Investigation of the New Generation University Initiative: The Case of Atatürk University[*]

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Abstract

The aim of the research is to examine the implementation processes and results of the "New Generation University Design and Transformation Project" carried out by Atatürk University in line with higher education reform movements in the context of new generation university standards. Case study, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the research. Data were collected through document analysis. Documents, archive records, working documents, all news and explanations about the project, project development and evaluation reports, strategy documents, workshop result reports were analyzed as part of the document analysis. According to the results of the review, the areas of improvement in terms of the educational mission of the "New Generation University Design and Transformation Project" are the increase in program accreditation by more than 300 percent, the expansion of program self-evaluation studies, and the elimination of deficiencies in course information packages. The aspects of the project that are open to improvement in terms of the educational mission are; limited program monitoring and updating practices, lack of graduate monitoring systems or inability to obtain effective and efficient results, lack of dissemination of different teaching methods and techniques, the existence of faculties without accredited programs, lack of peer evaluation practices, lack of structuring education, research and social contribution processes in relation to each other. Areas of improvement in terms of the "research" mission of the project are the existence of defined processes and practices for research strategy and objectives, and the establishment of monitoring mechanisms for research processes. On the other hand, there is room for improvement in that the results of the monitoring of research processes are not evaluated sufficiently and improvements are limited, information management systems for monitoring performance indicators are used at a limited level, and practices for developing research competence are limited. The area of improvement for the social contribution mission area of the project is that there are defined processes and practices for the social contribution strategy and objectives. The areas open for improvement are that the results of the monitoring of social contribution processes are not sufficiently evaluated and information management systems for monitoring improvements and performance indicators are used at a limited level.

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INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions have started a transformation process with the new generation university mentality that is spreading rapidly in the whole world. The transformation that started in higher education has also affected our country and HEC (Higher Education Council) has initiated the process of "delegation of authority" by transferring its authority to universities after establishing regulations on many issues, especially the establishment of boards such as the Higher Education Programs Advisory Board and the Higher Education Quality Board. This decision is intended to increase the quality and speed up decision-making processes in many areas, especially in human resources, research, education and training, in order for university systems to "develop and strengthen their institutional capacity" (YÖK, 2018).

The process of transformation has accelerated in our country with the transfer of authority and well-established universities in the country have been involved in the process. As a new generation university initiative, Atatürk University started the reform process by carrying out the "New Generation University Design and Transformation Project" on February 2, 2018. As part of the project carried out by the university to transform knowledge into value and improve its research performance, the mission areas of "education, research and contribution to society" were blended and a holistic Meta-System was designed by operating common sense processes. Along with the design, short, medium and long term action plans were put into practice. The mission, vision and all practices of the university were updated in the framework of the new generation university. As the results of the project started to be obtained in the process, the eyes turned to the University and the practices gained importance. For this reason, Atatürk University practices were investigated in this study. Studies on higher education reforms in the context of the new generation university, which has an important place in the literature, emphasize the development of higher education or the historical dimension of the reform process. It is expected that the results obtained by examining the practices aimed and realized by Atatürk University in the reform process will lead the university transformation activities that have started in our country and the educational policies of Turkish universities.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Universities have changed their missions with the transformation they have undergone, and new missions have been added to the missions previously grouped under two main headings namely education and research (Doğramacı, 2000; Valimaa & Hoffman, 2008). Universities are now expected to: become an important position in the market and knowledge-based economy (Delanty, 2001), transfer technology, become a center of innovative processes, commercialize knowledge, create collaborative networks (Lazzeroni & Piccaluga, 2003; Hannon, 2013), ensure the adoption of democratic principles in societies, contribute to the modernization of society, meet the need for lifelong learning, contribute to local and regional initiatives, become an important component of the national innovation system, provide trained human resources, support economic growth and conduct interdisciplinary studies (Agrawal, 2001).

Universities have stopped being the only source of knowledge because of the growth in higher education, the increase in the labor force participation rate of the population of the countries, the increase in the level of education, the development of digital technologies in society, education and economy in the world. Technological, scientific, social and economic changes have reduced the validity of traditional education and research methods. At this point, there is a need for new generation universities that support qualified projects and research and integrate innovative and creative learning methods. All these expectations have made it necessary to restructure the education system in general and the higher education system in particular in a flexible, open and powerful way (YÖK, 2006). Due to changing expectations, universities have started the process of transition to the "new generation university" model by shifting away from the traditional university structure. The mission and vision of universities that have transitioned from the traditional structure to the transformation process have

been redefined to include the goal of a new generation university. Universities have started the reform process by considering their own ecosystem within the framework of general trends in the world such as democratization of information and access, digital technologies, integration with industry, global mobility and market demands, national and international funding. During the reform process, universities have reviewed all their practices, institutions, structures, methods, and mechanisms in detail and made structural changes in line with the reforms.

Several factors have pushed universities to the transformation process. The first and most important of these is that many universities aiming to carry out international research and academic studies cannot reach the budgets they need, in other words, the budget allocated exceeds the cost of the research to be carried out. For this reason, universities have started to cooperate with companies that can meet their financing needs. Thanks to this cooperation, academic and industrial research have intertwined, which has led to a change in the relationship between the state and the university. Thus, the relationship between the state and the university has remained within the framework of a cooperation to support only micro-scale research and to train manpower in the quantity and quality that the country needs. As a result of this cooperation, universities started to provide education based on the market economy while training the qualified manpower needed.

The increasing dominance of the market economy has changed the thinking and practices of public administration. Governments that provide public funding for university research have changed their view of the university and started to establish their own research centers to access the science and technology that dominates the market. The number of research centers has increased, especially with the emergence of competitors to public higher education institutions, such as private national institutions, national and foreign partnered certification centers, foreign virtual education providers, and blended education service institutions. Universities with their own research centers started to largely gain autonomy and moved away from public accountability (Arap, 2010; Aypay, 2003; Tekeli, 2003; Wissema, 2014). As universities started to become market-oriented "commercial places managed by bureaucracy like customer-centered companies" through research centers, public universities started to become more entrepreneurial and there was a shift towards the pragmatic university. As a result, the concept of a university focused on market-oriented ideas has emerged. As a requirement of being an entrepreneurial university, these universities started to obtain financing from the market for their financial needs in exchange for the production of market-oriented scientific research and commercial products within the framework of university-industry cooperation (Arap, 2010).

In the pragmatic university, the perspective on the concept of "knowledge" has also changed, and the understanding of knowledge as a goal has been replaced by the understanding of knowledge as a buy-sellable commodity within the framework of market logic. With the rapid buying and selling of knowledge, the importance of having diplomas with international validity and prestige has rapidly lost its importance, while the concept of lifelong learning has come to the fore in order to renew and continuously improve oneself in parallel with the developing technology and the changes experienced (Tekeli, 2003). In addition, the effective use of information technology in research, in the provision of education and training services and in virtual education has fostered a pragmatic approach. The increasing influence of the pragmatic perspective has also forced universities to change. Especially the effective use of information technology in the execution of formal, distance and virtual higher education programs on digital and online platforms, the development of competency-based certificate understanding, and the possibility of providing higher education services to more students, in more diverse environments, more effectively and efficiently are the factors that have led to the change in the understanding of university.

Another reason for the transformation in higher education is the internationalization of universities. Especially universities in developed countries host the best international students and

researchers, forcing higher education systems to change. Better opportunities to study abroad have led to global mobility in the global academic market, both for students and scientists seeking the best career opportunities. To recruit the best researchers, universities have started to compete not only nationally but also internationally to get their share of this mobility (Apple, 2002; Parlar, 2012; Tural, 2002; Wissema, 2014). In this competitive environment, universities in our country have entered a reform process to diversify and increase their sources of income and develop more efficient management models. Atatürk University, one of these universities, has determined the necessary action plans to design the future with a common mind, develop new strategies and create a transformation vision with the New Generation University Design and Transformation Project. The project is especially important in terms of leading the higher education reform movements that accelerated during the Higher Education Council (YÖK) authorization transfer process. The aim of this review is to introduce practices that will guide reform programs for the higher education system in Turkey. For this purpose, the following questions were sought to be answered.

- How do the reform practices of the "New Generation University Design Transformation Project" carried out by Atatürk University comply with the new generation university standards?

- Are the results of the reform practices of the "New Generation University Design Transformation Project" carried out by Atatürk University in line with the new generation university understanding?

In the context of these questions, the study explains the practices of Atatürk University in its efforts to become a new generation university and the results obtained from the practices.

METHOD

RESEARCH DESIGN

Qualitative method was preferred in the study because of the success of qualitative methods in explaining, understanding and interpreting the nature, causes and consequences of situations and events in social sciences. In order to examine in detail, the "New Generation University Design and Transformation Project" carried out by Atatürk University in the context of the new generation university, case study design was used. Case study is a method that can be used in a wide variety of disciplines and has a widespread area in terms of the resources it utilizes and is basically used to examine the subject examined in research in depth and to develop theories and hypotheses (Karasar, 2015). In addition, it has great importance in terms of in-depth description of the subject, providing information, examining the extremes, reaching new findings with the aim of making judgments without the need for generalization, discovery, and re-examination of old information (Merriam, 2013). In case studies, different sources such as observation, interview, document review and questionnaire are generally utilized. In the research, project documents were analyzed within the framework of the case study in order to examine the project in detail. Through document analysis, information on plans, objectives and results were obtained and the essence of the project was analyzed.

In this study, the practices and implementation processes of the "New Generation University Design and Transformation Project" carried out by Atatürk University in line with higher education reform movements were examined in the context of new generation university standards. In order to list the new generation university standards and to examine at what stage Atatürk University is on the way to becoming a new generation university with the project, the literature was reviewed, and the standards were listed on the basis of Wissema (2014). Thus, an initial list of standards was created and the criteria considered necessary from other sources were added to the list. Subsequently, opinions on the standards were received from experts in the field working on the new generation university and some standards were revised based on the feedback received. After the final edits, the data collected through document analysis were examined and analyzed in line with the new generation university

standards in terms of the practices and implementation results of the "New Generation University Design and Transformation Project". The results are discussed based on the findings obtained as a result of the analysis.

DATA COLLECTION

In the research, in which qualitative case study was preferred, document analysis technique was used to collect data. In document analysis, which is one of the most common data collection techniques used in qualitative research, sources such as memories, diaries, archival documents are carefully examined by the researcher (Kümbetoğlu, 2012, p. 145). In the current study, the archival records of Atatürk University's "New Generation University Design and Transformation Project" were analyzed by accessing project documents, working documents, workshop reports obtained from project officers and explanations about the project. The project was analyzed in detail based on the relevant reports. According to the data collected, the transformation of higher education is described in detail. After the explanations, the impact of the university transformation process on Atatürk University and the place and importance of the University in the transformation process are discussed.

The study firstly, the archive records of the project, project documents, working documents, workshop reports obtained from the project managers and explanations about the project were accessed and analyzed. While analyzing the reports of the project, new generation university standards were used. The standards used in this review were listed based on Wissema (2014). Then, national and international literature was reviewed in line with the new generation university and a general list was created. After the literature review, all standards emphasized in the sources and thought to contribute to the research were added to the general list. The reason why Wissema (2014) is the reference point in the general list is that he is considered to be one of the theorists who emphasized the new generation university understanding the most in the literature and expressed some classifications for the first time.

After determining the initial standards in the research, the current literature in the context of the new generation university was reviewed and additions were made to the list. Before finalizing the list, field experts were consulted. It should be emphasized that the experts to be consulted should be selected properly before consulting expert views. Because it is important to appoint people who have the qualifications to contribute to the study in terms of the successful outcome of the research (Garrod & Fyall, 2005; Hsu & Sandford, 2007). In this regard, Skulmoski et al. (2007) listed the characteristics that should be present in the experts to be consulted as "having knowledge and experience in the field, having awareness, being willing to participate, having enough time for participation and having effective communication skills". Accordingly, when choosing experts who published in the field, criteria such as their publications being cited and being indexed in international indexes were taken into consideration.

Another important point after the selection of the expert is the determination of the number of candidates to be consulted for expert opinions. There are different opinions in the literature on this issue. Şahin (2001) and Delbecq et al. (1975) stated that the ideal group should consist of 10-20 people, while Ruppert and Duncan (2017) stated that the error decreased with each participant as the number of participants increased up to 12 and that the ideal number of participants was 30. Gordon (1994), on the other hand, stated that the number of experts in his research consisted of 15-35 people. As a result, this number should be decided according to the purpose of the research and the diversity of the participants, taking into account that there is no specific number in the literature for the size of the expert group and that the participants may not respond to all the forms sent (Williams & Webb, 1994). Accordingly, the expert opinion form was sent to 30 participants, taking into account the purpose of the study, the contribution of the participants to the field, their characteristics, and accessibility, and 19 participants responded.

Based on expert feedback, some criteria were added, some were removed, some were edited, and indicators were added as a result of discussions. In this way, the competencies indicated by the criteria were made clear; the confusion of which criterion could be evaluated by which indicator was eliminated. These indicators served as a reference point when analyzing Atatürk University's New Generation University Design and Transformation Project (NGUDTP) practices and implementation results, which is the purpose of the research. After the addition of the indicators, the final version of the list was presented in the interviews with the vice-rector, who was the head of the project executive team. The list was completed in line with the feedback from the interviews.

Table 1. *Next Generation University Standards and Indicators (NGUS)*

1. Having a contemporary curriculum
   - Defined processes used for program design and approval (alignment with education policy, guidelines, procedures and principles, etc.)
   - The managerial and organizational structure of the curriculum design and approval processes (Committees, process responsible)
   - Evidence of alignment of program objectives and outcomes with the Turkish Higher Education Qualifications Framework
   - Evidence of departmental/field-based diversity of practice in distance-blended program design
   - Evidence of stakeholder engagement in program design processes
   - Evidence that the design and approval process of programs is monitored and improved

2. Having an innovative mission and vision
   - Preparation of policies with relevant stakeholder participation
   - Statements in policy documents showing the holistic relationship and examples of applications (Emphasis on research in education programs, emphasis on community service in research processes, emphasis on distance education)
   - Evidence that policies are monitored and evaluated
   - Having guiding mission policies

3. Having sufficient infrastructure and equipment in accordance with the updated needs
   - Development of facilities, infrastructure and equipment in relation to institutional growth (e.g. the relationship between the increase in the number of units and the increase in physical space)

4. Quality of scientific research
   - Total points from peer reviews
   - Ratio of qualified publications made at the university to the number of faculty members
   - Number of graduates or faculty members who have won the Nobel Prize
   - Cited publications of faculty members

5. Having a brand and international reputation
   - International Faculty Member Ratio (The ratio of the number of foreign faculty members (Professor, Associate Professor, Dr. Lecturer) working at the institution in the relevant year to the total number of faculty members).
   - Number of international faculty members working at the university
   - Number of international students studying at the university
   - Number of highly cited researchers in different fields
   - Total number of academic fields in which the university publishes articles in high quality journals
   - High number of TÜBİTAK and EU projects

6. 6. Having the best teaching staff
   - High number of academic articles and citations
   - Citations per faculty member (ISI data)
   - Number of highly cited researchers in different fields
   - Total number of articles published in the last year
   - H-index (Top level index) in the last two years

7. 7. Having the best researchers/students
   - International Student Ratio
   - Number of students in the top 1000

8. High level of use of information and technology

9. Having a multicultural cosmopolitan structure
   - Number of international students studying at the university
   - Number of international faculty members working at the university

10. Having a Technopark
- Number of Active Companies Owned or Partnered by Faculty Members in Technopark, Incubation Center, and TEKMER
- Number of Active Companies Owned or Partnered by Students and Graduates in Technopark or Incubation Center
- Number of International Patent Certificates
- Number of National Patent Certificates
- Number of National and International Patent Applications

11. Having R&D institutions
- Supporting entrepreneurship activities
- Amount of Funds Transferred to the Agency from National R&D and Innovation Support Programs in the Corresponding Year
- Number of Projects Received from National R&D and Innovation Support Programs

12. The management system is constantly renewing itself in line with the needs of the university
- Transparent management (Process and criteria for the appointment and promotion of academic staff are determined and open to the public)
- Process management mechanisms are monitored, evaluated and improved together with relevant stakeholders.
- Defined processes are managed throughout the organization.

13. University - industry relationship
- Effective collaboration between industry and professional service providers
- Number of research studies conducted based on industry-university cooperation
- Ratio of the Fund Amount Received from R&D and Innovation Projects Conducted in Collaboration between University and Industry to the Number of Related Projects

14. Having an innovative leader who is compatible with change

15. Presence of academic freedom

16. Having new generation libraries
- Number of publications in the library
- Diversity of publications in the library

17. Use of digital platforms

18. Having a career development center

19. Having the necessary funding for scientific studies
- Education and research funding is administered by independent intermediaries, not by the state

20. High number of internationally accredited faculties at the university

21. Availability of international mobility
- Number of Circulating Faculty Members/Students (As of the last year, the number of institutional staff and students (inbound/outbound) circulating within the scope of Higher Education Council, National Agency and TUBITAK circulation programs

22. Having an adequate infrastructure system for data storage, management and utilization

23. The ability of scientific studies carried out at the university to create value (social, cultural, economic)

24. Adequate accessibility services for students with special needs
- Evidence of monitoring and improvement of barrier-free university practices
- Mechanisms for disadvantaged groups and special types of assessment, such as online exams

25. Carrying out activities to encourage different faculties to cooperate

26. Carrying out education, research and social contribution activities together

27. Using foreign language effectively
- Students are proficient in at least one language
- Academics can provide education in a foreign language

DOCUMENTS

In this part of the research, the practices and implementation results of the "New Generation University Design and Transformation Project" carried out by Atatürk University were evaluated in line with the new generation university standards. In the research, all documents, archive records, working documents, explanations and all news about the project on atauni.edu.tr website were examined. In addition, project development and evaluation reports, declarations, strategy documents, workshop outcome reports and all other official or unofficial documents related to the research topic were analyzed.

FINDINGS

The first of the questions determined in line with the main problems of the research is; to what extent are the practices of the NGUDTP in compliance with the new generation university standards? In this part of the study, the document analysis findings obtained for the first question are presented.

Atatürk University (AU) has been conducting NGUDTP since February 4, 2018 in order to transform knowledge into value and improve research performance. Within the scope of the project, 19 search conferences were held, 230 experts from outside the university and 926 experts from within the university were invited to these conferences, and a Holistic Meta-System was designed with a common mind to create a multiplier effect in higher education that blends the mission areas of "education, research and contribution to society". This design was supported by short, medium and long term action plans and put into practice. Some of the projects implemented by Atatürk University with YNÜTDP are listed below and examined in the context of new generation university standards.

1. **LEARNING EXCELLENCE MODEL IMPLEMENTATION AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS TRANSFORMATION PROJECT**

Along with the project, the university has carried out the 'Learning Excellence Model Implementation and Education Programs Transformation Project' in order to ensure that the quality level of the undergraduate and graduate education program is international and that the program content includes up-to-date and innovative educational pedagogies. Thus, it is aimed to realize a student-centered learning experience and to comprehensively gain the competencies expected from graduates in working life. "The implementation of the model covers all undergraduate, graduate, distance and open education programs. The project aims to review and redesign programs; provide programs that continuously improve instructor competence; implement methodologies to improve learning resources and environments; and monitor programs with performance criteria while receiving regular feedback through student, graduate and employer surveys. In line with the feedback, some courses are expected to be added to the program, some are expected to include new content and some courses are expected to be removed. THEQC internal and external quality assessments are also considered as part of this process. Having initiated the accreditation process, the University is designing a comprehensive transformation of educational programs through the Learning Excellence Project. A large part of this design has been achieved. With the project, which aims to review the curricula in all faculties of the university, the program renewal process has been completed in some faculties (Structural Transformation Practices, 2020)". Some courses that could be a burden in teaching were removed and replaced with elective courses.

As a result of examining the new educational policies in the Learning Excellence Model in terms of the policies of graduate programs, the following policies were determined and implemented; reducing the number of programs, including current and priority programs, gathering similar programs under a single roof, removing departments that cannot provide undergraduate education from graduate programs, increasing the number of interdisciplinary programs, employing faculty members with industry experience, increasing the admission criteria for programs, reducing the number of students per faculty member, cooperating with different universities in Turkey and abroad, and providing some of the graduate courses by distance education method, departments to take the initiative and organize a department from each faculty to provide English language education; to create brand programs in the fields of basic sciences, health sciences, social sciences and educational sciences; to add entrepreneurship, innovation and project management courses to the program in graduate education; to make it compulsory for students to take courses from different disciplines; to encourage multidisciplinary joint theses; to encourage multidisciplinary studies with formations such as R&D Café; to increase the course credit hours of students; to focus on solving the problems of the region, then the country and the world in the theses; focusing on the solution of the problems of our region, then our country and the world in priority areas (New Generation University Design and

Transformation Project Final Report, 2020). In addition, when undergraduate programs are examined; policies such as periodic renewal of the program, structuring common elective courses, increasing accreditations, teaching common and basic courses with the support of technology, formation program application for faculty members, student-centered education and supporting the individualization of education have been determined. When these policies are evaluated in terms of new generation university standards, they overlap with the 1st standard "having a contemporary curriculum", the 8th standard "high level of use of information and technology", the 17th standard "use of digital platforms", and the 20th standard "the number of internationally accredited faculties in the university".

2. NEW GENERATION MASTER'S DEGREE

The focus topics of the new generation master's programs are intended to be related to one of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the University's priorities of "Large Scale", "Internationalization", "Digitalization". By designing the master's research question in relation to these topics, the theses are expected to be interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary. For instance: Combining engineering and a social science field. This practice is in line with the 25th standard of the new generation university standards, which is "conducting studies to encourage cooperation between different faculties". In addition, each program is planned to include "distance education" and/or a reverse-face education application. This practice is in line with standard 1, "evidence of department/field-based application diversity in distance-blended program design", which is one of the indicators of standard 1, "having a contemporary curriculum".

Master's degree programs are categorized into four main categories according to their focus on the University's missions of education, research and contribution to society. The first category is Non-Thesis Master's Programs where education is the priority. The second and third categories are "research and contribution to society" focused programs. The fourth category is Fusion Master's Programs where the missions of "education, research and contribution to society" are intertwined. Atatürk University has implemented the New Generation Master's Design project in order to increase the weight of Fusion Master's Programs in the institutes. With this project, it is aimed to specialize the student in at least one field, to have master's programs that establish a relationship with the sector or society, and to have master's programs that progress to doctoral programs. When evaluated from this point of view, the indicator of the 2nd standard, "having an innovative mission and vision", is in line with the "statements and examples of practices that show a holistic relationship in policy documents".

3. STRUCTURING THE CAREER PLANNING AND GRADUATE MONITORING APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT CENTER

The Career Center was established to support students in planning and developing their careers. With the Career Center, the alumni database is expanded and there are applications to increase interaction with graduates. Thus, it is aimed to structure the integration processes with the graduates of Atatürk University. The center also carries out the academic career follow-up of graduate students. When the activities of this center are considered in terms of new generation university standards, it is seen that it complies with the 18th standard, "having a career development center".

4. NEXT GENERATION PERFORMANCE CRITERIA AND ASSIGNMENT SYSTEM PROJECT

A performance management system was developed to support faculty members in improving their academic performance. The system, which consists of a new generation of performance criteria, has also renewed the appointment criteria based on these performance criteria. In line with this practice, it is aimed to encourage publications, research projects and social contribution activities. In terms of the new generation university standards, these practices are in line with the 12th standard "the management system is constantly renewing itself in line with the needs of the university" and the

indicator "the processes and criteria for the appointment, promotion and assignment of academic staff are determined and open to the public".

5. ON-SITE INTERNATIONALIZATION

The aim of the studies carried out within the scope of Internationalization in Place is to facilitate foreign language learning opportunities on a campus with international qualities and to implement a renewed curriculum within the scope of internationalization. Through the international networks and partnerships established through the project and the services offered to international students and researchers, the University aims to both increase its research output and qualify its foreign language education.

In order to improve and expand English language education across the University, the project has been carried out in four different categories: designing the curriculum approach, structuring the English preparatory school, designing English language support programs for undergraduate and/or graduate programs in English. In all processes, it is envisaged that modern technological methods will be added to English education, extracurricular learning opportunities will be created and foreign language learning will be encouraged in general. In addition, the University continues to make improvements to open undergraduate and especially graduate programs in foreign languages. These investments in foreign languages are intended to attract international students and faculty members. When these practices are considered in the context of the new generation university, it is seen that the university meets the 5th standard of "having a brand and international reputation" and the 27th standard of "using foreign language effectively".

6. DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND SOFTWARE OFFICE RESTRUCTURING PROJECT

With NGUDTP, the Digital Transformation Office was established to disseminate digital technologies throughout the University. The office has started to work on topics such as artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, soft boot, 3D printer, educational technologies, academic processes.

The most important point in the "digitalization" process of the University is the digitalization of management processes. Because in this way, official transactions such as documents, applications, registrations and obtaining information are carried out using digital media. In addition, opportunities such as automatically improving the physical conditions of educational environments, increasing the quality of security, and monitoring educational processes are also included in the digitalization process. Atatürk University carries out many projects to realize digital transformation in education. Some of these projects are given as examples in Figure 2 on the next page.

Figure 1. *Projects for Digital Educators, Digital Students and Digital Learning Environments (Digital University Transformation Roadmap, 2022)*
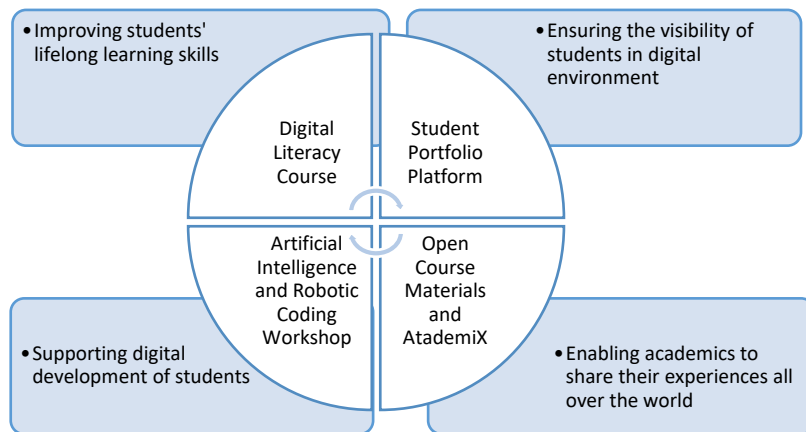
The first objective of the digital transformation project is the digitalization of learning, teaching and assessment processes. The aim here is to develop the digital skills of all staff and learners

employed at the university, to create digital learning infrastructures such as virtual learning environment, learning management system and to provide support services for the development of lifelong digital learning habits. Digital transformation can also be used to track the stage of official transactions within the University and to determine the working performance of the staff. These digital support services offered at the University are expected to facilitate the solution of many problems that staff and students may encounter. For an example, it is stated that there are also advantages such as completing document requests in a short time and realizing these processes with electronic documents, effectively increasing service quality and time; ensuring coordination in the execution of business processes of units with digital transformation and facilitating work follow-up.

Along with the digitalization of teaching processes, content and access to information also need to be digitalized. For this purpose, the establishment of systems for knowledge management, development of digital expertise, communication skills and information literacy of the digital library and support staff, data management, learning analytics, digitalization of the data usage process, digital media production and distribution, and support for digital media experts have been initiated. These implementations are aligned with the 8th priority "high level of use of information and technology", the 16th standard "having next generation libraries", the 17th standard "using digital platforms" and the 17th standard "having an adequate infrastructure system for data storage" in terms of next generation university criteria.

7. AGRICULTURE SCHOOL PROJECT

Considering the practices carried out under the project, the leading Agricultural Faculties and programs in the world were examined and compared with ATAUNI and trends were revealed; the programs, programs, quota occupancy rates and base scores of ATAUNI Faculty of Agriculture were examined; new program proposals suitable for accreditation were developed within the framework of common courses of the Faculty of Agriculture; a sustainability course group focused on SDGs was created for the entire Faculty of Agriculture and a module-based new generation curriculum proposal was prepared". Ataturk University's plan to support projects in which the Faculties of Agriculture, Veterinary Medicine and Fisheries, which produce knowledge in education and research in the agricultural field, will work in cooperation and benefit the society is also aligned with the 25th standard of the next generation university standards, which is "conducting studies to encourage different faculties to cooperate".

It is seen that the main issues such as conserving water and managing scarcity, protecting biodiversity and ecosystem functions, promoting recycling activities and sustainable consumption, increasing soil health, which are also within the research areas of new generation universities in the world, are addressed within the priority areas of the School of Agriculture Project. In addition, facilitating access to productive resources, finance and services, connecting small producers to markets, rehabilitating land, encouraging diversification of production and income, increasing the knowledge and capacity of producers are also part of the School of Agriculture Project. These practices are in parallel with the 23rd standard of the new generation university standards, which is "the ability of scientific studies carried out at the university to create value (social, cultural, economic)".

8. STRUCTURING THE COORDINATION DEPARTMENT OF SRC

Forms and documents related to the processes of all projects within BAP, which is the biggest supporter of scientific activities carried out at AU, were revised. As a result of the efforts to restructure BAP, arrangements were made to bring project application forms in line with TÜBİTAK standards. In addition, as a result of the structural reorganization activities carried out on quality management and information security management systems, trainings were provided to all personnel. These efforts are in line with the 4th standard of the new generation university standards, which is the criterion of increasing the "quality of scientific research".

9. STRUCTURING THE METHODOLOGY SUPPORT OFFICE

The Methodology Support Office was established to bring together the expertise in data collection and analysis for research conducted at AU under the same roof and to guide research in the right direction. The aim is to position AU as a leader in scientific fields and increase its ability to compete for new research initiatives. The Methodology Support Office works together with all faculties, schools, institutes and units. It is seen that these studies are practices aimed at increasing the "scientific research quality", which is the 4th standard of the new generation university standards.

10. MEETINGS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS (CSOS)

Another of the practices carried out within the scope of NGUDTP is that meetings were held with CSOs in order to realize collaborations that will benefit the integration of the University with the region. In the interviews, CSOs expressed their expectations that the research conducted at the University should be related to the problems of the region and that arrangements should be made for the collaborations needed to strengthen the University's bond with the city. With the feedback from the interviews with CSOs, some actions were taken within the scope of NGUDTP. It is seen that these studies are in line with the 13th standard of the next generation university criteria, "industry-university relationship", and are directly related to the sub-indicators "effective cooperation between industry and professional service providers" and "number of research studies conducted based on industry-university cooperation".

11. RESTRUCTURING OF TECHNOPARK

The restructuring of Technopark is an activity that directly affects the entrepreneurship initiative of Atatürk University. In this context, industrialists and other private sector companies in the region and academics within the University were matched in line with their common fields. The name of the program that enables them to come together for cooperation is the Hundred-100 program. In addition, TIM-TEB Initiative House was established and a physical environment that contributes to entrepreneurs within the University in areas such as training, mentoring, consultancy, coaching, incubation program, networking, investor relations as well as financial services was put into practice. In terms of the new generation university, the studies seem to be in line with the 10th standard "having a technopark"; the 11th standard "having R&D organizations" and its sub-indicator "supporting entrepreneurship activities" and finally the 13th standard "industry-university relationship".

12. PROJECT TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF PATENTS

As part of NGUDTP, studies on Intellectual and Industrial Property Rights (IPR) are ongoing. In this framework, it is envisaged to encourage the protection of scientific studies carried out within the University through methods such as patent, utility model and design registration. In addition, informative seminars and trainings on IPR are organized, and activities are carried out to raise awareness by providing financial support by the SRP Coordination Unit. Through the Patent Number Development Project, graduate studies obtained from institutes are examined by relevant experts and evaluated in terms of patent potential. During the evaluation process, the relevant academicians are contacted in order to protect the studies that may be patents or utility models. The products/services are handled by the Patent Commission established under the project and patent applications are made to the Turkish Patent and Trademark Office. It is seen that these activities are in compliance with the 10th standard "having a technopark" and sub-indicators "number of international patent documents"; "number of national patent documents" and "number of national and international patent applications" criteria for the new generation university. As a result of the general evaluation of the practices carried out by Atatürk University within the scope of the project, it is seen that all of them comply with the criteria of a new generation university.

FINDINGS ON THE REFORM IMPLEMENTATION RESULTS OF THE NGUDTP

The last of the questions determined according to the main problems of the research is; To what extent do the implementation results of the "New Generation University Design Transformation Project" comply with the new generation university standards? For this purpose, the results obtained from the practices carried out by Atatürk University under the project are listed below.

1. RISE OF ATATÜRK UNIVERSITY IN RANKING SYSTEMS

According to 'THE 2023 World University Rankings by Subject' prepared by Times Higher Education (THE), a UK-based international higher education rating organization, Atatürk University has been ranked in five of the 11 main subject headings. According to THE, 2023 Subject Rankings, Atatürk University ranked 2nd among Turkish universities by placing in the 501-600 band in the main subject of Life Sciences, and ranked 1st in the sub-topics of Agriculture & Forestry and Veterinary Science, as it has been for the last 3 years. In addition, it ranked 2nd among Turkish universities in Biological Sciences and Sport Sciences. In 2023, Atatürk University, which maintained its ranking in Physical Sciences (501-600) and ranked 2nd in Geology and Geology, Environmental, Earth & Marine Sciences, ranked in the top 1000 among world universities in Education (501-600), Medicine and Health (801+) and Engineering (801-1000) (https://atauni.edu.tr accessed on 21.10.2023). The fact that Atatürk University is on the rise in international rankings in terms of new generation university standards shows that this rise meets the 2nd standard of "having an innovative mission and vision"; the 4th standard of "high quality of scientific research"; and the 5th standard of "having branding features and international reputation".

#### 2. THE PRESENCE OF ATATÜRK UNIVERSITY AMONG PROJECT PRODUCING UNIVERSITIES

In the 1st semester of 2022, 10 projects submitted within the scope of the "1001-Scientific and Technological Research Projects Support Program" were entitled to receive direct support, ranking Atatürk University 5th among project producing universities. It is seen that Atatürk University's ranking 5th among project producing universities meets the 2nd standard "having an innovative mission and vision"; 4th standard "having a high quality of scientific research; 5th standard "having branding features and international reputation"; 11th standard "having R&D organizations"; 19th standard "having the financing deemed necessary for scientific studies" in terms of new generation university criteria.

3. QUANTITATIVE RESULTS OF CHANGES IN TECHNOPARK ORGANIZATION

Because 80% of the world's technical knowledge is contained in patent documents, patents and patent applications as a result of R&D studies are considered very important for the new generation university. In addition, protecting the innovations and inventions produced as a result of scientific studies at universities with patents is of great importance for the industry to benefit from these innovations and to develop university-industry cooperation. The use of patented information in R&D studies prevents investments and time from being wasted. Patents are accepted as an indicator of the transformation of scientific research results into technology (Wisssema, 2014). Because patents are based on the recognition of intellectual products, encouragement of entrepreneurial activities and dissemination of technical knowledge based on R&D results (Erdem, 2013).

The change in the number of patents at Atatürk University is shown in Figure 3 based on Technopark data.

Figure 3. *Number of National Patent Applications (Academician) (Atatürk University Technopark Data Office)*
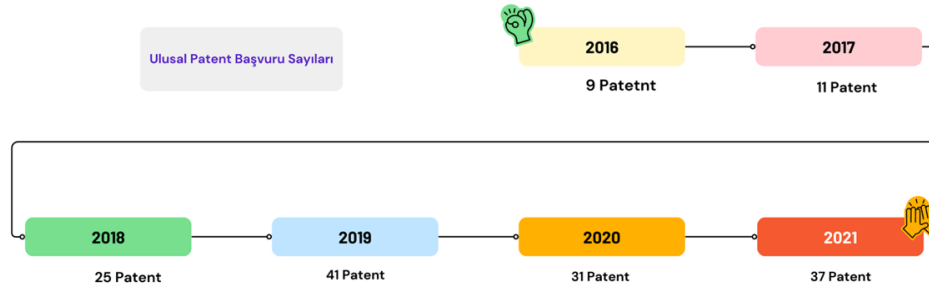
In 2018, there were 2 national registrations (2 national registrations without patent examination), 1 national registration (1 national registration without patent examination), 1 international registration (1 international registration with patent examination) in 2019, 4 national registrations (3 national registrations with patent examination, 1 utility model registration), 8 international registrations (8 international registrations with patent examination) in 2020, 11 national registrations (7 national registrations with patent examination, 4 utility model registrations), 2 international registrations (2 international registrations with patent examination) in 2021. When the indicator "having national and international patent applications", which is a sub-indicator of the 10th standard among the new generation university criteria, is taken into consideration and the change in the number of patents is examined; it is seen that the number of patents has increased since the project was implemented and there has been a significant increase especially in the number of international registrations. The 10th standard "having a Technopark", the 13th standard "having R&D organizations", the 13th standard "supporting entrepreneurship activities" and the 17th standard "university-industry relationship (effective cooperation between industry and professional service providers, the number of researches carried out based on industry-university cooperation) criteria are met.

The change in the number of patents is detailed in the Technopark data. Table 2 shows how the Technopark activities have changed since the year the project started.

Table 2. *Technopark Data Total Values (Atatürk University Technopolis Data Office, 2022)*

Qualification Name	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total Number of Companies (R&D and Incubation Companies)	78	86	106	118	134
Number of R&D Companies (Excluding İncubation Companies)	67	71	84	88	101
Number of Incubation Companies	11	15	21	29	33
Number of Companies (R&D and Incubation Companies) Accepted to the Zone	17	21	28	24	29
Number of Companies Established in the Region	13	14	21	16	16
Number of Companies Starting Operations in Incubation	6	9	7	12	11
Number of Companies Graduating from İncubation	5	1	4	7	9
Allocated Support Number of Companies	1	0	1	0	1
Number of Companies Incorporated by Receiving Pre-Incubation Services	11	12	6	15	4
Number of Companies Benefiting from Pre-Incubation Services	30	42	48	57	53
Number of Foreign/Foreign Partnered Companies	0	2	2	2	2
Number of Foreign Companies in Incubation	0	0	0	2	1
Number of Academic Spin-Off Companies	18	22	30	30	27
Number of Companies in which Academicians are Partners	21	24	32	32	30
Total Number of Academic Spin-Off Companies in Incubation Companies	5	5	7	7	5
Number of Companies Cooperating with Companies in and outside the Region	37	29	25	16	18
Number of Companies Cooperating with Foreign Companies	0	0	0	2	2
Number of Pre-Incubation Entrepreneurs	10	64	120	288	388

The total values are taken from 2018, the year in which the NGUDTP officially started. In general, the table shows that there has been an increase in all years except for "Number of Companies Collaborating with Companies within and outside the Region (R&D and Incubation Companies)" and "Number of Companies Incorporated by Receiving Pre-Incubation Services".

The table shows that while the total number of Technopark companies was 78 in 2018, this number increased to 134 in 2022. The same progress is observed in the number of R&D companies. The number of R&D companies, which was 67 in 2018, reached 101 in 2022. Since R&D studies are the source of patents, the number of R&D companies is an important indicator for the new generation university.

It is seen that the number of incubation companies was 11 in 2018 and 33 in 2022, and the number of incubation companies tripled in 4 years. There has been a steady progress in Technopark activities since 2018. It seems possible to explain this progress with the structuring of the Technopark as part of the project. These data are also very important for the new generation university. Because techno-pioneering institutions such as Technopark have an important role in the knowledge wheel that forms the center of the new generation university. Technopioneers interact with facilities belonging to big businesses and independent research institutes. In this way, they strengthen the knowledge wheel and the competitive position of the university, creating new high-level jobs and making a significant contribution to the economy (Wissema, 2014).

4. AWARDING ATATÜRK UNIVERSITY WITH THE HEC DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Following the 2020 Contribution to Local Development Award within the scope of the Higher Education Council (HEC) Outstanding Achievement Awards, the HEC 2022 Outstanding Achievement Award was given to Atatürk University in the category of Digital Transformation and Big Data Studies with the project titled "Determining the Digital Competence Level of Atatürk University" (https://atauni.edu.tr accessed on 25.11.2022). In terms of the new generation university standards, it is seen that Atatürk University has met the criteria of the 2nd standard "having an innovative mission and vision" sub-indicators "evidence that policies are monitored and evaluated"; "mission policies are guiding"; 12th standard "the management system is constantly renewing itself in line with the needs of the university" and finally the 14th standard "having an innovative leader who is compatible with change".

5. ATATÜRK UNIVERSITY AS A RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

Atatürk University was selected as one of the 10 research universities as a result of a three-stage evaluation based on approximately one hundred "output-oriented" parameters based on the academic performances, research infrastructures and goals of the universities. According to the criteria, it is seen that Atatürk University meets the 2nd standard of "having an innovative mission and vision"; the 4th standard of "high quality of scientific research"; the 5th standard of "having branding features and international reputation"; the 10th standard of "having a Technopark"; the 11th standard of "having R&D organizations"; the 13th standard of "university-industry relations"; and the 19th standard of "having the necessary financing for scientific studies".

6. THE SELECTION OF ATATÜRK UNIVERSITY AS PART OF HEC'S BIG DATA PROJECT

Today, when digital transformation is taking place in every field, higher education institutions are required to take an active part in this process and become the pioneer institutions of digital transformation. At this point, the awarding of the Outstanding Service Award to Atatürk University within the scope of Digital Transformation and Big Data Studies in 2022 is an indication that the steps taken towards becoming a new generation university are officially recognized by HEC. The fact that AU has received this award means that the 12th standard in terms of new generation university standards is "the management system is constantly renewing itself for the needs of the university";

the 17th standard is "the use of digital platforms" and finally. 22nd standard, "having an adequate infrastructure system for data storage, management and utilization".

7. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DATA CENTER

Today, when protecting information is as strategically important as producing it, many institutions and organizations, including government agencies, financial institutions, telecommunications companies, online marketplaces such as Google and Facebook, need data centers to ensure fast and secure access to data. When the Data Center is completed, it is designed to provide high-tech services such as server hosting, server rental, private cloud, public cloud, disaster recovery center, and high physical and cyber security in the region. It is planned to be a Data Center facility that centralizes information technology operations and equipment in line with the needs of the country, especially the Erzurum region, in order to store, process and distribute data and applications (https://atauni.edu.tr accessed on 22.12.2022). The establishment of Atatürk University's data center meets the criteria of standard 3, "having adequate infrastructure and equipment in line with the updated needs"; standard 12, "the management system is constantly renewing itself in line with the needs of the university"; standard 17, "using digital platforms"; and standard 22, "having an adequate infrastructure system for data storage, management and use" in terms of next generation university standards.

8. BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION EFFORTS

Biodiversity Application and Research Center (BAUM) was established as part of NGUDTP. It is aimed with this center to protect plant biodiversity, to introduce protected species, to create awareness of environmental protection and ownership in individuals, and to open the materials to the studies of national and international scientists. In this context, efforts to establish a "Biodiversity Science Museum" have also been initiated. In this way, the University aims both to open its scientific collections, laboratories and laboratories to scientists and to bring science together with society through exhibitions open to the public (accessed from https://atauni.edu.tr). In terms of the new generation university standards, the protection of biodiversity by the University is in line with the 23rd standard, which is "scientific studies carried out at the university can create value (social, cultural, economic)".

9. EXTENSION OF PROGRAM EVALUATION STUDIES TO ALL FACULTIES

In order to improve the quality of education, research, social contribution and management activities of undergraduate programs at Atatürk University, peer evaluation processes are carried out after the self-evaluation of undergraduate programs. In addition, accreditation studies have been carried out to a great extent throughout the University. Internal and external stakeholders of all programs have been updated, program objectives, course contents and course outcomes have been reviewed. In addition, self-evaluation reports of 129 undergraduate programs and 8 institutes were prepared according to THEQC criteria (https://atauni.edu.tr accessed on 12.10.2023). The dissemination of program evaluation studies to all faculties is in line with the 1st standard "having a contemporary curriculum" and its sub-indicators "having defined processes used for program design and approval"; "having evidence of the alignment of program objectives and outcomes with the Turkish Higher Education Qualifications Framework (THEQF)"; "evidence of stakeholder participation in program design processes" and "evidence that the design and approval process of programs is monitored and improved". In addition, the 2nd standard "having an innovative mission and vision" meets the criteria of "evidence that policies are monitored and evaluated" and "mission policies are guiding".

10. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION MODEL

The "Learning Excellence Model Implementation and Education Programs Transformation Project" was carried out in order to ensure that the undergraduate and graduate programs of the

university include innovative educational pedagogies with up-to-date content at international quality level. In this way, it is aimed to realize a student-centered learning experience and to gain the competencies expected from graduates in working life in a comprehensive manner. "All undergraduate, graduate, distance and open education programs participated in the implementation of the model. Strategies were created and programs were reviewed in line with the orientation component where the basic policies of the programs were determined. The checklists of the programs, which were restored to their new designs, ensured that the designs were up-to-date and student-centered. In the model, it is planned to implement methodologies that will continuously improve instructor competence through in-service training and improve the resources and teaching environments used in learning" (Structural Transformation Practices, 2020).

The implementation of the Excellence in Education Model is compatible with the 1st standard "having a contemporary curriculum" and its sub-indicators "having defined processes used for program design and approval"; "having evidence of the alignment of program objectives and outcomes with the Turkish Higher Education Qualifications Framework (THEQF)"; "evidence of stakeholder participation in program design processes" and "evidence that the design and approval process of programs is monitored and improved". In addition, it is seen that it meets the criteria of "evidence that policies are monitored and evaluated" from the sub-indicators of the 2nd standard "having an innovative mission and vision".

11. ACCREDITATION OF ATATÜRK UNIVERSITY BY THEQC FOR 2 YEARS

The University has been accredited by THEQC for 2 years. The number of accredited programs, which was 6 when the Quality Coordinatorship was established, increased to 24 by 2022. While the accreditation process of 40 undergraduate programs continues, it is stated that the necessary work has been initiated to apply for the accreditation process of 13 undergraduate programs (https://atauni.edu.tr accessed on 12.12.2022). The accreditation process at the university is carried out according to THEQC criteria (https://atauni.edu.tr accessed on 10.11.2022). The accreditation of Atatürk University by THEQC for 2 years is in line with the 1st standard "having a contemporary curriculum" and its sub-indicators "having defined processes used for program design and approval"; "having evidence of the alignment of program objectives and outcomes with the Turkish Higher Education Qualifications Framework (THEQF)" and "evidence that the design and approval process of programs is monitored and improved" in terms of new generation university standards. In addition, it is seen that it meets the criteria of the sub-indicator of the 2nd standard "evidence that policies are monitored and evaluated" and the 20th standard "the number of internationally accredited faculties in the university is high".

12. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW GENERATION PERFORMANCE CRITERIA AND APPOINTMENT SYSTEM PROJECT

One of the important tools of the meta-system designed by Atatürk University as part of NGUDTP is the performance management system. In this system called Academic Performance Evaluation Process Management System (APSIS), the scores of each academic staff member are analyzed and the deficiencies identified are communicated directly to the relevant academic staff member with the help of software. Thus, the objections of the lecturers within the specified calendar were made with the help of the software and the deficiencies were completed and the relevant corrections were made. In this way, the current situation was determined and the aspects that need to be improved were revealed. This software is especially intended to serve to improve the quality of the missions of "education, scientific research and service to society". The implementation of the new generation performance criteria and assignment system project corresponds to the 12th standard in terms of the new generation university standards, "the management system is constantly renewing itself in line with the needs of the university" and the sub-indicators "transparent management, processes and criteria for the appointment, promotion and assignment of academic staff are

determined and open to the public", "process management mechanisms in the institution are monitored and evaluated and improved together with the relevant stakeholders" and finally "defined processes are managed throughout the institution".

13. ESTABLISHMENT OF EASTERN ANATOLIA HIGH TECHNOLOGY APPLICATION AND RESEARCH CENTRE (EAHTRC/DAYTAM)

EAHTRC, established within the university, provides infrastructure for scientists conducting research in the fields of chemistry, physics, biology, medicine, veterinary medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, agriculture, engineering and materials science, and provides laboratory, testing, analysis and R&D services to industrial organizations. The Research Center is open to all public and private sector stakeholders, and project activities, testing and analysis can be carried out by them in the laboratories specially allocated to them. This research center aims to provide a working environment for both Atatürk University researchers and researchers of regional universities (www.daytam.atauni.edu.tr accessed on 12.12.2022). The establishment of EAHTRC corresponds to the 2nd standard "having an innovative mission and vision"; the 3rd standard "having sufficient infrastructure and equipment in line with the updated needs"; the 4th standard "quality of scientific research"; the 5th standard "having branding features, having an international reputation"; the 8th standard "having information and technology". "high level of use of information and technology"; 11th standard "having R&D institutions"; 12th standard "the management system is constantly renewing itself in line with the needs of the university"; 23rd standard "scientific studies carried out at the university can create value (social, cultural, economic)".

14. EASTERN ANATOLIA OBSERVATORY PROJECT

It is aimed with the Eastern Anatolian Observatory (EAO) to train the manpower Turkey needs in space sciences and technologies, to have Turkey's first and largest scale telescope, to serve space research of national strategic importance, to cooperate with organizations such as ERA, VO, ESA and NASA, and to serve space research of national strategic importance (http://dag-tr.org accessed on 15.12.2022). The establishment of an observatory is based on the 2nd standard of "having an innovative mission and vision"; the 3rd standard of "having adequate infrastructure and equipment in line with the updated needs"; the 4th standard of "having scientific research quality"; the 5th standard of "having branding features, having an international reputation"; and the 8th standard of "having IT and technology". "high level of use of information and technology"; 11th standard "having R&D institutions"; 12th standard "the management system is constantly renewing itself in line with the needs of the university"; 23rd standard "scientific studies carried out at the university can create value (social, cultural, economic)".

15. PARTICIPATION OF ATATÜRK UNIVERSITY IN THE 'GREEN UNIVERSITIES' LIST

According to the results of the UI GreenMetric World Universities Ranking Index 2022, which ranks world universities in 6 main categories "Building and Infrastructure, Energy and Climate Change, Waste Management, Water Management, Transportation, and Education and Research", Atatürk University ranked 324th among 1050 world universities ranked 119 places higher than the previous year, and ranked 24th among 83 universities, 65 of which are public universities and 18 private universities in Turkey (www.atauni.edu.tr accessed on 23.11.2022). It is seen that Atatürk University, which is among the universities with environmental awareness, meets the 23rd standard in terms of new generation university standards, which is "scientific studies carried out at the university can create value (social, cultural, economic)".

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In this part of the study, the University is evaluated in terms of its compliance with the new generation university standards. In this evaluation, the numerical data of the changes that have

occurred since the project started in 2018 are discussed. These data were obtained from the internal evaluation reports of higher education institutions announced by THEQC every year. When NGUDTP was analyzed in the context of new generation university standards, the following results were reached.

In terms of the first standard, "Having a contemporary curriculum", the University is in the category of new generation universities. This evaluation is seen in the changes that have occurred since 2018, when the University started the project. When the first standard of the project is evaluated in parallel with THEQC data, it is seen that the number of international symposiums, congresses or artistic exhibitions increased from 15 in 2018 to 70 in 2022, and the number of social or industrial projects carried out by students increased from 92 in 2018 to 300 in 2022 (THEQC data table in Appendix 1). In terms of the first standard, it is possible to state that AU has the characteristics of a new generation university.

In terms of the standard "The number of internationally accredited faculties at the university is high", the 300% increase in program accreditation in the project, the start of program self-evaluation studies in all faculties, the elimination of the deficiencies identified in the course information packages and the increase in the diversity of resources in teaching are important developments. Considering the 2022 data together, it is seen that the University has the characteristics of a new generation university in terms of its educational mission. In the process of revision of the educational mission, Atatürk University consulted stakeholder opinions in order to clearly reveal the expectations from education and training activities. The results obtained from the stakeholder opinions revealed that the graduating students are theoretically adequate but lacking in practical aspects. For example, feedback from stakeholders includes that a graduated teacher candidate has the necessary knowledge but cannot transfer it to the classroom; a nurse cannot draw blood or use a needle. In response, the University established the Education Coordinatorship in order to meet the needs of the sector in the best way possible. The establishment of the coordinatorship is an indication that there are "defined processes used for program design and approval". The fact that the Education Coordinatorship works in cooperation with all stakeholders, collects information from the sector and analyzes the collected data is in compliance with the standards "Evidence of stakeholder participation in program design processes and Evidence that the design and approval process of programs is monitored and improved". It can be said that the University has the characteristics of a new generation university because it makes plans and practices by taking stakeholder participation into account in its coordination activities.

As a result of the feedback received by the coordinatorship, it was determined that especially laboratory and practical course hours should be increased. In parallel with this problem, program update studies were carried out, the number of courses was reduced within the framework of the legislation of HEC, and more practical courses were integrated into the program. A total of 266 associate and undergraduate programs were updated at Atatürk University in 2022. The information load in the programs was reduced with a 6-month study and a minimum of 25% elective courses were introduced to each program. A minimum of 2, maximum 4 elective courses were added to associate degree programs, and a minimum of 4, maximum 6 elective courses that can be considered as social and cultural activities were added to undergraduate programs. For international students, both vocational courses and courses that can improve their social and cultural skills have been added. By reducing the course load, students have more time for social and cultural activities, research, project development, social awareness and participation in social responsibility activities. This change in course load has also given faculty members the time they need to develop themselves. Considering this situation in the context of the new generation university, it is seen that it complies with the standard "Evidence that the design and approval process of programs is monitored and improved". In this respect, program improvement activities add new generation university characteristics to the University. In addition, with the arrangements made in the educational mission of the University (Teaching and Learning Development Application and Research Center activities), all necessary

trainings are provided to support all kinds of pedagogical training, to make faculty members aware of different teaching methods and techniques in both distance education and formal education, and to provide the necessary training to all academic staff by exploring the world in digital transformation. This center also carries out very important activities in terms of its educational mission. In terms of the standards "the university renews itself in line with current needs" and "has an innovative mission and vision", it is seen that AU has the characteristics of a new generation university.

Atatürk University has the characteristics of a new generation university in accordance with the standards that emphasize its educational mission. However, the lack of program monitoring and updating practices in all faculties, the lack of graduate monitoring systems or the fact that not enough graduates are enrolled in the system due to the voluntary registration of graduates, and as a result of this, the system cannot be used effectively and efficiently, different teaching methods and techniques are not used in all faculties, there are still faculty members who teach with traditional methods, there are faculties with no accredited programs, there are no peer evaluation practices, and education, research and social contribution processes are not structured in relation to each other are the points that are open to improvement in the educational mission.

As a location preference, AU integrates the functions of education, research and social contribution within the framework of its new generation university vision. With this integration, it envisages to create a multiplier effect in the three mission areas, to ensure the integration of the outputs obtained from education and research policies into society, and to serve the people, nature and cultural assets in its sphere of influence. The institution has a social contribution policy, goals and strategy, which expresses the principles, priorities and preferences in managing its resources in social contribution activities.

In the category of contribution to society and social responsibility main mission, there are indicators such as social responsibility projects, vocational training activities, career center activities, cooperation with public institutions, and monitoring and evaluation of activities for disadvantaged individuals (University Monitoring and Evaluation Report, 2022). The changes and indicators at AU over the years are presented in Annex. 5. One of these indicators, "increasing the number of social responsibility projects", is the first goal in the new generation university policies that AU prioritizes for its social contribution mission area. It is seen that this number was only 3 in 2018, when the project started, and increased to 473 in 2021. In terms of the standard "scientific studies carried out at the university can create value (social, cultural, economic)", the number of certificates issued by the Continuing Education Center (SEM) and Language Center (DİLMER) for vocational training increased from 1544 to 4336, and the number of projects carried out with other public institutions increased from 21 to 130. In the evaluation of the social contribution mission, there have been very good improvements in this mission thanks to the existence of defined processes and practices for the social contribution strategy and goals. In particular, the increase in social sensitivity projects, the consideration of social benefit in determining research fields and turning outputs into products are important developments towards becoming a new generation university. According to the University Monitoring and Evaluation Report published by HEC in 2022, the university ranked third among universities in Turkey in terms of the number of social responsibility projects. This is an indication of a significant achievement in the mission of social contribution. In this respect, AU has the characteristics of a new generation university. On the other hand, the fact that the results of the monitoring of social contribution processes are not sufficiently evaluated and improvements are limited, and the limited use of information management systems for monitoring performance indicators are the aspects of the project that need to be improved in terms of this mission area.

Another new generation university standard is "having a career development center". It is seen that the number of activities carried out for students and graduates within the scope of AU's Career Center activities has increased from 32 to 422. According to the University Monitoring and Evaluation

Report (2022) announced by HEC, Atatürk University ranks 5th in Turkey in terms of Career Center activities. The university has a new generation university feature in terms of this standard.

Considering the project in terms of "having new generation libraries", the number of printed books per student in the university library is 2,925 in 2018, while this number is 3,289 in 2022. The number of electronic publications per student in the university library was 2,607 in 2018 and 6,1805 in 2022. Due to the steady increase in the number of books over the years and the opening of the new library building, it can be said that the diversity of learning resources has increased in terms of the educational mission. In this respect, it is a University that has the characteristics of a new generation university.

As a result of the examination of the standards of "having an innovative leader who is compatible with change, the management system is constantly renewing itself in line with the needs of the university, transparent management", process management mechanisms in Atatürk University institutions are monitored and evaluated and improved together with the relevant stakeholders, and defined processes are managed throughout the institution. In addition, the processes and criteria for the appointment, promotion and assignment of academic staff at the University have been determined and are open to the public. In this respect, AU is in the new generation university category. In the interviews, it was stated that the University has adopted a transparent management approach. There are 2 steps to transparent and participatory management at AU. The first step is mission-based management and each manager fulfills the tasks defined according to the missions. The second step is to manage the University collaboratively. At this point, the AU model is recognized as a "governance model" rather than "management". This is because in this system there are 14 boards called mini senates, which are affiliated to 7 different regions. The boards include representatives from many departments, including students. The main goal here is to have these committees evaluate the idea before it comes to the senate. This governance model aims to ensure both participation and transparency, with ideas coming from the grassroots of the University. In addition, performance data is shared with everyone in a transparent manner. Who produces what in which faculty is announced on the University's web page. With these practices, which are an important indicator of transparency, AU can be seen as a new generation university.

In terms of the standard of "conducting studies to encourage different faculties to cooperate", AU is focusing on the integration of the Faculty of Health Sciences and the Faculty of Engineering with the "Hospital, Engineering and Technology Collaboration Project". It is seen that the university has a potential in health sciences as it has the University Hospital, which serves both the city and the region. For this reason, it is aimed to carry out interdisciplinary studies by combining its existing experience in health sciences with engineering and advanced technologies. The University plans to determine the materials, devices and materials needed especially by healthcare professionals and to convey them to the Faculty of Engineering and to produce patented products in line with these needs. In terms of this standard, the University has the characteristics of a new generation university.

In terms of the standard of "academic freedom", it is seen from the interviews held in the project that the University has not reached the desired level in this regard. It was reported that there are problems such as academics being asked to work and conduct research in certain fields and that studies outside these fields cannot receive incentives. Atatürk University has left room for improvement in terms of this standard.

According to the standard of "having international mobility", the effects of the project on the internationalization dimension indicate that the objectives set in this mission area have not been fully achieved. For example, the University has developed, monitored and adopted approaches to improve its performance in the areas of student and staff mobility, number of foreign students, increasing cooperation protocols with qualified educational and research institutions in its strategic plans for internationalization. It is seen that the number of academic staff coming within the scope of

international exchange programs increased from 19 to 43, but this number decreased to 4 in 2020 due to the pandemic (Appendix 1). In 2021, it increased again to 12, which is a positive indicator, but considering the starting point, it can be considered as a serious decrease. Again, it is seen that while the number of academic staff sent within the scope of international exchange programs was 42 in 2018, the number decreased to 17 in 2021. The number of students coming within the scope of international exchange programs increased from 59 to 72 and decreased to 3 in 2021. It is seen that the number of foreign doctoral academic staff at the university decreased from 24 to 3 in 2018. In addition, when the number of students sent within the scope of international exchange programs is examined, a similar result emerges; It is seen that the number of 231 in 2018 decreased to 38 in 2021. In the internationalization dimension, THEQC data shows that the University is generally in a decline. There are two results that can be evaluated positively; these are the number of foreign students at the University, which has been steadily increasing over the years, and the number of projects based on international funds received by the University faculty. Although the number of foreign students at AU is high in general, it is seen that most of these students come from countries such as Syria, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia, not from the West. In this context, it is seen that the standard of "Having a multicultural cosmopolitan structure, the number of international students studying at the University and the number of international faculty members working at the University" is not fully met.

The goals of Atatürk University for internationalization can be listed as the implementation of the curriculum based on international creative learning models and methodologies in all faculties and departments, and the internationalization of curricula, and the opening of English programs throughout the University. The foreign language project was interrupted due to the pandemic. This situation also negatively affected the internationalization goals. Therefore, the failure to meet the standard of "speaking a foreign language effectively" has left an important step missing on the way to becoming a new generation. In addition, since there is not enough data on attracting foreign students from all over the world, it has not met the expectations of the new generation university in terms of the standards of "having the best teaching staff" and "having the best researchers/students". As a result, the reasons for falling behind in internationalization targets can be listed as the inability to conduct qualified international research, the inability to attract enough qualified students in student mobility, and the lack of sufficient progress in attracting internationally renowned faculty members to the institution. The university is working on some solution proposals as of 2023 in order not to fall behind the set targets. These include increasing the number of international graduate students by 10%, opening at least one English-language graduate program in each institute, and expanding the "B1 level English proficiency" requirement for PhD students and making it a requirement for all master's students. It is thought that these solution proposals will contribute to the internationalization strategies identified in the project.

With the internationalization of universities, digital transformation has become the first priority of universities all over the world. For this reason, digital transformation is an inevitable process in today's world where the world is evolving towards digital universities and paradigmatic changes are taking place in education (Ataş & Gündüz, 2019; Bozkurt et al., 2021; Gümüşoğlu, 2017). In order for digital transformation to be carried out effectively in higher education institutions, it is necessary to carry out studies in line with various digital capabilities, measure and evaluate digitalization, and determine the maturity level of the institution. For digital transformation, universities should innovate and create their own strategies by transforming their data into assets. In addition, for the effective use of resources, the physical inventories of the institution should be managed through information technologies, and all collected data should be transformed into meaningful information and adapted to decision-making processes (Tecim, Aydın, Tarhan, Aşan, & Komesli, 2022). In this competitive environment where digital skills are becoming increasingly important, it is seen that the University has gained an important place for itself at the point of internationalization in the digitalization race with the digital transformation project that won Atatürk University an award. The University, which meets

the standards of "using information and technology at a high level" and "having an adequate infrastructure system for data storage, management and use", is a new generation university in terms of its achievements in the digitalization process.

It is seen that the university meets the 24th standard "adequacy of accessibility services for students with special needs" and the sub-indicators "monitoring and improvement evidence of barrier-free university practices", "mechanisms for disadvantaged groups and special types of measurement such as online exams" in the context of next generation university standards. The number of activities related to social integration and inclusion for disadvantaged groups increased from four to 64, and the number of Barrier-Free University Award, Barrier-Free Flag Award, Barrier-Free Program Order and Disability-Friendly Award received by the University increased from zero to four..

Atatürk University aims to ensure that disabled students complete their education and training processes in a healthy, unhindered, independent, social and successful manner. For this reason, the University has established a "Disabled Student Unit" within the University in order to identify problems, plan and implement solutions, evaluate the results, take necessary measures and make arrangements in order to identify and eliminate their needs in terms of structuring the administrative, physical and academic environment in ideal standards in line with their special conditions and differences. AU is a new generation university in terms of the standard of "scientific studies carried out at the university can create value (social, cultural, economic)" in the project.

The university has the infrastructure (elevators, wheelchair ramps, lane paths, etc.) that all disabled students can easily continue their education and training. Disabled students are also provided with facilities such as ergonomic design of physical spaces and the installation of elevator systems outside the building in old buildings. The requests of disabled students enrolled in university programs who certify that they are disabled are determined and fulfilled for exams. Depending on these requests, a reader and marker are assigned for visually impaired students, and a marker is assigned to disabled students who cannot use their hands or have difficulty in using their hands. For students with orthopedic disabilities, places with ramps, elevators or the ground floors of buildings are allocated as examination places. This is an indication that it is a new generation university in terms of the criterion of "having sufficient infrastructure and equipment in line with the updated needs". In addition, visual and symbolic questions identified in the exams of visually impaired students are excluded from the assessment and evaluation processes and these students are exempted from the relevant questions. The material fee and contribution fee transactions of students enrolled in the ongoing programs at the University, who document that they have a 40% disability with a disability health report, are also carried out within the scope of the relevant legislation provisions.

The University aims to become an internationally recognized institution by blending its "research" mission with education and social contribution. In order for the university to become internationally renowned or a brand, the research conducted within the university is expected to make a measurable contribution at regional, national and international levels. In this way, the targeted international rise will be possible. Increasing international resources is possible with the capacity to conduct qualified research at the international level. In order for these goals to be realized, the knowledge produced must be transformed into products, that is, academic knowledge must meet with industry. In the context of the research mission area of the project, it is seen that Atatürk University has made serious progress in terms of the standards of "having a Technopark, having R&D organizations, university - industry relationship". The University has been selected as a research university by keeping the objectives in this area up to date and rigorous. The presence of defined processes and monitoring mechanisms for research strategy and objectives has a great impact on this success. In addition, positive developments such as the redesign of the University's research management system, efforts to increase the adequacy of research infrastructure, open access and open science studies, restructuring of research budget monitoring and management processes,

updating research results/outputs dissemination and dissemination policies, revising the researcher appointment and promotion strategy in line with the University's research policies, restructuring the reward and incentive system in this direction, and finally re-entering the entrepreneurial and innovative university index have also taken place. With these innovations, the University has the characteristics of a new generation university.

The research mission field is a very important mission field for Turkey to increase and strengthen its academic and innovation performance and to achieve its goal of becoming one of the countries with major economies in the world. THEQC data on Atatürk University's "Research-Development, Project and Publication" reveals the changes that have occurred in the institution in the research mission of the project. Based on THEQC (2018-2021) data, it is seen that the number of patents, utility models or designs applied for in the project in terms of research mission has increased from 32 to 66; the number of patents, utility models or designs finalized has increased from 2 to 13; the number of publications cited in the top 10% has increased from 304 to 611; the number of HEC, Turkish Academy of Sciences, TÜBİTAK science, incentive and art awards has increased from zero to 2; the number of national and international research scholarships awarded by TÜBİTAK to students and academic staff has increased from 33 to 220. In addition, the number of national and international support programs provided by TÜBİTAK to students and academic staff increased from 66 to 153 and the number of R&D projects supported by national and international private or public institutions and organizations increased from 74 to 168. The increase is at least two and at most 6-fold in most research fields. Finally, the number of students participating in Technopark or Technology Transfer Office (TTO) projects increased from 61 to 354, indicating that students are assuming their role in projects (Appendix 1). The rise of Atatürk University in the research mission area is quite good. The university has new generation characteristics in this context. However, the limited use of information management systems for monitoring performance indicators, the limited use of information management systems for monitoring performance indicators, and the limited use of practices for developing research competence are the points that need to be improved in the research mission of the project.

As a result, it is seen that the overall improvement areas of NGUDTP in education are as follows: an increase of more than 300 percent in program accreditation, widespread use of program self-evaluation studies, elimination of deficiencies in course information packages, and increasing the diversity of learning resources. The aspects of the project that are open to improvement in terms of the educational mission can be listed as follows: limited program monitoring and updating practices, lack of graduate monitoring systems or inability to obtain effective and efficient results, lack of dissemination of different teaching methods and techniques, the existence of faculties without accredited programs, lack of peer evaluation practices, lack of structuring education, research and social contribution processes in relation to each other. The areas of improvement in terms of the research mission of NGUDTP are the existence of defined processes and practices for research strategy and objectives, and the establishment of monitoring mechanisms for research processes. On the other hand, areas open for improvement are: insufficient evaluation of the results for monitoring research processes and limited improvements, limited use of information management systems for monitoring performance indicators, and limited practices for developing research competence. The area of improvement for the social contribution mission area of the project is that there are defined processes and practices for the social contribution strategy and goals. On the other hand, the areas open for improvement are the limited use of information management systems for monitoring performance indicators and the limited use of information management systems for monitoring performance indicators.

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APPENDIX 1. Atatürk University Internal Evaluation Reports by THEQC

ARAŞTIRMA

YÖKAK Atatürk Üniversitesi Kurum İçi Değerlendirme Raporları (2018-2021) Kurum iç değerlendirme raporu, https://yokak.gov.tr/raporlar/kurum-ici-degerlendirme-raporlari

KRİTERLER	Sayı-Oran-Yıl 2018	Sayı-Oran-Yıl 2019	Sayı-Oran Yıl 2020	Sayı-Oran Yıl 2021
Araştırma-Geliştirme, Proje ve Yayın				
Ulusal hakemli dergilerde yayımlanmış öğretim elemanı başına düşen yayın sayısı	0,0966	0,141	0,257	0,27093
SCI, SCI-Expanded, SSCI, AHCI ve ESCI endeksli dergilerde yayımlanmış öğretim elemanı başına düşen yayın sayısı	0,3529	0,396	0,482	0,52389
Üniversite adresli bilimsel yayınlara açık erişim oranı	%45,10	%49,86	%56,44	%57,46
Başvurulan patent, faydalı model veya tasarım sayısı	32	57	66	63
Sonuçlanan patent, faydalı model veya tasarım sayısı	2	3	11	13
En yüksek %10'luk dilimde atıf alan yayın sayısı	304	461	561	611
YÖK, Türkiye Bilimler Akademisi, TÜBİTAK bilim, teşvik ve sanat ödülleri sayısı	0	0	2	1
TÜBİTAK tarafından öğrenci ve öğretim elemanlarına verilen ulusal ve uluslararası araştırma bursu sayısı	33	104	90	220
TÜBİTAK tarafından öğrenci ve öğretim elemanlarına verilen ulusal ve uluslararası destek programı sayısı	66	120	141	153
Ulusal ve uluslararası özel veya resmi kurum ve kuruluşlar tarafından desteklenmiş Ar-Ge niteliği taşıyan proje sayısı	74	30	66	168
Üniversitenin Times Higher Education'a göre bölgesel sıralaması				301,35
Üniversitenin Times Higher Education'a (THE) göre ulusal sıralaması				12

EĞİTİM VE ÖĞRETİM

YÖKAK Atatürk Üniversitesi Kurum İçi Değerlendirme Raporları (2018-2021) (Kurum iç değerlendirme raporu, https://yokak.gov.tr/raporlar/kurum-ici-degerlendirme-raporlari)

KRİTERLER	Sayı-Oran-Yıl 2018	Sayı-Oran-Yıl 2019	Sayı-Oran-Yıl 2020	Sayı-Oran-Yıl 2021
Eğitim ve Öğretim				
Mezun olan doktora öğrenci sayısı	293	256	267	202
Kamu Personel Seçme Sınavlarında (KPSS) üniversitenizin ilk %10'a giren ilk beş programı ve bu programların kendi içindeki sıralaması	5	3	6	3
Akademik Personel ve Lisansüstü Eğitimi Giriş Sınavlarında (ALES) üniversitenizin ilk %10'a giren ilk beş programı ve bu programların kendi içindeki sıralaması	3	5	4	3
Uluslararası sempozyum, kongre veya sanatsal sergi sayısı	15	27	24	70
Öğrencilerin yaptığı sosyal veya endüstriyel proje sayısı	92	300	157	164
Teknokent veya Teknoloji Transfer Ofisi (TTO) projelerine katılan öğrenci sayısı	61	314	291	354
Üniversitenin bölüm ve programlarındaki genel doluluk oranı	%92,35	%92,06	%94,3	%97,1
Erişilebilen ders bilgi paketi oranı	%71,27	%92,0	%91,4	%100
Öğrencilerin kayıtlı oldukları program dışındaki diğer programlardan alabildikleri ortalama seçmeli ders oranı	%6,21	%2,54	%32,4	%32,49
Yükseköğretim Kurumları Sınavı (YKS) kılavuzunda akredite olduğu belirtilen lisans programı sayısı	6	7	6	12
Üniversite kütüphanesinde öğrenci başına düşen basılı kitap sayısı	2,925	3,24	3,32	3,289
Üniversite kütüphanesinde öğrenci başına düşen elektronik yayın sayısı	2,607	3,4	5,03	6,1805

TOPLUMSAL KATKI

YÖKAK Atatürk Üniversitesi Kurum İçi Değerlendirme Raporları (2018-2021) Kurum iç değerlendirme raporu, https://yokak.gov.tr/raporlar/kurum-ici-degerlendirme-raporlari

KRİTERLER	Sayı-Yıl 2018	Sayı-Yıl 2019	Sayı-Yıl 2020	Sayı-Yıl 2021
Topluma Hizmet ve Sosyal Sorumluluk				
Sosyal sorumluluk projesi sayısı	3	475	418	473
Sürekli Eğitim Merkezi (SEM) ve Dil Merkezi (DİLMER) tarafından mesleki eğitime yönelik verilen sertifika sayısı	1544	646	1179	4336
Kariyer Merkezi çalışmaları kapsamında öğrenci ve mezunlara yönelik gerçekleştirilen faaliyet sayısı	32	85	296	422
Diğer kamu kurumları ile birlikte yürütülen proje sayısı	21	9	67	130
Dezavantajlı gruplara yönelik sosyal entegrasyon ve kapsayıcılığa ilişkin yapılan faaliyet sayısı	4	34	44	64
Üniversitenin aldığı Engelsiz Üniversite Ödülü, Engelsiz Bayrak Ödülü, Engelsiz Program ve Engelli Dostu Ödülü sayısı	0	0	1	4
Üniversitenin yeşil, çevreci üniversite endeksindeki sıralaması	476	574	685	443

ULUSLARARASILAŞMA

YÖKAK Atatürk Üniversitesi Kurum İçi Değerlendirme Raporları (2018-2021) Kurum iç değerlendirme raporu, https://yokak.gov.tr/raporlar/kurum-ici-degerlendirme-raporlari

KRİTERLER	Sayı-Yıl 2018	Sayı-Yıl 2019	Sayı-Yıl 2020	Sayı-Yıl 2021
Uluslararasılaşma				
Üniversitedeki yabancı uyruklu doktoralı öğretim elemanı sayısı	24	24	2	3
Üniversitedeki yabancı uyruklu öğrenci sayısı	3662	2699	3301	4737
Uluslararası değişim programları kapsamında gelen öğretim elemanı sayısı	19	43	4	12
Uluslararası değişim programları kapsamında gönderilen öğretim elemanı sayısı	42	38	3	17
Uluslararası değişim programları kapsamında gelen öğrenci sayısı	59	27	72	3
Uluslararası değişim programları kapsamında gönderilen öğrenci sayısı	231	107	176	38
Üniversite öğretim elemanlarının aldığı uluslararası fonlara dayalı proje sayısı	12	13	15	42