THEQC
ICQAA 2026

2nd INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION

Conference Abstracts and Full Proceedings Book

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SEPTEMBER 14-15, 2026, İSTANBUL, TÜRKİYE

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FOREWORD

Quality assurance in higher education is one of the fundamental elements of institutional development, sustainable success, and international competitiveness. Today, as digital transformation and artificial intelligence technologies reshape all processes of higher education, developing quality assurance systems with an approach that guides this change, supports innovation, and bases itself on continuous improvement carries strategic importance.

The Turkish Higher Education Quality Council (THEQC) regards the internalisation of a quality culture in the Turkish higher education system, the strengthening of institutional quality assurance mechanisms, and the dissemination of information and experience sharing at the international level as among its key priorities. In line with this, we held the 2nd THEQC International Conference on Quality Assurance and Accreditation (ICQAA'26), hosted by Yıldız Technical University, in İstanbul on 14-15 September 2026, under the theme "Quality Assurance Systems and Artificial Intelligence in the Process of Digital Transformation."

Our conference, which attracted considerable national and international attention, brought together approximately 1,200 participants. A total of 313 paper applications were submitted to our conference, and following scientific evaluations, 247 papers were accepted for oral presentation. The 4 keynote speeches, 9 panels, and scientific sessions conducted simultaneously in 6 different halls within the scope of the conference provided a foundation for addressing the future of quality assurance in higher education, the opportunities offered by digital transformation, and the prospects and responsibilities brought by artificial intelligence in a multidimensional manner.

The international keynote speakers, Prof. Bjørn Stensaker, Prof. Daniela Cristina Ghițulică, Dr Nasser H. Paydar, and Prof. Jamil Salmi, made valuable contributions to the scientific and international quality of our conference with their evaluations on the future of quality assurance, digital transformation, artificial intelligence, and evolving approaches in higher education.

This book of proceedings includes a total of 193 scientific studies, comprising 74 paper abstracts and 119 full-text papers. I believe that this work, which transforms the scientific accumulation generated at our conference into lasting academic value, will make significant contributions to the development of quality assurance policies in higher education, the improvement of institutional practices, and the strengthening of international academic collaborations.

I would like to extend my gratitude to all our stakeholder institutions and organisations, particularly Yıldız Technical University for their valuable contributions to the success of our conference, as well as to our Organizing and Scientific Committees, invited speakers, panellists, researchers, reviewers, and colleagues who served with dedication.

I hope that this book of proceedings contributes to the reinforcement of quality culture in higher education, the advancement of scientific knowledge, and the future of our higher education, and I wish it to be beneficial to the academic community and all stakeholders.

Prof. Ümit KOCABIÇAK
President of the Turkish Higher Education Quality Council

FOREWORD

Universities are not merely institutions where knowledge is produced and transmitted; they are also centres of science where different ideas meet, new concepts develop, and the future is shaped together. International scientific meetings, on the other hand, offer significant opportunities for universities to share their academic experience, benefit from diverse perspectives, and develop lasting collaborations.

Drawing strength from its deep-rooted history exceeding a century, Yıldız Technical University attaches great importance to pioneering in the fields of science, technology, and innovation, and to contributing to the future of higher education through the knowledge we produce and the collaborations we build. With this understanding, we were honoured to host the 2nd THEQC International Conference on Quality Assurance and Accreditation (ICQAA'26), organised by the Turkish Higher Education Quality Council on 14-15 September 2026, on the historic Davutpaşa Campus.

The conference, conducted under the theme “Quality Assurance Systems and Artificial Intelligence in the Process of Digital Transformation,” enabled issues closely concerning the future of higher education to be addressed from an international perspective. Bringing together academics, researchers, and higher education representatives from different universities across Türkiye and various countries around the world in İstanbul was extremely valuable in terms of strengthening scientific interaction and developing a shared understanding.

The speeches, panels, and scientific sessions conducted on our campus over two days laid the groundwork for discussing current developments from different perspectives and establishing the foundations for new institutional collaborations. This book of proceedings is a valuable work that immortalises the academic output of the scientific gathering at Davutpaşa Campus and serves as a reference for future studies.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Presidency of the Turkish Higher Education Quality Council for leading this meaningful organisation, to all academics and researchers who contributed to the scientific program, and to our colleagues involved in the organisation. I also extend my special thanks to our academic and administrative staff who fulfilled our university's hosting responsibility with great dedication.

I wish that the scientific bonds established on the occasion of the conference continue to grow stronger, and I hope that this work contributes to new research, original ideas, and international academic collaborations.

Prof. Eyüp DEBİK
Rector of Yıldız Technical University

PREFACE

Quality assurance in higher education is one of the essential pillars of institutional development, sustainable success, and international cooperation. Today, as digital transformation and artificial intelligence technologies reshape higher education processes, developing quality assurance systems with innovative approaches and sharing best practices are of great importance.

With this understanding, the International Conference on Quality Assurance and Accreditation (ICQAA'26), organised by the Turkish Higher Education Quality Council (THEQC) on 14-15 September 2026 and hosted by Yıldız Technical University under the theme “Quality Assurance Systems and Artificial Intelligence in the Process of Digital Transformation,” hosted an important scientific gathering at both national and international levels.

At our conference, which gathered approximately 1,200 participants, the future of quality assurance in higher education, digital transformation, artificial intelligence, micro-credentials, and international accreditation approaches were addressed in various dimensions through 4 keynote speeches and 9 panels. The contributions of representatives from international quality assurance agencies strengthened the scientific quality and international interaction of our conference.

A total of 313 paper applications were submitted to our conference, and following scientific evaluations, 247 papers were accepted for oral presentation. The book of conference proceedings includes 193 scientific studies, consisting of 74 paper abstracts and 119 full-text papers. I believe these studies will provide significant contributions to the scientific knowledge and future research in the field of quality assurance in higher education.

I sincerely thank the THEQC President for leading the successful organisation of our conference, the Rector of Yıldız Technical University for hosting the event and their support, our keynote speakers, panellists, Scientific and Organizing Committees, reviewers, all participants, and our dedicated organisation team for their valuable contributions.

I hope that ICQAA'26 reinforces international collaborations, contributes to the dissemination of a quality culture, and that this book of proceedings sheds light on future scientific endeavours.

Prof. Ramazan BAYINDIR
Chair of the ICQAA'26 Conference Organizing Committee

THE 2ND THEQC INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION

"Quality Assurance Systems and Artificial Intelligence in the Digital Transformation Process"

THE BOOK OF FULL-TEXT PAPERS AND ABSTRACTS

September 14–15, 2026, Istanbul, Türkiye

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ID: 173 - ICQAA-II - Oral Presentation

Reliability Analysis of an Academic Member Questionnaire Measuring Institutional Quality Culture in Postgraduate Education

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Abstract

Background: Quality assurance in higher education is a management vision shaped by academic leadership and transparent processes. This study aimed to develop an instrument to evaluate how health sciences faculty perceive institutional quality culture, administrative workflows, and the use of digital infrastructures in postgraduate education.
Methods: Following approval from the Dokuz Eylül University Non-Interventional Research Ethics Committee, we designed a 24-item questionnaire comprising 18 substantive questions and 6 demographic variables. The survey evaluates core quality parameters: administrative leadership, improvements based on the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle, transparency, data privacy, and the effectiveness of digital management systems for maintaining institutional memory and supporting decisions. The instrument was piloted with a representative sample of 30 participants, and the data were analyzed using SPSS Statistics 30.
Results: The reliability analysis revealed Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.930. This high level of internal consistency indicates that the proposed instrument is highly reliable for assessing faculty perceptions of quality in higher education settings.
Discussion: The questionnaire helps identify whether faculty view digital systems simply as bureaucratic record-keeping tools or as strategic frameworks for decision-making. Additionally, the items offer a structured approach to assessing the impact of administrative leadership, transparency, and institutional memory on academic staff.
Conclusion: With its strong internal consistency, this questionnaire can yield actionable data for PDCA-based institutional improvements. Ultimately, it offers a dependable means of gathering evidence to drive stakeholder-oriented, continuous improvement initiatives in postgraduate academic environments.

Keywords: Institutional culture, Quality assurance, Turkish Higher Education Quality Council (THEQC), Academic member.

INTRODUCTION and OBJECTIVE

Higher education, at its foundation, organizes the production and circulation of knowledge (Altbach, 2009; Özenç, 2024; Power, 2015). Universities pursue that goal through teaching, research, and—increasingly—direct engagement with the communities around them. In recent decades, however, global competition and shifting stakeholder expectations have been pushing institutions toward more transparent, quality-oriented operating models (Vaira, 2004).

How "quality" is to be understood in this context is itself a contested question. Yeşilbaş Özenç (Özenç, 2024) frames the concept as multidimensional. It can denote excellence in standardization, the internal coherence of operations, or the value an institution creates for the constituencies it serves. Quality assurance systems, in turn, are typically designed to optimize outcomes across teaching, research, and societal contribution. Earlier work by Harvey and Green (Harvey & Green, 1993), together with Cheng's (Cheng, 2007) reflections on institutional effectiveness, points to attributes such as fitness for purpose, excellence, and consistency—sometimes extended to the satisfaction of stakeholder expectations.

In Türkiye, the Higher Education Quality Council sits at the center of this architecture (Turkish Higher Education Quality Council (THEQC), 2019). THEQC accreditation pathways generally expect institutions to embed continuous improvement mechanisms (THEQC, 2025). In practice, those mechanisms tend to follow the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle, looping through both academic and administrative units.

Building a genuinely sustainable quality culture is, in our experience, seldom a matter of compliance alone. Ehlers (Ehlers, 2009) argues that such a culture depends on the convergence of human participation, trust, and communication—conditions that policy documents on their own rarely generate. Active stakeholder involvement, effective administrative leadership, and long-term strategic planning all appear to contribute, although their relative weight is still debated. The structural conditions into which reform efforts land further shape how, and whether, a quality culture actually takes root.

Electronic Document Management Systems and Information Management Systems are routinely positioned as central instruments for sustaining institutional memory and ensuring data transparency (Aktan, 2010; THEQC, 2021; THEQC, 2025). Whether they actually live up to that role depends, however, on where they sit inside the institution. They may function primarily as bureaucratic record-keeping tools—paper trails in digital form—or, when strategically embedded, as genuine decision-support systems for academic leadership. In other words, their effectiveness tends to reflect the institutional culture that surrounds them.

Student engagement is often cited as a marker of institutional maturity (Akkoyunlu et al., 2020; Avşaroğlu Erkan et al., 2021). Adequate student guidance—particularly around career planning, ethical standards, and academic development—can function as a meaningful indicator of educational quality (Bardakçı et al., 2021; THEQC, 2025). Aligning the institute's societal contribution policies with its strategic priorities, as discussed by Uludağ et al. (Uludağ et al., 2021) and in the THEQC's Health Sciences Institute guidance (Yükseköğretim Kalite Kurulu, 2021), tends to shape how postgraduate programs position themselves externally, often by translating research output into tangible public benefit.

Despite the centrality of the theme, empirical work on quality culture in higher education remains comparatively limited (Skolnik, 2010; Bendermacher et al., 2017). In Türkiye, the literature still leans heavily on institutional evaluation reports and self-assessment documents. Scale-based instruments that examine faculty perceptions are, by comparison, scarce, and questionnaire-validation studies in postgraduate settings are even rarer.

Postgraduate education is shaped by intensive research activity, close supervisor–candidate relationships, and a heavy administrative load that does not always coexist comfortably with research time. Sustaining a quality culture in this setting demands more than formal policy, in our view; it depends on active faculty engagement and the strategic use of digital infrastructure. This methodological study was therefore designed to develop an original measurement instrument for health sciences faculty. The questionnaire aims to generate evidence-based information on quality culture, administrative processes, transparency, and the role of digital systems such as EDMS and IMS within postgraduate education.

MATERIAL and METHODS

This study is designed as methodological research aiming to develop an original measurement tool to evaluate institutional quality perception in postgraduate education processes at higher education institutions.

Research Design

Institutional permission was obtained from the Dokuz Eylül University Institute of Health Sciences on April 6, 2026. Ethics committee approval was granted by the Dokuz Eylül University Non-Interventional Research Ethics Committee on April 20, 2026, with the decision number DEÜ 10849-GOA 2026/16-10. To measure faculty members' experiences and perceptions regarding institutional quality culture, a questionnaire form consisting of 24 questions in total was developed—6 addressing demographic characteristics and 18 addressing attitudes and perceptions. The data collection tool was uniquely designed by the researchers by reviewing national (THEQC) quality assurance standards, institutional accreditation criteria, and the relevant literature.

The questionnaire is structured around core dimensions:

1. Institutional Leadership and Strategic Alignment
    - Measures the perceived leadership effectiveness of the institute management in creating a quality culture.
    - Assesses the perceived alignment level of the institute's societal contribution policy with strategic goals.
2. Information Systems (EDMS/IMS) Performance and Infrastructure The questionnaire form consists of two main sections:
    - **Demographic Characteristics (6 Questions):** Designed to determine the descriptive characteristics of the participants, including the variables of "Age," "Gender," "Title," "Department/Location of Position," "Total Years of Service," and "Years of Service in Current Institution."

- **Quality Culture and Quality Perception Scale (18 Questions):** Consists of items rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1: Strongly Disagree – 5: Strongly Agree), aiming to measure the attitudes and perceptions of faculty members toward institutional quality processes.

3. Based on the literature review, THEQC Institutional External Evaluation Criteria, and the THEQC Rubric, the questionnaire evaluates the perceptions and satisfaction levels of academicians working at the institute regarding:

   - The general satisfaction of academic personnel with the EDMS/IMS infrastructure.
   - The perceived level of integration and harmonious operation among different information systems.
   - The apparent performance of the EDMS in accelerating correspondence speed and reducing bureaucracy/time loss.
   - The potential of the EDMS/IMS to facilitate academic interaction and transparency in approval mechanisms.
   - The perceived problem-solving speed and feedback quality of IT / EDMS support units.
   - The user-friendliness and accessibility of information system interfaces.

4. Transparency, Governance, and Institutional Memory

   - Measures the perceived ease of accessing qualified data/documents from the EDMS archive as an institutional memory.
   - Evaluates the apparent transparent sharing of the organizational chart and job descriptions.
   - Assesses the level of transparent announcement of board decisions and quality practices via the EDMS.
   - Measures the degree to which management is perceived to take the requests/complaints of academic personnel into consideration.
   - Evaluates the perception of user feedback transforming into improvements within the scope of the PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) cycle.

5. Digital Transformation, Security, and Decision Support Systems

   - Measures the perceived level of paperless/physical document-free digital process management in academic and administrative processes.
   - Evaluates the apparent ease of remote access to systems from off-campus and different devices.
   - Assesses trust in the systems regarding Personal Data Protection (KVKK) data privacy, cybersecurity infrastructure, and information security adequacy.
   - Measures the awareness/effectiveness of using EDMS/IMS not merely as an archive, but strategically as a potential Decision Support System (DSS) in administrative processes.

Implementation and Data Analysis

The target population of the research consists of faculty members who teach and supervise theses at the postgraduate level (master's and doctorate) within the Dokuz Eylül University Institute of Health Sciences. To test its structural comprehensibility and linguistic appropriateness, the developed questionnaire was first administered to a pilot group of 10 individuals. During this preliminary application, the following were evaluated:

- Are the questionnaire questions generally understood, and are the expected answers received?
- Are the questions sufficient, is anything missing, or are there unnecessary questions?
- Are unexpected answers received for closed-ended questions, and at what rate?
- Are there any questions that might make individuals uncomfortable, force them, or lead them?
- How much time does it typically take to administer and complete the questionnaire?

By evaluating the responses received in the pilot application, it was tested whether the intended data could be reasonably collected. Necessary revisions were made based on feedback, and the study proceeded to determine the validity-reliability coefficient.

To conduct validity and reliability analysis, considering the minimum sample size recommended for pilot studies to evaluate questionnaire reliability, it was administered to a group of 30 individuals sharing similar characteristics with the target audience (Bujang et al., 2024). Participants were informed about the research, and the principle of voluntariness was observed. The obtained data were transferred to a computer environment and analyzed using the SPSS statistical program, and the Cronbach's Alpha (α) coefficient was calculated to measure the internal consistency of the questionnaire.

RESULTS

The 24-item questionnaire, comprising six demographic and 18 scale items, was assessed for reliability. This analysis yielded a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.930. Such a value suggests a high degree of internal consistency. In psychometric evaluations, coefficients above 0.80 are generally characterized as highly reliable. Thus, the result of 0.930 indicates that the instrument may demonstrate significant stability in capturing faculty evaluations. These findings imply that the scale items align with the intended objectives. The questionnaire might therefore be viewed as a scientifically sound tool for assessing quality perceptions in postgraduate education.

DISCUSSION

Quantifying quality culture in higher education rarely comes without methodological friction. The difficulties typically begin with a relative scarcity of validated instruments tailored to specific institutional contexts. Hildesheim and Sonntag (Hildesheim & Sonntag, 2019) developed the Quality Culture Inventory with that gap in mind. Their scale conceptualizes quality culture through six core dimensions—quality-oriented commitment, leadership behavior, communication, internalization of quality, leadership expectations, and participation. In subsequent applications, the QCI has demonstrated how multidimensional operationalization can move the discussion of "quality culture" beyond abstract declarations.

Within the Turkish setting, Bahat and Karakütük (Bahat & Karakütük, 2023) earlier put forward one of the few scale-based efforts to evaluate quality indicators from the faculty's own vantage point. Their instrument foregrounded factors such as the structure of educational processes, broad institutional characteristics, internationalization, student needs, and technological competence. Read together, those elements still constitute a fairly comprehensive evaluation framework for the field—yet they were developed primarily with undergraduate teaching in mind.

The present study introduces a questionnaire tailored to postgraduate faculty and thesis supervisors operating within a health sciences institute. We deliberately narrowed the scope so that dimensions unique to postgraduate education—supervisor load, thesis tracking, intensive research workflows—could surface more clearly in respondents' answers. That narrower focus, we suspect, also helps the scale generate more systematic evidence on how faculty perceive institutional quality culture in this specific academic setting. The work was carried out at the Dokuz Eylül University Institute of Health Sciences, with the longer-term aim of producing a tool suitable for routine field use.

The questionnaire deliberately departs from conventional evaluative methods. Rather than asking faculty to rate abstract institutional attributes, it foregrounds the perceived value of digital systems such as the EDMS and IMS—and does so from the faculty perspective rather than the administrator's. Preliminary analysis of the 24-item instrument (n = 30) yielded a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.930. That value suggests the questionnaire may offer a consistent means of measurement, and appears capable of capturing relatively complex constructs such as institutional transparency and the practical utility of digital tools. In psychometric terms, a coefficient comfortably above the 0.80 threshold for high reliability is, in our reading, a meaningful signal at the pilot stage.

Looking at the items more closely, the questionnaire is structured to assess perceptions of institutional memory, transparency in administrative decisions, and sensitivity to data security. The conceptual framework draws on core managerial perspectives—leadership behavior and the PDCA cycle—examined alongside information security and the strategic integration of EDMS/IMS. That combination, we believe, reflects how academic staff actually experience quality processes: rarely through any single channel, and almost always as a layered interaction between leadership, infrastructure, and workflow design.

Digital systems are commonly recognized for their strategic significance in preserving institutional memory (Yıldırım, 2025). The questionnaire accordingly seeks to evaluate academic satisfaction and trust across several domains, ranging from paperless office practices to perceptions of cybersecurity. Practical experience in our institute suggests these two concerns—document flow and data security—are often discussed separately in policy documents, even though faculty encounter them together during daily work. The scale has the potential to clarify how digital tools are positioned within an institution: whether they function primarily as bureaucratic record-keeping mechanisms, or as strategic decision-support systems that actively shape managerial choices.

CONCLUSION

Through this methodological study, we developed and piloted a 24-item questionnaire designed to evaluate institutional quality culture within health sciences postgraduate education. Pilot results indicate satisfactory validity and reliability, and—in our reading—are sufficient to support further field application. The instrument is theoretically grounded in the broader quality assurance literature, and was constructed to assess faculty perceptions across four interrelated domains: institutional quality culture, administrative processes, transparency, and the strategic role of digital infrastructures such as EDMS and IMS.

The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.930 obtained during the pilot phase points to a high degree of internal consistency. Practically speaking, that value suggests the tool could lend itself well to the continuous improvement initiatives now expected of universities operating within the THEQC framework. The data generated through this questionnaire, we anticipate, will yield the evidence-based, stakeholder-oriented insights that higher education institutions typically need in order to design and refine their Plan-Do-Check-Act cycles. Looking ahead, the instrument may also help fill a methodological gap that postgraduate-specific, faculty-level measures have so far only partly addressed in the Turkish context.

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