

## **ANADOLU UNIVERSITY DISTANCE EDUCATION SYSTEM FROM EMERGENCE TO 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

**For human beings education is a tool to develop abilities and exploit opportunities in the society. By creating new possibilities in the field of education, democratizing the educational process, providing lifelong education opportunities, distance education is a strategic opportunity for nations in improving the educational services. Distance education is also strategic to the 21<sup>st</sup> century University. It provides students with access, independent of place and time, to learning programs, resources, and services, including interaction among faculty and students, through synchronous and asynchronous technologies.**

As a developing country with considerable economic and cultural potential, education is vitally important issue for Turkey. Parallel to the population growth, the demand for all types of education is increasing whereas the resources such as schools and teachers are limited and not possible to reach to adequate levels in short period of time. Therefore it seems quite difficult for Turkey to achieve an overall education level required by a modern society using conventional educational approaches and techniques. Anadolu University Open Education System is the major attempt in Turkey in integrating the distance education approaches with national education system. Since the involvement to distance education in 1982 as a dual university, the institution contributed more than 190 000 bachelor and pre-bachelor graduates to the country. Although considered as one of the mega universities of the world Anadolu University is also least known institution among the similar institutions.

### **INTRODUCTION**

**For human beings education is a tool to develop abilities and exploit opportunities in the society. By creating new possibilities in the field of education, democratizing the educational process, providing lifelong education opportunities, distance education is a strategic opportunity for nations in improving the educational services. Distance education is also strategic to the 21<sup>st</sup> century University. It provides students with access, independent of place and time, to learning programs, resources, and services, including interaction among faculty and students, through synchronous and asynchronous technologies.**

As a developing country with considerable economic and cultural potential, education is vitally important issue for Turkey. Parallel to the population growth, the demand for all types of education is increasing whereas the resources such as schools and teachers are limited and not possible to reach to adequate levels in short period of time. Therefore it seems quite difficult for Turkey to achieve an overall education level required by a modern society using conventional educational approaches and techniques.

Anadolu University Open Education System is the major attempt in Turkey in integrating the distance education approaches with national education system. Since the involvement to distance education in 1982 as a dual university, the institution contributed more than 190 000 bachelor and pre-bachelor graduates to the country. Although considered as one

of the mega universities of the world Anadolu University is also least known institution among the similar institutions.

## COUNTRY PROFILE

Turkey is a country linking Europe and Asia continents has the majority of the lands in Southwest Asia. The country has a total area of 780,58 sq.km. which is divided into 80 administrative provinces with a population of 63 million. Because of its geographical location, the mainland, Anatolia (Anadolu), has witnessed the mass migration of diverse peoples shaping the course of history. The home to countless civilizations, Anatolia has developed a unique synthesis of cultures, each with its own distinct identity, yet each linked to its predecessors through insoluble treads. After the end of the War of Independence started on May 19<sup>th</sup> of 1919, modern Turkish State is established by the proclamation of the Republic of Turkey on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1923 ending over six centuries of the reign of Ottoman Empire. The revolutionary reforms that Great Ataturk put into force during his presidency of fifteen years following the founding of Republic were aimed at transforming the country into a constitutional, modern state. These reforms including education laid the fundamentals of the new Republic.

The Republic has introduced universal principles of law to Turkey. In this context, the idea that all citizens are equal and free without any discrimination based on race, language, and religion, establishes the basis of the Republican Covenant, which ensures social unity. Secularism, which brings under guarantee the freedom of religion and belief; democracy, which enables citizens to express their thoughts freely and to participate in political process; and the rule of law, which makes it possible for them to live free from fear and oppression, are products of the social contract of the Republic. The constitutional democracy in Turkey is established on this sound basis.

As a developing country with a relatively young population, education has the utmost priority for Turkey. According to the 1997 census, the population increase rate is 1.47% and 35% of the population live in the metropolitan areas whereas the 65% in the rural areas. The schooling rates are 99.7% for primary school, 69.3 for middle school, 53.4% for high school and 22.4 % for higher education including open education. About 35% of the higher education population is in the Anadolu University distance education system. The Ministry of National Education is responsible for all educational services in the country excluding the higher education. The Council of Higher Education is the planning, coordinating and policy making body for higher education. Formal education includes pre-school education, basic education, secondary education, and higher education. Basic education, which is extended from 5 to 8-years in 1997, forms the foundation of national education system. It is compulsory for every Turkish citizen from the age of six to the age of fourteen, regardless of sex, and is free-of-charge in state schools. The secondary education system can broadly classify as General High Schools, and Vocational and Technical High Schools. Higher education is defined as all post-secondary programs with a duration of at least two years. The system consists of universities (53 states and 19 private) and non-university institutions of higher education (police and military academies and colleges). Each university consists of faculties and four-year schools, offering bachelor's level programs, and two year vocational schools offering pre-bachelor's (associate's) level programs of a strictly vocational nature.

## DISTANCE EDUCATION IN TURKEY

In the Turkish National Education System besides primary school level schooling rates are below the desired levels. The schooling rates in the secondary education are low but the extension of the basic education from 5 years to 8 years is an attempt to solve the problem. On the other hand the bottleneck in front of the universities makes the problem more severe. Admission to higher education is very competitive and based on a nationwide examination administered by the Student Selection and Placement Center (OSYM) every year. In the beginning of 1998-1999 academic years around 1 400 000 high school

graduates took the test and only 280 000 of them are expected to be admitted to conventional higher education institutions. These characteristics of the educational system with the impossibility of increasing capacity of conventional schools in short time and the need for efficient use of human resources (teaching staff) make distance teaching a very rational alternative to increase an overall education level.

Although, the arguments are concerning distance education started in Turkey beginning from the year 1927, concrete applications are not observed until late 1950's. Correspondence Course Center (CCC) which was founded within the Ministry of Education in 1959 started offering correspondence courses in technical fields as well as preparatory courses for external exams). Because of the increased demand for higher education there had been some works to provide tertiary education through correspondence but academicians and public opinion confronted these attempts with negative attitude. "Between" 1974-1976, students who completed their secondary education are offered teacher training via distance education through The Teacher Training Pilot College but this project turned out to be unsuccessful and the students are transferred to other formal education institutions (Odabasi&Kaya, 1998).

Current educational system of Turkey includes distance education institutions at all levels of education. Anadolu University in Eskisehir offering two-and four-year programs is the only institute that conducts distance higher education. Anadolu University, in dual system parallel to the conventional higher education departments, started the programs of Business Administration and Economics in 1982 with 29.479 students. Today Anadolu University with more than 450.000 active students are considered one of the ten-mega universities of the world delivering undergraduate degree programs and other programs such as degree completion programs to Turkish people in Turkey, Northern Cyprus Turkish Republic and Europe. Anadolu University programs have been greatly expanded in recent years, although entry still remains competitive.

At the basic and secondary education levels Ministry of Education provides the distance education. Open High School (OHS) is a widespread secondary education program, which has been operating since 1992. OHS started education with 45.000 students reached a student population of 90.000 in 1996. The purpose of the OHS is to allow traditional and non-traditional students, who for one reason or another have not completed secondary schools, with an opportunity to earn a high school diploma. The OHS curriculum is same as for traditional high school students.

Technologies used currently in Turkey to deliver distance education programs are typically one way and designed to reach masses. As Murphy states (Murphy, 1996) these technologies for both programs include specially designed textbooks and other printed materials including newsletter and bulletins, television and radio broadcasts. Technologies used in the Anadolu University Open Education system include videotapes, face to face lectures at local universities throughout the country. Multiple choice type examinations for both programs are offered in a variety of locations, usually in cities and larger towns.

It seems that there is an increasing public awareness towards the distance education issues in Turkey in the recent years. Two international distance education symposiums are performed in 1996 and 1998 respectively. Some universities started to employ distance education technologies to support conventional teaching. In 1996 Bilkent University has initiated some synchronous distance education courses via satellite. Middle East Technical University (METU) has started sending experimental distance education course via Internet in 1997. Istanbul Technical University established remote classrooms via a microwave link connecting two campuses that are in different locations in Istanbul. The same year with the initiative of the Council of Higher Education a project is conducted, by a group of researchers from different universities, for the analysis of nation-wide distance education alternatives. (TUBITAK-BILTEN, 1997) As of technical infrastructure The National Academic Network (ULAK-NET) consists of the national high-

speed backbone and the fast node connections. The users of ULAK-NET are the universities (state and foundation owned), R&D divisions of and information and documentation centers of state and private organizations and prominent libraries around Turkey. ULAK-NET is an initiative of the Scientific and Technical Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK) and strongly backed by Turkish Telecom. The Council of Higher Education is preparing rules and regulations for the distance education based on computer and communication technologies which will be effective starting from the 1999-2000 academic year.

## **ANADOLU UNIVERSITY**

Anadolu University, the only institute in Turkey conducting distance higher education, has maintained the mission of raising the nation's overall educational level by providing opportunities for higher education through distance learning methods. The foundation of Anadolu University goes back to 1958, in dual mode the university has undertaken distance teaching since 1982. Within this time period, Anadolu University has considerable contribution to Turkish Education System. The educational needs of high school graduates who, for various reasons, could not receive or continue their university education is the main target group for Anadolu University. In addition to awarding bachelor's and pre bachelor's (associate) degrees Anadolu University has provided opportunities of improving academic or professional proficiency to people who are already engaged in professions. Today, due to the distance learning system Anadolu University is considered among one of the 10-mega universities of the world. (Daniel, 1998)

The origin of the Anadolu University is the Eskisehir Academy of Economical and Commercial Sciences (EITIA) which is founded in 1958. During the reorganization of Turkish Higher Education System in 1982, EITIA joined with the State Academy of Engineering and Architecture (DMMA) within the framework of Anadolu University.

Today Anadolu University has, including the distance education system, 12 faculties, 9 vocational schools, a state conservatory and 12 research institutes. The three faculties, which constitute the distance education system of the university, are Open Education Faculty (OEF), Faculty of Economics and Faculty of Business Administration. These schools are also called as the faculties that employ distance education system as the mode of education.

The attempts that gave rise to Anadolu University distance education system goes back to early 1970's. Educational Television Institute (ETV) which was founded within the Turkish-German technical aid program provided insight and experience in communication sciences. After the acquisition of audio and video technology, establishment of production studios, training of technical personnel, educational activities are organized at the Communication Sciences Faculty.

In 1982 Anadolu University is assigned with the task of conducting "open education" in Turkey by Law No. 2547. Starting with the 1982-1983 academic year a distance education program is initiated at the Open Education Faculty of Anadolu University. Two four-year distance education programs, Economics and Business Administration with a total enrollment of 29.471 students commenced to education.

By the year 1993 a new era started with the establishment of Faculty of Economics and Faculty of Business Administration in addition to Open Education Faculty. The students of former Economics and Business Administration programs were transferred to the respective faculties. In this new organizational set-up two functions are assigned to the Open Education Faculty. First is the educational function of conducting two-year associate degree programs, degree completion programs and certificate programs. Second is the task of student administration, course books printing, production of radio and TV

programs, data processing services, academic counseling activities and the student examinations of the whole system.

## FACULTIES AND ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES

The faculties that constitute the distance education system of Anadolu University are organized in a conventional university structure. Each faculty has a dean, faculty board and executive committee, academic and administrative bodies. A vice-rector is responsible from the coordination of the activities of the faculties in distance education system.

### Open Education Faculty

Open Education Faculty conducts two-year associate degree programs, degree completion programs and certificate programs. This faculty has a peculiar status among the three schools that constitute the Distance Education System of Anadolu University because the tasks of student administration, course books printing, production of radio and TV programs, data processing services, academic counseling activities and the student examinations are assigned to this faculty. In another words Open Education Faculty has the responsibility of providing services to the system where as the other faculties have only academic functions.

**Table: 1  
Open Education Faculty: Business and  
Administrative Sciences Department**

OPEN Business and Associate Degree Programs	EDUCATION and Administrative	FACULTY Sciences
Social Sciences		
Home Management		
Sales Management		
Accounting		
Tourism & Hotel Management*		
Banking and insurance		
Office Management		
Medical Institutions Management		
Business Administration		
Public Relations		
Public Administration		
Foreign Trade		
Theology **		

\*Students are required to complete 45-day summer Training in Tourism and Hotel Management program.

\*\*Only government religious officers are admitted

There are four academic departments; Department of Distance Education, Department of Continuing Education, Department of Economics and Administrative Sciences and

**Department of Health Programs, among which only the latter two are active in offering associate degree study in vocational school status. Department of Distance Education is established in order to offer graduate study in the field of open and distance learning. Department of Continuing Education designs and administers continuing education programs to students coming from various backgrounds. The Department of Economics and Administrative Sciences which is established in 1992 and continue to offer associate degree programs on the following 13 fields are shown above.**

**The Department of Health Programs is first established in 1990 due to an act signed between the Ministry of Health and the Anadolu University to provide associate degree study to the nurses under the name of "Nursing Associate Degree Program". Initially, in 1991 new students are admitted to the program based on the special exam administered by Student Selection and Allocation Center (ÖSYM). After that year two new programs, Midwifery and Medical Technician programs are included and the students are started to be admitted based on the nationwide university entrance exams. Starting from 1999-2000 year no students are being admitted to the program.**

**Table: 2  
Open Education Faculty: Health Programs Department**

<b>OPEN EDUCATION FACULTY Health Programs Department Associate Degree Programs</b>
<b>Nursing</b>
<b>Midwifery</b>
<b>Medical Technician</b>

**The students of the health programs are required to complete an on the job training after the second year of their study.**

**West Europe Programs, which are the extension of The Department of Economics and Administrative Sciences in West Europe programs, are started at 1987-1988 academic year. These programs are coordinated by the branch office established at Cologne-Germany. Economics (BA degree), Management and Organization (BA degree), Foreign Trade (Assoc. degree) programs are offered to Turkish citizens living at Western European countries mainly in Germany, France, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, and Austria.**

**The examinations for the West Europe program students are held at 11 centers (Wine, Brussels, Cologne, Hamburg, Frankfurt, Munich, Berlin, Stuttgart, Den Hag, Paris, and Bern) separate from the students in Turkey. As of 1998-1999 academic years, number of students registered to these programs is 1185 and the total number of graduates until since 1998 is 1766. Anadolu University Cologne Office also provides administrative support for student services (registration, examinations, etc.) to Ministry of Education for offering Open High School programs to Turkish citizens living in Europe.**

**Various certificate and degree completion programs are being conducted in the Department of Continuing Education: Education Associate Degree Program is established in 1985-1986 academic year to provide associate degree study for the primary school teachers who are the graduates of teacher schools. Approximately 135.000 primary school teachers graduated from the program receiving associate degrees.**

**Degree Completion Program is established in 1990 academic year to provide bachelor degree study for the high school teachers who are the graduates of Education Institutes in the fields of Turkish Language and Literature, Mathematics, History, Geography,**

**Physics, Chemistry, Biology.** In 1993 English, French, German, Artistic Drawing and Physical Education fields are included to the programs. Approximately 35.000 high school teachers graduated from the program. Starting from 1997-1998 academic year a degree completion program directed to the primary school teachers having associate degrees. As of 1998-1999 academic year there are around 35 000 students enrolled to the programs. Agriculture and Veterinarian Programs are developed to provide associate degree study to the technicians employed at the Ministry of Agriculture. Starting from 1994-1995 academic approximately, agriculture program had 4.500 graduates and the Veterinary Program had 1.500 graduates.

#### **Faculty of Economics and Faculty of Business Administration**

These faculties started education at the 1993-1994 academic years. Both conducts four-year program leading to a BA degree in the following fields.

**Table: 3**  
**Faculties of Economics and Business Administration Programs**

<b>FACULTY OF ECONOMICS</b>	<b>FACULTY OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION</b>
Economics	Accounting and Finance
Public Finance	Marketing
Public Administration	Management and Organization
Labor Economics and Industrial Relations	Business Administration (No new students are accepted to this department)

Except a single course the first two-year programs of the two faculties are same. The students are allowed to obtain associate degrees after competition of the first two years.

#### **ENROLLMENT PATTERN and STUDENT PROFILES**

Admission to higher education in Turkey's centralized and based on nation-wide examination administrated by the Student Selection and Placement Center (ÖSYM) every year. Until 1998, the entrance examination was carried out in two stages. The first stage of the examination was the Student Selection Examination (ÖSS) and candidates with scores between 105 and 120 points are offered to enter Anadolu University Open Education System as well as some other restricted choice of higher education programs. Those with a minimum score of 120 are qualified for the second stage of the examination, the Student Placement Examination (ÖYS) also being allowed to choose open education. The students are placed to higher education institutions according to their success in the exam and the allotment of the institution. Starting from the 1998-99 academic year, the second stage of the examination has been abolished.

There is a severe competition in university entrance in Turkey causing a bottleneck in front of higher education institutions. For example, in 1998, 1 398 000 students (high school graduates) applied to take the university entrance exam but only 420 000 are accepted to universities of which 176.000 are placed to Anadolu University Open Education System.

**Table: 4**  
**Active and Passive\* Student Population by Years**

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Business Administration &amp; Economics</b>		<b>Open Faculty (2 year programs)</b>		<b>Total</b>
	<b>Active Students</b>	<b>Passive Students</b>	<b>Active Students</b>	<b>Passive Students</b>	
<b>1982-83</b>	<b>29.445</b>	-	-	-	<b>29.445</b>
<b>1983-84</b>	<b>45.378</b>	-	-	-	<b>45.378</b>
<b>1984-85</b>	<b>64.141</b>	-	-	-	<b>64.141</b>
<b>1985-86</b>	<b>97.313</b>	-	-	-	<b>97.313</b>
<b>1986-87</b>	<b>106.000</b>	-	-	-	<b>106.000</b>
<b>1987-88</b>	<b>133.160</b>	-	-	-	<b>133.160</b>
<b>1988-89</b>	<b>174.738</b>	-	-	-	<b>174.738</b>
<b>1989-90</b>	<b>228.284</b>	<b>27.885</b>	-	-	<b>256.169</b>
<b>1990-91</b>	<b>261.089</b>	<b>31.131</b>	-	-	<b>292.220</b>
<b>1991-92</b>	<b>289.866</b>	<b>36.835</b>	-	-	<b>326.701</b>
<b>1992-93</b>	<b>304.489</b>	<b>50.098</b>	<b>43.597</b>	-	<b>398.184</b>
<b>1993-94</b>	<b>361.869</b>	<b>59.843</b>	<b>108.363</b>	<b>6.448</b>	<b>536.523</b>
<b>1994-95</b>	<b>306.290</b>	<b>108.108</b>	<b>130.878</b>	<b>24.459</b>	<b>569.735</b>
<b>1995-96</b>	<b>282.522</b>	<b>78.116</b>	<b>142.341</b>	<b>25.562</b>	<b>528.541</b>
<b>1996-97</b>	<b>275.426</b>	<b>71.121</b>	<b>154.853</b>	<b>30.855</b>	<b>532.255</b>
<b>1997-98</b>	<b>315.565</b>	<b>55.806</b>	<b>191.360</b>	<b>30.461</b>	<b>593.192</b>
<b>1998-99</b>	<b>320.282</b>	<b>73.065</b>	<b>199.909</b>	<b>43.183</b>	<b>636.439</b>

**\*Students who do not register for a specific academic year are considered passive students. If the students do not register in two consecutive years they are dismissed from the system.**

**Data about student population, graduation and recent enrollment figures are given in tables 4, 5 and 6. With current student population of 636.000, Anadolu university Open Education system represents about 35% of the students of Turkish Higher Education system.**

**Table: 5**  
**Graduates by Years**

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Economics</b>	<b>Business Administration</b>	<b>Open Faculty</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1985-86</b>	<b>2.866</b>	<b>1.792</b>	-	<b>4.658</b>
<b>1986-87</b>	<b>3.498</b>	<b>2.674</b>	-	<b>6.172</b>
<b>1987-88</b>	<b>2.713</b>	<b>2.949</b>	-	<b>5.662</b>
<b>1988-89</b>	<b>2.574</b>	<b>2.864</b>	-	<b>5.438</b>
<b>1989-90</b>	<b>3.664</b>	<b>4.742</b>	-	<b>8.406</b>
<b>1990-91</b>	<b>3.979</b>	<b>5.659</b>	-	<b>9.638</b>
<b>1991-92</b>	<b>3.728</b>	<b>5.668</b>	-	<b>9.396</b>
<b>1992-93</b>	<b>2.978</b>	<b>5.078</b>	-	<b>8.056</b>
<b>1993-94</b>	<b>4.120</b>	<b>7.440</b>	<b>2.483</b>	<b>14.043</b>
<b>1994-95</b>	<b>4.550</b>	<b>8.020</b>	<b>12.121</b>	<b>24.691</b>
<b>1995-96</b>	<b>4.686</b>	<b>6.976</b>	<b>13.054</b>	<b>24.716</b>
<b>1996-97</b>	<b>5.039</b>	<b>7.276</b>	<b>20.027</b>	<b>32.342</b>
<b>1997-98</b>	<b>6.992</b>	<b>8.632</b>	<b>25.966</b>	<b>41.590</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>51.387</b>	<b>69.770</b>	<b>73.651</b>	<b>194.808</b>

**Table: 6**  
**New Registrations by Recent Years**

	<b>Years</b>			
	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>
<b>OPEN EDUCATION FACULTY</b>				
<b>Home Management</b>	<b>5.897</b>	<b>4.991</b>	<b>7.216</b>	<b>6.447</b>
<b>Social Sciences</b>	<b>16.287</b>	<b>8.976</b>	<b>9.077</b>	<b>6.440</b>
<b>Business Administration</b>	<b>2.579</b>	<b>1.480</b>	<b>1.323</b>	<b>734</b>
<b>Public Relations</b>	<b>8.058</b>	<b>11.004</b>	<b>13.399</b>	<b>13.190</b>
<b>Public Administration</b>	<b>1.514</b>	<b>2.176</b>	<b>1.571</b>	<b>1.845</b>
<b>Foreign Trade</b>	<b>627</b>	<b>1.191</b>	<b>958</b>	<b>1.364</b>
<b>Sales Management</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>908</b>	<b>929</b>
<b>Accounting</b>	<b>1.830</b>	<b>2.888</b>	<b>3.079</b>	<b>2.708</b>
<b>Tourism &amp; Hotel Management</b>	<b>7.200</b>	<b>8.227</b>	<b>10.231</b>	<b>8.063</b>
<b>Banking and Insurance</b>	<b>2.612</b>	<b>3.077</b>	<b>3.620</b>	<b>3.754</b>

<b>Office Management</b>	<b>3.247</b>	<b>3.526</b>	<b>3.139</b>	<b>2.459</b>
<b>Health Inst. Management</b>	<b>1.369</b>	<b>1.554</b>	<b>1.711</b>	<b>1.743</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>51.753</b>	<b>49.730</b>	<b>56.232</b>	<b>49.676</b>
<b>FACULTY OF ECONOMICS</b>				
<b>Economics</b>	<b>17.797</b>	<b>13.906</b>	<b>16.243</b>	<b>17.018</b>
<b>Public Finance</b>	<b>6.024</b>	<b>6.496</b>	<b>6.276</b>	<b>6.332</b>
<b>Public Administration</b>	<b>13.876</b>	<b>10.447</b>	<b>15.008</b>	<b>24.244</b>
<b>Labor Economics and Industrial Relations</b>	<b>4.189</b>	<b>3.773</b>	<b>4.227</b>	<b>4.741</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>41.886</b>	<b>34.622</b>	<b>41.754</b>	<b>52.335</b>
<b>FACULTY OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION</b>				
<b>Accounting and Finance</b>	<b>5.659</b>	<b>6.951</b>	<b>10.097</b>	<b>12.139</b>
<b>Marketing</b>	<b>1.357</b>	<b>2.011</b>	<b>2.239</b>	<b>2.601</b>
<b>Management and Organization</b>	<b>17.665</b>	<b>15.631</b>	<b>19.764</b>	<b>23.063</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>24.681</b>	<b>24.593</b>	<b>32.100</b>	<b>37.803</b>

**Average duration of the study varies between associate and bachelor degree graduates:**  
**For two year associate degree programs average duration of study is 3.4 years which turns out to be 6.2 years for bachelor degree graduate.**

**Table: 7**  
**Age Distribution of Open Education Students**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Less than 20</b>	<b>5.2</b>
<b>20-24</b>	<b>32.6</b>
<b>25-29</b>	<b>26.8</b>
<b>30-34</b>	<b>16.9</b>
<b>35-39</b>	<b>12.3</b>
<b>40-44</b>	<b>4.6</b>
<b>More than 45</b>	<b>1.6</b>

**Average age of the students is 24 with the age distribution given in Table 7.** Male students comprise 60% of the students and remaining 40% are female. About 70% of the students have full time and 8% part time employment. Handicapped students comprise about %1.5 of the student population. Students residential data show that about 53% of the students live in metropolitan areas with population above 500.000, 16% in areas with population between 100.000 and 500.000, 18% in small provinces with population between 20.000 and 100.000 and 13% in rural areas with population less than 20.000.

## **INSTRUCTIONAL SYSTEM AND STUDENT SUPPORT**

The distance education system at Anadolu University provides study opportunity via various components. Main elements of the system are introduced briefly as follows:

### **Textbooks**

As a common characteristic of almost all distance education institutions, the primary element of the open education system is the printed materials. Text books designed to provide self learning are prepared by the academics of Anadolu University and other universities in coordination with a Distance Education Material Design Team. Currently there are about 400 books used at three schools and other programs. Books are sent to the students at the beginning of each academic year. Total number of books printed at the beginning of 1998-1999 academic year is around 3 million copies. Anadolu University has printing capacity to satisfy all of the universities printing requirements. Distance education course materials, bulletins, and test booklets are printed in the university facilities.

### **TV Programs and Videocassettes**

An experienced technical team in coordination produces TV programs, which support the printed materials in the open education system, with authors and editors of the course material. All the video and audio programs required by the distance education system are produced at the Educational Television Center (ETV). The center, supported with editing and postproduction units, has two production studios and a mobile production vehicle. Currently 165 technical staff is employed in the center.

For most of the courses books video programs are produced to be broadcast via TRT (Turkish Radio and Television) channels. Videocassettes of the course programs are also in sale.

### **Academic Tutoring System**

For certain courses academic support is provided via face to face lecturing sessions. At 55 provinces face to face lecturing is provided for various courses. These courses are instructed either by OEF staff or local university staff. At 1998-1999 academic year a total of 800 instructors were assigned duties of face to face instruction and counseling at 55 provinces. The lectures are conducted at evening and weekends at the study centers with support from local universities staff.

### **Computer Assisted Teaching**

Beginning from 1994, computer laboratories are established in order to provide computerized lessons and exercises to the distance learners. As of 1999, computer assisted learning material is made available for 17 main courses at the computer laboratories of 14 provinces. The courseware used is the supplementary software based on drill-and practice type that combines text, image and sound developed by the Computer Assisted Teaching Center. It is planned to increase the number of the laboratories with new courses and Internet access will be provided.

### **Assessment**

Student's success is determined by multiple choice tests. At each academic year, a mid-term and a final exam are given to the students to evaluate their performance. The weights of these tests at the final grade are 30% and 70%. An average score of 50% is required in order to "pass" a course. The students who fail have given an opportunity to recover their final test score at a final make up exam.

Test Research Center is responsible for preparing and maintenance of a questions data for the OEF exam bank. Tests are prepared at this center of Anadolu University by a joint study of authors/editors, field experts, technical consultants and scientific supervisors. Tests are printed at the Anadolu University print shop and sent to the test centers under strict security measures. Examinations are administered by the Anadolu University

**computer center. Following figures of the 1998-1999 final exam quantify the extent of the exam show also that it is one of the largest examination organizations of the world.**  
**No of courses: 229 different courses**

**No of examination sessions: 4**  
**Total no. Students responsible: 517.448**  
**No. Examination centers: 82 centers at 77 provinces**  
**No of students entered: 1 185 787 (in four sessions)**  
**No of buildings: 3631**  
**No of classrooms: 55 007**  
**No of personnel employed: 147 766 (in four sessions)**

### **Student Centers**

Administrative support to open education students are provided the students by the 78 student centers located at 75 provinces and including Northern Cyprus Turkish Republic. Central office at Eskisehir provides services that are not available at provincial branches such as student transcripts, student certificate (for foreign countries), dropout application, diploma (associate and bachelor), certificate of graduation (for those who lost their diplomas) and associate degree certificate

The services provided by the provincial offices are registration (new and former students, student certificate, military service documents, student ID cards, and diploma issuing.) All of the student centers are connected to the host computer via Dial-on-Demand system for updating the changing data.

### **Faculty and Support Staff**

Because Anadolu University is conducting a dual system of education, all the academic staff is besides the distance education system are and the lecturers from local universities are considered in part time status. The staff of the schools that offer distance education programs is full time. Under this categorization total number of staff of Anadolu University is given as follows:

#### **Full time Academic Personnel:**

**Professor: 24**  
**Associate Professor: 9**  
**Assistant Professor: 33**  
**Instructor: 6**  
**Research assistant: 21**  
**TOTAL: 93**

#### **Part time Academic Personnel**

**Professor: 95**  
**Associate Professor: 54**  
**Assistant Professor: 42**  
**TOTAL: 1 91**

#### **Full time Administrative/Technical/Support Personnel: 499**

In addition to above numbers there are 650 part time academic personnel from local universities support the academic tutoring system as lecturers.

### **REGULATIONS**

Anadolu University Distance Education System has adopted the conventional approach to the academic progression, which is based on the class system. Students who failed from two or less than two courses can pass to a higher class. Students who fail more than two courses repeat the courses they failed and thus can not register to higher-class

**courses. In addition to students who have not succeeded all of the 1<sup>st</sup> (freshman) year courses can not register to 3<sup>rd</sup> year courses (sophomore). Same is true for students who have not successfully completed 2<sup>nd</sup> (junior) class courses who can not register 4th (senior) class courses. Students must register at the beginning of each academic year. Students who have not registered in two successive years are dismissed. At each academic year a mid-term, final and final-make up exams are performed. Evaluation is based on the grading system with the highest score of 100. The weights of the mid-term and final exams are 30% and 70% respectively. An average score of 50% is required in order to "pass" a course. Associate degree students are allowed to hold student rights for four years and bachelor degree students for seven years. Beyond these limitations there is no time limit for the duration of education.**

**Students who are the graduates of the two-year associate degree programs of equivalent schools can be accepted to Faculty of Business Administration and Economics if they prove to be successful in the 1-year preparatory program.**

**The academic rules and regulations are being reviewed in order to reach a more flexible system more suitable to the demands of open learners. Starting from the 2000-2001 academic year major modifications such as elective courses, credit transfer, credit hour rating, letter grading are planned.**

#### **BUDGET AND COSTS**

**By far, the major source of income of state universities in Turkey is the funds allocated through the annual state budget. In addition to this, a university has three more sources of income. First, income from the services provided by a university, such as patient care in university hospitals, and contract research, is collected in a revolving fund. Second, student contributions towards highly subsidized services are collected in a separate fund. Third, each university has a research fund made up of a lump sum grant from the state-provided budget plus a portion of the income from the revolving fund and from earmarked projects given by the State Planning Organization. For 1998 fiscal year, allocation of budget per full-time student is calculated as; budget 61%, income generated by universities 33% and student contributions 5%. Only 27 % of the incomes from student contributions were spent for education, the rest going to very highly subsidized meals, lodging and medical services provided to the students, and to financing extracurricular activities. Thus, it is obvious that there are no real tuition fees in Turkey for state universities, which educate almost 98% of the students. Anadolu University has no peculiar status in terms of the regulations governing the funding and budgeting of the distance education system. For the distance education system Anadolu University has also three sources of income. First the budget allocated to the distance education students by the state. Second the charges collected from the students for the cost of services (books, examinations and other support services) which goes to the revolving fund. Third the student contributions collected in a separate fund.**

**When converted to US dollars on the average currency rates the total budget of the open education system adds up to a total of approximately 32 million USD. This averages 60 USD for each student. Approximately 7% of the budget are provided by the state and the rest is collected from the students. These figures show the relative low price of the distance education in Turkey. On the other hand one point is very important. The budget allocated from the state is very low for distance education students compared to counterparts in conventional universities. Average state budget support for a distance education student is about 5% of a business student in conventional school.**

#### **CURRENT ISSUES OF THE DISTANCE TEACHING**

**In the process of distance education since 1982, Anadolu University has played an important role in the national education system of the country. Some of the problems and points of interest that are being taken into consideration are summarized below.**

### **Social Issues**

With regard to the social acceptance, when compared to the students of conventional universities, distance education students of Anadolu University are not accepted socially as formal students. This negative attitude is attributed to the relative easiness of entrance to the open education. This attitude also brought the perception of the graduates of the system as inferior to their counterparts at the conventional schools. At present there is not a reliable assessment that measures the "quality" of the graduates of the distance education system. But when compared with the students of conventional universities the graduates of Anadolu University distance education system may stand a little below at the beginning because of their relatively low scores at the university entrance exams. But this is not a consequence of the distance education process. The distinction between the open education students and conventional school students appears as a result of the university entrance examinations. This public attitude is started to disappear in the recent years as the people become more informed about distance education and observe the educational effectiveness of distance education technologies as well as success stories of the graduates.

High drop out rates as a common characteristic of distance education students prevails also in Anadolu university distance education system. The overall drop out rate of the system is 40% and most of the dropouts are observed in the first year of the study. Military service is compulsory in Turkey considerable portion of male students that enroll to the Anadolu University distance education system are believed to have the purpose of deferring their military service. Consequently those students who enter open education study to postpone military service either drop out or dismissed from the system.

### **Technical Issues**

The technologies used to deliver instruction to distance learners are primarily one-way and non-interactive. Face to face lecturing at local centers is limited to certain courses. Also, access of the students to the local is difficult due to geographical dispersion and the time of the classes. Only about 20% of the total student population is estimated to attend the face to face lecturing classes as well as computer assisted academic counseling centers. The main reason for this is that a considerable percentage of the students are either working or housewives

A well-developed distance education system requires an infrastructure of telecommunications and information technology. Currently there are bottlenecks and problems even with the Internet communication. On the other hand, videoconferencing, one of the efficient distance education technologies, requires ISDN network, which is not widely available in the country. Anadolu University has sufficient facilities, technology and expertise for a local and nationwide broadcasting. But current regulations prohibit Anadolu University to make live broadcasting. On the other hand Turkish Telecom does not provide privilege of satellite communication to the universities and state enterprises.

### **Organizational Issues**

Anadolu University accomplishes an academic and administrative activities as well as student services via an organization distributed to all the provincial centers of Turkey, Northern Cyprus Turkish Republic and Western Europe. Current management policies are highly centralized and the upper management practices decision-making. The span of control is very wide for some of the organizational units of the Open Education Faculty. This decreases the efficiency.

Also coordination of research and development activities within Anadolu University needs to be strengthened. Different organizational units within Anadolu University conduct research and development activities on distance education issues and there is not a strong coordination between them. There is a need to combine these studies under the supervision and direction of a single organizational unit.

### **Improvement of the Effectiveness of Distance Education System**

Beginning from 1998 Anadolu University has initiated major projects to improve the quality and the effectiveness of distance education system. It is decided to introduce improved educational technologies and new ways of organizing the distance education system. Considerable effort is directed to enhance the educational content as well as integrate the system with communication and computer technologies. Some of the important issues of that are targeted at the start of the new millennium are as follows:

**Improvement of the Distance Teaching Methods:** Existing course development and teaching procedures are being reviewed in order to reach the best possible media composition by incorporating state-of the art technologies. The textbooks are being redesigned and upgraded by taking the advantage of multimedia aids capable of transmitting study materials with accuracy and speed. The major consideration on this issue is the low access to the distance education students. Projects are being developed to make all of the open education students computer owners and connect them via a national network Open-Net.

**Increasing the Interactivity** Anadolu University has facilities and expertise to conduct broadcasting locally and nationally. In the 1998-1999 academic year as a preparatory session for examinations live lectures are broadcast nationally for a period of one week with the consent of Turkish Radio Television Institute and the under the financial sponsorship of a private organization. In these live broadcasting sessions students had opportunity to watch the live lectures at their home with the opportunity of asking questions via telephone If the legal and financial barriers can be overcome Anadolu University is ready to broadcast own courses via its studios.

On the other hand pilot studies are being conducted to adopt videoconference technology as a mean of two way interactive audio and video communication. Videoconferencing system requires a well-developed communication network preferably an ISDN. It is possible to establish videoconferencing links using satellites but it is considerable expensive alternative and limited to the points where the uplink and downlink equipment are located. Anadolu University had acquired videoconferencing equipment and succeeded in the initial tests of the system. A studio for videoconferencing purposes is furnished. Due to the high cost of leasing Telecom lines, the possibility of using Internet links provided by ULAK-NET is currently being investigated.

**Office Automation System in Provincial Offices** Currently the data transfer between host computer and the provincial offices are being made via the physical transfer of data diskettes. With this project the offices will have a direct communication link between the offices and the host computer so the provincial offices will have access to the current data files. A dial-on-demand system, which is currently at a pilot stage, will provide flexibility and speed in student support services.

**Improvement of the Computer Assisted Instruction System** Computer aided instruction is also being a common tool in distance education. Anadolu University is using this technology in academic counseling system but the current system needs to be modified with the state of the art technology. At the same time studies to integrate Internet to the system are continuing as well as possibilities of making the students computer owners or provide access to computers are being investigated.

**Improvements of the Production Studios** Due to the rapid improvements in the electronics and computer technology analog recording and broadcasting system is being replaced by the digital systems. Anadolu University is also making preparations and investments to upgrade the current analog system to a digital one.

## **COLLABORATIONS**

Anadolu University works closely with many organizations to conduct distance education activities. Also the university has collaborations with international institutions for cooperation in the field of distance learning and teaching.

Turkish Higher Education Institute (YOK), Turkish Radio and Television Institute (TRT) and Turkish Ministry of Education are the major domestic institutions that Anadolu University is working with. Turkish Higher Education Institute is the main governing body of higher education by whom all the programs offered must be approved. Since the initiation of the distance education system all of the video course material is broadcast via Turkish Radio and Television channels. In 1998-1999 academic year between 23 November 1998 and 28 May 1999 a total of 2323 programs are broadcast in TRT-4 .In addition to regular course programs, special Examination preparation programs are broadcast between 29 May 1999 and 18 June 1999 some of them being live allowing the students to interact by directing questions via telephone.

Considerable portions of degree completion program graduates as well as current students are teachers. In coordination with the Ministry of Education Anadolu University develops programs to teachers and school principals to upgrade their teaching skills and knowledge. Also Anadolu University provides services to the Ministry of Education in conducting Open High school programs to the students in Western Europe.

Hoca Ahmet Yesevi University of Kazakhstan is one of the partners of Anadolu University to design and offer distance courses to on-campus students at Kazakhstan. In 1998-1999 academic year a pilot study is conducted for the remote teaching of a marketing course from Eskisehir Turkey to Kazakhstan. The textbooks and the related video material are sent to students for independent learning under the guidance of a local tutor. During the semester each week a satellite linked videoconference session is established and weekly remote lectures are given. The homework is sent via Internet but the exams are given in classroom environment under the supervision of the local tutor.

Anadolu University is in contact with Israel Open University for cooperation in distance education issues. There is an intention for the performance of a joint distance education symposium in the year 2001. Also Anadolu University, Israel Open University and Japan National Institute submits a tri-partite joint project proposal to Toyota foundation for Multimedia Education (NIME).

Another institution that Anadolu University has cooperation is the Open University U.K. In March 1999 a workshop is conducted with the participation of experts from Open University on the topic of "Course and Material Design in Open and Distance Teaching".

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