

PROTOCOL- INSTITUTIONAL AND PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION	
Quality area	Accreditation
Contributes to the realization of the ENQA requirements and review of the ANQA processes and procedures by the ECA	ESG standard: 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 3.1
Approved on	01.03.2016
Valid untill	30.12.2020
Approved by	ANQA management
Version	0.3
Responsible for this area	Anushavan Makaryan
<p><b>Strategic goal</b></p> <p><i>To ensure the implementation of independent, impartial and grounded institutional and programme accreditation through mechanisms and procedures defined in this protocol according to state accreditation criteria and ANQA procedures. The results of the accreditation are acceptable for ANQA stakeholders and contribute to contribute to quality assessment and improvement of RA professional education.</i></p> <p><b>Targets</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To organize a well-grounded, independent and impartial expert assessment for the accreditation of TLI, the results of which will be acceptable for the RA professional education system and international experts.</li> <li>2. To organize the accreditation processes according to the Statute on Accreditation and according to the approved schedule dates attached to the agreements by following ANQA procedures and formats.</li> <li>3. To ensure that ANQA electronic questionnaires contain sufficient and up to date information about TLI's institutional capacities and experts.</li> <li>4. To involve experts whose capacities will enable them to implement assessments acceptable by the organization and in compliance with the accreditation criteria.</li> <li>5. To ensure that changes in the Statute on Accreditation, ANQA procedures and formats are interrelated and take into consideration the problems and difficulties during the processes.</li> <li>6. To provide an adequate information that will allow the international experts to implement quality assurance assessment of accreditation area.</li> </ol> <p><b>Indicators for evaluating targets</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Accreditation Commission, educational institutions and experts are satisfied with ANQA's expert reports' reliability and justification (targets 1, 4).</li> <li>2. The experts are satisfied with their independency level of acting, making assessments and decisions (target 1).</li> <li>3. International experts' positive response to the coherency of the accreditation criteria, standards and the ANQA procedures with the European relevant guidelines (target 1).</li> </ol>	

4. The participants of the accreditation processes (educational institutions, local and international experts as well as ANQA coordinators) are satisfied with the load distribution of accreditation process and ANQA formats (target 2).
5. Educational institutions, ANQA Secretary and members of the expert panel are satisfied with the electronic questionnaires and coordinators are satisfied with the structure and content of experts' electronic database (target 3).
6. Educational institutions, experts and ANQA staff are satisfied with the in time and appropriate changes carried out in the formats and procedures (target 5).
7. Educational institutions, experts and other participants are satisfied with the transparency and clarity of accreditation processes (targets 5, 6).
8. External evaluators are satisfied with the available information on the accreditation process (target 6).

#### **Description of main activities**

The accreditation process is conducted in several phases:

##### *Application for accreditation*

ANQA Secretariat implements the acceptance of the application and assessment considering its completeness and compliance with the accreditation and ANQA's relevant format, content, etc. Besides, TLI has to complete ANQA's electronic questionnaire. TLI can apply to ANQA Secretariat when they encounter difficulties in filling in the application form, application and electronic questionnaire, as well as it should complete ANQA questionnaire on the assessment of accreditation process.

##### *Preparation for accreditation*

This phase consists of two sub phases: a) self-evaluation study, b) drawing up accreditation schedule. First, the self-evaluation report submitted by the institution and the package of attached documents are studied. Whenever a self-evaluation report is accepted, a schedule of accreditation is compiled and is agreed with the TLI beforehand.

The coordinator and the responsible for monitoring of TLI ensure that all accreditation processes take place according to the approved schedule.

##### *Expert panel composition*

This phase is divided into two sub phases: a) expert panel selection, b) the composition of expert panel is agreed with TLI. Panel selection is carried out in accordance with the requirements of expert panel composition procedure among ANQA experts' electronic database. The composition of the panel is considered to be preliminary until it is not agreed with TLI. In case of justified disagreement changes in the expert panel composition can occur only within the framework of the agreement with the Accreditation Commission. The formats developed by ANQA on experts' independence and the absence of conflicts and the checking of requirements presented to them are applied.

##### *Implementation of external evaluation*

This phase is divided into three sub phases: a) preparatory site visit, 2) site-visit, outlining of conclusions, 3) development of the draft version of the report and the production of final report. Desk review and drawing up of the site visit is carried out according to the Statute on Accreditation and ANQA manual and timeframes indicated in them. The format of preliminary assessment, list of the meetings and schedule of

the site visit are applied. The experts participate in trainings. The effectiveness and usefulness of the trainings are later assessed by the experts through filling in a questionnaire where they should decide on the themes for the future supplementary trainings through open questions.

The site visit plan and schedule should be designed in such a way, so as to allow the panel to carry out all planned meetings, observe all the resources and necessary documents. The institution should be responsible for ensuring the participants presence and the provision of documents and for the announcement of the open meeting. After every meeting the representatives of the institution fill in the questionnaire on the assessment of site visit that is developed by ANQA. They express their opinion about the activities of the expert panel and the about the course of the meeting.

The draft report is prepared according to ANQA format preserving the requirements of its structure and content. Judgments must be based on considerations and considerations in their turn, must be grounded by self-evaluation or findings that were revealed during the site visit.

The final report is summarized by the expert panel based on remarks and suggestions of the educational institution. The objections and remarks are discussed between the expert panel and the representatives of TLI before finalization of the report. There are links in the report and ANQA conclusion texts about changes that were made based on the remarks of the institutions.

#### *Decision making*

During this phase, the Accreditation Commissions' decision is prepared (accreditation package preparation, decision drafting). The Panel assesses the problem and schedule developed by TLI for the elimination of the imperfections and the risks in their implementation. During the decision making the Accreditation Commission is guided by the procedures described in the Statute on Accreditation and by the procedure on ANQA Accreditation Commission formation and operation. The Commissions' decision can be as follows: the institution is accredited, the institution/program is conditionally accredited for 2 years, the institution is not accredited.

#### *Publication*

TLI get informed about the Accreditation Commissions' decision on accreditation during the session. The information on the results of accreditation process (the final report, ANQA's conclusion and the decision of the Accreditation Commission) is published on ANQA's website.

#### *Providing information*

Except the implementation of above-mentioned phases required for each accreditation, ANQA is responsible for providing information to stakeholders (TLIs, superior organizations, students) on the processes of evaluation procedures and new formats' development. Before the approval of the procedure or the change of the format, ANQA organizes discussions with representatives of educational institutions and stakeholders. After the approval the new procedures and formats are published on ANQA website.

#### **ANQA's accreditation procedures and formats study based on Accreditation package**

- ***Technical requirements:*** study whether the application form is properly formulated and signed, whether the licenses on TLI's functioning and on academic programs' implementation permittance issued by the competent institution are valid, whether the samples of self-evaluation are presented in relevant format, numbers, versions and languages, whether the annexes of self-evaluation, CVs,

agreements and other constituent documents of the package are available;

- **Official claims:** pay attention to whether the expert panel is composed in a relevant form, whether the accreditation schedule is realistic and agreed upon with the participants. The accreditation process' coordinator is responsible for this process;
- **Content claims:** pay attention to the judgments and groundings of evaluation reports, to the consistent preservation of rules and ethics of accreditation procedures and various meetings. The accreditation coordinator is responsible for this process who operates by consulting with the process' coordinator responsible for the package.

**To study:**

**in terms of content:**

- experts' reports,
- the arguments and judgments of the institution on draft version of experts' report,
- ANQA conclusion
- guiding books published by ANQA,
- experts' database and its capabilities;

**in terms of inner relations:**

- the workload of ANQA schedule on TLIs accreditation process,
- expert panels composition procedure,
- inner working order and discussion formats of expert panels,
- the mechanisms of accreditation processes' coordinators cooperation;
- **in terms of external relations (with educational institutions and other participants):**
  - application forms,
  - self-evaluation formats of institutional and academic programme accreditation,
  - contracts signed between ANQA and TLIs under accreditation,
  - following the procedures set forth in Statute on Accreditation and in Accreditation manual,
  - The contracts signed with experts, coordinators, support staff and other documents,
  - ANQA webpage.

**Evaluation**

***Round tables/discussions***

1. Once per year meetings devoted to accreditation decisions are held with the chairmen of Board of Trustees, ANQA Accreditation Commission, secretary, ANQA director, TLI's top management and QA staff. The results of the discussions and recommendations are fixed in protocols, and in case of the ANQA Board of Trustees' approval they are included in ANQA forms, published on the website and guidelines.

***The agenda of meetings may include:***

- *Discussions on self-evaluation and accreditation procedures,*
- *Issues of the accreditation system improvement,*
- *Independence and justification of decision making,*
- *Accreditation load distribution,*
- *Discussions on evaluation procedures and framework changes,*
- *Discussion procedures of possible objections and appeals.*

**2. *Separate discussions are held with:***

- TLI's administration,
- Expert panel,
- Coordinators of accreditation processes,
- The officers of internal quality assurance bodies,
- The trainers involved in the trainings organized by ANQA,
- International experts.

- 1) Once in a year a meeting is held with the representatives of TLI administration that have participated in accreditation processes. The head of the quality assurance is responsible for the meeting .
- 2) Meetings with expert panel take place at the end of each accreditation process. The coordinator of that accreditation process is responsible for the meeting.
- 3) The coordinators present written report about the process. Their meetings take place at the end of each accreditation process. The head of the quality assurance of accreditation area is responsible for the meeting.

During these meetings the evaluation of accreditation processes, experts' database and ANQA procedures are stressed.

Performance indicators

- Schedule of meetings
  - Agenda / officers
  - Minutes of meetings
- 4) Regular meetings takes place with the heads of internal quality assurance bodies, not only the representatives of the institutions that have undergone accreditation process are participating, but also the ones who are preparing for the accreditation. The head of ANQA is responsible for the meeting.
  - 5) A meeting with training participants takes place at the end of the trainings organized by ANQA. The participants assess the effectiveness of the trainings by filling in questionnaires. The head of accreditation area's QA and the trainers and sociologists are responsible for the meeting.
  - 6) Meetings with international experts take place at the end of each accreditation process. The meeting is held with the director of ANQA. The international expert provides a written feedback on ANQA procedures. The coordinator of accreditation is responsible for the meetings and receiving feedback.

During these meetings the evaluation of accreditation processes and ANQA procedures are stressed. The Director delivers a report on the meetings with the President of ANQA Board of Trustees the heads of TLIs and responsables of QA at the staff meetings.

### ***Audit***

All the accreditation processes are monitored by Internal Audit Group (Director, head of the I&P accreditation division, ANQA coordinators, head of the secretary). Great importance is attached to the maintenance of schedules of the accreditation process, templates, the site visit and ANQA policy. If there are deviations from the procedures the responsible for the monitoring prepares and presents a report to the external evaluation department.

Each year an audit of a certain amount of accreditation processes is implemented /about 25% of graduates/. During these audits the attention is paid to the technical /procedures maintenance, distribution of accreditation load etc./ and to the quality of documents' content / veracity of reports and justification of decision-making, institutions' observations and objections/.

### ***Random evaluation***

In case of special necessity, according to the decision of Accreditation Commission, ANQA Director or according to the relevant accreditation evaluation plan, the evaluation of accreditation procedures can be implemented according to forms, schedule, subjects, educational institution, implemented academic programme.

The coordinator of quality assurance area produces a summary report on entire evaluation results so to include it in annual report.

### **Accountability**

The chain of internal quality assurance area's responsables is formed as follows: Ruben Topchyan (ANQA director)- Anushavan Makaryan (Head of the accreditation division), Ani Mkrtyan (coordinator of internal quality assurance).

The quality coordinators mentioned in the chain are responsible for the internal quality assurance.

General: Anushavan Makaryan

Quality coordinators by areas:

*Institutional and academic programme accreditation of HEIs: Varduhi Gyulazyan*

*Institutional and academic programme accreditation of VETs: Lilit Pipoyan*

*Questionnaire-databases, experts: Varduhi Gyulazyan, Ani Mkrtyan*

*Trainings: Lilit Zakaryan, Anushvan Makaryan*

### **Reporting**

Electronic and paper surveys are being prepared by the area's quality assurance coordinators and ANQA sociologist and are being implemented by area's quality assurance coordinators while the analyzes are being carried out by sociologists. Reports based on the analyzes of the results of surveys are presented

at the staff meeting and are included in the protocol's annual report.

The results of the current round tables and meetings are presented by the area coordinators during staff meetings where the discussion and improvement suggestions of existing problems are made.

The results of evaluations and reviews are sent to the general responsible of accreditation area's quality assurance and to the accreditation area's quality team. The results are summarized and included in the annual report of accreditation area's quality. It is produced by accreditation area's quality team and discussed in the ANQA quality assurance team.

The results presentation and the discussion of possible improvement measures are carried out during staff meetings.

### **Improvements**

Based on the external and internal assessments results and on defined goals the improvement activities will be offered by the quality assurance working group (possible adjustments of targets). They will be included in the annual quality assurance report. There will also be a brief review on proposed improvements measures concerning each quality area. The quality assurance working group initially highlights and prioritizes the improvement actions. The ANQA annual report and priorities will be discussed during the meetings of ANQA working group and the Board of Trustees if necessary. The working group will decide what improvements to implement and which targets to change. The decisions on improvement actions will be fixed in the annual working plan in the future.

Interim changes of working methods or procedures that may be a consequence of the current practices and evaluation results' discussions, are directly included in relevant documents.

Regulatory actions or the ones that require structural changes will be discussed at the Board of Trustees.

### **Documents**

#### *Internal*

- Pilot accreditation packages
- Experts' requirements
- Expert panel composition procedure
- Formats used in the accreditation process
- Reporting forms
- Training materials
- Experts' and coordinator's Questionnaires
- Agendas and minutes of meetings
- Reports of the coordinators
- Reports of the responsible for QA
- Reports on audit
- Feedback of international experts
- Report of the protocol

#### *External*

- ANQA IQA policy
- Statute on state accreditation of tertiary level institutions and academic programmes in the Republic of Armenia
- National qualifications framework
- Institutional accreditation criteria
- Academic programme accreditation criteria
- Application form

- Self-evaluation format of institutional capacities
- Self-evaluation format of academic programme capacities
- Accreditation manual
- ANQA website.

*Analyses of*

- Professional educational system
- Accreditation process assessment by the institutions
- Assessment of the site visit by the institution
- Assessment of the accreditation process by experts
- Assessment of the accreditation process by the coordinator
- Assessment of the experts by the coordinator
- Assessment of the effectiveness of the trainings

**Approved by ANQA Director**

**Ruben Topchyan**