

Strategic Plan 2016-2020

National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation



2016

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Results of 2010-2015 Strategic Plan

The 2010-2015 strategic plan of “National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance” foundation (ANQA) was developed in 2010, when the primary challenge in the scope of tertiary education in Armenia was the formation and dissemination of quality culture. The system of tertiary education was aimed at reforming in line with global trends and being integrated into the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Being formed at the end of 2008, among the main challenges of the Foundation was the development of National Center for QA as an institute as well as the promotion of approaches and ways of operation according to the needs of tertiary education within the institutions which had decades of history passed. Being under the influence of the former regulation on accreditation, the tertiary education system needed not only to be shifted to more effective model, but also to realize the necessity of such a shift. It was of great importance that since 2012 HEIs with greater numbers of students voluntarily applied for accreditation, thus ensuring significant coverage of the new regulation on accreditation and its standards.

For the transitional period of 2010-2015 ANQA’s main strategic goals and achievements were the following:

- ANQA capacity building: Enhance the national professional education quality assurance system.
 - As a result of resource formation and development, ANQA is an institution capable to organize assessment of TLIs, to provide them consultancy, to organize trainings, etc.
- Quality area establishment: Establish an external quality assurance system for tertiary education level while aligning the quality assurance policies and procedures with the international standards.
 - Criteria and standards have been developed and approved, which are based on the primary needs and issues of the system and on the European standards. These criteria and standards ensure improvements of tertiary education by setting priorities of the system development and thus guiding TLIs to fixation of the most urgent issues. Special importance was given to the information-based mechanisms of decision making in the management of education systems. QA procedures and corresponding formal document base have been developed, the efficient application of which had positive influence on the development of external and internal QA systems. The participation of international experts in accreditation processes has been ensured, besides, bilingual procedures have been developed, and as a result the external QA system has been recognized and accepted by international experts. QA forums and conferences are regularly organized with the participation of QA stakeholders.

- Quality culture: Promote quality culture establishment.
 - ANQA has encouraged the formation and reinforcement of internal QA units in all the HEIs. The heads of institutions are proactively involved in QA processes as a result of which HEI management approaches have been improved. The culture of regular self-assessment has been formed. Benchmarking is used by HEIs regarding different activities. The role of internal QA units has been revalued. In the domain of management of institutions and academic programmes an importance has been given to the alignment with predefined mission. Transition is being made to the learning outcome-based approach, students' assessment methods are being reviewed putting the emphasis on the assessment of practical skills. The increase of research component in academic programmes is highlighted.
- QA experts: Establish an expert pool to avoid blind import of quality, rely on the experienced and seasoned teaching staff to make them the apostles of quality culture.
 - ANQA's database of experts includes professionals from different state and private universities, managers, academic staff, employers, etc. Database of international experts is also formed, which includes experienced professionals from several international leading organizations. As a result of all these, ANQA managed not only to ensure the availability and reliability of required experts, but also to form effective mechanisms of expert recruitment.
- Internationalization: Create preconditions for ANQA international recognition.
 - Memorandums of cooperation have been signed with several international QA organizations. International experience has been observed and localized in different activities of ANQA. Close connections have been established on regional level. Consequently ANQA is the carrier and disseminator of international experience and is recognized by international and foreign organizations.

Thus, the above-mentioned goals in general are successfully achieved. Though not all the issues have been completely solved, ANQA has managed to overcome the transitional period currently facing new challenges.

Needs and Challenges

One of the most important indicators of the successful formation of QA system in the field of tertiary education is the stakeholders' understandings of their own interests and aspiration to participate in the QA processes. Thereby, during the period of transition the main challenges were the formation of quality area, quality culture and the capacity-building, while at the current stage of mostly formed QA system the challenges arise from the needs of stakeholders. Having realized the importance of quality assurance for tertiary education and ANQA's role, the stakeholders of the sphere have become active stakeholders of ANQA. This has been strengthened by ANQA's work with different groups of stakeholders, during which the needs of stakeholders were revealed and registered. ANQA's stakeholders are its founder, i.e. the Republic of Armenia represented by the Government, TLIs, teaching and support staffs, students and bodies formed by students, entrants and other stakeholders connected to entrants, alumni, employers, foreign entrants and students, foreign TLIs and employers, and ANQA staff.

Taking into account the needs of stakeholders revealed through researches and surveys, the current challenges for ANQA are the following:

- support for further development internal QA systems in HEIs,
- effective organization of programme accreditation process and ensuring its public recognition,
- protection of competition and students' interests in the market of professional educational services,
- international promotion of local TLIs,
- transparency of reliable information on quality of tertiary education and its availability for both local and international stakeholders.

ANQA determines the directions of its strategic development for the upcoming years heading toward the mentioned challenges.

Mission

ANQA fosters the assurance of tertiary education quality standards and ongoing quality enhancement, supporting the autonomy and accountability of TLLs.

While performing its activities derived from the mission, ANQA represents public interest, strives to increase the competitiveness of TLLs and their graduates and is guided by the following principles:

- Public trust. This principle is based on democracy and its idea that public is holding real power and determining its own future. By its activities ANQA guarantees public trust to tertiary education.
- Social cohesion and responsibility. One of the main goals of education is socialization (i.e. development of respect for norms, values and principles of democratic society) which will ensure social cohesion. In this regard, the role of quality assurance is to increase the awareness of the society regarding its right to receive quality education, which is typical of democratic societies. Sustainable and independent system of quality assurance will safeguard the society against low-quality education by making the services of tertiary education transparent for the public.
- Equity. ANQA strives to ensure equal opportunities for every social stratum through its approach to all the stakeholders of tertiary education. Particularly ANQA applies equal approach to public and private institutions.

Vision (2020)

ANQA is an organisation supporting the enhancement of tertiary education quality, internationally recognized and reliable for all its stakeholders.

Main Goals and Objectives

Three main goals proceed from ANQA's vision:

1. ANQA's activities have significantly supported the enhancement of tertiary education quality.
2. ANQA is a reliable organisation for all its stakeholders.
3. ANQA is an internationally recognized organisation.

Strategic Priorities for 2016-2020

Heading toward the challenges for quality assurance in the field of tertiary education and the needs of stakeholders, ANQA strategic priorities are the following:

- efficient fruition of programme accreditation process,
- ANQA's internationalization (both regional and European) aiming at the enhancement of the international recognition of Armenian tertiary education,
- development of ANQA's potential as an institution realizing external quality assurance in the field of tertiary education,
- launch of accreditation process for VET institutions.

To ensure their achievement, ANQA's main goals are divided into sub-goals, and corresponding objectives are set. The above-mentioned priorities are reflected in these sub-goals and objectives. Particularly, the following 10 sub-goals and 26 objectives are set for 2016-2020:

1.1. The assessments of TLLs and academic programmes organized by ANQA are basis for quality assurance and enhancement.

Objective 1.1.1. Organising assessments based on criteria and standards, which reflect public interests

Objective 1.1.2. Carrying out institutional accreditation of TLLs operating in Armenia to secure interests of the majority of students

Objective 1.1.3. Carrying out programme accreditation of academic programmes being operated in Armenia to secure interests of the majority of students

Objective 1.1.4. Providing expertise of TLLs, based on which institutions carry out quality enhancement of their activities realizing their usefulness for the stakeholders

Objective 1.1.5. Developing external QA policy and procedures for VET system

1.2. TLLs are provided with consultancy services.

Objective 1.2.1. Providing regular consultancy initiated by ANQA aimed at dissemination of QA methodology

Objective 1.2.2. Providing targeted consultancy initiated by TLLs aimed at overcoming of QA issues

1.3. ANQA carries out researches and analyses to reveal QA issues and best practices in the sphere of tertiary education.

Objective 1.3.1. Conducting and publishing regular thematic analyses

Objective 1.3.2. Publishing summarized information and analyses based on the accreditation processes

Objective 1.3.3. Ensuring QA experience exchange among TLLs

2.1. ANQA's assessments are publicly recognized as quality-reflecting objective indicators.

Objective 2.1.1. Ensuring stakeholders' awareness of the results of assessments organized by ANQA

Objective 2.1.2. Guiding the public in the field of tertiary education based on ANQA's assessments

2.2. TLIs are satisfied with the results of ANQA’s assessments regardless of being positive or negative.

Objective 2.2.1. Ensuring availability of experts who are reliable and acceptable by TLIs

Objective 2.2.2. Ensuring existence of reliable appeal mechanism

2.3. ANQA ensures independence of its activities.

Objective 2.3.1. Ensuring impartiality of assessments

Objective 2.3.2. Ensuring financial independence of ANQA

2.4. ANQA is an efficiently performing sustainable organization.

Objective 2.4.1. Ensuring efficiency of ANQA’s management system

Objective 2.4.2. Being adequately resourced

Objective 2.4.3. Ensuring existence of reliable internal QA system at ANQA

3.1. ANQA is member of organizations which ensure international recognition, and participates in international programs.

Objective 3.1.1. Expanding ANQA’s membership in organizations which ensure international recognition

Objective 3.1.2. Localizing international best practices by making them accessible for local TLIs, as member of international organizations and participant of international programs

Objective 3.1.3. Presenting experience of local TLIs for its checking, improving and recognition, as member of international organizations and participant of international programs

3.2. ANQA carries out assessments abroad and quality of its services are not inferior to similar services provided by European agencies.

Objective 3.2.1. Forming international demand for services provided by ANQA and organizing assessments of foreign TLIs

Objective 3.2.2. Carrying out joint assessments

3.3. ANQA's assessments are recognized by foreign entrants, TLIs, employers.

Objective 3.3.1. Forming transparent environment for foreign stakeholders

Objective 3.3.2. Ensuring recognition of ANQA's assessments by foreign stakeholders