



**ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE  
DECREE № 28**

**ANQA-2018/28**

27 October, 2018

General information about the Institution

The full name of the Institution      **“Vazgen Sargsyan Military University of RA Ministry Of Defence” State Institution**  
Official address:                       RA, Yerevan, Nor Nork 6<sup>th</sup> district, 77 Shopron street  
Previous accreditation decree and date: Not available

Guided by the regulation on “State Accreditation of the RA Institutions and their Educational Programmes” approved by the RA Government on 30 June, 2011 N 978-Ն decree; by RA Government decree N 959-Ն (30 June, 2011) on “Approval of RA Standards for Professional Education Accreditation”; by the Procedure on the Formation and Functioning of Accreditation Committee of “National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance” foundation (ANQA) as well as by ANQA Regulation on the Formation of the Expert Panel, in the open session held on 27 October, 2018, the Accreditation Committee of “National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance” foundation (hereinafter referred to as the Committee) discussed the issue of state institutional accreditation of **“Vazgen Sargsyan Military University of RA Ministry Of Defence” State Institution** (MU) with the presence of representatives from the RA Ministry of Defence, the Head of the Expert Panel, and ANQA coordinator of the accreditation procedure.

Having examined the self-analysis presented by MU, the comments of MU concerning the draft expert panel report, the expert panel report, MU action plan for the elimination of shortcomings mentioned in the Expert Panel report as well as ANQA conclusion, the Committee stated the following:

The main phases of the accreditation process were carried out within the following periods:

Submission of application	14 July, 2017
Submission of self-evaluation report	06 March, 2018
Expert panel site-visit	11-14 June, 2018
Submission of expert panel report	31 August, 2018
Submission of action plan on elimination of shortcomings	5 October 2018

The expertise was carried out by an independent expert panel formed in compliance with the requirements set by the ANQA regulation on "Formation of expert panel"<sup>1</sup>. The evaluation was carried out according to the 10 criteria of institutional accreditation approved by the RA Government decree N 959-N as of 30 June 2011.

While carrying out the peer-review the Expert panel took into consideration that V. Sargsyan Military University of MoD is a higher military education institution the main mission of which is to prepare BA and MA military specialists with necessary skills and competences in line with modern international standards and scientific-educational tendencies through the implementation of academic programs. The expert panel also took into consideration that MU has a military importance for RA military sphere. At the same time MU is under the immediate supervision of MoD and in many cases does not have freedom for making decisions. One of the most important factors taken into consideration by the expert panel during the expertise was that MU combines the statuses of a professional education institution and a military unit with all the related environmental, procedural and other peculiarities.

Internal and external stakeholders of MU have merely the same impression about the mission of the University which proves that the role of MU in the society is clearly formulated. However unified clear formulation of mission and vision is still missing at the University. 2015-2020 long-term development plan of MU is developed not in the format of a strategic plan but rather a plan-schedule. Expected outcomes and indicators for assessment are not mentioned in the plan which puts the processes of revealing achievements and shortcomings of MU activities as well as further effective planning at a risk.

Elements of military unit and university systems are combined in the management system of MU. There is a clear hierarchy among the management circles but there are also collegial bodies typical to an education institution like Scientific Council and Methodical Councils. Responsibilities of each structural unit and each staff member of MU are strictly defined in the respective documents. Sometimes changes are made in the management structure but they do not always depend on the analysis of effectiveness of the management system.

In spite of the existence of collegial bodies there is a danger of one-man decision in MU by the officers having higher military rank. Formal participation of cadets in the management procedures stands for that.

The planning process and following the plans are given much importance to in MU. This is ensured through the application of clearly defined mechanisms of bottom-up accountability. The latter however is not made complete with external accountability. The current approach of publication of very limited information on MU activities does not foster improvement of social opinion about MU, moreover, it hinders the opportunities of MU to carry out fundraising activities.

Academic programs being implemented at MU are fully in line with the mission of MU to prepare commander staff for RA Armed Forces (AF). The academic programs have mostly an applied nature. While developing academic programs MU defined their goals and objectives, intended learning outcomes which are in line with NQF descriptors. Admission requirements are also involved in the academic programs and teaching, learning and assessment methods are outlined. And what for the career of the alumni, serving in the RA AF is considered as such. MU has developed "Regulation of the organization of education processes with a credit system and assessment of the knowledge of learners" however the number of international mobility of

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix 1 - Expert Panel Composition and ANQA Support Staff

cadets and teaching staff is limited conditioned by objective reasons: differences of military equipment and armament in the Armed Forces, danger of experience exchange in military sphere, differences in the raised problems, and subjective reasons: lack of implementation of academic program benchmarking, exchange programs and foreign language proficiency.

There is a tendency in MU to implement assessment of cadets on clear basis. It refers to the organization of examinations, final attestations and current assessment. There are quantitative tangible norms of assessment and methodical instructions on the level of some courses in MU. The basis for the appeal of marks are RA AF regulations however cases of appeal did not occur in MU and the University hasn't yet analyzed the reasons for that.

There is a tendency in the chairs to continuously improve the academic programs. MU regularly reviews the academic programs taking into account the feedback and changes of RA AF as well as the results of surveys conducted among the cadets and attendees.

There are clear mechanisms of cadets' collection and selection in MU. However MU has not conducted studies of their effectiveness. Regular studies of cadets' needs is carried out in MU through conduction of surveys, there are also mechanisms for the provision of additional educational consultancy to cadets, regulation for turning to the administrative staff, etc. Steps towards the creation of scientific-research atmosphere for cadets at MU are not targeted, the desire of cadets to deal with research activities is still in a low level. MU strives to ensure effective educational environment for cadets trying to apply mechanisms of evaluating the quality of provided services. However the absence of systematic analysis hinders the complete disclosure of problems existing in learning environment and provided services as well as finding their effective solutions to them.

The requirements set for the professional qualities of the teaching staff are formulated in a general way: not less than 50% of the teaching staff should have scientific degree or title and/or long-term military service work experience in the relevant sphere. Having lack of specialists with scientific degree and title is conditioned by objective reasons however it causes the danger of having only specialists with military service experience thus omitting research and pedagogical skills.

The workload of teaching staff is not analyzed in MU which causes a serious danger of being overloaded because besides the teaching activity according to individual plans activities of self-development as well as additional lessons and consultancy for cadets are also envisaged. There are mechanisms of regular assessment of teaching staff and improvement of teaching such as class observations, surveys and activities of methodical consultancy.

The circle of ambitions and interests of MU in the research sphere is not yet clearly formulated. MU doesn't have mechanisms encouraging learners' and teachers' involvement in research initiatives which decreases the motivation of teaching staff and cadets to make research activities as well as puts the formation of research skills and competences of learners at a risk.

Internationalization of the results of research activities on the institutional level is not given much importance to by MU. There is no clear policy on the development of scientific research at MU. Analysis of research results are not carried out at the University in terms of effectiveness and impact, thus their absence can hinder further development of research activities as well as the implementation of activities towards the improvement. Progressiveness of scientific-research activities are not ensured in MU.

Education environment in MU is like a military unit which on the one hand causes limits (usage of external information recourses, academic honesty) and on the other hand is in favour

of a cadet as the environment corresponds to the environment of further military service of the cadets as much as possible.

Currently there is no diversification of financial resources at MU however it does not cause any danger of reduction of funding. Stable source of MU funding is RA state budget. RA MoD provides means to MU according to the provided estimates which express MU's financial and material needs.

Material resources of RA AF and MoD are also available for MU. The territory of MU is rich in all the necessary technical means for the implementation of academic programs. Classrooms are equipped according to courses taught, i.e. classrooms are not attached to the groups of cadets for the implementation of different courses but instead classrooms are equipped for a particular course and this helps to raise the effectiveness of the application of resources. Satisfaction with material resources in MU is assessed through surveys conducted among the stakeholders and through other feedback mechanisms. However MU material-resource base needs further improvement.

MU has strict mechanisms and procedures of accountability within the University and to MoD. Accountability to public by MU is mainly done through MoD. Limits concerning the transparency of procedures and processes as well as availability to the public are often objectively conditioned by the confidentiality of information. However processes and procedures which do not contain military secret or provisions for the safety of the state are not transparent either and they are not published.

Non sufficient efforts by MU in terms of the application of diverse and effective tools for public relations can hinder the formation and strengthening of comprehensive and positive image of MU among the public. MU has stable feedback mechanisms with departments of RA MoD, RA AF and with alumni by creating objective perspectives of MU future development. At the same time it should be mentioned that mechanisms of public relations are not consistent which can result in the detachment of MU activities from public developments. MU does not have its own page.

The formulations in the long-term development plan of MU do not reflect MU's circle and ambitions of internationalization. The absence of policy and procedures regulating the sphere put at a risk the implementation of coordinated activities. MU cooperates with limited circle of local and international organizations and the planned events and activities are not always implemented and for the non-implemented activities respective decisions are made<sup>2</sup>. Cases of cadet mobility are limited and on an ad hoc basis, mobility of teaching staff is not carried out at MU. MU does not yet ensure sufficient level of foreign language proficiency among its internal stakeholders and this is a serious obstacle for internationalization. Though some steps towards internationalization are being taken, MU does not yet have environment promoting the development of exchange of experience and internationalization.

MU has QA traditions derived from the peculiarities of military sphere. QA policy and procedures are stipulated in the basic documents, especially in the QA manual. All the staff members of MU are aware of the provisions of QA manual understanding the importance of QA processes and the University values. MU provides sufficient human resources for the management QA internal processes. Internal and external stakeholders are involved in QA processes. The absence of analysis of the effectiveness of QA tools does not give an

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<sup>2</sup>□ The sentence was reformulated after the feedback got from the University.

**opportunity to objectively assess the impact of QA processes on the improvement of academic programs and University activities. The absence of systematized process of evaluating and reviewing the QA system is conditioned by the fact that QA system at MU is still in the stage of stabilization.**

Observing the presented package of documents and considering the opinions of Head of the Expert Panel and representatives of MU, as well as taking into account that:

a/having military importance from the perspective of preparation and training of professionals of the RA military sphere MU solves a great issue of ensuring the RA Armed Forces with necessary command staff;

b/for the provision of the academic programs with proper quality MU has established a sufficient university environment with some highlights of military unit and has necessary material-technical resources and teaching staff having relevant professional qualifications;

c/some shortcomings were revealed in the institutional capacities:

1. The shortcomings in **“Research and Development”** weaken the role of MU as an education institution in the general sphere of education, do not foster provision of advanced education as well as can hinder the formation of analytical skills among the alumni.
2. The shortcomings in **“External Relations and Internationalization”** do not allow fulfilling the goals of internationalization set for MU: as a result of international cooperation to improve the quality of military education and service, to enhance the competitiveness of the university in national and international levels, to create favorable environment for dialogue and to ensure competitiveness of MU alumni on national and international levels

d/ the shortcomings mentioned in the expert panel report do not influence the effectiveness of organization of academic programs and credibility of awarded qualifications;

e/ the analysis of strong points, opportunities and current problems of the Institution show that in case of necessary support from the RA Ministry of Defence the action plan for the elimination of shortcomings of MU is realistic;

f/ through the invested QA system the Institution can manage the main risks of its activities.

As a result of voting the Accreditation Committee

### **DECIDED**

1. To award **“Vazgen Sargsyan Military University of RA Ministry Of Defence” State Institution an Institutional Accreditation with a 4 /four/ year period.**
2. Within two months after the publication of the Decree on Awarding Institutional Accreditation to submit an action plan on elimination of shortcomings mentioned in the Expert Panel report and corresponding time-schedule to ANQA taking into account:
  - a. the necessity of finding solutions primarily to the problems existing in the fields of **“Research and Development”** and **“External Relations and Internationalization”**;

- b. the necessity of having KPIs for the evaluation of effectiveness of processes carried out by MAU;
  - c. the results of evaluation and recommendations of the international expert in terms of being integrated into European Higher Education Area.
3. To pay special attention to the reinforcement of the link between learning and research, improvement of management system, modernization of necessary logistics, mobility of teaching staff and students, training of teaching staff, improvement of internal quality assurance system.
  4. According to the requirements of clause 12 of the Regulation on “State Accreditation of RA Institutions and their Educational Programmes” every 2 /two/ years to submit a written report to ANQA on the results of the carried out activities evaluating the improvements, innovations and achievements of MU.
  5. To assign ANQA to monitor the effectiveness of MU activities based on the KPIs.

**President of the Accreditation Committee**

**S. Avetisyan**

**October 27, 2018, Yerevan**