



National Center For Professional
Education Quality Assurance
Foundation

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

ANQA-2022/72

DECREE N 72

September 15, 2022

**ON ACCREDITATION OF INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES OF
M. NALBANDYAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF SHIRAK FOUNDATION**

General Information about the Institution

Full name of the Institution: M. Nalbandyan State University of Shirak Foundation

Official Address: 4 Paruyr Sevak Str., Gyumri, RA

Previous Accreditation Institutional accreditation for a period of 4 years:

decision and date: 22.09.2016-22.09.2020

Guided by the Statute on the State Accreditation of RA Education Institutions and their Academic Programs approved by the RA Government Decree N 978-N as of 30 June 2011, the RA Government Decree N 959-N as of 30 June 2011 on approval of Establishing Accreditation Criteria for Tertiary Education of RA, the Procedure on the Formation and Operation of the Accreditation Committee of the National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance foundation (hereinafter referred to as ANQA)” as well as by the Regulation on the Formation of ANQA Expert Panel, ANQA’s Accreditation Committee (hereinafter referred to as the Committee) discussed the issue on accreditation of institutional capacities of the M. Nalbandyan State University of Shirak (hereinafter referred to as “SUSH”, “TLI”) in the session of the Accreditation Committee held on September 15, 2022.

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

Submission of application: June 3, 2019

Submission of the self-evaluation: December 17, 2021

Site visit by the expert panel: March 15-18, 2022

Submission of expert panel report: June 14, 2022

Submission of the preliminary follow-up plan July 18, 2022

The external review of the SUSH's institutional capacities was carried out by an independent expert panel formed in compliance with the requirements set by the Regulation on the Formation of the Expert Panel. The evaluation was carried out according to the 10 criteria of institutional accreditation approved by the RA Government Decree N 959 as of 30 June 2011.

Among 10 criteria of the institutional accreditation, 3 of them — **“Governance and Administration”**, **“Academic Programmes”**, **“Research and Development”** were evaluated as unsatisfactory.

Having examined the SUSH's self-evaluation of institutional capacities, remarks and suggestions on the preliminary version of the expert panel report, the expert panel report, the follow-up plan; having heard the conclusions on the expert panel evaluation, which were made by the three members selected by the Chair of the Accreditation Committee and were formed as a result of the meetings with the expert panel members and the SUSH's representatives; as well the comments and suggestions made by the Accreditation Committee members, the Committee stated the following:

1. There are fundamental problems and risks in terms of the credible award of qualifications. However, there are trends and examples of development.

The SUSH's academic programmes (APs) meet the requirements of the NQF.

The SUSH involved employers and students in the process of the APs' development as well.

However, the SUSH has to carry out some activities in terms of the APs' review, definition of outcomes, expansion of the optional component, and the formation of applied and practical skills. The APs do not contain outcomes aimed at the development of practical skills. Some APs do not show the correlation between the outcome of the given profession and the outcomes mentioned in the course descriptors. Generally, it is not clear what assignments, teaching and learning methods are used to achieve the outcome. Though there is an assessment system, it is not clear how the outcome will be assessed.

The SUSH is provided with full-time teaching staff with relevant academic degrees and there are no risks from the perspective of stability. However, the number of employer teachers with practical

skills is quite limited. The breakdown of employer-TLI ties and segmental collaborations do not contribute to the preparation of alumni in accordance with employers' requirements.

No clear requirements have been set in the APs for the professional qualifications of the academic staff yet.

The SUSH has the necessary resources for the creation of a learning environment and the effective realization of the defined mission and goals. Generally, the SUSH has carried out the resource replenishment from the financial inputs from international programmes. With an estimate of the SUSH's income and expenditure, the allocation of funds is not generally carried out according to strategic priorities.

2. The governance system is at the stage of formation. However, there are development trends. Governance and quality assurance systems are aimed at quality enhancement and the credible award of qualifications.

After the first accreditation, the SUSH has reviewed its mission. However, it is ambitious and needs revision. The mission does not reflect the local problems that exist in the region.

There is a problem in terms of the governance system's effectiveness. The governance is mostly situational and there is no result-oriented management. After the expiration of the strategic plan (SP) 2015-2019, the SUSH has not developed a new SP.

Monitoring mechanisms for long-term and short-term planning do not work effectively. There are significant deviations between long-term, mid-term, short-term plannings and their actual performance. There are no evaluations of the governance system's effectiveness and analyzes on the external environment.

The SUSH has reviewed the organizational structure and redistributed functions. However, in the absence of a clearly developed SP, these changes are also situational.

Previous accreditation recommendations in the field of Governance and Administration are generally unimplemented.

The quality assurance process is systematic and can point out key issues. There is a document base and the processes are aimed at the dissemination and enhancement of quality culture. However, it is not clear to what extent upper governing bodies find appropriate solutions to the above-mentioned problems.

Since 2018, the quality assurance centre has merged with the scientific policy and management centres. As a result of the implemented changes, the principle on independence of quality assurance is jeopardized. The center lacks sufficient independence to assess the quality of management and research.

Generally, the governance system is at the stage of formation. However, there are development trends. Quality assurance system supports processes aimed at the enhancement of education quality.

3. Internationalization and research activities do not sufficiently support the credible award of qualifications.

After the first accreditation, the SUSH carried out certain reforms towards both internationalization and enhancement of research works' quality. However, the TLI has not yet defined a strategy for expressing its interests and ambitions in the research field at the institutional level.

Since 2014, the procedure for the promotion of scientific research and scientific methodical works of employees has been introduced and is in operation.

The SUSH has the Centre for External Cooperation and Public Relations. Through this division, the SUSH has participated in more than 10 international cooperation programmes.

The SUSH uses multi-level accountability mechanism. Reports include a certain analytical component and are debatable and public. Generally, the SUSH ensures the transparency and accessibility of procedures and processes among public.

Pre-attestation training courses for teachers of Shirak's public education institutions has been carried out at the SUSH. The TLI has planned the continuous implementation of that activity.

The SUSH has mechanisms for student recruitment, selection and admission. There is a Regulation on identification, support and guidance of students needs of SUSH according to which, a study of

students' educational needs is carried out. Since 2018, a service of academic recommendations has been introduced, which is organized by the Library – Academic Consultations Centre.

Career services for students still do not operate effectively.

Students do not have enough methodology to conduct research.

Generally, internationalization and research activities have development trends and support the credible award of qualifications.

4. The shortcomings mentioned in the expert panel report have crucial impact in terms of the credible award of qualifications. However, grounds are laid for enhancement.

5. The follow-up plan essentially includes main recommendations given by experts. The follow-up plan is realistic and in case of implementation that will lead to qualitative changes.

Taking into consideration the above mentioned, as a result of an open voting, the Accreditation Committee:

DECIDED

1. **To award conditional institutional accreditation to M. Nalbandyan State University of Shirak Foundation for 2 /two/ years.**
2. After the publication of the decision on accreditation award, to submit a revised follow-up plan based on the expert panel report and respective time schedule to ANQA within two months, taking into account the need to give urgent solution to the problems existing in the fields of “**Governance and Administration**”, “**Academic Programmes**”, “**Research and Development**” were evaluated as unsatisfactory.
3. To pay special attention to:
 - a) the stimulation of the stakeholders’ participation in the processes of evaluation of the TLI's mission, goals and objectives, educational needs;
 - b) the need to have clear and measurable qualitative and quantitative indicators for evaluating the effectiveness of the implemented processes;
 - c) the need to provide solutions to the problems raised;
 - d) the involvement of young and well-experienced specialists representing practical field;

- e) the decision-making based on the processes of data collection and analysis of results;
 - f) the connection of research and educational processes, the acquisition of practical skills;
 - g) the implementation of the PDCA cycle in all the processes;
 - h) the organization of teaching aimed at the development of students' analytical, creative and critical skills.
4. In accordance with the requirements set by point 12 of the Statute on the State Accreditation of RA Education Institutions and their Academic Programs, every 6 /six/ months to submit a written report to the ANQA on the results of carried out activities by ensuring the evaluation of enhancement of the TLI's activity, innovations and achievements.
5. To assign the ANQA to carry out mandatory monitoring of effectiveness of the activities of the TLI in accordance with the KPIs.

Chair of the Accreditation Committee:

A. Saghyan

September 23, 2022

Yerevan