



National Center For Professional
Education Quality Assurance
Foundation

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

ANQA-2022/74

DECREE N 74

October 10, 2022

ON ACCREDITATION OF INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES OF MESROP MASHTOTS UNIVERSITY

General Information about the Institution

Full name of the Institution: Mesrop Mashtots University SNCO
Official Address: 72 Garegin Nzhdeh Str., Stepanakert,
Republic of Artsakh
Previous Accreditation **Not available**
decision and date:

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 Mesrop Mashtots University (hereinafter referred to as “MMU”, “TLI”) in the session of the Accreditation Committee held on October 10, 2022.

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

Submission of application: December 27, 2019
Submission of the self-evaluation: December 21, 2021
Site visit by the expert panel: May 2-5, 2022

Submission of expert panel report: July 18, 2022

Submission of the preliminary follow-up plan September 1, 2022

The external review of the MMU'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, 2 of them — **“Governance and Administration”**, **“Infrastructure and Resources”** were evaluated as unsatisfactory.

Having examined the MMU'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 MMU's representatives; as well the comments and suggestions made by the Accreditation Committee members, the Committee stated the following:

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

The subject content of the academic programmes (APs) corresponds to the requirements of the NQF and the MMU's mission. The TLI has started the redevelopment of the APs. Bachelor's APs include mappings with the outcomes and the NQF's descriptors, but the master's APs are not outcome-based yet. There are no specifications. As a positive fact, it should be noted that some APs include various teaching methods and individual assignments for students. A benchmarking of different HEIs' APs has been carried out in the APs' preparation process. However, they have not been documented.

Though the implementation cycle of the APs has not yet been finished, ongoing monitoring of the APs is carried out and certain problems have been identified that are already in the enhancement process.

37% of the MMU's alumni work in their professions, which proves their demand in the labor market.

The MMU has a problem of maintaining the AP's stability, which is conditioned by a number of factors, e.g. getting a job at other HEIs, leaving Artsakh after the 44-Day War, etc.

The requirements for the academic staff's professional qualities are not formulated for specific academic programmes.

Working in difficult conditions, the MMU is also able to carry out the training process of the academic staff. The TLI devotes lots of space to the organization of online lectures with the involvement of RA and foreign specialists.

As a result of surveys conducted among students, the academic staff has been highly appreciated. Class observations are conducted, which are the main tools of needs assessment and help to monitor the professional growth of young teachers, as well as identify their training needs.

The MMU has a policy for attracting teachers with academic degrees through high salaries. As a result of the war, there is a shortage of teaching staff. The MMU has procedures for the academic staff's recruitment, training and evaluation. Procedures for regular evaluation of the teaching staff have been set. Mentors are appointed for young teachers. Class observations are held. Reports of class observations are in place.

The resource base may not be sufficient for the organization of the APs at this time.

2. Governance system is at the stage of formation. There are development trends. Governance and quality assurance systems are aimed at quality enhancement and the credible award of qualifications.

The MMU lacks strategic and risk management system based on the. The MMU does not conduct a study of the factors affecting that. The TLI carries out situational management.

Since 2013, the MMU has reached a new level of activity regulation. There are regulations for almost all functions.

The MMU has certain human resources for the realization of educational and other goals. However, the number of administrative staff is limited and overloaded with a number of functions. Material

and financial resources are strictly limited, but the MMU tries to use them as much as possible for the realization of strategic goals.

Data collection mechanisms are in place, but their effectiveness has not yet been evaluated.

The strategic plan (SP) 2019-2023 meets the requirements of the NQF and the management staff is guided by it.

The management system attaches importance to quality assurance processes and already has considerable input in that direction. The quality assurance system supports the processes aimed at the enhancement of education quality.

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

Taking into consideration the existing objective problems in Artsakh, it can be stated that MMU has taken active steps towards the development of the research, creative environment, internationalization, external relations and feedback with stakeholders.

The MMU does not have a separate strategy related to the scientific research field. However, in its SP and implementation plan, the MMU has clarified its interest in the field of scientific research, recognizing Caucasology as a priority direction. That is important for a university like MMU, as it gives the opportunity to concentrate scientific potential and scarce funds. In 2015, the Caucasology Center was opened, as well as the Research Methodology course was introduced in the academic programmes. A research component in the format of individual works has also been included in various courses.

Since 2006, the MMU has published collection of a periodic scientific articles "Scientific Bulletin", which has been included in the list of scientific publications acceptable for the Supreme Certifying Committee.

The MMU has an accountability culture, but the reports are mostly descriptive and factual. The TLI ensures the transparency and accessibility of the procedures and processes through its official website, Facebook page, and various social networks.

The MMU attaches importance to the provision of public services, particularly through additional courses. The MMU has contracts with the Red Cross and a number of other organizations operating in Artsakh, which are directed towards the provision of additional services/courses for their employees. The MMU highlights the increase in the educational, scientific and cultural level of the society. Short-term courses are conducted by stakeholders.

The MMU does not have a developed policy on the development of external relations and internationalization. Since its foundation, the MMU has strived for comprehensive development of external relations and internationalization of its activities. The MMU managed to sign cooperation agreements with the HEIs of the Russian Federation and unrecognized states.

Until the war of 2020, the MMU cooperated with the SSCF (Swiss South Caucasus Foundation) and jointly implemented 13 projects, including the involvement of foreign specialists in the development of APs, alternative courses of modular programmes, international business trips of students and staff, organization of international conferences.

The MMU has clear mechanisms for student recruitment and admission in case of both full-time and part-time education systems. There are mechanisms for the identification of students' educational needs. In case of problems, students also raise them in the relevant faculty councils, during the meetings with deans and heads of chairs.

The students are provided with recommendations once a week, but no evaluation of their effectiveness has been carried out. Awareness of the information provided by the Career Center is still low.

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 generally includes the recommendations mentioned by the expert panel. 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 Mesrop Mashtots University SNCO 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”, “Infrastructure and Resources”**.
3. To pay special attention to:
 - a) the need to review the TLI’s vision, making it more measurable and accessible;
 - b) the need to have clear and measurable qualitative and quantitative indicators for evaluating the effectiveness of the implemented processes;
 - c) the need to have clear and measurable qualitative and quantitative indicators for the TLI's mission and goals, as well as the evaluation of the effectiveness of the implemented processes;
 - d) the need to define requirements for professional knowledge, skills and capacities of teachers in the APs;
 - e) the need to have a long-term prospective plan for the development and expansion of research works;
 - f) the data collection, analysis of results and their use in the decision-making process;
 - g) the improvement of the accountability system, making it more analytical;
 - h) the connection of research and educational processes, the acquisition of practical skills,
 - i) the organization of teaching aimed at the development of students' analytical, creative and critical skills;
 - j) the implementation of the PDCA cycle in all the processes.
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

October 31, 2022

Yerevan