



National Center For Professional
Education Quality Assurance
Foundation

**EXPERT PANEL REPORT
ON INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION OF
GYUMRI STATE PEDAGOGICAL INSTITUTE**

INTRODUCTION

The institutional accreditation of Gyumri State Pedagogical Institute (hereinafter GSPI) is carried out based on the application presented by the Institute. The process of institutional accreditation is organized and coordinated by the National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance, Foundation (ANQA).

ANQA is guided by the regulation on “State Accreditation of RA Institutions and their Educational Programs” set by the RA Government on 30 June, 2011 N978 decree as well as by N959-Ն (30 June, 2011) decree on approving RA Standards for Professional Education Accreditation.

The expertise was carried out by the expert panel formed according to the demands of ANQA Regulation on the Formation of the Expert Panel. The expert panel consisted of 4 local experts and 1 international expert from the UK.

Institutional accreditation aims not only to the external evaluation of quality assurance but also to the continuous improvement of the institution’s management and quality of educational programs. Hence, there were two important issues for the expert panel members:

1. To carry out an expertise of institutional capacities in line with the RA standards for state accreditation
2. To carry out an evaluation for the improvement of university’s quality and for its integration to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

The report refers to the expertise of institutional capacities of GSPI according to the state criteria and standards for accreditation as well as to the peer review according to the ESG.

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SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES ACCORDING TO ACREDITATION CRITERIA

The expertise of the GSPI was carried out by the expert panel formed according to the demands of ANQA Regulation on the Formation of the Expert Panel. The evaluation was carried out according to the 10 criteria set by the RA Government on 30 June, 2011 N 959-Ն decree.

While carrying out the expertise the expert panel took into consideration that preparing and training professionally compatible professionals with deep knowledge and corresponding skills on BA and MA levels fostering qualifications of a researcher also through the academic programs (hereinafter AP) is the strategic priority of the University. Fully realizing its role in the scientific-academic, cultural and social-economical spheres of the region, as well as in the process of formation of civilian society, the GSPI has settled a priority of becoming a form of “regional centre” for the city of Gyumri and for Shirak Region in general.

The expert panel states that the policy and the operations of the GSPI in general are in line with the mission adopted by the Institute. However, at present there are certain differences and discrepancies between the name, the statute and the mission of the institute, which risk the process of development of the institute. The name and the current statute of the University do not reflect the holistic cycle of operations of the Institute (the existence of non-pedagogical disciplines) which subsequently diminishes the recognition of the GSPI. The expert panel appreciates the fact that the GSPI, which has adopted the policy of becoming a regional TLI, has an intention of changing its statute with the aim of making the latter more consistent with the mission.

There are 31 full-time and 29 part-time BA, 18 full-time MA programmes in 6 faculties of the GSPI. 20 research academic programmes are carried out in 4 scientific directions. Both the pedagogical and non-pedagogical academic programmes of the TLI are generally speaking consistent with its mission, however, there are the ones which are not in line with the mission as determined in the Strategic Plan (hereinafter SP). These are some specializations which at present are not demanded in the Republic of Armenia (hereinafter RA) labour market and subsequently there are only small groups, and in some cases even one or two students. As far as part-time studies are concerned, there are myriad serious issues that the GSPI faces; in particular these refer to insufficient number of hours which leads to a non-effective realization of academic programmes. The effectiveness and the objectiveness of current assessment system implementations are low, especially when the part-time studies are concerned, since it is here that a low attainment of students can be traced.

The expert panel appreciates the fact that the GSPI has elaborated a policy and procedures aimed at recruitment of teaching and support staff aimed at AP implementation. The said regulation, which foresees competitive selection for the majority of positions, enhances the procedure of having more competitive teaching staff. Due to the said document, throughout the recent years an augmentation in the number of those teachers who hold either scientific degrees or ranks has occurred. The fact, that the majority of the teaching staff is full-time, noticeably enhances the stability of the teaching staff and the sustainable implementation of APs. The fact that the institute tries to fill-in the gap of the shortage of teaching staff by means of its MA and research alumni is a positive tendency. Though the GSPI has certain mechanisms aimed at teacher promotion, the expert panel thinks it worrisome, that throughout the last three years an increase in the number of young teachers can be traced (from 19 to 16%). This is quite a vulnerable issue from the perspective of ensuring sound generation change.

At present the GSPI has enough infrastructures and resources to implement its academic programmes. However, the expert panel finds that the GSPI faces the need of resource improvement and enrichment. Classes are organized in two shifts. The expert panel states that in this scenario both the academic operations of the students and the activities of the teachers will become more difficult. Notwithstanding current academic resources (laboratories, computers, projectors and etc), there is still a need of renovating and re-saturating technical means and laboratories. The said need was ascertained also by the participants of the meetings. Tuition fees are the main sources of financial flows, which endanger the financial sustainability of the institute within the light of a decreasing

number of students. Grant projects are an alternative sources of financial flows, which are accounted for only 1% of financial flows of the Institute.

The procedures aimed at students recruitment are quite precise and are carried out in accordance with the regulations ratified by the Ministry of Education and Science (hereinafter MoES) with corresponding events organized among prospective students, which are in line with recruitment operations. The Institute has carried out observations and realized professional orientation events through surveys, site-visits and discussions, which, the expert panel is inclined to believe, has had a positive impact on the recruitment of the students.

The expert panel thinks that the mechanisms and procedures (questionnaires) aimed at revealing the needs of the students are not sufficiently holistic and reliable. In this respect, especially vulnerable is the low level of surveys conducted among the part-time students aimed at revealing their needs. This endangers the process of raising the effectiveness of their academic operations. There are certain infrastructures in the Institute which strive to assist the students and to enhance the process of revealing their academic needs and to solve the latter. The students have the opportunity to participate in extra-curricular courses and to get consultations.

The GSPI lacks a precise strategy referring to research and its interests in the said field. This weakens the research operations. The fact that there are no mid-term and short-term plans in this respect also hinders the process. It is foreseen, that the said plans must be implemented started from 2017. There are certain undertakings with regard to research internationalization, since, de facto, there are no significant research operations in this respect, except for some articles published in international journals. This diminishes the mobility of the teaching staff and the framework of cooperation with foreign TLIs.

The main priorities and objective of internationalization and external relations are highlighted in the SP of the institute. The GSPI has singled out the comprehensive development of external relations, experience exchange and the operations fostering internationalization of the TLI as its aims.

The GSPI has certain experience in international projects, and at present it is involved in an array of TEMPUS Projects (ARARAT, HEN-GEAR, SuToMa, ARMENQA and else). Though the majority of the teaching staff dominates a foreign language, which might be sufficient for general communication, this is not enough for professional communication and for having academic courses in English which is quite necessary from the perspective of organizing student exchange programmes. With the aim of fostering foreign language acquisition, the Institute organizes English Language trainings for its teaching staff. There is also a Language Centre, where the students can participate in foreign language courses.

The expert panel appreciates the fact, that especially throughout the recent years certain reforms have been undertaken in the system of governance of the institution (Quality Assurance Centre (hereinafter QAC), University-Market Cooperation Unit and else), which are aimed at improvement of education quality, however, the organization of the Institute is not yet thoroughly adapted to the implementation of the mission and strategy, there is an issue of optimal allocation of management resources, the management is generally not carried out in accordance with the PDCA cycle. Notwithstanding the fact that the main infrastructures of the Institute do operate, the lack of scientific infrastructure is risky for the thorough implementation of the GSPI mission.

Throughout the recent years the implementation and the development of QA system can create conducive conditions for the formation of quality culture and for internal and external assessment. The regulations elaborated by the QAC serve as a base for the implementation of QA functions. The involvement of both the teachers and the students into QA operations, provides for a more targeted and effective operations, however, the level of their participation is still low. The Institute has an internal system of QA, which is still in its development fostering the continuous improvement of the GSPI operations, establishment of quality culture and strives to ensure the transparency of its operations.

STRENGTHS OF THE INSTITUTION

1. The GSPI has an important academic and social role, what is more, it solves the problem of providing the region with pedagogues.

2. The GSPI has qualified teaching and support staff. Throughout regular surveys the Institute reveals their needs.
3. The TLI has necessary resources aimed at the implementation of academic operations.
4. The Institute has accountability system, which reveals the operations carried out in the GSPI.
5. The University has certain experience participating in international projects which fosters external relations.
6. The TLI has an internal system of QA, which enhances the establishment of quality culture.

WEAKNESSES OF THE INSTITUTION

1. The SP of the GSPI is not based on precise analysis of environmental scanning.
2. The organigram of the GSPI is not adapted for the realization of its strategic aims, there is an issues of optimal allocation of its administrative resources.
3. Certain APs are not in line with market demands. The reviewed programmes are not yet carried out consistently.
4. There are certain problems related to the implementation of APs, as far as part-time studies are concerned. These problems are related to the organization of academic programmes and the effectiveness of assessment system.
5. The Institute does not have a policy on the development of research activates, moreover, the scientific-research priorities of the TLI are not made precise.
6. There are no necessary conditions for the students with special needs.
7. The reports elaborated by the TLI have but a descriptive nature and are not analytical to a necessary extent.
8. The level of foreign language acquisition at the GSPI is not sufficient enough.
9. The majority of operations carried out at the GSPI are at “do” and “plan” cycles which means that the PDCA cycle is not yet closed.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

Mission And Purpose

1. To determine the mission of the University by reflecting the peculiarities and the strengths of the GPSI. The needs of the stakeholders, in particular those of the teaching staff, alumni, students as well as the population of the region.
2. The make the mission, name, statute and operation undertaken more precise and in line with each other.
3. To elaborate and implement precise mechanisms and procedures aimed at SP improvement, as well as qualitative and quantitative assessment of strategic aims.
4. To provide the active involvement and feedback of stakeholders (especially external) in the process of SP implementation.

Governance and Administration

5. To improve the organigram of the Institute by adapting it for the implementation of strategic objectives.
6. To elaborate and implement a separate regulation on ethics.
7. To enhance external stakeholder involvement in the operations of management.
8. With the aim of risk management, to create a separate working group, which would continuously prepare reports on SP implementation.
9. To elaborate new mechanisms of data collection, analysis and those assessing the effectiveness of the latter referring to the effectiveness of governance operations.

Academic Programmes

10. To improve the list of APs, making the latter in line with labour-market demands.
11. To elaborate a policy and procedures aimed at teaching/learning method selection and modernization.
12. To reflect and ensure the link of teaching/learning methods and assessment means with the intended learning outcomes.
13. To improve the implementation of APs in part-time studies by elaborating more effective syllabi.
14. To elaborate and implement a policy on plagiarism and academic honesty.
15. To elaborate grounded approach referring to credit calculation by making credit allocation in line with best international practice.
16. To elaborate formal operations of AP monitoring.

Students

17. To make the mechanisms aimed at revealing the academic needs of the students more elaborate and to observe their effectiveness.
18. To develop the research activities of the students and to foster the link between the research and academic process.
19. To reform the functions of University- Market Cooperation Unit directing the latter towards assisting the students and alumni with their career.
20. To elaborate a regulation on how administrative staff can be addressed.
21. To foster the initiative on the part of the students to reveal issues.

Teaching and Support Staff

22. To elaborate professional requirements to be presented to the teaching staff in line with Academic Programmes.
23. To elaborate and implement a system of professional training of the teaching staff.
24. To elaborate mechanisms enhancing staffing the Institute with young professionals.
25. To elaborate and implement job descriptions for the teaching and support staff.
26. To evaluate the effectiveness of operations undertaken by the support staff and to elaborate mechanisms for fostering the said operations.

Research and Development

27. To elaborate precise priorities of research operations of the Institute taking into account the scientific experience accumulated in the Chairs and the resources available.
28. To foster international research undertakings.
29. To implement research component in the APs at a BA level and to promote its enhancement.
30. To enhance the development of research operations with other HEIs and research centers of the RA through implementing joint research topics, organizing seminars /especially throughout MA studies/ on problematic topics conducted by invited specialists from abroad and else.

Infrastructure and Resources

31. With the aim of insuring financial autonomy and sustainability, to ensure the diversity of external sources and to expand the number of grant projects.
32. To carry out financial planning and allocation taking into account the demands of the APs.
33. To improve library infrastructure by developing the usage of modern technologies.
34. To develop the scope of IT services rendered which would enhance the system of governance of the Institute, the implementation of distant learning and else.
35. To create conditions for students with special needs with the aim of making academic environment accessible.

Societal Responsibility

36. To develop analytical component in the system of accountability of the Institute.
37. To develop the mechanism of societal feedback and to make it more precise.
38. To elaborate and implement mechanisms aimed at assessing the services rendered to the society.

External Relations and Internationalization

39. To undertake certain steps with the aim of implementing international projects on their own initiative and investment.
40. To enhance the level of foreign language acquisition among its internal stakeholders with the aim of fostering external cooperation and implementation of APs in foreign language.
41. To activate cooperation with different other HEIs and scientific centres of the RA.

Internal Quality Assurance System

42. To elaborate and implement a policy, procedures and mechanisms aimed at enhancing the involvement of external stakeholders into the QA procedures.
43. To elaborate and implement mechanisms aimed at monitoring and analyses of QA system operations and to ensure continuous professional development of the staff responsible for the QA.
44. To improve the procedures of survey and data collection carried out in the Institute by implementing mechanisms aimed at their validity.

PEER-REVIEW FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF EDUCATION INSTITUTION'S INTEGRATION INTO EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

STRENGTHS OF GSPI

GSPI is a regional university which has faced a steep decline in the local economy and population, with consequent effects on student recruitment and resourcing. Despite this pressure some significant achievements have been made eg in updating buildings, increasing participation in international projects and in encouraging staff and students to write in refereed journals. The University has a good local reputation, especially in Pedagogy. Teaching at the University appears sound and achievement is measured against learning outcomes.

ACTIONS TO MEET EUROPEAN STANDARDS

Against international benchmarks the following may be noted, with *recommended actions in italics*:

1. Staff -student ratios and the management of teaching resources

The current reported staff student ratio of 9 to 1 seems to represent significant overstaffing by international standards with the retention of some subject areas with very few students leading to wastage and or the potential for a poor student experience. Well-intentioned support for declining subject areas seems to reflect the needs of staff rather than the needs of students or the local economy. Over -investment in staffing prevents investment in other key areas such as the electronic library.

Resources should be redirected to successful courses that attract students and meet the needs of the regional economy according to a clear and transparent formula

2. Strategic management of the institution

Strategic planning at GSPI is at an early stage and is not informed by proper statistical analysis of the internal or external environment, nor by the views of external stakeholders. The plan is not widely disseminated or understood. The objectives in the plan should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Realistic, Timely)

Strategic planning should be strengthened with improvements to intelligence and data gathering, and the wider use of performance monitoring and management at the level of Chairs and Deans. The local community should be involved in, and informed about progress on the strategic plan.

3. Research

Research output per head is below comparable international norms and could be improved despite the fact that publication in refereed journals is incentivised and rewarded.

Better use could be made of targeted research funds to support research and knowledge creation of benefit to the local economy, through eg joint funding of projects, better support for conference and seminar attendance and the preparation of research funding bids. A higher proportion of institution expenditure could be devoted to this purpose.

4. Academic programmes

There were significant weaknesses in some aspects of academic programmes. These included an apparent lack of understanding of the process for allocating credits to modules according to the hours of instruction, a failure to implement anti-plagiarism policy, a lack of oversight of and unevenness in assessment, a lack of effective data gathering, and limited external review of programmes. Taken together these factors suggest that GSPI still needs considerable work before it can join the European Higher Education Area. GSPI should:

- a) *ensure credits are allocated to modules consistently and in a way which enables credit transfer between institutions*
- b) *publish and educate staff and students about European definitions of plagiarism, and consistently enforce regulations eg through the use of online anti plagiarism software*
- c) *consider the introduction of peer review of all aspects of the assessment process, including setting and marking of assignments and examinations*
- d) *ensure that data is gathered about progression of students by course, benchmarked both internally and externally*
- e) *consider the introduction of regular programme reviews, including the use of external reviewers in this process*

5. Language policy

Although 30% of the library stock is reportedly held in Russian and in some subjects Russian sources predominate, new entrants to GSPI often lack proficiency in Russian.

GSPI should determine its long term policy towards language requirements at entry and language support for its students, together with an appropriate library acquisition strategy so that all learners can access materials in a language they can understand.

Vardan Sargsyan

Chair of the expert panel

15 January 2016.

DESCRIPTION OF EXTERNAL REVIEW

EXPERT PANEL COMPOSITION

The external expertise of the SER and QA operations of Gyumri State Pedagogical Institute was carried out by the expert panel having the following composition:

1. **Vardan Sargsyan** - Head of the Chair of IS, doctor, professor in Economics at Armenian State University of Economics.
2. **Patrick David Gray** - Head of Department of Social Professions of London Metropol University.
3. **Garegin Hambarzumyan** – PhD in veterinary, associate professor in the Chair of Physiology of State Medical University after M. Heratsy.
4. **Mergarita Shahverdyan** – Head of the Centre of Quality Assurance, PhD in Psychology at State Pedagogical University after H. Tumanyan of Vanadzor.
5. **Gohar Mikaelyan** – student at Armenian National Agrarian University.

The works of the expert panel were coordinated by Varduhi Gyulazyan – a specialist at ANQA Institutional and Program Accreditation Department.

The translation was provided by Zaruhi Soghomonyan – Head of the Chair of Foreign Languages at French University of Armenia.

The composition of expert panel was agreed upon with the University and was appointed by ANQA director.

All the members of expert panel including the coordinators and the translator have signed independence and confidentiality agreements.

PROCESS OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW

Application for State Accreditation

GSPI applied for institutional accreditation by submitting to ANQA the application form, the copies of the license and respective appendices.

The ANQA Secretariat checked the application package, the data presented in the application form, the appendices and the ANQA electronic questionnaire completed by the university. According to the decision on accepting the application request a tripartite agreement was signed. The timetable of activities was prepared and approved.

Within the deadline set in the schedule GSPI presented the Armenian and English variants of its self-evaluation report according to form set by ANQA and also the package of attached documents.

The self evaluation was carried out by a team formed according to the order of GSPI rector.

Preparatory Phase

ANQA coordinators observed the report with the aims of revealing its correspondence to the technical requirements of ANQA. Then ANQA secretariat sent the self-evaluation report to the expert panel the members of which were agreed upon with the institute and was confirmed by the director of ANQA.

Five trainings on the following topics were organized for the expert panel members by R. Topchyan and A. Makaryan to prepare the expert panel and to ensure the effectiveness of the activities:

1. Main functions of expert panel
2. Preliminary evaluation as preparatory phase of developing expert panel report, the main requirements of writing the report
3. Methodology of observation of documents and resources
4. Techniques and ethics of meetings and questions

Having observed the self-evaluation and documents of the University, the expert panel conducted the initial evaluation according to the format and prepared the list of questions for different target groups and also the list of additional documents needed for observation.

Within the scheduled time the expert panel summarized the results of the initial evaluation and formed a time schedule of the site-visit¹. According to the ANQA manual on the expertise the intended meetings with all the target groups, close and open meetings, document and resource review, visits to different infrastructures and else were included in the time schedule.

Preparatory Visit

Throughout the span of 4 days (November 9-12, 2015) the timetable of expert site-visit was discussed online and agreed upon with the GSPI. The plan-schedule of the site-visit was agreed upon, the list of additional documents that needed observation was presented, discussions and mutual decisions were reached referring to organizational, technical, informative questions of the site visit. Questions related to the conduct and the norms of ethics of meeting participants were also touched upon. The rooms prepared for focus groups and expert panel discussions were also discussed, the issues related to the equipment and facilities were clarified.

Site-visit

Site visit of the expert panel took place from 15 to 19 November, 2016. According to the schedule the works of the expert panel launched with a close meeting of the panel the aim of which was to discuss and agree about the assessment cycle, strong and weak points of the Institute per criteria and

¹ Appendix 2. Schedule of site visit at ASPU

procedure of focus groups with the international expert Patrick Gray, as well as to clarify further steps.

All the members of the panel, ANQA coordinators as well as the translator were present at the site visit.

The site visit started and was closed with the meeting with the Rector. Representatives from the teaching staff, students, deans, heads of chairs, employers and alumni were selected randomly from the list provided beforehand. All the meetings were organized according to the schedule. During the site visit the expert panel conducted observation of documents², resource observation³ and focus groups in different structural units of the University.

During the close meetings of the panel at the end of each working day the interim results of peer review were discussed and at the end of the site visit the main outcomes of the site visit were summarized during the close discussion.

Peer review was carried out within the framework of state accreditation criteria and standards and ANQA procedures with the implementation of a tow-scale system: **satisfactory and unsatisfactory**.

Alongside, the SER of the Institute was evaluated according to the aforesaid scale per standard and the expert panel report –per criteria.

Expert Panel Report

The expert panel has conducted preliminary evaluation according to the self-evaluation report of the Institute, the documents attached to it and the observations during the site-visit as a result of regularly organized discussions. Based on the observations after the discussions the head of the panel and ANQA coordinator prepared the draft of expert panel report which was agreed upon with the panel members. The international expert prepared his conclusion and a separate document of peer review. The said documents were translated and handed over to expert panel members. The responsibility of including the approach and opinion of the international expert into the report lies on the chairman of the expert panel and the coordinator. The document of peer review was thoroughly included into the report. The preliminary report was handed over to the Institute on January 18, 2016. The expert panel finalized the report based on the comments got from the University.

Varduhi Gyulazyan

Coordinator

15 January 2016

²Appendix 3. List of observed documents

³ Appendix 4. Resources observed by the panel

EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

BRIEF INFORMATION ABOUT THE EDUCATION INSTITUTION

HISTORY: The main higher education institution in Shirak Region - Gyumri State Pedagogical Institute after M. Nalbandyan (GSPI), which was established in 1934, from the first year of its establishment has been carrying out educational, scientific and cultural activities in the northern part of Armenia. During the same year and the ones to come many prominent scientists and academicians of national sciences used to teach in the Institute. Since 1994 the HEI has launched its activities in the new building. The existing faculties were reorganized and due to this the number of the faculties reached six, a number of the existing chairs suffered structural changes.

EDUCATION: The operations of the GSPI are aimed at organizing academic process with the following modern academic reforms carrying out continuous improvement of academic services rendered. Since 2006 educational reforms have been implemented at GSPI, aimed at promoting the integration of GSPI into the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), adopting the system of academic credit accumulation and transfer. At present the Institute has 6 Departments: Physics, Mathematics and Economics; Biology and Geography; History and Philology; Pedagogics; Foreign Languages; Physical Education and Pre-Military Training, 21 specialized chairs, which run the academic process by Bachelor's, Master's and Researcher's Degree Programs: in the full-time system of Bachelor degree programmes there are 31 specializations, in the part-time system of Bachelor degree programmes- 29, in Master degree program -18, in Researcher Degree Program – specializations in 4 scientific areas. More than 30,000 students have graduated from the Institute who make up more than 80% of the staff of the public education sector in Shirak Region. The Institute implements a three-degree educational service.

RESEARCH: GSPI targets at internationalization of research and the link with academic process as a strategic aim of research and development. The latter will be ensured through the implementation of below-given objectives:

1. to ensure the realization and development of research by long, mid and short term planning
2. to ensure synergy of efficient educational and scientific processes;
3. to arrange and promote research work internationalization;
4. to supply with the required facilities and provide financial assistance for research work realization.

INTERNATIONALIZATION: GSPI aims at comprehensive development of Foreign Relations, practice exchange and activities promoting internationalization of the Institute by surmounting the following objectives:

1. establishment of the environment fostering the development and internationalization of external affairs and experience exchange,
2. to ensure a regulated process of external relations,
3. to ensure effective cooperation of the GSPI with local and international institutions and establishments.

QUALITY ASSURANCE: GSPI has set a certain policy which ensures continual enhancement of all activities and establishment of a quality culture. The steps aimed at quality are the following:

1. to ensure the effectiveness of operations of internal quality assurance system,
2. to ensure the effective usage of human, material and financial resources allocated for the realization of internal quality operations,
3. to expand internal and external stakeholder involvement in quality assurance operations,
4. to carry out regular reviews of internal quality assurance system,
5. to create sufficient base for the implementation of procedures aimed at external assessment of quality assurance,
6. to ensure transparency of information on the quality of GSPI operations.

While carrying out the expertise, the expert panel was led by the principle “fitness to purpose” and has regarded the above-given information as ambitions and aims of the Institute.

CRITERION I. MISSION AND PURPOSE

CRITERION: The Tertiary Level Institutions' (TLI) policy and practices are in accordance with its mission, which is in accordance with the Armenian National Qualifications Framework (ANQF)

FINDINGS

1.1. The TLI has a clear, well-articulated mission that represents the institution's purposes and goals as well as is in accordance with the ANQF.

The TLI has a Strategic Plan (hereinafter SP) (2015-2019), which determines the mission of the Institute. GSPI mission lies in preparing specialists with Bachelor, Master and Research qualifications and providing necessary knowledge and appropriate skills according to national labour market demands through the implementation of academic programmes (hereinafter AP). The mission of the Institute is generally in line with the ANQF in a sense that the Institute carries out its APs on BA, MA and PhD levels. However the mission is generic and does not single out the peculiarities of the Institute. For instance, the mission does not reflect the 80-year-old history of the Institute as a pedagogical TLI, the important role of the latter in the region and does not involve the contextual framework of the APs.

Strategic priorities, the aims emerging from the latter and the objectives adjacent to them are singled out in the SP of the Institute. There is an operational plan adjacent to the SP (ratified 18.02.2014). The said document includes the steps of SP implementation, the schedule, the ones responsible and intended outcomes. Based on the operational plans the Chairs elaborate their annual plans. It is worth mentioning that the current SP does not reflect the analyses of the operations undertaken within the framework of the proceeding regulation on strategic planning.

The Institute implements not-pedagogical APs in line with pedagogical ones since the GSPI has an aim of becoming regional university. Out of 31 full-time BA APs 11 are non-pedagogical, out of 29 part-time APs, 7 are non-pedagogical. As far as MA studies are concerned, 4 out of 18 are not pedagogical. The expert panel would like to highlight that at present the name of the Institute and the statute do not reflect the implementation of non-pedagogical APs and are not in line with the current operations of the Institute.

1.2. According to the Self-evaluation Report (SER hereinafter) the Mission of the University reflects the needs of internal and external stakeholders.

The mission, aims and objectives of the Institute only partially reflect the needs of internal and external stakeholders which is accounted for by the fact that there was only partial involvement of external stakeholders in the elaboration of the SP, especially as far as the field of non-pedagogical APs is concerned. Only those external stakeholders, who are in need of pedagogues, are involved in the process of mission and SP implementation. These are the representatives of secondary schools who are involved as employers. Two headmasters of schools were involved in the team of SP elaboration.

The needs of internal stakeholders are reflected much better than the ones of external stakeholders, since a vast circle of internal stakeholders was involved into the process of SP elaboration.

1.3. In TLI there are approved mechanisms and procedures to evaluate the results of implementation of mission and aims and for their further improvement.

The system of infrastructure (vice-rector, methodical, external relations, faculties, chairs, student council (hereinafter SC) and else) reports was implemented with the aim of assessing the process of implementing the mission and the aims of the GSPI.

The GSPI operational plan reflects the intended outcomes per each step, which can be viewed as KPIs. The reports mainly include information about the works undertaken, objectives and facts.

There is an insufficient amount of analyses. The tools or mechanisms which can be used to improve the singled-out issues/objectives are not described.

There are no other mechanisms and procedures aimed at measuring and assessing the outcomes of SP aim implementation.

CONSIDERATIONS

The policy and operations of the GSPI are mostly in line with the mission adopted by the Institute, however, at present there is a difference and certain discrepancy between the mission, statute and name of the Institute, which endangers the process of the development of the Institute. The name and the current statute of the Institute do not reflect the whole sphere of Institute operations (the existence of non-pedagogical APs) which subsequently diminished the recognition of the Institute. The expert panel evaluates positively the fact that the GSPI, having an aim of becoming a regional University, has an intention of altering its statute with the aim of making the latter in line with its mission.

The operational plan, elaborated for the implementation of the SP (this includes the steps of SP implementation, the schedule, the ones responsible and intended outcomes), will help the Institute to be more target-driven. However, based on the operational plan it is quite difficult to reveal the scope of resources which is necessary for the implementation of strategic aims. Though the mission reflects strategic aims and objectives of the Institute, it is generic and does not state the peculiarities of the latter and the professional orientation of the APs which include pedagogical and non-pedagogical APs.

The fact that there is certain involvement of internal stakeholders is praiseworthy; however, the one of external stakeholders is not yet effective. In case no consistent heed is paid to this question, the Institute can face certain problems related to increasing the effectiveness of its APs and ensuring the cooperation with regional labour market. The expert panel appreciates the fact that the Institute has already initiated certain cooperation with the employers of non-pedagogical field.

In the meanwhile, the expert panel underlines the fact that the lack of precise and effective procedures aimed at assessing and improving the outcomes of the mission and aim implementation can hinder the process of ensuring effective strategic development of the Institute.

SUMMARY: Taking into consideration the fact that the Institute has formulated mission as well as aims and objectives emerging from the latter, strategic plan and an auxiliary operational plan, certain involvement of stakeholders in the stages of SP elaboration and implementation, the expert panel concludes that the GSPI meets the requirements of the Criterion 1. However, the expert panel underlines the fact that the name, statute, mission and operations of the GSPI should be in line with each other.

CONCLUSION: The correspondence of GSPI institutional capacities to the requirements of Criterion 1 is **satisfactory**.

CRITERION II. GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

CRITERION: The TLIs' system of governance, administrative structures and their practices are effective and intend to the accomplishment of its mission and purposes by keeping the governance code of ethics.

FINDINGS

2.1 The TLI's system of governance ensures regulated decision-making process in accordance with defined code of ethics and has efficient provision of human, material and financial resources to accomplish its educational and other purposes.

The system of governance of the GSPI ensures a regulated procedure of decision making. According to the GSPI statute "...the management is carried out on the principle of self-management with the combination of collegiality and an individual management...".

The rector is the sole manager of the Institute. The GSPI Council, Scientific Board and the Rectorate are collegial bodies. Internal stakeholders (deans, chair heads, students and else) of the GSPI are represented in the system of governance of the GSPI, which provides for harmonious decision-making related to the needs of the Institution.

The GSPI has corresponding bodies and infrastructures for the implementation of corresponding functions. These are:

- Educational and Methodological Department,
- Quality Assurance Centre,
- Postgraduate and Additional Education Department,
- Faculties,
- Chairs,
- Library,
- Student Council,
- else.

Different committees can operate in the system of governance of the Institute (as additional and temporary resource of governance). The latter aim to operatively solve myriad issues that might arise. However, the operations and the outcomes of said operations are not sufficiently documented and analyzed.

The Institute organizes its operations based on the annual budget which is previously determined, however a shortage of necessary financial and material resources can be traced. As a result, certain expenditures aimed at reform have been diminished (from 10% to 5%).

The system of governance is not adapted for the implementation of strategic objectives and aims. In the scenario, when the Institute faces the objective of the development of scientific-research operations, non-efficiency of corresponding resources can be traced in the system of governance. There is no Department of Science in the organigram of the Institute, though the GSPI has a significant scientific potential. This means, that the latter has been left out from the organigram.

There is an insufficient allocation of administrative resources in the operational system of governance. In particular, centralization of academic operations, science, management of external relations as well as the responsibilities of Educational and Methodological Department head.

Though certain elements of ethics are involved in various documents (Rules on Internal Discipline, Regulation on Teaching and Support Staff Formation), the Institute lacks a separate Code of Ethics.

2.2 The TLI's system of governance provides students and teachers opportunity to participate in decision making processes directed to them.

According to internal and external normative acts and documents the students and teachers have the opportunity to participate in decision making processes directed to them.

25% of student participation in different collegial bodies of the GSPI is ensured through different regulations. 25% of students and teachers are represented in the Council of the University. The involvement of the teaching staff in the Scientific Board is ensured through that of chair heads and a small number of teachers.

With everything said, still the initiative of both the students and the teachers in voicing issues directed at them is still low which has a negative impact on the system of governance of the Institute. For instance, almost no issues are voiced by the students in the Scientific Board and there are no registered cases, witnessing that decisions had been made based on the suggestions of both the teachers and the students.

2.3 The TLI develops and implements short, mid, and long term planning consistent with its mission and purposes and has clear monitoring and implementation mechanism.

The Institute has a long-term planning (5 year) which is ratified within the framework of strategic plan and timetable. Based on the said plan, short-term (one-year) operational plans have been elaborated in the chairs.

The financial planning of the GSPI is carried out on an institutional level and not the one of faculties or separate APs. A budget, with the indication of financial flows and per separate articles on expenditure, is elaborated per each academic year. The financial planning of lower cycles is integrated into the articles of the budget.

The mechanisms of planning, implementation and monitoring are based only of the system of reports and there are no sound procedures and mechanisms aimed at monitoring, feedback and improvement.

2.4. The TLI conducts environmental scanning and draws on reliable data during the decision-making process.

The GSPI conducts an environmental scanning mainly through surveys. Some part of the said surveys has been undertaken within the framework of international projects. As an outcome, certain objectives have been singled out (condition of services rendered, resources and the like). With the aim of revealing the number of potential applicants, site-visits to schools have been carried out with. There are no precise procedures aimed at planning and implementation of environmental scanning.

The Institution lacks precise procedures and mechanisms aimed at solving the issues revealed throughout the surveys (The SER contains information only about certain reforms undertaken on the instruction of the rector).

Except for the surveys, there are no other methods aimed at conducting environmental scanning. The said methods could include for instance, comprehensive analyses of the situation, recorded open discussions and else. The issues revealed throughout the surveys do not reflect the whole spectrum of factors influencing the operations of the GSPI. The reliability of the surveys is not guaranteed in certain cases. For instance, there are certain questions which do not correspond to the target group. This includes the survey conducted among the applicants. Based on the aforesaid survey, the opinion of prospective students about the teaching staff has also been analyzed, however, the applicants have had but contacts with a limited number of teachers.

There is a shortage of analyses on external environment and in the majority of cases they are not scientifically grounded. For instance, there is a lack of structured analyses on regional labour-market or demography aimed at further planning of its operations and decision-making.

2.5. The management of the policies and the processes draws on the quality management principle (plan-do-check-act).

The Institute has separate cases of PDCA principle implementation. In particular, it was following the said principles that the "Procedure on Knowledge Assessment of Credit-based Academic Process of BA Full-Time/Part-Time Studies" and the "Differentiated System of Bonuses Aimed at Promoting Scientific-Research and Scientific-Methodical Operations of the Teaching Staff" were reformed.

Generally speaking, the PDCA cycle is not yet closed and there are no analyses on the assessment carried out. The main accent is put on planning and implementation.

2.6. The TLI has evaluation mechanisms on the effectiveness of data collection, analyses and application of the academic programmes and other procedures.

Precise mechanisms are exercised with the aim of collecting statistical data on academic programmes of the GSPI: these include the number of students, information about their mobility and

attainability. The said information is being discussed in the Scientific Board of the Institute. Moreover, it is handed over to external statistical infrastructures following the determined format.

Certain analyses about the APs and other operations of the Institute (information on academic and scientific operations, finance and else) are conducted and are included in different reports. However, the data collected does not thoroughly reflect the comprehensive qualitative description of the effectiveness of APs and other operations.

Notwithstanding the fact that the elaboration of the procedure aimed at assessing data collection, analyses and implementation of different operations is a strategic priority of the Institute, there are no precise mechanisms regulating the latter.

2.7. There are impartial mechanisms evaluating the quality of quantitative and qualitative information on the academic programmes and qualification awards.

The transparent system of accountability and the reports of the heads of summative attestation committees (they are posted in the web-site) are used for the qualitative and quantitative assessment of qualifications awarded, however, in the majority of cases they are not analytical in nature.

There are no precise and objective mechanisms aimed at assessing the publication of qualitative and quantitative information on APs and qualifications awarded.

CONSIDERATIONS

The expert panel evaluates positively the fact that certain reforms have been undertaken in the system of governance of the Institute within the recent years (QAC, University-Market Cooperation Unit and else). They are all targeted at the improvement of quality education; however, the organigram of the Institute still needs further improvement. Notwithstanding the fact that the GSPI has all necessary infrastructures typical to TLIs, the lack of a Department of Science is risky for the thorough implementation of its mission. The said infrastructure will ensure the process of integration of education and science, as well as the effective administration of scientific potential of the Institute. An incorrect allocation of administrative resources was traced which can hinder the process of effective administration.

The lack of systematic norms of ethic can also hinder governance.

The loose involvement of employers in decision-making bodies can limit the level of awareness of external demands and developments. This can be illustrated by the lack of external stakeholders in the Scientific Board of the Institute. The insufficient amount of environmental scanning can lead to further risks of strategic development.

The loose involvement of both the students and the teachers in the process of decision-making diminishes the possibility of revealing certain issues and solving the latter.

The effectiveness of the system of short and long-term planning significantly depends on precise mechanisms of plan implementation and monitoring. However, these mechanisms are not yet thoroughly elaborated and implemented.

The expert panel appreciates the fact that certain surveys have been conducted and some issues have been revealed at the Institute. However, the fact that except for the surveys there are no other methods and no scientific data aimed at environmental scanning narrows the opportunity of objective vision of the reality. There is a need to raise the degree of reliability of the surveys conducted.

The Institute needs to improve its system of governance by making the latter more consistent with its strategy and operations by taking into account the PDCA cycle.

The fact that the Institute collects statistical data on academic programmes is positive. However, there is not enough evidence that the data is effectively used. The data collected can be especially valuable for the planning and administration of the GSPI operations, especially from the perspective of financial-economical and other operations of the APs.

SUMMARY: Taking into consideration the fact that the system of governance is not adapted to the implementation of strategic aims, there is an issue of optimal allocation of administrative resources, the governance is mainly not carried out with the implementation of PDCA principle, there are no analyses which will help to raise the effectiveness of the system of governance, there is an insufficient involvement of external stakeholders in the operations of governance, the mechanisms of feedback are loose in the system of governance. The expert panel concludes that the GSPI does not meet the requirements of the Criterion 2.

CONCLUSION: The correspondence of GSPI institutional capacities to the requirements of Criterion 2 is **unsatisfactory**.

CRITERION III. ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

CRITERION: The programmes are in concord with the institution's mission, form part of institutional planning and promote mobility and internationalization

FINDINGS

3.1. The academic programmes are in line with the mission statement of the university, the state academic standards and are meticulously described with the indication of the intended learning outcomes per degrees awarded.

There are 31 full-time and 29 part-time BA, 18 full-time MA programmes in 6 faculties of the GSPI. 20 research academic programmes are carried out in 4 scientific directions. Both the pedagogical and non-pedagogical academic programmes of the TLI are generally speaking consistent with its mission, however, there are the ones which are not in line with the mission as determined in the Strategic Plan which states that preparing and training professionally compatible professionals with deep knowledge and corresponding skills on BA and MA levels fostering qualifications of a researcher also through the academic programs is the strategic priority of the University. There are some specializations which at present are not demanded in the Republic of Armenia labour market and subsequently there are only small groups, and in some cases even one or two students. In the meanwhile, the Institute stresses the importance of such specializations (non-pedagogical) which have a higher demand in the labour-market. Each specialization of the GSPI has academic programmes (with corresponding course descriptions) described in accordance with the set format. The GSPI has not analyzed the correspondence of its APs with the NQF.

3.2. The TLI has a policy that promotes/ensure alignment between teaching and learning approaches and the intended learning outcomes of academic programmes, which ensures student-centered learning.

The teaching methods of the academic programmes are described on the level of courses and course themes; however, the APs do not clearly reflect the link of teaching methods and the outcomes. According to the SER, certain procedures aimed at revealing certain issues in the APs, course content, the link of the teaching and learning methods with the outcomes have been carried out by the QAC in 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 academic years. However, de facto there are no mechanisms aimed at analyzing the issues revealed, as well as assuring the feedback. The reliability of the said procedures is not ensured.

The students were generally contented with the teaching methods. According to the surveys carried out among the students, the latter have noticed certain improvements in teaching.

The GSPI also carries out surveys aimed at assessing the professional and pedagogical qualities of the teaching staff. The aforesaid surveys are conducted among the students. As an outcome of the

surveys, certain guidelines of selecting teaching methods favoring student-centred learning have been singled out, however, there are no procedures aimed at modernizing teaching/learning methods.

Certain trainings on teaching and learning methods have been organized for the staff of the GSPI by the specialists of the National Institute of Education. It is foreseen that these trainings will have a continuous nature.

Though there is no precise policy on the AP level aimed at selection of teaching methods enhancing student-centered learning, certain elements of the latter are carried out at the GSPI.

3.3. The TLI has policy on students assessment according to the learning outcomes and promotes/ensure academic honesty.

The Institute has a "GSPI SNCO Bachelor Full-time/Part-time and Master Credit Academic Programmes Learning Outcomes Evaluation and Appeal" which describes a multi-functional system of assessment. The Institute also has procedures on assessing course papers and individual works, as well as the internships. The latter also foresees a multifunctional system of assessment. Also there are criteria of graduation paper and MA theses assessment.

The academic descriptors of the APs include not only assessment forms but also assessment components and their value. However, the link between the intended learning outcomes of the course with the assessment forms is missing.

Certain issues related to the assessment system have been revealed and certain steps aimed at their amelioration have already been undertaken (e.g. introduction of oral exams).

Certain surveys about the effectiveness of assessment system and that of appeals have been conducted among the students. The said surveys have revealed that the assessment system enhances learning (4.1 points out of 5), however, the data on the objectiveness of assessment was comparatively low (3.7).

The Institute has a policy aimed at ensuring academic honesty; however, it does not have sufficient experience to implement it.

With the aim of ensuring academic honesty, the assessment system involves a regulation of appeals, which, however, is not always implemented. According to the said regulation, prior to the creation of a committee of appeals, the matter is orally being discussed with the teacher, chair head and dean. In case the student is still dissatisfied with his/her mark, he/she hands in a written appeal. This procedure can hinder the process of appeals and the implementation of the principles of academic honesty.

The Institute has other mechanisms aimed at ensuring academic honesty except for the said system of appeals. This mostly has to do with the struggle against plagiarism.

The effectiveness or the objectiveness of the assessment system is low, especially in part-times studies, where certain cases have been traced when the summative assessment of the students does not correspond to the mid-term indicators of the latter (the mark for the summative assessment is non-satisfactory, in the scenario when the student had a 100% presence and positive mid-term results). The insufficient number of course hours is considered to be the main reason for low attainment in part-time department.

The involvement of the component "physical presence of the student" into the assessment system is not grounded, especially as far as part-time studies are concerned. In part-time studies if the student absenteeism is more than 50%, the component of presence is equaled to zero, which in its turn influences the mark.

3.4. The programmes of the TLI are contextually coherent with other relevant programmes and promote mobility of students and staff as well as internationalization.

In the SER of the Institute it is stated that the GSPI signed a Memorandum to joint the consortium of all Armenian Universities awarding pedagogical degrees. The said consortium aims at elaborating joint APs and enhancing mobility. Within the framework of the consortium and TEMPUS project

certain analyses are carried out, however, the Institute lacks a comparative analyses (policy on benchmarking). There are certain elements of benchmarking, however, the latter have an episodic nature and are not being registered.

Generally speaking, there is no contextual consistency with either local or international universities. Notwithstanding the fact, that some chairs mentioned cases of copying separate APs, there are no analyses aimed at revealing the opportunities of their adaptation.

There is no precise policy and systematic approach to credit allocation of separate courses, in particular, there are disciplines which have been allocated more than 10 ECTS credits. What is more, the disciplines are stretched upon more than one semester, one and the same discipline has different credit allocation in different semesters.

3.5. The TLI adopts policies in place ensuring academic programme monitoring, evaluation of effectiveness and enhancement.

In 2013, a Policy on AP elaboration, ratification, monitoring and review was adopted. The aim of the latter was to prepare specialist who would be in line with continuously changing demands of the labour market. However, the said policy is not yet thoroughly implemented. It is still quite generic, it describes the methodology of AP elaboration, and does not contain a precise strategy.

Mainly the internal stakeholders participate in the procedures of AP monitoring and assessment of effectiveness. The participation of external stakeholders is not yet active. The external stakeholders can evaluate the AP outcomes based on the conclusions of attestation committees, since they form 50% of the said committees. Surveys are considered to be an important mechanism of AP monitoring (especially among the alumni). They allow to reveal the issues and to hand them over to the chairs. However, the GSPI is in need of elaboration and implementation of new approaches aimed at monitoring, assessment and review.

As an outcome of the said surveys, the QAC has registered certain issues related to APs, which are related to modernization of courses, credit allocation, organization of internships and else. The issue revealed by either the QAC or the attestation committees are merely revealed and handed over to corresponding chairs for further discussions. Generally speaking, the ways to solve the said issues are not yet revealed or systematized in the chairs.

Generally speaking, there is no systematic review of APs.

COSNIDERATIONS

The GSPI runs certain APs, which are not demanded in the RA labour market and hence do not ensure enough applicants. This contains certain risks related to the implementation of Institute mission. The expert panel appreciates the fact that in this scenario the GSPI carries out such specializations (non-pedagogical) which have a greater demand in the labour market.

The fact that only 17% of the students pursues their studies in non-pedagogical disciplines (the ones that are more or less demanded in the labour market) is also quire risky for the mission and the APs of the Institute.

The expert panel appreciates the fact that there is an array of teaching methods implemented in the academic process (APs, course descriptions and thematic operational plans). However, the fact that in certain cases the selection of the method is not in line with the intended learning outcomes and the APs do not reflect the link of teaching/learning methods with the outcomes is really worrisome. This can hinder the establishment of a student-centred environment as well as the acquisition of intended learning outcomes.

The fact that the Institute has a procedure of "GSPI SNCO Bachelor Full-time/Part-time and Master Credit Academic Programmes Learning Outcomes Evaluation and Appeal" is positive. The said document foresees a multifunctional system of assessment. However, the link between the intended learning outcomes (within the framework of courses) with the methods of assessment is not reflected, which can result in a non-efficient implementation of assessment system. The system of

assessment is not linked with the academic outcomes in a sense that the assessment of competences included in the outcomes is not precisely highlighted in the operating system.

The effectiveness and the objectiveness of current system of assessment is low, especially as far as part-time studies are concerned. The implementation of APs in part-time studies is related to a number of serious issues; more particularly, the insufficient number of classes has been singled out, which results in an ineffective implementation of APs.

The unsystematic approach to credit allocation and the lack of a precise policy can hinder mobility. One of the factors influencing student mobility, is the low level of foreign language acquisition among the students.

Mostly internal stakeholders participate in the procedures of AP monitoring and assessment of effectiveness. The external stakeholders can evaluate the outcomes of the APs mainly through the conclusion of Attestation committees. However, this does not ensure the sufficient level of participation of external stakeholders in the process of AP improvement.

It is praiseworthy, that certain separate cases of AP improvement have been registered, however the Institute lacks operating mechanisms and procedures aimed at AP monitoring, assessment of periodic review of APs. It is of interest to note, that the Institute has guidelines aimed at elaborating the aforesaid procedures. The strategies aimed at solving the issues related to APs are not precisely highlighted and systematized. This will endanger the modernization of APs and courses in line with labor market demands, as well as implementation of new teaching/learning methods.

SUMMARY: Though the GSPI has undertaken certain steps aimed at ameliorating the APs, the expert panel concludes that the GSPI does not meet the requirements of criteria 3, taking into consideration the fact that certain academic programmes are not that demanded in the regional labor market which, in its turn, contradicts with the mission of the Institute, the Institute still lacks other generic principles and approaches aimed at teaching method selection and improvement in line with the principles of student-centered teaching, the assessment system is not implemented with due effectiveness, there are certain issues related to AP implementation in part-time studies, the academic honesty and the struggle against plagiarism are not sufficiently grounded, the involvement of external stakeholders in AP implementation is still low and the GSPI does not yet have mechanisms aimed at AP monitoring.

CONCLUSION: The correspondence of GSPI institutional capacities to the requirements of Criterion 3 is **unsatisfactory**.

CRITERION IV: STUDENTS

CRITERION: The TLI has student support services that provide for productive learning environment.

FINDINGS

4.1. The TLI has set mechanisms for promoting equitable recruitment, selection, and admission procedures.

In GSPI the admission and competition for Bachelor degree full-time education system are set in line with the requirements and standards approved by the RA MoES. Full-time education admission is carried out in regard with the list of specialties approved by the RA Government for the current academic year. According to the Decree on "Admission to Bachelor's degree Programmes in State and Private Higher Education Institutions" the Institute carries out inner-institutional admission exams for the following Bachelor degree system specializations: "Physical Education and Sport", "Pre-Military and Physical Training" and "Applied Arts". The Institute carries out admission exams for Bachelor degree correspondence/part-time education according to the Decree on "Admission to Correspondence Education Courses in RA State Higher Educational Institutions". The Institute runs

admission and education for Master and Research degree students according to GSPI regulations on Admission to Master and Postgraduate/External Postgraduate education.

The GSPI has carried out events of professional orientation among its prospective students following the format of surveys, site-visits and discussion, which, according to the expert panel, can have a positive impact on the recruitment of the applicants. In current 2015-2016 academic year the flow of the students has outnumbered the outflow. The continuous decrease in the number of students within the recent 2-3 years is worrisome. The GSPI finds that the said decline has objective reasons, however, it should be mentioned that the number of students recruited during the recent year has outnumbered that of last year. The GSPI has not conducted any qualitative analyses of recruitment outcomes.

4.2. The TLI has policies and procedures for assessing student educational needs.

There are no policy and procedures aimed at revealing and analysing the needs of the students, however, the institute implements a couple of mechanisms for revealing their needs. For instance, the involvement of students in administration council, scientific and faculty councils of the Institute, myriad surveys conducted among them (the outcomes of the said surveys are being discussed in different councils). There are no other mechanisms implemented with the aim of revealing the needs of the students. As was revealed during the meeting initiated throughout the site-visit, the interest of the students to reveal their needs and to participate in the operations carried out at the GSPI is not that high.

The surveys conducted, do not give a holistic idea about the needs of the students in a sense that they mostly refer to full-time students, whereas those of part-time students are not yet fully developed at the Institute. The GSPI has a system of reduction of tuition fees.

4.3. The TLI provides opportunities for extra-curricular activities and consultation services aimed at supporting student effective learning.

In 2015, the Procedure on Educational Counselors'/Curators' Work was established, by which their functions and duties were approved and regulated. The aim of the counselor is to provide assistance to the students in the process of organizing the academic process. The staff of specialized chairs and the heads of the courses are those who act as counselors.

With the aim of providing general information about the academic process of the Institute, the Student Guide (E-learning) has been elaborated and is available on the web-site of the GSPI. However, throughout the meetings with the students it became clear that the majority of the latter is unaware of the electronic guide.

The GSPI possesses certain opportunities to organize extra-curricular classes. Generally, the said classes are organized for part-time students, who have low attainment. According to the regulation on credit system, a student can register to take part in extra-curricular studies with the aim or retaking its academic debts (the student pays the fee determined for the particular discipline

4.4. There are precise regulation and schedule set for students to visit the faculty administrative staff for additional support and guidance.

There is no separate and precise regulation and timetable for addressing the faculty administrative staff, however, different regulations (Regulation of Credit System, Procedure on Assessment and Appeals and else) describe the steps that need to be undertaken in order to address the administrative staff.

There is no timetable (except for the meetings with the rector) regulating the hours the students can apply to the dean's offices or chairs.

4.5. The TLI has special student career support services.

In 2012 GSPI Career Center was established which later on in 2013 was reorganized into UMCU within the scope of TEMPUS, ARARAT project. The Center works according to its Statute. The main goal of the Center activities is to increase competitiveness of GSPI students and alumni in the labour market and to provide them with work.

Throughout the site visit it became apparent that from the aforesaid perspective, the effectiveness of the works carried out by the said centre is not that high. There are almost no services, promoting the career of the students, rendered by the said centre or any other infrastructure of the Institute. Only a couple of surveys have been conducted by the centre and certain operations, aimed at the issues of alumni employability, have been planned

The awareness of the students referring to the operations of the centre is low. Almost no student applies to the said centre. The Centre lacks information about the vacancies in the labour market, the database of those who need work, as well as information about the alumni. From this perspective the expert panel appreciates the fact that the INFO journal of the GSPI regularly updates the information on vacancies.

4.6. The TLI promotes student involvement in its research activities.

The participation of the students in scientific works is highlighted as a priority in the SP. With the aim of promoting the participation of the students in the aforesaid activities, the Institute foresees to elaborate corresponding procedure, since at present the GSPI lacks procedures like the one mentioned.

From 2013, following the suggestion of the Students Scientific Board, annual student scientific conferences are being organized. Students from other TLIs also take part in the said conference. The expert panel is inclined to believe, that this can enhance the enforcement of inter-university ties and promote student cooperation. The GSPI provides financial assistance to the organization of scientific conferences. The fact that throughout the last three years the GSPI has assisted in publishing the materials of the said conferences is praiseworthy. The GSPI students participate in the conferences organized by other universities of the RA and in international ones, however, the number of students participating in international conferences does not yet have a rising tendency.

Research is mainly carried out in MA as an integral part of the AP.

4.7. The TLI has a special body, which is responsible for the students' rights protection.

The body responsible for student right protection is the Student Council, which has its statute. As was highlighted by the Student Council representative, the students of the GSPI are not yet thoroughly involved into the operations of the said body and the majority of the students is reckless in revealing their needs.

The Students Council has raised different issues related to the needs of the student in front of the rector. However, as the students of the Students Council noted, at least throughout the last academic year no issues have been voiced by them in the Scientific Board. Hence, the expert panel can note that the Students Council is passive in this respect.

Student appeals are sometimes not registered and are presented and discussed orally. There are no minutes reflecting the further operations undertaken in this respect.

At present, the elections of Student Council representatives are preconditioned by their GPA, though, this question is on the agenda.

4.8. The TLI has set mechanisms that ensure quality of the student services and the students are involved in the quality assurance practices.

An array of mechanisms is implemented in the process of evaluating the services rendered to the students; reports, focus groups, surveys. In accordance with the outcomes of the implementation of said mechanisms the GSPI has undertaken certain improvements (for instance, improvement of teaching methods, timetable for examination, accessibility of exam materials, conditions of the

reading hall and else). The steps undertaken have promoted the establishment of a more promoting academic environment.

CONSIDERATIONS

The procedures of student recruitment are precise and in line with the regulations ratified by the MoES. The actions and events undertaken towards the prospective students promote the recruitment. By evaluating positively the endeavour of the Institute to keep the professions which have but 1 or 2 students, the expert panel cannot help highlighting that the scenario described above can hinder the development of the Institute and implementation of its strategic aims.

The Institute lacks precise regulations aimed at revealing the needs of the students, which debilitates the said procedure. The expert panel is inclined to believe, that the documents (surveys) revealing the needs of the students need review and completion. It is also worth mentioning, that the process of revealing the needs of part-time students is especially vulnerable which hinders the process of raising the effectiveness of their academic process.

Though the Institute has a regulation on academic counselors, the infrastructure of counselors needs implementation, regulation and improvement. The meetings conducted throughout the site-visit revealed that extra-curricular classes, as well as the procedures of professional counseling still bear episodic nature for the students.

The expert panel appreciates the fact that a system of tuition fee reduction operates at the GSPI, which is given an utmost importance taking into account the social-economic problems of the region.

The fact that the electronic version of the Student Manual is available in the web-site can have a positive impact on the awareness of the students. However, the weakness of the latter is the fact that the majority of the students are not aware of the manual.

The expert panel finds that University-Market Cooperation Unit does not serve its aim (to promote career opportunities of the students) which cannot have a positive impact on the employability of the alumni. The Institute has certain undertakings referring to raising the awareness about the said Unit, since the majority of the students does not have any information about the said Unit and does not make use of its services.

Evaluating the existence of the Students Council and Student Scientific Board and highlighting the fact that they really carry out vast amount of work, the indifference of the majority of the students towards the operations of the said centres is worrisome and it does not enhance the process of revealing the needs of the students and the protection of their rights.

SUMMARY: Taking into consideration the fact the Institute has a precise procedure on students recruitment, certain mechanisms aimed at revealing the needs of the students, the students have the opportunity to participate in extra-curricular classes and to get consultations, there are certain bodies who try to assist the students and promote the process of revealing their needs and solving the problems, the expert panel concludes that the GSPI meets the requirements of the Criterion 4.

CONCLUSION: The correspondence of GSPI institutional capacities to the requirements of Criterion 4 is **satisfactory**.

CRITERION V: FACULTY AND STAFF

CRITERION: The TLI provides for a highly qualified teaching and supporting staff to achieve the set goals for academic programmes and institution's mission.

FINDINGS

5.1. The TLI has policies and procedures promoting recruitment of a highly qualified teaching and supporting staff capable of ensuring programme provisions.

The Institute has an operating regulation on Regulation on Teaching Staff and Education Support Staff Formation and the formation of their workload. The said regulation was ratified in 2012 and it determines not only the categories (teacher, assistant, associate professor, professor and else) of the teaching staff but also the requirements and descriptors. The regulation also includes procedures on teaching and support staff formation, their dismissal, the regulation on recruitment (contractual, hourly-paid, double-employment), conditions and the like. The aforesaid regulation promotes the competitive enrollment of the teaching staff and the process of recruiting qualified staff. Throughout the recent years (2012-2015 academic year) an increase in the number of those having scientific degrees (candidates 9%, doctors 2%) and scientific awards (professor 3%, associate professor 5%) can be traced.

5.2. The teaching staff qualifications for each programme are comprehensively stated.

Though the Regulation on Teaching Staff and Education Support Staff Formation has generic qualitative indicators towards the categories of professor and associate professor, there are no precise indicators towards professional qualities of the corresponding teaching staff in the APs. It's worth mentioning that there are certain teachers who teach a couple of disciplines. Sometimes, the latter are contextually too diverse from each other.

5.3. The TLI has well established policies and procedures for the periodic evaluation of the teaching staff.

The Institute possesses a couple of mechanisms aimed at evaluating the teaching staff: annual reports, lesson-observations, student surveys. Since 2013 the Regulation on the Quality and Efficiency of Teaching has been put into action regulating the implemented activity. The outcomes are discussed throughout chair meetings, the issues are being revealed, and in case the necessity arises the results are handed over to the admission committee. Lesson observations are conducted following a specially elaborated format. This unifies the approach exercised by the members of the committee conducting the lesson-observations and the requirements of assessment. There timetable for lesson-observations and teacher assessment can be found in the chairs and in the office of the vice-rector on education.

There are no mechanisms aimed at solving the issues revealed throughout the surveys, i.e. the approach towards teachers having positive and/or negative assessment is not regulated.

5.4. The TLI promotes teacher professional development in accordance to the needs outlined during regular evaluations (both internal and external).

The Department of Post-graduate and Additional Education is responsible for the trainings of the teaching and support staff. The regulation on training and professional development has been operating at the GSPI started from 2013. There are two types of trainings:

- a. planned-mandatory,
- b. according to the needs revealed.

The necessity of conducting trainings arises either based on the outcomes of student surveys, or those of lesson-observations. As was revealed throughout the site-visit, foreign language and IT trainings had been conducted. In the meanwhile, it is of utmost importance that the Institute pays attention to professional trainings. Several employees have undergone trainings of teaching, learning and assessment methods. Throughout the meetings with the expert panel, both the teachers and the administrative staff highlighted the fact that they needed professional trainings.

5.5. The TLI ensures that there is a permanent staff to provide for the coverage of qualifications adequately.

The majority of the teaching staff are permanent employees of the GSPI, part-time and hourly-paid employees constitute for about 15-17,1%. This tendency is quite conducive from the point of view of sustainability. Though there are certain promotional tools (bonuses, differentiated lump payment), a reduction in the number of young teachers can be traced throughout the recent years. At present, young teachers (until 36 years of age) constitute 16-19% of the employees, which is the token of the fact that the GSPI has certain undertakings in the process of staff rejuvenation. As far as separate APs are concerned, there are certain vulnerable issues related to staff sustainability, which is accounted for by the fact that there is a very low number of students in some specializations.

5.6. There are set policies and procedures for the staff promotion.

As far as professional development of the teaching staff is concerned, the Institute lacks precise mechanisms and policies at ensuring the said procedure; however, as it is stated in the SER, the Institute is in the process of elaborating the said documents and implementing them.

It became apparent throughout the site visits that the biggest issue today, is the one related to professional training of the teaching staff. The GSPI also works towards implementing an institute of mentors, which can promote experience exchange and teacher development.

With the aim of insuring professional development of the teaching staff, series of non-professional trainings are organized (assessment system, foreign language and else). This issue is highlighted as a priority in the SP.

5.7. There is necessary technical and administrative staff to achieve the strategic goals.

Throughout the recent years certain structural reforms have been undertaken in the administrative structure of the Institute. As an outcome certain infrastructures have been reorganized (Academic-methodical Department, Department of Post-graduate and Additional Education, QAC, Department of Public Relations and Mass Media). The GSPI considers that the structural reforms undertaken are up-to-date and in line with the demands. As far as the functions of the support and administrative staff are concerned, the lack of a policy aimed at ensuring the quality of their operations can be viewed as a weakness.

The support staff of the Institute has certain working requirements which are related to the assistance of the academic process. The issue related to the training of the support staff is quite low, since they have undertaken only IT trainings. At certain cases non-targeted realization of support staff operations can be traced, since according to the statute of the Institute the latter should assist the organization of academic process, ensure laboratory equipments and chemical substances to be utilized throughout practical-laboratory classes, however, our observations come to witness that the support staff does not carry out the aforesaid functions.

CONSIDERATIONS

The expert panel appreciates the fact that the GSPI has elaborated policy and procedures aimed at teaching and support staff recruitment which is a necessary precondition for the implementation of the APs. The said regulation, which foresees competitive selection for the positions, promotes the recruitment of a qualified staff. The said document also promotes the augmentation in the number of teachers having scientific awards and degrees. The fact that the majority of the teaching staff are permanent employees, significantly augments the sustainability of the teaching staff and promotes the stable implementation of academic process. The fact that the GSPI tries to recruit its former alumni, MA graduates and researchers is praiseworthy.

By evaluating positively the endeavour of the Institute to keep the academic programmes which have but 1 or 2 students, the expert panel cannot help highlighting that the scenario described above can hinder the development of the Institute and implementation of its strategic aims, since in this case there is an uneven utilization of human resources.

The lack of precisely elaborated criteria presented to the professional qualifications of the teaching staff (per corresponding academic programme) makes the requirements to the teaching staff more

generic and complicates the selection of appropriate specialists. The effectiveness of academic process can be hindered by the fact that one and the same teacher is in charge of conducting disciplines that are contextually too far from one another. This is also an obstacle for ensuring academic quality.

The expert panel evaluates positively the fact that the GSPI has procedures and mechanisms aimed at regular assessment of its teaching staff. The said mechanisms enhance the procedure of having highly qualified specialists, however, the teaching staff must first and foremost have a mechanism of auto-evaluation, which is absent.

From the perspective of teaching staff improvement, the trainings carried out at the GSPI can be viewed as something positive. However, the said trainings were from foreign languages and IT. In the meanwhile almost no professional trainings have been conducted hence far. This fact is worrisome, especially taking into account the fact that professional trainings are the main path of raising qualitative characteristics of the teaching staff. The training of the staff is mainly carried out by means of internal resources, however, with the aim of raising the effectiveness of the said operation, external resources should also be utilized.

Though there are certain mechanisms of promotion, the expert panel considers it worrisome that throughout the recent years a decrease in the number of young teachers can be traced (from 19 to 16%). This scenario is quite vulnerable from the perspective of generation change. Certain chairs have tried solving the aforesaid problem exercising their own opportunities; recruiting former PhD students and researchers, however, given the importance of the question, it should be solved on the university scale. The fact that the majority of the GSPI teaching staff are its permanent employees enhances the sustainability of the teaching staff.

Notwithstanding certain mechanisms (trainings), at present the Institute lacks precise mechanisms and procedures aimed at enhancing teacher promotion, which naturally debilitates the sustainability of the teaching staff.

Though the Institute has corresponding administrative and support staff, the lack of mechanisms aimed at QA of their operations, hinders the assessment of the latter.

SUMMARY: Taking into consideration the fact that the Institute has a policy and procedures aimed at recruitment of teaching and support staff, carries out evaluation of its teaching staff and certain operations aimed at promotion of the latter, the efforts exercised to ensure the sustainability of the teaching staff, the existence of preconditions for revealing their needs and promoting them, the fact that de facto the Institute has teaching staff with necessary qualifications, the expert panel concludes that the GSPI meets the requirements of the Criterion 5. However, the expert panel would like to draw the attention of the Institute on the fact the professional trainings must be organized in accordance with the Aps.

CONCLUSION: The correspondence of GSPI institutional capacities to the requirements of Criterion 5 is **satisfactory**.

CRITERION VI: RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

CRITERION: The TLI ensures the implementation of research activity and the link of the research with teaching and learning.

FINDINGS

6.1. The TLI has a clear strategy for promoting its research interests and ambitions.

The strategy on research is presented in the SP with a quite generic enumeration of objectives. The research directions of the Institute are not made precise. At present, the main research spheres are

Pedagogy and Physics-Mathematics. The strategy of fostering the faculty academic and methodical activities was put into action in 2014. A lump bonus is foreseen for publishing a scientific article of a corresponding quality. However, notwithstanding all the conditioned mention above, throughout the last three years a declining tendency in the number of published articles and/or theses can be traced (197 in 2012, 168 in 2013, 157 in 2014). Needless to say, that this cannot be considered a positive development. The fact the GSPI does not allocate sufficient portion of the budget to research (approximately 1% of the annual budget) cannot enhance the development of the latter. The expert panel is inclined to believe, that the lack of corresponding scientific department which would have coordinated the operations also creates obstacles for the development of research.

6.2. The TLI has a long-term strategy and medium and short-term programmes that address its research interests and ambitions.

The SP determines that within the upcoming 5 years the GSPI is going to elaborate and implement scientific priorities (directions) and its interests and this is why the expert panel stresses that the strategy of research development is still in planning. The GSPI anticipates that the highlighted steps will be implemented from 2017. At the same time the mid and short-term programmes related to the sphere of research are also in the cycle of planning. The programme of scientific development is not anchored on the path the Institute has pursued and on present outcomes, which is not reflected in the SP.

A number of chairs of the GSPI have had scientific topics that were financed from the RA state budget, which the expert panel evaluates positively. However, at the same time the expert panel would like to note that there is a lack of pan-university system of strategic management of the scientific sphere.

6.3. The TLI ensures the implementation of research and its development through sound policies and procedures.

The GSPI has certain mechanisms aimed at research, however, there is no precise policy on research implementation and development and there are no corresponding procedures. The scope of responsibilities is not yet made precise. 1% of budget allocations goes to research including the bonuses given to those who have scientific publications. Research activities form part of individual plans of teaching staff and are included in promotion schemes.

At present the sphere of research is being coordinated by the Vice-rector on Research (there is no separate staff). The chairs have certain scientific topics and publications, the outcomes of which are presented in the form of a report.

The outcomes of research are evaluated annually through scientific reports and publications.

The fact that a PhD student is given an opportunity to work at the GSPI is praiseworthy. In the meanwhile, the opportunities for participating in scientific grant projects and conferences are limited. The recruitment and attainment of new PhD applicants is a challenge that the GSPI faces. For such a big Institute as the GSPI, the number of PhD students is quite limited. The number of publications in international reviewed journals and papers is also insufficient.

Famous scientists of the field work at the GSPI. The latter are members in different degree awarding councils of the RA, however, the scientific resources of the Institute do not allow to have its own degree awarding council.

6.4. The TLI emphasizes internationalization of its research.

The importance of research internationalization is highlighted in the SP, however, the steps undertaken in this respect are limited to publications in certain international journals. There are no international joint research programmes, no joint research topics or programmes in cooperation with similar chairs of foreign universities and institutes.

Throughout 2012-2015 academic year, the decrease in the number of publications witnesses that research operations are becoming more passive.

With the aim of research internationalization, trainings of English are being organized for the teaching staff. Rare are the cases, when the GSPI initiates to assist its staff to participate in international scientific conferences.

6.5. *The TLI has well established mechanisms for linking research with teaching.*

Research and academic process are linked mainly in MA studies, where MA theses topics are mainly chosen based on the specialization of the chairs. Though certain works are being undertaken on BA level, research operations of the students do not yet form an integral part of academic process, which can have a negative impact on academic outcomes. Course papers are viewed as research papers, however, the latter are not scientific. What is more, the continuity of research operations on MA level cannot be traced, which otherwise could have enhanced a more effective implementation of research component.

The requirement to MA theses, as the main scientific component of APs, to formation and selection of theses topics are not precisely described.

CONSIDERATIONS

The lack of precise strategy of research and GSPI interests in the field debilitates research operations. The lack of mid and short-term programmes in this direction is also an obstacle. It is foreseen that the aforesaid programmes will be implemented from 2017. Having an 80-year-old history and certain scientific potential, the Institute was supposed to have planned and implemented short, mid and long-term programmes aimed at research implementation long ago.

The link between the GSPI and other scientific organizations is quite loose and is mainly limited to membership in degree-awarding councils of different universities of the RA, review of dissertation papers or acting as opponents.

The decline in the number of articles and theses published by the GSPI staff should be worrisome for the Institute, since this is the direct consequence of a decline in research operations and interests towards science among its teaching staff. It is praiseworthy that the Institute has certain experience in carrying out programmes financed by the State Committee on Science, however, the lack of other financial sources aimed at science and research witnesses the vulnerability of the GSPI in that respect.

The Institute has certain undertakings as far as research internationalization is concerned, since de facto it can be witnessed that no prominent research operations are carried out at the GSPI, except for publishing articles in international journals. This diminishes the mobility of the teaching staff and the scope of cooperation with foreign TLIs.

The lack of research operations at BA level does not enhance the formation of research competences among the students. To the contrary, it complicates the operations of further MA students since the latter will not be ready or will have difficulties to start their research activities.

SUMMARY: Taking into consideration the fact that at present the GSPI does not have a strategy reflecting its research priorities (directions) and interests in the field, scientific directions of the Institute are not precise, mid and short-term programmes have not yet been implemented, the internationalization of research is still weak, the link between academic process and research is not precise, the expert panel concludes that the GSPI does not meet the requirements of the Criterion 6.

CONCLUSION: The correspondence of GSPI institutional capacities to the requirements of Criterion 6 is **unsatisfactory**.

CRITERION VII. INFRASTRUCTURES AND RESOURCES

CRITERION: The TLI has necessary resources to create learning environment and to effectively support the implementation of its stated mission and objectives.

FINDINGS

7.1. The TLI has an appropriate learning environment for the implementation of academic programmes offered.

For the realization of academic programmes in an apt educational environment GSPI has academic buildings. Academic activities are mainly realized at the building on P.Sevak 4. The GSPI has 6 big auditoriums, 10 laboratories, 8 crafts room. There are classrooms meant for rendering information services and IT rooms, sport-shall, professional cabinets including computer and language laboratories, partially and fully saturated academic and research laboratories. There are three classrooms with a SmartBoard and projector, however, their number is still quite limited for conducting all classes.

Because of the insufficient number of classroom, the classes are organized in two shifts which can have its negative impact on the organization of academic process. On the basis of the agreement with Gyumri Economic Development Fund (GEDF), GSPI can utilise mechanics, electronics, television broadcasting and multimedia laboratories given for rent to the GEDF.

The Institute has a library, which is partially saturated with necessary books. The fund of the said library is being refreshed every year. However, the library still faces shortage of books, especially the ones which were published recently and are aimed for non-pedagogical APs. There is no electronic catalogue. The sub page of the library in the official web-site of the GSPI is empty and does not contain any information. At present certain steps are undertaken aimed at elaborating electronic library systems. A system of electronic lectures and academic materials has been implemented at the GSPI, which significantly relieves the urgent need for literature. The GSPI has a free Wi-fi coverage.

The expert panel would like to highlight the existence of a studio which enhances the development of professional competences of students pursuing their studies in journalism.

For assessing the academic environment of the Institute, the GSPI has conducted a survey among the students and based on the outcomes of the survey certain conditions of the library have been reformed.

7.2. The TLI provides appropriate financial resources with necessary equipment and facilities as needed to achieve its mission and objectives.

69% of GSPI financial resources is accumulated from the tuition fees, approximately 29% from State Budget allocations, 1% from grant projects, 1% from non-functional incomes. The fact that tuition fees constitute a major source of GSPI financial flows diminishes the autonomy of the Institute and makes it dependant of the number of students.

The GSPI allocates financial resources according to priorities (based on the needs of different infrastructures and bodies). As far as the policy of financial resource allocation is concerned, the Institute has annual financial planning and accountability.

The expenditures embrace the following spheres:

- Salaries – 60-69%,
- Scholarships – 3-5%,
- Library expenses – 1%,
- Renovation – 7%,
- Business trips – 1-1.5%
- Else.

Financial allocations to research are insufficient. This was ascertained by the GSPI employees.

7.3. The TLI's resource base supports the implementation of institution's academic programmes and its strategic plans.

The Institute has a procedure on financial resource allocation according to priorities and based on the needs. GSPI deploys its financial means as follows: the budget project is compiled by the Rector, the Pro-Rectors and the chief financial officer departing from development plan, precalculated income, expected expenses as well as needs and demands of GSPI subdivisions and departing from previous years' performance statements.

The budget plan is discussed at the Institute Scientific Board and in case of approval it is presented to GSPI Board for verification. The existence of a procedure on financial allocation is a favouring condition for correct, targeted utilization of financial means. However, the mechanisms aimed at assessing the effectiveness of current policy on financial planning and allocation is not yet evaluated, which diminishes the effectiveness of financial resource allocation of the GSPI.

There is no policy of financial resource allocation per academic programme and it is not foreseen in the precalculation of budget expenditure.

7.4. The resource base of the University allows for implementation of APs and SP which fosters continuous enhancement of quality and sustainability.

The resource base of the Institute allows of carrying out the APs. From this perspective, the said resource base is sufficient for carrying out theoretical classes. However, as far as practical classes are concerned, the Institute still has certain steps to undertake with the aim of enriching resource base. Throughout the recent months, the Institute has purchased sufficient amount of laboratory equipments by the means of the MoES. Throughout the site-visit it became apparent that the Institute purchased laboratory equipment equivalent to 100,000 US\$ (the money was given by the Government).

7.5. The TLI has a sound policy and procedure to manage information and documentation.

A set of tools is used at GSPI for efficient information and documenting management, of which Mulberry document circulation electronic system stands out. Since 2013 Professional Education Management Information (PEMI) system has been put into action which is an information source for obtaining data on the Institute activities.

The unanimous student database is used based on local data. For inner document circulation the local server is used which provides access to the system for the registered users. However, the final reports are also sent in paper. The employees are aware of what the mechanisms for forming their reports and sending to appropriate cycles are.

The web-site of the Institute ensures availability of information about accountability, regulations and APs.

The elaboration of electronic library is still in its formation.

7.6. The TLI creates safe and secure environment through health and safety mechanisms that also consider special needs of students.

The Institute has a medical centre. There are mandatory medical checks for the freshmen and employees which are carried out with external resources too. Notwithstanding the trainings at different sports sections organized by the Chair of Physical Training and Its Teaching Methods, the students are not that contented with the conditions of sport-halls.

For GSPI security management, the security guard system has been implemented. For the service efficiency enhancement the card entrance system has been used since 2012. There is a fire prevention system, but the GSPI wants to ameliorate it.

The GSPI still does not have enough conditions for students with special needs (there is a disabled ramp near the entrance), which hinders the opportunities to get education.

7.7. The TLI has special mechanisms in place for the evaluation of the effectiveness, applicability and availability of resources given to the teaching staff and learners.

Within the framework of TEMPUS HEN-GEAR programme (2013-2014 and 2014-2015 academic years) certain surveys have been conducted among the alumni, with the aim of assessing resource applicability, effectiveness and accessibility. As an outcome of the said surveys, certain issues related to resource applicability and accessibility have been detected (state of auditoriums and laboratories, library, computer labs). It's worth mentioning that the aforesaid surveys do not cover the whole spectrum of resource applicability, accessibility and effectiveness assessment. What is more, the issues related to the effectiveness of financial resource implementation are not taken into account.

There are no other analytical mechanisms except for the surveys (e.g. regular monitoring and else). The expert panel has not seen any other surveys conducted among the internal stakeholders referring to resources.

CONSIDERATIONS

Though the Institute has corresponding auditorium fund, the latter is still insufficient, and as an outcome, the classes are organized in two shifts. The expert panel has noted, that with the aforesaid state of affairs both the academic process of the students and the operations of the employees will be complicated.

Though the Institute has academic resources (laboratories, computers, projectors and the like), there is still a need to re-saturate technical equipments and laboratories. This was ascertained by the participants of the meetings.

It is evident that the main source of financial means is student fees, which endangers the financial sustainability of the GSPI in the scenario when the number of the students has a declining tendency. Grant projects are accountable for only 1% of Institute's financial means that is why, the GSPI should have a precise viewpoint on diversification of financial means, in particular on augmenting the percentage of other sources.

The fact, that the GSPI has a formulated mechanism of financial allocation is positive, since this raises the effectiveness of their utilization. In the annual budget of the Institute certain expenditures directed at the implementation of its aims are foreseen, however, the said expenses are not detailed per academic programmes and separate laboratories, which would make financial investments more targeted.

The existence of an internal net enhances the implementation of an effective document flow.

Throughout the recent years a mechanism aimed at assessing the academic environment has been implemented at the GSPI. This can be quite conducive for revealing the needs and from the perspective of further improvement of academic environment. However, the operations aimed at assessing the resources are still insufficient, since the surveys have been conducted only among the alumni.

The Institute still lacks conditions which would be conducive to the academic process of students with special needs and the GSPI still has many undertakings in this respect.

The ratio teaching staff-students is 1-9 at present, which witnesses about the small number of students. Such a high number of teaching staff can limit the opportunity of having investments in other crucial spheres (e.g. research, library, internationalization) and debilitate the effectiveness of SP implementation.

SUMMARY: Taking into consideration the auditorium and laboratories of the Institute, the existence of resources assisting the organization of the academic process (library, sport-hall, medical center and etc), also the fact that throughout the recent years the Institute exercises efforts aimed at improving and enriching GSPI resources, the expert panel concludes that the GSPI meets the requirements of the Criterion 7. However, the expert panel would like to underline that the Institute faces certain problems related to creating conducive academic environment for the students with special needs as well as to financial planning of separate APs.

CONCLUSION: The correspondence of GSPI institutional capacities to the requirements of Criterion 7 is **satisfactory**.

CRITERION VIII. SOCIETAL RESPONSIBILITY

CRITERION: The TLI is accountable to the government and society for the education it offers and the resources it uses as well as for the research it conducts.

FINDINGS

8.1. The TLI has clear policy on institutional accountability.

The Institute has a determined regulation on accountability. It is carried out top-bottom and bottom up and accordingly the questions to be discussed go through chairs, faculties, vice-rector, Scientific Board, rector, council. The following chain is utilized to reveal the questions which can refer to all the functions of the Institute. However, the weakness is that the participation of the students in discussions is quite passive. This is being ascertained by the observations of the expert panel.

According to the accountability procedure, the reports of faculties, chairs, rectors are posted in the web-site, which is again a positive mechanism of ensuring accountability and transparency.

Started from 2012, a format of chair, faculty, library, other infrastructure and rector report is implemented. The said format includes the main targets (academic process, research, resources, QA and else). This unification is quite enhancing, since it helps to systematically reveal the questions which may be applicable to similar infrastructures. However, following observation outcomes, the reports presented by the chairs and faculty mostly have descriptive nature and not in all cases have in depth analysis.

8.2. The TLI ensures transparency of its procedures and processes and makes the results of the latter publicly available.

One of the main mechanisms of GSPI accountability is the reports of different infrastructures (faculty, chair) as well as that of the rector which is posted in the web-site of the Institute. The said mechanism ensures the transparent operation of the Institute and informs vast layers of the society about its operations. Several other tools aimed at transparency of procedures and operations are also utilized: web-site, official Facebook page, the web-site of Institute studio, the journal of the GSPI, dissemination of information via mass media (carried out from time to time).

The annual report of the rector to the Council of the GSPI can be considered as a format of accountability in front of its external stakeholders, since the latter are also included in the said Council.

The studio of the GSPI disseminates information about the current operations of the Institute, posts the reports of the rector and ensures transparency and accountability. Video and printed materials that the said studio prepares are posted in the web-site of the Institute and in certain cases are also shown on regional TV channel. All the aforesaid activities enhance the transparency of the GSPI operations and dissemination of information for a larger segments of society.

8.3. The TLI has sustainable feedback mechanisms for promoting/establishing contacts with society.

The Institute does not have a determined policy and procedures (the elaboration is still in progress) aimed at feedback which enhances the establishment of societal ties. From this perspective, there are certain mechanisms which enhance feedback assurance; the web-site of the GSPI in particular, where both internal and external stakeholders can address their questions to the Institute. According to the

outcomes of the site-visit, external stakeholders mainly pose their questions through the official facebook page of the Institute and in this respect the web-site of the GSPI does not yet have a huge role to play.

8.4. The TLI has mechanisms that ensure knowledge transfer to the society.

The fact that some alumni of the GSPI work outside the RA (in the regions of Georgia inhabited by Armenians) promotes the process of knowledge transfer to the society. Being a significant scientific-academic center of the region, except for its main functions, the GSPI renders other services; training of teachers, operations carried out with potential applicants, psychological services (the GSPI has a Centre of Psychology). There are several other social events that are organized by the GSPI and can be viewed as mechanisms aimed at transferring knowledge and values to the society. Notwithstanding all the operations described above, the GSPI lacks assessments and analyses about the services rendered.

CONSIDERATIONS

The precise bottom-up and top-down mechanism of accountability, which operates at the GSPI, enhances the quality of accountability and renders the transparency of GSPI operations more transparent. The said procedure is being promoted by the fact that the reports are being posted in the web-site and that the studio disseminated information about them. The inclination of the GSPI to ameliorate the accountability mechanisms for external stakeholders is praiseworthy. However, the report format of the chairs and that of the faculty needs elaboration, since the latter are overloaded with diverse facts (individual indicators of students, the names of graduation and MA theses and else) in the meanwhile including only weak analysis.

There are certain mechanisms which ensure the transparency of procedures and operations (web-site, Facebook page and else). From this perspective the Institute must promote information dissemination among its internal stakeholders. The fact that the society almost does not make use of the opportunity to raise certain issues via the web-site is one of the weaknesses and needs certain clarifications. Another weakness is that the Institution has not evaluated the mechanisms ensuring the transparency of its operations among its stakeholders.

The fact that except for academic knowledge transfer system, the Institute has other mechanisms to ensure knowledge transfer to the society. For instance, teacher training, operations of the psychological centre (this fosters the role of the institute as not only academic institution). Throughout the site-visit it became apparent that so far very few people have made use of the Psychological Centre of the Institute.

Evaluating positively the fact that the GSPI has services rendered to the society (teacher training, activities with prospective applicants, social events), it still must be mentioned that the Institute needs to elaborate mechanisms, which will help to assess and guide the services rendered.

SUMMARY: Taking into consideration the fact that the GSPI has a system of accountability, which mainly reveals the operations undertaken in the Institute, the information about GSPI operations is generally available, there are certain mechanisms aimed at knowledge transfer, the expert panel concludes that the GSPI meets the requirements of the Criterion 8.

CONCLUSION: The correspondence of GSPI institutional capacities to the requirements of Criterion 8 is **satisfactory**.

CRITERION IX. EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND INTERNATIONALIZATION

CRITERION: The TLI promotes experience exchange and enhancement through its sound external relations practices, thus promoting internationalization of the institution.

FINDINGS

9.1. The TLI promotes its external relations through sound policies and procedures aimed at creating an environment conducive to experience exchange and enhancement and internationalization.

The GSPI SP determines the main directions and objectives of internationalization and external relations. GSPI aims at comprehensive development of Foreign Relations, practice exchange and activities promoting internationalization of the Institute. The Institute has certain experience in international projects and currently is involved into a number of projects, including the ones of TEMPUS (ARARAT, HEN-GEAR, SuToMa, ARMENQA and else). The process of internationalization is carried out only within the framework of projects having external financial sources. No initiative, investment and resources are exercised on the part of the GSPI in this direction. There are no procedures aimed at promoting the establishment of external relations.

9.2. The institution's external relations infrastructure ensures regulated process.

There is a Department of External Relations which is under the direct supervision of the vice-rector. The department is in charge of coordinating a number of international projects. The said unit has two employees: The operations of the department are carried out in accordance with its statute ratified in 2013, however, the said document is generic.

9.3. The TLI promotes fruitful and effective collaboration with local and international counterparts.

The GSPI has successfully participated in a number of international projects, including TEMPUS, which endowed its staff and the students with the opportunity to participate in international mobility, as well as to acquire certain resources. The comparative increase in teacher and student mobility, traced within the last three years, can be viewed as a positive trend (8 students in 2012-2013 academic year, 16 students and 3 employees in 2013-2014 academic year, 17 students and 7 employees in 2014-2015 academic year).

At a local scale, ties have been established with schools, social services, a couple of employers which in its turn has provided limited opportunities for internships and joint research, at the same time having some impact on the employability of the alumni. At a national level, there are certain links with different universities.

9.4. The TLI ensures internal stakeholders' appropriate level of a foreign language to enhance productivity of internationalization.

According to the SER 80% teachers, students and administrative staff dominate a foreign language. According to the said source, 20% of teachers and students do not possess necessary level of Russian, which means that they cannot utilize literature in Russian which can have an impact on internationalization. Certain efforts have been exercised in order to improve the level of English among the students with the aim of enhancing their participation in international projects.

Notwithstanding the fact, that the majority of teachers dominate a foreign language, which might be enough for general communication, it is not enough for professional communication and for carrying out classes in a foreign language, the organization of which is a priority from the viewpoint of exchange programmes.

With the aim of fostering the level of foreign language, the GSPI organizes trainings of English for its staff. There is a Language Centre where certain students can participate in foreign language classes.

CONSIDERATIONS

The expert panel evaluates positively the efforts of the GSPI exercised towards internationalization, experience exchange and development. The SP of the GSPI determines the integration into the EHEA and the tendency towards internationalization of its scientific-academic system as its priorities, which is an important prerequisite for the internationalization of the Institute. The Department of Foreign Relations provides favoring conditions for internationalization and further activation of foreign relations.

The activity of the Institute participating in an array of international projects accumulates certain experience for the targeted development of the Institute towards internationalization. Especially within the last ten years and at present, the participation of the GSPI in more than 10 TEMPUS and other international projects has ensured certain mobility and enrichment of resource base, which according to the expert panel is a step towards internationalization. In the meanwhile, the independent international operations of the GSPI are not active enough.

The fact of foreign language acquisition among some teachers and students enhances further development of foreign relations. However, realizing the fact that the level of foreign language acquisition can still be insufficient for conducting specialization classes and promoting students mobility within the framework of international projects, the Institute organizes extra-curricular classes of foreign language, which can be a promoting factor for the internationalization of the Institute.

SUMMARY: Taking into consideration the fact that the SP of the GSPI highlights the importance of internationalization, that the Institute has participated and still participates in an array of international projects, there is a Department of Foreign Relations in the organigram of the GSPI, the GSPI realizes the importance of foreign language classes and trainings carried out on different levels, the expert panel concludes that the GSPI meets the requirements of the Criterion 9. However, it should also be noted, there are no precise procedures aimed at enhancing internationalization.

CONCLUSION: The correspondence of GSPI institutional capacities to the requirements of Criterion 9 is **satisfactory**.

CRITERION X. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

CRITERION: The TLI has an internal quality assurance system, which promotes establishment of a quality culture and continual improvement of all the processes of TLI.

FINDINGS

10.1. The TLI has internal quality assurance policies and procedures.

Started from 2012 the Quality Assurance Centre (QAC) operates at the GSPI. In June, 2011 a structural new unit, namely Quality Assurance and Monitoring Centre was established within the Department of Foreign Relations and Reforms supported by TEMPUS Programme. Started from 2012 it became an autonomous infrastructure which functions in accordance with the mission, QA policy and strategy.

The QAC, pursues the aim to ensure GSPI educational, scientific and management procedures' quality monitoring, accountability and continual enhancement.

Guidelines of Internal QA System was put in utilization according to GSPI Scientific Board session decision, May 23, 2014. It defines a quality assurance general policy and its realization within the framework of the institutional mission, vision and main values.

The QAC statute defines the place of the centre in the administrative organigram of the GSPI, however, no precise procedures aimed at ensuring quality of operations have been elaborated so far.

According to the statute, the QAC carries out operations in a number of directions: organizational, methodical, counselling, and informative and else.

10.2. The TLI allocates sufficient time, material, human and financial resources to manage internal quality assurance processes.

Both international projects as well as human, material and financial resources are invested into the internal quality assurance system. The establishment of IQA system was enhanced by the technical support of TEMPUS DIUS, PICQA and the project of "Education Quality and Concordance" of the World Bank and within the framework of the aforesaid projects the centre had been saturated with necessary material-technical base.

With the aim of decentralizing the operations of the Centre and raising the effectiveness of the latter, faculty QA Centers have been created, the operations of which are carried out by chair responsible of QA and students with the coordination of faculty QA responsible.

The operation of the Centre are coordinated by two employees: the head and the secretary, as well as by 6 faculty responsible of QA, each one having a 0.25 workload, the latter have undergone necessary trainings. However, as the Institute mentions itself, there is still a lack of experience. The functions of the head and faculty responsible of the QA are determined in corresponding regulations.

Faculty Council selects faculty representatives and the rector ratifies. Faculty representatives are accountable (present their reports) to the Faculty Councils.

The GSPI students also have certain participation in the operations of the QAC. The latter are involved in groups formed by the Student Council.

10.3. The internal and external stakeholders are involved in quality assurance processes.

The IQA system which operates at the GSPI endows the internal stakeholders with the opportunity to have participation in QA operations (APs, learning, QA of academic resources, else). The QAC cooperates with the QA group of the Student Council ensuring certain participation on the part of the students in QA operations. The students have had participation in the process of writing the SER. The group, in charge of the said report, included deans, chair heads, as well as students. The level of involvement and the activity of part-time students is low which is worrisome especially taking into account the fact that a huge number of students pursue part-time studies.

According to the GPSI Guide of IQA, external stakeholders should also be involved in QA operations, however, the level of their participation is still non-satisfactory. With the aim of overcoming this issue, the Institute underlines the importance of improving necessary mechanisms ensuring internal and external stakeholder awareness and involvement.

10.4. The internal quality assurance system is periodically reviewed.

In June, 2011 a structural new unit, namely Quality Assurance and Monitoring Centre was established within the Department of Foreign Relations and Reforms supported by TEMPUS Programme. In 2013 the first statute of the said unit entered into force and was reviewed in 2014. Before that, QA operations have been carried out within the framework of PICQA project, which endowed the GSPI with the opportunity to carry out comparative analyses of the QA systems operating in other universities and to determine the further path of QA system development. The QA operations followed the PDCA cycle.

The operations of the Centre are currently directed towards planning and implementation of the GSPI activities. Notwithstanding the works undertaken by the QAC, the PDCA cycle is not yet closed. Moreover, there is a need to elaborate procedures, which will ensure assessment and improvement operations.

Certain reforms have been undertaken in the IQA system within the last 3 years, however, there is still no policy on regular review of the system. In particular:

- When and why should the QA system be reviewed?
- What changed would this bring about?
- Would it enhance improvement of academic programmes, student satisfaction, and the involvement of the latter in research activities.

10.5 The internal quality assurance system provides valid and sufficient basis/background for the success of the external quality assurance processes.

With the aim of organizing external assessment, certain operations have been carried out within the framework of IQA system (surveys, SER). The first steps directed at external assessment of institutional capacities have been undertaken within the framework of grant projects. The said steps were targeted at accessibility of information and assurance of transparency of operations, as well as at data collection, elaboration and analysis.

The operations of data collection, dissemination and management are generally speaking systematic, however, their effectiveness is not yet examined.

10.6. The internal quality assurance system provides for the transparency of the processes unfolding in the TLI through providing valid and up to date information on the quality of the latter to the internal and external stakeholders.

The transparency of IQA system is being ensured through the web-site (www.gspi.am), reports, discussions, GPSI info journal, the programmes of the studio.

The information is accessible for both internal and external stakeholders and per se is enough to form an overall idea about the quality of GSPI operations.

CONSIDERATIONS

Throughout the recent years the implementation and development of QA system can create favorable conditions for the establishment of quality culture, as well as internal and external assessment.

The regulations elaborated by the QAC of the GSPI provide grounds for the realization of QA functions. The involvement of GSPI teachers and students into quality operations ensures the targeted nature of the latter. However, it is worth mentioning, that the involvement of internal stakeholders is still low.

The expert panel evaluates positively the fact that the GSPI is involved in a number of international projects (DIUS, PIQA and else) within the framework of QA operations. Human, financial and material-technical resources involved into quality operations per se ensure the implementation of corresponding functions, however, the level of effectiveness of resource implementation is not yet examined which can be an obstacle for the implementation of quality assurance.

At present, the insufficient involvement of external stakeholders in QA system can debilitate the effectiveness of QA system and the GSPI has certain undertakings in this respect.

The steps targeted at ensuring the transparency of information about quality functions enhance the level of awareness of both internal and external stakeholders.

SUMMARY: Taking into consideration the fact that the GSPI has an operating system of IQA which is still in the process of development and yet promotes the continuous improvement of institution operations, establishment of quality culture and tries to ensure the transparency of its operations, the expert panel concludes that the GSPI meets the requirements of the Criterion 10. However, it should also be noted, that the involvement of external stakeholders into QA procedures is not sufficient. What is more, myriad operations are still in the cycles of planning and implementation.

CONCLUSION: The correspondence of GSPI institutional capacities to the requirements of Criterion 10 is **satisfactory**.

EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

CRITERION	CONCLUSION
<i>I. Mission and Goals</i>	Satisfactory
<i>II. Governance and Administration</i>	Unsatisfactory
<i>III. Academic Programs</i>	Unsatisfactory
<i>IV. Students</i>	Satisfactory
<i>V. Teaching and Support Staffs</i>	Satisfactory
<i>VI. Research and Development</i>	Unsatisfactory
<i>VII. Infrastructure and Resources</i>	Satisfactory
<i>VIII. Social Responsibility</i>	Satisfactory
<i>IX. External Relations and Internationalization</i>	Satisfactory
<i>X. Internl Quality Assurane System</i>	Satisfactory

15 January 2016

Vardan Sargsyan

The chair of the expert panel

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. CVs of EXPERT PANEL MEMBERS

Vardan Sargsyan graduated from the Yerevan State Institute of National Economy (at present State University of Economics of Armenia) and was awarded the qualification of engineer-economist. In 1989 he was awarded a PhD of economics and in 2009 a degree of Doctor of Economics. In 1993 he was awarded the degree of an associate professor. At present he is a professor, a Head of the Chair of IS. He participated in a number of exchange programmes and myriad scientific conferences. He has about 60 published articles, books and textbooks (1996-2014), including 16 papers and one book (co-editor) in Europe and USA, 4 monographs, 6 textbooks.

Patrick Gray graduated from the Leeds University, UK in 1975 being awarded a BA degree in Political Studies. In 1981 he graduated from the University of London with a Master of Science in Politics with Sociology. He undertook his postgraduate studies in Polytechnic University of London and was awarded a postgraduate diploma in Management Studies. At present he is the Head of department of Social Professions of London Metropol University, Patrick Gray is responsible for academic leadership of department with 65 staff and 1500 students in areas including Education, Social work, Community Work, Health. He is also responsible for quality. He has undertaken a number of external reviews. He had reports in an array of international seminars and scientific conferences. He is the author of myriad publications.

Garegin Hambardzumyan graduated from the Armenian Agricultural Academy, from the Faculty of Veterinary. He undertook his PhD studies throughout 1999-2002. He is a PhD in Veterinary Sciences. Throughout 2003-2011 he worked in Armenian Agrarian Academy as a teacher. Started from 2011 he is a leading specialist in the sphere of academic reforms and implementation of credit system. From 2011 till present he works at Yerevan State Medical University after M. Heratsi as an associate professor in the Chair of Physiology.

Margarita Shahverdyan graduated from PhD studies of Armenian State Pedagogical University after Kh. Abovyan in 1990. She is a PhD in Psychology. From 2010 till present she is the Head of the Centre of Quality Assurance of Vanadzor State Pedagogical University after H. Toumanyanyan. Margarita Shahverdyan has been initiating societal activities and is included into a number of international programmes and she is an author of a number of publications.

Gohar Mikaelyan is a second year students of the Department of “Examination, Standardization and Certification of Agriculture Production and Provisions”, National Agrarian University of Armenia. Gohar has participated in the training organized by the ANQA and got a certificate.

APPENDIX 2: SCHEDULE OF SITE VISIT

15.11.2015.-19.11.2015.

15.11.2015 թ.		<i>Start</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Duration</i>
1.	Departure to Gyumri	16:00	18:00	60 minutes
2.	Closed panel meeting	19:00	21:30	120 minutes
16.11.2015 թ.		<i>Start</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Duration</i>
1.	Meeting with rector	9:30	10:00	30minutes
2.	Meeting with vice-rectors	10:10	11:10	60 minutes
3.	Meeting with self-assessment implementation team	11:20	12:20	60 minutes
4.	Meeting with faculty deans	12:30	13:30	60 minutes
5.	Lunch and closed panel meeting	13:30	14:30	60 minutes
6.	Resources and documentation review	14:40	15:40	60 minutes
7.	Meeting with the alumni (8-10 people)	15:50	16:50	60minutes
8.	Meeting with employers (8-10 people)	17:00	17:45	45minutes
9.	Closed panel meeting	18:00	19:30	90minutes
17.11.2015 թ.		<i>Start</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Duration</i>
1.	Meeting with Chair Heads in charge of AP represented in self-assessment	9:30	10:20	50 minutes
2.	Meeting with the Chair heads	10:30	11:20	50 minutes
3.	Meeting with teaching staff(including 3 AP) (10-12 people)	11:30	12:30	60 minutes
4.	Break and closed panel meeting	12:40	13:30	50minutes
5.	Resources review (Deans' offices, documentation)	13:40	15:10	90minutes
6.	Resources review (Chairs, documentation)	15:20	16:50	90minutes
7.	Meeting in University-Market Cooperation Unit	17:00	17:30	30 minutes
8.	Closed panel meeting	17:40	19:40	120minutes
18.11.2015թ.		<i>Start</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Duration</i>
1.	Meeting with Student Council representatives	9:30	10:00	30minutes
2.	Meeting with BA student representatives(10-12 people)	10:10	11:10	60minutes
3.	Meeting with MA student representatives(10-12 people)	11:20	12:20	60minutes
4.	Break and closed panel meeting	12:30	13:30	60minutes
5.	Resources review (auditoriums, laboratories, cabinets, library, sport club, medical service...)	13:40	15:10	90minutes
6.	Subdivision review (Methodological Department, Public Relations and Mass-Media Department, Internship Department, External relations Department)	15:20	16:50	90minutes
7.	Meeting with Vice-rector of Science and Public Affairs and with representatives of corresponding spheres	16:50	17:30	40minutes
8.	Meeting with representatives of Student Scientific Association	17:30	18:00	30 minutes
9.	Closed panel meeting	18:00	20:00	120minutes
19.11.2015 թ.		<i>Start</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Duration</i>
1	Meeting with representatives of Quality Assurance Centre	9:00	10:00	60minutes
2	Meeting with people chosen by the expert panel	10:10	11:10	60minutes
3	Open meeting/ consultation session with expert panel	11:20	12:00	40minutes
4	Break and closed panel meeting	12:00	13:00	60minutes
5	Closed panel meeting	13:00	15:00	120minutes
6	Meeting with rector	15:10	16:00	40minutes
7	Departure to Yerevan	16:20	18:20	120minutes

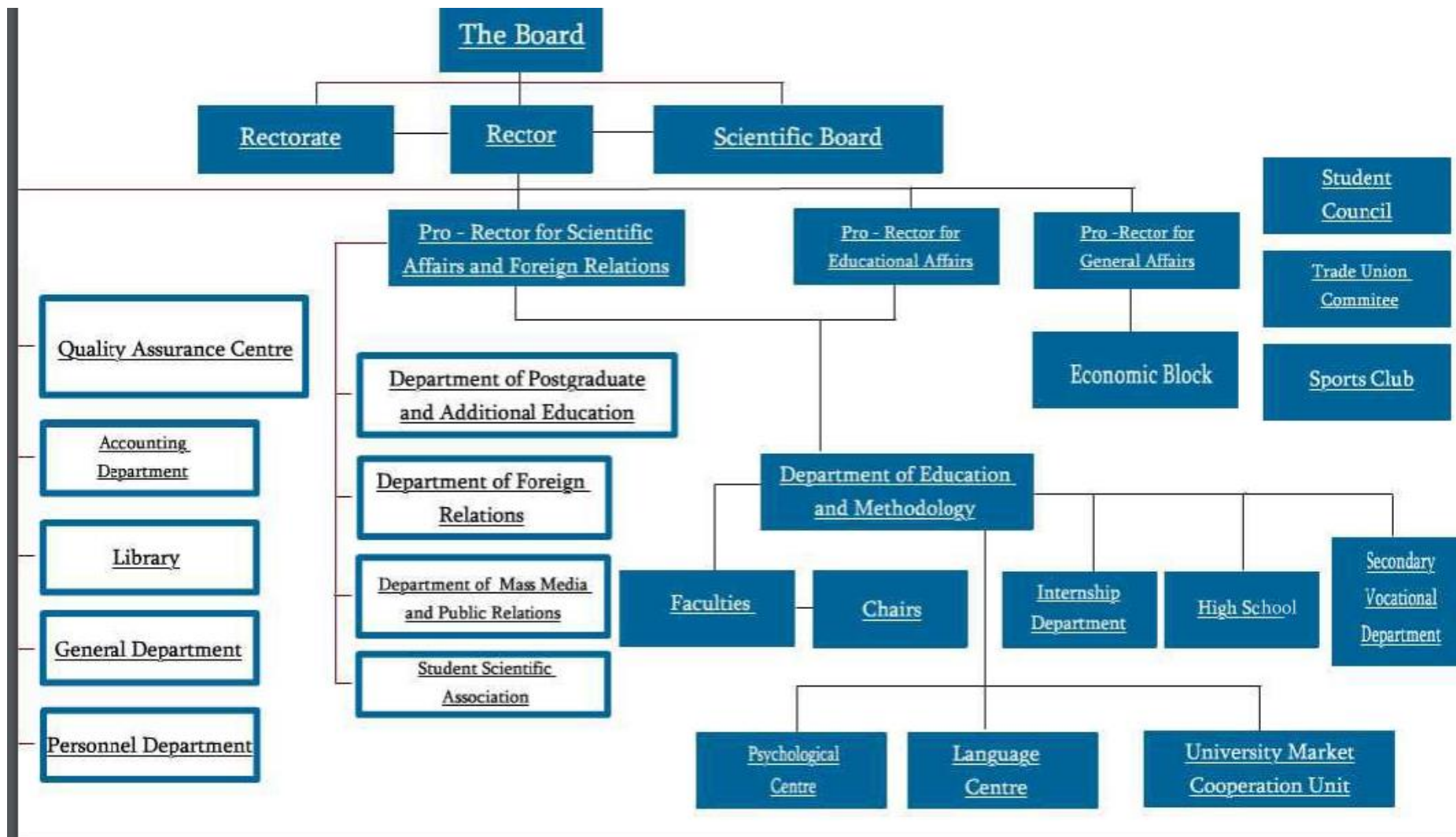
APPENDIX 3: LIST OF DOCUMENTS OBSERVED

N	List of documents	C/S
1.	Results of research aimed at SP review	1.1
2.	SP of the three faculties in accordance with the academic programs	1.1
3.	Reports of discussions with internal and external stakeholders on SP review	1.2
4.	Timetable, working plan of SP implementation	1.3
5.	Minutes of the meetings with the rector and Scientific Board on the outcomes the SP aims	1.3
6.	Minutes of the meetings of the Committee on SP essentials	2.1
7.	Annual faculty reports of the deans	2.1
8.	Annual report of the Student Council president	2.1
9.	Scientific Board reports	2.1
10.	Long-term financial project (the results of the survey are presented in the Diagram 2.1)	2.1
11.	Reports on the issues raised by the students and the decisions made	2.2
12.	Monitoring project	2.3
13.	The outcomes of the surveys carried out in secondary schools (2014-2015 academic year) by the University-Market cooperation Centre	2.4
14.	2013-2014 analysis of alumni surveys	2.4
15.	Minutes of the meeting with the rector, Scientific Board on the process of academic programs	2.6
16.	Implemented regulations and procedures on data collection referring to the effectiveness of the operations aimed at academic program implementation	2.6
17.	Regulation on "Credit System"	3.1
18.	The outcomes of Benchmarking and the benchmarking policy	3.1
19.	Basis of QAC monitoring	3.2
20.	Minutes of lesson audit	3.3
21.	Information on methodical councils of academic programs /competences, structure/	3.5
22.	Minutes of licensing committee	3.5
23.	Student numbers per faculty	4.1
24.	Student survey outcomes and analysis	4.2
25.	Documents justifying the activities of counselors	4.3
26.	Strategy of the University-Market Cooperation Unit	4.5
27.	Undertakings of the Student Scientific Union /reports of student scientific meetings, published materials, means of promotion/	4.6
28.	The frequency of needs analysis of Student Scientific Union and SC and the minutes	4.6
29.	SC strategy	4.6
30.	Minutes, facts about assistance rendered to the students	
31.	The Cvs of professors represented in 3 academic programs	5.1
32.	Minutes of lesson audits	5.2
33.	Evaluation project of the staff and the faculty	5.3
34.	Training programs, lists, opinions ՊԴ կազմի վերապատրաստման ծրագրեր, ցուցակներ, կարծիքներ	5.4
35.	Professional development training program, the list of participants	5.6
36.	Policy of assisting young teachers	5.6
37.	SP on research development and working plan	6.1
38.	Graduation theses: 3 marked as "excellent", 3 marked as "failed".	6.5
39.	Theses evaluation criteria	6.5
40.	Financial policy and accountancy regulation	7.2
41.	Mechanisms and policy of financial allocation	7.3
43.	Reports of the chairs and administrative bodies, samples of new accountability formats	8.1
44.	Regulation on the web-site maintenance	8.3
45.	Contracts with different organizations /within the framework of international programs not mentioned in the SER/	9
46.	Training procedures, programs, assurance of feedback mechanisms	
47.	Foreign language training programs and list of participants	9
48.	Reports of QA faculty centre working groups and activities	10
49.	Reports of discussions with internal and external stakeholders on quality system	10

APPENDIX 4. RESOURCES OBSERVED

1. **Classrooms**
2. **Deans' offices** (Foreign Languages, Pedagogy, Natural Sciences and Geography, Physics-Mathematica, and Economical, Historical)
3. **Chairs** (English Language and Methodology, Pedagogy and Social Work, Economy, Higher Mathematics and Methodology, Biology, Ecology and their teaching methods)
4. **Departments** (Education and Methodology, Foreign Relations, Mass-Media and Public Relations, University-Market Cooperation Unit)
5. **Laboratories**
6. **Studio of the GSPI**
7. **Psychology Centre**
8. **Sport Hall**
9. **Conference Hall**
10. **Computer Labs**
11. **Canteens**
12. **Medical Centre**
13. **Library**
14. **Reading halls**

APPENDIX 5. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATION INSTITUTION



APPENDIX 6. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1. **EREA**- European Higher Education Area
2. **ECTS** – European Credit Transfer System
3. **RA**- Republic of Armenia
4. **GSPI** _ Gyumri State Pedagogical University
5. **AP**-Academic programme
6. **TLI**- Tertiary level institution
7. **QA**- Quality assurance
8. **ANQA**- National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance, Foundation
9. **ESG** _ European Standards and Guidelines
10. **NQF**- National qualification framework
11. **AC**- Academic staff
12. **PDCA**- Plan, do, check, act
13. **SP**- Strategic plan
14. **IT**- Information technologies
15. **SSO**- Student Scientific organization
16. **SC**- student council