"NATIONAL CENTRE FOR PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE" FOUNDATION

EXPERT PANEL REPORT
INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION OF
LORI REGIONAL STATE COLLEGE

Yerevan – 2021

Contents

INTRODUCTION

The institutional accreditation of Lori Regional State College (hereinafter referred to as LRSC) is carried out based on the application submitted by LRSC.

The process of institutional accreditation is organized and coordinated by "National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance" Foundation (hereinafter ANQA), guided by regulation on "State Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and Academic Programmes in RA" set by RA Government Decree N 978-Ն (dated June 30, 2011) and by Decree N 959-Ն on "Approval of RA Standards for Professional Education Accreditation" (dated June 30, 2011).

The expert examination was carried out by the independent expert panel formed in accordance with the requirements set by the "National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance" foundation in regulation on "Formation of the Expert Panel". The Panel is formed of 4 local experts.

The accreditation process was funded by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports of the Republic of Armenia (hereinafter ESCS).

The institutional accreditation is aimed not only at external evaluation of quality assurance but also at continuous improvement of the quality of management and academic programmes at the institution. Special emphasis was paid to the cooperation of the institution and employers and its impact on the content of education.

The hereby report comprises the results of the evaluation of the institutional capacities of the college in accordance with the State Accreditation Criteria and Standards.

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

The exercising of LRSC institutional capacities was carried out by the independent expert panel formed in accordance with the requirements of "Regulation on the Formation of the Expert Panel", «National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance» Foundation. The evaluation was conducted according to 10 institutional accreditation criteria set by the RA Government Decree N 959-Ն, dated June 30, 2011.

While carrying out the evaluation, the expert panel considered that LRSC is a state VET institution whose main mission is the preparation of graduates with qualifications corresponding to the 5th level of the NQF based on the needs of the region. The expert panel considered the fact that LRSC is undergoing an accreditation process for the first time.

The professions offered by LRSC arise from the needs of the Lori region economy, in particular, some professions are traditional for the college and serve the light industry sector and other professions are more relevant, in particular, IT, tourism, etc. The academic programs of the offered specialties are largely based on the state educational standards, and at the planning level, the college is not free to make major program changes. In the actual educational process, the position of the college is much more liberal, in particular, the choice of teaching, learning, and assessment methods in the college are liberalized, and it depends on the lecturer. In these cases, there are risks of non-compliance with the planned and actually achieved results, and the college does not have neutralization mechanisms for such cases yet. In addition, the practical skill component is not implemented properly, and the strictly partial or unregulated involvement of employers in program evaluation and review processes endangers sustainable compliance with labor market requirements. Moreover, although the college is an SNCO, and received funding from the state budget, and is financially stable, however the resource base in terms of equipment, software and literature are out of date from the demands of the labor market.

Management processes in LRSC are operative, and even the highest governing bodies do not raise strategic issues. As a result, the management processes are not strategic. Operative management is carried out, the departments plan their annual activities, but these plans are not based on strategic goals and do not serve them. One of the main reasons for such a situation is the lack of a critical approach to the processes, which affects the internal quality assurance system. The activity of which is not yet highlighted, and the utility is not realized.

The involvement of external stakeholders in management, quality assurance, and other processes is not regulated. The main approach is informal communication through personal connections, which, however, endangers the stability and reliability of receiving data from the outside world. Accordingly, the regional partner network formed and expanded not by necessity or purpose, but by opportunity. In general, the LRSC does not pay proper attention to its development, which also proves the shortcomings of strategic management. Nevertheless, the college aspires to have its contribution to the development of the region and solve the problems of the population.

Strengths of the Institution:

1. The mission is perceived equally by almost all stakeholders

2. Structural compliance of academic programs to state educational standards

3. Clear admission and recruitment mechanisms of students which ensures a stable number of students

4. Necessary resource provision for implementation of academic programs

5. Financial stability

6. Striving to contribute to the development of the region and solving the problems of the population.

Weaknesses of the Institution:

1. Ignoring the strategic approach in management

2. Almost no culture of treating processes based on a quality cycle

3. A liberalized approach to the choice of the methods of teaching, learning, and assessment, which endangers the formation of the outcomes

4. The uncoordinated, situational approach to changes in academic programs including the participation of employers

5. Failure to ensure applicability and continuity of results of research activities

6. The situational approach of establishing external relations, including the employers

7. Not appreciating QA processes and capacity building, lack of analysis.

Main recommendations:

Mission and Purposes

1. Develop and implement clear mechanisms for setting goals and monitoring that will ensure the reflection of the needs of external and internal stakeholders, and forced to assess the LRSC progress.

Governance and Administration

2. Activate the activates of the LRSC board as a collegial governing body that raises strategic issues

3. Clarify the responsibilities of LRSC management and subdivisions and provide them with the appropriate capabilities by regularly evaluating the effectiveness of the management system and procedures

4. Introduce an information management system, especially by providing its analytical tools and carrying out analyses of the activity environment, received data, and published information

Academic programmes

5. Introduce coordinated mechanisms for monitoring, evaluating, and improving the academic programs, ensuring wide involvement of the LRSC external stakeholders in these processes, conducting a comparative analysis of program best practices, as well as introducing students to corresponding academic programs

6. Develop a clear policy for the selection of teaching, learning, and assessment methods, implement periodical updates of teaching, learning and assessment methods, and compliance with the expected learning outcomes by ensuring the establishment of a student-centered learning approach and academic honesty

7. Ensure the development of the practical skills that are required in the labor market which is defined by the academic programs by using the tools for regular assessment of those skills

Students

8. Develop such mechanisms of professional orientation for students, which will give them a complete picture of what kind of specialist they will become after graduating from college

9. Identify the need of students by regularly using appropriate mechanisms and ensuring additional advice according to the needs

10. Implement in-depth analysis about the employment of graduates and career analysis and improve student services based on the results

11. Develop the capacity of student self-governing bodies by promoting consistent protection of students' rights

Faculty and staff

12. Clarify, fix and make transparent the faculty recruitment policy based on the results of the own needs assessment

13. Improving the system of regular evaluation and identification of teaching, support,

and administrative staff and increasing its objectivity and reliability by interconnecting the assessment results to training or other professional development activities also with the reward system

Research and Development

14. Develop and define the clearly defined research priorities of LRSC (policies and procedures) emphasizing regional needs

15. Develop a policy that will promote the continuity of research activities, the applicability of results, and internationalization

Infrastructure and Resources

16. Regularly evaluate the usability of resources to ensure a more targeted upgrade of resources, and the library stock which used in the educational process, take into account labor market requirements while upgrading the equipment and software packages

17. Considering that college is state and regional, adapt the learning environment and conditions for students with special needs as much as possible

Societal Responsibility

18. Implement a regulated process for accountability to the public for the used resources

External Relations and Internationalization

19. Assess your own needs related to external relations and internalization, shaping the scope of that expectation to which foreign cooperation should be directed

20. Clarify external relations functions by defining the responsibilities of individual units and ensuring regulated activities

21. Considering the regional nature of LRSC and scarcity of resources develop such institutional and individual capacities necessary for internationalization (including knowledge of foreign languages) which will contribute to regional network expansion of LRSC partners and the employment of graduates

Internal Quality Assurance System

22. Providing intended resources develop a QA infrastructure that will be free from possible conflicts of interest and will provide an analytical, critical, and self-critical approach

23. Carrying out a needs assessment of LRSC introduce QA policy and targeted

procedures which will match the capacity of the QA infrastructure

24. Involve external and internal stakeholders in QA processes providing tangible consequences of quality assessment thus motivating stakeholders to use QA processes

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Tigran Mnatsakanyan, Chair of Expert Panel

February 01, 2021

DESCRIPTION OF EXTERNAL REVIEW

COMPOSITION OF EXPERT PANEL

External evaluation of the institutional capacities of Lori Regional State College was carried out by the following expert panel[1].

1. **Tigran Mnatsakanyan**- Armenian State University of Economics, Candidate of Economics (Ph.D.), Expert Panel Chair.
2. **Heghine Mughumyan**- Head of the Telecommunication Systems Department of Syunik Regional State College, lecturer.
3. **Lilit Nersisyan-** Lecturer at the Chair of Design in Kotayk Regional State College.
4. **Narek Harutyunyan-** Student at Yerevan State College of Informatics.

The composition of the expert panel was agreed upon with the Institution.

The works of the expert panel were coordinated by Roza Babayan, specialist of the ANQA Policy Development and Implementation Division.

All the members of the expert panel and the coordinator have signed independence and confidentiality agreements.

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[1] Appendix 1. CVs of the Expert Panel

PROCESS OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW

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

The ANQA Secretariat checked the data presented in the application form and the appendices in the application package.

According to the decision on accepting the application request, a bilateral agreement was signed between ANQA, LRSC, and ESCS. The timetable of activities was drawn up and approved.

Self-evaluation

Due to COVID-19 epidemic and war situation, the TLI presented the self-analysis of institutional capacities and the package of documents in the Armenian version two weeks late from the scheduled time according to the guideline set by the ANQA.

As the LRSC was in the process of institutional accreditation for the first time and the process was difficult for the college to implement, ANQA has done some work with the institution, preparing them for the process of self-evaluation and accreditation. In June, LRSC conducted a SWOT analysis within two weeks in accordance with accreditation ten criteria. After presenting the SWOT analysis, the institution recommended two employees, together with the ANQA staff, they reviewed the SWOT analysis presented by the college for a month and identified the main issues. During that period, the employees have been directed on how to make a SWOT analysis, and what to pay special attention to while doing the self-evaluation within the criteria. After observing the SWOT analysis, the college employee, as experts, together with ANQA staff conducted monitoring at LRSC on July 10, 2020.

Institutional Capacity Self-Evaluation of LRSC was presented on 28.10.2020. The self-evaluation was carried out by 16 employees of the institution, including lecturers, teaching, and support staff. External and internal stakeholders, students did not participate in the self-evaluation process. The self-evaluation report was mainly descriptive and general, which sometimes did not allow the experts to understand and correctly assess the real situation in the college during the preliminary assessment.

Preparatory phase

ANQA coordinator observed the report to reveal its correspondence to the technical and substantive requirements of ANQA. Then ANQA coordinator sent the self-evaluation report to the expert panel, the members of which were agreed upon with LRSC.

The self-evaluation and attached documents were provided to the expert group for preliminary evaluation, which was agreed upon with the college and was confirmed by the order of the ANQA director

To prepare the expert panel members and ensuring the effectiveness of the activities, training on the following topics were conducted:

- The main functions of the members of the expert panel,

- The ethics and techniques of holding meetings and doing inquiries,

- Defining the specifics of the VET sector and interpretation of accreditation criteria according to the VET sector

- Preliminary assessment as a stage of preparation of the expert report, the main requirements for the report.

Having reviewed the self-evaluation report and documents of the college, the expert panel conducted the preliminary evaluation. According to the format, the lists of questions and objectives for different departments and target groups, as well as additional documents have been prepared.

During the preliminary assessment, the expert group conducted online classes in "clothing modelling and design'' "Maintenance of computer equipment and computer networks'', ''Management'' and in various courses.

Within the scheduled time, the expert panel summarized the results of the preliminary evaluation, and the Chair of an expert panel, together with the process coordinator, set the schedule of the site visit[2]. According to the ANQA manual, the intended close and open meetings with all the target groups, documents observation were included in the schedule, and

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[2] Appendix 2. Schedule of the Expert site visit

the resource observation were carried out through video recording.

After having identified the main issues and the investigation of documents, the expert panel highlighted the issues to be discussed at meetings. At regular meetings, the questions on each standard were discussed, and the package of documents on the preliminary visit of the expert panel was prepared. The package included the schedule of the site visit, the questions to be investigated and explained for different target groups, and the list of additional documents needed for observation during the site visit. From the lists provided by the TLI, the representatives of the teaching staff and students, graduates, and employers were selected to participate in the meetings.

Preparatory visit

A preliminary online meeting took place on November 12, 2020. ANQA coordinator and the head of the institutional-program accreditation department were present at the meeting. During the meeting, the schedule of the site visit was introduced and agreed with the college, the list of documents has been presented and peculiarities of organizing the online site visit in pandemic conditions (existence of the video, where the main resource base of the college can be seen: classrooms, laboratories, libraries, etc., provide an online version of the documents that were required by experts on time, provide technical rules for online site visit such as connected cameras, the ability to see the entire room with a single shared camera, excluding the presence of other people in the room than the target groups, etc.

Site visit

The expert panel site visit took place from November 30 to December 03, 2020. The site visit was initially planned to be carried out within three days, however, in the online format, the three-day site visit lasted four days by maintaining the workload of the expert panel.

According to the schedule in 29.11.2020, the activities of the site visit were launched with a close meeting aimed at discussing and coming to an agreement with the international expert upon the expert evaluation frame, the issues to be reviewed during the site visit, the strengths and weaknesses of the institution according to the criteria, the procedure of focus groups, as well as further steps.

All members of the expert panel, including the ANQA coordinator, participated in the visit.

The site visit started and ended with meetings with the director of LRSC. All scheduled meetings were held, except from the open meeting. According to the schedule, the panel held meetings with the representatives of all departments of the college.

At the end of each working day, the expert panel closed meetings were held to discuss the results of the interim expert assessment, and at the end of the visit the main results were summarized.

 The assessment has been carried out within the framework of State Criteria and Standards of Accreditation and ANQA procedures, following which the assessment has two levels: **satisfactory** and **unsatisfactory**.

Expert panel report

The expert panel conducted the preliminary assessment based on the self-evaluation submitted by the college, the study of the attached documents, and the videos of the resources.

Based on the observations made after the discussions, the head of the expert panel and ANQA Coordinator prepared the preliminary version of the expert report, which was agreed with the experts on December 24.

The College submitted its observations and remarks on the report to ANQA on 14.01.2021. ANQA organized an online meeting for the representatives of the college and expert panel on January 22, 2021, where the remarks were addressed. Considering all the remarks, the expert panel provided the final version of the report, which was approved by the panel on 29.01.2021.

Roza Babayan

Coordinator of the Expert Panel

February 01, 2021

EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

BRIEF INFORMATION ABOUT THE EDUCATION INSTITUTION

History: Lori Regional State College was founded in 1970, initially as the Kirovakan branch of the Yerevan Technical College of Economics. In 1971, by the order N 200 of the Minister of Higher and Secondary Vocational Education of the Armenian USSR, became a Kirovakan Soviet trade technical school. By the decision N42 of the Council of Ministers of the Armenian SSR of January 21, 1987, the technical school reformed, becoming the Kirovakan State Technological Technical School. By the decision of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Armenia of June 25, 1992, the city of Kirovakan was renamed city Vanadzor, in connection with which Kirovakan Technological College was renamed Vanadzor Technological College. By the order N241-N of 09.09.2002 of the RA Minister of Education and Science, the technological technical school was renamed "Vanadzor State Technological College" SNCO. According to the RA Government Decision N199-N of 03.03.2011, "Vanadzor State Technological College" SNCO was renamed "Lori Regional State College" SNCO.

Education: There are 10 secondary professions in the college.

1. 0413.01.5 / 0602 / - Management

2. 0414.01.5 / 0607 / - Marketing

3. 0415.01.5 / 0608 / - Trade

4. 0612.02.5 / 2204 / -Maintenance of computer equipment and computer networks

5. 0212.02.5 / 2808 / - Clothing modelling and design

6. 0723.03.5 / 2809 / - Technology of making clothes

7. 0728.03.5 / 2814 / -Polygraph manufacture

8. 0718.01.5 – Mechatronics

9. 0413.06.5 - Organization of tourism services with advanced knowledge of a foreign language

10. 015.01.5 – Tourism

Except from 0413.01.5 / 0602 / "Management" specialty, teaching in other specialties in the college is organized by a modular system. The admission of students of 0728.03.5 / 2814 / - "Polygraph manufacture" and 0612.02.5 / 2204 / "Maintenance of computer equipment and computer networks" has started from 2011-2012 academic year. From the 2018-2019 academic year the admission of 0718.01.5 – "Mechatronics" specialty has started. In the 2020-2021 academic year the first applicants" Organization of tourism services with advanced knowledge of a foreign language" were accepted.

Research: The goal of the LRSC research and development strategy is the innovation in the field of vocational education and training as well as the introduction, development, and dissemination of localized international best practices, integration into global education systems.

External Relations: The goal of LRSC is the introduction of innovations, as well as localized international best practices in the field of vocational education, development, and dissemination, the introduction of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), and localization, integration into global education systems.

Quality Assurance: One of the main functions of the LRSC Internal Quality Assurance System is regular quantitative and qualitative research within the defined areas of college quality assurance, making the results available to the relevant stakeholders, contributing to effective decision-making, and increasing management efficiency.

Source: sources for the identification of facts in the above-mentioned fields are the documents provided by the TLI (e.g. self-evaluation report, strategic plan, action plan, plans of the departments, concept APers, etc.)

CRITERION I. MISSION AND PURPOSES

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

FINDINGS:

According to the self-evaluation, the mission of the College is defined by the founding document, the charter, which was approved by the RA Minister of Education and Science on December 2, 2019, by order N1140-A / 2. However, the 13-15 points of the charter define the scope of LRSC activities, based on which the LRSC mission can be formed. Instead, the mission statement is part of the LRSC strategy, according to which the college prepares small and medium business participants in accordance with the requirements of the basic VET programmes and economy and labor market, provides training for service sector employees and individuals through additional educational programmes and short-term courses, etc.

According to self-evaluation, the LRSC is a complete structure, with the potential to develop the education system, which main mission is to create knowledge through academic programs, development of abilities and skills, transmission, and distribution within the framework of the state strategy for the development of education. It provides qualified specialists with secondary professional education in accordance with state educational standards and international standards for industrial enterprises of the region, IT sector, polygraph manufacture, and commercial organizations. These statements, however, are not fixed in any basic document.

Thus, there is a fixed unified formulation for the mission, but in all formulations of the mission, it is clear that the main area of the LRSC activity is in the fifth level of NQF, which should serve the needs of the region. During the online site visit, it became clear that the stakeholders share the above-mentioned framework.

The purposes of the college are fixed in the same way in the charter and in the 2017-2020 strategic plan, which was approved by the LRSC board, which includes internal and external stakeholders. There is also a formulation of vision in the strategy. The formulation of vision and purposes, which in general point out some directions of LRSC development, are not measurable and do not assume deadlines.

It should be noted that there exist provisions related to the needs of internal and external stakeholders in the charter and strategy, but there is no evidence of discussion about them.

There exist reports and some other performance appraisal mechanisms in LRSC, but they do not target the strategic goals.

LRSC considers the "Ensuring the coherence of the 2023-28 strategy with the strategy of the region" to overcome the weaknesses and threats.

CONSIDERATIONS:

The LRSC mission does not have a clear fixed formula perceived in the same way by the LRSC stakeholders, which means that the mission is formed. It is in line with the fifth level of NQF, as all areas of the mission emphasize the field of secondary vocational education and any activity beyond that not intended in any version.

The vision and purposes of LRSC, which are included in the strategy are approved by the LRSC board, however, the board members do not influence the formation of the purposes, because the goals of the strategy are taken from the charter. Thus, the external and internal stakeholders included in the board were not directly involved in the formation of the purposes; however, one of the most important stakeholders, the founder of LRSC, through the charter, from the foundation predetermined the LRSC goals. Thus, it can be stated the mission and purposes reflect the needs of stakeholders, however, there are no mechanisms to ensure that the needs of stakeholders will be taken into account in the next review of purposes.

The definition of the vision and purposes cannot serve as a basis of activity, because they are not measurable and do not imply deadlines. The fact that the strategy is designed for 2017-2022, is not reflected in any way. The fact that there is a certain gap between the formulated and implemented purposes also indicates that LRSC plans to make its next strategy in tune with the strategy of the region and the demands of the employers. In fact, realizing that there is such a problem in the 2017-2022 strategy, LRSC is not going to correct it until 2022.

Though there are mechanisms for evaluating the results of activities, the lack of direct connection with the set purposes does not allow LRSC to assess its progress according to those purposes.

SUMMARY:

Taking into consideration, that LRSC has an incomplete formulated mission, but the mission perceived equally by almost all stakeholders, which is the provision of secondary vocational education to serve the needs of the region, the expert panel concludes that the LRSC activates are in line with the mission, which is in line with the RA National Education Qualifications Framework.

CONCLUSION:

The compliance of institutional capacities of LRSC 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:

LRSC is a State Non-Commercial Organization and has the governing bodies provided by the legislation, the board, and the director. The charter defines the authorities of the founder and authorized body, in addition to the formation of the board, the procedures for electing the director, and the authorities.

The highest governing body is the board, which at least once every three months convenes a meeting. One of the collegial governing bodies is the educational-methodological council, which operates to ensure collegial discussion of educational, teaching, methodological work, and other issues.

The LRSC council includes employers, a representative of the regional employment service, students, and lecturers. At board meetings, however, students hardly raise questions. In general, the scope of discussed issues of the council is not strategic, not aimed at the long-term development of the college, they are more operational management issues, for the adoption of which the decision of the council is obligatory (for example, tuition discounts, rewards issues, acquisition of technical means and resources)[3]. At the same time, during the online site visit, it became clear that board members had needs and recommendations, including those of a strategic nature that they had never raised at board meetings.

However, LRSC generally does not see the need to develop autonomy.

The organizational structure of LRSC with its latest changes was approved on 19.02.2020 by the board decision.

The LRSC departments have annual plans and submit relevant reports, but they are not part of the overall planning. Thus, there are only short-term programmes that focus on current activities. Moreover, the adoption of the strategic plan has not changed anything in the activities of the departments.

The functions of separate units are not clearly separated in the management system. The work is done according to capacity and not according to responsibilities.

LRSC does not conduct systematic studies of the factors affecting its activities. Instead, decision-making is often based on information obtained through informal mechanisms. LRSC considers the number of applicants as external environment indicators.

There are no mechanisms for evaluation and improvement of policy and procedures, and actual changes are rare. The changes are mainly based on situational information, the reliability of which is not checked.

The data collection process is not regular at all, and there are no appropriate procedures. Accordingly, there are no mechanisms for evaluating the received information. The collected

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[3] Changed as a result of college observations.

information is generally not processed or analyzed.

LRSC conducted surveys among the first-year students, to find out how they are informed about the college. However, the survey results are not used. In addition, during the online site visit, it become clear that some of the graduates had a misconception about the expected qualification when applying to LRSC. In general, the published information is determined arbitrarily.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Although the LRSC Charter defines individual and collegial governing bodies, the board, which is the highest governing body, does not fully participate in the management of LRSC. The board, which is the only body aimed to raise strategic issues does not seem to be consistent in performing such a function. Management system resources are focused on daily operations because of the absence of clearly defined, measurable purposes.

As a result, the inclusion of stakeholders in the board does not serve its purpose, as board decisions are not generally made directly affecting them.

The desire to implement strategic management in LRSC is not noticeable, as there is no wish to increase autonomy.

The study of the impact of the external environment was neglected because of focusing only on operational management, as it may not be visible on current jobs. The fact that LRSC studies more about the response of the external environment does not allow it to predict and react to changes in advance. Receiving data through informal mechanisms endangers the reliability of that data, especially in the case that LRSC does not have an information management system with its analytical tools.

The problem of structure and human resources mismatch is obvious in the LRSC management system. As a result, the work is done according to capacity rather than responsibilities

There are no mechanisms for regular evaluation and improvement of either the management system or the procedures. It can be concluded that a culture of quality management is not created yet.

SUMMARY:

Taking into account the neglect of the strategic approach in LRSC management, the incomplete activity of the collegial bodies, unclear separation of responsibilities in the management system, almost no culture of quality cycle processes in the information management system, imperfection of planning and monitoring mechanisms, the expert panel considers that the management system, administrative structures, and their activities can not be considered sufficiently effective.

CONCLUSION:

The compliance of institutional capacities of LRSC to the requirements of CRITERION 2 is **unsatisfactory**

CRITERION III. ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES

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

Lori Regional State College implements 10 academic programs, which corresponds to the approved state educational standards.

The distribution of lessons in the curricula corresponds to the state educational standards. It became clear from the curricula that the input requirements of the modules are mostly preserved: consultation hours are also planned, but from the meeting with lecturers and students it becomes clear that consultation hours at the college are not clearly defined and carried out.

Besides, during the online site visit, it turned out that there is a lack of components for developing practical skills in AP according to graduates and employers, and the theoretical education is based on outdated materials. Moreover, the programme is the basis of more theory, and the practical part is provided according to the situation and to the capabilities, that is, the practical part is not planned at all.

During the online site visit, it turned out that the students are not acquainted with the AP, and do not know what the intended outcomes are. It should be noted that the credits intended for certain programmes are formal and are not planned and controlled.

For certain professions (such as " Maintenance of computer equipment and computer networks ") professional descriptors are developed, which describes the role of the relevant profession, problem areas, performance criteria, work process, knowledge, abilities, and skills, however, there is no established policy for the choice of teaching methods. There are almost no mechanisms for the mapping of the courses and outcomes or mutual correspondence and ensuring the purposefulness of the courses, which make it difficult for the choice of methods[4].

During the site visit, it was found out that the lecturer chooses the methods of each subject freely and independently, as a result of which the teaching process turns out to be strictly lecture-centered. It also became clear that the teaching process is carried out mostly by lectures, which also hinders student-centered learning. In addition, students do not choose courses. From the meeting with lecturers, it became clear that, while choosing the methods, the lecturers often do not take into account either the type of outcomes or the level of the NQF.

There are some elements for the assessment system in the college, in particular, the assessment procedure, but the assessment criteria are not defined. There are requirements for individual programs, which repeat the requirements of state educational standards. The student, however, does not know on what principle the assessment of tasks aimed at developing knowledge, abilities, and skills. The procedure for conducting course works and internships does not set out provisions for assessment. There is no appeal procedure in the college. It

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[4] Changed as a result of college observations.

became clear from the meeting with the students that there are cases of appealing grades, but it was not recorded.

During the online site visit, it became clear that there have been some problems with online learning, particularly within the clothing modelling and design module, when they had to do individual work instead of group work and replace the actual size of the work with large-scale. In addition, though the final assessment done at the college, it has become difficult to assess the student's work[5].

A single unified system was not used during online learning. The lecturers were free to choose the online teaching platform and methods. The lessons were carried out through VIBER and ZOOM applications. During the class observations, it became clear that the implementation of the lessons was not very effective through applied platforms. It mainly used the Q&A method, which was carried out by writing. It becomes impossible to ensure academic integrity and apply an accurate assessment system by using these methods of teaching.

There is a procedure for preventing academic honesty and plagiarism, but it doesn't work. During the expert visit, it became clear that from the point of view of academic honesty, there is no examination of diploma and course works. It became clear that a technological development sequence is required for the preparation of the diploma work for the specialty 0212.02.5, which is missing in the module performance criteria. The details presented in diploma works, but the final model of the dress is missing, the series of diploma design sketches made in one manuscript, which was not done by students. Also, the website presented in the module "Fundamentals of Web Programming and Development" for the specialty 0612-02-5 was not a website made by students, it was taken from the Internet.

During the site visit, it also became clear that lecturers are generally free to choose their assessment methods. Practical skills assessment, however, is not always implemented. In addition, during the class observation, it became clear that the current feedback provided to students does not contribute to their progress. From the experience, the assessment by the above-mentioned logic was carried out.

LRSC does not have a well-developed benchmarking policy and does not make a comparative analysis about best practices of academic programs. There is no mobility mechanism in the college; however, the graduates of the college with excellent and high progress are able to continue their education at the university from the second year with part-time learning.

LRSC has a procedure for developing and monitoring APs. For evaluation of the effectiveness of AP, the basis becomes the results of final attestation and State Qualification Commission. Surveys are the main mechanism for identifying the factors influencing LRSC educational activities, the scope of which cannot be considered an effective way to identify the needs of internal and external stakeholders. The employees of the college claim that these inquiries are more subjective than objective.

The monitoring of the APs mainly carried out by the heads of departments. Taking into account the education is modular; there is often a need for additional control to ensure course parallelism.

Changes in academic programmes are rarely done. Because of the cooperation with

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[5] Changed as a result of college observations.

MKUZAK, the proportion of the practical and theoretical parts has been changed; also, some recurring topics have been removed. Based on employers' recommendations, changes have been made, but the process is not regulated. During the online visit, it turned out that in some cases the programme changes are due to a change of lecturer.

CONSIDERATIONS:

The expert panel positively assesses the fact that the academic programmes of the college are in line with its mission and correspond to the state educational standards. New academic programs have been introduced in recent years. The expected learning outcomes are defined in the academic programmes, which correspond to the NQF. The meeting with the employers showed that they are generally satisfied with the knowledge of the college graduates, but they noticed that there is a need to modernize their knowledge, also it is necessary to bring the curriculum in line with the requirements of the labor market and follow the development of the latest technologies, trying to provide more practical skills.

The freedom of choice of the teaching-learning and assessment methods of lecturers do not contribute to the full implementation of academic programmes, as practical skills techniques are rarely used and actual learning is focused on knowledge acquisition. In such a situation, it is not possible to guarantee the compliance of the results of the actual educational process with the results of the outcomes of the academic programmes. Moreover, the imperfection of the evaluation system does not allow the evaluation of the actual results.

In general, the college does not have mechanisms to promote mobility and does not carry out benchmarking. The combinations with the labor market requirements are not regular. Due to these changes, the academic programmes are not systematic, based on situational, not always reliable data.

SUMMARY:

Taking into account the liberalized approach to the choice of methods, which does not guarantee the formation of the outcomes, the lack of practical skills of graduates, the lack of elements of student-centered learning, unregulated participation of employers in the process of development and review of APs, uncoordinated approach to programme improvement: The expert panel concludes that the academic programmes and their implementation do not meet the requirements of the standard.

CONCLUSION:

The compliance of institutional capacities of LRSC to the requirements of CRITERION 3 is **unsatisfactory**

CRITERION IV. STUDENTS

CRITERION: The TLI provides relevant student support services ensuring the effectiveness of the learning environment.

FINDINGS:

According to the self-evaluation, the admission of full-time education is carried out in line with the list of professions approved by the Government of the Republic of Armenia for the given academic year. According to the "Procedure for Admission to Primary and Secondary Vocational Education Institutions", in the current education system, the college organizes admission exams only for the profession "Clothing modelling and design". The admission procedure is transparent and open. The College organizes free preparatory classes in the subject of "Drawing" for applicants for the profession of "Clothing modelling and design", which are conducted by the relevant specialists of the college.

The number of students for the years 2015-2020 is stable; up to 340-360 students. According to documents, LRSC has clear mechanisms for student recruitment, selection, and admission. LRSC cooperates with the schools of the Lori region. Booklets are printed by the college, video messages are prepared, but during the online visit it became clear that most of the students are admitted to the college through acquaintances, sometimes not knowing what specialist they will become (mainly it refers to "Computing technology" profession).

According to self-evaluation, the college made importance to the identification of educational needs. Students are a member of the College Board, retirement, and student allowance commissions. Course instructors are involved in the process of identifying the educational needs of students. Students ask different issues to their course instructor, who discusses the issue with the educational part and, if necessary, with the director. The student council also makes suggestions, which raise different issues to the director or deputy director, but during the online site visit, it became clear that students apply to the Student Council only with organizational issues. The college conducts surveys on students' educational needs; they have a box of complaints and suggestions. During the online site visit, it becomes clear that in case of problems students mainly apply to the course instructors.

During the site visit, it became clear that LRSC does not have a clear schedule for providing advice. The process of providing additional classes and consultations is not coordinated, and the process of providing consultations is carried out at the discretion of the lecturer.

According to the LRSC self-evaluation, basically, all students are aware of the administrative services concerning them, as they relate to the administrative staff for different issues. All regulations and procedures are available to learners from a variety of sources: course instructors, head of professional department, the secretary, and information board. As it maintained in the self-evaluation, which also proved during the site visit that the internal disciplinary rules of the college do not provide admission days and hours: students can apply to administrative staff at any time with any questions, written or oral, also through the course instructors.

According to the self-evaluation, in 2012 the Career Center subdivision was created in

the college, whose works were regulated by the deputy director of educational activities. Since 2018, the college has had full-time employees. The structure operates in accordance with its charter. The Career Center organizes events with alumni, collects data about them, and also cooperates with the regional employment center. The communication with alumni, however, is mainly provided through partner employers.

Though according to self-evaluation, there are no employees before graduation, the practices contribute to students' careers. Very often students are hired by the internship organization itself. For example, the graduates of "Clothing modelling and design" and "Clothing technology "specialties work in "Gloria" Garment Company. However, during the online visit, it turned out that in some cases, students are not satisfied with the options of places of experience offered to them and students have to propose another option through personal connections.

Very often, individual entrepreneurs apply to the college to find an employee. A dual education system with a "Mechatronics" specialty has been introduced with Vanadzor Technology Center, but there are no graduates yet. According to LRSC, the number of job-seeking graduates is not large, but during the site visit, it became clear that most of the graduates later changed their profession.

According to self-evaluation, students of the specialty "Clothing Modelling and Design" stand out in terms of involvement in research work, who perform diploma work due to their specialty. Students of the same specialty participate in college and city cultural events, presenting their projects in the form of clothing collections. Students carry out course works in other specialties, but during the site visit, it became clear that the course works are in the form of essays. Students participate in conferences, with the support of lecturers; articles are published with the participation of students. The students of the "Computer Engineering" specialty have designed a smart greenhouses program. However, the processes are not continuous. In addition, LRSC participates in discussions on the establishment of a student scientific society at the regional level.

According to self-evaluation, the body responsible for protecting the rights of students in the college is the student council, which is a representative, independent, self-governing elective body of students and operates in accordance with its charter. However, during the online visit, it became clear that the student council limits its activities by organizing events. According to the self-evaluation, there is funding for the student council, but during the online visit it turned out that the funding is implemented only according to separate events. The student council applies to the director in case of funding issues. The Student Council is not considered by students as an appropriate body for the protection of students' rights. In case of issues, students immediately apply to the administrative body. There have been unique cases of appeals to the Student Council for an appraisal of grades, however, in those cases, the assessments were not revised.

Surveys are conducted among students for the assessment of lecturers, which, according to the college, are subjective. No other mechanisms for assessment are used.

CONSIDERATIONS:

The panel considers it positive that, the college is making efforts to improve the results of student recruitment, selection, and admission processes. However, there is a problem with the professional orientation of students: often they do not know what kind of specialist they will become. This can be dangerous for students' careers and progress.

It is also positive that there are opportunities to express educational needs in the college; however, no processes are undertaken for the identification of the educational needs of the students in the college. There is a problem with the consulting and additional training process: no clear schedule is set, also there is a feedback problem. The consulting and additional training services will contribute to the improvement of the quality of education and the continuous progress of the students.

The college does not have a clear schedule for applying to the administrative staff to provide support and guidance to students. However, the process is mainly effective: students receive the guidance and support they need.

The college has student support services, but their effectiveness is not stable. Labor market and alumni employment analysis is not implemented: only limited to superficial data collection. Such analyzes will help to stabilize the college-employer relationship and continuous development. A component that promotes student careers can be considered the presence of a creative mind. It is necessary to improve the assignments given by the lecturers, which will contribute to the development of student's creative thinking and analytical skills.

Although the body, which is responsible for the protection of students' rights in LRSC, according to self-evaluation, is the student council, it does not function as such. The college does not give importance to the few mechanisms for evaluating student services. which jeopardizes the possible continuous improvement of these services.

SUMMARY:

Taking into account that there are clear mechanisms for students' admission and recruitment in the college, students have opportunities to express their needs, the college tries to promote the career of the alumni, the expert panel concludes that LRSC meets the requirements of Criterion 4.

CONCLUSION:

The compliance of institutional capacities of LRSC to the requirements of CRITERION 4 is **satisfactory**

CRITERION V. FACULTY AND STAFF

CRITERION: The TLI has a highly qualified teaching and supporting staff to accomplish the institution's mission and to implement the goals set for academic programmes
FINDINGS:

The employment relations with faculty are established on a contractual basis. There is a full-time, combined, and part-time recruitment procedure in LRSC. In job descriptions, it is also described the requirements for each position, which summarize the main functions arising from the position. First of all the qualification of the lecturer is taken into account before admission.

The announcements are spread through TV, newspaper, website, and employment center. The faculty of LRSC is formed on a competitive or non-competitive basis. A commission is set up on the basis of the order of the director of LRSC to hold the competition. The commission compiles minutes after the competition.

There is a noticeable aspiration of the college to involve practical lecturers in the implementation of APs, who have relevant professional qualifications. Although such a requirement is not fixed, at present time having practical experience is the main requirement for recruiting lecturers: in the past was having a higher education.

The requirements for professional qualities are considered when choosing the teaching staff of the AP of each specialty at the institution: basic professional education, work experience, and other information are considered primary while certifying documents are submitted to the HR department and competition commission. Educational, scientific, pedagogical, and social activities indicators are taken into account.

During the online site visit, it turned out that the staffing competition implemented in recent years, and before that, those who get a job continue to work and make up a larger number. In addition, the college has limited financial resources in hiring specialists: the problem is more significant considering the scarcity of those who want to work in the region. It turned out that many of the lecturers work at LRSC, because their relatives worked at the college previously.

Class observations are held in the college. The exchange of experience of lecturers is done, the shortcomings are mentioned, and suggestions are made in the paper of class observation, which is developed in advance. Based on the class observations, the lecturer also makes some program changes (mainly intra-thematic).

In LRSC, the professional qualities of the faculty and regular evaluation of their work are significant by conducting regular surveys. Private conversations are organized with teachers who have received low grades as a result of the evaluation, trying to understand the existing problems, and find solutions. The issues are discussed at the sessions of the chair. During the meeting, it turned out that only well-educated students take part in the surveys each academic year, about 40% of the students. The results of the process of evaluating the professional qualities of lecturers and their work are discussed by the heads of departments, and if certain shortcomings are found, the head of the department has a private conversation with the lecturer, discusses the reasons for the problem, and tries to eliminate them. The lecturer's work is also summarized on the last page of the journal, where the shortcomings are noted.

There are no set policies and procedures for staff promotion. Lecturers receive pre-holiday promotions, but there are no set mechanisms of promotion for the work done.

The faculty of LRSC, who conducts modular teaching were trained by MKUZAK. The last training with the support of LRSC was conducted in 2012. Three lecturers participated in the "Distance Learning Abilities" courses conducted by the "GIZ" organization, as a result, all three received national e-learning expert qualifications. The number of specialists who have been trained for the last 4 years in 2017 was 6, in 2018 - 2, in 2019 - 14, in 2020 - 11 people. Considering the training data of the last 3 years, it can be concluded that a larger number of young professionals have been trained and participated in various courses. The trainings were professional and non-professional.

It became clear from the meeting that the needs of assessment are not implemented by the college, the trainings are carried out as a result of individual initiative or short-term programmes. There is a lack of systematic methodological-professional trainings, which is based on needs identification.

In addition, during the online visit, it became clear that both employers, students, and lecturers are in need of trainings. Employers believe that it is desirable to train teachers concerning new technologies, and students and faculty emphasize the need for training in teaching methods and exploration about the international experience.

As it can be seen from the study of documentations, for the last three years the faculty of the college is relatively stable and there is a tendency to rejuvenate the faculty. There are part-time employees in the college, but the main staff is more (more than 80 %) and the fluidity rate is low. Employer lecturers are mainly involved in the "Mechatronics" dual programme.

Heads of LRSC departments are constantly working with beginner teachers. For gaining experience, the beginner lecturers conduct class observations with experienced lecturers, which promotes the rapid integration of beginner lecturers into the teaching process.

There is a teaching and administrative staff in LRSC, but there is a lack of human resources due to employees. There are almost no opportunities to improve the methodological-professional qualities and abilities of the administrative-teaching staff.

CONSIDERATIONS:

The expert panel positively assesses the fact that the college is provided with a teaching and administrative staff with the necessary professional qualities. The college has procedures for the recruitment of full-time, part-time, and hourly basis. It is also noticeable that there is an aspiration for the involvement of practical lecturers in the implementation of APs. The involvement of practical lecturers will contribute to the response to the needs of the labor market and the training of specialists with practical skills and it will also contribute to the exchange of experience with college professors.

The current state of financial security is considered by LRSC as a factor limiting the number of faculty members. In other words, however, the fluidity is low, but in terms of the faculty, LRSC's ambitions are greater than the available resources.

The college tries to evaluate the professional qualities of the lecturers, their work and identify their needs. Private conversations are organized with those lecturers who have low-rate due to evaluation. However, during the site visit, it became clear that there is a procedure,

but there is no developed policy that could serve to improve these procedures. Needs identification is not interconnected to training. The needs are visible for both internal and external stakeholders.

SUMMARY:

Taking into account that the professional skills of the teaching and support staff correspond to the qualifications awarded by the educational programmes and the college pays attention to the indicators of educational, pedagogical, and social activity of the staff, evaluations are made, issues are identified, some trainings are provided and there is a desire to involve employers in the educational process, the expert panel finds that LRSC meets the requirements of Criterion 5.

CONCLUSION:

The compliance of institutional capacities of LRSC 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:

The scope of LRSC's research interests is not defined according to the particulars of the college, and accordingly, it is mainly identified with the main specialties of the college. The ambitions are not defined and are limited by the creative component assumed by the outcomes of the academic programmes.

The college does not have a separate document for achieving its research goals, where the specific actions and required resources can be outlined.

At LRSC, the research activities are carried out in the forms of creative practices, preparation and display of clothing collection, implementation, and protection of graduate work, results of short-term trainings (for e.g. smart greenhouse, robot-manipulator, anti-radar) and works presented at conferences and seminars.

Open conferences were organized and presented the works about " Computer Research-Localization of Some Professional Subjects ", "The need for Armenian game-simulators in education", "Artificial Intelligence in Web Programming", "Periodic Economic Development and Economic Crises". During the online site visit, however, it became clear that employers are not involved in the above-mentioned activities. In addition, the results of projects or activities with a research component are not used in subsequent research projects.

It should be noted that no actions are taken for guaranteeing academic honesty and

prevent plagiarism.

The college not only gives importance to the internalization of the results they have created, and also importing foreign experience to the college. The fact that there is no internationalization of research activities in the college is due to the insufficient level of foreign language proficiency. However, the college plans to participate in the creation of an Art Management module for Plymouth College of Art as part of the British Council's Grafting Futures program.

In general, the interrelationship between the research and educational processes, which, according to self-evaluation are limited to diploma theses, can not be described as stable mechanisms, although modular teaching is considered a positive side.

CONSIDERATIONS:

The concept of research and development has not been developed in the college yet, which does not allow to set goals. As a result, research activities are identified with activities carried out within the framework of academic programs, which in almost all cases is a mandatory activity. In the conditions of such an approach lecturers participate in the processes only in the role of passive observer, evaluator, or consultant. Research works are carried out in the form of diploma projects, essays and participation in conferences.

The low level of participation of employers in diplomas and other works does not contribute to the implementation of the most required and applicable research. Furthermore, the college does not use the opportunity to develop the results of students' work, as it doesn't consider the implemented projects as a basis for the projects to be implemented.

The evaluation of the results of the completed works does not contribute to the fact that there are no processes related to academic honesty and plagiarism in LRSC. The internalization of research activities is not implemented.

SUMMARY:

Taking into account, that LRSC does not have policy and procedures for expressing its interests and aspirations in the field of research, does not ensure the applicability of the results of research activities, internationalization, and sustainability, the employers are not involved in the development of students' research and creative thinking skills, and the lectures do not study the international best practice, the expert panel concludes that LRSC does not meet the requirements of Criterion 6.

CONCLUSION:

The compliance of institutional capacities of LRSC to the requirements of CRITERION 6 is **unsatisfactory.**

CRITERION VII. INFRASTRUCTURE 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:

The educational process is carried out in two buildings in LRSC. The total area of the buildings is 4485.3 square meters. As a result of the resource base monitoring the expert panel recorded that there are three computer labs in the college, two sewing workshops, one printing house, a library room, a book stack, an event hall, a gym, and classrooms. However, the college does not consider its building conditions sufficient, because the library, one sewing workshop, one computer lab are used as a classroom. LRSC library has one book stack and library-reading room. The reading room can serve up to 20 readers at the same time. The library is replenished with professional magazines, brochures, and newspapers every year. During the online site visit, it became clear that there is no modern professional literature in the library by fields. Most of the students confirmed the need to supplement the library with professional literature. The students mentioned that the professional literature is mainly in Russian. During the site visit, it became clear that, if there is a need for literature missing from the library, only through the personal contacts of the librarian or director can the required literature can be provided.

The two sewing workshops in the college are equipped with universal-professional sewing machines. There is a printing house in the college, where other advanced printing and typographical techniques are placed. The gym is equipped with modern sports equipment.

There are two main sources of funding for the college: the state budget and tuition fees, but the sources of it are very few.

In order to manage and control the financial flows in LRSC, an estimate of annual budget revenues and expenditures is made. The majority of financial resources are from the state budget. Most of the college expenses make up the salary. Finances are not enough to acquire additional resources, but sometimes due to the need assessment, they are able to acquire material resources.

The college budget is generally stable to meet the goals of the APs. Each year, the college submits a report on income and expenses to the board of the college.

During the site visit, it became clear that for almost all internal stakeholders, the primary need of the college is connected with the material and financial resources.

There is no information and documentation process policy in LRSC. The internal documentation is carried out in paper form, by email, through internal telephone communication. However, the information is not managed because it is not a regulated process and is in a different source. This is evidenced by the fact that most of the documents submitted to the accreditation process are not signed and sealed.

In order to disseminate information, the college has an official website and Facebook page. The college has an official website, however, the available information is not complete.

Security is mainly provided by the 3-night guards and the housekeeper: in this respect, there were no problems in the college. It is mentioned in the self-evaluation, that there is a nurse working in the college.

Medical insurance is provided for the protection of teachers' health and injuries received

from accidents for 15,000 drams each year.

According to the self-evaluation, the college has students with disabilities who do not need special care, therefore there is no need to provide conditions for people with special needs.

It became clear from the meetings that the college had provided resources for both faculty and students for properly conducting distance learning. If necessary, the faculty can use laboratories out of classes. Resources are provided for both students and faculty to organize interactive demonstrations. However, the college does not evaluate the processes.

CONSIDERATIONS:

The expert panel positively assesses the fact that the college makes efforts to acquire resources for the implementation of its strategic goals and educational programs. Although the college's financial resources are limited, however, they are trying to allocate financial means to improve its resources. The resource base is replenished through programs (for example, funded by the United Nations Development Program). The college library, however, needs to acquire the latest professional literature in line with the demands of the labor market.

The stability of the college's financial resources is not endangered, as it is mainly funded by the state. During the site visit, it became clear that the resource base of the college is mainly sufficient for the implementation of APs. However, in terms of separate resources, according to external-internal stakeholders, it is necessary to carry out various quantitative and qualitative reforms, which indicates the availability of resources and applicability assessment of the shortcomings.

Although the documentation is mainly carried out in paper form, which sometimes leads to certain problems, the creation of an electronic documentation system can contribute to more efficient activities in the future.

It is also positive that there is a safe environment through health and safety services. However, the college has not taken any steps to create the necessary conditions for people with disabilities, considering that there is no need for it.

By not implementing assessments of the availability of resources, the LRSC endangers its further cost-effectiveness, which is especially important in the absence of financial means.

SUMMARY:

Taking into account that the college has created sufficient conditions for professional education with limited financial resources, the resource base is satisfactory for the implementation of the APs, the documentation processes are not regulated, but they are carried out, college environmental Safety and health services are sufficient, the expert panel concludes that LRSC meets the requirements of Criterion 7.

CONCLUSION:

The compliance of institutional capacities of LRSC 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:

The result of LRSC internal accountability is the annual report of the director, which is presented to the board. The Board includes external stakeholders, which allows internal accountability to be partially transformed into external accountability. The reports, however, are not based on indicators; they are partly analytical.

The external accountability is generally directed to the ECSC, and processes targeting the public are not regulated.

The accountability to external stakeholders is ensured through social networks, in particular presenting information about the done work on the Facebook page, about the screenings, events inside or outside the college, and invited guests. The online platform is a communication network mechanism, through which they regularly respond to the website, e-mail questions. However, there are no guarantees for the stability of communication mechanisms; the college does not promote them. The information is not complete and is not updated often: only a small part of procedures is available online. The transparency of processes is more ensured at the level of personal contacts.

LRSC participates in the job fair organized by the State Employment Local Office, in the exhibition-sale organized by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, regularly organizes exhibitions of clothing models, and holds seminar courses. Provision of additional educational-consulting services is being implemented through cooperation with various organizations, for example with the State Employment Local Office, and organizing short-term trainings with various charitable organizations. For example, in 2019, the "Eurasia" Charitable NGO implemented the "Disability as a Challenge" program, which was attended by 15 women with disabilities and two lecturers selected through a competition. As a result of the project, the participants found a job in a short time in a garment factory in Vanadzor and one participant found a job in the college.

The LRSC wants to serve its community in that sense as well that the list of professions offered by the college on the one hand includes traditional professions in the light industry, which are traditional for the region, and, on the other hand, more modern professions (such as tourism, IT and other fields). In some of these areas, the college offers short-term courses, but this is not done with regular frequency and not often.

CONSIDERATIONS:

The expert panel positively assesses the fact that the LRSC is accountable to the state and also seeks to become a full member of the regional community by participating in various events.

The expert panel positively assesses the fact that the college tries to be as active as possible on online platforms and trying to spread information through these platforms: however, to make the processes more transparent, there is a need to upload more information on these platforms, which will help to involve external stakeholders in the work of the college.

Feedback mechanisms are generally limited with minimum availability, which does not

promote feedback.

Though it does not provide stability in the process of knowledge transfer to society, the college provides additional educational and consulting services through cooperation with various institutions by organizing short-term courses. However, there are no regulated public accountability processes, and the feedback is not promoted.

SUMMARY:

Taking into account, that LRSC carries out the accountability process in accordance with the established procedure, seeks to contribute to the development of the region and the solution of the problems of the population, implements some means of the knowledge transfer to the society, the expert panel concludes that LRSC meets the requirements of Criterion 8.

CONCLUSION:

The compliance of institutional capacities of LRSC to the requirements of CRITERION 8 is **satisfactory**

CRITERION IX. EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND INTERNATIONALISATION

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

According to the strategy, one of the goals of LRSC is the implementation of a unified system and localization of the credit accumulation and transfer, and integration into global education systems. LRSC seeks to raise awareness of mobility programmes among students and faculty, however, these activities are generally limited to the dissemination of information and are not supported.

LRSC does not have a separate infrastructure responsible for external relations and internationalization. The works of external relations are carried out by the director, his deputy, and the career center responsible. A document regulating external relations and specifying the relevant functions has not been developed.

The main area of LRSC external relations is the students' experience: several agreements have been signed with various companies (mainly companies existing in Vanadzor). However, establishing relationships with employers is mainly based on personal relations. Apart from experience, there is no regular cooperation with employers in other areas. Exceptions are the two employers of the college board and the State Employment Local Office, with whom the cooperation is more active, but mainly of an informational level.

There is also cooperation with libraries of the region, but if in the past this cooperation was on a contractual basis, now the resources of the library are available only through personal connections.

Due to separate partnerships with local and international non-profit organizations,

LRSC has received non-financial support, in particular furniture and equipment. However, the initiative of that partnership mainly came from abroad.

During the online site visit, it became clear that both internal and external stakeholders consider that the level of students' knowledge of a foreign language (primarily English and Russian) is insufficient, which has hindered not only mobility but also the establishment of working relationships with foreign organizations.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Despite the predetermined goal of developing external relations and internationalization, LRSC provides almost no resources in this area. The support to internal stakeholders is mainly informational, which can not be considered a policy that encourages the establishment of external relations.

A highly decentralized and personalized system of external relations does not allow to perform regular processes. LRSC is passive in terms of initiatives to establish external relations. The initiative is endangered by the fact that there are no corresponding responsibilities.

The relations with employers, despite the existence of a local network of partners, are not yet regulated and not realized with their full potential.

LRSC does not pay proper attention to the knowledge of foreign languages, though almost all stakeholders are aware of the problem.

It can be concluded that LRSC does not have the institutional aspiration to develop the capacity for external relations, and situational external relations are not aimed at the development of LRSC.

SUMMARY:

Taking into account, that LRSC provides almost no resources for external relations and internationalization, and external relations are not regulated, are situational, does not pay enough attention to the knowledge of foreign languages, the cooperation with employers does not contribute to the implementation of joint strategies in different areas of the college in terms of development, the expert panel concludes that LRSC does not meet the requirements of Criterion 9.

CONCLUSION:

The compliance of institutional capacities of LRSC to the requirements of CRITERION 9 is **unsatisfactory.**

CRITERION X. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

CRITERION: The TLI has an internal quality assurance system for promoting establishment of a quality culture and continuous improvement of all the processes of TLI.

FINDINGS:

Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures are described in the ''Quality Assurance Policy'' and ''Quality Assurance Guide'' (Training Guide) documents. In addition, the guide includes the full text of the policy. The described quality assurance policies and procedures, however, are generally not yet embedded. In addition, the quality assurance procedures in the guide are described superficially, without such details, only with which it will be possible to fully invest. It should be noted that some of the procedures included in the guide do not relate to QA processes (for example, procurement procedures). During the online site visit, it became clear that the QA documents were developed based on the experience of other institutions and need assessment of LRSC was not performed for this purpose.

In February 2020, in the structure of LRSC, a quality assurance center was envisaged in accordance with the exemplary staff list provided by the authorized body, and the order of its activity was approved. Appropriate resources, however, were not provided by LRSC. In LRSC, the Deputy Directors (on a voluntary basis) are responsible for QA activities. In addition, during the online site visit, it became clear that from the LRSC point of view, the position of QA manager was designed primarily for accreditation processes, as well as to help the career center solve other issues.

LRSC students participate in courses and teacher evaluation surveys, but the results of these surveys are not emphasized (including by the students themselves) and do not have significant consequences. The final attestation commissions, which include employers, present reports. During the online site visit, it became clear that LRSC graduates were not involved in QA processes after graduation.

Based on the information received from stakeholders, certain changes were made in LRSC, however, both the collection and use of this information is situational which is based on personal contacts. During the online visit, it becomes clear, that the stakeholders see needs for improvement in some areas but often suggest conflicting ways to solve the issues.

As the internal quality assurance system has not yet been developed and has not been properly evaluated. However, according to LRSC self-evaluation, the results of the surveys may be unreliable, however, LRSC did not improve that mechanism.

Data on the quality of LRSC processes are not coordinated and no reports are compiled. There is a lack of evaluation and self-criticism in self-evaluation. The information which is available to the public does not describe the quality of the processes. The results of surveys with their own participation are not transparent to students.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Although LRSC has some of the procedures described in the documents, they are generally not yet fully implemented and can not be fully applied, as their descriptions are superficial and require further detail. The documentary basis of QA that exists in LRSC implies

more processes than the actual ones and is not derived from the needs of LRSC. This contributes to attaching no importance to QA processes.

The QA processes are not given enough importance and proves that it's been a long time since resources have not been provided, though they are intended. The development of QA infrastructure does not seem to be considered as a system that primarily contributes to the improvement of internal processes. From this point of view, it is noteworthy that the Deputy Directors are responsible for QA processes, that is, the individuals who are the organizers of the processes the quality of which must be ensured. The panel believes that in this case, the risk of internal conflicts of interest is too high, as the person will have to evaluate the work he has done.

It should be noted that some QA processes in LRSC are in progress, however, they are not widely used. In the absence of consequences or conditions of the imperfection of QA processes, the whole process is endangered, for example, a student who does not take importance to surveys may have formal participation in that surveys. In addition, the participation of external and internal stakeholders in QA processes is rather weak, which also means that the LRSC QA system can not be considered decentralized.

The contradictory approaches among stakeholders indicate that there are not implemented proper discussions and evaluations of improvements in LRSC. In this case, the situational approach to gathering information that is based on personal connections contains risks, as the gathered information may not reflect the actual needs. In general, it is noticeable that the motivation for quality assurance in LRSC is still weak, which also proves the fact that QA processes are not improving through the disadvantages observed to some extent and were recorded.

SUMMARY:

Taking into account the fact that QA policy and procedures are not implemented in LRSC, the uncoordinated and situational approach of the QA processes, not highlighting the QA and capacity building processes, the incomplete participation of internal and external stakeholders, lack of clarity of responsibilities of QA responsible, the need for capacity building in this area, the incompleteness of data collection and mechanisms for evaluation, the expert panel finds that the internal quality assurance system of LRSC does not sufficiently contribute to the continuous improvement of the institution's processes and the formation of a quality culture.

CONCLUSION:

The compliance of institutional capacities of LRSC to the requirements of CRITERION 10 is **unsatisfactory.**

EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

CRITERION	CONCLUSION
I. Mission and Purposes	**Satisfactory**
II. Governance and Administration	**Unsatisfactory**
III. Academic Programmes	**Unsatisfactory**
IV. Students	**Satisfactory**
V. Faculty and Staff	**Satisfactory**
VI.Research and Development	**Unsatisfactory**
VII. Infrastructure and Resources	**Satisfactory**
VIII. Societal Responsibility	**Satisfactory**
IX. External Relations and Internationalization	**Unsatisfactory**
X. Internl Quality Assurane System	**Unsatisfactory**

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Tigran Mnatsakanyan

Chair of Expert Panel

February 01, 2021

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. CVS OF EXPERT PANEL MEMBERS

Tigran Mnatsakanyan-Graduated from Armenian State University of Economics (ASUE) with a degree in Management in 2008. In 2011 he received his Ph.D. in Economics ("The directions of enhancing the effectiveness in Public Administration /case study of Armenia/"). He has been an assistant at the Chair of Management, ASUE, since 2011. In 2008-2011 he was the president of ASUE Student Scientific Society. He has published a number of scientific articles on the theory of administration, the history of public administration, contemporary issues in public administration, methodology and enhancement of evaluating efficiency, and issues in local government. He has participated in international conferences dedicated to improving quality in higher education

Heghine Mughumyan - Graduated from the State Engineering University of Armenia in 1997 with the specialty "Technical means of computer systems and networks". From 2000 to now, she has been working in "Syunik Regional State College" SNCO as the head of the "Telecommunication Systems" chair, lecturer.

Lilit Nersisyan - Graduated from Yerevan "Culture" University in 2011 with a bachelor's degree in "Art" (design and art). In 2013 she graduated from Kh. Abovyan Armenian State Pedagogical University, specialty "fine arts, and drawing", master's degree. From 2016 to now she studies at Kh. Abovyan Armenian State Pedagogical University (applicant). The topic of her work is "Armenian decorative art in the system of aesthetic education of students (by the example of art colleges)". From 2103 to now she works at Kotayk Regional State College as a lecturer at the Department of Design.

Narek Harutyunyan - Student of Yerevan State College of Informatics. Participated in the training of student-experts of the "Student Voice" project, organized by ANQA.

APPENDIX 2. SCHEDULE OF SITE VISIT

	30.11.2020	*Start*	*End*	*Duration*
1.	Meeting with the Head of the College	9:30	10:30	*60* minutes
2.	Meeting with the Deputy Heads of the College	11:00	12:00	60 minutes
3.	Meeting with the Board of the College	12:30	13:20	50 minutes
4.	Lunch, expert panel discussions	13:30	14:30	60 minutes
5.	Meeting with alumni of the College (8-12 representatives)	14:45	15:45	60 minutes
6.	Review of documents and close meeting of the expert panel	16:30	18:30	120 minutes
	01.12.2020	*Start*	*End*	*Duration*
1.	Meeting with Heads of Chairs (head of general education program, head of maintenance of computer equipment and computer networks, head of light industry and tourism)	9:30	10:30	60 minutes
2.	Meeting with teaching staff (including 3 APs)	11:20	12:20	60 minutes
3.	Lunch, expert panel discussions	12:30	13:30	60 minutes
4.	Meeting with representatives of employers (8-12 representatives)	13:45	14:45	60 minutes
5.	Meeting with students (8-12 representatives)	15:15	16:15	60 minutes
6.	Review of documents and close meeting of the expert panel	17:00	19:00	120 minutes
	02.12.2020	*Start*	*End*	*Duration*

				Start	End	Duration
1.	Parallel meeting with the teaching staff of Clothing modelling and design AP (8-12 representatives)	The teaching staff of Management AP (8-12 representatives)	The teaching staff of Maintenance of computer equipment and computer networks AP (8-12 representatives)	9:30	10:30	60 minutes
2.	Parallel meeting with the students of Clothing modelling and design AP (8-12 representatives)	Students of Management AP (8-12 representatives)	Students of Maintenance of computer equipment and computer networks AP (8-12 representatives)	11:15	12:15	60 minutes
3	Lunch, expert panel discussions			12:30	13:30	60 minutes
4.	Meeting with the representatives of the subdivisions of the institution (Responsible for career guidance, Internship Manager, Librarian, Chief Accountant, HR manager)			13:45	14:45	60 minutes
5.	Meeting with members of the Student Council			15:15	15:55	40 minutes
6.	Review of documents and close meeting of the expert panel			17:00	19:00	120 minutes
	03.12.2020 წ.			*Start*	*End*	*Duration*
1.	Meeting with quality assurance responsible			9:30	10:30	60 minutes
2.	Open meeting with the expert panel			11:00	11:40	40 minutes

| 3	Meeting with the staff member(s) selected by the expert panel	12:00	12:40	40 minutes
4.	Lunch, expert panel discussions	13:00	14:00	60 minutes
5.	Meeting with the staff member(s) selected by the expert panel	14:15	15:15	60 minutes
6.	Close meeting of the expert panel	15: 30	17: 00	90 minutes
7.	Meeting with the Head of the College	17:30	18:00	30 minutes

APPENDIX 3. LIST OF DOCUMENTS OBSERVED

N	Name of Document	Criterion
1.	Performance analysis Minutes of the meetings of the Methodological Council	1
2.	Minutes of the Board meetings	2
3.	The guideline for assessment the head of the college and the pedagogical staff	2
4.	Chair Action Plans	2
5.	Evaluation sheet of teaching staff	4
6.	Alumni database	4
7.	The procedure of Career Center, work activities, survey data	5
8.	Procedure of subdivisions/library, practice, HR department/	2
9.	Schedule of educational process	3
10.	Evaluation sheets for different APs	3
11.	Procedure for completing course works	3
12.	Example of a web page made in the subject of "Web programming"	3

13.	Evaluation sheet (results 1 to 7) not complete	3
14.	Examples of annual plans of different subdivisions / library, teaching-methodological council, educational part /	2
15.	Minutes of sessions	2
16.	All timetables	3
17.	Class observation registers / a copy from each course of the last three years /	3
18.	Graduation works / Clothing modelling and design AP /	3
19.	Class observation papers	2
20.	Filled diaries of internship / Clothing modelling and design, Economics and computer technology /	3
21.	Training packages / Tatyik Navasardyan, Varduhi Poghosyan /	5
22.	Staff list	5

APPENDIX 4. RESOURCES OBSERVED

1. Classrooms
2. Gym
3. Library
4. Conference room
5. Lecture room
6. Computer laboratories
7. Administrative staff offices
8. Sewing workshops
9. Printing house-publishing house
10. Event hall

APPENDIX 5. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATION INSTITUTION
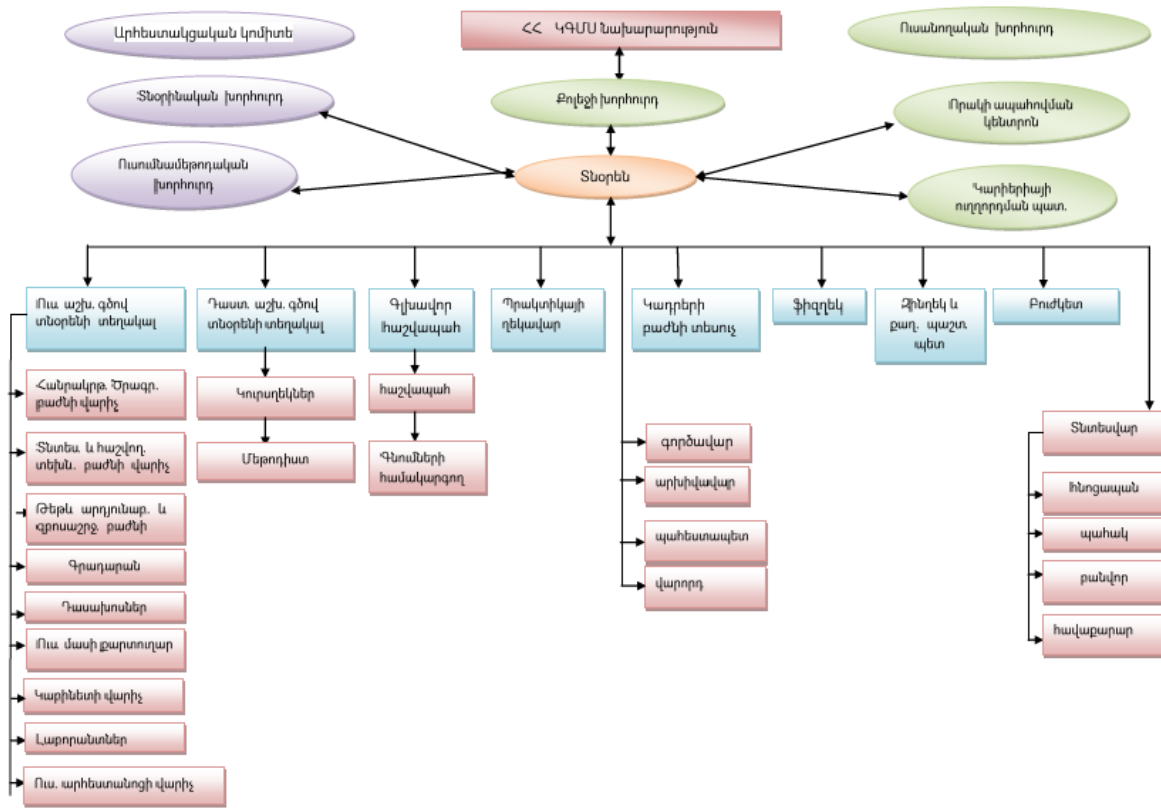
APPENDIX 6. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1. **RA**- Republic of Armenia
2. **LRSC**- Lori regional state college

3. **AP**- Academic Programme

4. **QA**- Quality assurance

5. **ANQA** - National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance

6. **SP**- Strategic Plan

7. **SC** - Student Council