

«NATIONAL CENTER FOR PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE»
FOUNDATION



EXPERT PANEL REPORT
INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION OF YEREVAN GLADZOR UNIVERSITY

YEREVAN – 2021

Introduction

The institutional accreditation of Yerevan Gladzor University (hereinafter referred to as YGU or University) was carried out in accordance with the application submitted by Yerevan Gladzor University.

The accreditation process was coordinated by the “National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance” foundation (hereinafter referred to as ANQA), guided by the statute on the “State Accreditation of Institutions and Their Academic Programs in the Republic of Armenia” set by the RA Government Decree N 978-N of June 30, 2011 and Decree N 959-N “On Approving the Accreditation Criteria of the RA Professional Education” dated June 30, 2011.

The investigation was carried out by an expert panel which was formed in accordance with the requirements of the Regulation on the Formation of the ANQA Expert Panel, consisting of one international and four local experts.

Institutional accreditation is aimed at not only the external evaluation of quality assurance but also the continuous improvement of the institution’s governance and the quality of educational programs. The experts were hence faced with two issues:

- 1) To carry out an investigation of the university’s institutional capacities in accordance with the RA criteria for state accreditation,
- 2) To conduct an evaluation of the improvement of the institution’s quality as regards its compliance with international development and its integration into the European Higher Education Area (hereinafter referred to as EHEA).

This report contains the results of the investigation of the institutional capacities of the University according to the state criteria for professional education accreditation as well as the peer review from the perspective of the university’s integration into the EHEA.

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SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION

EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

The investigation of Yerevan Gladzor University was carried out by an independent expert panel¹, formed in accordance with the requirements of Regulation on the Formation of the ANQA Expert Panel. The evaluation was carried out according to 10 criteria set out by the RA Government Decree N 959–N dated June 30, 2011.

While conducting the investigation, the expert panel took into consideration the fact that YGU is a for-profit educational cooperative whose activity, as designated in its charter, is aimed at organizing education, learning, research at the level of general education, secondary vocational, higher, postgraduate vocational, supplementary education in the fields of socio-economics, social sciences and humanities, in compliance with the RA Legislation.

The expert panel also took into consideration that YGU is undergoing accreditation for the second time. It is important to note that the qualitative inconsistencies specified in the previous accreditation expert report of 2015 have been taken into account and the YGU Action Improvement Plan-Schedule has been revised significantly. The latter has greatly influenced the 2015-2020 goals and activity directions and has certainly contributed to the progress in almost all areas of the institution's activity. However, the expert panel has noted that in most instances of action improvement, the University has relegated itself merely to the development of documents, without ensuring the proper functionality of the relevant mechanisms with some documents having been developed and approved in 2018- shortly before the new accreditation process commenced.

Yerevan Gladzor University has comprehensive procedures in place for the development and implementation of academic programs and their components, which conclusively indicate that the University has well mastered the curriculum development tools and is technically proficient with them. Nevertheless, most of the procedures were not yet fully introduced and are not applied in the actual processes. The programs are relatively complete in terms of their format, but the inconsistencies of the program evaluation and review mechanisms, particularly in terms of content, impede their sustainable compliance with the requirements of the labor market. The programs are essentially implemented by lecturers with relevant qualifications, academic degrees, and scientific-pedagogical titles. The University manages to attract competent lecturers (especially those with expertise in teaching), but mostly due to ongoing efforts. The training, encouragement and career development of the available human resources do not receive proper attention. On the other hand, YGU is willing to acquire the necessary resources for learning. The auditoriums are technically equipped, and the classroom environment is generally favorable for learning. Financial risks do not substantially threaten the continuity of the educational process as different mechanisms have been specified for overcoming them. The latter, however, are not generally applied in advance, which indicates untapped opportunities.

¹ APPENDIX 1: CVS OF EXPERT PANEL MEMBERS

While there are several issues with the Academic Programs, the Academic staff, and the resources that can be easily overcome, the university effectively ensures the credibility of certification and qualification.

The foundational YGU documents include statements regarding strategic objectives, which are largely in correspondence with the University's activities. Mechanisms for the stakeholders' involvement in defining the objectives have been developed as well. However, the strategic plan does not factually impact the determination of the directions of quantifiable development and the activities of the University. The practice of sole management prevails in decision-making, although there are collegial governance bodies at the institution. Such an approach, of course, ensures flexibility and speed in management, but threatens stability as the whole system depends on one person and his substitution could be quite difficult. The University also has a number of documented regulations, policies and procedures for a number of processes, but the majority of them have not yet been fully implemented and their effectiveness has not been assessed. Generally, the quality assurance policies and procedures are not yet been entirely employed and the Quality Assurance Center is not a major role player in University activities.

It can be concluded from the above-mentioned evaluation that the governance and quality assurance systems, despite the existence of considerable documents and the regulations stipulated in them, are not yet sufficiently institutionalized and that the strategic approach is not sufficiently applied, which impedes the university's sustainable development.

YGU supports its students in order to ensure a productive educational environment. Students are generally satisfied with the educational and additional services they are provided. The university employs various mechanisms to identify students' needs (surveys, discussion meetings) but the frequency of their use and the objectivity of the analysis of the results are unclear. The University administration, the administrative staff, and the academic staff are almost always available for the students and provide the necessary support. Apart from providing students with practical knowledge and skills, the University's Law Clinic and the Center of Forensic Studies show a great potential for research. They are, however, not exploited to the fullest of their utility and student involvement in research is at rather low levels. Short and mid-term research projects are not implemented at YGU. The interests and aspirations of the University in the field of research are not specified, and no research, policies, or procedures that would foster the internationalization of results have been introduced. Generally speaking, there are no procedures and policies to promote internationalization and international relations. YGU has signed cooperation agreements with several foreign universities, but no exchange programs have so far been implemented within the framework of any of the actual Academic Programs. There have cooperation agreements with local organizations, too; the local partnership network seems to be more active and effective (especially with employer organizations). One of the best examples of results of this partnership is the Center of Experimental Forensic Studies and the envisaged simulation bank intended for student training. By forming such infrastructures, YGU creates opportunities for the provision of additional services and the transfer of knowledge to the public. Although the latter is not yet fully implemented, YGU strives to be accessible and transparent to the general public.

Taking into account the scope of the above-mentioned advantages and objectives of the University, it can be concluded that YGU endeavors to ensure its long-term development and integration into the local and international community but has not yet developed a clear framework of objectives for this purpose. The volume of activities targeting internationalization and research are insufficient for the educational processes; however, there are prospects for development in these areas that can be implemented if the university adopts a strategic approach and makes some improvements.

Strengths of the institution

1. Existence of procedures for the development and implementation of Academic Programs and their individual components.
2. An academic staff with practical expertise in teaching.
3. Availability of technically equipped auditoriums.
4. Commitment to continuously developing the resource base.
5. Opportunities to ensure financial stability.
6. Desire to ensure a fair environment in YGU.
7. Regulations of governance and quality assurance processes formally foreseen in documents.
8. Student satisfaction with the educational and supplementary services provided by the university.
9. Availability of mechanisms for identifying students' needs.
10. Availability of YGU management, administration, and academic staff to support the students.
11. Network of local and foreign partners.
12. Availability of the necessary infrastructure for providing consultancy and professional services to the public.

Weaknesses of the institution

1. Lack of results and coordination in the evaluation and review of the Academic Programs,
2. Lack of distinction between undergraduate and graduate programs.
3. Lack of mechanisms for training, incentives, and career development for human resources,
4. Lack of mechanisms for the evaluation of cost-effectiveness.
5. Lack of a strategic approach in the system of governance, weak correlation between the studies provided and the decisions made by the administration.
6. Dependence of the governance system on one person, lack of institutionalization.

7. Lack of mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of the governance system, policies, and procedures.
8. Lack of motivation among internal stakeholders to participate in quality assurance processes.
9. Lack of an impact of quality assurance processes on the activities of the University.
10. Lack of a strategic approach and clarity of interests and aspirations in the fields of research and internationalization.
11. Lack of research programs.
12. Low rates of international mobility.

Recommendations

Mission and Purposes

1. To formulate and develop strategic priorities while narrowing the gap between the implemented guidelines and the ones stipulated in the documents by means of clarifying the university's position and vision in accordance with the existing ideas and values.
2. To stimulate the interest of internal and external stakeholders in the processes of the development of the YGU Strategic Plan, consequently ensuring the identification of discrepancies between the strategic objectives and the stakeholders' true needs.
3. To develop and introduce a unified system for evaluating the progress of strategic objectives, using this as a basis for defining the strategic objectives and ongoing refinement.

Governance and Administration

4. To improve the YGU governance system by increasing the degree of institutionalization, as well as by clarifying the degree of collegiality and autonomy.
5. To introduce a mechanism for evaluating the effectiveness of the governance system and subsequently provide effective improvements that would meet the stakeholders' needs.
6. To identify the causes for low motivation, to encourage the participation of internal stakeholders in governance processes, on top of providing opportunities encouraging the active participation of the Academic staff and students in decision-making at different levels of governance.
7. By identifying the role of each YGU staff member in achieving strategic goals, to compare mid- and short-term plans while introducing follow-up monitoring mechanisms.
8. To introduce mechanisms for regular observation of environmental factors as a basis for ensuring the objectivity of decision-making.
9. To introduce mechanisms for systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of all current and future policies and procedures (for instance, by stating indicators for each policy and procedure), as well as to pursue improvements stemming from the evaluation results.

- 10.* To carry out an analysis of the reliability and effectiveness of the mechanisms used through coordinating all the information collected with the help of different mechanisms.
- 11.* To evaluate the effectiveness of outgoing information by publishing objective quantitative and qualitative information regarding Academic Programs and the awarded qualifications.

Academic Programs

- 12.* To clarify the differences between the undergraduate and graduate Academic Programs' outcomes, to ensure the measurability of the expected outcomes considering the availability of distance learning.
- 13.* To align the teaching and learning methods with the outcomes, to clarify the ratio of the provided courses to the outcomes of a specific Academic Program.
- 14.* To clarify the requirements for graduation papers and master's theses, to emphasize their differences by introducing clear requirements for the evaluation of graduation papers.
- 15.* To introduce lists of facultative courses in the Academic Programs, and in case of the graduate programs, lists of optional courses.
- 16.* To improve instruction by providing a component for development of professional competences and skills.
- 17.* To review the Regulation for organizing, conducting, and evaluating the pre-graduate and scientific-research experience (internship), by clarifying the difference between the outcomes of the undergraduate and graduate internships, and the measurability of the factors, which serve as a basis for the evaluation of the experience.
- 18.* To carry out benchmarking of Academic Programs, by substantiating the criteria of selecting universities for implementing benchmarking, taking into account the complete components of the Academic Programs.
- 19.* To expand the involvement of YGU stakeholders in the processes of regular monitoring, implementation, evaluation, and improvement of Academic Programs.

Students

- 20.* To improve the mechanisms for applicants' recruitment and admission, to assess the risks of decreasing the number of applicants, to develop and implement a clear policy for that purpose.
- 21.* To clarify the periodicity of needs identification mechanisms, to improve the methodology for surveys.
- 22.* To make additional counseling services more accessible, to provide additional courses for students with lower attendance rates or low academic achievement, as well as for undergraduate students with other basic education needs.
- 23.* To coordinate the documentation package for students, to make it more accessible to students, to raise the level of awareness of its availability among students.
- 24.* To make the events organized by the Career Center more accessible to a larger number of students, to shift the provided services from the current employer-centered approach to a student-centered approach.

25. To clarify the activities of the Student Scientific Society (SSS), to promote the relations of the SSS and chairs, to give impetus to joint research, to set certain criteria for the submitted reports, to ensure their scientificity, to provide incentives.
26. To consider the possibilities of more efficient use of the university centers for research purposes, to make the given centers more accessible students.
27. To contribute to raising students' awareness of their rights, to prepare a student handbook with an emphasis on student rights, to clarify the role of the Student Council in the institution to ensure the autonomy of the institution, and to motivate students to be involved in University management.

Faculty and Staff

28. To improve the policy and procedures relating to the Academic and Support staff, to pay attention to the regulation of the competition, to exclude situational governance of the field and decision making.
29. To develop Academic staff professional qualifications requirements for each Academic Program, to specify the professional distinctions required for teaching undergraduate and graduate Academic Programs.
30. To review the evaluation system of the Academic staff, to introduce application of various methods in the evaluation process, which will serve as the basis for obtaining reliable data, analyzing the results, identifying deficiencies, and using improvement measures to correct them.
31. To develop and implement procedures to allocate financial and other resources for the purpose of improving the professional qualities of the Academic staff, ensuring mobility, and effectively implementing the functions of the units.
32. To introduce a policy of human resource planning and stability, aimed at rejuvenating staff and increasing retention.
33. To introduce clear mechanisms for identifying, analyzing, and evaluating the needs of the Academic staff, to clarify the Academic and Support staff programs for coordinated and regulated trainings, to substantiate and connection with the strategic plan of the professional education institutions.
34. To develop and introduce regulated mechanisms for professional advancement and encouragement in order to contribute to increased motivation among the Academic and Support staff.

Research and development

35. To clarify the priorities in the field of research, directing them to the development of the university, using the resources, expanding the scope of cooperation, and ensuring a clear mapping of the realization of those priorities.
36. To provide a strategic governance system for the scientific-research processes by clarifying the roles of relevant actors and aligning the processes with strategic planning and priorities.

37. To develop and introduce mechanisms to support and encourage the activities of Academic staff and student in the field of scientific-research based on the University priorities (including the internationalization of research activities), by ensuring the simultaneous development of the processes.

38. To ensure the alignment and continuity of research and learning processes at all levels of education by introducing the achieved results in the learning process and contributing to the development of the University.

Infrastructure and Resources

39. To implement financial management with a strategic approach, by introducing long-term financial planning, cost-effectiveness assessment, and financial risk management mechanisms.

40. By regulating information flows, paperwork, and document circulation processes, to carry out a information and document inventory as well as optimization, taking into account the accessibility and comprehensibility to stakeholders.

41. To consistently create learning opportunities for students with special needs.

42. To introduce regular mechanisms for evaluating the applicability, availability, and effectiveness of resources.

Societal Responsibility

43. To review reporting templates for all units, to introduce mechanisms for accountability analysis and effectiveness evaluation.

44. To review the university and external stakeholder feedback mechanisms in order to activate the involvement of external stakeholders in various university processes.

45. To introduce clear mechanisms for evaluating and analyzing the effectiveness of feedback and knowledge (values) transfer.

46. To use the full potential of the Center of Experimental Criminalistics and, in parallel with the provision of paid services, to develop research activities in the field of Criminalistics through grants or other methods, while involving academic staff and students.

External Relations and Internationalization

47. To ensure strategic governance of external relations and internationalization, by clarifying processes of the field, as well as institutionalizing the scope of cooperation and conditioning them with the priorities and needs of the University, with the involvement of possible funding sources.

48. To clarify the role and activities of the External Relations and Internationalization Division, by ensuring its effectiveness.

49. To provide information on experience exchange, mobility, research and other programs and participation opportunities for internationalization, by involving a wide range of stakeholders and encouraging relevant activities.

50. To develop and introduce principal mechanisms for the study of best practices (local or international) and their application.

51. To introduce mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of foreign cooperation and internationalization activities.

52. To develop new opportunities and approaches for online collaboration both for mitigating the effects of COVID-19 and for reducing mobility costs.

Internal Quality Assurance

53. To improve the documentation regulating the internal quality assurance system processes, by ensuring their applicability as well as the simultaneous development of quality assurance processes.

54. To clarify the activities of the Quality Assurance Center by ensuring short-term planning activities and evaluating its effectiveness arising from the strategic plan.

55. To ensure the active involvement of internal and external stakeholders in quality assurance processes.

56. To develop mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance system, by ensuring the simultaneous development of processes.

57. To introduce analytical mechanisms for ongoing research and reporting, to evaluate the effectiveness of processes, at the same time ensuring the accessibility of the results to stakeholders.

58. To ensure the full implementation of the Plan Do Check Act (PDCA) cycle and establish the basis for the introduction of a QA system covering all areas of the University.

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

- YGU has included a major emphasis on internationalization in its Development Strategic Plan 2019-2023. According to Task 1.7, the university will achieve enrollment of foreign students in BA and MA programs of the University. Furthermore, Strategic Goal Seven seeks to “expand the University's international recognition, scope and format of the collaboration and to promote the University’s stakeholders’ participation in international projects.” Tasks 7.1 and 7.2 include increasing mobility and involvement in international projects. However, the SP reviewed did not provide any detail how these tasks would be carried out or include KPIs of any kind. Therefore, the efficacy (and indeed the existence) of actual steps to achieve these Goals and Tasks cannot be properly assessed based on the available information.
- As a first step in assessing how the university is being integrated into the EHEA, let us analyze YGU’s fit within European standards and procedures. Armenia became a signatory of the Bologna Accord in 2005. The university has since achieved the markers of the Bologna Process, including implementation of a three cycle qualification scheme, use of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, and use of Learning Outcomes. YGU has a Procedure of Credit System of Education (which also describes a multi-factor system of assessment). It may be that the methodology of calculating ECTS credits in use could be improved, as no adjustments seem to be made, for instance, based on differing writing requirements or in light of the switch to online teaching and learning as a result of the Covid 19 Pandemic. No actual examples of Learning Outcomes were reviewed. However, the Policies and Procedures for Development, Approval, and Review of the Course Description does set out standards that correspond to the Bergen framework. Furthermore, the university has implemented a Diploma Supplement. Therefore, in terms of the formalistic scope of the EHEA, the University is well integrated.
- Internationalization and particularly international mobility are important factors in incorporation into the EHEA, however, and therefore must be analyzed at this point. First, it must be acknowledged that the Covid 19 Pandemic has greatly interfered with internationalization and mobility possibilities during the current period in Armenia and the rest of the world. Yet YGU has a long history of internationalization efforts, as well as some recent structural developments, that can be reviewed and form the basis for recommendations.
- YGU has entered into numerous agreements with other universities over the years, but to date there have been limited results. These have included occasional conferences and shared research work. YGU has been in discussions with an Iranian university regarding a

joint program, although there may be regulatory constraints. It has carried out several formal benchmarking of academic programs with foreign universities as well. In terms of mobility, a limited number of professors have visited other universities and few visiting professor have visited YGU. Student mobility is reported to be essentially non-existent. The university doesn't seem to have engaged in intensive analysis of why its relationships do not produce more results. A lack of resources was cited as a primary cause in interviews. However, there may also be a sense among some stakeholders that internationalization is a pro forma activity that will not lead to genuine opportunities.

- As acknowledged by the SWOT in the SER and in interviews, lack of language skills, particularly English skills, is also acting as a constraint to internationalization. This appears to create a circular problem in that opportunities are being limited by the lack of language skills, while stakeholders are not motivated to acquire language skills due to the lack of opportunity. Interviews suggested that additional focus is currently being given to improving foreign language results, which could provide additional impetus for mobility.
- Moreover, there have been some recent developments supporting the university's ambitions. YGU is now authorized by the RA Ministry of Education and Science to offer English-language programs to foreign students. Moreover, in 2018 the university created a separate Department of External Relations and Internationalization, based on international benchmarking. The Department has a single employee, but he is planning to seek additional assistance, for instance to manage grants to the university. The Department is assigned general responsibility for relationships. According to interviews it is now primarily engaged in Erasmus + activities, which could provide very encouraging support to internationalization linkages and grant funding. Hopefully the Department will be in a position to find financial support and opportunities for mobility in particular. It could also put focus on building virtual relationships that could produce results despite the pandemic or financial constraints.
- In sum, the university has identified internationalization as a key element of its current strategy, although details of exactly how that would be carried out and monitored are not clear from the provided materials. YGU fits well into the EHEA's standards and procedures, with a three-cycle system of qualifications, ECTS, LOs, and a diploma supplement in place; ECTS and LO approaches could benefit from some monitoring during periodic program reviews. As to the key issue relating to integration into the EHEA, internationalization, YGU's efforts are still a work in progress. Although it has entered into multiple relationships over the years, the results have been limited. This may be due to lack of financing, issues with foreign languages, or incomplete incorporation of internationalization as part of the culture of the university. Whatever the cause, the university should take a hard and detailed look at what is impeding a true

internationalization experience for stakeholders. There is particular hope for the future as YGU may be able to use its new authority to offer courses to foreign students in English, and as a new Department of External Cooperation and Internationalization engages with Erasmus + and other potential opportunities.

Recommendations:

- Incorporate review of compliance with European standards of LOs and ECTS calculations into regular program reviews
- Maintain a strong focus on the three Strategic Tasks relating to internationalization, including planning, monitoring, and reporting of progress
- Conduct an assessment of present and past international relationships to discover and reduce impediments to mobility
- Link language learning firmly to mobility opportunities, particularly to the West where international activities are frequently conducted in English
- Support the new Department of External Affairs and Internationalization as much as possible, especially considering additional human resources
- Look for opportunities for virtual cooperation, both to deal with the effects of the Covid 19 epidemic and to reduce costs such as travel
- Strengthen ties with multi-lateral and bi-lateral organizations, particularly with Erasmus +, but also with OEDC, USAID etc as sources of international practice and possible sources of funding

Tigran Mnatsakanyan
Head of the Expert Panel

March 19, 2021

DESCRIPTION OF THE INVESTIGATION

EXPERT PANEL COMPOSITION

The external investigation of the institutional capacities of Yerevan Gladzor University was carried out by the expert panel having the following composition:

1. **Tigran Mnatsakanyan** - Candidate of Economics, Armenian State University of Economics,
2. **Margaret Tabler** - Doctor of Law, African Development Bank, Expert, Higher Education Quality Assurance Advisor,
3. **Armenuhi Sargsyan** - Candidate of Physical and Mathematical Sciences, Associate Professor, Shirak State University, Director of Scientific Policy, Quality Assurance and Governance Center,
4. **Siranush Petikyan** - Candidate of Legal Sciences, Associate Professor, M. Mashtots University of Stepanakert, Head of the Chair of Law,
5. **Anahit Karapetyan** - Yerevan State University, Faculty of International Relations, 1st year MA student of “Regional Policy”.

The composition of the expert panel was agreed upon with the Education Institution and appointed by Head of the ANQA.

The activity of the expert panel was coordinated by Meri Barseghyan – Specialist of the ANQA Institutional and Program Accreditation Division.

The translation was provided by Gurgen Karapetyan, lecturer of the Chair of English Communication and Translation at Yerevan Brusov State University.

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

PROCESS OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW

Application for state accreditation

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

The ANQA secretariat checked the data presented in the application form and the attached documents.

After making the decision on accepting the application request, a bilateral agreement was signed between ANQA and YGU. The timetable of activities was prepared and approved, which was later changed due to the COVID-19 epidemic, and later due to state of emergency, and then the martial law, declared in the Republic of Armenia.

Self-evaluation

The self-evaluation report on institutional capacity, compiled in accordance with the criteria set by ANQA, and the package of attached documents were submitted in Armenian and English within the timeframe set by ANQA.

The self-evaluation of the Institution was carried out by a group, formed for that purpose, in accordance with the order of the Rector of the institution. Representatives from the University administrative, educational, Academic staff, students and graduates are involved in the group.

The ANQA coordinator studied the self-evaluation report with the aim of revealing the correspondence to the technical requirements of ANQA. The self-evaluation, submitted by YGU did not correspond to the set unified format; there were technical, format and substantive inconsistencies. The self-evaluation report was submitted back to the University and the University amended the inconsistencies within the set period, bringing the self-evaluation report in line with ANQA format. The self-evaluation report was submitted to ANQA on 20.02.2020. Afterwards, the self-evaluation report and the package of attached documents, the electronic questionnaire, completed by the University were submitted to the expert panel, the composition of which was previously agreed with the University and approved by the order of the ANQA director.

Preparatory phase

With the aim of preparing the expert panel members and ensuring the effectiveness of the activities, trainings on the following 4 topics were conducted:

1. The main functions of the members of the expert panel,
2. Preparatory phase of preliminary evaluation of the institutional self-evaluation report, the main requirements of the report,
3. Research methodology of documents and resources,
4. Ethics and techniques of conducting meetings and inquiries.

Having reviewed the self-evaluation report and documents of the Institution, the expert panel conducted a preliminary evaluation. Based on the given format, the lists of questions and objectives for different units and target groups, as well as additional documents have been

prepared. During the preliminary evaluation, the members of the expert panel attended some of the online classes held at the University and did class observations.

Within the given time period, the expert panel summarized the results of the preliminary evaluation and the Chair of expert panel, together with the process coordinator, set the time schedule of the site-visit².

According to the ANQA manual for the investigations, the intended meetings with all the target groups, close and open meetings, document reviews, etc. were included in the time schedule.

Preparatory site-visit

On October 29, 2020, an online meeting with Yerevan Gladzor University Rector took place on the Zoom platform. During the meeting, the expert site-visit schedule was discussed and agreed upon with the University, the list of supplementary documents to be studied was submitted and mutually agreed upon and informed decisions were made regarding the organizational, technical, informative issues of the site-visit and the ones related to the conduct and the norms of ethics of meeting participants. The conditions for the activities of focus groups and the expert panel were discussed, and the rules for conducting online meetings were clarified.

Expert Panel Site-visit

The expert panel site-visit was originally planned for three days, but due to the online accreditation process, the expert panel site-visit was implemented for four days, maintaining the same workload for the expert panel. The expert panel site-visit took place from 14 to 17, December 2020. According to the time-schedule, the activities of the site-visit were launched with a closed meeting, aimed at discussing and coming to an agreement with the international expert Margaret Tabler upon the expert evaluation frame, the issues to be reviewed during the site-visit, the strengths and weaknesses of the Institution in accordance with the criteria, the procedure of focus groups, as well as further steps.

All members of the expert panel, including the ANQA coordinator and translator, participated in the site-visit.

The expert panel online site-visit started and ended with a meeting with the Yerevan Gladzor University Rector. Lecturers and students, deans, Heads of Chairs, employers, and alumni were selected from a list provided in advance by the University to clarify the questions. All meetings, except for the open meeting, due to the lack of participants, were held according to the schedule. The review of documents³ and observation of resources⁴ as well as focus group meetings with different YGU structural units were held online by the expert panel.

At the end of each working day, expert panel closed meetings were held to single out the results of the interim expert assessment and in the end of the site-visit the main findings were summarized.

² APPENDIX 2. EXPERT SITE-VISIT SCHEDULE

³ Appendix 3. List of reviewed documents

⁴ Appendix 4. Resources Reviewed by the Expert panel

The expert panel evaluation was conducted in accordance with the State Accreditation Criteria and Standards and ANQA procedures, providing two scales: **satisfactory** and **unsatisfactory**.

Expert panel report

The expert panel conducted the preliminary evaluation based on an electronic questionnaire completed by Yerevan Gladzor University, the submitted self-evaluation report, through the review of the attached documents, the online class observations, the expert site-visit, as well as consistent discussions. Based on the many findings concluded in the discussions, the head of the expert panel and ANQA coordinator prepared the draft of the expert panel report. The international expert prepared a separate peer review. The documents were translated and handed over to the head of the expert panel. The complete peer review is included in the report. The preliminary version of the report was submitted on February 01, 2021. On March 1, 2021, the reflections of YGU on the preliminary version of the report and the position of the expert group were discussed online between the YGU Rector, the coordinator and the members of the expert panel, and the Director and the Head of the Institutional and Programme Accreditation Division of ANQA. Consequently, certain changes were made in the report, and the final version of the report was submitted to ANQA on March 9.\

Meri Barseghyan
Coordinator of the Expert Panel

March 19, 2021

BRIEF INFORMATION ABOUT THE EDUCATION INSTITUTION

History. Yerevan Gladzor University (YGU) (called Gladzor Governance University until 2006) was founded in 1990. Since the beginning of its operations, the university was aimed at restoring and pursuing the rich intellectual heritage of the great historical university of Gladzor with a high level of education, qualified academic staff, efficient course guides and curricula, scientific potential, and so on.

On July 25, 2001, the University was accredited by the RA Ministry of Education and Science. In 2015, the University received institutional accreditation for a period of 4 years. At the Ninth International Forum of “High Quality in Business” held in fall 2005, in Geneva, Yerevan Gladzor University was awarded a gold medal by the International Fund of the homonymous “For High Quality Work”, as well as a certificate of membership of Yerevan Gladzor University in the fund declaration.

In 2010, the University Rector and the Academic staff of the University were awarded the RA Prime Minister’s Commemorative Medal for “significant contribution to the professional education of the young generation”. In 2015, the University Vice-Rector A. Kharatyan and 5 lecturers were awarded the RA Prime Minister’s Commemorative Medal and Letter of Appreciation for “significant contribution to the professional education of the young generation”.

In 2012-2014 and 2016-2019 Yerevan Gladzor University implemented grant programs entitled “Provision of grants to universities for the introduction of the university quality assurance system or their further improvement” and “Modernization of the Law specialty” by concluding grant agreements with the “Center for Educational Programs” PIU of the RA Ministry of Education and Science.

Education: Since the 2006-2007 academic year, a credit system for evaluating education process governance and learning outcomes has been introduced. For the effective implementation of these initiatives, since 2012, the Quality Assurance Center has been operating at Yerevan Gladzor University.

With the license issued by the RA Ministry of Education and Science, the University has the right to train its staff in the following specialties: “Law”, “Finance”, “Governance”, “Marketing”, “Accounting and Taxation”, “International Relations”, “Journalism”, “Armenian Language and Literature”, “Foreign Language and Literature”, “Linguistics”, “Information Technologies”, “Informatics” (computer science).

During the 2018-2019 academic year, the university implemented academic programs in “Law”, “Finance” (total number of students - 213 people), and during the 2019-2020 academic year in “Law” (BA and MA programs), “Finance”, “International Relations”, “Foreign Language and Literature” (BA program), where more than 280 full-time and part-time students are enrolled. Students are provided with classrooms with material-technical resources, equipped classrooms, smart classroom, law clinic, center of experimental criminalistics, courtroom, library, conference

hall, sports hall, 24-hour internet accessibility, audiovisual classrooms ensuring the provision for foreign language learning, dressing room, emergency room, etc.

Research. About 30 University graduates are Candidates of Sciences, and one of them is a Doctor of Science. Today, 8 Candidates of Sciences from Gladzor teach at the University. The names of more than two dozen lecturers were submitted to Higher Qualification Committee by the Scientific Council of the University to be nominated for the academic title of Associate Professor or Professor. All nominated candidates were awarded the appropriate degree/title by the Supreme Certifying Commission, without exception. The University has the right to approve the topics of PhD and Doctoral dissertations, to appoint scientific supervisors, as well as to take the PhD exams.

Monographs, teaching manuals, articles published by the professors of the university, and collections compiled and published on the basis of the reports submitted in the scientific sessions contribute to the development of science. The University is actively engaged in the publication of textbooks, supporting materials, materials for the annual conferences featuring the Academic staff and PhD students, and monographs. To date, the University has published eight collections of Academic staff and PhD students conference materials and has sponsored the publication of more than two dozen books.

Internationalization. YGU Internationalization Strategy is based on the mission of the University and predetermines the expansion of international cooperation. The overall University Development Strategy aims at expanding the international recognition of the University, the scope and format of cooperation, as well as at promoting the engagement of University stakeholders in international programs.

To achieve the strategic goal, an objective is set to increase the mobility of the University Academic staff, students, and PhD students to promote the engagement of the University stakeholders in international programs.

Quality assurance. YGU has a strategic goal to ensure the effective operation of the quality governance system at the University. To achieve the set goals, an objective is set to improve the effective governance mechanisms and accountability mechanisms promoting the spread of quality culture, to increase the transparency of the University activities, as well as to ensure the effectiveness of the public responsibility related mechanisms.

The implementation of the YGU Quality Assurance Policy is based on the Internal Quality Assurance Manual, which defines the goals and objectives of the internal quality assurance system, and its organizational structure, processes, and procedures, as well as relations with the university units and other organizations.

Source: The documents provided by YGU (e.g., self-evaluation, strategic plan, schedule, unit plans, concepts, etc.) serve as a basis for the review of facts in the above-mentioned areas.

EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

I. MISSION AND PURPOSES

CRITERION: The policies and procedures of the Professional Educational Institution (hereinafter referred to as Institution) are in accordance with the institution's mission which is in line with ANQF.

Findings

1.1 The institution has a clear, well-articulated mission that represents the Institution's purposes and goals and is in accordance with National Qualifications Framework (hereafter NQF).

YGU mission is stipulated in the Charter and 2019-2023 Development Strategic Plan. According to the Charter, the University activity is aimed at organizing education, learning and research at the level of general education, secondary professional, higher, postgraduate professional, and supplementary education in the fields of socio-economics, social sciences and humanities, in accordance with the RA legislation. Thus, the wording of the mission indicates the level of education that YGU provides is in accordance with the NQF. According to the Development Strategic Plan, YGU is an autonomous higher education institution that offers quality academic programs (in the field of socio-economics, social sciences and humanities), ensuring in-depth professional, national and European criteria, as well as erudite specialists with theoretical, practical knowledge, skills and abilities, guided by national state mentality, universal values, and the development of an exemplary citizen of the republic in line with the labor market requirements. Compared to the mission stated in the previous strategic plan, the University has specified its mission (in particular, the areas of the educational programs and the expected profile of the graduates) in line with the recommendations presented in the previous accreditation expert report.

The main characteristics of the vision stipulated in the 2019-2023 strategic plan are = accessibility for all social groups, at the same time the provision of theoretical and practical training, an interactive environment and motivating educational community, dissemination of quality culture, and contribution to the solution of social problems. The development strategy also defines the strategic goals in the priority areas and the objectives arising from them.

During the expert visit and especially the meeting with the Rector, it became clear that one of the guidelines of the YGU mission and vision is the elimination of social stereotypes regarding private universities, the exclusion of a differentiated approach to state and private universities, at least conformity with the regulation of state universities.

1.2 The mission, goals and objectives of the Institution reflect the needs of internal and external stakeholders.

The YGU strategic plan, that sets out the mission, goals, and objectives, has been approved by the Scientific Council. The latter includes external and internal stakeholders: university

governance, academic staff, students, and employers. It is worth mentioning that the founders of YGU are included in the Scientific Council governing positions.

YGU has a “Strategic Plan Development, Evaluation and Review Policy” document, according to which the strategic plan is developed by the working group. The latter includes representatives of the administrative and academic staff, students, and graduates, as well as representatives and specialists of other organizations. The working group for the development of the 2019-2023 Development Strategic Plan consisted of 10 members, including representatives of the administrative staff, heads of Chairs, one student, one graduate and one employer.

According to the documents reviewed by the expert panel, in setting out the strategic goals and objectives, the working group relied on the needs identified as a result of stakeholder surveys. The survey included questions about the main mission of YGU (answers: providing quality education, training of knowledgeable professionals, employment of students, research activities, public responsibility), how satisfied the stakeholders are with the mission, etc.

In addition, the draft of the Development Strategic Plan, as envisaged by the “Strategic Plan Development, Evaluation and Review Policy”, was published and put into circulation for 15 days to receive feedback from stakeholders. As a result, about 10 observations were submitted, which were duly taken into account.

The Expert panel site-visit, however, revealed that the majority of external and internal stakeholders are not familiar with the approved strategy.

1.3 The Institution has set mechanisms and procedures to evaluate the achievement of its mission and goals and further improve them.

In addition to the YGU 2019-2023 Development Strategic Plan, an action plan-schedule has been developed, in which quantitative indicators have been defined in accordance with the actions and the responsible persons and planned financial support (financial planning, however, is not integrated into the strategic plan, and no specific funds are provided) are singled out. In addition, some of the mechanisms for evaluating the results of the implementation of the goals are defined in the documents “Strategic Plan Development, Evaluation and Review Policy”, “Mission and Goal Evaluation Policy and Procedure”. The mechanisms stipulated in these two documents, however, are not systematically interconnected and unified.

In parallel with the approval of the 2019-2023 Development Strategic Plan, it was agreed to change the format of the Rector’s report- it should be in compliance with the strategic goals. The reports of previous years were not targeted to strategic goals, but in 2016 the “Monitoring and Evaluation Plan of 2012-2018 Strategic Plan” was approved and in 2019 the “Report on the Implementation of 2012-2018 Strategic Plan” was compiled.

The expert panel site-visit revealed that the processes of evaluation and improvement of the results of the implementation of the goals were not taken into account by YGU, the evaluations through reports and other mechanisms were (including, according to some internal stakeholders) descriptive and non-analytical, while some evaluation and strategic governance mechanisms in

general were introduced only before the accreditation process. As a result, the connection between evaluation and amendments is not visible.

Considerations: The YGU mission, vision and goals are summarized in the Development Strategic Plan, which gives an idea about the university activities. In addition, the expert panel notes that the provisions set out in these statements are in line with the NQF. At the same time, however, with all these documented statements, it is difficult to clearly understand what is distinctive about YGU or how the university strives to be different. The distinctions that are emphasized regarding YGU's stance and activities, such as full competitiveness, primary or key professions in the proposed academic programs, values, etc., are not fully reflected in the foundational documents. As a result, there is a risk of a disruption between the priorities stipulated in the documents and the ones that are stated based on its activity.

The expert panel positively evaluated the fact that the "Strategic Plan Development, Evaluation and Review Policy" document defines a procedure for the development of a strategic plan, which presupposes the engagement of stakeholders in different stages of its development. Although the needs of the stakeholders are basically reflected in the goals and objectives, it is alarming that most of the stakeholders are not familiar with the strategic plan. Furthermore, the expert panel points out that the effectiveness of the surveys was not high, as the nature of the questions and answers allowed only a superficial picture. Consequently, even though a formal process of identifying the needs of stakeholders has been implemented, no sufficient grounds have been provided to guarantee the reflection of actual needs in the set goals. Thus, although the expert panel can prove that currently the needs of the stakeholders are mainly reflected in the set goals and objectives, under the existing mechanisms it cannot be stated that the needs will be considered during the next accreditation.

Different mechanisms for evaluating the results of activities, such as evaluation indicators are stipulated in various YGU documents. Although the expert panel evaluates the existence of these mechanisms as positive, they are not coordinated and do not allow implementation of a comprehensive evaluation of progress. It is not clear what specific objectives can be met by each of the evaluation mechanisms. As a result, efforts to evaluate progress are proved to be ineffective. In such cases, the continuity of University development is endangered, as no correlation of the strategic plan of any period with the strategic plans of the previous and future periods is ensured.

Summary: Taking into account the existence of the YGU mission, vision, strategic goals, their compliance with university's activities and QAF, the existence of mechanisms for stakeholder participation, and the first steps to evaluate the strategic goals, the expert panel believes that YGU policies and activities are in line with the mission adopted by the institution.

Conclusion: The compliance of institutional capacities of YGU to the requirements of Criterion 1 is **satisfactory**.

II. GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

CRITERION: The institution's system of governance, administrative structures and their activities are efficient and are aimed at the accomplishment of mission and goals of the institution preserving ethical norms of governance.

Findings

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

According to the Charter, the highest governing body of YGU is the General Assembly of the members of the educational institution, consisting of two members. The General Assembly, however, does not participate in the governance as an independent collegial body, as the chairman of the General Assembly holds the position of executive officer- rector, which is the sole governing body. The other body of collegial governance is the Scientific Council, which, in addition to internal stakeholders, includes external stakeholders, according to the observations made in the previous expert report. In 2015, the Scientific Council Regulation was revised; in particular, the set functions of approving the University budget, planning, and controlling the financial-economic activities, and determining the proportions of allocating and distributing the resources were included into its activities.

The activities of structural units are regulated in accordance with the regulations of each unit. Furthermore, job descriptions for administrative and support staff have been developed.

In 2017, the "Governance and Administration Policy and Procedure" document was approved, which defines the principles of governance and administration - participation and transparency. Some ethical criteria are set out in the "Internal Disciplinary Regulations", as well as in the "Codes of Ethics (Code of Conduct) of Administrative and Academic staff, Student". An Ethics committee has been established under the Scientific Council, which has the authority to investigate various incidents and impose disciplinary sanctions. However, the committee has not yet held sessions, as no relevant applications have been submitted. The expert panel site-visit revealed that YGU has a tendency to create an environment of justice through depoliticization, particularly being free from corruption, which is also observed among the students. The degree of autonomy of the units in the governance system, as became clear during the expert site-visit, is not clearly defined, and depends on the individuals and the situation.

Although from the perspective of the current activities, the YGU governance system, in general, does not have a critical shortage of human, material and financial resources, a number of units have only the position of Head without employees, while the Heads of some units stated a need for employees during the expert panel site-visit. Moreover, according to the self-evaluation report, in order to ensure the efficiency of employees' activities, the number of inbound part-time employment relationships has been reduced as much as possible; however both inbound and outbound part-time employment relationships exist. Thus, two of the five Chair Heads that

participated in the meeting with the expert panel did not have their primary employment with YGU, while another two worked together in other organizations.

In order to evaluate the efficiency of the activities of the separate units of the governance system, the “Order for evaluating the administrative and support staff” has been developed, but the mechanism for evaluating the efficiency of the governance system itself has not yet defined and no such evaluation has been implemented except for the analyses carried out in the accreditation process. However, some amendments are envisaged in the governance system- there is an intention to establishing a human resources department, but due to lack of financial resources, this has not been implemented yet, although the University has a human resources department.

2.2 The Institution’s system of governance gives an opportunity to students and the teaching staff to take part in decision making procedures.

The main way for internal stakeholders to be engaged in] University governance is their participation in the Chair and Scientific Council meetings. Lecturers and students make up 25% of the YGU Scientific Council, not counting the Heads of some Chairs. According to the decision of the Scientific Council, criteria for lecturers and students to be involved in the Scientific Council are set. The expert panel site-visit revealed that student participation in the Scientific Council meetings is not significant, they do not affect the decision-making process, and sometimes only the group leaders participate in the Chair meetings. From the students' point of view, their influence on decision-making process is expressed through participation in surveys, but in the event of private issues, they can reach solutions for particular situations, such as a change in teaching method.

Apart from participating in meetings and surveys, the lecturers and students have regular meetings with university management and heads of units.

According to the self-evaluation report, an online platform is to be created on the YGU website, allowing posting of the most important questions for the University on the platform, with the aim of getting suggestions from stakeholders, allowing them to make observations, and come up with new proposals before a decision is made.

2.3 The Institution formulates and carries out short-term, mid-term and long-term planning consistent with its mission and goals as well as has appropriate mechanisms for the implementation and monitoring of those plans.

The University has developed the “Activity Planning, Management and Monitoring Policy” document, which, however, contains only general descriptions and does not define any clear mechanisms. During the meetings of the Scientific Council, the Rector, Heads of Chairs, and Heads of the structural units make reports and submit their annual action plans. According to the self-evaluation report, these action plans should be based exclusively on the Development Strategic Plan. The expert panel site-visit, however, revealed that the approval of the strategic plan did not have a significant impact on the activities of the units. The mid and short-term plans were

not derived from the Development Strategic Plan as a basis for the actual activities of the units, risk assessment and adjustment of long-term plans.

As a mechanism for monitoring implementation of the annual plans, since the 2014-2015 academic year, the units have submitted annual reports on their activities in accordance with the defined format. Although the report format includes a section on activities related to implementation of the Development Strategic Plan, it is not yet fully implemented. The reports, including the annual report of the Rector, do not target the strategic goals and do not allow evaluation of progress.

2.4 The Institution carried out examination of facts affecting its activities and draws on reliable findings during the decision-making process.

The university has developed the “Procedure for Studying Factors Affecting its Activities” document; however, it does not contain a mandatory provision and does not impose liability. No clear procedure for conducting such a study is defined; the document contains only general descriptions. As a result, this document does not provide for a regular review of the factors affecting the activity.

A more exhaustive analysis was carried out in 2018 to identify the external and internal factors affecting YGU activities. The results of the analysis, according to the self-evaluation report, served as the basis for drafting a new development strategy. Numerous internal and external inquiries were conducted, which, however, did not serve as a basis for changes.

At the same time, various significant decisions were made, which are not based on complex studies. For example, changes were made in Academic Programs based on interaction with individual teaching employers, it was agreed to create an educational bank, etc.

2.5 The management of the policies and the processes is based on the quality management principle (plan-do-check-act /PDCA/).

According to the self-evaluation report, the administrative structures, implementation principles and provisions, as well as the specifics of management of YGU policies and procedures are presented in the documents “Internal Quality Assurance Manual” and “Governance and Administration Policy”. The “Governance and Administration Policy and Procedure” document, however, only describes the approach to quality management. Appendix 1 of the “Internal Quality Assurance Manual” document sets out the frequency of review of the various documents, however it is precise only for the strategic plan (at least every 5 years) and for the Academic staff (at least every 4 years). A review of policies and procedures is provided only as needed.

Systematic evaluation of policies and procedures as such is not implemented, while the grounds for individual changes are not evident.

2.6 Institution has mechanisms in place ensuring data collection on the effectiveness of the academic programs and other processes.

According to the self-evaluation report, the mechanisms of data collection and application have not yet been fully used in the University; therefore, their evaluation has not been carried out. The only factor ensuring the effectiveness of the collection and application of the data received is the simultaneous use of different methods of obtaining data (including informal data).

Analysis of the received data, including analysis verifying its reliability (for example, by statistical methods) is not performed.

2.7 There are objective mechanisms in place evaluating the quality of quantitative and qualitative information on the academic programs and qualification awarded.

The main platform for publishing information is the YGU website and the social network page, where the content to be published is developed through a decentralized approach, but the information is approved by the Rector. Moreover, the University publishes student periodicals, while in-person interaction is of utmost importance (for example, with applicants).

According to the self-evaluation report, the surveys conducted among students and lecturers and regularly organized meeting-discussions provide an opportunity to evaluate the quality of published information, the level of awareness of information sources, and their accessibility and objectivity. The analysis of the effectiveness of the evaluation mechanisms provided by YGU was conducted in 2019. The evaluation of the provided information mechanisms was carried out through a survey among students and applicants.

The YGU “Information Policy and Public Awareness Concept” sets out conceptual objectives and priorities that can serve as a basis for evaluating the publication of information; however, they have not yet been used. The document “Monitoring and Evaluation System of PR Strategy” envisages a procedure for evaluating information measures (with a developed questionnaire), as a result of which a corresponding report was compiled in 2019.

However, despite all the above-mentioned studies, no durable mechanisms for selecting publications and their methods have been introduced. In addition, the information published is mostly for advertising purposes; it cannot be considered as a publication of quantitative and qualitative information on the quality of Academic Programs and qualification awards.

Considerations: The expert panel evaluates the existence of collegial governing bodies. However, the balance of collegial and sole decision-making in YGU governance system is at stake. The Executive manager is not, in fact, accountable to the body. As a result, although there are many rules regulating decision-making, final decisions are usually made unilaterally. The Expert panel acknowledges that the decision-maker is the founder of the university, which is logical at large, and that in the case of a small governance system, sole management can be flexible and effective. However, it should be stated that no matter how reliable the current management is, stability is put at risk due to the dependency of the whole system on one person, and his substitution would be quite significant. This is especially important as educational activities involve long-term service delivery. Consumers of educational services need guarantees of stable governance.

The expert panel positively evaluates the efforts to ensure an environment of justice in YGU and to uphold ethical standards but notes the lack of mechanisms ensuring the maintenance of ethical standards, in particular the principles of collegiality and autonomy.

The YGU governance system currently provides the opportunity for rapid decision-making and other management functions, but the lack of mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of the governance system does not provide an objective picture of the real needs of the governance system, thus failing to lead to more effective improvements.

In the governance system, the participation of internal stakeholders is formally ensured through their involvement in the Scientific Council; however, the motivation of the stakeholders (especially students) to actively participate in the management process is low. Instead, passive means of governance prevail, such as participation in meetings and polls. In such cases, there is a risk of inconsistency between the decisions made and the “opinions of the stakeholders”.

Although the documents contain regulations for the implementation of the current planning in accordance with the strategic plan, they have not yet been implemented, and the strategic plan does not serve as a basis for the daily activities of employees. At the strategic level, the changes do not affect the current activities, as there are no consistent mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of the plans.

In YGU, the correlation between studies and the decisions made is quite weak. Most studies do not turn into decisions, and most decisions are not based on complex studies. As a result, decisions are largely either intuitive, or based on incomplete data obtained through non-formal mechanisms. Accordingly, the effectiveness of the decisions made is endangered. In case of unilateral governance, the mentioned danger is higher: on the one hand, the lack of objective information increases the risk of subjective management, on the other hand, in case of subjective management, obtaining objective information can be viewed as an insignificant process, as the information is more unlikely not to have been used.

Systematic and regular evaluation of policies and procedures is not carried out at YGU, as a result of which it does not improve or else changes based on intuition and the particular situation.

As the university is still taking the first steps in introducing information collection and analysis mechanisms, it is important to implement the evaluation of the effectiveness of these mechanisms so that the university can avoid wasting efforts on inefficient methods.

Although YGU uses some mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of publications, they do not become the basis for decision-making on future publications. Moreover, the published information should not be considered as a publication of quantitative and qualitative information on the quality of Academic Programs and qualification awards. In such cases, the main benefit (the recipient's objective response) of publishing information may be completely jeopardized.

Summary: The expert panel states that the inconsistencies of the university governance system may jeopardize the implementation of the mission and goals, given the lack of collegiality and autonomy in the governance system, the threat to the stability of governance, the lack of evaluation of the effectiveness of the governance system, the passive involvement of students in governance processes, the interruption between the development strategy and current planning, the

lack of research to support objective information; the subjective nature of the decisions, the lack of evaluation of the effectiveness of policies and procedures, and the inconsistencies in the information management system.

Conclusion: The compliance of institutional capacities of YGU to the requirements of Criterion 2 is **unsatisfactory**.

III. ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

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

Findings

3.1 The academic programs are in line with Institution's mission, they correspond to the state academic standards and are thoroughly described according to the intended learning outcomes of the qualification awarded.

Yerevan Gladzor University implements academic Programs at the Bachelor, Master and Post-Graduate levels, full-time and part-time, in the spheres of socio-economics, social sciences, and humanities (law, international relations and other humanities).

YGU implements academic Programs on the 6th (bachelor), 7th (bachelor) and 8th (post-graduate) levels of the NQF. Moreover, with the purpose conforming the outcomes of the academic Programs with the 6th and 7th levels of the NQF, YGU has tried to define the outcomes by developing corresponding matrices.

In accordance with the YGU mission, the educational institution offers quality academic programs, ensuring the formation of specialists and exemplary citizens of the republic who possess professional in-depth theoretical and practical knowledge, skills and abilities which correspond to the national and European standards and requirements of the labor market, who are many-sided and are guided by the national state mentality and universal values.

The format of the introduced course programs contains components of knowledge, skills and abilities; however, the formulations of a skill and ability are not clearly differentiated. This is further evidenced with a list of recommendations, with an absence of requirements for individual works. It became clear, as a result of the expert visit and examination of the documents, that individual works are not compulsory for all courses, have a referential nature, do not involve student's own research or promote acquisition of the course learning outcomes.

As a result of the previous accreditation, a Policy for YGU AP Development and Approval and a Methodological Guide for the Development of Academic Programs were elaborated. There are academic programs in "Law" and "Finance" (Bachelor's and Master's degree). However, the correspondence of the APs with YGU mission is not clearly visible, since there are no studies of the

necessity of the newly introduced APs, economic justification, or determination of the demand for graduates in the labor market.

The study of the academic programs in “Finance” and “Law” (Bachelor’s and Master’s programs) showed that the difference between the learning outcomes of the Bachelor’s and Master’s APs is not clearly visible (in particular, there are repetitions in the learning outcomes of the Bachelor’s and Master’s APs in “Law” such as in Bachelor’s A3 – Master’s A4, Bachelor’s B2 – Master’s B2, Bachelor’s C7, C9 – Master’s C5, C6), not all the learning outcomes are measurable (such as Bachelor’s C1 – “Is able to continue studies on the second level of higher education in Law”, Bachelor’s C7 and Master’s C6 – “Can responsibly execute his functions as a lawyer, following the rules of ethics” It also became clear, as a result of the meetings held during the expert visit and lesson observations carried out by the expert group, that no evaluation of the efficiency of acquisition of the intended learning outcomes had been conducted in case of distance learning.

Taking into consideration the recommendations provided as a result of the previous accreditation, YGU developed and introduced a Guide on Graduation Works Completion and Defense Organization. The examination of the documents and meetings with the stakeholders showed that there is no essential difference, but for the volume, between the requirements for the Bachelor’s and Master’s graduation papers, the time period for the approval of topics and scientific supervisors is not clearly regulated, and no proper monitoring of the process of the completion of the Master’s theses and graduation papers is conducted by the Chair. According to the Institution’s self-analysis, the inclusion of elective courses in the curricula has a big role in the acquisition and evaluation of the APs learning outcomes, with the purpose of which the “Procedure for Selecting Elective Courses” and the “Procedure for Selecting Optional Courses” have been developed; however there was no list of Optional courses in the APs, and no elective courses are provided for the Master’s degree programs.

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

Based on the recommendations of the previous accreditation, YGU developed a “Policy and Procedure for a Course Description Design, Approval and Review”. The course programs include not only the goal, objectives and outcomes of a course but also the teaching and learning methods.

Examination of the academic programs shows that, for the acquisition of in-depth professional theoretical knowledge, lectures and seminars are used at the University. Lesson observations carried out during the expert visit permit the observers to state that traditional teacher-centered approaches prevailed during the classes, and very few classes were conducted using interactive distance learning. It became evident during the lesson observations that the applied methods were mainly aimed at acquiring knowledge and proficiency. Extracurricular or in-class assignments and works, aiming at the formation of professional abilities and skills, are not clearly defined. It became clear during the expert visit that, in case of some courses in “Law”, the University has realized the problem and plans to start applying more interactive methods.

The teaching and learning methods reflected in the APs are not varied; identical methods are mentioned for structural components A (Professional knowledge and proficiency), B (Practical professional abilities and skills), and C (General abilities).

It became clear during the discussion with the teaching staff and students that the choice of methods is left with the lecturers; methods may change, depending on a classroom, while students may also make suggestions as related to the choice of the methods.

Taking into consideration the recommendations provided as a result of the previous accreditation, guides for “Graduation Works Completion and Defense” and “Master Theses Completion and Defense” were designed. It follows from the Institution’s self-analysis that graduation works are planned to be carried out on a mandatory basis from the 2020-2021 academic year. It became clear as a result of the examination of the lists of graduation works and Master theses submitted for the expert evaluation, as well as discussions with the teaching staff and students during the expert visit that the topics are suggested by the Chair; however, the students also have the right to decide on their research topics themselves.

According to the Institution’s self-analysis, with the purpose to improve the policy for the choice of teaching and learning methods in accordance with the intended learning outcomes of YGU AP, a “Procedure for the Selection and Evaluation of Teaching and Learning Methods Corresponding to the Learning Outcomes” was developed. The examination of the programs mentioned by the expert group showed that the methods are repeated both in the AP and course programs without stressing the connection of the taught courses with the learning outcomes of a specific AP.

The Institution’s self-analysis proves that surveys among the students as well as conducting and evaluating lesson observations are important means for the evaluation of the teaching and learning methods. However, there are no visible examples of changes made on this basis in the submitted documents.

During the expert meetings, the stakeholders mentioned that the results of these surveys do not always objectively reflect the answers to the raised questions.

3.3 The Institution has policy on students’ assessment according to the learning outcomes and promotes academic integrity.

At YGU, student assessment is carried out with a Credit system in accordance with the “Regulation for the Assessment of Teaching and Students’ Knowledge and Abilities”.

In the AP specifications, an attempt has been made to conform the assessment methods with the learning outcomes. As is mentioned above, the assessment methods are the same here, too, as they are repeated for all the learning outcomes in the structural components A (Professional knowledge and proficiency - for example, a final test/exam, speech, submission of an individual work, discussion, or moot court), B (Practical professional abilities and skills - for example, an oral and written check-up of the studied material, final test/exam, delivery of a speech in front of an audience, preparation of a research/suggestion, introduction of a group/individual work, or moot court), or C (General abilities - for example, a final test/exam, delivery of a speech in front of an audience, preparation of a

research/suggestion, introduction of a group/individual work, discussion/debate, or moot court). The methods are listed with a logical connection with the learning outcomes. The methods are mainly aimed at the assessment of knowledge, sometimes, skills and abilities.

Both in Bachelor's and Master's programs, a 100-point grading scale is used. At YGU, the grading system is introduced in the following way: 1. evaluation of a course that involves completion of an individual work and ends up with an exam based on the following criteria – attendance, participation, exam, individual work; 2. evaluation of a course that does not involve completion of an individual work and ends up with an exam based on the following criteria – attendance, participation, exam; 3. a course that does not involve a final assessment has got the following assessment criteria: attendance, participation, test. Maximum points are set for each criterion. The assessment system proves that completion of an individual work is not compulsory for all the courses.

The lesson observations, discussions with the teaching staff, and examination of course programs carried out during the expert visit showed that mainly methods for assessment of knowledge are used in the teaching-learning process.

According to the Institution's self-analysis, testing and assessment of students' retained knowledge are important for the formation of the learning outcomes as defined in the AP. For this purpose, a "Procedure for Organizing and Conducting Testing of Students' Retained Knowledge" has been developed, which is to be applied starting from the academic year 2020-2021. However, examination of the documents submitted for the accreditation shows that there are no results of an analysis justifying the necessity of adopting such a procedure.

Following the recommendations mentioned in the expert report of the previous accreditation the Institution has developed a "Procedure for Organizing and Conducting Knowledge Assessment, Summarizing and Appealing Results, Retakes". A "Procedure for the Prohibition of Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism" has also been developed. Moreover, a "Guide for the Completion and Defense of Graduation Works" and a "Guide for the Completion and Defense of Master Theses" have been developed. The examination of the above-mentioned documents allows to state that there are no assessment criteria or criteria for grades, for the graduation works, while assessment criteria for the Master theses are indicated. However, their content is not clarified, which would allow more objective grading. Discussions with students held during the expert meetings showed that students' awareness of the above-mentioned guides is not equal.

Internships play an important role in the acquisition of the learning outcomes by students. Marking the importance of strengthening the connection between the University and employers, ensuring the involvement of the employers in the educational processes and, consequently, developing students' practical skills and taking into consideration the recommendations of the previous accreditation, the "Procedure for the Organization and Assessment of Internships" has been reviewed. It was revealed during the expert meetings with the internal stakeholders that the above-mentioned procedure was reviewed based on students' inability to put into practice their theoretical knowledge; consequently, the time period for internships has been increased, starting from the third year.

At YGU, a “Regulation for the Organization, Conduct and Assessment of Students’ Pre-Graduation and Scientific-Research Internships” has been developed. The examination of the documents and discussions held during the expert visit showed that the learning outcomes of the Bachelor’s and Master’s programs do not differ. The Institution realizes that this problem has not been entirely solved, and the university has plans to undertake steps for the solution of this problem. The internship is assessed on a 100-point scale: attendance 15 points, grade of the head of the place of the internship 20 points, grade of the supervisor appointed by the Chair 20 points, defense of a report 45 points. According to the above-mentioned Regulation, assessment of internships is based on the skills and abilities acquired by students during the internship.

3.4 The programs of the Institution are contextually coherent with other relevant programs and promote mobility of students and staff.

YGU has developed a “Policy and Procedure for Benchmarking”. In the self-analysis, the Institution states that, by the means of a grant program for the optimization of the specialty in “Law”, a study of international practices related to academic programs in “Finance” and “Law” as well as benchmarking was conducted. At the University, the academic programs in “Finance” and “Law” have been reviewed in accordance with the RA Legislation, internal normative documents of the University, results of benchmarking, studies of stakeholder needs, and employer evaluations and suggestions. Requirements for vacant positions on employment websites have also been studied. Nevertheless, it became clear during the expert meetings with different groups that the above-mentioned studies had not been thoroughly conducted, as well as that employers and other stakeholders had not been actively involved in this process. Following the recommendations on Benchmarking provided during the previous accreditation, a study of practices, for example, of Frankfurt J. W. Goethe University has been carried out. As a result of discussions, it was revealed that there are no criteria for selecting universities for benchmarking, as well as no appropriate analysis of the necessity for the implementation of the practices as a result of benchmarking, and no actual changes.

The discussions held during the expert meetings showed that the Institution realizes the issue and plans to make a series of changes based on the results of benchmarking. In accordance with the Institution’s self-analysis, the intended learning outcomes of the APs aim, first of all, at ensuring thorough professional readiness of a future specialist, and formation of a competitive specialist at the labor market.

A study of the practices of the University of Amsterdam in the field of “Finance” has been carried out. A report was prepared and suggestions related to the implementation of the practices were made. Moreover, in 2017, a study was conducted at the Kutafin Moscow State Law University, Faculty of Law of Lomonosov State University, in 2018, benchmarking was conducted at the Faculty of Law of FRG Goethe University, at the University of Mainz, in 2018 and 2019, at the Faculties of Finance and Management of G. V. Plekhanov Russian University of Economics, in 2019 at the Jan Amos Komenski University in Leshno, Poland. Nonetheless, there are no evidenced examples of changes and improvements.

The discussions held during the expert visit indicated that the Institution plans to expand and strengthen cooperation; in particular, they want to provide programs granting a double diploma.

As a result of the examination of the documents and meetings with the stakeholders, it became clear that the mobility of lecturers is very low, but for the cooperation with G.V. Plekhanov University, in scope of which, starting from 2018, mutual visits (such as mutual lectures) have been paid by the lecturers and employees of these two universities.

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

In accordance with the Institution's self-analysis, at YGU the academic programs in "Finance" and "Law" have been reviewed on the basis of the RA Legislation, internal normative documents of the University, results of benchmarking, studies of stakeholder needs, and employer evaluations and suggestions. Requirements for vacant positions on employment websites have also been studied. However, the examination of the submitted documents indicates that there are no changes made or results of analyses evidencing their necessity.

Taking into consideration the recommendations of the previous accreditation provided with the purpose of efficiently carry out YGU APs' monitoring and assessment, the following documents have been developed: "Policy and Procedures for AP Monitoring and Review", "AP Assessment Sheet", "Policy and Procedures for Conducting Surveys", and "Survey Methodology" which serve as a basis for relevant processes. The examination of the submitted documents and meetings with different stakeholders prove that the Institution carries out program efficiency assessments on the basis of the following methods and sources: student surveys, employers' opinions, and opinions of Chairmen of the final attestation commission; nonetheless, examples of improvement are few. At the same time, the outlined mechanisms are not systematic and relate to separate components of an AP.

Considerations. The expert group appreciates that, after the previous accreditation, certain improvements related to APs were made. Nonetheless, no mechanism ensuring the correspondence of the provided APs with the mission of the University is applied. There is no justification of the necessity of APs, results of the analyses aiming at revealing needs of the labor market, or application of methods promoting formation of skills and abilities, which endangers the training of specialists in accordance with the learning outcomes.

It is appreciated that at YGU a "Policy for APs Monitoring and Approval, a Methodological Guide on Academic Programs Development", which served as a basis for the design of the APs provided by the Institution, has been developed. The study of the academic programs (Bachelor's and Master's programs) in "Finance" and "Law" showed that the differences between the learning outcomes of Bachelor's and Master's APs are not clearly visible, definitions are general, which does not allow understanding of what is the difference between a Bachelor and a Master student prepared by the Institution. The absence of the difference between the present definitions of the learning outcomes and their generality may lead to an improper perception of continuing education and wrong perceptions of a Bachelor's and Master's competencies by external stakeholders. Moreover, the weak connection

between AP elective courses, internships, learning outcomes of graduation works and Master theses with the AP learning outcomes, as well as the absence of a substantial difference between the requirements for graduation works and Master theses, do not allow for implementation of all the components of an AP, which may hinder training of quality specialists.

The Institution must undertake steps to redefine AP learning outcomes (taking into account distance learning), aligning them with the NQF as well as steps related to the measurability of learning outcomes clarifying difference between Bachelor's and Master's APs learning outcomes.

The expert group finds that completion of Bachelor's and Master's individual and research works is very poor, individual works are of a referential nature, do not contain student's own research, which would promote fulfillment of the research requirement set in the NQF and development of research skills (especially by Master students). At the same time, students' research initiative is on at a very low level, which may have a negative influence on the completion of such assignments and formation of students' responsibility. The above-mentioned proves that the recommendations provided in the report of the previous accreditation have not been fully implemented by the Institution.

It is appreciated that, on the basis of the recommendations provided as a result of the previous accreditation, YGU developed a "Policy and Procedure for a Course Description Design, Approval and Review". Nevertheless, the applied methods were mainly aimed at the acquisition of knowledge and proficiency; practical, group and research methods for the acquisition of learning outcomes were few both in course descriptions and in teaching (in case of distance learning). This approach may endanger formation of professional abilities and skills by the students.

It became clear during the expert visit that student-centered methods are applied in a limited way. The Institution realizes the necessity of using new approaches to optimize teaching and learning methods. In this regard, the Institution plans to implement the practices of Frankfurt J. W. Goethe University; however, there is no relevant analysis of the necessity to implement these practices.

Assessment methods are aimed at testing mainly knowledge, sometimes, skills and abilities. YGU assessment system proves that individual works are not compulsory for all the courses, which may devalue, among students, the importance of completing individual works, especially, in case of distance learning, which may be aimed at the formation of skills and abilities, as well as hinder the acquisition of a course learning outcomes, raising the level of research, which is a serious problem with the APs implemented at YGU. Moreover, the absence of assessment criteria for graduation works and ambiguity of assessment criteria for Master theses may endanger objectivity of grades. At YGU, assessment of internships is based on the skills and abilities developed during the internship, however, the factors serving as a basis for the assessment of the internship are not measurable (in particular, the quality and content of reports prepared by students, as well as their independence and activity), which may endanger testing the formation of the internship learning outcomes.

It is appreciated that YGU developed a "Policy and Procedure for Benchmarking"; however the frequency is not fixed, there are no criteria for selecting universities for benchmarking, relevant analyses of the necessity to implement the practices due to benchmarking, or examples of actual

content changes. The above-mentioned proves that the Institution did not give importance to benchmarking in the process of AP review.

The discussions held during the expert visit showed that the Institution plans to expand and strengthen cooperation. They want to provide programs granting a double diploma.

The “YGU Policy for the Monitoring and Review of AP” is of a formal nature, since the monitoring, review and assessment mechanisms do not allow all the needs of the stakeholders to be revealed, or ensure objectivity of data. The absence of a comparative analysis, or analyses of needs identification of internal and external stakeholders as well as the labor market may endanger the continuing improvement of the quality of APs.

Summary. Taking into account that YGU, based on the recommendations of the previous accreditation, reviewed its APs, developed a “Policy for APs Design and Approval”, developed and implemented a Guide for the Completion of Graduation Works and Defense Organization, with the purpose of promoting students’ research abilities and skills, as well as procedures for choosing selective and optional courses, an attempt was made in the AP specifications to conform the assessment method with the learning outcomes, and Chair discussions and surveys among stakeholders are conducted with the purpose of academic programs monitoring, the expert group finds that YGU meets the requirements of Criterion 3.

Conclusion. The compliance of YGU institutional capacity with the requirements of Criterion 3 is evaluated as **satisfactory**.

IV. STUDENTS

CRITERION. The Institution provides relevant student support services ensuring the efficiency of the learning environment.

Findings

4.1 The Institution has policies and procedures for assessing student educational needs.

On the basis of the previous report, the Institution has reviewed its “Policy for Students’ Recruitment, Selection and Admission”, and improved it in the “Applicant Recruitment Policy” document.

The University has certain mechanisms for students’ recruitment, selection and admission. The Institution provided free preparatory courses, but for this, the school and college in the Gladzor educational complex also contribute to students’ flow to the university. One of the events organized by Gladzor University is the “Days of Open Doors” during which study visits are paid to the University by pupils and students. The University itself pays visits to different general education schools and specialized colleges and has cooperation agreements with some of them. The website of the University has an Applicant section where all the needed information about admission is provided. PR tools are also applied; the University has prepared video ads about itself which are broadcast on radio and television. The University provides as well Master’s programs in two specialties. At the University, admission to Bachelor’s program is carried out in accordance with the procedure for “Admission to RA

State and Non-State Higher Educational Institutions (according to the Bachelor's Academic Program)” and “Procedure for Admission to Bachelor’s Academic Program”. Admission to a full time Bachelor’s academic program is carried out as a result of joint exams, and, in case of distance learning, the Institution itself organizes and carries out admission exams and interviews. Admission to a Master’s program is regulated by the “Regulation for Admission to Master’s Program”, in accordance with which an admission board is formed under the rector’s chairmanship, course examination boards are formed, and the admission is carried out through an interview on a course related to the chosen specialty.

Despite all the above-mentioned events, the number of applicants and students has had a downturn trend for the period 2014-2018, both for Bachelor’s and Master’s academic programs. The documents and expert visit serve as a basis to state that the efficiency evaluation and review mechanisms for the above-mentioned events aimed at students’ recruitment and admission are not regularly applied. However, in 2018-2020, the number of students admitted to YGU has been increasing, mainly due to those admitted to newly opened specialties.⁵

Being a private university, the Institution ensures its development by means of students’ tuition fees, which creates a certain dependence and risk related to students’ number. Based on this, there are basically no admission barriers; the approach of the Institution to the number-quality ratio of students is not set as well.

One of the events, promoting admission and based on the current circumstances, is the implementation of distance learning in two specialties, the works in the direction of which are in progress.

According to the data provided by the Institution for the period 2014-2018, the inflow-outflow ratio of students is not negative. The Institution admits students from other RA state and non-state universities, while the outflow is to the other RA universities as well as abroad.

4.2 The Institution has a policy and procedures for revealing students’ academic needs.

The identification and meeting of students’ needs, as consumers of academic services and the Institution’s immediate stakeholders, is an important pre-condition for future recruitment of applicants. Gladzor University, on the basis of the recommendations for identifying and meeting students’ needs provided in the expert report of the previous accreditation process, carried out a number of events. Needs identification is conducted in a number of ways, in particular, through surveys among students, meetings and discussions, an e-questionnaire on the website, and a suggestion box placed in the Institution.

The surveys are conducted by the Quality assurance department. Although it was mentioned in the self-analysis that the surveys are conducted through a set methodology and regularity, the submitted documents and discussions held during the visit made it clear that the surveys are not conducted regularly, and need methodological improvements. Results obtained from surveys are analyzed if needed, as there is no set frequency for conducting analyses. On the basis of the needs

⁵ This sentence was added following the discussion held between the panel experts and the YGU Rector.

identified by students, specialized literature was updated, an opportunity for internships was given in the 3rd year as well. Nevertheless, there is a lack of clarity on the future steps related to the identified problems, so that the process of solution of the identified issues is not evident. It must also be mentioned that, in general, there is a lack of students' involvement and interest in the identification process of academic needs.

According to the self-analysis, meetings-discussions are held with a fixed schedule available to students. The students also have meetings-discussions with the Rector and Vice-Rectors. Although these meetings were mentioned during the visit, no problems revealed during them and subjected to certain processes were mentioned.

It became clear during the meetings that students' participation in Chair meetings is not ensured.

During the expert visit, the e-questionnaire did not work. No facts related to the efficiency of this mechanism were mentioned. The suggestion box was not mentioned during the discussions and no example of issues/suggestions raised in this way was brought up.

As is stated in the self-analysis, being a small institution gives students an opportunity to individually introduce their problems to the responsible officers.

It is stated in the self-analysis that a working group was formed by the Rector's order, which involves lecturers, administrative workers and students who discuss problems and suggest relevant solutions. No examples of work regarding certain problems conducted by the working group were found either in the documents or during the discussions held during the visit.

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

The description, aims and objectives of the extra-curricular activities and advising services provided by Gladzor University are fixed in a document of the same name. The Chairs of the Institution provide consultations related to the specialty, and formation of practical skills and other issues connected with courses. A schedule for consultations is designed by the Chairs. The students were informed about this schedule, although they stated that lecturers provide such consultations when needed, without waiting for the scheduled date. Nevertheless, it became clear as a result of a survey conducted by the Institution that the level of awareness of the consultations among the students was not that high – 68%.

A "Regulation for Academic Advisors' Activities" has been developed, which is not yet in use. These consultations are planned to be included in lecturers' workloads.

A consultation for each course is also provided before exams, including final exams. It became clear during the visit that the lecturers are quite responsive, providing individual consultations when needed.

In Master's programs, separate events for students with a different specialty background are not planned, although certain assistance on an individual level is provided by the lecturers. Work with

students skipping classes for different reasons or with a low level of achievement is not institutionalized, but is left on an individual level of communication with the lecturers.

Another event contributing to students' effective learning is the meetings-discussions organized by the Career Center, which are aimed at professional orientation, introduction of labor market demands, and increase of students' competitiveness.

4.4 The Institution has set regulation and schedule for students to receive additional support and guidance from the administrative staff.

With the purpose of regulating the support provided to students, a "Package for Student Support" has been designed by the Institution.

There are procedures and a schedule for addressing the University governance bodies and heads of structural subdivisions. On the basis of the observation made in the previous report, a "Procedure for Discussion of Students' Applications, Complaints and Suggestions" has been developed.

The surveys conducted by the Institution show that students are satisfied with the administrative staff's activities. Although there is a set schedule for addressing the officers, it became clear during the visit that students address a relevant administrative subdivision when needed.

It became clear during the expert visit that, despite the above-mentioned procedures that have to some extent a formal nature, the students are free to turn to the head of a relevant subdivision at any moment. The Rector is available to raise any issue. The University states that there was no demand in this regard made by students for a strict regulation of the process.

Although students do not always turn to a relevant body in case of a certain issue, they receive the needed guidance. In case of issues related to the teaching and learning process, students more often turn to the Education department and lecturers.

On the basis of the recommendations provided in the expert report of the previous accreditation, the "Student Guide" has been amended and published on the website.

4.5 The Institution has student career support services.

The Institution organizes a number of events supporting students' careers. At Gladzor University, career support services are regulated by the Career Center, which has a set Regulation and an Annual Action Plan.

A Career Guide has been developed by the Center, where a number of subtleties connected with CV and motivation letter writing and participating in interviews are found. It became clear during the visit that the Center holds meetings with students to share such skills.

The Career Center has also developed a "Concept of Professional Orientation". Some of the students stated that in the first year a meeting-discussion about such a topic had been held by the Career Center.

The Center carries out works to ensure cooperation and communication between the University and employers. For this purpose, they target especially those of their alumni who reached

success in their professional fields. The latter deliver speeches, share their experience, and contribute to student motivation.

The establishment of an Alumni Club, which is planned to open on the occasion of the University's jubilee, aims at strengthening the connection with graduates. The latter was not visible for the expert group members. However, some of the graduates stated that they regularly receive information about vacant job positions from the Career Center.

Information about vacant job positions in employer organizations is made available to the students by the Center through the website, Facebook page and other means. However, it became clear during the meetings that a very small part of the students became employed as a result of the Career Center's mediation. According to the self-analysis, for the purpose of student career support, a "Career Days" event has been organized since 2019; however, it became clear during the expert visit that the scope of stakeholders' participation in these events is not yet large.

The preparatory internship, which are taken in partner organizations of the University, form bases for gaining experience and career advancement. But for this and to obtain practical skills, there are a legal clinic, forensic center, audiovisual classroom ,and courtroom at the University, which also create opportunities for student professional advancement.

For this purpose, the Institution cooperates as well with employers and involves them as lecturers. Another indirect action taken by Gladzor University for student career support is involvement of employers in the review of academic programs. However, the expert visit showed that, in this regard, the cooperation with the employers is based on individual situations.

Apart from all these events, a survey conducted by the Institution shows that only 45% of the students is aware of the career support services.

4.6 The Institution promotes student involvement in its research activities.

Gladzor University defined increase of involvement of the teaching staff and students in research activities as a strategic goal. Mainly Master's and postgraduate students carry out scientific-research activities. According to the self-analysis, final works are planned to be made compulsory for high-performing students, starting from this academic year. It became clear that, as of December, topics for final works and supervisors had not yet been fixed for the students. The "Guide for the Completion and Defense of Final Works" is being reviewed; there is also a guide for writing a Master thesis at the University. Master students write final theses; however, it became clear as a result of discussions held during the visit that, although there was one semester left until the end of the academic year, some students still had uncertainties related to the thesis.

Since 2005, there has been a Department for Post-Graduate Studies at the University, which has 40 researchers. Researchers and Master students are more involved in Institution's scientific sessions and collections of scientific articles.

Taking into consideration the observations made in the expert report of the previous accreditation, the works of the University SSS has been regulated through development of a "SSS Terms of Reference". The President of the Society is appointed by the Rector, which, in essence, limits the

independence and autonomy of the student structure. SSS organizes scientific sessions. The list of the topics of the introduced reports, which was submitted to the expert group, forms a basis to state that very general and superficial themes were chosen for the works; often, the topics of the reports had no connection with the specialty and there were no set criteria for report presentation.

The Chairs of the University have a scientific-research orientation, in accordance with which, scientific seminars involving postgraduate, Master and Bachelor students are held. Students do not participate in the research programs of the Chairs. In this regard, a “Regulation for Organizing Joint Research by Lecturers and Students” has been developed. Joint research has not yet been planned and conducted. There is no connection between the Chairs and SSS.

Introduction of the courses “Scientific Research Methodology” in Master’s programs and “Research Activity” in Bachelor’s programs by the Institution aim at development of research skills.

The Forensic training center of the University has got a necessary resource base for conducting research in this field. One of the postgraduate students has already began a research project in the center. Nevertheless, the examination of the documents and visit discussions made it clear that the capacity of the center in regard of students’ research skills formation and development is not being fully used by the University.

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

According to the self-analysis of Gladzor University, the main body for student rights protection is the SC of the Institution. The structure has got a procedure and committees. The expert visit and internal surveys conducted by the Institution show that the structure is passive and is not perceived by the students as a structure to raise their needs and protect their rights. The students mainly turn to the Rector, Head of the Education department and Chairs for the protection of their rights. The President of the SC is chosen by the Rector. The SC does not have a separate budget and turns to the Rectorate in case of need of financial means. The SC members are passive in the governance bodies, too, and no issues raised by them were mentioned. The students are not motivated to join the structure. The structure is mostly engaged with event organization.

According to the self-analysis, the Chairs and Quality Assurance Department are auxiliary bodies for rights protection. However, it became clear as a result of the expertise available that the role of these bodies in the issue of student rights protection is bigger than that of the SC. The Rector organizes receptions where issues of concern are raised. Outside of the set reception hours, the Rector is easily available and responsive, too. Certain communication and cooperation between the Student Council and Quality Center were visible. The Quality Center organizes discussions and gathers evaluations of the provided services.

There is information about student rights and responsibilities in the contract signed with each freshman student, however it limits itself to a list of the University responsibilities with no clarification and mechanisms for the protection of rights. Student rights and responsibilities are defined in the “Student Guide and Academic Programs Directory” available on the website. The meetings made it clear that some of the students are unaware of the document; the level of awareness is not high.

There is a “Procedure for the Discussion of Students’ Applications and Suggestions”. Requests for deferment of the tuition fee have been raised, which have been granted.

4.8 The Institution has set mechanisms for the evaluating and ensuring the quality of educational, consultancy and other services provided to students.

In the scope of the program “Implementation of a University Quality Assurance System and Its Further Improvement”, on the basis of the observations made by the expert group, the Institution has, to some extent, regulated the mechanisms ensuring students’ involvement in the evaluation of the provided services. The evaluation of the provided services is conducted through surveys and discussions, which are regulated by the Quality Center. The examination of the documents and meetings held during the visit showed that the results of the surveys are not evident and are analyzed when needed. Among the issues raised by the students, the issue of replenishing the library has been solved, internships have been planned to now start from the 3rd year. However, in general, the future influence of the surveys is not evident. There are no indicators for the evaluation of survey’s efficiency.

The Institution gathers information on graduates’ employment. The meetings held during the expert visit made it clear that communication with the graduates is mostly on a personal level with the administrative staff.

According to the self-analysis, students’ participation in Chair meetings and SC meetings is an evaluation mechanism, too. The meetings showed that participation in Chair meetings is rare. No examples of problems or suggestions raised by the students involved in the SC have been mentioned, either.

Although according to the data of the analysis conducted in 2019, 30% of students consider that their opinion does not influence decision-making in the Institution, the visit showed that students, in general, are satisfied with the education provided to them.

Considerations. As a result of the examination of the documents submitted to the expert group and data obtained during the expert visit, it can be stated that the Institution, in general, supports students in ensuring the efficiency of the learning environment. The students are mostly satisfied with the education provided to them by the Institution. However, in recent years, the number of students has had a downturn trend, which can be risky for the Institution from a financial perspective. Yerevan Gladzor University, being a private university, derives its main financial means from student tuition fees, thus there is a necessity for evaluation and prevention of this risk. Although the University applies a number of mechanisms for student recruitment, it must be noted that their application has not contributed to the increase of admission rates. The expert group finds that there is a need to undertake actions to evaluate the efficiency of these mechanisms and find a target audience.

Although the absence of admission barriers for students makes education at the University easily available and ensures the necessary number of students, the University’s policy for the ratio between number and quality is not clear.

The expert group appreciates that there are a number of mechanisms for revealing students’ needs, including surveys, meetings and discussions. At the same time, the periodicity of the application

of these mechanisms and analysis of results was not visible to the group. To form a more accurate picture, the survey methodology needs improvement.

It is encouraging that such needs raised by students as library replenishment, increase of internship and deferment of tuition fees have been accordingly satisfied by the Institution. However, it must be stated that students are not active and consistent in the process of needs identification and have a lack of motivation to participate.

Students' passivity is also noticed in student structures such as SC and SSS. The Student Council is not perceived as a structure for the protection of students' rights, and the connection between the latter and the students is weak. The body introducing students' rights and needs is primarily the administrative staff.

Student involvement in research works is low. It is appreciated that, on the basis of the recommendations provided in the expert report of the previous accreditation, a "SSS Regulation" has been developed and scientific sessions are being held. Nonetheless, general topics of students' reports and the absence of presentation criteria for these may put their scientificity at risk. The connection between the Chairs and SSS is weak, and students are almost not involved in research works.

The Presidents of the SC and SSS are appointed by the Rector, which, in the expert group's opinion, may restrict the activities of the structures and, in essence, contradict their self-governing function. The structures need clarification of their roles.

The expert group considers the "Regulation for Conducting Joint Scientific-Research Works by Lecturers and Students" a beginning of a good approach, hoping that in the near future it will serve as a basis for joint research. The introduction of the courses "Scientific Research Methodology" in Master's programs and "Research Activity" in Bachelor's programs are encouraged as well, in regard to research development. Making completion of final works by high-performing students compulsory is also appreciated, although, in this regard, the process has not been fully implemented and needs proper execution. At some Faculties, the introduction of academic consultations, as part of making final works compulsory, is quite appreciated.

The legal clinic and forensic center of the Institution, in addition to providing students with practical knowledge, greatly increase the research capacity of Gladzor. However, the documents and meetings made it clear that the centers are not fully used for research.

The establishment of an Education bank, with the purpose of increasing the research element for the specialty in Finance, is appreciated. It will provide students both with an environment for practice and a unique research center for conducting sectoral research.

The Institution provides additional educational and consulting services, including consultations over development of professional and practical skills and other issues related to courses, for which a schedule has been designed. In this regard, lecturers are available out of the scheduled hours, and consultations are also provided before exams. The expert group finds the introduction of academic consultations in the context of making final works compulsory for some students quite important. Taking into consideration the circumstance that a large number of students with different

educational backgrounds apply for the Master's programs of Gladzor University, conducting additional classes for them will ease the existing difficulties for these students.

Despite the various events organized and mechanisms for student career support applied by the Career Center, such as developed concepts and guides, the involvement of the Center in finding employment in the labor market for the graduates of Gladzor University is not that evident. Internship opportunities in partner institutions of the University is an important mechanism in this regard. Moreover, several specialists from the practical sector teach at the University, which creates additional opportunities for students.

It became clear during the visit that, despite the regulatory documents for addressing the administrative supporting staff, communication is rather personal; the students are free to turn to their lecturers and administrative officers with any question. The Rector is easily available in this regard. Although very often problems are raised by individuals affecting a small number of students, and receive an immediate solution, the individual, non-collective approach to issues in some cases may endanger seeing the whole picture.

In general, the large number of unsystematized documents addressed to students proves that they are not developed with a purpose of being fully introduced. Most of the students are not aware of most of the documented mechanisms.

Summary. Taking into account that there are mechanisms for student recruitment, selection and admission at the University, the University has made certain improvements based on the recommendations provided in the expert report of the previous accreditation, students do not have complaints and are satisfied with the education provided to them while at the same time there are some mechanisms for student need identification, the administrative and teaching staff are quite responsive, and the University provides students with relevant support for the improvement of the learning environment, the expert group finds that YGU meets the requirements of Criterion 4.

Conclusion. The compliance of YGU institutional capacity with the requirements of Criterion 4 is evaluated as **satisfactory**.

V. FACULTY AND STAFF

CRITERION. The Institution has a highly qualified teaching and supporting staff to accomplish the Institution's mission and to implement the goals set for academic programs.

Findings

5.1 The Institution has policies and procedures promoting recruitment of a highly qualified teaching and supporting staff for the provision of academic programs.

According to the Institution's self-analysis, on the basis of the recommendations given as a result of the previous accreditation, a policy and procedures for the recruitment of teaching staff and supporting staff have been introduced to the University – "Regulation for the Formation and Dismissal of Teaching Staff, Procedure for Administrative and Supporting Staff Selection". The University, in compliance with the set procedure, applies several methods for replenishing the teaching staff:

- 1) announcement of a competition for vacant job positions.
- 2) specialists invited by the management.
- 3) employment of specialists applying to the University management with a job request.

The examination of the documents submitted in the scope of the accreditation showed that the provisions of the above-mentioned regulation related to the competition method are not fully in use. Meetings with Heads of Chairs and teaching staff made it clear that the invitation method is often used, while competition is of secondary nature, since it is announced in cases when there is no possibility to replenish the teaching staff with other methods. Moreover, there are no norms regulating the procedure for holding a full-scale competition, especially establishing the rationale for holding an open or close competition, disallowing any one from applying for a vacancy after the announced competition, and what to do if no one among the applied candidates gets employed or a negative conclusion is provided after discussion of the issue on filling a vacancy at a Chair.

It became clear during the expert visit that in case a vacancy is not filled as a result of a competition, the Institution's management tries to find relevant specialists. The expert meeting with the teaching staff showed that the invited specialists enjoy prestige in their fields and invite students to their workplace.

There are cases of changes in the teaching staff however there are no transparent mechanisms justifying these decisions.

In the Institution, most of the teaching staff has a secondary employment, however, the efficiency of such a decision is neither introduced nor clarified.

The above-mentioned permits the team to state that the Institution has not yet emphasized the importance of planning the teaching staff on the basis of the necessity to ensure AP learning outcomes. Planning has got a short-term nature.

At the University, the issues connected with the employment and dismissal of the teaching and supporting staff are regulated by the RA Legislation on Labor, internal acts of the University, employment contracts and contracts for the provision of paid services entered into with the employers.

5.2 The requirements for qualifications of teaching staff per academic program are comprehensively stated.

According to the Institution's self-analysis, at YGU the requirements for the professional qualities of the teaching staff are defined in the job descriptions of the teaching and administrative staff, where it is stated what a representative of each structural subdivision must know and be able to do, and their rights and responsibilities, in the documents "Regulation for the Formation and Dismissal of "Yerevan Gladzor" University Teaching Staff", "Procedure for the Evaluation of the Teaching Staff's Professional Qualities and Work", and "Regulation for YGU Administrative Staff's, Teaching Staff's and Students' Ethics". The requirements for the teaching staff's professional qualities are also defined in the descriptions of APs, where requirements for the teaching staff's qualifications necessary for ensuring the acquisition of the learning outcomes are introduced. However, examination of the academic programs (Bachelor and Master's) by the expert group showed that the defined requirements

are general (for example, a lecturer must know the procedures and forms for fulfilling the functions stemming from the requirements of Chair Regulation, YGU structure, goals of its activities, normative-legal basis of the field, specialty teaching methodology, etc.; a lecturer must be able to, in accordance with YGU mission and goals, make suggestions relating to YGU and Chair development, design syllabi and curricula, prepare various reports, and conduct research analyses, and possess additional knowledge – principles for establishing interpersonal relations, general negotiation rules, etc., and additional abilities – work on a computer using simple computer programs, communicate, plan and organize works, negotiate and converse with co-workers), and are absolutely the same for all academic programs (Bachelor and Master's), and professional teaching qualities are not specified. Moreover, examination of the submitted documents and meetings with the internal stakeholders allow the team to state that there are no set mechanisms for checking teachers' compliance with the above-mentioned requirements. The Institution states in its self-analysis that the requirements for teachers' professional qualities are subject to review and change, taking into consideration the results of the analyses of the inner and external factors. However, examination of the above-mentioned procedures permits the team to state that there is no evidence of analyses in the submitted documents.

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

The periodic evaluation of the teaching staff is fixed in the “Procedure for the Evaluation of “Yerevan Gladzor” University Teaching Staff's Professional Qualities and Work”, in which evaluation methods are defined (student surveys about teaching quality and efficiency and lesson observations for teaching quality and efficiency). Moreover, a document “Procedure for Rating Evaluation of Teaching Staff's Activity”, in which the process of rating evaluation and then three main components of rating evaluation are described: a) evaluation of the efficiency of lecturers' activities in the defined period; b) evaluation of lecturers and their teaching quality by students; c) evaluation of lecturers by the Chair.

The documents examined by the expert group prove that no evaluation of these procedures is carried out in the Institution. According to the Institution's self-analysis, a new mechanism for salary differentiation and a “Procedure for Academic Extra Payment” (the project is being developed) have been developed with the purpose of improving lecturers' professional qualities and efficiency of evaluation process of their work. According to the documents submitted in scope of the accreditation the following evaluation forms for teaching staff are used at YGU:

1) An annual rating evaluation of the efficiency of the quality of lecturers' activity in the defined time period, where general information about lecturers and data on their educational, educational-methodological and educational-organizational activities, scientific and scientific-organizational activities, and intra-university and extra-university services are provided. The examination of the documents, discussions with the Heads of Chairs and teaching staff prove that information about the above-mentioned performances is provided by lecturers. However, it is not clear how their results are to be analyzed and applied.

2) Evaluation of lecturers and their teaching quality by students, which is carried out only by means of surveys. According to the Institution's self-analysis, the survey results serve as a basis for organizing discussions with the University Rectorate and Heads of Chairs to analyze the formed picture, reveal existing problems and find corresponding solutions. However, there are no documentation of the steps undertaken to solve the identified problems as well as the influence of the surveys on the continuation of lecturers' future activities at YGU.

3) Lecturers' evaluation through lesson observations by Chairs. Examination of the documents related to the Chair activity permits the team to state that there was no schedule for lesson observations in case of distance learning. According to the YGU self-analysis, the results of lesson observations are recorded and discussed with lecturers the in scope of informal meetings at Chairs, which contribute to the improvement of teaching quality.

But for the above-mentioned, no other mechanisms are applied at YGU. The documents submitted for the accreditation prove that no evaluation of the efficiency of procedures relating to teaching staff's evaluation is carried out in the Institution.

5.4 The Institution promotes professional development for the teaching staff in accordance to the needs outlined during regular evaluations (both internal and external).

At YGU, a "Regulation for Implementing the Program of Teaching Staff's Qualification Improvement", a "Policy for Organizing and Conducting Trainings for Teaching Staff and Supporting Staff", and a plan of events for raising the level of foreign languages among the workers have been developed; methodological trainings and master classes are also conducted.

It became clear during the expert visit that the trainings are often conducted on lecturers' individual initiative. In particular, the lecturers needed technical knowledge to organize distance learning more competently, for which purpose corresponding courses were delivered by the Institution. According to the Institution's self-analysis, the restriction of the possibility to organize trainings, especially those related to business trips to other countries and study of practices for the University teaching staff is conditioned by insufficient financial means. The provision of mobility is also conditioned by the University's financial capacity. Limited financial means provided for the programs for teaching staff's professional qualities improvement and reward for performance are mentioned as the only weak side in the SWOT analysis.

The issue of the development of procedures to provide financial and other resources for the teaching staff's advancement and their implementation was mentioned in the expert report of the previous accreditation, too; nonetheless, the University has not yet undertaken steps to solve this problem. Moreover, it must be stated that the formats for conducting trainings at YGU are not sufficiently clarified and there are no analyses of the efficiency of these trainings. The QAC conducts surveys to identify teaching staff's academic needs. This is proven in the submitted documents, however, there is no actual data on the results analyses of the surveys.

5.5 The Institution ensures that there is a permanent staff for the stable provision of the academic programs.

The Institution has developed a “Policy for the Recruitment and Assurance of Sustainability of the Teaching Staff”. According to the introduced documents, at YGU the majority of the teaching staff has got a secondary employment or is paid on an hourly basis, which is a result of, according to the Rector’s clarification, low salaries in the education field. Moreover, as became clear during the expert meetings, there is a large number of new lecturers at different Chairs, while staff changes are often made that are based on the management’s personal connections. That is, there is a high level of turnover which is not based on evaluation. It must be stated that no reasons for dismissal and relevant analyses are provided in the documents.

According to the YGU self-analysis, the University has reviewed the curricula in recent years and ensured the involvement of lecturers with a rich work experience in the practical field as a result of introducing practical courses into curricula at employers’ suggestion, for the purpose of the acquisition of learning outcomes (at the Chair of General Law, 45% of the lecturers are lecturers with practical experience, the latter make 42% at the Chair of General Economics). As a result of reviewing the curricula for the specialties in “Law” and “Finance”, researchers from the practical field have been involved (at the Chair of General Law, 45% of the lecturers are lecturers with practical experience, employers, the latter make up 42% at the Chair of General Economics). This was confirmed during the expert meetings, however, no analyses of the efficiency of the introduced changes were submitted. The University also emphasizes the issue of delivering several courses (more than 3 courses) by one lecturer at the same time is now excluded. Starting from the academic year 2018-2019, an attempt has been made to increase the number of courses taught by one lecturer to a maximum of 3.

The University management has set a tuition fee discount for the workers of the University and their family members, which is a unique stimulus for ensuring staff sustainability.

The decision on development of a “Procedure for Supporting New Families and Encouraging Childbirth” aims at ensuring teaching staff’s sustainability.

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

The University has developed a “Policy for Ensuring Professional Advancement of Teaching Staff” to ensure professional advancement of the teaching staff of Yerevan Gladzor University. However, it became clear during the expert meetings with different stakeholders that the provisions of the above-mentioned policy are not fully implemented. The Institution mainly selects professionally developed lecturers. Moreover, there is no data on the analysis and evaluation of the efficiency of the above-mentioned policy. No set mechanisms for raising and promoting lecturers’ motivation have been introduced to the expert group; moreover, according to the SWOT analysis, the financial means provided for as incentives are limited. The meetings with the teaching staff showed that no concrete steps are undertaken by the University to organize professional trainings.

At YGU, the majority of the teaching staff has got a secondary employment or is paid on an hourly basis and participate in trainings in other places. The University emphasizes the importance of

ensuring scientific and professional requirements and qualities for professional advancement. Thus, in the requirements to move from low to high categories, requirements for defending PhD and Doctor's theses, writing and publishing scientific articles, monographs, lectures, publishing other works, discussed and recommended by a relevant Chair or the Scientific Council, have been introduced.

There is a Department for Post-Graduate Studies at YGU, in scope of which specialists, by enrolling in a post-graduate course or by applying as a researcher, carry out research and receive a scientific degree, as well as teach, gradually moving from low to high categories set by the University. Salaries are differentiated on the basis of scientific degrees.

The professional advancement of the teaching staff is also ensured by the replenishment of the University library with specialized literature (including foreign literature), scientific and specialized magazines and periodicals, by ensuring an opportunity for all the lecturers to use them.

Taking into consideration the recommendations provided in the previous report, YGU has developed a Policy for Mentoring Young Lecturers, which is not fully applied.

5.7 The Institution has necessary administrative and support staffs to achieve the strategic goals. Job descriptions have been developed for YGU teaching and administrative staff, in which the goal and objectives of the University structural subdivisions, knowledge, abilities, rights and responsibilities are stated. All the workers of the University's organizational structure have got descriptions specific to their positions, in which their functions are introduced and descriptors for job responsibilities are developed, which gives an opportunity to control the fulfillment of responsibilities. A "Procedure for Evaluation of Administrative and Supporting Staff" has been developed to evaluate the efficiency of these staff members. However, there are no examples of administrative staff's evaluation, incentives based on it, dissemination of best practices, organization of trainings, or provision of consultations.

It became clear from the expert meetings with the Institution's subdivisions that only one position, that of the Head of subdivision, is provided in almost all subdivisions. Examination of the documents submitted to the expert group permits it to state that allocation of financial means is needed for staff replenishment to efficiently carry out functions of these subdivisions.

The quality and efficiency of the activity of all the subdivisions is evaluated through surveys conducted by the QAC. However, as became clear during the expert meetings, the University did not manage to reveal the needs of the administrative and supporting staff only through surveys. Moreover, data on the analysis of the survey results was not provided to the expert group. At the same time, the expert group can state that there are no facts available about the trainings organized for the administrative and teaching staff.

Considerations. Examining YGU documents, it can be stated that, in general, YGU has got administrative and supporting staff with the necessary professional qualities. Although the majority of the Institution's teaching staff has got a secondary employment, YGU managed to involve specialists who enjoy prestige in their field. With this approach, the Institution has realized the objective of ensuring quality teaching staff for APs. The data revealed during the expert meetings permit the team to state that the academic programs are mainly served by lecturers with relevant qualifications, academic titles, and degrees.

The meetings held during the expert visit permit the team to state that the invitation method is often used, while organization of a competition is of a secondary nature; at the same time, there are no regulatory norms for organizing a full-scale competition. The expert group finds that these functions of the Institution need to be regulated, since the management of the field is based on particular situations where individual decision-making predominates. This may endanger the teaching staff's sustainability.

The examination of the academic programs (Bachelor and Master's programs) in "Law" and "Finance" introduced in scope of the accreditation showed that the requirements for professional qualities are general, absolutely the same for all the academic programs, both Bachelor's and Master's, professional teaching specificities are not stated, there are as well no set mechanisms for checking lecturers' compliance with the defined requirements, or any evidence of conducting analyses related to reviewing and changing requirements for professional qualities. The expert group finds that this approach may risk the selection of appropriate specialists.

'Different evaluation forms for teaching staff are used at YGU' however, the implementation of the evaluation procedures developed by YGU does not allow the team to confirm the analysis and applicability of the results of the documents filled in by lecturers. Students' evaluation of the lecturers and their teaching quality, which is carried out only through surveys, allows the team to state that the results of these surveys are not always objective, and may hinder the process of problems and needs identification. There are no in-depth analyses which would reveal the reasons for existing problems and positive practices.

Use of various evaluation methods would serve as a basis for implementing improvements to obtain valid data, analyze results, identify shortcomings, and correct them, as well as to make decision based on the obtained valid data. The absence of the above-mentioned risks the improvement of teaching quality.

According to the elaborated documents, the Institution emphasizes the importance of lecturers' development. However, trainings are often organized on lecturers' individual initiative.

Limitations of teaching staff's professional qualities development and assurance of mobility are conditioned with insufficient financial means.

YGU has not yet developed and implemented procedures to provide financial and other resources for the teaching staff's development, despite the recommendations provided in the previous expert report. Moreover, the training formats organized at YGU have not been sufficiently clarified, there are no facts about the justification of the trainings and their compliance with the APs learning outcomes, as well no analyses of the efficiency of the carried-out trainings.

The above-mentioned proves that the process does not sufficiently contribute to the realization of the following strategic direction – "Development of Organizational Governance and Staff Capacity".

It is worrisome that the majority of YGU teaching staff has got a secondary employment or is paid on an hourly basis. There is a large number of new lecturers at different Chairs, and staff changes are often made based on the management's personal connections. This proves that YGU does not carry out set human resource planning, which may harm the provision of the teaching staff's sustainability.

The involvement of lecturers with rich work experience in the practical field, with the purpose of acquisition of learning outcomes by students, is appreciated; however no analysis of the efficiency of this approach has been introduced. It follows that the full implementation of APs is at risk because of such less-than clearly planned actions.

The expert group evaluates positively that the University emphasizes the importance of excluding the issue of teaching several courses (more than 3 courses) at the same time by one lecturer, and that a policy for mentoring young lecturers has been developed and implemented at YGU.

No set mechanisms for raising and promoting teaching and supporting staff's motivation have been introduced to the expert group. According to the SWOT analysis, financial means provided as incentives are limited, which may put the provision of the staff's sustainability at risk and cause staff outflow. Full realization of the goals and objectives of the strategic plan may be endangered if the University continues to implement this policy.

Moreover, no evaluation of the efficiency of the administrative and supporting staff's activities and performances is conducted by the Institution.

Although there are necessary subdivisions at YGU, it became clear at expert meetings that almost in all subdivisions only one position, that of the Head of the subdivision, is provided which may endanger the efficient fulfillment of the functions of these subdivisions.

It follows from the above-mentioned that YGU must undertake necessary measures, particularly in regard to the expansion of financial resources for the teaching staff's advancement, otherwise, there may be human resource losses. The full realization of not only the APs but also the goals and objectives of the strategic plan may be put at risk if the Institution continues to implement this policy.

Summary. Taking into consideration that YGU has got teaching and supporting staff with necessary professional qualities, a corresponding policy and procedures for their selection, formation and dismissal have been developed, there are some mechanisms for identifying teaching staff's needs, and the University undertakes actions to involve lecturers from the practical field, the expert group finds that YGU meets the requirements of Criterion 5.

Conclusion. The compliance of YGU institutional capacity with the requirements of Criterion 5 is evaluated as **satisfactory**.

VI. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

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

Findings

6.1 The Institution has a clearly defined strategy promoting its research interests and ambitions.

In the 2012-2018 Strategic Plan of YGU, there is a designated section for Scientific Research and Innovation where recurring, ambiguously defined tasks are proposed for the two problems identified in this direction of activity.

The university's global research ambitions for 2019-2023 are presented in the "Sustainable Development of Scientific Potential, Research and Implementation of Innovation" section of the 2019-2023 strategic plan. In the document, four major tasks are set forth for achieving this goal, for which specific steps, indicators, responsibilities, and the financial means provided by the YSU budget are set out.

In both the former and the current SP, the main direction of scientific research is as follows: "The Challenges of Modernity and the Issues of Social Sciences and Humanities." This conclusively proves that the university's research interests are tied to the situation and not distinctly outlined.

There are, however, other research-related documents in place, namely, the "YGU Research Strategy" approved on October 19, 2015, the 2018-2021 research strategy of the YSU Chair of Law, and the 2018-2021 research strategy of the YSU Chair of General Economics.

These documents lay out rather ambitious goals and problems in the field of scientific research (ensuring involvement in research, and strengthening the connection between science, education, and economy. It is even planned to direct at least 10% of the annual funding to research, use incentives to encourage the academic staff that is involved in research activities (minimum 10% per year, etc.), and to achieve at least a 30% annual increase in student involvement in academic research), but the review of the documents revealed that these goals and objectives do not facilitate the implementation of the research processes in any definite way and that the stakeholders are not aware of them. In particular, these processes focus solely on the organization of the republican scientific sessions.

6.2 The Institution has a long-term strategy and med-term and short-term programs that address its research interests and ambitions.

The 2015 Research Strategy defines three directions of research, but only one of them (law, economic, philosophical-political) is specified; changing the negative phenomena observed in the field of mass culture, ecological education of the population, and understanding the ongoing political process.

According to the self-evaluation report, the study of research interests and ambitions is accordingly carried out by the Chairs, which develop the research strategy. According to the 2018-2021 research strategies, the chairs envisage to ensure equal education and development of all branches of law /economy/.

The chairs have topics of scientific research; however, they are general and devoid of clarity: "The main issues of Law in the Context of Modern Challenges", "Current Issues of Economic Development in the Republic of Armenia".

The strategies of the chairs are presented in the form of general objectives and have not been developed into programs.

There are no research projects or programs in the University. Seminars are held according to the compiled schedules in the Chairs of General Law and General Economics.

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

The coordination of the research activities of the University is carried out by the Rector's Advisor, whose activities are reflected in the organization of scientific sessions.

On the grounds of the recommendations given as a result of the previous accreditation, regulations for organizing and holding conferences and scientific seminars have been developed, based on which the Chairs develop a schedule for organizing and holding scientific seminars, round table discussions, scientific debates and sessions at the University. Participation in conferences and publication of articles in conference proceedings can be a mechanism to encourage the development of research activities at the University.

The Academic staff publishes not only scientific articles, but also develops monographs and manuals, reviewed by the Scientific Council and used in the educational process. However, the number of scientific publications has decreased in recent years.

A Center of Experimental Criminalistics (training room-laboratory, as well as a local library for Criminalistics) has been established at the University, the activities of which are regulated. It is a powerful stimulus for students and lecturers to conduct both theoretical and practical research. It is envisaged to create Training Bank, which will provide an opportunity to conduct various research in the field. However, there are still no research projects and programs to apply these resources.

The "Procedure for Providing Internal Grants for Promoting Research" is in the development stage and has not yet been implemented.

Postgraduate education is implemented through the PhD researcher's academic program. Throughout its activity, the university has prepared 30 candidates of sciences.

The University approved a procedure for joint research of YGU lecturers and students in 2015, but the expert panel site-visit revealed that the stakeholders do not apply it.

6.4 The Institution emphasizes internationalization of its research.

According to the self-evaluation report, in order to increase the total number of scientific works published by the University lecturers, the University pursues a policy of encouraging the publication of articles and other scientific works in international scientific periodicals, journals, partially or completely covering the financial costs of publication. However, the number of papers published in international journals and conferences is low and has not increased in the last five years. The number of publications in foreign international reviewed journals does not exceed three each year, while the

number of publications in reviewed professional journals in the CIS countries increased from 5 to 11 in the period 2014-2016, but has sharply decreased since then.

The internationalization of YGU research activities was facilitated by the agreement signed with Armavir Linguistic Social Institute of Russia, as a result of which joint conferences were held, eight lecturers of the University submitted a scientific article in 2017, which was published in the periodical of the Linguistic University. The next conference is envisaged. in 2020-2021.

Within the framework of the cooperation agreement signed with the G.V. Plekhanov Russian University of Economics, three employees participated in an international conference in 2019, and presented the results of a joint study.

There are no other agreements contributing to the internationalization of research activities, nor are there any relevant processes or policies.

The Center of Experimental Criminalistics creates opportunities for international cooperation in the field of research; however, such steps have not yet been envisaged.

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

YGU does not have a clear policy for linking research with the teaching process. Undergraduate programs do not contain research modules. They are mainly expressed in individual activities, course papers or some assignments. In undergraduate and graduate programs, the continuity of research activities is not guaranteed. There is a research module in the graduate academic program, which makes 25% of the total 120 credits; the academic program also includes “Scientific Research Methodology” course. A “Guide to Master’s Thesis Preparation and Defense” has been developed. The research component in master’s academic programs creates a possible precondition for further research activities for students enrolled in that program.

In some cases, lecturers apply the results of their scientific work and experience in academic programs, including them in the taught curricula, participating in scientific meetings-discussions, seminars, and presenting reports. The expert panel site-visit revealed that the students have a very low level of awareness in this regard.

Student conferences organized by SSS are beneficial, as they give students the opportunity to submit the results of their research, and in case of the best results, to get incentives. However, these conferences are organized in the University and the materials are not always published (the conference materials were published only in 2017-2018); besides, in 2018-2019 reports were presented only in the philosophy department. At the same time, there are no mechanisms to encourage or support the members of the academic staff who engage students in research activities.

An important exception is the Center of Experimental Criminalistics, which, however, is not yet fully used for the development of students’ research activities.

YGU envisages to establish a Training Bank for the development of practical abilities and skills of students majoring in “Finance”.

Considerations. The research ambitions and directions in YGU are unclear, and the strategy outlining their path has general wording, which does not ensure the development of research activities; at the same time the map of strategic activities and resources is unrealistic. As a result, there is no strategic management system, and the plan only exists in the document. This problem is also reflected in the research strategies of the Chairs. The action plan and human, financial, and material resources are not clear for the equal study and development of all branches of the respective field.

The expert panel was informed of plans to commercialize the University's research activity; however, no steps have been carried out in this direction, and no preparation is envisaged in the activity plans of the chairs.

The University does not have mid and short-term research projects and programs, and no steps are planned in this direction.

The organization of scientific seminars and conferences is important, as such events create opportunities for the exchange of experience and cooperation, although the organized seminars have not yet served as a basis for joint research, while seminars are organized only in two Chairs.

The number of scientific publications in recent years has decreased, which gives cause for concern. The University does not have clear support and encouragement mechanisms in this direction, and only scientific sessions contribute to this cause, which is not enough.

The expert panel positively evaluates the existence of the Center of Experimental Criminalistics, but the plans for the latter are related only to the use of resources in the educational process and the provision of additional income through the use of resources.

The expert panel also considers favorably implementing internal grants in the field of research and believes that they will create a real opportunity for solving the priority problems of the University and ensuring its development.

There are problems in YGU in terms of internationalization of research activities, as there are no joint international research programs or publications in internationally renowned journals and no incentive mechanisms in this direction. There are some publications only in the collections of materials of international conferences, the index of which is very low. The number of publications in professional journals reviewed in the CIS countries has also decreased. There are no international grant research programs. Cooperation with foreign universities in the field of research is reflected only through participation of joint conferences and, moreover, only with universities of the CIS countries.

The University does not have a clear policy for ensuring correlation between the research and teaching processes. Within the framework of the Undergraduate programs, it does not have a clear compulsory component; the correlation is mainly expressed in individual and course papers, which does not imply mandatory research results and does not reflect the ambitions of the University in the field of research. The research module envisaged by the Graduate program is an important mechanism for linking research and teaching processes, but there are no cases of introducing the results of the research in the educational process or directing these to the development of the University. Scientific sessions organized by the SSS are important, but being organized in the university, they do not allow

students to exchange experience and to expand the scope of cooperation, as well as to evaluate the results of their own research in a wider range. The lack of incentives to engage the Academic staff in student research activities jeopardizes the effective continuity of the processes.

The expert panel emphasizes the importance of pursuing postgraduate education at the University and believes that this provides an opportunity for the realization of research ambitions and the development of the University.

The lack of mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of research processes jeopardizes the effective implementation of research ambitions.

Summary. Given the fact that Yerevan Gladzor University does not have clearly stated interests and ambitions in the field of research, as well as research directions, mid and short-term programs, clear policies and procedures for research implementation and incentives, internationalization is quite weak in the field and the correlation between research and teaching is not clear, as well as the fact that the recommendations provided in the 2013 Accreditation Expert Panel Report in these areas are mainly reflected in the documentation and are not applied in practice, the Expert panel found that YGU did not meet the requirements of Criterion 6.

Conclusion. The compliance of institutional capacities of YGU to the requirements of Criterion 6 is **unsatisfactory**.

VII. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RECOURSES

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

Findings

7.1 The Institution has an appropriate learning environment for the implementation of current academic programs.

The YGU building, constructed in the 2000s, is owned by the University. As the expert panel site-visit revealed, the YGU building in its form and structure has created an impression of elite status for the students and graduates. The building has technically equipped classrooms of different sizes, a library-reading hall, administrative areas, and halls. It also has an elevator.

YGU has a legal clinic, Laboratory of Criminalistics and a training center, as well as a courtroom. In addition, it is envisaged to create Training Bank. The expert panel site-visit revealed that by launching such resources, YGU seeks to create a tangible or visible learning environment contributing to learning.

Adjacent to the building, the University has a garden with fountains, a cafeteria and a cloakroom. Internet connection is available.

Apart from the strategic goal of establishing a University infrastructure that meets modern requirements, stipulated in the strategic plan, YGU considers the training of graduates who will be able to apply their knowledge, and use it in practice its main objective.

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

2014-2019 YGU expenditures were mainly directed to the salaries of the Academic staff, administrative-support staff (about 73% of the expenditures in 2019), as well as to the improvement of the infrastructure and advertisement. According to the 2020 budget, 63.5% of the expenses or 55.2 billion drams, about 7.8 billion more than in 2019, will be directed to the remuneration of labor.

The expert panel site-visit revealed that the financial planning is carried out for five-year period, as well as annually, based on the demands of the units. In case of the need of separate resources (especially literature) they are obtained in about a week.

No cost-effectiveness analyses are carried out.

7.3 The Institution has policy on financial distribution and capacity to sustain and ensure the integrity and continuity of the programs offered at the Institution.

According to the strategic plan, one of the strategic objectives of YGU is to increase financial independence by diversifying the stability of financial flows from external sources. The main source of income for the University is the tuition fees (more than 97% of the income in 2019; about 88% is envisaged in 2020 budget). Grant programs are few; according to the self-evaluation report such an agreement has been signed twice.

The University is considering opportunities for developing new sources of financial income, such as the provision of additional educational and consulting services (“Policy for the Implementation of Additional Educational and Consulting Services to the Public” has been developed), attracting investments by the employers, but no practical steps have been taken yet. They are not registered, except for forensic services, the high level of productivity of which was also mentioned by the employers.

Recently, two new chairs have been established at YGU, and another chair has been reopened.

According to the information received during the expert panel site-visit, in 1990, the salary at the University was one of the highest in the field, but currently YGU does not provide the desired amount. According to the financial data presented in the annual reports, the income is almost entirely spent on salaries. Accordingly, financial resources are hardly formed. The expert panel site-visit revealed that YGU Development Fund was formed. However, the latter has not yet been considered as a full component of the University financial system.

Financial risk management mechanisms are not in place, but the University has previously managed to overcome short-term crises (due to low enrollment or involvement of borrowed means). In case of scarcity of financial resources, the college and available resources for rent are considered to

be additional sources of income. In addition, YGU seeks to build loyalty among its alumni and affiliated applicants, as well as stable partnerships with banking organizations.

7.4 The Institution's resource base supports the implementation of Institution's academic programs and strategic plan, which promotes sustainability and continuous improvement of quality.

Study of the resources revealed that the University classrooms are equipped with computers, projectors, and screens. Specialized rooms are equipped with modern furniture and devices. The courtroom has almost all the attributes, including the judge's private office. The Criminalistics Laboratory has forensic investigation tools: dactyloscopy, ballistic, devices emitting ultraviolet radiation, weapon molds, mannequins, and real-life examples.

According to the self-evaluation report, YGU library is equipped with the basic literature for the curricula; the library contains foreign language literature. The law clinic has a separate library. According to the self-evaluation report, the results of the surveys show that the University stakeholders are always satisfied with the available resources, which was later confirmed by the students and lecturers during the expert panel site-visit. Problems emerged during the epidemic, due to the lack of accessibility of some of the resources.

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

According to the self-evaluation report, the University has developed a "Regulation for Information and Document Circulation Management", and introduced an electronic document management system. The expert panel site-visit, however, revealed that the electronic system is not applied, and the above-mentioned document has not had a significant impact on the regulation of information flows.

Information is usually transferred either orally or via e-mail.

During the expert panel site-visit, the stakeholders expressed the opinion that the University regulations and other documents are numerous, which creates challenges in submitting them to the stakeholders.

7.6 The Institution creates safe and secure environment through health and safety mechanisms taking into account the students with special needs.

There is a security service, security cameras, evacuation plans, and fire extinguishers in the territory of YGU.

According to the self-evaluation report, the medical point has been operating since 2003, the demand for which is satisfied once a semester, and the medical staff, apart from providing medical care, monitors the observance of sanitary requirements in classrooms, cafeterias, and bathrooms.

In addition, a Gladzor recreation area has been established in Sevan, where the internal stakeholders of the university spend their summer vacations for free or part payment. There are recreation means in the University yard (garden, cafe, etc.), as well as a cafeteria, gym, and volleyball court.

There are currently no facilities for students with special needs, but it is envisaged to adjust the back entrance of the building.

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

Resources are evaluated through student surveys, but the expert panel site-visit revealed that the results of the evaluation are not applicable. Instead, the desires and needs of internal stakeholders are taken into account. Statistics on the availability of existing literature or other resources are not maintained and no analysis is carried out.

Considerations: The expert panel evaluates positively the aspiration the University to provide a favorable material environment for learning. The expert panel site-visit positively evaluates the fact that the University manages to facilitate the development of intangible components of the learning environment by providing material conditions, as evidenced by the expectations and impressions of the beneficiaries. Such an approach of the University is completely in line with its intention to train financially successful graduates.

The recent year expenditure structure is generally in line with the university's approach to investing in the visible. Although financial planning is underway, current financial decisions predominate. The expert panel evaluates the university's readiness to implement the budget, but a lack of strategic approach can be observed. Cost-effectiveness is particularly jeopardized by the lack of proper analysis.

The expert panel positively evaluates the university's aspiration to diversify its income, but a delay in that diversification, given the small number of students, can jeopardize financial stability. The expert panel also positively evaluates the approach of developing new chairs and professions, as it may encourage the diversification of tuition fees by professions. At the same time, such an approach can jeopardize the usability of existing resources. Salary trends can also threaten financial stability. The scarcity of marketable resources, if necessary, can cause financial challenges, but the expert panel believes that they are less likely to turn into long-term challenges, given the potential for additional revenue generation and involvement of borrowed means.

The expert panel positively evaluates the technical equipment of the university classrooms and specialized rooms in terms of both modernity and completeness. The internal stakeholders do not point out any significant lack of resources, which was positively received by the expert panel. They even consider that the existing resource base is sometimes more than necessary for the implementation of

academic programs, but it is difficult to express such an opinion, given that the resource base is largely enriched on an ad hoc basis without a common strategy.

The channels of information flow and low level of regulation in the University on the one hand, and the large number of documents available and lack of coordination, on the other hand, do not contribute to the proper accumulation, use and access to stakeholders.

The expert panel believes that the resources available in the University provide a safe environment; moreover, the university promotes students' health through leisure activities. The expert panel also positively evaluates that YGU has realized the importance of creating facilities for students with special needs and some steps have been envisaged.

Lack of regular deployment of resource usability, availability and efficiency mechanisms jeopardizes the purposefulness of resource improvement, which can lead to waste under the condition of limited financial resources. The only mechanism that contributes to the applicability is the use of annual claims, but the expediency of their content is not evaluated.

Summary: Taking into account the educational environment contributing to learning, the willingness to acquire material resources, the possibility of neutralizing financial risks, and the technical equipment of specialized rooms and safe environment, the expert panel believes that YGU resources contribute to the development of the educational environment and the implementation of goals of academic programs.

Conclusion: The compliance of institutional capacities of YGU to the requirements of Criterion 7 is **satisfactory**.

VIII. SOCIETAL RESPONSIBILITY

CRITERION: The Institution 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 Institution has clear policy on accountability.

The implementation of the University's accountability is based on the developed "Accountability Policy of Internal and External Stakeholders", according to which the internal accountability of YGU is carried out in the following way: accountability of the teaching staff to the heads of the chairs, accountability of the heads of the chairs to the head of the Educational Department, accountability of the head of the Educational Department to the Scientific Council of the university, and the accountability of Scientific Council of the university to Rector's Office; The external accountability of YGU is implemented in the following way: accountability to the Ministry of Education and Science, accountability to employers, accountability to other stakeholders and to the society.

The "Information Policy and Public Awareness Concept Note" has also been developed. The aim of improving the accountability set of tools is to present the annual reports of the Rector on the activities of the university at the meeting of the Scientific Council, and to put it on the website of the university.

According to the self-evaluation of the institution, each year the university provides a report in accordance with the standards set by various state institutions.

YGU has developed a PR strategy monitoring and evaluation system, a format of the annual report of the chairs (consisting of 2 sections, where only facts about the number of students, exam results, graduation exams, and academic staff are presented, without analyses), a format of annual report of the departments (there are presented the activities envisaged by the department work plan, the process of their implementation, the results, the reasons and consequences of unfulfilled work, the problems encountered by the department, the possible ways to solve them, the possible ways to improve the department work efficiency), and the information policy and public awareness concept note. The activity reports of 2018 and 2019, surveys of internal and external university stakeholders of 2019, conclusions of the independent auditor, 2012-2018 Strategic Plan implementation report, analysis on the efficiency of improvement plan publication, evaluation report on internal control system of financial management, and FL 19-20 Annual Report are posted in the YGU website. However, according to the materials posted on the website, the annual reports of all chairs and departments are missing. In addition, mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of accountability are not presented.

8.2 The Institution ensures transparency of its procedures and processes and makes them publicly available.

Access to YGU educational processes and procedures is ensured by a number of mechanisms: through the university's official website "gladzor.am", the university's official newspaper "Nor Gladzor", as well as through television and social networks.

The official website of the university regularly updates the information on YGU processes, activities, services provided, reports, regulatory documents, news and announcements, results of work done, etc. The university website contains information on the structure of the university, academic programs, collaborations, news, etc. However, the section of the Scientific Council minutes on the website is replenished.

The Russian and English variants of the website are full of information.

In addition, the institution conducts visits to educational institutions, in particular, various schools, through which it raises awareness about YGU activities.

8.3 The Institution has sustainable feedback mechanisms for establishing contacts with society.

The main centers for ensuring relations with society and external stakeholders are the Career Center of the University and the editorial office, which, according to the institution's self-evaluation, within the capacity stipulated by their regulations, disseminate information about the main goals and functions of the university to the general public, and ensure the involvement of university in social

processes, active cooperation with mass media outlets, dissemination of information about the events and programs implemented at the university, and submission of printing projects of booklets, posters and other materials to the university administration. During the expert discussions, it became clear that career days and meetings with students of different schools are organized at YGU, and feedback with the graduates is carried out through the career center. The university website, the electronic questionnaire on it, and the Gladzor pages on social networks also provide an opportunity to build public relations and provide information. The official Facebook page of the university has a wide and clear opportunity for feedback.

Expert meetings with external stakeholders showed that they were not involved in the process of organizing the academic programs, nor were they actively involved in the university decision-making process. According to the submitted documents, the institution received some suggestions from employers within the framework of the internship discussion process, in particular, increase of practical classes, development of students' practical skills, and increase of the internship period. However, it is obvious that the feedback and cooperation between the institution and the employer are carried out through the personal contacts of the administration. It should be noted that no facts were presented on the evaluation of the effectiveness of the existing mechanisms for promoting public relations.

8.4 The Institution has mechanisms that ensure knowledge /value/ transfer to the society.

Gladzor University of Yerevan has developed a policy for the implementation of additional educational and consulting services to the public, which implements the following educational, developmental, and informational directions:

1. Provision of legal aid through the Legal Clinic (documents regulating the activities of the Legal Clinic have been developed). It became clear from the expert meetings and the submitted documents that the students of the university, under the guidance of the lecturers of the Chair of Law, provide free counseling services to poor families belonging to socially vulnerable groups. The Courtroom at the University and the Legal Clinic are used for the implementation of the courses of "Criminal Procedure Law", "Civil Procedure Law", "Advocacy" and seminar and practical classes of other courses; besides, the YGU Courtroom was provided to schools and colleges as a professional environment for relevant courses (mock trials)⁶.
2. Short-term training courses for experts through the Training and Expertise Center of Forensic Sciences (documents regulating the activities of the Training and Expertise Center of Forensic Sciences have been developed). As it turned out during expert discussions, the YGU Training and Expertise Center of Forensic Sciences is provided to various state bodies on a paid contract basis for conducting expert examinations.
3. Triumph Training Center provides free and paid services in the following areas: foreign language training, software training, accounting, and auditing. The order of activity of Triumph Training Center has been developed in YGU.

⁶ This sentence was amended as a result of the discussion held between the panel experts and the YGU Rector.

It should be noted that the mechanisms for informing the public about the services provided are few, and the level of access to such information by external stakeholders is also low.

Taking into account the existence of the above-mentioned mechanisms for transmitting knowledge (value) in YGU, the expert panel is not provided with data proving the collection of opinions as a result of these processes, or the results of studies to reveal public demand. In addition, it should be noted that the effectiveness of mechanisms for transmitting knowledge (value) is not yet assessed by the institution, through which it would be possible to identify shortcomings in the application of mechanisms and their causes, so as to increase access to information about services by YGU and introduce more effective mechanism options.

Considerations. The institution emphasizes accountability, transparency and accessibility to the public, which is positively evaluated by the expert panel. However, there is no data on the hierarchy, as well as the mechanism for evaluating the effectiveness of accountability. In addition, the formats of the reports allow the team to state that they contain mainly facts and statistics; analyses, conclusions, and clearly identified shortcomings and specific recommendations for their correction are missing. It goes without saying that all this can jeopardize the identification of weaknesses, and the introduction of the development process in the interests of the institution, and evidence-based decision-making.

There are public feedback mechanisms in YGU (in particular, the YGU website and Gladzor pages in social networks; for example, the official Facebook page of the university has a wide and clear opportunity for feedback), but it should be noted that "Institution and External stakeholders" feedback is rather weak, which may jeopardize the identification of labor market requirements and the improvement of academic programs. It should be noted that no facts were presented on the evaluation of the effectiveness of the existing mechanisms promoting public relations. Besides, the institution should take steps to expand public awareness of the services provided, as the diversification of such mechanisms will increase the level of awareness of YGU processes among the general public, boosting their participation level in those processes.

After getting acquainted with the capabilities of the Center of Training and Expertise of Forensic Sciences, the expert panel finds that the existing resources are not fully used by YGU; in particular, the technical equipment of the training center could allow the institution to become a leading center for forensic research in the field of education, cooperating with similar institutions in different countries.

Evaluating positively the existence of mechanisms transmitting knowledge (value) in YGU, the expert panel has not been provided with data on the collection of opinions as a result of these processes or the results of research to identify public demand, which could contribute to modernization and expansion of training courses and services provided by the university and create a beneficial value, as well as contribute to the improvement of financial resources. In addition, it should be noted that the effectiveness of mechanisms of transmitting knowledge (value) has not yet been assessed by the institution, through which it would be possible to identify shortcomings in the application of the

mechanisms, their causes, to increase access to information about services provided by YGU, and to introduce effective options for mechanisms based on strategic goals.

Summary. Taking into consideration the fact that an accountability policy to internal and external stakeholders has been introduced and developed in the institution, mechanisms are implemented to ensure access to educational processes and procedures, and the university provides additional educational and consulting services to the public, the expert panel finds that YGU meets the requirements of Criterion 8.

Conclusion. Correspondence of the university's institutional capacities to the requirements of Criterion 8 is assessed as satisfactory.

IX. EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND INTERNATIONALIZATION

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

Findings

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

The section of International Relations and Cooperation of the YGU Strategic Plan for 2012-2018 envisages one objective (to cooperate with national and international higher education institutions and research institutes to improve the quality of university education and science), which reflects the aspirations towards external relations and internationalization. However, it should be noted that it is devoid of specificity and does not allow determination of a clear direction and framework of external relations.

In 2018, the YGU "Internationalization Strategy" and the "Regulation on the Activity of External Relations and Internationalization Department" were approved.

Then, in the section on Expansion of International Cooperation of the 2019-2023 strategic plan, two objectives are envisaged. 1. Increasing the mobility of the university academic staff, PhD students, learners, 2. Promoting the participation of the university stakeholders in international programs.

There is a credit accumulation and transfer system for the three-level education system at YGU.

The University received the right to organize the education of foreign students in a foreign language by the RA ESCS Ministry.

According to the "Strategic Plan for Internationalization", one of the functions of the Department of External Relations and Internationalization is to promote internationalization in various fields of activity. However, there is no description of more specific promotion tools; there are no policies and procedures to encourage establishment of external relations.

There are still no annual action plans and effectiveness evaluation mechanisms in this area.

There are no exchange programs and precedents for educational programs. They are just laying the groundwork for opportunities for student and staff mobility.

There are some areas of cooperation in YGU, but they are mainly focused on one-person cooperation and are not institutional in nature.

The university has not been involved in international programs, there are no results in this regard. Only now it is included in the Erasmus Jean Monnet program, which aims to promote research; in this context, the planned visit of the head of the Department of External Relations and Internationalization to Greece was postponed.

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

Until 2018, various departments dealt with external relations and internationalization issues, including the Educational Department, Rectorate, and Chairs (mainly Chair of Foreign Languages). In 2018, by the order of the rector, the Department of External Relations and Internationalization was opened at the university, where only the head of the department works.

The documents of the "Regulations of the Activity of External Relations and Internationalization Department" and "Strategic Plan for Internationalization" were approved on the same day, and both documents mention the functions of the Department of External Relations and Internationalization, which provisions, nevertheless, are different. The formulations are quite general and involve a wide range of activities, which does not allow regulation of the activities of the department, leaving them to a certain ad hoc nature.

The reports on the processes aimed at external relations and internationalization are submitted to the Scientific Council, but they mainly have referred to mutual visits within the framework of cooperation with the Russian State University of Economics after G. V. Plekhanov.

At present, the activities of the department have not been fully clarified, despite the existence of an annual work plan of the department. The rector of YGU is responsible for expanding external relations, conducting negotiations with foreign universities, educational, academic, and other scientific institutions, and signing contracts.

9.3 The Institution effectively collaborates with local and international counterparts.

In 2016-2019 more than a dozen contracts have been signed with schools and colleges, as well as more than a dozen internship contracts.

A cooperation agreement has been signed for the implementation of joint educational program with Kutafin Moscow State Law University, taking into account their experience in the development of both law and forensics. Negotiations are still underway to implement a joint educational program. Completion of activities is set for 2021.

A cooperation agreement was signed in 2015 and resigned in 2017 with the Armavir Linguistic Social Institute (RF) to hold joint conferences, according to which a conference has already been organized once.

In 2017, an agreement was signed with the Industrial Management Institute of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the implementation of which is still underway.

In 2018, a contract was signed with the Russian State University of Economics after G. V. Plekhanov. In this framework, the cooperation is mainly focused on one employee. Only in 2019, 6 undergraduate and graduate students of "Law" and "Finance" majors had the opportunity to pay an intercultural educational visit to Russian State University of Economics after G. V. Plekhanov to participate in some theoretical and practical classes, as well as discussions.

In 2019, an agreement was signed with the International Mediterranean Center for Studying Human Rights, within the framework of which the head of the center is scheduled to visit the university in April 2020 as a visiting lecturer.

In 2019, a cooperation agreement was signed with Araratbank OJSC, within the framework of which it is planned to establish an educational bank at the university.

Cooperation agreements have been signed with the RA National Bureau of Expertise, the RA Expertise Center, the RA Police Educational Complex, the RA Special Investigation Service, the RA Chamber of Advocates, according to which the mentioned institutions can conduct expert examinations at the Forensic Center on paid basis.

During the site visit, it became clear that the lecturers and students are mainly not aware of possible cooperation or mobility programs and do not participate in them.

The scope of cooperation does not fully meet the ambitious strategic goals of education, research, internationalization, mobility; such results are not yet available. The establishment of ties is not institutional in nature, it is mainly based on personal ties. There is no noticeable cooperation framework for the commercialization of research activities, and the cooperation with employers is mainly aimed at ensuring the implementation of internships.

There are no clear approaches to evaluating process effectiveness.

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

According to the self-evaluation data, the majority of teachers, administrative staff and students speak foreign languages (here the data are not presented in separate languages). At the same time, according to the SWOT analysis presented in the YGU Institutional Capacities Self-Analysis, which was also approved during the site visit, the issue of language competencies, especially English, hinders the internationalization of the University. This seems to put the university at a dead end, as the lack of language skills automatically reduces mobility opportunities, and the limited opportunities in turn do not encourage stakeholders to develop their language skills.

In the 2018-2019, 2019-2020 academic years, YGU organized courses aimed at improving the level of English proficiency and foreign language film screenings and lectures, and the Student Council organizes discussions in a foreign language. However, the involvement of teachers and students in these events is not so high.

There are no courses / academic programs in foreign languages offered to foreign students.

The curriculum includes compulsory English language instruction, as well as the opportunity to learn a second foreign language, although no instances of such an opportunity were observed during the site visit.

Taking into account the observations made in the previous accreditation expert report in foreign language training programs the learning outcomes were aligned with the EU A, B, C scale of foreign language skills.

Foreign language literature is required to be included in the course, but during the site visit it became clear that the students have difficulties, so they avoid the use of foreign language literature.

It is important to replenish the library with foreign language literature, and steps are being taken in that direction as much as possible.

Only the Chair of Foreign Languages is involved in the internationalization process.

Considerations. Until 2018, according to the strategic plan, the ambitions aimed at external relations and internationalization were unclear, as a result of which it did not turn into concrete processes with relevant short-term plans; therefore, the processes in the field were based on the particular situation and did not have a guided and institutional nature.

Then, although a number of documents were approved in this area after 2018 (“YGU Internationalization Strategy”, “Regulation on the Activity of External Relations and Internationalization Department”, and the International Cooperation Enhancement Division in the 2019-2023 Strategic Development Plan), being devoid of specificity they have not become tools for regulating processes (in particular, to encourage the establishment of external relations, mobility of teaching and student staffs, participation in international programs, and other processes).

On the positive side, there is a system of credit accumulation and transfer at YGU, which is a favorable condition for mobility processes; it is also necessary to have the opportunity for education of foreign students.

The lack of concrete measurable actions, in turn, hinders both the evaluation of process efficiency and the development of appropriate mechanisms.

The expert panel emphasizes the fact that YGU is involved in the Erasmus Jean Monnet program, but the university needs to clarify its expectations from the program and the impact of the program on the university processes.

The expert panel emphasizes the existence of a separate infrastructure for external relations and internationalization at YGU, which indicates that the university is developing these processes. However, the role of the department needs to be clarified, at the same time we believe that the lack of clear mechanisms for evaluating both the activities of the department and the processes in general hinders the simultaneous and continuous development of the sector. Moreover, the processes in this direction did not provide a complete PDCA cycle, which does not allow to assess their effectiveness.

The expert panel seeks to establish some areas of cooperation, but the continued involvement of a very narrow circle of stakeholders has not contributed to the exchange of experience and internationalization.

It is worrisome that stakeholders are not aware of possible cooperation or mobility programs.

It is positive that the university cooperates with Moscow State Law University after O. E. Kutafin, with the aim of implementing collaborative educational programs. However, these processes are still under negotiation.

It is important to establish a university partnership for business purposes, which can contribute to the diversification of financial income.

Despite the fact that the contract with the Institute of Industrial Management of the Islamic Republic of Iran was signed in 2017, no results have been noted yet.

Some areas of cooperation allow to organize visits of invited teaching staff to the university, which also facilitates the exchange of experience.

As a result of cooperation with the Armavir Linguistic Social Institute in the field of research, some lecturers participated in the conference and presented the results of the research, but such a framework of cooperation is not sufficient to achieve quite ambitious research goals.

It is worrisome that there are no clear mechanisms and precedents for studying best practices.

It is also important to plan the establishment of a training bank within the framework of cooperation with Ararat OJSC, which, however, is still being planned, although it is not reflected in the strategic plan.

The expert panel emphasizes the implementation of measures aimed at learning professional foreign languages by the university, but YGU does not have the necessary environment; there is no cooperation with European universities, there are no international exchange and research programs, and stakeholders have no information about such opportunities.

All over the world, the COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly had a negative impact on inter-university mobility and international cooperation. However, the university can use this "relative peacefulness" in international relations to its advantage to develop a new vision and approach. This online engagement experience (meetings, seminars and many other educational events) can be further used as a way of international cooperation, which will be beneficial, for example, in terms of reducing travel costs.

Summary. Taking into consideration the fact that there is no strategic management in the field of external relations and internationalization, YGU does not have a clear external relations policy or implementation procedures and lacks institutional links for foreign cooperation, the established cooperation frameworks do not meet the needs for strategic goals in terms of exchange of experience, internationalization and research, besides, there are no clear mechanisms for studying best practices, there are no precedents for mobility or opportunities for international research programs, even after the previous accreditation process, only some documents have been developed and a department has been set up, so the process efficiency is not clear, the expert panel finds that YGU does not meet the requirements of Criterion 9.

Conclusion. Correspondence of the university's institutional capacities to the requirements of Criterion 9 is assessed as unsatisfactory.

X. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

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

Findings

10.1 The Institution has quality assurance policies and procedures.

In 2012, the Scientific Council approved the “Regulation on the activity of YGU Quality Assurance Center”, and in 2013, the strategy of “YGU Quality Assurance Center”. The documents have not been reviewed since.

Then, after the first institutional accreditation, in 2014, the Scientific Council approved the agenda for the formation and operation of the Quality Control Committee under the YGU Scientific Council, and in 2017, the “YGU Internal Quality Assurance Manual”, in which the procedures are described in general terms, without the necessary details (except for the documents provided in the appendices).

The 2012-2018 strategy envisages no action related to quality assurance processes, at the same time there are no work plans, and the strategy of YGU Quality Assurance Center is of a general nature. According to the 2019-2023 strategy, it is planned to review the quality assurance policy in 2021, but there are still no analyses on what basis and for what reasons it should be reviewed. The actions of the same strategy are mainly aimed at ensuring the transparency of the processes, accountability and increase of public responsibility.

The above-mentioned documents are used partially in practice.

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

In 2012-2014, as a result of a grant program funded by the World Bank at YGU, the Internal Quality Assurance Center was established, which still operates, and where only the director works. Due to the same program, in 2013 the material and technical base of the center was replenished and an adjoining meeting room was created. A quality control commission has been formed under the Scientific Council, working groups for carrying out self-evaluation, and people responsible for quality assurance at the faculty level.

The Quality Control Commission under the SC has a number of functions according to the relevant procedure, but during the site visit it became clear that this activity was reflected in the development of some documents.

According to the self-evaluation of institutional accreditation, lecturers and staff regularly participate in ANQA training courses and workshops, but during the site visit it became clear that such training was needed, including for the members of the self-evaluation committee.

Students are also involved in the work of the center on a voluntary basis in the issues of providing technical assistance to the center in preparing, conducting, processing and summarizing the results of the surveys organized among the stakeholders.

According to the 2019-2023 strategy, one employee is planned to be recruited. There are no approaches and experience in assessing the effectiveness of the resources provided to quality assurance processes.

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

In 2014, the Scientific Council approved the policy of ensuring the involvement of internal and external stakeholders in the quality assurance and management processes of YGU, according to which the groups of stakeholders to be involved in processes are outlined.

According to the self-evaluation, the participation of internal stakeholders in the relevant processes is carried out in several ways: the right to participate in the meetings of the Scientific Council, Student Council, and chair, as well as conducting surveys and organizing meetings-discussions. At the same time, the internal stakeholders are also involved in various surveys: evaluation of the course and academic programs, evaluation of the lecturer, surveys aimed at identifying the professional needs of the academic staff, which are conducted for the analysis of institutional capacities, and surveys among graduates and applicants.

External stakeholders are also involved at the university as members of the final attestation exams, and chairmen of the thesis and graduation paper defense committees.

During the site visit it became clear that the involvement of stakeholders in the surveys is low, many were not aware of these, and they were also not motivated to be involved in the surveys. At the same time, the frequency of the surveys and the reforms based on their results are not clear, only literature replenishment was singled out by all stakeholders as a result. Graduates stay in touch with the university, but they are not involved in quality assurance processes. Employers' involvement is reflected in expressing opinions in internship diaries, but there have been no instances of change based on them. In some cases, some employers make suggestions to the rector. The involvement of the Student Council in the processes is reflected in the promotion of surveys.

10.4 The internal quality assurance system is periodically reviewed.

The Review Package of Internal Quality Assurance System (2013) sets out general approaches to system evaluation, but no specific mechanisms; there is no quality assurance system review experience. The "Internal Quality Assurance Manual" has a section on "Monitoring of Internal Quality Assurance Processes", however, despite all this, it does not include a mechanism for reviewing the internal quality assurance system. At the same time, there are no approaches to benchmarking the internal quality assurance system.

As can be seen from the facts presented in the various criteria and document bases, the processes are mainly in the planning and in some cases implementation phase (details in the previous criteria), and a number of documents have just been developed and are still in the introduction phase.

The institutional accreditation process has an irreplaceable role in reviewing the processes. It is noticeable that a number of documents have been developed and research has been carried out, which, however, has not led to the transformation or improvement of the processes.

10.5 The internal quality assurance system provides valid and sufficient grounds for the external quality assurance processes.

The terminology of the internal quality assurance system documentation is consistent with the accepted terminology. This is now the second attempt to conduct a self-evaluation according to the institutional accreditation criteria and standards. However, the self-evaluation did not provide sufficient grounds for external evaluation, thus it was not possible to evaluate the processes taking place at the university. The data collection mechanisms are still incomplete and the existing reports do not contain enough data to carry out the necessary analyses. Incomplete performance in accordance with standards is often noticeable, even in terms of required data. The self-critical and analytical approach is too weakly manifested. The presented strengths and weaknesses do not give a comprehensive picture of the university.

10.6 The internal quality assurance system ensures the transparency of the processes at the Institution providing valid and up to date information on their quality to the internal and external stakeholders.

Transparency and publicity, according to the “Internal Quality Assurance Manual”, are principles of quality assurance policy.

In terms of providing quality information and its transparency, the university emphasizes term and annual reports submitted by the heads of chairs. The heads of the chairs, in their turn, provide the lecturers with relevant information about the work going on in the chair, quality assurance processes, problems, etc.

The results of the external audit conducted at the university, the reports of the Rector for 2018-2019, the results of the research conducted for the purpose of self-assessment of institutional capacities (2019), the report on the implementation of the strategic program for 2012-2018 (2019) are published on the official website.

However, the published materials are mainly informative in nature, and do not allow formation of an idea about the quality of the processes. Moreover, the existing information is not available in the English version of the page.

Considerations. Even though there are a number of documents in place, the unclear regulation of the processes set out by them has led to the reality that these documents have not fully come to life in the form of processes and have not become provisions regulating the processes.

YGU used its first expert accreditation process and resources and experience provided by the World Bank grant scheme of 2012-2015, which included some useful processes and documents. But

now it is the time for YGU to take further steps to improve the quality culture and exercise in the university.

Based on the advice provided in the 2013 Institutional Accreditation Expert Report, the University has established a Quality Control Committee under the SC. However, the lack of clear planning of quality processes does not allow assessment not only of the effectiveness of those processes, but also the effectiveness of the resources allocated to those processes. However, the university needs to replenish its human resources and plans to replenish the staff of the quality assurance center. The activities of the Quality Assurance Center are not enough and the center is still not able to promote the development of a quality culture.

Most research is conditioned by institutional accreditation processes. Research results are seemingly not perceived to be aimed at analysis, repetition, or continuous improvement as they are considered within individual relationships, but it is extremely important to distinguish individual responses from general quality issues more clearly.

Internal and external stakeholders are not motivated to participate in quality assurance processes and their involvement is very weak.

Quality assurance policy and existing procedures have not been reviewed, and the needs of the internal quality assurance system have not been addressed, which jeopardizes the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance system. Meanwhile, it is important that at least one PDCA cycle will be ensured after the previous accreditation.

The terminology of the internal quality assurance system may be consistent with the accepted terminology, but the imperfection of data collection mechanisms and the lack of an analytical component in the current analyses and reports make it difficult to conduct both self-evaluation and external assessment.

YGU does not publish information on the quality of procedures and processes. Access to survey results is not guaranteed for stakeholders, which could jeopardize the effectiveness of the mechanisms used.

Summary. Taking into consideration the the incomplete implementation of quality assurance policy and procedures, the weak impact of the Quality Assurance Center on the activities of the University, the weak involvement of internal and external stakeholders in quality assurance processes, the gap in assessing the effectiveness of the quality assurance system, the lack of analysis in quality assurance processes, inaccessibility of information, unclear expression of the role of different departments in the quality assurance structure and processes, imperfection of data collection mechanisms, and non-closure of the PDCA cycle, the expert panel finds that the university does not meet the requirements of Criterion 10.

Conclusion. Correspondence of the university's institutional capacities to the requirements of Criterion 10 is assessed as unsatisfactory.

EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

CRITERION	CONCLUSION
<i>1. Mission and Purposes</i>	Meets
<i>2. Governance and Administration</i>	Doesn't meet
<i>3. Academic Programs</i>	Meets
<i>4. Students</i>	Meets
<i>5. Faculty and Staff</i>	Meets
<i>6. Research and Development</i>	Doesn't meet
<i>7. Infrastructure and Resources</i>	Meets
<i>8. Societal Responsibility</i>	Meets
<i>9. External Relations and Internationalization</i>	Doesn't meet
<i>10. Internal Quality Assurance System</i>	Doesn't meet

Tigran Mnatsakanyan
Head of the Expert Panel

March 19, 2021

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. CVS OF EXPERT PANEL MEMBERT

Tigran Mnatsakanyan- In 2008 he graduated from the Armenian State University of Economics with a degree in "Management". In 2011 he was awarded the degree of Candidate of Economics. In 2011-2019 he was an assistant and a lecturer in ASUE Chair of Management. From April to September 2019, Tigran was the ASUE Vice-Rector for Scientific Affairs. He has published a number of scientific articles on management theory, history of public administration, modern issues of public administration, methodology and evaluation of efficiency assessment, issues of local self-government. He has participated in international conferences on improving the quality of higher education.

Margaret Tabler- She graduated from the University of Colorado in 1978 and the University of Oregon in 1988 with a degree of Doctor of Law. In 2007 she received a Master's degree in Oxford University. She has taught at the universities of Budapest, Bahrain, and Liverpool. She has been an expert at the African Development Bank. In 2011-2013 and since 2015 she has been a quality assurance consultant for higher education. She collaborated with the faculties of law of universities of the former Soviet Union, Central Europe, and Africa. She participated in the development of quality assurance standards and indicators, and was involved in a number of accreditation processes.

Armenuhi Sargsyan- In 2006 she graduated from Gyumri State Pedagogical Institute after M. Nalbandyan, majoring in "Mathematics". In 2011 she was awarded the degree of Candidate of Physical and Mathematical Sciences. In 2007-2011 she was a lecturer in the chair of Mathematical analysis and differential equations in Gyumri State Pedagogical Institute after M. Nalbandyan, in 2011-2014 - an assistant in the same Chair, in 2014-2017 - Associate Professor in the Chair of Higher Mathematics and Mathematics teaching methodology. Since 2018, she has been the director of the Scientific Policy, Quality Assurance and Management Center of Shirak State University. She has authored and co-authored a number of scientific articles.

Siranush Petikyan- In 2008 she graduated from Nizhny Novgorod State University after N. Lobachevsky, Faculty of Law. In 2008-2011 she was an assistant at the Chair of Civil Law and Litigation in the same university. She has been a member of the Association of Lawyers of Russia since 2009. In 2011 she graduated from the same university with a post-graduate degree in "History and Theory of Law and State and History on the Doctrines of the Law and State" and was awarded with the degree of Candidate of Juridical Sciences. In 2019, she was awarded the title of Associate Professor in "Law". In 2012-2014, she taught in Nizhny Novgorod State University after N. Lobachevsky. Since 2014 she has been the head of the Chair of Law at M. Mashtots University in Stepanakert. Since 2015 she has been the co-founder of the "Union of Young Scientists and Specialists of Artsakh" NGO. Since 2020 she has been teaching at Goris State University. She has participated in a number of conferences and courses of qualification increase, and authored scientific articles.

Anahit Karapetyan- In 2020, she graduated from the Faculty of Oriental Studies of Yerevan State University. She is currently studying in the 1st year of the Master's program in "Regional Policy" at YSU Faculty of International Relations. In 2020, she participated in the student-expert training

course of ANQA "Student Voice" project. She has been a member of the European Student Union Quality Assurance Student-Expert Network since July 2020.

APPENDIX 2.VIRTUAL SITE-VISIT AGENDA

14 December, 2020–17 December, 2020

14 December, 2020		<i>Start</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Duration</i>	<i>Input data</i>
1	Meeting with YGU Rector	9:30	10:30	60min	Meeting ID: 819 1290 0657 Passcode: 102699
2	Meeting with Vice-Rectors	11:00	12:00	60 min	Meeting ID: 861 6330 0996 Passcode: 361306
3	Meeting with the working group in charge of SER	12:30	13:30	60 min	Meeting ID: 827 6467 5692 Passcode: 945269
4	Break, Expert panel discussion	13:30	14:30	60 min	Meeting ID: 811 9749 0923 Passcode: 234836
5	Meeting with employers	15:00	16:00	60 min	Meeting ID: 863 6813 2061 Passcode: 145470
6	Document review and closed session of Expert panel	16:45	18:00	75 min	Meeting ID: 812 5081 3287 Passcode: 886943

15 December, 2020		<i>Start</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Duration</i>	<i>Input data</i>
1	Meeting with Heads of Chairs	9:30	10:30	60 min	Meeting ID: 846 1335 8049 Passcode: 544269
2	Meeting with representatives of full-time and part-time teaching staff (10-12 members)	11:00	12:00	60 min	Meeting ID: 841 6264 9732 Passcode: 556967
3	Meeting with students (10-12 members)	12:45	13:45	60 min	Meeting ID: 846 9004 0829 Passcode: 122683
4	Break, Expert panel discussion	13:45	14:45	60 min	Meeting ID: 867 6795 4349 Passcode: 890391
5	Meeting with alumni	15:00	16:00	60 min	Meeting ID: 896 0106 2765 Passcode: 544243
6	Document review and closed session of Expert panel	16:45	18:30	105 min	Meeting ID: 890 1932 1464 Passcode: 247705

16 December, 2020		<i>Start</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Duration</i>	<i>Input data</i>
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1	Meeting with representatives of Student Council and Students' Academic Union (10-12 members)		9:30	10:30	60 min	Meeting ID: 811 2742 9250 Passcode: 845216
2	Meeting with representative(s) in charge of the Academic Programme in 'Law' specialty	Meeting with representative(s) in charge of the Academic Programme in 'Finances' specialty	11:00	12:00	60 min	Meeting ID: 882 5484 5510 Passcode: 414582
3	Meeting with teaching staff in 'Law' specialty	Meeting with teaching staff in 'Finances' specialty	12:45	13:45	60 min	Meeting ID: 890 5676 4146 Passcode: 190134
4	Break, Expert panel discussion		13:45	14:45	60 min	Meeting ID: 854 1555 8599 Passcode: 592332
5	Meeting with students in 'Law' specialty	Meeting with students in 'Finances' specialty	15:00	16:00	60 min	Meeting ID: 845 7657 3003 Passcode: 218793
6	Open meeting		16:45	17:30	45 min	Meeting ID: 868 8020 9392 Passcode: 315213
7	Document review and closed session of Expert panel		18:00	19:30	90 min	Meeting ID: 886 4895 8923 Passcode: 394971

	17 December, 2020	<i>Start</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Duration</i>	<i>Input data</i>
1	Meeting with heads of departments (Educational department, Human resources management department, International cooperation department, Career Centre , IT Center, Library, , Financial department, Economic services department , Legal Clinic, Forensic Expertise Center, “ Triumph” Training Center)	09:30	10:50	80 min	Meeting ID: 858 2943 0335 Passcode: 096531
2	Meeting with representatives of Quality Assurance	11:20	12:20	60 min	Meeting ID: 810 4043 8159 Passcode: 676427
3	Break, Expert panel discussion	12:20	13:20	60 min	Meeting ID: 813 3616 8656 Passcode: 629045
4	Meeting with staff members selected by the Panel	13:30	15:00	90 min	Meeting ID: 898 5344 7106 Passcode: 140101
5	Document review and closed session of Expert panel	15:45	17:15	90 min	Meeting ID: 827 4405 9930 Passcode: 673495

6	Meeting with YGU leadership	18:00	18:30	30 min	Meeting ID: 820 3334 8556 Passcode: 730567
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APPENDIX 3. LIST OF DOCUMENTS OBSERVED

N	Name of the Document	Criteria/Standard
1.	Reports on the implementation of tasks planned in 2019, in accordance with the current strategy	1
2.	Minutes of the Scientific Council meeting of September 25, 2018	1
3.	Minutes of the meetings of the working group carrying out the development of the SP	1
4.	Documentary basis related to the development of the SP: order, minutes, project options, report	1
5.	Grounds for taking into account the needs of stakeholders when reviewing the mission	1
6.	Summary of suggestions and remarks received on the draft strategic plan	1
7.	Minutes of the Scientific Council on the discussion of the draft strategic plan	1
8.	Minutes of the Scientific Council meeting of June 20, 2017	1
9.	Action plans and reports of departments	1
10.	Work plans of the SC	1
11.	The results of the educational, scientific, financial, and economic activities of Yerevan Gladzor University and the main indicators of the draft budget for 2020	1
12.	2017-2022 implementation plan - schedule of the development Strategy of the Training and Expertise Center for Forensic Sciences	1

13.	Outcomes of activities envisaged by the 2017-2022 implementation plan - schedule of the development Strategy of the Training and Expertise Center for Forensic Sciences	1
14.	Staff list	2
15.	Minutes of the Scientific Council, during which the issues of establishment of the attached commissions were discussed / staff and procedure were approved /	2
16.	Grounds for the method of selecting lecturers in the Scientific Council	2
17.	Protocol approving the staff of the Ethics Committee	2
18.	Work plans of departments, Scientific Council, Faculty Council, and Student Council	2
19.	SSS work procedure	2
20.	Grounds for documenting the SP monitoring and its results	2
21.	SP development order	2
22.	Copies of annual plans and reports of departments chairs	2
23.	Grounds for the study of factors influencing the activities of the university	2
24.	Completed copies of the review forms of academic programs	2
25.	Grounds for cases of changing academic staff members	2
26.	Grounds for cases of changing representatives of the administrative and support staffs	2
27.	Analysis of the effectiveness of the evaluation mechanisms provided by YGU in 2019	2
28.	Results of surveys and analyses set out by PR strategy monitoring and evaluation	2

29.	Annual plans and reports of chairs and departments / for the last three years	3
30.	Minutes of the meetings / for the last three years	3
31.	Timetables	3
32.	Electronic registers	3
33.	Internship registers /one from each year/	3
34.	Books of class observations / one from each chair/	3
35.	Lecturer portfolios, lecturer plans / if any, five from each chair /	3
36.	Internship programs, completed diaries, internship reports /4 selected for 2 academic programs/	3
37.	Staff of training consultants, consultation topics and meeting schedules, book of registration / for the last 2 years /	3
38.	Staff lists of chairs	3
39.	Educational workload standards	3
40.	Lecturer training packages / training schedule, training topics /	3
41.	Lists of scientific and teaching-methodological papers of the lecturers of the chair	3
42.	Schedule of scientific seminars, and their minutes / for the last three years /	3
43.	Analyses of surveys on academic programs /for the last two years	3
44.	Grounds and protocols on the involvement of employers in the process of developing the academic programs	3
45.	Course descriptions /for the selected academic programs/	3

46.	Analyses of stakeholder needs, employer assessments and suggestions	3
47.	Report on the results of the study of the best practices of forensic laboratories in Moscow higher education institutions and relevant bodies	3
48.	Procedure for organizing and conducting knowledge tests, summarizing the results, appealing and retake	3
49.	Grounds for analyzing the effectiveness of changes in the evaluation system	3
50.	Copies of master's theses	3
51.	Opinions on master's thesis topics, basis for master's thesis topics / for selected academic programs /	3
52.	Analysis of satisfaction surveys from the evaluation system, minutes of the meetings of the chairs, the rector's office and the Scientific Council, where the issues of the efficiency of the evaluation system were discussed	3
53.	Procedure for student readmission, internal transfer, submission of subject differences and tuition fee calculation	3
54.	Mobility data, bases, and contracts	3
55.	Changes in academic programs brought forward by benchmarking, and their sources	3
56.	Preparatory course programs	4
57.	Results of 2019 student admission	4
58.	Copy of a contract between the university and the participants of the preparatory courses	4

59.	Procedure for applying to administrative and support staff	4
60.	Regulations for the activity of academic advisers	4
61.	Student guide and curriculum directory	4
62.	Annual work plans of Student Council / for the last three years	4
63.	Reports of the president of the Student Council / for the last three years /	4
64.	Work plans for additional services	4
65.	Procedure for reviewing student applications and suggestions. Examples of applications and proposals	4
66.	Procedure for the development of a legal clinic	4
67.	List and statistics of employers taking interns	4
68.	Grounds for the activity of the legal clinic (clerical work, act on the implemented work, application, survey results)	4
69.	Documents on the activities of the Training and Expertise Center for Forensic Sciences	4
70.	Statistics of student involvement in research programs / presented information dates until 2018 /	4
71.	Grounds for the selection of the academic staff hired through competition	5
72.	Grounds for the competition of the recruited administrative and teaching staff	5
73.	Minutes of the chair meeting on the discussion of the issue of selection of a candidate for the vacancy	5
74.	Grounds and documents for class observation /schedule, minutes/	5

75.	Analyses based on rating evaluations of the activities of the academic staff	5
76.	Regulation on the professional qualities of the teaching staff and the evaluation of their work	5
77.	Analysis based on questionnaires of lecturer performance evaluation	5
78.	Minutes of the meetings of the Chair and the Scientific Council, in which the results of the survey on the lecturer's efficiency and quality are discussed	5
79.	Grounds and analysis of surveys on online education	5
80.	Analyses based on the results of identifying the needs of the academic staff	5
81.	Policy for organizing and implementing trainings of the teaching and support staffs	5
82.	Procedure, indicators, and bases for incentives of academic staff	5
83.	Basics of the activity of the department of continuing education	5
84.	Policy for professional advancement of the academic staff	5
85.	List and statistics of honorary titles of academic staff	5
86.	Grounds for the implementation of the objectives and indicators set by the strategy of 2019-2023	6
87.	Chair research strategies, master's thesis topics, PhD thesis topics	6
88.	Published articles and monographs in YGU / for the last three years / Publication data in high-ranking journals	6

89.	Minutes of the chair meeting on the approval of the topics of students' scientific papers	6
90.	Financial statements of 2014-2019	7
91.	Analysis of identified needs concerning resources at the level of academic programs	7
92.	Regulations on Information and documentation management	7
93.	Policy for providing additional educational and consultation services to the public	8
94.	List of bodies to which the "Nor Gladzor" monthly journal is provided	8
95.	Copies of booklets	8
96.	Data on the number of participants in the training courses (without YGU internal stakeholders)	8
97.	Grounds and documents for establishing contacts, implementing collaborative projects, including the implementation of joint academic programs, exchanging the experience of academic staff members, organizing lectures and reports with the participation of invited professors from other universities, as well as organizing business trips of lecturers to different universities.	9
98.	Schedule of the strategic plan of the Department of External Relations and Internationalization / for the last three years	9
99.	Minutes of the Scientific Council, where issues related to internationalization were discussed	9
100.	Grounds for examples and results of cooperation and mobility, as a result of contracts signed with foreign universities	9

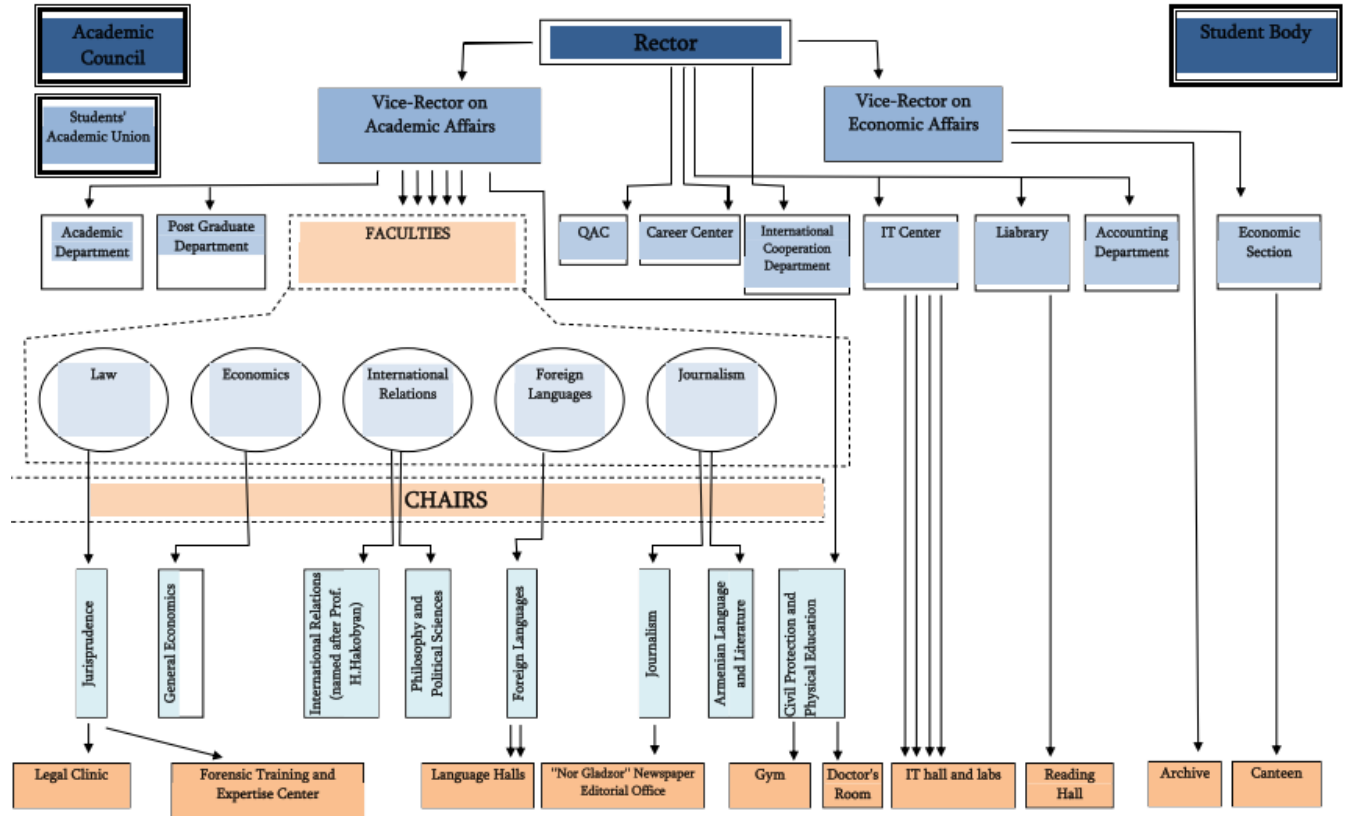
101.	Grounds, analyses of the implementation of measures aimed at improving the level of foreign languages Indicators of participation of internal stakeholders in the events, indicators of improving the level of language proficiency	9
102.	Comparative analysis with internal quality assurance systems of other universities	10
103.	The policy of ensuring the involvement of internal and external stakeholders in quality assurance and management processes	10
104.	Completed copies of survey forms among employers	10
105.	Examples, bases, analyses of needs identification by stakeholders	10

APPENDIX 4. RESOURCES OBSERVED⁷

1. Legal clinic
2. Courtroom
3. Auditoriums, SMART auditoriums, computer auditoriums, computer auditoriums, computer laboratories
4. Discussion rooms
5. Hall
6. Conference hall
7. Library
8. Reading hall
9. Cafe
10. Cafeteria
11. Open field of Volleyball
12. Gym
13. Dispensary
14. Security checkpoint

⁷ Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the resources of the institution were viewed online in an online tour by means of video footage submitted in advance by the institution and during the site visit.

APPENDIX 5. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF YEREVAN GLADZOR UNIVERSITY



APPENDIX 6. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

KPI- key performance indicators

YGU- Yerevan Gladzor University

AP- academic program

PEI- professional education institution

QA- quality assurance

ANQA – National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance

NFQ- National Framework of Qualifications

AS- academic staff

SP- strategic plan

SSS- Student Scientific Society

SC- Student Council

SS -support staff