

**“NATIONAL CENTER FOR PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE”
FOUNDATION**



**EXPERT PANEL REPORT
INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION OF
YEREVAN STATE HUMANITARIAN-TECHNICAL COLLEGE**

Yerevan – 2023

INTRODUCTION

The institutional accreditation of Yerevan State Humanitarian-Technical College (hereinafter referred TLI or College) is carried out based on the application submitted by the College. The process of institutional accreditation is organized and coordinated by “National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance” Foundation (hereinafter ANQA), guided by regulation on “State Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and Academic Programmes in RA” set by RA Government Decree N 978-Ն (dated June 30, 2011) and by Decree N 959-Ն on “Approval of RA Standards for Professional Education Accreditation” (dated June 30, 2011).

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

The accreditation process was funded by the College.

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

The hereby report comprises the results of the evaluation of the institutional capacities of the TLI by the State Accreditation Criteria and Standards.

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

The expertise of Yerevan State Humanitarian-Technical College institutional capacities was carried out by the independent expert panel formed by the requirements of “Regulation on the Formation of the Expert Panel”, «National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance» Foundation. The evaluation was conducted according to 10 institutional accreditation criteria set by the RA Government Decree N 959-Ն, dated June 30, 2011.

The mission of YSHTC is to create an educational environment where, through specially selected faculty and modern technical capabilities, students will receive a high-quality education by the imperatives of the time, will strive for continuous professional improvement, will be equipped with the abilities and skills corresponding to the standards of secondary professional education, and will graduate from the institution fully prepared to enter the labor market.

The 2022-2027 Strategic Plan of the College (hereinafter referred to as the SP) The development strategy of TLI is built based on the mission, development vision, strategic goals, objectives, and actions related to them, which is expressed by a clear logic of the cause-and-effect relationship between these components of the plan and derives from the harmony of the Charter and the Strategic Plan of TLI. At the same time, there are differences in wording and content between the strategic goals defined in the Strategic Plan and the goals of the Strategic Plan, and their evaluation criteria are not clear and measurable. For the problems mentioned in the SP plan schedule, the possible risks are listed without their management. An analysis of the risks threatening the activities included in the action plan attached to the SP has not been carried out, and methods for managing them have not been developed.

One of the five priorities of the TLI Strategic Plan is the implementation of effective management, according to which the goal is to improve the management and financial policies of the institution. To achieve this goal, the College is working to solve the problem of improving its financial planning, trying to make a targeted and more efficient distribution of funds under the conditions of limited funds.

The College is trying to solve the problem of developing high-quality human resources by introducing procedures for continuous personnel training, and to improve the overall management system, it is trying to increase the efficiency of its structural divisions. The current management of YSHTC has declared the improvement of the management system a priority, the efforts to ensure more inclusive and participatory management are visible, the working atmosphere is

positive, and the relations are constructive.

All eight academic programs of YSHTC are based on state educational standards, educational outcomes, goals, thematic content, and performance standards describing academic programs and courses defined by the state. All academic programs implemented at the college are consistent in their nature and content with the mission of the institution and comply with the NQF and state educational standards. Elective courses and their selection procedures are not presented in the curricula of academic programs. In the three observed programs, there were no unified documents developed by the AP, specifications, which should reflect the relevance of the AP and the justification of compliance with the labor market requirements, the purpose of the academic program and the problems arising from it, the balance of theoretical and practical parts, the mapping of expected learning outcomes, brief descriptions of the taught modules and the justification of their logical sequence. The same problem is observed in the mappings of modules and learning outcomes of all the APs. In the mapping of learning outcomes, which mainly reflects the outcomes of professional modules, general education subjects and modules are also included, and in some cases, there is no causal or logical connection between the learning outcome and the corresponding subject. There are two general shortcomings in the modular programs, such as that most programs are not provided with educational resources, the assessment method is not visible in the assessment sheets of the learning outcomes of the modules, and the threshold for overcoming the learning outcomes is not defined.

Lecturers with relevant qualifications and pedagogical experience mainly teach the academic programs of YSHTC. Lecturers regularly participate in trainings organized by relevant state bodies and partner organizations. From the point of view of professional development, the issue of raising the qualifications of lecturers remains open. Therefore, it is of paramount importance for the College to implement a comprehensive program of faculty development, including professional skills, foreign language skills, research skills, IT skills, and the ability to apply for grants and other programs. At the same time, during the site visit, the desire and enthusiasm of the College lecturers for measures to improve their qualifications were noted, as well as a certain initiative in implementing measures aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the courses they teach.

The continuous improvement of infrastructures and the quantitative and qualitative improvement of resources are among the strategic priorities of YSHTC. However, the other

strategic goals of the College are somewhat overshadowed. The minimum volume of defined outcomes of academic programs is achievable under the conditions of existing resources and infrastructure. The acquisition of educational literature is being carried out. During the site visit it was obvious that, within the limits of possibility, renovation works on classrooms were carried out and are being carried out.

An internal quality assurance system has been newly implemented, which conducts surveys aimed at identifying the needs of the College's stakeholders. However, the QA system still needs improvement. To implement the most competitive academic programs, the College should more intensively monitor and review the latter by conducting benchmarking, which has not yet been done and is only in the planning stage.

The college should take active steps in the direction of its foreign policy in the region and other sectors, including competitors, through the regular organization of joint programs and events, as well as in the direction of forming and developing relations with society.

College strategic planning should be based on a clear methodology, including government priorities, in-depth analysis of institutional problems, implementation of the previous Strategic Plan, etc. Particular attention should be paid to deriving departmental plans from the strategic plan, establishing quantitative and qualitative reliable indicators for performance evaluation, and setting deadlines and clear responsibilities.

Strengths of the Institution:

1. A clearly defined mission.
2. Reflecting the main priorities and pressing issues in the College's Strategic Plan.
3. Motivated administrative and teaching staff.
4. Coordinated teamwork.
5. Efforts of the College towards the maintenance and upgrading of infrastructure.
6. Positive attitude of the college in terms of performing the necessary basic work in the direction of development: improving the management system, developing human resources, and introducing, and developing a quality assurance system.
7. The increased number of students

Weaknesses of the Institution:

1. Incomplete implementation of strategic planning and accountability systems for college development.

2. Incomplete use of existing mechanisms for monitoring and ensuring the quality of academic programs.
3. Student Council's passivity in addressing students' academic needs.
4. The lack of a strategy for the formation and development of relations with the college community. The academic programs and important documents are not available to the community.
5. Low level of knowledge of foreign languages by faculty and students.
6. Lack of clear and effective quality assurance policies, strategies, and procedures.

Main recommendations:

Mission and Purposes

- With the involvement of a wide range of internal and external stakeholders, improve the schedule for the implementation of activities attached to the College's strategic development plan, defining clear and measurable indicators for quantitative and qualitative assessment of results.
- Define the goals and objectives of YSHTC, in cooperation with employers and other stakeholders, conduct an in-depth study of state priorities and labor market requirements in the field of college specialities.

Governance and Administration

- Clarify the connections between departments in the organizational structure of the college for the regulation of the scope of cooperation.
- Define the functions of administrative employees in their job descriptions to avoid repetition of their duties and to increase the efficiency of management.
- Revise the format of plans and reports, making them more analytical and interrelated with the objectives of the SP.
- Ensure the active participation of internal and external stakeholders in management processes.
- Develop and implement mechanisms for evaluating and monitoring the effectiveness of the college's activities.
- Apply the PDCA cycle of quality management on the basis of management processes.

Academic programs

- Develop and finalize the specifications of the APs, introduce a clear policy for the implementation of AP benchmarking, create opportunities for internal stakeholder mobility, expand the scope of cooperation with employers by involving them in the improvement of APs, as well as improve the monitoring policies and procedures of APs.
- Improve the existing assessment system and increase the level of students' awareness of the assessment methodology.
- Revise the system of organizing selective courses, providing the opportunity for real choice

and the formation of additional narrow professional abilities.

- Expand the use of interactive teaching methods using technical means to promote student-centered learning.
- Review and clarify the internship programs with the employers, making the actual work in accordance with the outcomes of the APs.

Students

- Diversify the mechanisms of recruiting applicants, emphasizing the involvement of students with secondary education.
- Organize additional counselling classes that will contribute to students' learning.
- Strengthen the Career Center-employer-graduate connection, contributing to the realization of graduates in the labor market.
- Clarify the process of forming and authorizing the Student Council, introducing prerequisites for student autonomy and the forming of a representative body.

Faculty and staff

- Develop and implement a clear procedure for surveying and interviewing for faculty vacancies.
- Define clear requirements for the professional qualities of the faculty according to academic programs and professional modules.
- Involving employers and other organizations in continuing the professional training of faculty.
- Improve the professional, pedagogical and methodological training of lecturers based on the problems identified during class observations.

Research and Development

- Involving employers and other organizations to continue providing professional training for faculty.
- Deepen the research component in the educational process of the college, to activate cooperation with employers.
- Study and develop the possibilities of implementing the results of the research conducted at TLI in the teaching and learning process.

Infrastructure and Resources

- Effectively plan and manage financial resources, contributing to the continued development of the College.
- Improve library infrastructure by adding professional, up-to-date and digitized literature.

- Create laboratories with appropriate furniture.

Societal Responsibility

- Align the College's internal accountability schedule with the College's structural scheme, including quantitative and qualitative analyzes in the reports.
- Promote the College's official website, using it as a tool for ensuring accountability, transparency, and feedback to external stakeholders.
- Plan and implement activities aimed at transferring values and knowledge among external stakeholders.

External Relations and Internationalization

- Develop a strategy for the development of external relations and internationalization of the college's activities and procedures for its implementation.
- Develop cooperation with other RA colleges to gain good experience in international cooperation and mobility.
- Expand the scope of cooperation with employers to introduce the dual education system.
- Organize foreign language professional competitions at intra-college and inter-college levels among students.

Internal Quality Assurance System

- Fill the position of Education Quality responsibility, contributing both to the stability of the employee and to the professional progress in the field of quality assurance.
- Clarify the College's vision for quality assurance processes and develop mechanisms to involve internal and external stakeholders in quality assurance processes.
- Create foundations for the formation of a unified system of quality culture, guided by the PDCA cycle.
- Edit data collection, processing, and analysis tools to meet College needs and specifications.
- Implement reliable mechanisms that will ensure transparency and publicity regarding the College's quality assurance processes for internal and external stakeholders.

Chair of Expert Panel

02.10.2023

DESCRIPTION OF EXTERNAL REVIEW

COMPOSITION OF EXPERT PANEL

The external evaluation of the institutional capacities of Yerevan State Humanitarian-Technical College was carried out by the following expert panel.

- 1. Andranik Arakelyan**-Lecturer of the Department of Thermal Energy and Environmental Protection of the National Polytechnic University of Armenia, associate professor, head of the expert panel.
- 2. Armine Matentsyan** - lecturer of the Department of Tourism and Services of the European University, member of the expert panel.
- 3. Marine Galubyan** - "Sanare-Pharm" LLC, accountant, member of the expert panel
- 4. Artur Davtyan** - 3rd-year student of YSU "Applied Statistics and Data Science" speciality, member of the European Student Union quality assurance platform, student-expert of the expert panel.

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

The works of the expert panel were coordinated by Lilit Ghazaryan, a specialist of the Secretariat Department of the ANQA.

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

PROCESS OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW

The College applied for state institutional accreditation by submitting to ANQA (17.01.2023) filled the application form, presented copies of the license, and respective appendices.

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

After deciding to accept the application (27.01.2023) an agreement was signed between ANQA and College. The self-evaluation of the college was carried out by the working group formed by the order of the director of the College.

Self-evaluation

Considering that the educational institution is going through institutional accreditation for

the first time and is in the initial stage of the formation of the culture of quality assurance in college, ANQA has conducted a four day online workshops with accredited VET institutions. The workshops aimed to prepare colleges for the organisational stages of the accreditation process. The workshops took place on January 2023, and were attended by TLI's employees. During the workshops, the interpretations of the institutional accreditation criteria and standards, the electronic questionnaire to be filled in for applying for institutional accreditation, and the features of self-evaluation and SWOT analysis were presented. The educational institution carried out a SWOT analysis, which was discussed with the employees of the ANQA. During the implementation of the self-evaluation, current discussions were organized by the ANQA to clarify the issues.

The self-evaluation of the college's institutional capacity was presented on 19.05.2023. The self-evaluation was carried out by 20 employees of the institution. External stakeholders did not participate in the self-evaluation process. Each criterion was analyzed by a college staff member considering the work orientation and criterion requirements. The self-evaluation was mainly descriptive and general, which did not allow the experts to get an idea of the real situation in the college during the preliminary evaluation.

Preparatory phase

After the submission of the self-evaluation report and the attached documents by the TLI, the ANQA coordinator observed the package to reveal its correspondence to the requirements of the ANQA. The self-evaluation and the attached documents were provided to the expert panel for the preliminary evaluation. The composition of the expert panel was agreed upon with the College and was confirmed by the order of the ANQA Director.

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

- The main functions of the members of the expert panel,
- The ethics and techniques of holding meetings and doing inquiries,
- Defining the specifics of the VET sector and interpretation of accreditation criteria according to the VET sector
- Preliminary assessment as a stage of preparation of the expert report, the main requirements for the report.

Having reviewed the self-evaluation report and documents of the college, the expert panel

conducted the preliminary evaluation. The expert panel also participated in the final certification exams of the College (Tourism on 16.06.2023. 06/09/2023, Finance 06/21/2023/). According to the format, the lists of questions and objectives for different departments and target groups, as well as additional documents have been prepared.

Within the scheduled time, the expert panel summarized the results of the preliminary evaluation, and the Chair of the expert panel, together with the process coordinator, set the schedule of the site visit.

According to the ANQA manual, the intended close and open meetings with all the target groups, documents observation were included in the schedule, professional meetings etc. The members of the expert panel also had professional meetings with the AP responsible presented by the College, faculty, and students. Before the professional meetings, the experts studied the assignments given to the students and conducted class observations to understand the extent to which these assignments are aimed at achieving the expected outcomes.

Preparatory visit

On June 26, 2023, a preparatory visit to YSHTC took place. The ANQA coordinator, the head of the institutional program accreditation department and the head of the expert panel were present at the meeting. During the meeting, the schedule of the site visit was introduced and agreed upon with the college as well as discussed and mutually agreed decisions were made regarding the technical, organizational, and information issues of the site visit, the behaviour, and ethical norms of the meeting participants.

Site visit

The expert panel site visit took place from June 3-7, 2023. One day before the scheduled visit (02.07.2023), all members of the expert panel and the coordinator had a closed meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the College according to the standards, clarify the questions to be asked to the target groups, and discuss the procedure of the meetings and the next steps. The site visit started and ended with meetings with the director of the College. All the participants of the meetings were selected at random from a pre-provided list. All scheduled meetings were held. During the visit, the expert panel conducted a study of documents. At the end of each working day, the expert panel closed meetings were held to discuss the results of the interim expert assessment, and at the end of the visit, the main results were summarized.

The conclusion on the criteria was reached by the expert panel because of discussions and analyses of all members, always applying the principle of consensus.

Expert panel report

The expert panel members and the ANQA coordinator prepared a preliminary version of the expert report. After approval by the members of the expert panel, the preliminary report was provided to the college on 14.09.2023. The college did not send responses to the preliminary report. Then, the expert panel prepared the final version of the report on 02.10.2023.

Lilit Ghazaryan

Coordinator of the Expert Panel

02.10.2023

EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

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