

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



**EXPERT PANEL REPORT
INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION OF
ARARAT STATE COLLEGE**

Yerevan – 2021

INTRODUCTION

The institutional accreditation of Ararat State College (hereinafter ASC) is carried on the initiative of the education institution and based on its application. The process of institutional accreditation was organised and coordinated by the “National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance” Foundation (hereinafter ANQA).

ANQA was guided by the Regulation on “State Accreditation of RA Education Institutions and Their Academic programmes” set by the RA Government Decree N978-N, dated June 30, 2011, as well as the Decree N959-N, dated June 30, 2011, on “Approval of RA Standards for Professional Education Accreditation”.

The expertise was carried out by the independent expert panel formed in accordance with the requirements set by the ANQA Regulation on “Formation of the Expert Panel”. The expert panel consisted of 4 local experts.

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

Institutional accreditation is aimed not only at external quality assurance, but also at the continuous improvement of the quality of governance and study programmes. Particular emphasis was placed on the cooperation of the institution with employers and impact on the content of education. The hereby report comprises the results of the evaluation of the institutional capacities of the college in accordance with the State Accreditation Criteria and Standards.

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SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

EXPERT EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES ACCORDING TO RA PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

The expert evaluation was carried out by the independent expert panel formed in accordance with the requirements set by the ANQA Regulation on “Formation of the Expert Panel”. The evaluation was carried out according to 10 accreditation criteria set by the RA Government Decree N959-N, dated June 30, 2011.

While conducting the evaluation, the expert panel took into account that ASC, in accordance with its mission, is a "Primary (Craftsmanship) and Secondary Vocational Education Institution, whose activities are aimed at providing economic, pedagogical and service education. The "TLI strives to provide quality education, to implement innovative pro-student education, to promote the principles of excellence among learners and employees." The core values of ASC are student achievements, affordable education, high quality teaching staff, academic freedom and integrity, social environment, and social partnership.

The expert panel notes that ASC's activities in the field of education and its policies are generally in line with the institution's mission and the NQF in providing secondary vocational education. However, the TLI stakeholders consider it a competitive advantage for their students to continue their education at universities. The approach of continuing education is strengthened among students. Of course, while not ignoring the significance and potential of the latter, it should be emphasised that the prospects of regional socio-economic development require the training of specialists in "Finance", "Accounting" and "Service Organisation", which will be in demand in the labour market.

ASC "Winemaking and Juice Production", "Cosmetics and Makeup Art", "Digital Art and Design" vocational education programmes are quite effective; they can train specialists with practical skills for the local job market.

ASC external stakeholders are involved in the TLI governing bodies, but their practical suggestions for developing student hands-on skills are still in the planning stage. The expert panel welcomes the fact that ASC is open to suggestions from outside stakeholders, but work needs to be done to develop the practical skills required by employers for students. In this context, it should be noted that there are no employer teachers at TLI, which may hinder the realisation of the goal.

The expert panel considers that, in general, in the current conditions, ASC resources ensure the implementation of study programmes. At the same time, it is important that the TLI, although financed from the state budget of the Republic of Armenia, has extra-budgetary funds, which are derived from the tuition fees of students, short-term programmes, and seeks ways to provide resources necessary for the ASC development. The expert panel got acquainted with the material and technical resources of the TLI with videos, where the subject classrooms are generally in good condition, there is a hall for organising events, a gym, a library, a medical room, and laboratories. Confidence in ASC is enhanced by the TLI's efforts to create a safe and secure environment, although no assessments of satisfaction with the educational environment have been made. It is advisable for the TLI and employers to use their human and logistics resources in a joint strategy.

Since 2018, ASC has developed and approved procedures and regulations ensuring management processes, developed the 2018-2023 development plan (hereinafter referred to as DP). It is commendable that the TLI sees the effectiveness of process management in developing constructive collaboration among governance, student, pedagogical, and other councils, but now, collaboration mechanisms among ASC councils do not work. In general, strategic management and planning are not carried out effectively in the TLI. It is true that annual development plans and programmes are made, relevant reports are written, but those short-term plans and their performance reports are not comparable, that is, what was planned together with quantitative and qualitative analysis of its implementation should be included in the reports. The principle of QA management in the TLI is in the planning and implementation stage; assessments, as well as issues to be improved have not been set yet. When the period starts to run smoothly, the efficiency of the management system can already be demonstrated, and the processes will have continuous improvements. Whereas ASC is satisfied only with procedures and regulations, reports are descriptive and include descriptions of the organisational work, contain almost no analysis, quality assurance period has no summaries, no improvement issues are visible. In this context, the monitoring mechanisms do not work. As a result, strategic management approaches are also not maintained, endangering ASC long-term strategic management.

The expert panel positively assesses that the programmes studied correspond to the SAC and are described in detail according to the expected learning outcomes of the qualifications awarded. At the same time, the expert panel observed that there is a problem of providing practical skills in "Finance", "Accounting", and "Service Organisation" specialities. During the online meetings, the employers especially emphasised it, expressing a wish for the students to master the AS, the practical skills of the banking sector, some analytical methods. Thematic overlaps in academic curricula, as well as overlaps in assignments, essays, and independent work topics, directly jeopardise the effectiveness of academic curricula. At the same time, academic programmes and modular programmes have not improved generally, they have never been compared to other TLI academic and modular programmes; moreover, in compiling them, teachers have used HEI study programmes and professional literature. As a result, the provision of NQF Level 5 is endangered. As employers are not actively involved in the development and implementation of academic and modular programmes, they are actually involved in educational processes during internships, they do not teach at the college, and surveys are not conducted among them, the needs of the local labour market do not become apparent in the implementation efficiency of the TLI academic programmes. As a result, education at ASC is on a theoretical basis and continuing education becomes a competitive advantage. The TLI, on the other hand, needs to train professionals with practical skills in line with the labour market.

The flow of students at ASC is stable and has been growing in recent years. The TLI regularly conducts student recruitment activities and has introduced student surveys. The course instructors are quite active in identifying student problems and their solutions, in addition, the position of pedagogue-psychologist has been formed in the TLI, and the latter regularly meets with students. The TLI also has a Career Center, which has just started to deal with student-promoting processes.

One of the strong points of ASC is the stable teaching staff, which includes young and middle-aged teachers with pedagogical experience and interesting methods, who regularly

participate in trainings organized by NCVETD. However, few trainers participated in the trainings organised by ASC, there is a need to organise trainings also with employers. At the college, the teachers can teach different modular programmes in different specialities at the same time, thus endangering the efficiency and stability of the course. It is noteworthy that the TLI teachers are almost entirely involved in QA processes.

ASC has a "Strategic Research Plan" but does not distinguish between long-term strategy and mid-term, short-term plans. In this context, research for secondary vocational education can be viewed in the context of analysis, and it can be noted that some assignments given to students at ASC contain analytical elements; teachers and students organise events related to business research, marketing analysis. However, the mentioned good practice is not spread and, in general, there are no instructions aimed at developing creative thinking.

Expert panel positively assesses that the TLI has a built-in reporting system, and if analysis is presented in the reports, it can boost the efficiency of ASC. The TLI website and Facebook page are available to provide feedback to the public, and since 2017, the connection with alumni has been maintained. It should be noted that internal and external stakeholders have a sufficient participation in the events organised at ASC.

ASC has a wide range of local cooperation, and cooperates with representations of international organisations. ASC seeks to expand its external relations, cooperation with local and international organisations, and continues to take active steps to attract external stakeholders. It is positive that the level of knowledge of Russian among TLI teachers is assessed as good; during the visit, it was found out that the knowledge of English among teachers and students is assessed as satisfactory.

The expert panel welcomes ASC efforts to introduce an internal quality assurance system and quality culture. The work done since 2018, which refers to the development and operation of procedures, regulations, has laid the foundation for the establishment of a quality assurance system. It can contribute to the regulation and continuous improvement of educational processes at the TLI. It is positive that separate committees have been formed to manage the quality assurance processes, and teachers with professional potential are involved in the work. The above-mentioned contributes to the establishment of the TLI quality assurance structure and the achievement of professional advancement of the employees. It should be noted that these processes are still in the development process; great efforts and investments are required to make the planned processes a reality in the context of implementation of analysis, clear planning and improvement mechanisms.

THE STRENGTHS OF THE INSTITUTION ARE THE FOLLOWING:

- 1) Clarity of ASC strategic goals and objectives.
- 2) Existence of appropriate material and technical base for the implementation of study programmes.
- 3) Involvement of private sector employers in "Winemaking and Juice Production" academic programme.
- 4) Steady flow of students.
- 5) Stable teaching staff, the presence of young teachers.
- 6) The policy of distribution of financial resources, the availability of extra-budgetary

funds.

- 7) Existence of a safe and secure educational environment.
- 8) Introduced accountability system.
- 9) Wide range of regional cooperation.
- 10) Implementation of quality assurance system and involvement of teachers in QA processes.
- 11) Existence of motivation for the creation and development of quality culture among the members of the Quality Assurance Committee.

THE WEAKNESSES OF THE INSTITUTION ARE THE FOLLOWING:

- 1) Inefficiency of strategic management.
- 2) Training of specialists with few practical skills in accordance with the requirements of employers.
- 3) Lack of governance efficiency, absence of planned activities.
- 4) Low employer participation in the management of academic programmes.
- 5) Lack of monitoring policy for all processes, including academic programmes.
- 6) Lack of surveys among employers, teachers and alumni.
- 7) Lack of opportunities for students to develop analytical thinking and creative thinking.
- 8) Lack of cooperation with other TLIs.
- 9) Lack of employer-teachers.
- 10) Lack of joint strategy with employers. Lack of qualitative analysis of the TLI activities.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS:

Mission and Purposes

- 1) To improve the involvement of internal and external stakeholders in the development and implementation of the strategic goals set out in the ASC DP.
- 2) To make the results of the TLI mission and goals assessible for the short term, to carry out qualitative analyses.
- 3) To improve the accountability system, make it comparable with analytical plans.
- 4) To make the TLI goals more in line with existing capabilities.

Governance and Administration

- 1) To improve the surveys, ensure data collection on all stakeholders.
- 2) To clarify and regulate the functions of the middle management units, the chairs, strengthen the interdepartmental connections, the interconnection of academic programmes.
- 3) To develop and implement long-term and short-term plan monitoring policy.
- 4) To improve the governance system by strengthening hierarchical ties.
- 5) To base the decision-making on data collection, processing and analysis.

Academic Programmes

- 1) To review the TLI mission, including the academic programmes introduced in recent years.
- 2) To discuss draft versions of modular programmes (MPs), take into account the opinion of

- employers and approve in the ASC governing board.
- 3) To develop a policy for the selection of teaching and learning methods in accordance with the expected learning outcomes of academic programmes.
 - 4) To clarify assessment mechanisms.
 - 5) To compare academic programmers and MPs with other TLIs operating in Armenia.
 - 6) To develop mechanisms for monitoring academic programmes, make academic programmes effective and an integral part of TLI planning.
 - 7) To neutralise overlaps of MP topics with assignments.
 - 8) To incorporate employer's suggestions for practical skill acquisition in MPs.

Students

- 1) To improve the admission process, upload materials about the specialities on ASC official website.
- 2) To improve mechanisms for identifying educational needs.
- 3) To improve assignments on analytical skills.
- 4) To strengthen the activities of the Student Council and ensure its independence as an autonomous body.
- 5) To improve communication with alumni, activate the work of the Career Center.
- 6) Increase student participation in the ASC management processes.

Faculty and staff

- 1) To adopt the competition procedure for the selection of qualified teachers, teaching assistants, administrative staff, clarify the requirements for the teacher of a specific subject (abilities, skills, scope of functions).
- 2) To involve practical trainers in the educational process, develop a clear policy for their involvement.
- 3) To develop clear mechanisms and tools for identifying the needs of the teaching staff.
- 4) To organise professional trainings for the teaching staff (for separate specialities).
- 5) To use different forms of encouragement.
- 6) To develop a staff development and sustainability programme.

Research and Development

- 1) To develop clear mechanisms, as a result of which analytical thinking and creative thinking among students and teachers will develop.
- 2) To include in the academic programmes and make the analytical assignments given to the students, individual and team work, essays, reports, applicable, taking into account the requirements of the employers.
- 3) To introduce a mechanism to encourage teachers for the implementation of research work.
- 4) To strengthen cooperation with local and international organisations, using the existing potential to study and localise best practices.
- 5) To organise exchange of local and international experience in the context of research.

Infrastructure and Resources

- 1) To establish the necessary professional laboratories.

- 2) To improve building conditions by providing a safer environment.
- 3) To develop a resource replenishment policy for the effective management of academic programmes.
- 4) To develop a policy of joint use of resources with employers.
- 5) To develop and introduce mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of resources and educational environment.

Societal Responsibility

- 1) To develop and introduce reporting regulations, improve the quality of reporting.
- 2) To improve the website and Facebook page in terms of providing information and feedback.
- 3) To regulate the mechanisms of knowledge transfer to the society.

External Relations and Internationalisation

- 1) To improve external relations with employers, develop and introduce a joint strategy, ensure the use of human and logistics resources together with employers.
- 2) To strengthen cooperation with alumni and employers.
- 3) To take steps to increase the level of knowledge of a foreign language, in particular English.
- 4) To activate cooperation with international organisations.

Internal Quality Assurance System

- 1) To make the QA concept more measurable in terms of feasibility, clarify the implementation deadlines and responsible people, and reveal the results.
- 2) To plan the QA processes, activate internal stakeholders and involve external stakeholders.
- 3) To compare the QA concept with other TLI concepts or QA policies.
- 4) To organise regular trainings and improvement works for the QA staff.
- 5) To improve the survey system, publication of results.

Date: 29.01.2021



Armenuhi Mheryan
Chair of Expert Panel

DESCRIPTION OF EXTERNAL REVIEW

COMPOSITION OF EXPERT PANEL¹

The external assessment of ASC institutional capacity was carried out by the following expert panel:

- Armenuhi Mheryan – Chair of Expert Panel, Armenian State University of Economics, Lecturer at "Finance" Chair, Candidate of Economics / 2006 /, Associate Professor / 2010 /, Armenia.
- Kristine Hakobyan – Member of Expert Panel, Kotayk Regional State College SNCO, Chief of Staff, Lecturer in Tourism, Armenia.
- Lusine Sahakyan – Member of Expert Panel, Vardenis “Badeyan” State College, Lecturer in Economics and Informatics, Armenia.
- Mariam Gyurjyan – Member of Expert panel, Student-Expert, Yerevan State University, Faculty of Economics, 3rd year student, Armenia.

The composition of the panel was agreed upon with the college.

The works of the expert panel were coordinated by ANQA Specialist Lilit Ghazaryan.

The translation was provided by Kristine Ohanyan, Senior Executive Assistant at the Chair of Translation Studies, Yerevan State University.

All the members of expert panel including the coordinator signed a non-disclosure agreement. All the members of expert panel and Secretariat have signed independence and confidentiality agreements.

¹ APPENDIX 1. CVS OF EXPERT PANEL MEMBERS

Application for State Accreditation. To obtain state institutional accreditation, on July 9, 2020, ASC submitted an application according to the set format with copies of the license and orders.

The ANQA Secretariat reviewed the information provided in the application and the accompanying documents.

Following the decision on the application (July 23, 2020), a tripartite agreement was signed among the TLI, ANQA and MoESCS. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war, with a two-week delay, the TLI, according to the ANQA's set format, submitted the the institutional capacity self-assessment in Armenian and the package of accompanying documents.

The self-assessment of the college was carried out by a working group formed by the order of the director of the TLI.

Self-Assessment. As ASC was in the process of institutional accreditation for the first time, the process was difficult for the college to implement, so ANQA did some work with the TLI to prepare it for the self-assessment and accreditation process. In June, ASC conducted a 2-week SWOT analysis according to 10 accreditation criteria. After the presentation of the SWOT analysis, the TLI nominated 2 employees, together with whom the ANQA staff reviewed the SWOT analysis submitted by the college for a month, and identified the main issues. Staff were instructed on how to perform the SWOT analysis and what the college should pay particular attention to within the criteria during the self-assessment. After reviewing the SWOT analysis, the college staff, as experts, together with the ANQA staff conducted a monitoring at ASC on July 6, 2021.

The ASC institutional capacity self-assessment was presented on October 16, 2020. The self-assessment was performed by the TLI staff - teachers, support and managerial staffs. External and internal stakeholders (students) did not participate in the self-assessment process. Each criterion was analysed by the TLI staff, taking into account the scope of work and criteria requirements.

The self-report was generally consistent despite some technical and content shortcomings.

Preparatory Phase. Following the submission of the TLI institutional capacity report and the accompanying documents, the ANQA coordinator reviewed them to verify compliance with the ANQA requirements.

All documents attached to the self-assessment were provided to the expert panel for preliminary evaluation, the composition of which was agreed in advance with the college and approved by order of the ANQA director.

In order to prepare the expert panel for the work, to ensure the efficiency of the processes, trainings were conducted on the following topics:

1. the main functions of the expert panel members;
2. defining the specifics of the VET field and interpreting the accreditation criteria in accordance with the secondary professional field;
3. preliminary assessment as a stage of preparation of the expert report, the main requirements for the report.

The expert panel, reviewing the college self-assessment and accompanying documentation package, conducted a preliminary evaluation according to the format,

preparing a list of required documents for further review², as well as a list of issues and questions, indicating the relevant departments or target groups. The expert panel summarised the results of the preliminary evaluation within the stipulated time, and the Head of the Institutional and Programme Accreditation Subdivision made a schedule of the site visit.

Guided by the ANQA Accreditation Manual, the schedule includes expert meetings with all groups, open and closed meetings, document reviews, parallel meetings, etc. ANQA has added two parallel meetings as a novelty during the site visits to the college, during which the expert panel is divided, each expert according to the professional orientation. Each expert (except for the student-expert, she joined one of the other experts) had the opportunity to have professional meetings with the teachers of the study programmes presented by the college, the responsables for the study programmes and students. Prior to the professional meetings, the experts, within the scope of their specialties, studied the assignments given to the students within the modules to understand the extent to which those assignments are aimed at achieving the result defined in the module.

As the site visits were online, the expert panel could not visit the subdivisions of the institution, so the schedule also included meetings, the participants of which could be selected by the expert panel. These meetings allowed the experts to fill in the information that, according to the experts, was incomplete or ambiguous.

Preliminary Visit. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the preliminary visit of the college was made online, two weeks before the site visit, the meeting was attended by ANQA coordinators, the Head of the Institutional and Programme Accreditation Subdivision. During the meeting, the college was introduced to the site visit plan-schedule³, the list of additional study documents was presented, as well as the peculiarities of organising online site visit during the pandemic (providing videos by the college where the college's main resource base will be seen⁴: classrooms, laboratories, libraries, etc; provision of online versions of the documents required by the experts within the set deadline, provision of technical rules for online site visits: turned on cameras, the ability to see the whole room in case of one camera, exclusion of the presence of persons other than the target groups in the room, etc).

Site Visit. The site visit took place on November 23-26, 2020. Two days before the scheduled visit (November 22, 2020), all members of the expert panel, the coordinator, and the Head of the ANQA Institutional and Programme Accreditation Subdivision had a closed meeting online. The purpose of the meeting was to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the college according to the criteria, to clarify the questions asked to the target groups, to discuss the procedure of the meetings held in the online environment, and the further steps.

The site visit started and ended with meetings with the college director.

The participants of the focus group meetings organised to clarify the issues - teachers, students, alumni - were randomly selected from the pre-provided list (due to the lack of employers and heads of chairs, all were included). All scheduled meetings were held. The expert panel also conducted lesson observations. During the visit, the expert panel reviewed the documents, resources, and conducted focus group meetings online.

² APPENDIX 3. LIST OF DOCUMENTS OBSERVED

³ APPENDIX 2. SCHEDULE OF SITE VISIT

⁴ APPENDIX 4. RESOURCES OBSERVED

The information gathered during the various meetings, the main results of the document review and discussions, were summarised both at the end of each meeting and at the end of each day, during the final discussion and evaluation at the end of the visit.

The expert panel reached a final conclusion on the criteria as a result of discussions and analysis among all members, always applying the principle of consensus.

Expert Report. The expert panel conducted the preliminary evaluation based on the self-assessment submitted by the college, the study of the attached documents, the videos of the resources submitted by the college, and the observations during the site visit (as a result of regular discussions). Based on the observations made after the discussions, the chair and the ANQA Coordinator prepared the preliminary version of the expert report, which was agreed with the experts on December 24.

ASC sent its response to the preliminary version of the report to ANQA on January 13, 2021. ANQA provided the observations of the college to the experts. On January 26, 2021, ANQA organised an online meeting between the college and the expert panel, during which the response presented by the college was discussed. Taking into account the observations of the college, the expert panel prepared the final version of the expert report, which was approved by the group on January 29, 2021.

29.01.2021

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lilit Ghazaryan', written in a cursive style.

Lilit Ghazaryan
Expert Panel Coordinator

BRIEF INFORMATION ABOUT THE EDUCATION INSTITUTION

History. RA MoESCS “Ararat State College” SNCO (hereinafter referred to as ASC) is a non-profit legal entity, vocational institution. The college is the legal successor of Ararat Industrial and Technological College (registration №13.0004.20.11.1996). During the last 5 years of its activity, ASC has produced more than 900 alumni, who, working in various sectors of our economy as specialists, have contributed to the advancement of various organisations. Many of them have become competitive professionals. Today, the college continues its activities, training qualified human resources for different fields, both in the region and in other regions, in the primary vocational (craftsmanship) and secondary vocational education systems.

According to the data of the 2019-2020 academic year, about 406 students study in the primary and secondary vocational education systems of ASC. The educational work at the college is based on high foundations.

Education. The aim of ASC is to provide education that will enable students to reach their full potential in the vocational circles. The priority of the ASC mission is the organisation of effective primary vocational (craftsmanship) and secondary vocational education and training, and the focus of its activities on the implementation of economic, pedagogical and service education.

Today, the TLI also provides educational services in the following specialities:

- Secondary vocational education system - 9
- Primary vocational (craftsmanship) education system –5
- Short-term training from 2 to 6 months -7

By 2023, ASC will be a supportive environment that provides quality education, innovative pro-student education, promotes principles of excellence among students and employees, and educates students in a spirit of morality, national and universal values. It will be an institution accessible to the most diverse sections of society, providing a wide range of choices, favourable environment, and additional education.

The TLI emphasises the compliance of teaching and support staffs with the mission of the college, the qualifications awarded within the framework of study programmes, the generational change of teaching staff, and the process of continuous improvement, which is aimed at improving teaching and learning.

Research/Creative Thinking. In order to effectively implement the strategic and mission objectives of the college, it is necessary to outline new insights into the secondary vocational field, to clarify the list of problems which will be able to fill the need to train in-demand professionals who will master the implementation of modern knowledge. For that, it is necessary to instill in students a sense of responsibility for work and skills, perfect mastery of professional skills, and creative approaches. The strategic plan highlights the criteria and requirements for the performance of research work presented to pedagogical students, which are implemented within the framework of modular programmes, as well as during industrial, training and pre-graduate internships. The results are presented during the defense of internships, and they are able to identify the student as an independent researcher.

Monitoring and surveys conducted by both students and teachers are an integral part of the research work. Design work significantly contributes to the development of students'

ability and skills to work independently, the application of academic knowledge in practice. The greater involvement of pedagogues in research can be achieved through roundtable discussions involving other institutions (including representatives of other educational institutions, pedagogues, professionals). The connection between research and teaching, the implementation of the results directly during the educational process, as well as their regular nature, are strongly emphasised. A separate function of the research is performed by the Career Center, which studies the labour market demand in the region.

Based on the research done during the internships, it is planned to assess the students according to the result of independent research / pre-graduation internship report with specified requirements, in the previous years – also a diary / basis: Internship Organisation and Conduct Regulations. The ability to perform research required for various modules / subjects based on educational outcomes is also important / for example, to write business plans for the "Marketing Research" module.

External Relations. The college uses social partnership as a key tool for ensuring social solidarity, and identifying effective ways to solve problems. In this context, it is important to revise the ASC public relations concept, develop the marketing activities concept and diversify the advertising materials, to increase feedback with different groups of the society and develop the monitoring system, expand college involvement in public programmes and initiatives, diversify services provided to the public.

The 2018-2023 college development programme envisages the development of social partnership, but there are no cooperative and partnership relations in the international arena yet. There are only collaborations with the Armenian representations of several international organisations - "World Vision", "GIZ".

As for continuing education, ASC cooperates with the leading state HEIs of Armenia. This partnership enables the best college alumni to continue their education at partner HEIs. The college actively cooperates with employers.

Quality Assurance. As a first step, the ASC adopted an internal quality assurance development policy that was directly related to the college mission and strategy. The quality assurance system in the college is regularly reviewed, but it still needs to be strengthened. It has been developed as an internal quality infrastructure of education since 2015, but it operated in combination with another department (Internship Department). According to the staff list approved by RA MoESCS in January 2020, the TLI has the position of Education Quality Assurance Officer.

The process of regular review and updating was in the form of surveys, classroom analyses, annual analyses, and reports.

In the 2017-2018 academic year, the concept of internal quality assurance infrastructure of college education was developed. It includes a vision for the quality management of 73 quality assurance systems, detailing ASC quality assurance goals, issues, objectives, principles, implementation measures, implementation strategy, criteria, implementation mechanisms and priority areas, their procedures and evaluation tools, quality assurance concept and quality assurance system maps.

The internal assessment of ASC is carried out together with the security of the institution, efficiency of the activity, quality of the educational process, and community participation. Internal evaluation is carried out by the methods of statistical data, documentary analysis, monitoring, analysis of surveys and results.

Source. *The sources of evidence in the above areas are the documents provided by the TLI*

I. MISSION AND PURPOSES

CRITERION: The policies and procedures of the TLI are in accordance with the TLI's mission which is in line with ANQF.

Findings. RA MoESCS "Ararat State College" SNCO has formulated its mission in the Charter and 2018-2023 Development Programme (hereinafter referred to as DP). According to the mission, ASC is a primary (craftsmanship) and secondary vocational education institution. The activities of the college are aimed at the implementation of economic, pedagogical and service education. According to the mission of the institution, the TLI operates in accordance with NQF Level 5.

In the 2018-2023 DP, ASC singled out seven strategic goals, fifteen objectives with progress indicators. The college strives to provide quality education, to implement innovative pro-student education, to promote the principles of excellence among students and staff. The following basic values are enshrined in the DP: student success, affordable education, high quality teaching staff, academic freedom and integrity, social environment, social partnership.

During the online site visit, it became clear that the defined strategic goals and objectives reflect the processes implemented in the TLI, ensuring the implementation of secondary vocational education, and continuing education is considered a competitive advantage. According to the content of the goals and objectives, as well as implementation deadlines envisaged by the 2018-2023 DP, the 2018-2022 TLI Development Strategy Action Plan is available.

Development programmes for different subdivisions of ASC have been developed for the implementation of the 2018-2023 DP: ASC 2019-2020 academic year development plan, ASC Educational Department 2019-2020 academic year development plan, ASC Deputy Director of Administrative Affairs 2020-2025 development plan, ASC Alumni and Public Relations Department development plan, ASC Economic Committee 2019-2020 development plan, ASC CD headquarters development plan, ASC Language Committee development plan, plan for the development of the primary vocational education system.

The internal and external stakeholders mentioned in the ASC self-assessment are students, teaching and support staffs, alumni, parents, the Government of the Republic of Armenia, RA MoESCS, and employers.

The TLI internal and external stakeholders are involved in the governing bodies of the college and have the opportunity to constantly express opinions and make suggestions. However, it became clear from the online visit that the suggestions of internal and external stakeholders are not summarised, they are not clearly seen in the TLI DP. The weak point in the self-assessment was the participation of external and internal stakeholders in the evaluation of effectiveness. The self-assessment states that all the priority objectives of the ASC Development and Reform Strategy are specified in the short-term annual plans, which allows monitoring the progress of the strategic development plans. There are annual reports of the director and subdivisions, which are mainly of informative and descriptive nature.

There are progress indicators for each objective addressed in the DP, but the results obtained are not assessed in the reports.

The online site visit revealed that the TLI's mechanisms for assessing and improving the results of the mission and objective implementation are in place, but not fully operational.

Considerations. The expert panel welcomes the fact that ASC has a clear and comprehensible mission statement that reflects the core activities of the TLI. In general, the TLI policies and activities in the field of education are in line with its mission. The TLI is pursuing its goals and objectives as part of its mission although the online site visit revealed that in some respects the college seeks to ensure that students continue their education at HEIs, which may reduce the chances of the TLI alumni entering the labour market immediately.

Both internal and external stakeholders are involved in the governing bodies of the college, some surveys are made. However, the online visit revealed that active stakeholder recommendations are still in the planning stage at the TLI, their involvement in developing the implementation of DP strategic goals is not seen. Teachers and students have little involvement in the process of identifying the TLI issues. The alumni showed passive participation as well. As a result, the effectiveness of the DP may be endangered.

As the ASC DP was developed in 2018, the study programmes of the new specialities developed after that are not included in the ASC activity directions mentioned in the DP mission, so the above may hinder the clear definition of strategic goals.

On the positive side, the TLI Education Quality Officer, teachers and students conducted the ASC 2019-2020 internal evaluation, and a report was submitted, which, if made more analytical, could serve as a basis for developing the next Strategic Plan.

The expert panel welcomes the fact that the director's annual report generally includes the annual results of the TLI mission and objective implementation. However, the annual reports of the departments are not sufficiently compatible with the objectives of the short-term annual plans, which may hinder the implementation of the goals of the ASC development and reform strategy.

Although the ASC DP has indicators for assessing the progress of the proposed objectives, however, there is no justification for evaluating the indicators in the sense that the assessments do not clearly reflect the level of performance of the set objectives. As a result, ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the DP strategic objectives and results to be improved may be jeopardised.

The expert panel welcomes the fact that the TLI has mechanisms for assessing and improving results of the mission and objective implementation, which, if fully implemented, will increase the efficiency of the improvement processes.

Summary. Given that the activities of RA MoESCS ASC SNCO are generally in line with the mission set by the TLI, in line with the NQF of the Republic of Armenia, the goals and objectives of the institution, to some extent reflect the needs of internal and external stakeholders, there are performance evaluation mechanisms for the TLI mission and objectives, the expert panel considers that ASC meets the requirements of Criterion 1.

Conclusion. The expert panel evaluates the compliance of RA MoESCS ASC SNCO institutional capacities with the requirements of the Criterion 1 as **satisfactory**.

II. GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

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

Findings. ASC is managed based on the RA Laws on Education, Primary and Secondary Vocational Education, in accordance with the TLI Charter approved by the RA Minister of ESCS, with the functions of the TLI board of directors, pedagogical council and director. The

self-assessment states that the management of ASC is based on self-government, in combination with the principles of sole management and collegiality.

ASC governance system has:

- Founder and authorised public administration bodies that manage the college;
- College board, pedagogical council, director, through which the current management is carried out.

The ASC Board is the highest governing body with a term of 5 years. The Board discusses, approves the TLI budget, the strategic development plan, listens to and evaluates the director's annual performance report, and elects the TLI director. The Pedagogical Council (PC) is an advisory body, which, during the period between the meetings of the Board, in accordance with the established regulations, discusses issues related to the relevant fields within the scope of its powers. ASC also has a Methodological Council, Student Council (SC), Course Instructor Council, Library Council, and it is planned to establish a Parent Council. ASC has procedures and regulations for ensuring management processes. The self-assessment states that the TLI is guided by a Strategic Plan in the implementation of its functions, one of the main tasks of which is to ensure the effectiveness of management. According to this objective, constructive cooperation should be developed between the TLI Governing Board (GB), Student, Teaching and other councils.

The TLI has an organisational structure. In January 2020, a structural change was made, and staff positions have been increased since then. It became clear from the online site visit that the change in the organisational structure is not justified in the sense that there are no assessments of the implementation of those changes.

The TLI's financial resources are generated from the RA state budget, tuition fees, short-term programmes and other incomes. According to the self-assessment, the expenses are planned based on the capabilities of the TLI. There is a procedure for managing finances. ASC has the material and human resources needed to accomplish educational and other purposes. Hiring, transferring, dismissing, promoting, encouraging employees and penalties are carried out in accordance with the RA Constitution, the RA Labour Code, other laws and legal acts, internal regulations, TLI charter and internal disciplinary rules. The ASC Board, PC, SC and the current Charter and departmental regulations enable students and teachers to be involved in management processes. The GB has 2 representatives from the teaching staff, and 3 representatives from the students, who were elected from the teaching staff and from the Student Council. The PC convenes meetings at least once every two months, which includes the entire teaching and administrative staff.

If necessary, the Chairperson of the SC can also be invited. According to the self-assessment, the SC submits proposals to the TLI management and the PC.

It became clear from the online site visit that the participation of students and teachers in making decisions related to them is minimal. The identified needs and suggestions of students and teachers are not visible.

The TLI implements strategic planning and current annual planning. At the TLI, in accordance with the missions and goals, the ASC 2018-2023 DP has been developed and operated together with the ASC 2018-2022 development strategy action plan, ASC Deputy Director of Administrative Affairs 2020-2025 development plan, ASC 2019-2020 academic year development plan, ASC Educational Department 2019-2020 academic year development plan, ASC Economic Committee 2019-2020 development plan, ASC Language Committee development plan. In 2018, the concept of ASC internal quality assurance infrastructure (committee) was developed.

According to the self-assessment, the TLI implements strategic planning for the

development of ASC long-term planning of reforms, and ongoing annual planning; it is the operational planning of the educational process. Each of these levels has its own implementation mechanisms. Expert analyses have shown that these mechanisms do not work clearly in the TLI, nor do the mechanisms for monitoring strategic and ongoing planning, and nor does the monitoring policy. Long-term and short-term plans are not comparable. In addition, at the TLI, the distribution of functions of the middle management units (the chairs), is not specified, inter-chair cooperation is not visible.

Functions for the 2019-2020 academic year have been included in the development plans of the Chair of Languages and the Economic Committee, which, in fact, reflect the functions of a one-year development plan, where functions expressing inter-chair cooperation have not been included⁵.

The self-assessment states that short-term operational planning is carried out in all areas of ASC - financial, human resources, property, study programmes, etc, which is clearly reflected in the director's annual reports. According to the results of the implementation of the goals of the institution, the director's annual report for the work done in the 2019-2020 academic year presents the TLI training material base, staff and admission data, student progress, production training, the results of the final state attestation of alumni. The report of the educational department of the secondary vocational education system, the educational work of the department with the general education programme, the work done by the PC, are presented in terms of organisational work; the work done in the Career Center, Alumni and Public Relations Department, refers to the issues of continuing education in different HEIs of the Republic of Armenia after college education; options and advantages of continuing education are presented. There are no assessments and relevant recommendations in the conclusion and recommendation section of the director's report, the opportunity to continue education in HEIs is emphasised. It is clear from the site visit that the operational planning mechanisms also do not work clearly, the short-term plans and their performance reports are not comparable. The implementation and evaluation of the annual plans is carried out on the basis of the reports of the GB, PC subdivisions and the director, whereas the reports are descriptive, there are no qualitative approaches to the evaluation of the activity, and corresponding evaluations.

The self-assessment states that the study and analysis of external and internal factors influencing the activity of the TLI are regularly performed internal processes, which are continuously carried out in order to identify the factors affecting the quality of education. Positive factors are the building conditions, the interior furniture (Winery and "Armat" laboratories, equipped classrooms). Negative factors are the unsatisfactory gym, the lack of vehicles and financial means.

During the online visit, it was reported verbally that the TLI contained data on factors influencing performance, whereas the mechanisms for data collection and analysis are unclear. The 2019-2020 Internal Assessment Report is available, which provides general information about ASC, safe activities of students and teachers, health care, effectiveness of ASC activities, community participation indicators and criteria, the TLI issues are highlighted, as well as ways to overcome them, strengths and weaknesses. However, clear

⁵ Has been changed as a result of college observations.

assessments and ways for improvement are not outlined. Surveys are conducted only among students, no surveys are conducted among employers, teachers or alumni.

The ASC 2018 Education Quality Assurance Infrastructure concept sets out the basic principles of quality assurance and, according to the period under review, does not reflect the operation of the principle of quality management of the policy and administration: plan, do, check, act. From the online visit, it became clear that the principle of quality management is still not visible in terms of accountability of the performance of certain stages of the cycle. There are no performance results, assessments. There are no assessments of the implementation of the steps set out in the ASC 2018-2022 development strategy action plan.

Expert analyses show that there are no effective mechanisms for assessing the data collection and analysis in academic programmes and other processes. The TLI has reports from final attestation committees the results of which are not used to improve the academic programmes.

The self-assessment states that information on the existing study programmes and qualifications awarded is posted on the ASC official website (www.ascol.am) and Facebook page (www.apq.am). Dissemination of information about the qualifications and academic programmes is carried out both among the applicants and the participants of the annual Olympiads held by YSU. According to the self-assessment, the increase in the number of applicants for the 2019-2020 academic year from testifies to the availability of information and objectivity. During the entire period of the online visit, the website reviewed by the expert panel contained information about the TLI, the Facebook page contained up-to-date information. Information about the alumni, their qualifications and success was limited.

Considerations. Expert panel notes that ASC has procedures and regulations to ensure governance processes. Although the self-assessment states that the TLI is governed by the principles of sole management and collegiality, the TLI is guided by the strategic plan in the implementation of its functions, the objective of which is to deliver the ultimate management efficiency services, it became clear from the online site visit, that there are almost no effective mechanisms for constructive cooperation among the various councils in the TLI, which could jeopardise the principle of collegial governance and the regulation of management decisions.

As a structural change has taken place in the organisational structure of the TLI since January 2020, the number of positions has increased, there are no estimates of those changes, so the effectiveness of the structural change may be jeopardised.

The expert panel welcomes the fact that ASC has sufficient material, human and financial resources for the implementation of educational and other purposes. The resources are formed from the RA state budget, tuition fees for students studying on a paid basis, short-term programmes, which has a positive impact on the TLI capacity expenditure planning. It is noteworthy that there is a procedure for managing finances.

Although students and teachers are involved in the TLI governance processes, they can make suggestions to the TLI managerial staff and Board of Directors, the online visit revealed that they have almost no active involvement in decision-making related to them, jeopardising the principle of collegiality of management decisions.

Although the self-assessment states that the TLI strategic planning and ongoing annual planning have their own implementation mechanisms, however, these mechanisms do not clearly work in the TLI, and the mechanisms for monitoring strategic and ongoing planning are also unclear. As the TLI does not specify the functions of the middle management units (the chairs) as a result of which the inter-chair connections do not work well, the effectiveness of the management of academic programmes is also endangered.

It is disturbing that the progress indicators presented in the ASC 2018-2023 DP do not reflect the qualitative side of the implementation of the set goals and objectives. It is also a matter of concern that operational planning mechanisms do not clearly work, short-term plans and their reports are not comparable. In addition, the reports used for monitoring purposes are descriptive, mainly presenting the organisational work, they generally do not include qualitative analyses, relevant assessments, do not highlight the results to be improved. As a result, the effectiveness of the TLI management system and its evaluation is completely endangered.

The TLI regularly identifies internal and external factors that affect the quality of education, and also studies the factors that affect its activities, providing the educational process with the necessary material and technical resources, which has a positive impact on the efficiency of the educational process. At the same time, it is worrying that the mechanisms of data collection and analysis of the factors influencing the activity at the TLI are not clear, there are no surveys among employers, teachers and alumni yet, which may hinder the identification of the educational needs of internal and external stakeholders.

As the documents coordinating the management processes in ASC have been formed mainly since 2018, the quality management PDCA cycle and accountability are not yet visible. It is problematic that even in the short term, the results and assessments are not available. Summaries and relevant assessments are not available for the implementation of the steps set out in the ASC 2018-2022 development strategy action plan. As a result, the principle of quality management is endangered: the PDCA cycle does not have clear summaries, the issues to be improved are not clearly separated, hindering the continuous improvement of the educational and management processes.

The expert panel considers it positive that the information on study programmes and the qualifications awarded is posted on the official website of ASC and the Facebook page, which can help raise awareness and increase the number of applicants. It is disturbing that the information about the alumni is not complete, which may not give a complete picture of the alumni success.

Summary. Given that the TLI lacks clear mechanisms for implementing and monitoring the long-term and short-term planning, collecting the data on the effectiveness of academic programmes and other processes in line with the institution's mission and objectives; the principle of quality management of policies and administration is almost non-existent, as well as there are generally no mechanisms for evaluating the quantitative and qualitative information on the qualifications awarded by study programmes, the expert panel considers that ASC does not adequately ensure the effectiveness of the institution's mission-oriented management system and administration, and therefore does not meet the requirements of the Criterion 2.

Conclusion. The expert panel evaluates the compliance of RA MoESCS ASC SNCO institutional capacities with the requirements of the Criterion 2 as **unsatisfactory**.

III. ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES

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

Findings. According to the charter and mission, the activities of ASC are aimed at the implementation of economic, pedagogical and service education. The self-assessment states that TLI, as a specialised college providing primary (craftsmanship) and secondary vocational education, offers vocational, economics, pedagogy, information technology, and service study

programmes (also additional short-term) approved by the RA Minister of ESCS. It became clear from the online site visit that the TLI also trains middle professionals in the fields of winemaking, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics and makeup art, digital art and design, computer engineering, automated system operations. These directions are not included in the charter and mission of ASC.

According to the self-assessment, ASC has set itself the task of training highly qualified specialists with qualifications and skills relevant for the labour market. In this regard, it is guided by such academic programmes, which, in the conditions of training and production modules, are aimed at training specialists in accordance with the demand of the modern economy, providing sound and quality primary and secondary vocational education. As a result of the online site visit, it became clear that there is a problem of providing practical skills in the specialities of "Finance", "Accounting", "Service Organisation"; within the proposed framework of the occupation defined by the State Academic Criteria (hereinafter referred to as SAC) (Chapter 2), there are few internships for the "Service Organisation" speciality (students do internships in banks, shops, furniture stores, there are no partner organisations in the field of tourism). It also became clear that when hiring, employers require knowledge of accounting programmes, such as AS, practical skills in the banking sector, which are not included in the ASC "Accounting" and "Finance" academic programme modules.

The study programmes of "Finance", "Accounting" and "Service Organisation" specialities correspond to the SACs and are described in detail according to the expected learning outcomes of the qualifications awarded. The modular programmes of the studied specialities meet the requirements of SAC. However, the study of the documents revealed that the goals of the "Finance" academic programme have mainly NQF Level 6 formulations, the goals set by the academic programme are not comparable to the results expected by the MP.

Pursuant to Clause 22 of the ASC collegial governance board, the Board discusses and approves draft module / subject plans. Examination of the documents revealed that they were not ratified by the Board ("Guidelines for the Organisation and Implementation of the Learning Process in Accordance with the SACs Aimed at Capacities", A. Sahradyan, Yerevan, 2015, p. 156).

During the online site visit, it was found out that there are thematic overlaps in the professional modules for "Finance", "Accounting" and "Service Organisation". There are overlaps in the topics of assignments provided, individual work, essays, and reports.

As a result of the organisation of online education during the pandemic, most of the pre-graduation and industrial internships have been postponed. It became clear from the visit that measures have been taken to supplement the practical skills online.

The selection of professional modules taught in ASC majors (Finance, Accounting, and Service Management) is large (49 modules according to SACs). During the visit it was discovered that some modules have assignments aimed at developing independent and analytical, however, the existing good practice is not disseminated (for example, from the "Entrepreneurship" module – to write business plans, from the "Marketing Skills" module – to do merchandising studies, from the "Conflict, stress and change management" module – to do a role play that refers to changes in the organisation).

According to the self-assessment, all study programmes include modern teaching and learning methods, the use of which is discussed in chairs and methodological councils, but it became clear from the visit that at ASC, the policy of choosing teaching and learning methods based on the results expected from academic programmes is not clear. It became

clear from the visit that the connection between teaching and learning methods and learning outcomes is weak, there is a lack of modern mechanisms for promoting learning, which are fixed in the objectives arising from the strategic goals of the DP. In addition, there are no common teaching approaches to the specialities under study.

From the 2015-2016 academic year, ASC passed to the 10-point grading system, the passing one - 4 points. For the assessment of students, the documents on "Student Assessment, Appeal, Attendance and Registration Procedure", "Student Complaints Monitoring Regulations", "Procedure for Organising and Conducting a State Final Examination at ASC", "Policy to Guarantee Academic Integrity and Prevent Plagiarism" have been developed. However, the "Policy to Guarantee Academic Integrity and Prevent Plagiarism" lacks the mechanisms to prevent plagiarism, there is only an explanation and consequences.

From the study of the documents, it became clear that the section on MP assessment means does not specify on the completion of which specific task (test, brief report, practical work, question and answer) the results will be completed. Assessment is mainly carried out through tests in which the components of theory and practice are not differentiated⁶.

During the online visit, it was found out that the MPs compiled by the teachers are not comparable to the corresponding academic programmes and MPs of other TLIs, so there is no mobility among students and teachers. It was also found out that the teachers used the HEI programmes of YSU, ASUE, ANAU, while compiling the academic programmes and MPs. In addition, academic programmes are not monitored, there are no improvement approaches, and MPs have not been reviewed in recent years. The summary of lesson observation results is not embedded in the MP improvement processes. Employers do not have a significant involvement in the development of academic programmes, and surveys on the effectiveness of academic programmes have not been conducted among internal and external stakeholders. During the lesson observations and online site visit, it became clear that the students receive mainly theoretical knowledge during the professional courses, and almost no work is done to provide practical skills. In addition, employers claim that the necessary practical skills are not enough to get a job, they require knowledge of accounting software, such as AS, practical skills in the banking sector.

Considerations. Although according to the charter and mission, the ASC activity is aimed at the implementation of economic, pedagogical and service education, the TLI also has the following secondary vocational study programmes: "Winemaking", "Pharmaceutics", "Cosmetics and Makeup Art", "Digital Art and Design", "Computer Engineering and Automated System Operations", which are not reflected in the ASC charter and missions. It can interfere with the compliance between academic programmes and mission.

It is worrying that there is a problem of providing practical skills in the specialities of "Finance", "Accounting" and "Service Organisation", there are few internships in the field of "Service Organisation", and there are no partner organisations in the field of tourism. Employers also claim that the necessary practical skills are not sufficient for employment, they require knowledge of accounting software, such as AS, practical skills in the banking sector.

As the objectives of the "Finance" academic programme are primarily NQF Level 6 formulations, the objectives set by the academic programme are not commensurate with the

⁶ Has been changed as a result of college observations.

expected outcomes of the MP, and the list of literature used in the studied MPs is HEI-based. NQF Level 5 is jeopardised.

It is worrying that MPs are not ratified by the ASC collegial governing board, resulting in jeopardising the effectiveness of management decisions and control over them.

It is problematic that there are thematic overlaps in the professional modules for the studied specialities. There are also overlaps in the topics of assignments, individual works, essays, and reports provided, which may jeopardise the effectiveness of the academic programmes and the implementation of the NQF.

Although all pre-graduation internships were delayed as a result of the pandemic and online classes, and the internship supervisors have tried to supplement the practical skills online, the expected result have not been fully achieved, jeopardising the development of practical skills and the outcome of academic programmes.

Since the selection of professional modules taught in ASC majors (“Finance”, “Accounting”, “Service Organisation”) is large (according to SACs, 49 modules), and one teacher teaches different professional modules in three majors, the effectiveness of professional training is endangered. The expert panel welcomes the fact that the assignments of some modules develop independent and analytical thinking, however, the good practice gained is not disseminated, which may hinder the implementation of the NQF.

As the policy of choosing teaching and learning methods in accordance with the results expected from academic programmes at TLI does not work clearly, the link between teaching and learning methods and learning outcomes is endangered. In addition, there are no modern mechanisms for promoting learning included in the DP as an objective, and there are no common teaching approaches for the speciality under study. It is disturbing that the means of evaluating the results of academic programmes are not specified, there is no justification for the assessment, as a result of which the objectivity of student assessments may be questioned. As a result, the effectiveness of the TLI assessment system, the connection with outcomes is endangered⁷.

It is quite problematic that the academic programmes and MPs compiled by the teachers are not compared with the corresponding academic programmes and MPs of other TLIs, moreover, while compiling the academic programmes and MPs, the teachers used YSU ASUE, ANAU HEI programmess. As a result, the provision of NQF Level 5 is endangered.

As academic programmes are not monitored, MPs have not been reviewed in recent years, and there are no improvement approaches, lesson observation results are not embedded in MP improvement processes, employers have little involvement in the development of academic programmes, no surveys on academic programme efficiency were conducted among internal and external stakeholders. As a result, academic programme monitoring mechanisms do not work in the TLI.

Summary. Given that, in general, the policy of choosing teaching, learning and assessment methods in accordance with the expected learning outcomes of academic programmes at ASC is unclear, academic programmes and MPs are not comparable to other TLI academic programmes and MPs, the goals are in line with NQF Level 6, the practical skills acquired by students at TLI do not meet the demands of the job market, jeopardising the TLI mission to train specialists, and the academic programme monitoring mechanisms do not work, the expert panel considers that ASC does not meet the requirements of the Criterion 3.

⁷ Has been changed as a result of college observations.

Conclusion. The expert panel evaluates the compliance of RA MoESCS ASC SNCO institutional capacities with the requirements of the Criterion 3 as **unsatisfactory**.

IV. STUDENTS

CRITERION: The TLI provides support services to students ensuring productive learning environment.

Findings. ASC has an admission policy, student recruitment and admission procedure with applications from people with at least a basic education. According to the self-assessment, admission is carried out without entrance exams on a competitive basis, and in the case of sectoral specialisation (pharmaceutics) - with a professional exam. Admission is in accordance with paid and tuition-free places in the Primary and Secondary Vocational Education Programmes provided by the RA MoESCS for the given academic year. The online site visit revealed that ASC is working with schools to recruit students, in particular by visiting schools in the region, introducing the TLI majors during their visits. There are regular open-door days, meetings with parents, during which the specialities taught at the TLI are presented. There are also flyers listing the specialisations.

The official website of ASC is relatively new, there is the guide for the admission of applicants only for the academic year 2020-2021, and there is little material on the site for professional orientation. There are also several TLI Facebook pages, where both the admission procedure and the list of students - by courses - enrolled at the end of the admission was published. It became clear from the visit that the number of applicants has increased in the 2020-2021 academic year, and the presence of students paying the tuition fee has increased this year's extra-budget funding by 8,500,000 drams. ASC has procedures for identifying the educational needs of students, including the "Student Assistance Procedure", which provides for full or partial reimbursement of tuition fees for students with special needs. According to the self-assessment, students were provided with questionnaires to assess the TLI activities, but the online site visit revealed that the questionnaire analyses and the process of needs assessment derived from them is not continuous, and there are no clear mechanisms for identifying student educational needs. The SC is little involved in identifying student needs.

ASC has the position of a pedagogue-psychologist and a legal consultant. It became clear from the visit that the pedagogue-psychologist regularly talks to the students, trying to understand their problems, but the scope of functions of the legal consultant is not specified. There is a Course Instructor Council, and an emphasis on the scope of functions of the Councils. During the online visit, it was found out that the problems arising among the students are mainly solved through the mediation of the course instructors. The mechanisms of the additional classes are not clear, but the teachers provide additional support to the students with low progress. Course instructors also provide additional professional advice.

The ASC has a Career Department with a developed work schedule. According to the self-assessment, the TLI has a procedure provided by the Career Center for internship consultation, but it was clear from the online visit that students are not involved in the internship consultation system. During the online visit, it became clear that the feedback from the alumni is weak, the communication between the alumni and the TLI is mainly provided through teachers. There are no mechanisms and analyses for providing alumni feedback by the Career Center. It was also clear from the visit that at the TLI, the evaluation

mechanisms of student education, consultation and other services, are not clearly working. There are no clear rules or schedule for students to apply to the administrative staff, but it is clear from the visit that the administrative staff responds to the issues raised by the students. Problems relate to tuition, online education, absences.

At ASC, student participation in analytical work is manifested in the form of essays, individual practical works, and assignments. There are analytical components in the assignments for "Service Organisation" and "Finance" specialities, but not for other specialities.

The Student Council operates as a separate body in the TLI, which has a developed charter. It became clear from the online visit that the functions of the Student Council, which are related to the protection of student rights, are not clearly defined, the steps to raise student issues are not effective, whereas the Student Council is involved in controlling absenteeism and lateness and submits the information about them to the managerial staff.

A contract is signed between ASC and student, which includes the rights and responsibilities of the students, but it is clear from the visit that the students do not fully understand their rights and responsibilities.

Considerations. The expert panel welcomes the cooperation with various schools aimed at recruiting students at ASC and the organisation of open-door days, which can help increase the number of students. As there is little professional information available to applicants on the official TLI website, the expert panel believes that this may lead to an incomplete understanding of the speciality they choose. The increase in the number of students studying in the paid education system is a positive fact, which has led to an increase in the extra-budget funding of ASC. The support provided by teachers to students with low progress, and the response of administrative staff to the issues raised by students can help ensure student progress.

It is positive that surveys are conducted, but as their analysis and output are not presented to stakeholders, as well as no steps are taken to improve the issues identified, the expert panel believes that this may lead to the incomplete identification of student educational needs. It is noteworthy that the course instructors are involved in the process of identifying educational needs, as well as the scope of functions of the pedagogue-psychologist is emphasised, and regular meetings with students are conducted, which can contribute to the effective organisation of educational work.

Although there is a Student Council in the TLI, however, the lack of involvement of the Student Council in identifying student needs and advocacy can lead to mistrust of the Student Council. As feedback mechanisms with alumni are weak, this can be an obstacle to strengthening the TLI-employer relationship, jeopardising the continuing improvement in education.

The expert panel welcomes the existence of essays and independent works assigned to students at ASC. Assignments for some majors contain analytical components, which can have a positive impact on the development of students' analytical thinking. Because the evaluation mechanisms for student education, consultation and other services at TLI do not work clearly, improvements in student needs may be jeopardised.

Summary. Given that ASC has student recruitment, selection and admission procedures, there are procedures for identifying educational needs, students with low progress are supported by teachers, students are free to contact administrative staff at any time, there is a Student Council, students can have their problems solved by course instructors, the expert panel considers that ASC meets the requirements of the Criterion 4.

Conclusion. The expert panel evaluates the compliance of RA MoESCS ASC SNCO

V. FACULTY AND STAFF

CRITERION: The TLI has a highly qualified teaching and support staffs to achieve the set goals for academic programmes and the TLI's mission.

Findings. The documents on "Recruitment and Dismissal Regulations" and "Internal Disciplinary Rules" have been developed for the selection of teaching and support staffs in ASC. According to the "Recruitment and Dismissal Regulations", the labour relations with the employees originate in the order prescribed by the RA Labour Code or the employment contract, simultaneously adopting the individual legal act, and according to the "Internal Disciplinary Rules" document and the self-assessment, admission of teachers and trainers is carried out through an open competition, with the vacancy invitation announced in advance.

From 2018, a "Procedure for Organising and Conducting a Competition for a Vacancy for a Teacher or a Trainer" has been introduced in all colleges. It became clear from the online visit that in some cases, ASC hired a teacher and a trainer, inviting their alumnus or simply based on the CVs submitted, according to the TLI questionnaire, not following the competition procedure.

The basic requirements for the professional qualities of the teaching staff are set out in the SAC in accordance with the academic programmes, according to which the teaching staff of the college have the appropriate basic education and experience. There are no clear professional requirements for lecturers at the TLI.

The functions, rights and responsibilities of the teaching staff are presented in the employment contract of the teacher in the "Regulations on the Activities and Terms of Reference of the RA MoESCS ASC Pedagogical Employees". According to the self-assessment, the professional qualifications of teachers and trainers at ASC are assessed through the analysis of lesson observations by the heads of departments and experienced teachers, as well as by studying students' abilities. The results of the lesson observations are not only summarised and analysed in the lesson observation record books, but are also discussed, as well as the advantages, the level of efficiency, the shortcomings are highlighted. Student surveys are one of the procedures for regular evaluation of the teaching staff. It became clear from the site visit that discussions and analyses of the survey results were not carried out.

The self-assessment states that the activities of the educational department are aimed at the professional growth of teachers, increasing the efficiency of the educational process. According to the document on "ASC Educational Department 2019-2020 Development Plan", it is planned to conduct trainings for the teaching staff, to follow the individual acceptable workload of the teachers, to conduct lesson observations to promote the development of professional skills of the novice teachers, to train the teachers to work electronically, to make the advanced pedagogical experience accessible to the novice teachers.

For the improvement of its teaching staff, ASC is guided by the "Regulations for the Training of Teachers and Trainers", according to which pedagogical staff must be trained every five years. The training of the TLI teachers in accordance with the "Regulations for the Training of Teachers and Trainers" is mandatory and is carried out according to the application submitted by the director. About 15-20% of ASC teachers are trained during each academic year. Up to January 30 of the current year, the director submits the list of 20% of pedagogical staff (position, contact details) to the training organisation - NCVETD. It became

clear from the visit that a small number of teachers took part in the professional trainings organised by ASC, in particular, the teachers of "Accounting", "Computer Engineering and Automated System Operations" specialities were retrained.

The teaching staff of ASC is almost not involved in research, and according to the "Internal Evaluation Report" for the 2019-2020 academic year, only one of the teachers has done research work, published in international and national journals.

In order to encourage employees, in 2018, ASC developed a regulation on the "Mechanisms of Remuneration of Teachers, Material Incentives, and Dismissal of the Director and Pedagogues of the RA MoESCS ASC", according to which, if the job is performed properly, the employer (college director) can use incentives such as acknowledgement letters, souvenirs or certificates of honour, one-time monetary rewards, removal of a disciplinary sanction, and state awards to college pedagogues, as required by law. The site visit revealed that the teachers were awarded certificates and did not receive any financial incentives.

ASC has 40 full-time teachers and one part-time teacher in the 2020-2021 academic year. The online meetings revealed that one of the strengths of the TLI is the teaching staff. At the same time, it was revealed that some of the teachers ("The Composition of the Main Teaching Staff According to Qualifications, 2020-2021") teach more than 5 professional modules at the same time, which in some cases are different in nature.

ASC does not have policies and procedures for professional development of its teaching staff, but it does have a young, middle-aged staff with a clear focus on promoting young staff. It became clear from the online visit that the work with the TLI novice teachers is carried out in the chairs and in the educational department, a favourable environment is created for senior and experienced teachers to transfer experience to the novice teachers.

The TLI has the necessary administrative and support staff to carry out its strategic goals. There is no special procedure for selecting the administrative and support staff. Support staff are hired according to their applications. Administrative staff is appointed by the director, taking into account their professional qualities. ASC has developed job descriptions for some of the teaching and administrative staff positions.

Considerations: Even though the "Procedure for Organising and Conducting a Competition for a Vacancy for a Teacher or a Trainer" has been introduced in all colleges since 2018, it became clear from the visit that teachers and industrial trainers at ASC are hired on a non-competitive basis, which can hamper the efficiency of staff selection.

Although the TLI does not have clearly defined requirements for the professional qualifications of teachers, the recruitment procedure is not based on the competitive basis, nevertheless, the requirements for the professional qualifications of teachers derive from Chapter 5 of the SAC of the given profession. The result does not violate the SAC requirement, but may jeopardise the TLI teacher selection policy.

On the positive side, the TLI has launched a survey procedure among students for teacher evaluation, the regular implementation of which will have a positive impact on identifying educational needs and addressing the identified issues. At the same time, according to the expert panel, the application of this procedure can promote effective work with students.

The teaching staff participates in the annual scheduled trainings provided by the NCVETD, however, few teachers participate in the ASC vocational trainings, which may hinder the professional development of the teaching staff.

Although ASC has a staff incentive policy (in the form of certificates of honour), there are no clear manifestations of the incentive system which jeopardises the efficiency of staff

work.

It is noteworthy that ASC has 40 full-time teachers and one part-time teacher, employer teachers are not involved. In addition, teachers are mainly young. ASC has young pedagogues with pedagogical experience and interesting approaches. At the same time hiring practical trainers will enhance the practical skills and abilities of ASC students. It is worrying that some teachers teach more than 5 professional modules at the same time, which in some cases are different in nature, which may jeopardise the effectiveness and stability of the course.

On the positive side, the TLI lecturers, according to the QA committees, are largely involved in QA processes, they have participated in self-assessment, are open to discussion, and are generally open-minded, which can help use the potential of ASC teachers and improve the QA processes.

Although the TLI has different recruitment procedures, however, the lack of administrative and support staff selection procedures can hamper the effectiveness of their selection.

Summary. Considering that ASC has stable teaching and support staffs for the implementation of its mission and goals, as well as certain requirements for professional activity, professional potential, young staff, a clear direction for the promotion of the young staff, the expert panel considers that ASC meets the requirements of the Criterion 5.

Conclusion. The expert panel evaluates the compliance of RA MoESCS ASC SNCO institutional capacities with the requirements of the Criterion 5 as **satisfactory**.

VI. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

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

Findings. Examining the ASC documents, the expert panel found that the TLI has developed a "Strategic Research Plan" that does not clearly define what research is, nor does it clearly state the ASC research objectives and the sequence of strategic steps to achieve those goals.

The "Strategic Research Plan" does not distinguish between long-term strategy and mid-term and short-term plans that reflect the TLI's research interests and ambitions. ASC presented a structural scheme for organising and coordinating research, but the online site visit revealed that the TLI does not apply it to research. The expert panel also found out that a clear research policy has not been developed at ASC, which will ensure the implementation of research and the development of the TLI.

The ASC "Strategic Research Plan" focuses not only on local research experience but also on international best practice and localisation, but during the expert visit, it became clear that ASC encourages neither local research, nor internationalisation of research activities. Only one teacher at ASC has 2 articles published in international and national journals.

The self-assessment states that students carry out research work within separate modules, subjects, educational and graduate internships. Meanwhile, the visit revealed that the reports of the internships do not contain analytical elements, most of the business plans submitted as an analysis repeat one other, students generally do not receive analytical assignments from teachers or employers, students and employers do not have joint research work, the teaching staff does not carry out experience exchange and dissemination. However, in the case of some specialities, student assignments contain analytical elements.

Considerations. As the objectives and sequence of steps in the ASC "Strategic Research

Plan” are not clearly defined, the research policy at ASC is not clearly defined. As a result, the development of student and teacher analytical thinking, and, in general, the development the TLI research field is endangered.

It is worrying that “Strategic Research Plan” does not distinguish between long-term strategy and mid-term and short-term plans, and does not prioritise research during the allocation of financial resources. It is disturbing that the TLI almost does not encourage creative and analytical thinking, the study and localisation of local and international good practice, as well as joint research with employers.

As there is no clear policy for conducting research in ASC, therefore, mechanisms for interconnection of research activities with the educational process are not introduced here, which may jeopardise the development of research skills of ASC students and teachers, as well as professional advancement. In this context, however, the expert panel welcomes the fact that some of the assignments given to students at ASC contain analytical elements, the dissemination of which may stimulate the development of a research component in the TLI.

Summary. Given that the TLI “Strategic Research Plan” does not clearly state the ASC research objectives, sequence and timelines for their implementation, no clear policies and procedures, creative and analytical thinking is not encouraged yet, no steps are taken by ASC to internationalise its research activities, ASC research and education processes are not interconnected, no good practice research is disseminated, the expert panel considers that ASC does not meet the requirements of the Criterion 6.

Conclusio. The expert panel evaluates the compliance of RA MoESCS ASC SNCO institutional capacities with the requirements of the Criterion 6 as **unsatisfactory**.

VII. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

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

Findings. ASC is located in Ararat, Ararat region, Khanjyan Street, 67, within 1 building. The ASC educational process is organised in one building, where there is an event hall, gym, library, computer classrooms, "Armat" engineering laboratory equipped with the latest equipment, first-aid post, canteen, teacher room, 23 subject classrooms, military training classroom, laboratory for winemaking and juice production, meeting modern requirements.

The TLI building is as furnished and technically equipped as possible. Although there have been some renovations at the ASC building due to the 2017-2019 extra-budgetary funding and other financial means, there are still unrepaired classrooms that require investment. Round tables are set up in the Sky Club and winery classrooms. "Armat" engineering laboratory has a 3D printer, machine, robotics kits, etc. The TLI has a winery laboratory, where there are the necessary conditions for conducting winemaking lessons. The library has a reading room for 20 students, a library with fiction and professional literature, as well as textbooks.

During the online visit, it was revealed that the TLI chemistry, physics, biology laboratories, the electronic library, the gym, and some laboratories are in need of renovation. Material and technical resources for joint use with employers are not available.

One of the strategic goals set by the ASC DP is to have a quality infrastructure. According to the self-assessment, one of the tasks of achieving the strategic goals of ASC is the effective reorganisation, use, technical upgrade of the property complex for educational and scientific purposes, modernisation of the technical equipment of the halls, renovation of the library.

Revenues in the TLI are generated at the expense of the RA state budget, extra-budgetary fund and other financing. Expenditures are planned based on financial capabilities. ASC financial management and allocation is based on the preparation of the annual budget estimate and oversight of budget execution. The budget estimate takes into account the demand for resources and resources needed to achieve strategic goals. The Accounting Department submits a quarterly report on the income and expense. There is an estimate of ASC financial and economic activities, but the expenditures were not considered according to the strategic goals and study programmes. In order to maintain and update the resource base, the annual budget always envisages capital construction and repair costs, as well as ongoing repair costs. It became clear from the expert observation that capital expenditures are planned according to the annual expenditure estimates. In addition, the TLI has the potential to increase the revenue, and the allocation policy is based on the efficient use of financial resources. The TLI has developed a financial management procedure, a policy of distribution of funds.

The self-assessment states that in case of a certain increase in the number of students, the college will be able to provide an appropriate amount of resources. It became clear from the online site visit that if the number of students increases, a classroom problem may arise. The planning of the necessary resources for the implementation of the educational process in the TLI is carried out in accordance with the requirements of the RA Law on Procurement.

The TLI students and staff use the entire resource database in accordance with the rights set forth in the ASC Charter. In line with the goals of academic programmes, there is relevant literature in the TLI.

In order to improve the management of information and document circulation, the TLI website (www.ascol.am) was created in 2020. It is planned to create a unified central information system, to ensure its accessibility for students and staff. It became clear from the online visit that some work has already been done in that direction. The ASC office work is organised by the Secretariat. There is an Archiving Department at the TLI.

The ASC area is fenced, there is a video surveillance system of the entrance and the yard, the entrance is also guarded by a guard. During the visit, it was assured that there is a watch in the corridors, and students cannot leave the TLI area without informing the director, course instructor and parent. The TLI has a large gate, the entrance has a ramp, there are evacuation schemes in all corridors in case of emergencies, and there are also fire extinguishers in the corridors.

ASC has a renovated first-aid post with the necessary supplies and medications, it is located on the ground floor. The first-aid post also follows the preventive measures during the pandemic, there are sanitisers in each classroom, the chairs in the classrooms are arranged at a certain distance.

It became clear from the online site visit that the evacuation of the TLI staff and students is carried out regularly, with the participation of the Chief of the CD headquarters, in cooperation with the RA Ministry of Emergency Situations. In the post-war period, it is planned to include practical training in acquiring skills of providing first aid in war situations in the "Civil Defense and Emergency Issues" subject, and in the "Security and First Aid" module. It was also found out that the ASC building needs to be strengthened, and preparatory work was done in that direction.

The TLI does not have the basis for assessing resource satisfaction, the educational environment is not surveyed, but the visit shows that resources are available, but there are no mechanisms for assessing sustainability and effectiveness.

Considerations. The expert panel considers that, in general, ASC resources in the

current conditions provide the implementation of study programmes. It is a positive fact that in 2017-2019, the ASC building has been partially renovated, and the classrooms, gym, and some laboratories are planned to be renovated. It is commendable that the TLI is looking for additional funding sources for strengthening the building, such as the construction of chemistry, physics, biology laboratories, and an electronic library, which can contribute to the efficiency of educational processes. It is worrying that there are no logistics resources for joint use with employers, which hinders the development of practical skills.

The expert panel welcomes the fact that ASC has a mechanism for allocating financial resources, which is based on the preparation of the annual budget estimate and control over budget execution. It is noteworthy that the annual budget envisages expenditures aimed at achieving the goals of the TLI, in particular, permanent estimates of expenditures on capital construction, renovation, and ongoing renovation. However, the expenditures are not fully opened according to the strategic goals and study programmes, which would make the financial allocations more targeted. It is noteworthy that ASC is constantly looking for sources of new financial resources, which can contribute to having a quality infrastructure and financial stability from the strategic goals set by the DP.

On the positive side, there is usually no sharp increase or decrease in resource needs at ASC, however, with a certain increase in the number of students, the TLI will be able to provide adequate human and financial resources, which can also be a concern due to the lack of classroom resources, and ASC will not be able to admit many students.

It is worrying that the TLI does not have a basis for assessing resource satisfaction, and does not conduct surveys to assess the educational environment, which may prevent the real needs of stakeholders from being identified.

The work aimed at creating a safe and secure environment at ASC is welcome, and it has a positive impact on building trust in the TLI. It is also positive that the internal document circulation is coordinated, which is controlled by the director, ensuring the smooth operation of the TLI.

Summary. Considering that ASC provides the necessary conditions for the implementation of academic programmes, makes efforts to improve resources, acquire new ones, has a policy of allocating financial resources, has a safe and secure environment for organising the educational process, the expert panel considers that ASC has the necessary resources to create a learning environment, to achieve the defined missions and objectives, and meets the requirements of the Criterion 7.

Conclusion. The expert panel evaluates the compliance of RA MoESCS ASC SNCO institutional capacities with the requirements of the Criterion 7 as **satisfactory**.

VIII. SOCIETAL RESPONSIBILITY

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

Findings. Examining the ASC documents, the expert panel found out that the TLI does not have a set of accounting regulations, however, the following reports were submitted: budget expenditures and budget debt reports for 2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2019-2020; report on the work done in the 2019-2020 academic year (available to external stakeholders); Internal Assessment Report of the RA MoESCS ASC for 2019-2020 academic year; Quality Assurance Infrastructure Report for the 2019-2020 academic year; report on the work done by the ASC director in the 2019-2020 academic year; report of the Educational Department for the 2019-2020 academic year, the reports of the Methodological Council of the 2019-2020 academic

year; the reports of the state apparatus are presented regularly. Report on the work done by the ASC director in the 2019-2020 academic year and the internal evaluation reports of the RA MoESCS ASC 2019-2020 academic year include analytical elements, but they do not summarise the results. Accountability operates on a bottom-up, top-down basis.

The site visit and the observation of the documents revealed that ASC has a website (www.ascol.am), which was created in 2020, and the website is not updated regularly, the information provided is limited, there were no ASC operating procedures and regulations on the website during the site visit. The TLI has several Facebook pages. One of the Facebook pages contains enough information about the existing specialities, admission places. There are some videos of open lessons and online lessons organised by ASC. The transparency of the procedures and processes conducted by the TLI and the accessibility for the members of the society is carried out through regular meetings with the teachers and pupils of schools, in cooperation with the regional center and the municipality.

The self-assessment states that ASC does not have a Public Relations Department, however, the information provided through the website and Facebook page is coordinated by the computer service provider. Whereas the second part of the ASC DP 2018-2023 refers to public involvement and services where further development of public relations and enhancement of social responsibility are emphasised, and during the online visit the expert panel found out that the feedback with the alumni has been maintained since 2017. ASC publishes booklets representing the TLI, which are distributed. ASC organises national, cultural events according to the list approved by the authorised body. The TLI students also participate in other national and regional cultural events and festivals.

It became clear from the online visit that the TLI organises seminar discussions with the youth of the community, the meetings take place in the Sky club. Short-term courses are also organised, open-doors days are organised for pupils, introducing them to the specialities available at the TLI and the student life. The expert panel found out that feedback mechanisms are weak in the TLI.

Considerations. The expert panel considers it positive that ASC has a built-in reporting system, although the reports are mainly descriptive. The reports are presented for 2 years and they are short-term from the point of view of observation. The expert panel noted that there is little analytical component in the TLI reports, the presence of which can have a positive impact on the evaluation of the TLI performance, contributing to the development of positive practice, strengths and weaknesses, and the development of effective steps for improvement.

On the positive side, the ASC and Facebook pages have been set up to provide feedback to the public. There are several Facebook pages, and it is worrying that the interested persons may not receive complete information (the expert panel had problems while searching for the Facebook page).

Another positive aspect is that the TLI has been in contact with the alumni since 2017, which will help follow their career path, contributing to the efficiency of the educational process.

The expert panel welcomes the transparency and accessibility of information provided to the public by the TLI, but considers that the information available is incomplete (for example, the website does not contain information about the alumni). It is noteworthy that the updated information is posted on the website, however, the page is not updated regularly.

It is commendable that ASC is taking steps to involve the public in the TLI education processes, such as Sky club meetings, short courses, however, this process is not clearly

regulated, and there are no clear mechanisms that can have a positive impact on the TLI achievements and registered results.

Summary. Given that ASC complies reports and presents them to internal and external stakeholders, the TLI generally ensures the implementation of procedures, transparency and access to reporting, and steps are taken to involve the public in the TLI education, the expert panel considers that ASC meets the requirements of the Criterion 8.

Conclusion. The expert panel evaluates the compliance of RA MoESCS ASC SNCO institutional capacities with the requirements of the Criterion 8 as **satisfactory**.

IX. EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND INTERNATIONALISATION

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

Findings. The ASP 2018-2023 DP envisages the development of social partnership. ASC cooperates with the representative offices of several international organisations in Armenia: World Vision ("World Vision Armenia" has established the Sky club, where students get acquainted with entrepreneurial skills, and where seminars are held), "GIZ". ASC also cooperates with local organisations such as "Anushavan and Ofik Abrahamians" Charitable Educational Foundation (who equipped the "Winery and Juice Production", "Culinary", and "Armat" laboratory subject classrooms), "Armat" engineering laboratory (within the framework of implementing engineering projects), "ARMBUSINESS BANK" CJSC, "Ararat Wine Factory" LLC, "Ararat Municipality", "Ararat Marzpetaran" (for organising and conducting internships), as well as schools and kindergartens to attract students and to conduct internships. The online site visit revealed that ASC had signed new agreements with ACBA Credit Agricole Bank CJSC and VTB Bank (Armenia) CJSC. In addition, the self-assessment states that ASC does not yet have a cooperative partnership in the international arena. Employers are not involved in the college teaching process and it became clear from the visit that the implementation of their suggestions is still in the planning stage.

According to the self-assessment, the Career Center is actively involved with the "Employment Center", participating in job fairs organised by the latter, with the aim of ensuring that alumni enter the labour market.

As for continuing the education, ASC cooperates with the leading state HEIs of Armenia. This partnership enables the best TLI alumni to continue their education at partner HEIs. The online visit and the review of the documents revealed that there is no cooperation with similar TLIs. From the online visit and the review of the documents, it was clear that there is no cooperation with similar TLIs.

It was found out from the site visit that the knowledge of Russian among the TLI teaching and support staffs is good, and the knowledge of English is sufficient.

Considerations. It is noteworthy that ASC cooperates with a number of local organisations with foreign branches and representations in Armenia, takes steps to expand cooperation with other companies, which will have a positive impact on the implementation of the TLI external relations policy, as well as collaboration with employers can enhance students' practical skills. As employers are not involved in ASC as teachers, the link between the TLI and the labour market link is weak, thus jeopardising alumni career opportunities.

The expert panel welcomes the fact that the Career Center has started to actively cooperate with the "Employment Center", so their cooperation and organised job fairs can contribute to the employment of the alumni.

Although ASC is partnering with a number of Armenian HEIs to enable the best TLI

students to continue their education, it is nevertheless advisable to partner with similar TLIs as well, as a result of which good practices can be learned and introduced to ensure the mobility of students and teachers.

It is positive that at the TLI, the administrative staff, the teachers and students are fluent in Russian and English, which can have a positive impact on the internationalisation and mobility of the TLI.

Summary. Given that the TLI is taking active steps to expand its cooperation with local and international organisations, provides a wide range of cooperation, and ASC internal stakeholders are fluent in English and Russian, the expert panel considers that ASC meets the requirements of the Criterion 9.

Conclusion. The expert panel evaluates the compliance of RA MoESCS ASC SNCO institutional capacities with the requirements of the Criterion 9 as **satisfactory**.

X. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

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

Findings. According to the self-assessment, the ASC policy of internal quality assurance of education (hereinafter referred to as QA) was laid in 2015, the internal QA of education infrastructure was established, which started to act as a separate subdivision. In the 2017-2018 academic year, the documents on the "Concept of Internal Quality Assurance Infrastructure (Committee) of Education", "Regulation of Internal Quality of Education", "Procedure for Implementation of Internal and External Evaluation Criteria" were developed at the TLI. The "Concept of Internal Quality Assurance Infrastructure (Committee) of Education" includes the main goal, objectives, basic principles of QA, implementation mechanisms, priority areas of implementation. According to the concept, the main goal of QA is to outline the conceptual and methodological bases of the QA intra-college system, which will contribute to the development of quality culture, the introduction of a complete quality management system, provision of the oversight, evaluation and improvement mechanisms for the implementation of the TLI strategic priorities, and enhancement of quality of vocational education. According to the "Regulation of Internal Quality of Education", the purpose of the ASC Internal Quality Committee is to study and prepare issues in its area of regulations, and to submit proposals to the Pedagogical Council.

It became clear from the online site visit that the deadlines for the implementation of the goals and steps set by the concept are not specified, and there are no recorded results in the short term. At the same time, it was found out that the concepts of HEI QA were used in the development of the "Concept of Internal Quality Assurance Infrastructure (Committee) of Education".

In order to manage the internal quality assurance processes, the TLI has an internal QA internal center with its office. According to the 2020 staff list, the center has one position: the head of the QA internal center, there is a QA system map, three QA committees: Educational and Methodological, Student, Technical. However, it became clear from the visit that the committees are not yet fully operational, but work is underway to involve them in QA processes. The formulations of main issues of QA are still being planned.

The site visit revealed that the staff involved in QA processes were not trained. At the same time, it was observed that the TLI is working to consolidate human resources around QA processes. From internal stakeholders, the self-assessment team is involved in QA

processes, and the involvement of external stakeholders is not visible. According to the "Concept of Internal Quality Assurance Infrastructure (Committee) of Education", one of the quality assessment tools is to identify the needs of internal and external stakeholders through surveys, but the visit revealed that only students from internal stakeholders participated in the survey, but the results were not analysed.

The QA Internal Center has been established since 2020, and the site visit revealed that the QA system is in the planning stage of the PDCA cycle; the system has not been monitored yet.

In 2020, ASC conducted a self-assessment for external evaluation processes according to the 10 criteria, as well as developed regulations, procedures, documents coordinating ASC activities, completed the ANQA e-questionnaire, which helped the experts conduct external evaluation.

Considerations. The expert panel welcomes the fact that ASC has developed QA procedures, policies, and objectives, as well as the basis for the QA culture development. As the QA processes have just been introduced, the cycle is not over yet, so there is no analysis. It is worrying that the HEI QA concepts were used in the development of the "Concept of Internal Quality Assurance Infrastructure (Committee) of Education" without taking into account the specifics of the college.

It is a positive aspect that a new unit has been established in the ASC to organise QA processes, which has its own office space, QA internal processes are managed by the head of the department. In addition, ASC has already united internal stakeholders (teachers from the self-assessment team) around QA processes. At the same time, there is no involvement of external stakeholders. However, it became clear from the visit that the QA committees are not yet fully operational. Their full implementation can contribute to the achievement of QA goals.

Quality culture is still in its introduction stage at ASC, there are QA regulatory documents, however, it is worrying that even short-term analyses are scarce, there are no summaries of educational outcomes, their assessments, and ways to improve, which could jeopardise the quality culture and identification of problems, as well as the development and implementation of the improvement.

The expert panel welcomes the fact that the TLI has carried out a self-assessment for the external evaluation processes, there are relevant grounds, the ANQA electronic questionnaire has been completed, but expert observations have shown that there is little analysis and data collection in the self-assessment, and the analysis is in the beginning stage. A more systematic and analytical approach to this process will contribute to the introduction of a continuous quality improvement environment in the college.

ASC also provides information to external stakeholders through its Facebook page, website, but the QA information on both domains is not comprehensive, which could jeopardise access to the complete information on the TLI QA.

Summary. Considering that QA processes have just been introduced in ASC, and in a short period of time ASC has created documents regulating the field, teachers are involved in the TLI QA processes, there is an Internal Quality Assurance Center, the head of the center, self-assessment has been carried out, the principles of excellence are encouraged among students and employees, ASC has the potential to launch an internal quality assurance system, the expert panel considers that ASC meets the requirements of the Criterion 10.

Conclusion. The expert panel evaluates the compliance of RA MoESCS ASC SNCO institutional capacities with the requirements of the Criterion 10 as **satisfactory**.

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>	Unsatisfactory
<i>IV. Students</i>	Satisfactory
<i>V. Faculty and Staff</i>	Satisfactory
<i>VI. Research and Development</i>	Unsatisfactory
<i>VII. Infrastructure and Resources</i>	Satisfactory
<i>VIII. Societal Responsibility</i>	Satisfactory
<i>IX. External Relations and Internationalisation</i>	Satisfactory
<i>X. Internal Quality Assurance System</i>	Satisfactory

26.11.2020



Chair of Expert Panel

APPENDIX 1. CVS OF EXPERT PANEL MEMBERS

Armenuhi Mheryan: Graduated from the Department of Finance and Credit, Faculty of Finance and Accounting, Armenian State University of Economics in 2000, and in 2004, completed postgraduate studies of the same department. In 2006 - Lecturer at "Finance" Department, ASUE, PhD Candidate in Economics. In 2010 - Associate Professor, thesis: "Operational Financial Management in Production and Commercial Organisations / Materials of RA Manufacturing Industry /". Participated in the following trainings, courses and projects: 2019 - Educational Research and Consulting Center: Data Processing, Statistical Analysis and Submission via SPSS Statistical Package; 2019 – ICARE: Application of Econometric Models Using STATA for Addressing Economic Questions; 2016 - Training on Capacity Building for Implementing Bologna Reforms; 2016 – ASUE, "Mastery and Improvement of Information Systems", "Financial Accounting, Analysis and Audit", "Mastery and Application of Economic and Mathematical Methods and Models" courses; 2009 – ASUE, lecturer training course.

Kristine Hakobyan: In 2004, graduated from Armenian State Pedagogical University after Khacahtur Abovyan with a master's degree in "Teaching in Elementary Classes", speciality: "Methodologist". In 2015, participated in distance learning courses organised by NAS RA: Fundamentals of Tourism; Tourism Speciality; Etiquette and Intercultural Communication - Cultural Speciality; Human Resources Management. Since 2005, she has been working at the "Kotayk Regional State College" SNCO in the city of Hrazdan, Kotayk region, as a Chief of Staff, Lecturer in Tourism. Author of 2 professional educational manuals, Professional educational standard, Distance electronic courses.

Lusine Sahakyan: In 2007, graduated from the Faculty of Engineering and Economics of the Armenian State University of Economics with a degree in "Information Systems". In 2011 - Faculty of Informatics and Mathematical Modeling, Armenian National Agrarian University, speciality: "Mathematical Methods and Modeling in Economics". Thesis: "Economic and Mathematical Analysis of Banking and Credit Risks by the Example of RA Commercial Banks and Credit Organisations". Since 2014, she has been working at Vardenis "Badeyan" State College of Gegharkunik region as a lecturer in Economics and Informatics.

Mariam Gyurjyan: In 2019, graduated from the Department of "Accounting and Audit" of Regional State College N 2 after N. Achemyan, Yerevan. She is currently a 3rd year student at the Faculty of Economics, Yerevan State University. Since September 2018, she has been the Deputy Coordinator of the Student Councils of Secondary Vocational Education Institutions and has presented the student voice at the Youth Foundation. Since January 2019, she has been working as an accountant in "Base" accounting company.

APPENDIX 2. SCHEDULE OF SITE VISIT

SCHEDULE
OF ONLINE SITE-VISIT BY THE EXPERT PANEL
FOR INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION OF ARARAT STATE COLLEGE

23.11.2020-26.11.2020

	23.11.2020	Launch	End	Duration	Zoom link
1.	Meeting with the college Director	9:30	10:30	60 min	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85317826240?pwd=Z2daWldhdGV4RzhpelZKMDhEbnNVQT09 Meeting ID: 853 1782 6240 Passcode: 633071
2.	Meeting with the Deputy Director	11:00	12:00	60 min	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85025921726?pwd=WXL3aXFpK3JmQUtsS2wxdWJRN3p0QT09 Meeting ID: 850 2592 1726 Passcode: 246055
3.	Meeting with the college Board members	12:30	13:20	50 min	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83816632671?pwd=RkdLVk5HUGd5SDI6OTBHckQyVXNhQT09 Meeting ID: 838 1663 2671 Passcode: 384421
4.	Break, session of the expert panel	13:30	14:30	60 min	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87352713620?pwd=R1QyQzBQZmd4UDJXQXZTMWdoU0tvZz09 Meeting ID: 873 5271 3620 Passcode: 185130
5.	Meeting with alumni (8-10 representatives)	14:45	15:45	60 min	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81649795128?pwd=VWo4bTU5LzQ4cUZhRVc5enhPTHhwUT09 Meeting ID: 816 4979 5128 Passcode: 379571
6.	Review of documents, closed session of the expert panel	16:30	18:30	120 min	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87521805311?pwd=NmJKNEtPSUI0RExmSjVCUjJldGpJQT09 Meeting ID: 875 2180 5311 Passcode: 543303

	24.11.2020	Launch	End	Duration	Zoom link
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1.	Meeting with the Heads of the Chairs (Head of Education Programme Department, Head of the Chair of Economics, Head Teacher on Vocational Education, Head of Internship Department)	9:30	10:30	60 min	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86792423771?pwd=ak5zRmJ5a2UrVjRUbm5ON3pXRvlnQT09 Meeting ID: 867 9242 3771 Passcode: 755745
2.	Meeting with teaching staff members (including 3 academic programmes)	11:00	12:00	60 min	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87166346105?pwd=VHVvSjJ0eEF5UnhH WVJ6amNLR1phdz09 Meeting ID: 871 6634 6105 Passcode: 570046
3.	Break, session of the expert panel	12:30	13:30	60 min	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88009509718?pwd=UDNwT3BlakFvNC9z elAxMTVMMXRqZz09 Meeting ID: 880 0950 9718 Passcode: 371380
4.	Meeting with employers (8-10 representatives)	13:45	14:45	60 min	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8863650651?pwd=SzFBV1JESmRVSWtE aG55N1lvSEJjQT09 Meeting ID: 886 3665 0651 Passcode: 368575
5.	Meeting with Student Council members	15:15	15:55	40 min	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85611148276?pwd=dXdzcHpQNzJmUzR HR2o4dlJVZlRLdz09 Meeting ID: 856 1114 8276 Passcode: 315576
6.	Meeting with students (10-12 representatives)	16:30	17:30	60 min	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82417328103?pwd=b1lrdFZTZ3hkTWVC YjdoMGg5aVltZz09 Meeting ID: 824 1732 8103 Passcode: 573748
7.	Review of documents, closed session of the expert panel	18:00	19:00	60 min	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8974800162?pwd=Ylh5NUd6KzAvcE1Y OUg3dlNXZkIwZz09 Meeting ID: 897 4810 0162 Passcode: 728144

	25.11.2020			Launch	End	Duration	Zoom link
1.	Meeting with responsables for academic programmes on “Finance”, “Service Organisation” and “Accounting”			09:30	11:00	90 min	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83535716932?pwd=emQ1K1grYWczMGFtVU1BZVpoS0ZrQT09 Meeting ID: 835 3571 6932 Passcode: 592871
2.	Meeting with teachers of academic programmes on “Finance”, “Service Organisation” and “Accounting” (8-10 representatives)			11:15	12:45	90 min	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81699415287?pwd=enk3Vmt0Z2lhWmYyMFRZVndKTzM3dz09 Meeting ID: 816 9941 5287 Passcode: 525578
3.	Break, session of the expert panel			13:00	14:00	60 min	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87059217284?pwd=T1FHRHBLewNKK1ZQTkwWCHhiek5BUT09 Meeting ID: 870 5921 7284 Passcode: 659924
4.	Meeting with students of the academic programme on “Finance” (8-10 representatives)	Meeting with students of the academic programme on “Service Organisation” (8-10 representatives)	Meeting with students of the academic programme on “Accounting” (8-10 representatives)	14:00	15:00	60 min	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82205518332?pwd=b0hHdE91NVA5OUxveW9kd0NKdXZYUT09 Meeting ID: 822 0551 8332 Passcode: 286398
5.	Meeting with the representatives of the college Departments (Career Guidance Officer, Internship Supervisor, Librarian, Chief Accountant, HR Inspector)			15:30	16:30	60 min	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85339180451?pwd=d0VCeTFZUnJucEVESVI5WFdCb2IGQT09 Meeting ID: 853 3918 0451 Passcode: 595825
6.	Review of documents, closed session of the expert panel			17:00	19:00	120 min	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89001992652?pwd=eVdPVStJL0o5NkFRtZrKS2NCZE94QT09 Meeting ID: 890 0199 2652 Passcode: 530130

	26.11.2020	Launch	End	Duration	Zoom link
1.	Meeting with the Quality Assurance Department Officers	9:30	10:30	60 min	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84633127288?pwd=ekVSNkhnRFVqTEVwOXBLOXNPL0F5QT09 Meeting ID: 846 3312 7288 Passcode: 123706
2.	Open meeting with the expert panel	11:00	11:40	40 min	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88338799521?pwd=NHdCaEVYMKppU0ErU3M4T0lu aCtqUT09 Meeting ID: 883 3879 9521 Passcode: 168791
3.	Meeting with members chosen by the expert panel	12:00	12:40	40 min	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86022825467?pwd=UUQ0VDVka1VXVGc2L2VTVWg5TTg1dz09 Meeting ID: 860 2282 5467 Passcode: 418007
4.	Break, session of the expert panel	13:00	14:00	60 min	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88693974387?pwd=MFNB RGE3NCtjc2NJZFhvL1JvK2RsQT09 Meeting ID: 886 9397 4387 Passcode: 053772

5.	Meeting with members chosen by the expert panel	14:15	15:15	60 min	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81526285730?pwd=TVFnMUhtOXIzT09MbmhVVlRkZ0Zzdz09 Meeting ID: 815 2628 5730 Passcode: 063349
6.	Closed session of the expert panel	15: 30	17: 00	90 min	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84760970630?pwd=dTE4WkFUdmFoMnI3RGFiYVJWRkJadz09 Meeting ID: 847 6097 0630 Passcode: 073482
7.	Meeting with the managerial staff of the college	17:30	18:00	30 min	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81577660664?pwd=ZHY3VEN5R1ZVRHo5NUpBcWF6NHhoQT09 Meeting ID: 815 7766 0664 Passcode: 024451

16.11.2020

APPENDIX 3. LIST OF DOCUMENTS OBSERVED

LIST OF DOCUMENTS OBSERVED DURING ARARAT STATE COLLEGE ACCREDITATION

N	NAME OF THE DOCUMENT	CRITERION
1.	Internal memorandum on the implementation of educational department programmes of 2019-2020	1
2.	Protocols on identifying the needs of external and internal stakeholders	1
3.	2019-2020 analyses, reports	1
4.	Information folder on all sessions of all departments	1
5.	Board minutes record book	1
6.	Minutes of the election of Pedagogical Council members during the meeting of the Governing Board	2
7.	Minutes of the Student Council meeting for the election of the governing board members	2
8.	Reports on the already implemented points envisaged by the 2019-2020 academic year development programme of Ararat State College, the points envisaged by the educational department 2019-2020 academic year development programme, which have already been implemented	2
9.	Subject descriptions ("Entrepreneurship", "Basics of Banking", "Financial Markets", "State Finance", "Community Finance", "Budget system")	3
10.	Record book of chair protocols	3
11.	Approved vocational education modular programme	3
12.	Exam paper samples	3
13.	List of trained teachers and training certificates	3
14.	Analysis of professional subject observations	3
15.	List of students continuing their education in universities	3
16.	Contracts concluded with employers for the implementation of industrial and pre-graduation internships	3
17.	Examples of certificates of honour issued to teachers and students	3
18.	Examples of Situational problems used in the "Finance" specialisation	3
19.	Examples of essays	3

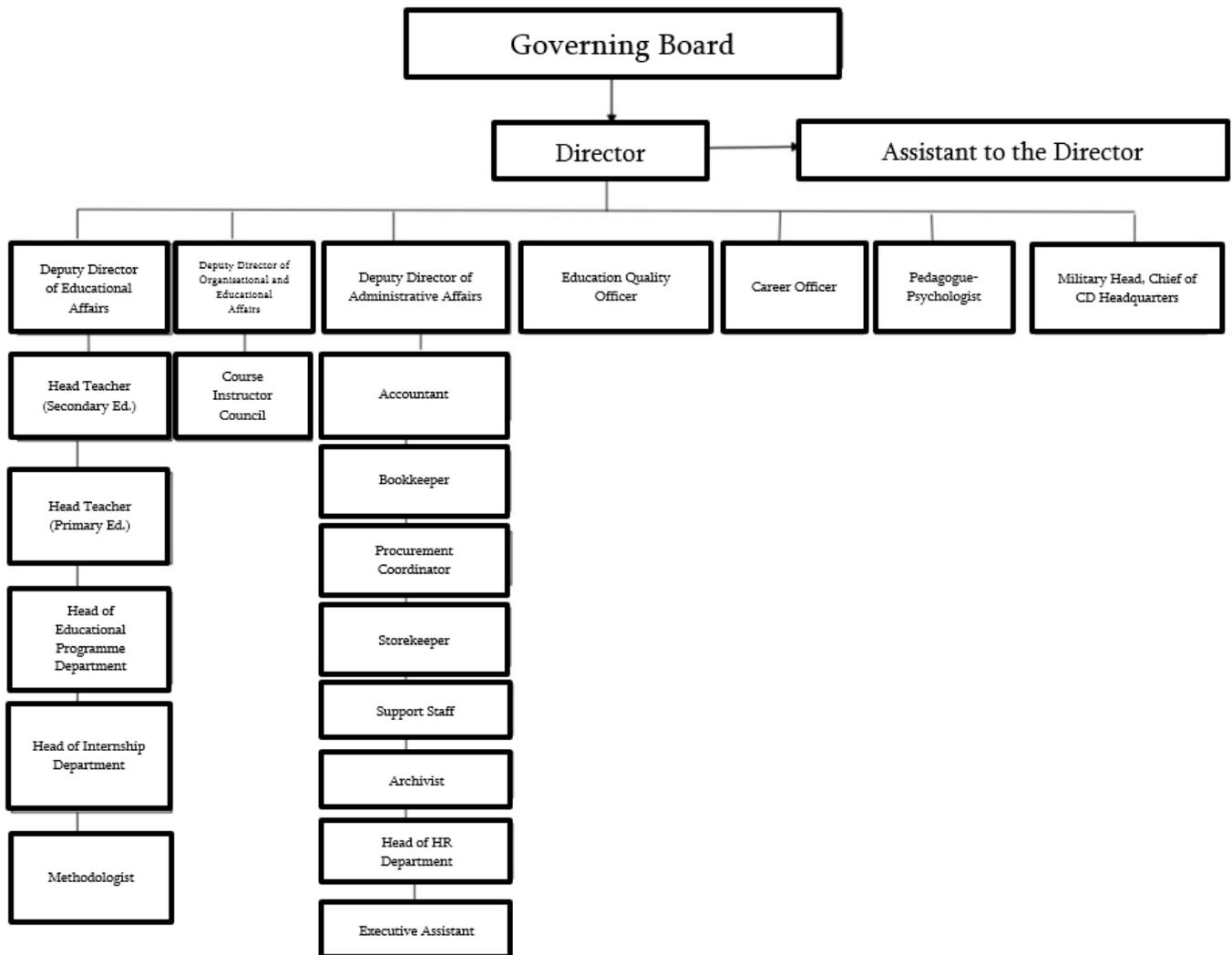
20.	Discussion of programmes in the Methodological Council and confirmation document in the Pedagogical Council, conclusion on the result	3
21.	Record books of chair protocols, other substantiating documents indicating the need for changes in modular or subject programmes, other analytical documents	3
22.	Example of delivering the learning outcomes of the modules	3
23.	Examples of annual plans of different subdivisions / for all subdivisions of the last three years /	3
24.	Reports of the past three years / chairs, subdivisions, director /	3
25.	Minutes of the meetings / three examples from each subdivision /	3
26.	Record books / one from each course of the past three years example	3
27.	Graduation papers / three examples from each of the three academic programmes	3
28.	Record books of lesson observations / for the past three years	3
29.	Teacher portfolios, teacher plans / for the past three years	3
30.	Filled in internship diaries / two examples for each academic programme	3
31.	List of educational consultants, consultation topics and meeting schedule, record book (for the past three years)	3
32.	Timetables	3
33.	Booklets, announcements about admission recruitment	4
34.	Timetable of additional classes	4
35.	Examples of Student Council meeting minutes	4
36.	Results of student evaluation of young teachers as a result of teacher evaluation	5
37.	Subject and modular programmes, protocol record books of the chair	5
38.	Collective agreement example	5
39.	Examples of employment contracts	5

40.	Training certificates	5
41.	Record books of lesson observations	5
42.	Internal evaluation documents	5
43.	List of employees fired in recent years and the reasons	5
44.	Graduate internship reports which include analyses, their assessments, research summaries	6
45.	Career Center report	6
46.	Procurement plans for the past 3 years	7
47.	Conclusion of the the CD headquarters on the results of evacuation	7
48.	Report on the work done by the QA infrastructure	10
49.	Reports on the distribution of funds	10
50.	Analysis of surveys conducted in the past three years and reports	10
51.	Analyses by the Quality Officer	10
52.	Alumni database	10
53.	Previous documents on QA processes	10

APPENDIX 4. RESOURCES OBSERVED

1. Classrooms
2. Subject classrooms
3. Chairs
4. Computer classroom
5. Laboratories
6. Sky club
7. Gym
8. Library
9. First-aid post
10. Reading hall
11. Canteen
12. Event hall

APPENDIX 5. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATION INSTITUTION



APPENDIX 6. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1. **ASC** – Ararat State College
2. **DP** – Development Plan
3. **GB** – Governing Board
4. **MP** – Modular Programme
5. **NCVETD** – National Center for Vocational Education and Training Development
6. **NQF** - National Qualifications Framework
7. **PC** – Pedagogical Council
8. **PDCA** – Plan-Do-Check-Act
9. **QA** – Quality Assurance
10. **SAC** – State Academic Criteria
11. **SC** – Student Council
12. **SP** – Subject Programme
13. **TLI** – Tertiary Level Institution