

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



**EXPERT PANEL REPORT
INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION OF
ABOVYAN STATE COLLEGE OF POWER ENGINEERING**

Yerevan – 2024

INTRODUCTION

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

The expert examination was carried out by the independent expert panel, which is made up of four local experts and was formed by the requirements set by the National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation in regulation on “Formation of the Expert Panel.”

The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of the Republic of Armenia funded the accreditation process.

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

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

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

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

When evaluating, the expert panel considered the college a vocational educational institution with a defined mission. The panel also considered the institution's significance as a VET institution for the region and Armenia while emphasizing the specifics of the implemented academic programs. The college underwent institutional accreditation for the first time in 2021, and as a result, it received conditional accreditation for two years.

The college's data collection mechanisms include surveys, opinions from the final certification commission, class observations, and reports. However, all this data has not yet been subjected to comprehensive analysis to uncover major issues. Additionally, some identified issues have not yet become the basis for administrative decisions.

According to the expert panel, despite certain studies highlighting issues and some steps being taken towards quality assurance and process management, the college still does not implement data-driven and strategic management. The college has academic programs that are in line with the NQF. The assignments given to students and the assessments carried out are primarily aimed at forming and verifying knowledge. The college does not have lecturers involved in the practical field. For the development of practical skills, the college has laboratories and a training ground, which are the result of its rich heritage. Additionally, the college collaborates with employers to organize internships; however, these resources are not fully utilized effectively. Furthermore, the resource base needs modernization, and cooperation with employers requires expansion and development. As a result, developing students' practical skills is likely suffering. At the same time, the process of evaluating practical skills remains incomplete. At the same time, the college has some good examples that can be expanded and institutionalized. Despite having a rich resource base and involving qualified instructors, the expert panel believes there are issues regarding the credibility of qualifications awarded by the college.

The college does not have specific goals, a strategy for research and external relations, or incentive mechanisms. The faculty is mostly not engaged in research or studying international experience, with only a few instances where instructors, on their initiative, have published educational manuals that have been implemented in the teaching process.

Assignments aimed at developing students' analytical and research skills are mostly absent, except for a few good examples.

The college has various mechanisms for identifying students' educational needs, but the identified issues have not become a basis for institutional reforms. The college introduces students to career opportunities to some extent, organizing various events; however, these efforts are aimed at a relatively narrow scope, and there are elements of uncertainty. There are still no institutional mechanisms to track the career paths of graduates, which could serve as a foundation for the continuous improvement of academic programs.

The college has implemented an accountability mechanism, which needs improvement in content. Efforts have been made to ensure transparency and improve processes, but these efforts require more active continuation.

The college collaborates with some local partners to meet educational needs, but this collaboration does not fully cover the full range of educational needs in terms of scope and depth of content. It has not been able to engage employer-lecturers, and employers' resource base is not fully utilized based on educational needs. The college still lacks international collaboration.

Based on the above, the expert panel concludes that the college has made some efforts towards development, emphasizing student needs and introducing certain accountability mechanisms. However, the expert panel believes that the existing issues related to the lack of clear goals and effective processes for research and external relations hinder the college's development.

Strengths of the Institution:

1. The only Power Engineering College in the region.
2. Mechanisms for student recruitment.
3. Mechanisms for identifying student needs.
4. Existing mentoring policy and faculty evaluation mechanisms.
5. A rich legacy of resources for implementing VET programs.
6. Established quality assurance system.

Weaknesses of the Institution:

1. Weak expression of the needs of internal and external stakeholders.
2. Inadequacy of mechanisms for strategic management, planning, implementation, and evaluation.
3. Incomplete research, evaluation mechanisms, and evidence-based management aimed at assessing the effectiveness of the college's activities.

4. Lack of mechanisms to ensure the learning outcomes outlined in the academic program (disconnection between teaching, learning, and assessment methods and expected outcomes).
5. Insufficient teaching and assessment methods and approaches to develop competencies and skills.
6. The process of continuous monitoring and improvement of academic programs is incomplete.
7. Lack of mechanisms for faculty advancement and low motivation.
8. Mechanisms for linking the educational process and the research component are ineffective.
9. Ineffective use of the resource base.
10. Lack of employer involvement and insufficient external relations to meet the academic program needs.

Recommendations:

Database management

1. Align strategic goals and objectives with the college's mission, labor market demands, and existing issues, involving a broad range of internal and external stakeholders, particularly with the involvement of employers.
2. Establish planning, implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement processes to ensure the feasibility of strategic goals.
3. Implement an effective and credible assessment process for educational, managerial, and other processes (improve data collection and analysis processes, study external factors affecting the college's activities) aimed at evidence-based management and enhancing decision-making.
4. Introduce effective mechanisms for involving both internal and external stakeholders in the college's quality assurance processes.

Credible award of qualifications

5. Improve academic programs and course content to align with labor market and international demands, focusing on developing competencies and skills, based on comprehensive studies (including the analysis of international experience).
6. Ensure the capabilities and skills envisaged by the AP by improving the implementation of academic programs (engaging employers, increasing practical and laboratory hours, improving teaching and learning methods, laboratory experiments, assignments, internships, etc.) and assessment processes (introducing formative

assessment mechanisms, evaluating practical training, etc.), while ensuring the appropriate faculty and infrastructure (including internship locations).

7. Ensure the effective use of existing infrastructure and resources, fostering a student-centered environment.
8. Introduce effective mechanisms for faculty development and progress, aligning them with strategic goals and educational needs

Long-term development

9. Define achievable strategic goals for research and external relations to ensure the outcomes and needs outlined in the academic program, diversify financial inputs, and support the development of resources and the college.
10. Involve students and faculty in research activities, ensuring alignment with the academic program's teaching components.
11. Expand the scope of cooperation with employers to meet educational needs and, where possible, improve lecturers' skills.

Armenuhi Sargsyan, Chair of Expert Panel

29.07.2024

DESCRIPTION OF EXTERNAL REVIEW

COMPOSITION OF EXPERT PANEL

The following expert panel carried out an external evaluation of the institutional capacities of the Abovyan State College of Power Engineering.

1. **Armenuhi Sargsyan** - Candidate of Physical and Mathematical Sciences, Associate Professor, Leading Researcher, head of the expert panel.
2. **Gayane Hambardzumyan** - Deputy Director for Educational Affairs of the Vardges Hamazaspyan State College of Echmiadzin, member of the expert panel.
3. **Oleg Gevorgyan** - Associate Professor, Deputy Director for Scientific, Scientific-Technological Cooperation and External Relations of the Institute of Information and Communication Technologies and Electronics of the Armenian National University, member of the expert panel.
4. **Lilit Nazaryan** - 2nd-year student of Accounting at Ararat Regional State College, student member of the expert panel.

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

Lilit Ghazaryan, a specialist from the Secretariat Department of ANQA, coordinated the work of the expert panel.

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

PROCESS OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW

Application for state accreditation

The College applied for state institutional accreditation by submitting to ANQA (21.11.2023), filling out the application form, and presenting copies of the license and respective appendices.

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

After deciding to accept the application, ANQA and the College signed an agreement. The timetable of activities was prepared and approved.

Self-evaluation

Considering that the educational institution is going through institutional accreditation for the first time and is in the initial stage of the formation of the culture of quality assurance in college, ANQA conducted four-day online workshops in February. The workshops aimed to prepare colleges for the organizational stages of the accreditation process. During the workshops, the interpretations of the institutional accreditation criteria and standards, the electronic questionnaire to be filled in for applying for institutional accreditation, and the features of self-evaluation and SWOT analysis were presented. The educational institution carried out a SWOT analysis, which was discussed with the employees of the ANQA. During the implementation of the self-evaluation, current discussions were organized by the ANQA to clarify the issues.

The self-evaluation of the college's institutional capacity was presented on 26.04.2024. Representatives of the institution's administrative and educational staff, lecturers, and students were involved in the self-evaluation process.

Preparatory phase

After the submission of the self-evaluation report and the attached documents by the TLI, the ANQA coordinator observed the package to reveal its correspondence to the requirements of the ANQA. The self-evaluation and the attached documents were provided to the expert panel for the preliminary evaluation. The composition of the expert panel was agreed upon with the College and was confirmed by the order of the ANQA Director. Within the scheduled time, the expert panel summarized the preliminary evaluation results, and the Chair of the expert panel, together with the process coordinator, set the site visit schedule.

Preparatory visit

Before the site visit, a preparatory visit to the college was carried out on 31.05.2024. The ANQA coordinator, the head of the institutional program accreditation department, and the expert panel head were present at the meeting. During the meeting, the schedule of the site visit was introduced and agreed upon with the college as well as discussed, and mutually agreed decisions were made regarding the technical, organizational, and information issues of the site visit, the behaviour, and ethical norms of the meeting participants.

Site visit

The expert panel site visit occurred from June 10-12, 2024. During the week preceding the site visit, the members of the expert panel and the coordinator visited the college, observed the infrastructure and resources of the college, conducted class observations, and observed exams. Then the experts and the coordinator had a closed meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to bring out the strengths and weaknesses of the college according to the standards, clarify

the questions to be asked to the target groups, and discuss the procedure of the meetings and the next steps.

The site visit started and ended with meetings with the college director. All the meeting participants were randomly selected from a pre-provided list. All scheduled meetings were held. During the visit, the expert panel studied documents.

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

The expert panel reached its conclusion on the criteria after discussing and analyzing all members' work, always applying the principle of consensus.

Expert panel report

The expert panel members and the ANQA coordinator prepared a preliminary version of the expert report. After the expert panel members approved it, the preliminary report was provided to the college.

On August 15, 2024, the college submitted objections regarding the preliminary version of the Expert Report. The expert panel examined and discussed objections, and a meeting was organized on September 17, 2024, at 16:00, between the college, the expert panel, and the ANQA. As a result of the discussion, the college received detailed clarifications on the objections it presented from the expert panel and reached the conclusion that all the facts in the expert report are substantiated, and no fact is subject to modification. Then, the expert panel prepared the report's final version on 19.09.2024.

Lilit Ghazaryan

Coordinator of the Expert Panel /19.09.2024

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 Internationalization</i>	Unsatisfactory
<i>X. Internal Quality Assurance System</i>	Unsatisfactory