

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



**EXPERT PANEL REPORT  
INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION OF  
YEREVAN STATE MUSICAL-PEDAGOGICAL COLLEGE NAMED AFTER ARNO  
BABAJANYAN**

**Yerevan – 2024**

## **INTRODUCTION**

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

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

The accreditation process was funded by the College.

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

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

## SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

The expertise of the Yerevan State Musical-Pedagogical College Named After Arno Babajanyan institutional capacities was carried out by the independent expert panel formed in accordance with the requirements of “Regulation on the Formation of the Expert Panel”, «National 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 conducting the evaluation, the expert panel considered that the college is undergoing institutional accreditation for the first time and is also in the initial stage of forming a culture of quality assurance. The college implements secondary professional educational programs in the field of music education by the 5th level of the RA NQF.

While carrying out the expert evaluation, the group considered that the mission of the College is to provide quality music education in the field of secondary professional education with effective academic programs within the framework of the state strategy of education and cultural development, to train specialists and pedagogical personnel with appropriate qualifications in musical art, and to preserve and spread national spiritual and cultural values. The expert panel notes that the summary results of the previous SP are not the basis for defining the goals and objectives of the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan. Therefore, the expert panel is full of hope that the work on the development of the new Strategic Plan will be combined with the evaluation and highlighting of target issues of the Strategic Plan for 2019-2024. The performance indicators defined by the college will be the basis of the plans and will express the strategic goals of the college.

It is important that for internal and external stakeholders, the mission of the college, and the goals and objectives of the SP are understandable and acceptable, emphasizing the role of the college in training professionals in the field of music and filling music schools with professionals with appropriate qualifications. They emphasize the role of the college in continuing the education of the graduates at the Komitas Yerevan State Conservatory. Within the framework of the success criteria set by the College, it is also essential that the outcomes of the academic programs are the basis for admission to the Conservatory. On the one hand, this has a positive impact on the formation of a positive rating of the college and increases the attractiveness of academic programs. On the other hand, from the point of view of the quick service of the labor market in the field of music, it is necessary that the graduates of the college immediately start working in schools and organizations in the field of music. According to the evaluation of the expert panel, the College needs to carry out certain works within the framework of this issue, directing the vector of education to the production of specialists who meet the needs of the sectoral institutions.

The college managed to realize the goals set by the SP, which are the creation of a document base for various processes, some improvements of material resources, and the development of external cooperation. The college has not yet succeeded in attracting alternative financial sources, aligning financial planning with strategic goals, ensuring the publicity and transparency of analytical reports related to internal quality assessment standards and the self-

evaluation process, forming an electronic library, and effectively applying information technologies in educational processes.

The College, according to its mission, implements four APs in the field of music, which in their structure and sequence of modules correspond to SES. It is positive that the representatives of the College took part in the preparation of the SESs of 3 specialities and their modular programs, because of which they were tested in the College and promoted the introduction and implementation of modular learning. The expert panel appreciates that the College pays a lot of attention to the formation and development of students' performance skills, to the development of creativity, for which various methods and performance techniques are used, and assignments containing a creative component are provided. Students also demonstrate their performance skills, which increases the competitiveness of college students. According to the site visit, similar tasks in the APs do not have a mandatory component, the implementation and classification of which according to theoretical and practical components can significantly increase the effectiveness of the APs. It is noteworthy that the lecturers have individual teaching and evaluation approaches, which are based on the characteristics of students. As well as when choosing teaching methods, they also consider the characteristics of students who need special educational conditions, maintaining the principle of inclusiveness and promoting student-centred learning. The expert panel positively assesses that the policy of teaching and assessment methods is at the center of attention of the college, and teaching, learning and assessment methods have been defined. However, the separation of those methods according to the outcomes, the introduction and implementation of assignments and evaluation rubrics equivalent to theoretical and practical teaching methods for each module can significantly increase the effectiveness of teaching. It will be useful for the college to cooperate not only with music schools but also with other places of practice separated by job descriptions defined by the characteristics of professional activity. In this case, the professional platform for students to acquire communication and performance skills can be expanded.

It is appreciable that the college has a highly qualified faculty for the implementation of academic programs. From the point of view of making the process of recruiting the faculty more effective, it is advisable to separate criteria according to the specialities. Faculty evaluation mechanisms are launched in the college, which contributed to highlighting some of the needs of the teaching process. However, the expert panel believes that these mechanisms need regularity and comprehensive analysis, providing an opportunity to make the process of regularly raising issues and to correlate them with the work done with lecturers and the professional development of young lecturers. As for the stability of the faculty, it can be appreciated that the rejuvenation of the staff through various recruitment tools, such as reserve, and graduates, ensures the stability of the faculty and the smooth generational change, because of which there are no risks in the implementation of academic programs in the college.

Referring to the resources and infrastructure necessary for the implementation of academic programs, the expert panel notes that the college is mainly provided with the necessary tools for the implementation of educational programs in the field of music. The College takes steps to

improve the educational environment, improving the resources to a certain extent through donations. Searching for new financial resources, increasing participation in international programs, and applying for grant projects can also contribute to increasing the college's financial resources, directing them to improve the learning environment and developing the capacities of internal stakeholders. The expert panel finds that the continuous efforts of the college, aimed at improving the academic programs, replenishing the faculty with high professional qualities, and updating the financial resources of the College, contribute to the credibility of the awarded qualifications.

To regulate management processes in the college, a certain documentary base has been developed, which has had a positive effect on a certain definition of the functions and activities of management bodies. However, expert studies show that in the established organizational structure of the college, there are inconsistencies in job descriptions, and in some cases, functional overlaps, which can create obstacles to the full implementation of hierarchical and horizontal connections from the point of view of management. The expert panel also emphasizes that the College is trying to correlate the distribution of financial and human resources with strategic goals, which will create favourable conditions for ensuring the progressive development of the College. To increase the efficiency of the management system, it is also important to define clear and measurable indicators, and their investment in strategic and current plans, which will contribute to the improvement of planning processes and the formation of planning-accountability connections.

Looking at the management and quality assurance systems, it is noticeable to the expert panel that a lot of work has been done to create the foundations for the implementation of the quality assurance culture in the College. A documentary base has been developed, the full implementation of which and its improvement considering the needs and characteristics of stakeholders will facilitate a quick response to problems, the extraction and dissemination of best practices. The expert panel believes that the College still has work to do to clarify the mechanisms for identifying needs and the expected results from their application, which will facilitate the transition from a situational management model to long-term strategic management. The provision of reliable data by the quality assurance system is important to increase the effectiveness of managerial decisions. The discussion of collected data with academic program responsables and faculty is also important to increase the trust of the stakeholders in the quality assurance system and to make it a reliable source in the context of risk and change management of the college. Some elements of the PDCA cycle are embedded in the documentation processes, but there is a gap in the check-act cycles. The periodic application of the PDCA cycle will contribute not only to the effectiveness of the management system but also to the implementation of academic programs, contributing to the realization of the goals set in the strategic direction of the college.

Thus, connecting the strategic planning, management and administration processes in the College and observing the impact of the quality assurance system on the continuous improvement of these systems, the expert panel considers that the TLI has to clearly define the expected outcomes as a result of the interaction of the systems, define the quality assurance objectives, increase among the stakeholders in identifying needs and making decisions to ensure the

continuous development of the institution and the improvement of academic programs.

Making the transition to the educational environment of the College, the expert panel positively notes that the TLI continuously improves the educational environment and creates favourable conditions for the release of specialists in the field of musical art. Due to the specifics of academic programs, the individual approach to students is also important in the context of preparing competitive professionals. Any creative activity in college is preceded by the research phase, which contributes not only to the development of performance abilities among students but also to the formation of research skills. The expert panel emphasizes that the faculty of the college also conducts research activities, develops manuals, and supports students in preparing their reports. To regulate the processes and expand the scope of faculty, it is important to encourage research works by the College and to define clear criteria for promotion. For students, the reflection of research assignments in academic programs and the distribution of evaluation criteria are also important for planning, measuring, and encouraging students' research abilities.

The college keeps societal responsibility and accountability to the state and society at the center of its activities. This is evidenced by the transparency of processes and regulations through the official website. However, it is also necessary to pay attention to the analytical nature of the reports, because in them, apart from the descriptive part, the evaluation of the effectiveness of the processes, the highlighting of issues, the analysis of the reasons for the planned but unimplemented processes will significantly contribute to the strengthening of accountability-further improvement links and increasing the efficiency of management processes. The college also plays a significant role in the development of the field of Armenian music, in the transfer of values, in the direction of which it continuously makes efforts to expand the scope of cooperation and external relations through various concert events and festivals.

Directing the college's potential towards international programs can facilitate student and faculty mobility and create opportunities for international best practices and localization within the College. In this context, it may be important to improve the foreign language skills of internal stakeholders, something the College has yet to do. The expert panel notes that the College effectively cooperates with the music and art schools of RA. It is also important to expand local connections and create opportunities for students' internships not only in music schools but also in professional institutions in the field, which will contribute to the development of students' performance abilities and the creation of opportunities to find professional employment.

### **Strengths of the Institution**

1. general ideas and perceptions of stakeholders regarding the mission of the College and its role in the republic,
2. the implementation of academic programs in line with the mission of the College and state educational standards,
3. the use of student-centred teaching methods in the teaching process,
4. valuing the needs of students with special learning needs by the college and ensuring the

principle of inclusion,

5. the presence of faculty with high professional qualifications and involvement from the practical field,
6. the implementation of steps aimed at the stability and smooth generational change of the faculty,
7. Incorporating a research component and creativity in the APs to train researcher-creators along with the development of performance skills,
8. availability of the necessary learning environment to ensure the outcomes of academic programs,
9. the college's efforts towards public responsibility and transparency of processes,
10. the scope of cooperation with music and art schools for implementation of internships, replenishment of faculty and exchange of experience.

**Weaknesses of the Institution:**

1. the imperfection of the indicators used in the process of strategic management and planning,
2. In the process of implementation of management and academic programs, the incomplete and regular application of the PDCA cycle,
3. non-regulation of comparative analysis of academic programs and implementation of best practices,
4. the weak link between the faculty evaluation mechanisms and the processes planned because of their application,
5. lack of reflection on research assignments in academic programs and lack of separation of evaluation criteria for them,
6. the lack of mechanisms for promoting the faculty, including the promotion of research activities,
7. the lack of diversification of financial sources and the disconnection of financial resources-set goals,
8. the weak expression of the analytical component in the reports,
9. the scarcity of places of practices separated by descriptions of professional activities,
10. the imperfection of the QA processes and the lack of trust of the stakeholders in the data collection mechanisms.

## **Main recommendations:**

### **Mission and Purposes**

- Evaluate the performance of the SP, considering the established indicators and putting the outcomes of the evaluation into the basis of strategic planning.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the needs identification tool for the internal and external environment and revise it based on analytical data.
- Link the defined indicators to the planning processes to contribute to increasing the effectiveness of strategic management.

### **Governance and Administration**

- Align the organizational structure of the College with the existing staff list, avoiding functional repetitions.
- Put the strategic goals and objectives based on the semester and annual planning, connecting them to the development directions of the TLI.
- Find alternative funding sources to build a college development budget and ensure long-term development.
- Develop and implement stakeholder needs assessment tools, using their results as a basis for managerial decision-making.
- Determine clear and measurable indicators of the effectiveness of the management system and improvement of the quality of services to increase the efficiency of management processes.

### **Academic programs**

- Develop and introduce clear criteria for student assessment, considering the specifics of the professions.
- Clarify the teaching method-assessment method-outcome connection to ensure the outcomes planned by academic programs and produce specialists who meet the demands of the labor market.
- Introduce the component of compulsory reflection of tasks in APs, contributing to the improvement of the process of planning and management of academic programs.
- Introduce mechanisms for the study of similar best practices and the localization of experiences to promote student mobility.

### **Students**

- Introduce opportunities for additional classes in foreign languages to help increase students' language skills.
- Regularly update the database of graduates, provide feedback to them, discussing identified needs with the academic program responsible.
- Clarify the functions of the Student Council to contribute to the realization of the educational needs of students and the implementation of measures aimed at the protection of rights.

### **Faculty and staff**



- Improve the lecturers' evaluation mechanisms by clarifying the processes of conducting lectures and the results expected from them.
- Invest the results of the conducted lectures based on the development of the lecturers' professional abilities.
- Develop and implement clear criteria for the professional advancement and promotion of the faculty to make the processes more transparent and efficient.

### **Research and Development**

- Separate the research interests of the College according to the features of the academic programs.
- To make the assignments containing the research-creative component a mandatory part of the academic programs to make the research activity of the students more planned.
- Introduce mechanisms for planning and promoting research work to include a wider range of lecturers and students.

### **Infrastructure and Resources**

- Introduce new funding models and fundraising mechanisms to implement the college's strategic priorities.
- Develop strategies for incrementally updating musical instruments to ensure academic program outcomes.
- Carry out the calculation of the minimum resources required for academic programs to increase cost-effectiveness.
- Ensure periodicity of resource satisfaction evaluation and plan further improvements based on needs elicitation.
- Introduce a unified electronic system for the implementation of documentation to increase the efficiency of administration processes.

### **Societal Responsibility**

- Emphasize the analytical component in reports, based on quantitative and qualitative evaluation, and place them in the basis of planning for further improvement processes.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the institution's transparency tools and improve them to increase awareness of college processes.
- Launch a PR strategy using the creative potential of the college.

### **External Relations and Internationalization**

- Expand the partnership framework for the implementation of internships, considering the relevance of the qualifications awarded and job descriptions.

- Contribute to the increase of foreign language proficiency of internal stakeholders for the study of international experience and the expansion of participation in international programs.
- To ensure the internationalization of the institution and promote the implementation of the activities provided by the agreements signed with international partners.

### **Internal Quality Assurance System**

- Evaluate and analyze quality assurance tools to get feedback from stakeholders and get reliable data.
- Involve internal and external stakeholders in internal quality assurance processes to create and promote a quality culture.
- Regularly carry out summaries and analyzes based on collected data to contribute to increasing the efficiency of managerial and educational processes.
- Revise the format of the quality assurance plan, taking as a basis for its formation the implemented reports and defining clear evaluation indicators.
- Develop a toolkit for a smooth and complete transition from one phase of the PIGB cycle to another in quality assurance processes.

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**Armenuhi Mheryan, Chair of Expert Panel**

**23.01.2024**

## DESCRIPTION OF EXTERNAL REVIEW

### COMPOSITION OF EXPERT PANEL

External evaluation of the institutional capacities of Yerevan State Musical-Pedagogical College Named After Arno Babajanyan was carried out by the following expert panel.

1. **Armenuhi Mheryan**, candidate of economics, associate professor, head of the "Finances and Banking" department of the European University of Armenia, head of the expert panel.
2. **Hasmik Mkhitaryan**, QA responsible at Yerevan State Music College named after Romanos Melikyan, member of the expert panel.
3. **Mariam Hovhannisyan**, lecturer at Ejmiatsin State College Named After Vardges Hamazaspyan, head of the Center for Quality Assurance of Education, member of the expert panel.
4. **Narek Meliksetyan**, 2nd-year student of the "Directing" speciality of Yerevan Regional N1 State College, student member of the expert panel.

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

The works of the expert panel were coordinated by Meri Barseghyan, a specialist at the Policy Development and Implementation Division of the ANQA.

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

### PROCESS OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW

The College applied for state institutional accreditation by submitting to ANQA (13.01.2023) filled the application form, presented copies of the license, and respective appendices.

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

After making the decision on accepting the application an agreement was signed between ANQA and College. 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 has conducted online workshops with accredited VET institutions. 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.

Representatives of the institution's administrative and educational staff, lecturers, and students were involved in the process of self-evaluation.

### **Preparatory phase**

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

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

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

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

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

schedule of the site visit<sup>1</sup>. According to the ANQA manual, the intended close and open meetings with all the target groups, documents observation were included in the schedule, professional meetings etc. The members of the expert panel also had professional meetings with the AP responsible presented by the College, faculty, and students. Before the professional meetings, the experts studied the assignments given to the students and conducted class observations to understand the extent to which these assignments are aimed at achieving the expected outcomes.

### **Preparatory visit**

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

### **Site visit**

The expert panel site visit took place from October 16-19, 2023. 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 director of the College. All the participants of the meetings were selected at random from a pre-provided list. All scheduled meetings were held. During the visit, the expert panel conducted a study of documents.

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

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

### **Expert panel report**

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix 2. Schedule of the Expert site visit

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

On 12.01.2024, the College sent its response to the report to ANQA. The ANQA provided observations of the College to experts. On 19.01.2024, ANQA organized a meeting between the College and the expert panel to clarify the observations. Then, the expert panel prepared the final version of the report.

**Meri Barseghyan**

**Coordinator of the Expert Panel**

**23.01.2024**

## EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

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