

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



**EXPERT PANEL REPORT  
INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION OF  
COLLEGE AFFILIATED WITH MESROP MASHTOTS UNIVERSITY**

**Yerevan – 2024**

## INTRODUCTION

The institutional accreditation of the College affiliated with Mesrop Mashtots University (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 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 College 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 College affiliated with Mesrop Mashtots University 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.

While conducting the evaluation, the expert panel considered that the college is undergoing institutional accreditation for the first time and is also developing a quality assurance culture. The college implements VET programs in line with the 5th level of Armenia's National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

The expert panel also considered that the college's mission is to train specialists who, with their professional knowledge, skills, and practical abilities, will adequately respond to the current challenges and support the development and strengthening of the Armenian economy through relevant actions.

The expert panel emphasises that the college's 2023-2028 Strategic Development Plan (SDP) was developed based on the performance evaluation of the previous 2018-2023 SDP and a SWOT analysis. For each objective, the current tasks are defined, necessary actions for achieving the goals are outlined, timelines are set, and indicators for evaluating progress are established. The panel considered the college's efforts to improve strategic development processes positively. However, considering that the college has focused primarily on documentation regulation at the initial level of process planning, the expert panel believes it is essential to move from developing documents to fully implementing the processes outlined in them. Defining clear performance evaluation indicators, identifying expected qualitative and quantitative results, and aligning them with the institution's budget will contribute to effectively implementing the college's strategic and long-term development processes.

Regarding the college's management processes, the expert panel notes that the college has taken steps to regulate processes and improve the administrative system. The expert panel positively evaluates the institution's management approach, especially in directing the university's financial resources to ensure the continuation of the college's academic programs despite limited resources. However, stable mechanisms for financial inflows must be established to ensure the sustainability of operations. The college has the potential to create financial stability by offering additional courses and applying for grant programs. The continuous collection of data on its activities and making management decisions based on

reliable data will contribute to fully realising the college's strategic goals. The expert panel also emphasises the importance of planning processes are in line with the college's resources to define measurable outcomes and implement realistic planning.

The college has taken visible steps towards implementing a quality assurance system, developing an appropriate documentation base and attempting to form needs assessment mechanisms. Considering the size of the college and the fact that some responsible individuals carry out several functions, the college must still pay attention to avoiding conflicts of interest while simultaneously carrying out quality assurance and strategic planning and implementation functions. A positive aspect is that some tools, implemented in a short period, have already yielded results, revealing and addressing some of the needs regarding resources and the learning environment. To promote the effective functioning of the quality assurance system, it is necessary to clarify the college's expectations from the internal quality assurance system, the directions and goals of identifying needs, which will contribute to the availability of data in all areas of the college's activities and increase the effectiveness of management decisions.

Regarding implementing the college's academic programs, it should be noted that the college has developed its programs based on national educational standards and the Qualifications Framework. The college has been able to improve its academic programs somewhat and introduce tasks that meet the real demands of the labor market. From the perspective of ensuring students' professional development and preparation, it is a positive circumstance that the college has introduced some professional subjects starting from the first year. Students are also given assignments related to their profession in general education subjects. The expert panel believes that it is important to clarify the criteria for student assessment to ensure that all intended student outcomes have been verified and to monitor the process of training specialists. To ensure the outcomes of academic programs, it is also important to conduct a comparative analysis of the college's programs with similar academic programs to enhance them.

The expert panel positively evaluates the college's faculty with the appropriate qualifications and experience, contributing to the implementation of academic programs and achieving established outcomes. The use of faculty evaluation mechanisms has contributed to identifying methodological needs and the college's provision of support and advice. The expert panel believes that the college needs to allocate resources for the professional development of the faculty as well. The professional improvement of the faculty can also be supported through internal experience-sharing events within the college, which can take place through regular and planned dialogues between faculty members with different experiences (in teaching,

research, and practical work environments).

The college continuously allocates resources to improve its resources and infrastructure, which creates a favourable educational environment. A positive aspect is that the college also utilizes the resources of employer organizations to familiarize students with modern tools and equipment used in the workplace. From the perspective of financial resource management, the college has not yet calculated the minimum resources to ensure the continuity of academic programs, which could contribute to improving financial planning for academic programs. Financial sustainability could also be supported by diversifying financial inflows by utilizing the college's potential by offering additional courses and applying for grants. Considering the progress made in the improvement of academic programs in recent years, the college's fulfilment of faculty needs in line with the directions of the academic programs, the stability of the faculty, and the use of resources and infrastructure, as well as cooperation with employers, it can be stated that the college ensures the credible awarding of qualifications.

Regarding student services, it should be noted that the college focuses on the student's needs, providing counselling sessions and additional courses. The college has not previously conducted regular data collection on alumni. Still, the work launched in the last three years is a good start. It can serve as a basis for studying the professional trajectory of graduates and further monitoring and improving academic programs.

The college has also emphasized the importance of conducting research activities. However, expert studies and professional discussions show that there are still no visible results in this direction. Some assignments with a research component are provided to students. However, these are not clearly planned or reflected in the academic programs, and their implementation and evaluation criteria are poorly defined. The introduced mechanisms have not yet contributed to improving the dynamics of research activities among students and lecturers. Although faculty members with university experience conduct scientific activities within their professional fields, the results of these studies are not connected to the student's learning process.

The college is also taking active steps towards establishing external relations. Over the past three years, collaboration with partner organizations and employers has increased, which allows the college to ensure the implementation of internships and practical training for students. The college has tried to establish connections with certain international educational institutions, although the work related to these partnerships is still in the planning stage. The expert panel believes the established partnerships will contribute to ensuring academic program alignment and create mobility opportunities. One of the essential steps to promote

internationalization is the implementation of foreign language courses, and in this context, the courses implemented by the college and the increase in the number of hours of foreign languages in academic programs are positive steps in increasing the language proficiency of internal stakeholders. The expert panel believes that the college needs to continue measures to increase language proficiency, which will also lay the foundation for implementing the college's foreign language academic program.

The accountability mechanisms have also improved over the last two years. Their increased analytical capacity will contribute to continuously identifying issues and provide reliable grounds for effective planning. Considering the potential of the college's faculty and its logistical environment, the expert panel finds that the college can use these resources to provide services and transfer knowledge to broad segments of society within the framework of its educational activities, fulfilling its social responsibility as an educational institution.

**Strengths of the Institution:**

1. Apply strategic planning tools by setting appropriate goals and objectives encompassing the college's activities.
2. Continuous improvement of the learning environment in line with the educational needs of students,
3. Staffing and stability with highly qualified faculty members.
4. Continuous improvement of infrastructure and resources and joint use of employers' resources,
5. Ensuring accountability of the institution's activities for internal and external stakeholders.
6. Implementation of activities to establish a quality assurance system and involve stakeholders in these activities.
7. Impact of the quality assurance system on the regulation and improvement of ongoing processes at the college.
8. Wide collaboration with partners in Armenia to conduct practical training and internships.
9. Implement activities to improve internal stakeholders' foreign language proficiency

levels.

#### **Weaknesses of the Institution:**

1. Different perceptions among stakeholders regarding the functions of subdivisions and the heavy workload of certain responsible individuals.
2. Lack of managerial decisions based on clear data.
3. The imperfection of mechanisms for experience exchange and comparative analysis within the framework of the APs.
4. Uncertainty in the requirements and criteria for student assessments.
5. Lack of mechanisms to promote research activities and the weak connection between research and the learning process.
6. Lack of financial allocations for the professional development of the faculty.
7. Lack of alternative funding sources and the incomplete distribution of financial resources according to strategic directions.
8. Lack of services provided to the public.

#### **Recommendations:**

##### **Database management**

1. Continuously collect data on the areas covering the college's activities and use them as the basis for making managerial decisions.
2. Diversify financial inflows to implement strategic goals and ensure financial stability.
3. Implement long-term financial planning of the college, aligning financial resources with the established strategic directions.
4. Define clear quantitative and qualitative indicators to monitor and assess the progress of strategic goals.
5. Evaluate the efficiency of the distribution of functions among subdivisions, avoiding functional duplication and conflicts of interest.

##### **Credible award of qualifications**

6. Introduce systematic, institutional mechanisms for studying the needs of employers in

academic programs and incorporating relevant tasks into the learning process.

7. Create a complete database of assignments provided to students to make the learning process more planned and assess progress.
8. Define clear criteria for assessing students' current tasks, internships, and final projects.
9. Introduce mechanisms for comparative analysis and benchmarking of academic programs to identify and localize best practices.
10. Implement effective mechanisms for continuous monitoring of academic programs and regularly assess the outcomes achieved by students.
11. Introduce mechanisms for faculty training and dissemination of best internal teaching practices.
12. Utilize the opportunity to cooperate with employers in planning and implementing professional development for faculty members.
13. Expand the range of employer instructors to develop students' practical skills and abilities in line with labor market requirements.
14. Take steps to replenish the college's professional foreign language literature and ensure access to online library resources.
15. To ensure students' safe professional activities, include tasks related to knowledge and adherence to safety regulations in professional modules.
16. Use the college's faculty potential to conduct short-term courses and generate additional financial inflows.

#### **Long-term development**

17. Create an alumni database, continuously and periodically tracking their progress and using the results to monitor academic programs.
18. Regulate the research assignments given to students, fully integrating them into academic programs and defining clear assessment criteria.
19. Improve the internal accountability system to monitor the effectiveness of processes and identify areas for further improvement.



20. Conduct additional courses for external stakeholders using the college's potential to increase societal responsibility and generate additional financial inflows.
21. Expand the scope of student internships by considering the directions of occupations defined in the educational programs.

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**Yasaman Avagyan, Chair of Expert Panel**

**12.11.2024**

## DESCRIPTION OF EXTERNAL REVIEW

### COMPOSITION OF EXPERT PANEL

The following expert panel carried out an external evaluation of the institutional capacities of the College affiliated with Mesrop Mashtots University.

1. **Yasaman Avagyan** - Chief Specialist of the Quality Assurance Department of the Armenian State University of Economics, Head of the Expert Panel.
2. **Lilit Abelyan** - Quality Assurance Specialist of Kotayk Regional State College, member of the expert panel.
3. **Olya Avetisyan** - Lecturer at the Department of Professional Subjects of Yerevan State College of Light Industry, member of the expert panel.
4. **Amalia Stepanyan** - Student of the Marketing and Management Department of the European University in Armenia, student member of the expert panel.

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

Meri Barseghyan, a specialist at the ANQA Policy Development and Implementation Division, coordinated the expert panel's work.

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 (25.12.2023), 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 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 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 13.05.2024. 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 results of the preliminary evaluation, and the Chair of the expert panel, together with the process coordinator, set the schedule of the site visit.

## **Preparatory visit**

Before the site visit, a preparatory visit to the college was carried out on 09.09.2024. 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 occurred from September 19-21, 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 participants in the meetings were selected at random 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 members of the expert panel approved it, the preliminary report was provided to the college.

The college did not submit any comments on the preliminary report. Then, the expert panel prepared the report's final version, which was approved on 12.11.2024.

**Meri Barseghyan**

**Coordinator of the Expert Panel /12.11.2024**

## EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

CRITERION	CONCLUSION
<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>Unsatisfactory</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>Satisfactory</b>