

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



**EXPERT PANEL REPORT  
INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION OF  
MEDICAL-HUMANITIES COLLEGE OF VARDENIS**

**Yerevan – 2023**

## **INTRODUCTION**

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

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

The 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 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 TLI's institutional capacities by the State Accreditation Criteria and Standards.

## SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

The expertise of the Medical-Humanities College of Vardenis 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 the institutional accreditation procedure for the second time, and the previous one (2020) received conditional accreditation for two years. As a result of the previous accreditation, the college received recommendations for improvement and, in recent years, has organized its activities towards their implementation, making progress in all areas. The expert panel also considered the region's socio-economic situation and the fact that it is on the border.

According to the revised mission of the college, the Medical-Humanities College of Vardenis is an educational institution that prepares qualified specialists with secondary professional educational programs. Its activities are aimed at preparing qualified specialists with fundamental and applied knowledge and practical skills. The college forms a student-centred environment where the student acts as a subject of the educational process. It should be noted that the academic programs implemented in the college have a demographic and strategic significance for the border town of Vardenis and neighbouring villages.

The college implements secondary professional academic programs in the medical and humanitarian spheres at the 5th level of the RA NQF. The college implements 5 secondary professional academic programs in the following specialities: "Nursing", "Medical Cosmetology", "Library Work", "Pharmacy", and "Service Organization". The academic programs are implemented based on the State Educational Standards, and since 2023, the college has switched to teaching with modular programs. Based on the previous accreditation, the college made program changes, considering the recommendations of internal and external stakeholders. The main changes were implemented within the framework of special professional courses. To implement the academic programs, the College managed to involve practising doctors and employers in the educational process. As a result, students can be present in a practical environment, carry out practical work and acquire professional skills.

Although the college does not have any requirements for the faculty, according to the goals of the academic programs, the college's policy in this direction is clearly visible to the expert panel. The latter always gives priority to the faculty's practical work, abilities, and professional knowledge. As a result,  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the teaching staff are practical and narrow field specialists.

In the last two years, the college has also made efforts to improve the resource base. In addition, the TLI has been able to supplement the incompleteness of its professional resource base with the help of medical centres. The expert panel is hopeful that the college will gradually be able to acquire appropriate professional laboratories.

The college opened a student cafe to improve the student environment, motivating the students to organize their entertainment. The college has implemented an electronic library to

ensure library saturation, which contributes to saving financial resources and providing students with relevant professional literature. Currently, the internal documentation of the college is mainly carried out in paper form, but the introduction of electronic documentation is a requirement of time.

To increase management efficiency, the college tried to regulate the processes carried out in the TLI. Many regulatory documents were developed, but not all of them were fully adapted to the institution's characteristics. At this stage, the college needs to assess the effectiveness of these regulations and retain those that are fully functional and necessary. To ensure the development of the college, the deputy director for educational work carries out his activities with great responsibility, the latter being the basis for implementing reforms in the college. Along with the latter, the college faces the need to ensure the same level of qualifications for other employees involved in the team, which will facilitate the efficient use of time and resources.

Mechanisms for recruiting, selecting, and admitting students are in place at the college. A noticeable increase in the number of students has been observed in the last two years, which was facilitated by the college's active cooperation with schools, the improvement of building conditions, and the regulation of student transfer (from villages to colleges and vice versa).

In the field of research, it is important for the college to assess the needs and challenges of the town of Vardenis and nearby villages. At this stage, the priority for the college is to understand what the research is for them and how it can be implemented in the academic programs. For the implementation of the latter, it will also be necessary to develop the skills of the faculty. The college still has a lot of work to do in this direction.

In terms of accountability, college departments now report on strategic goals, which will allow them to continually assess their achievements. As a result of the previous accreditation, the college has also introduced its official website, which contributes to ensuring the transparency of the processes implemented in the college.

External relations and internationalisation processes are among the college's strategic priorities, and it has taken steps to attract new partners. Over the past two years, the college has organized mutual visits, signed memorandums and agreements with other educational institutions providing similar education, and actively collaborated with local colleges, employers, hospitals, clinics, and schools.

The expert panel positively assesses that the college has taken steps to establish contact with foreign secondary professional educational institutions and to find edges of cooperation. However, to start more profound processes, the college needs to prepare both the faculty and the students step by step. Knowledge of foreign languages is a priority for solving that problem. The college has developed an appropriate document base to implement the quality assurance processes, but the expert panel also emphasizes the active participation of internal and external stakeholders in the quality assurance processes. The PDCA cycle is not completely closed in the main processes of the college. There is a need to diversify assessment tools to provide objective and reliable information in decision-making.

**Strengths of the Institution:**

- Major strategic importance in the region
- Involvement of employers in the process of development and review of academic programs.
- Involvement of practical specialists in the faculty.
- Availability of student environment.
- College policy towards resource improvement.
- The formation of the accountability system in accordance with the strategic goals.
- Activity in the direction of acquiring new partners.
- The management team's efforts in establishing the quality assurance system.

**Weaknesses of the Institution:**

- Lack of clear and measurable quantitative and qualitative indicators in assessing the SP's goals.
- Lack of transferable abilities of the administrative staff.
- The need to revise the documentary base regulating processes in the college.
- The incomplete application of the PDCA cycle for strategic purposes.
- The imperfection of the task base.
- Lack of initiative from the student body.
- Lack of systematic mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of the work of the faculty.
- Passive involvement of internal and external stakeholders in quality assurance processes.

**Main recommendations:****Mission and Purposes**

- Consider the possibility of matching the name of the college with the orientation of academic programs.
- Review the college's current strategy, implement the alignment of the SP's goals and objectives, and provide quantitative or qualitative indicators showing tangible and measurable results.
- Specify the financial and material resources to be provided in the process of strategic planning.

**Governance and Administration**

- Develop and implement performance indicators of employees.
- Take measures towards the professional development of administrative and teaching staff.
- Clearly divide the distribution of duties and responsibilities in management circles (not

only based on documents but also operationally).

- Develop and implement ways of obtaining other financial sources.
- Carry out monitoring of the submitted documents, keeping the applied documents, or aligning the non-applied ones to the specifics of the college.

### **Academic programs**

- Ensure the connection between non-professional subjects' content and academic programs' features and content.
- Create a database of tasks that will check the outcomes formed by the student because of studying the given course.
- Diversify interactive teaching methods, contributing to students' analytical thinking development.
- Revise the summative certification exam questions to include questions that test practical abilities and skills.

### **Students**

- Introduce career-promoting services for students, ensuring the development of their abilities to search, find, and appear for an interview.
- To study the careers of working graduates to understand the main problems of graduates, also ensuring the ongoing improvement of APs.
- Develop assignments that will develop the student's creative, analytical, and research abilities.
- Activate the Student Council's work, contributing to the active inclusion of all students in the structure's work.

### **Faculty and Staff**

- Carry out a systematic evaluation of the work efficiency of administrative and teaching staff.
- Ensure the possibility of participation in training (professional, methodical) of administrative and teaching staff.

### **Research and Development**

- Study and implement the best practices of research works corresponding to the level of secondary professional education.
- Introduce clear mechanisms of encouragement for research activities for students and

faculty.

### **Infrastructure and Resources**

- Replenish the fund of the electronic library with both Armenian and foreign language professional literature.
- Find mechanisms for attracting alternative financial resources.
- Consider the possibility of acquiring professional resources through international grants.

### **Societal Responsibility**

- Ensure the launch of the college's official website also in foreign languages.
- Introduce mechanisms that convey values to society, contributing to the improvement of the college's ranking.

### **External Relations and Internationalization**

- Discuss and target the market (English speaking, Russian speaking) where the college most clearly imagines the scope of cooperation in terms of the implementation of academic programs and exchange of experience between the faculty and students.
- Develop a clear action plan that identifies which employer organizations and international partners the college will try to establish connections with and find areas of cooperation.
- Organize foreign language (English) classes for both faculty and students, conducting ongoing evaluations of effectiveness.
- Consider the possibility of forming an association of private secondary professional institutions to ensure the generation and implementation of new ideas.

### **Internal Quality Assurance System**

- Expand the scope of involvement of internal and external stakeholders in the internal quality assurance system.
- Clarify the role and scope of responsibility of the stakeholders of the College in quality assurance processes.
- Diversify the mechanisms for raising needs.
- Launch the QA PDCA cycle for all processes implemented in the college.

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**Hermine Grigoryan, Chair of Expert Panel**

**28.11.2023**

## DESCRIPTION OF EXTERNAL REVIEW

### COMPOSITION OF EXPERT PANEL

External evaluation of the institutional capacities of the Medical-Humanities College of Vardenis was carried out by the following expert panel.

1. **Hermine Grigoryan**, Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences of Vanadzor H. Tumanyan State University, Associate Professor of the "Mathematics and Informatics" Chair, Candidate of Physical and Mathematical Sciences, head of the expert panel,
2. **Gohar Sargsyan**, Yerevan Basic Medical College, lecturer of resuscitation, civil defense, safety and first aid chair, methodologist, responsible for education quality assurance, member of the expert panel.
3. **Hayarpi Javrushyan**: University of Traditional Medicine, Head of the Department of Natural Sciences, Researcher at YSU Faculty of Biology, candidate of biological sciences, associate professor, member of the expert panel.
4. **Manvel Gevorgyan**, Academician Tamamshev State Agricultural College of Gavar, a third-year student in the finance department, student member of the expert panel.

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

Anahit Terteryan, a specialist at the Department of Institutional and Programme Accreditation of the ANQA, 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 TLI applied for state institutional accreditation by submitting to ANQA (10.04.2022), filled out the application form, and presented copies of the license and respective appendices. The ANQA Secretariat checked the data presented in the application form and the appendices in the application package.

After deciding to accept the application, ANQA and TLI signed an agreement (20.02.2022). The timetable of activities was prepared and approved.

### Self-evaluation



The college submitted the self-evaluation of institutional capacity and the accompanying documents in the format defined by the ANQA. The coordinator studied the report in terms of technical compliance with the ANQA requirements. The self-evaluation presented by the college did not comply with the defined uniform format; there were technical, format, and content deficiencies. The self-evaluation was returned to the TLI. The college corrected the deficiencies within the specified time and brought the self-evaluation in line with the format defined by the ANQA. The self-evaluation was submitted to the ANQA on 11.07.2023.

### **Preparatory phase**

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.

The expert panel conducted the preliminary evaluation after reviewing the college's self-evaluation report and documents. According to the format, the lists of questions and objectives for different departments and target groups and additional documents have been prepared.

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. According to the ANQA manual, the intended close and open meetings with all the target groups, document observation, professional meetings, etc., were included in the schedule.

### **Preparatory visit**

On August 31, 2023, an online meeting was held with the management staff of the TLI. 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 September 10-13, 2023. It started and ended with meetings with the director of the TLI. All the participants 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 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 (02.11.2023).

The college did not submit any observations regarding the preliminary report. The expert panel prepared the final version of the report, which was approved by the panel on 28.11.2023.

**Anahit Terteryan**

**Coordinator of the Expert Panel**

**28.11.2023**

## 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>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>Unsatisfactory</b>