



National Center For Professional  
Education Quality Assurance  
Foundation

**ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE**

**ANQA-2022/77**

**DECREE N 77**

November 15, 2022

**ON ACCREDITATION OF INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES OF**

**Northern University**

**General Information about the Institution**

Full name of the Institution: Northern University SNCO  
Official Address: 15/9 Alek Manukyan Str., Yerevan, RA

Previous Accreditation **Institutional accreditation for a period of 4 years:**  
decision and date: **23.03.2018-23.03.2022**

Guided by the Statute on the State Accreditation of RA Education Institutions and their Academic Programs approved by the RA Government Decree N 978-N as of 30 June 2011, the RA Government Decree N 959-N as of 30 June 2011 on Approval of Accreditation Criteria for the Tertiary Education of RA, the Procedure on the Formation and Operation of the Accreditation Committee of the National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation (hereinafter “ANQA”) as well as by ANQA’s Regulation on the Formation of the Expert Panel, ANQA’s Accreditation Committee (hereinafter the “Committee”) discussed the issue on accreditation of institutional capacities of the Northern University SNCO (hereinafter “NU,” “TLI”) in the session of the Accreditation Committee held on November 15, 2022.

**The main phases of the accreditation process were carried out within the following periods:**

Submission of application: May 26, 2021  
Submission of the self-evaluation: March 1, 2022  
Site visit by the expert panel: April 11-14, 2022  
Submission of the expert panel report: July 7, 2022

The external review of the NU's institutional capacities was carried out by an independent expert panel formed in compliance with the requirements set by ANQA's Regulation on the Formation of the Expert Panel. The evaluation was carried out according to the 10 criteria of institutional accreditation approved by the RA Government Decree N 959 as of 30 June 2011.

Among 10 criteria of the institutional accreditation, "**Governance and Administration**", "**Research and Development**", "**Infrastructure and Resources**", "**External Relations and Internationalization**" were evaluated as unsatisfactory.

Having examined the NU's self-evaluation of institutional capacities, the expert panel report, the follow-up plan; having heard the conclusions on the expert panel evaluation, which were made by the three members selected by the Chair of the Accreditation Committee and were formed as a result of the meetings with the expert panel members and the NU's representatives; as well the comments and suggestions made by the Accreditation Committee members, the Committee stated the following:

***1. The NU generally ensures the credible award of qualifications.***

The NU's academic programmes (Aps) arise from its mission and align with the descriptors of the the RA NQF's relevant levels.

The NU has a procedure for the APs' development and monitoring, as well as experience in their external review and benchmarking.

The NU carries out content alignment between its APs and other similar recognized APs to ensure mobility. Some APs have undergone internal and external benchmarking. Several curricula have also been revised to implement double degree APs with foreign HEIs. Despite the benchmarking and external reviews of APs, internal stakeholder's mobility is still scarce.

The NU makes efforts towards the introduction of a research component in the APs. The APs' courses contain a research component, and the TLI tries to ensure the full introduction and development of this component with all its managerial and educational processes.

The problems related to academic programmes are regularly discussed during the chair sessions, but these discussions have essentially no effect on the use of teaching methods. Teacher-centered teaching and learning methods still dominate. From that point of view, there is still a need to review and improve the APs' outcomes, as well as the learning, teaching and assessment methods.

The academic staff consists of high-quality specialists. The NU has procedures for the selection and evaluation of the academic staff. The requirements for professional qualifications are defined. There are passports for the positions of teachers and some members of the administrative staff. The NU has a policy for competitive selection of the academic staff, which enables the involvement of professionals with experience in various fields.

The NU actually attaches importance to the enhancement of the academic staff. The NU's trainings are organized in the form of courses, exchange of practice (open classes, seminars), as well as discussions related to the subjects taught.

However, there is a need to ensure the rejuvenation and stability of the TLI's academic staff.

The system of differential pay for teachers has been developed. In addition, it is important that they are not only based solely on student grades, but also take into account the basics of multi-factor assessment.

Though the NU considers the improvement and development of infrastructure and resources necessary for the APs' implementation as a strategic priority, the budget allocation does not clearly express the objectives planned in the strategic directions.

The building's infrastructure is not adapted for people with special needs. The resources envisioned in the strategic plan (SP) and the facts certifying the implementation of the recommendations made during the previous accreditation are not yet available.

***2. Governance and quality assurance systems generally support the enhancement of the credible award of qualifications.***

The Northern University's mission is set forth by the charter, as well as the strategic plans (SPs) 2016-2020 and 2020-2025. The mission has remained unchanged since 2016. The SPs present goals and actions aimed at the achievement of these goals. However, they have not been transformed into

a practical document. The NU still does not carry out clear and feasible strategic planning and does not provide guarantees for the realization of strategic goals. The TLI has both individual and collegial management mechanisms, which are regulated by relevant documents. However, collegial management processes are not fully functional yet. Stakeholders are not widely involved in the process of making important decisions.

In addition, the lack of objective data for decision-making, risk assessment and analysis, as well as the evaluation of the effectiveness of policies and procedures are also problematic.

The NU attaches importance to the role of the quality assurance department in the processes of quality assurance and dissemination of quality culture. Steps have been taken to ensure the independence of the department. The mechanisms for the conduct of research have been reviewed. Tools for the conduct of online surveys are used. The NU has a quality assurance policy and certain procedures, attaches importance to quality assurance processes and allocates certain resources for their management.

### ***3. Internationalization and research activities have development trends and support the credible award of qualifications.***

The NU has practical mechanisms for student recruitment and admission.

Based on the recommendations mentioned in the previous expert panel report, career support services, mechanisms for contact with alumni were increased, particularly, an alumni database was recruited. However, the Alumni and Career Center has not yet become the main means of alumni-TLI contact. The support provided by both the teaching and administrative staff is highly appreciated by the students. Raising of the level of awareness among the students about their rights is highlighted.

The strategy reflecting the NU's interests and ambitions in the research field is not realistic. There are no guarantees for their development. Though the staff of the Center of Scientific Researches, Innovative Programs and Postgraduate Academic Education has been replenished after the previous accreditation process, the human and financial resources of the existing five chairs and the Center of Scientific Researches are not sufficient for the fulfilment of the rather comprehensive goals and objectives. The stakeholders are not included in that process.

There is a lack of commercialization and internationalization policies in the research field. There are no mid-term planings. Indicators of research results and publications in periodicals with high impact factor are low. The link between research and learning is weak.

After the previous accreditation, the NU has taken steps to regulate the processes of establishing external relations. However, the results are still not visible. The mechanisms for the ensurance of continuity need enhancement.

Sufficient financial resources are not allocated for the realization of ambitious goals in the fields of scientific research, internationalization and education.

4. There are shortcomings that do not have crucial impact in terms of the credible award of qualifications. Grounds are laid for enhancement.

5. The follow-up plan in the expert panel report is generally realistic and its implementation will lead to qualitative enhancements.

Taking into consideration the above mentioned, as a result of an open voting, the Accreditation Committee:

#### DECIDED

1. **To award institutional accreditation to Northern University SNCO for 4 /four/ years.**
2. After the publication of the decision on accreditation award, to submit a revised follow-up plan based on the expert panel report and respective time schedule to ANQA within two months, taking into account the need to give urgent solution to the problems existing in the fields of **“Governance and Administration”, “Research and Development”, “Infrastructure and Resources”, “External Relations and Internationalization”**.
3. To pay special attention to:
  - a) the involvement of stakeholders in the TLI’s strategic planning, implementation, as well as the development and review processes of the APs;
  - b) the review of the policy for the selection of teaching, learning and assessment methods, ensuring the correlation of these methods with the APs’ outcomes;

- c) the review of the requirements for the academic staff mentioned in the APs, making them measurable and targetable;
  - d) the organization of teaching aimed at the development of students' analytical, creative and critical skills;
  - e) the need to carry out a benchmarking of quality assurance and introduce mechanisms for the evaluation of effectiveness, which will contribute to the development of activities through the PDCA cycle;
  - f) the strengthening of the link between learning and research;
  - g) the increase in the impact of the quality assurance system on the TLI's governance.
4. To organize an internal audit of the TLI's Aps with the involvement of external experts.
  5. In accordance with the requirements set by point 12 of the Statute on the State Accreditation of RA Education Institutions and their Academic Programs, every 2 /two/ years to submit a written report to the ANQA on the results of carried out activities by ensuring the evaluation of enhancement of the TLI's activity, innovations and achievements.
  6. To assign the ANQA to carry out mandatory monitoring of effectiveness of the activities of the TLI in accordance with the KPIs.
  7. The decision enters into force from the moment of registration in the State Accreditation Register.

**Chair of the Accreditation Committee:**

**A. Saghyan**

**November 25, 2022**

**Yerevan**