



ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

DECREE N 3

21 February 2015

On Awarding Institutional Accreditation to “STATE ENGINEERING UNIVERSITY OF ARMENIA (POLYTECHNIC)” STATE NON-COMMERCIAL ORGANIZATION

General Information on the Institution

Full name of the institution: *State Engineering University of Armenia (Polytechnic)*

Acronym: *SEUA*

Legal form: *State Non-commercial Organization*

Official address: *105 Teryan str., Yerevan 0009, Yerevan, Armenia*

Decree and date of previous accreditation: *Not available*

Guided by the regulation on “State Accreditation of RA Institutions and their Educational Programs” approved by the RA Government on 30 June, 2011 N 978-Ն decree; by RA Government decree N 959-Ն (30 June, 2011) on “Approval of RA Standards for Professional Education Accreditation”; by the Procedure on the Formation and Functioning of Accreditation Committee of “National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance” foundation (ANQA) as well as by ANQA Regulation on the Formation of the Expert Panel, in the open session held on 21 February 2015, the Accreditation Committee of “National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance” foundation (hereinafter referred to as the Committee) discussed the issue of state institutional accreditation of State Engineering University of Armenia (SEUA) with the presence of the representatives of the RA Ministry of Education and Science, Chair of the Expert Panel, ANQA coordinator of the accreditation procedure as well as SEUA representatives.

Having examined the self-analysis presented by SEUA, the Expert Panel report, SEUA action plan for the elimination of shortcomings mentioned in the Expert Panel report as well as ANQA conclusion, the Committee stated the following:

The main phases of the accreditation process were carried out following the below-given time-frame:

Submission of the Application	7 March 2012
Submission of the self-assessment report	18 December 2012,
Site-visit	20-24 May, 27 May, 6 June 2013
Submission of the Expert panel report	17 December 2012
Submission of the Follow-up plan	18 February 2014

The expertise was carried out by an Expert Panel formed in compliance with the requirements set forth by the ANQA regulation on the composition of expert panel. The assessment was carried out based in line with 10 criteria of institutional accreditation established by N959-Ն (30 June, 2011) decree on approving RA Standards for Professional Education Accreditation.

SEUA is a polytechnic higher education institution the mission of which is “to develop and implement academic and scientific programs and to provide services for meeting educational and technological needs of society and economy of the Republic of Armenia; to prepare students for life and career choice as well as professional development for proper functioning in the changeable socio-economic environment, to create favorable environment for comprehensive personal development and upbringing with national, moral and human values”. There is no special emphasis on research direction in the SEUA’s mission.

Throughout its activity SEUA did not undergo accreditation but it carried out its first self-analysis based on its educational experience in the Department of Mathematics. This process of accreditation is the University’s first experience. The aim of the self-analysis is to do a comprehensive assessment of the SEUA’s activity. At the same time the self-analysis aimed to foster self-development and improvement of the University.

SEUA provides 4 main academic programs for vocational, higher and postgraduate professional education and respectively grants qualification degrees of junior engineer, bachelor, master and researcher. Besides the mentioned main programs, the University offers additional academic courses through networking with its continuing education structures. The specialization scope of the University includes all the main branches of engineering and technologies represented by 44 BA and 39 MA specialties of engineering and engineering-economic profiles.

SEUA academic programs are mainly in compliance with the mission and state education standards. However, there are some problems concerning the application of modern teaching methods, struggle against plagiarism and assessment of students’ knowledge. Since 2012 SEUA has given importance to the process of reviewing academic programs which is aimed at defining intended outcomes in accordance with the qualifications. Before that SEUA had such an experience within the scope of a limited number of professions.

The strategy reflecting research interests and ambitions of SEUA are presented in the strategic plan. The chairs carry out research activities in compliance with their profiles, however, there isn’t any clear policy on selection of research areas. There is collaboration between internal and external markets, however, the financing is insufficient. The link between research and educational process is weak at SEUA which decreases the level of effectiveness of the University’s activity.

SEUA effectively cooperates with local and international institutions. The University organizes trainings for the teaching staff which aims to improve their foreign language proficiency. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of the activities carried out towards improvement of foreign language

proficiency of both students and teaching staff is not clear when viewing it as an important precondition for international cooperation and implementation of exchange programs.

SEUA infrastructures and resources are currently satisfactory for providing education. Like the central campus, the branches also have halls and sports grounds. There are also halls for holding conferences, seminars, student activities and skype-conferences which are equipped with respective technical facilities. There are medical centers, food service outlets, studios, entertainment places for students, laboratories. However, there is a lack of modern literature in Armenian and English. There is a lack of academic and support surfaces especially in Yerevan and Gyumri. The establishment of laboratories for online education both in Yerevan campus and in branches is a step forward.

The majority of the main teaching staff (the number of who exceeds 900) hold scientific degrees. Currently the University has a proficient staff with great experience which fosters the implementation of main goals of the academic programs. The University has set clear requirements for professional qualities of the teaching staff for each academic program, however, from the perspective of effectiveness, that policy and respective mechanisms have not been assessed. The University has not yet developed clear mechanisms for appreciating the best pedagogical-methodical experience and encouraging teachers. There is a problem concerning the implementation of trainings especially regarding the application of modern teaching methods and improvement of English.

SEUA carries out activities directed to the recruitment of students. At the same time the incomparable increase of the number of part-time students is worrisome. The reasons of the mentioned problem are not identified yet, and the standards for the admission of part-time study are not clear.

With the aim to identify the educational needs of students, the University regularly conducts surveys among students on teaching quality and student satisfaction with provided education.

The SEUA management system is aimed at the fulfillment of the mission and goals. The strategic goals are quite operational, and the internal stakeholders (staff and students) are engaged in different governing bodies but there are some gaps in the communication with external stakeholders. There is a mechanism of data collection which, however, is not fully invested. There are short-term and long-term plans at the University, and the annual reports are viewed as a mechanism of monitoring those plans. The University doesn't have mid-term planning the existence of which would make the functioning of the management system more targeted.

The University is given the following recommendations which should be fulfilled out within its strategy and which are aimed at the solution of problems put forward by the Expert Panel during the accreditation as well as at further improvement of the University.

Mission and Goals

1. To make SEUA's mission and goals more ambitious tending to become a research university in the future.
2. To make a clarification in the strategy about what kind of engineers the country needs and can prepare by particularly differentiating the academic programs for operating-engineers and researcher-engineers.
3. To develop and apply a mechanism for evaluating, monitoring and improving the results of fulfilled strategic goals which will allow to give a quicker feedback to the occurred changes, as well as to make amendments towards improvement in the plans.
4. To make a comprehensive study on satisfaction of main employers and professional associations with alumni and academic programs which aims to develop guarantees directed to the modernization of academic programs and increase of professional competences of alumni. The commercialization of knowledge created by the University can be the best mechanism of satisfying alumni's needs, and SEUA still needs to act towards that direction.

Governance and Administration

5. To review the place and role of the SEUA Department of Education Quality Control and Management in the administrative-organizational system.
6. To increase the scope of participation of SEUA teaching staff and employers in the governance of the University and to diversify participation modes.
7. To specify the mechanisms evaluating the collection, analysis and application of information on SEUA processes, as well as to define what department will fulfill and control the application of those mechanisms.

Academic Programs

8. SEUA needs to increase the number of programs set for foreigners which will foster student mobility and internationalization of educational process.
9. To ensure the 50:50 proportionality of academic and scientific blocks through the distribution of 120 credits for MA programs.
10. In order to make the academic programs more compatible with SEUA's mission, the following steps are recommended to take:
 - ✓ assurance of special educational toolset for the efficient organization of part-time study;
 - ✓ development and implementation of scientific-educational joint programs through collaboration between chairs and faculties.
11. It is necessary to use up-to-date computer technologies in final papers and master theses to identify and prevent plagiarism.

Students

12. The curatorial work should be reflected in the annual load of the teachers which will undoubtedly increase the curators' responsibility and the effectiveness of their activity.
13. To establish an official body, e.g. Ombudsman Institute of the University, which will deal with the protection of student rights.

Teaching and Support Staffs

14. To make the mechanisms of teaching staff selection more available to potential external candidates.
15. To define differentiated salaries for the teaching staff aimed at assurance of education quality.
16. In SEUA, particularly in Yerevan campus, to necessarily present the student survey results in accordance with the detailed content of the surveys to the teaching staff and to put them under discussion at chair sessions.
17. To develop special policy on preparation of pedagogical staff aimed at ensuring regular generation change of the SEUA teaching staff. The University should make efforts to ensure significant increase of the number of places for postgraduate study.

Research and Development

18. Based on the adopted state policy on creating knowledge-based economy, to specify the strategic directions of scientific research activities of the University.
19. To ensure the link between research and educational process. To pay attention to the students' participation in research activities.
20. Taking into consideration the peculiarities of the University, to expand the volume of activities carried out on economic-contractual basis.
21. To foster scientific publications in leading international scientific periodicals with high impact factor.

Infrastructure and Resources

22. To find means to make the academic and support surfaces per student in Erevan and Gyumri branch compatible with the functioning standards.
23. To find ways to modernize the laboratory of physics with modern equipments.
24. To create building facilities and educational conditions for students with special needs.

Social Responsibility

25. To equally develop the media system of the branches as well especially taking into consideration the fact that there is a free Wi-Fi zone in all branches.
26. To evaluate the effectiveness of the functioning mechanisms of accountability to the society and the government.

External Relations and Internationalization

27. To enhance foreign language teaching and to develop efficient ways of foreign language teaching including newest technologies which will ensure more flow of foreign students and will foster the mobility of internal stakeholders - students and teaching staff throughout the international scientific-educational area.

Internal Quality Assurance System

28. To engage a respective unit in QA processes which will also carry out internal audit of the University's units besides implementing academic programs.

Observing the presented package of documents and considering the opinions of head of the Expert Panel and other representatives, the Accreditation Committee finds that SEUA sufficiently fulfills its main goals. The suggested academic programs, educational resources and internal quality assurance system form sufficient educational environment for the implementation of professional education in accordance with the NQF. The shortcomings identified in the fields of *“Research and Development”* and *“Teaching and Support Staffs”* do not directly endanger the preparation of proper specialists in this transition period of the University.

The University should take serious steps towards generation change of teaching staff, preparation of young staff as well as their engagement in research activities, otherwise this problem can become risky for the University.

The elimination of the shortcomings and the implementation of the recommendations mentioned in the Expert Panel report will ensure the student-centered and research nature of provided education services as well as the comparability with international standards.

Taking into account the recommendations in all the 10 criteria the implementation of which is a matter of time, SEUA has developed an “Action Plan on elimination of shortcomings mentioned in the Expert Panel report”. The Action Plan is and it is aimed at further improvement of the University’s activity.

Taking into consideration that SEUA can eliminate the shortcomings mentioned in the Expert Panel report and implement the recommendations by methodically applying its internal QA mechanisms in a reasonable time period, as a result of open voting the Committee:

DECIDED

1. **To award institutional accreditation** to State Engineering University of Armenia **for 4 /four/ years.**
2. After the publication of the decision on accreditation award, to submit the Action Plan for the elimination of shortcomings mentioned in the Expert Panel report and respective time schedule within two months taking into account:
 - a) the necessity of giving urgent solutions primarily to the problems existing in the fields of **“Teaching and Support Staffs”** and **“Research and Development”**;
 - b) the results and recommendations of the peer review according to international standards.
3. In order to improve the activities of the University in line with current demands, to pay special attention to the development of quality assurance system, modernization of academic programs and refreshment of material-technical base, teaching staff and student mobility, reinforcement of the linkage between learning and research, generation change and training of the teaching staff.

4. According to the requirements of clause 12 of the Regulation on “State Accreditation of RA Education Institutions providing professional academic programs and their Professions” every 2 /two/ years to submit a written report to ANQA on the results of the carried out activities.
5. Taking into consideration the RA Government Decree N 1209 –Ն (13 November 2014), to give the Certificate of Accreditation to “National Polytechnic University of Armenia” Foundation which is the legal successor of “State Engineering University of Armenia (Polytechnic)” State Non-Commercial Organization.

Chairman of the Accreditation Committee

27 February 2015

Yerevam

V. Urutyan