



ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

DECREE № 8

11 April 2015

**On Awarding Institutional Accreditation to
“YEREVAN STATE CONSERVATOIRE AFTER KOMITAS”
STATE NON-COMMERCIAL ORGANIZATION**

General Information on the Institution

Full name of the Institution: **Yerevan State Conservatoire after Komitas**

Acronym: **YSC**

Legal Form: **State Non-commercial Organization**

Official Address: **1/a Sayat-Nova av., 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 March 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 Yerevan State Conservatoire after Komitas (hereinafter: YSCU) 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 YSC representatives.

Having examined the self-analysis presented by YSC, the Expert Panel report, YSC 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 **12 March 2012**

Submission of the Self-assessment report **9 July 2013**

Site-visit **30 September-4 October 2013**

Submission of the Expert panel report **11 November 2013**

Submission of the Follow-up plan **17 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-Ů (30 June, 2011) decree on approving RA Standards for Professional Education Accreditation.

When carrying out the evaluation, it has been taken into account that is a unique institution with 90 years of experience having a national role in educational, scientific and creative spheres of musical culture the primary mission of which is to provide music education at all levels of higher education.

Since 2012 YSC is a full member of the Association of European Conservatories (AEC).

Throughout its activity YSC hasn't undergone any accreditation; the quality assurance was carried out through the application of some mechanisms of quality control. The current piloting of accreditation of institutional capacities is YSC's first experience which is aimed at self-assessment of satisfaction of educational environment, efficiency of academic programs, social responsibility as well as recently invested internal quality assurance system.

YSC academic programs (APs) comply with the RA NQ musical and culture needs, foster development of culture as well as preservation, development and sharing of national spiritual culture values. Conservatoire is meant to become a student-centered institution by preparing high-quality artist-specialists who will comply with contemporary needs which derives from the mission and Strategic Plan of YSC.

Conservatory implements professional higher education providing 3 basic levels of education: bachelor's, master's and researcher's degrees, as well as postgraduate education of "Music Arts" profession which has 5 specialties. APs are reliable in terms of content and creativity and they are in line with state education standards. Although alumni with specialties in performance and creative spheres are able to continue their education abroad, some discrepancies in contents of APs of other similar institutions hinder free mobility and internationalization of students and teaching staff.

With the aim to modernize and internationalize APs, YSC carries out research of international best practices and benchmarking of similar APs within the frames of the World Bank Grant. The description of courses in line with learning outcomes (LOs) is in process. Based on the peculiarities of Conservatoire, the policy on students' individual learning ensures the compliance between teaching of majors and learning methods. There are some tangible facts which point out the efficiency of teaching methods.

With limited financial resources, YSC has managed to create efficient educational environment. Existing resources and facilities (which are also set for students with special needs) as well as

property foster the fulfillment of set mission and implementation of APs. However, opportunities for development are troublesome.

For the fulfillment of its mission and implementation of APs, YSC has teaching staff with necessary professional qualities which is aimed at the assurance of traditional musical and conservatory education. The teacher/student ratio is too high which is not justified.

The 98% of teachers are YSC alumni which ensures the stability of the teaching staff. However, being the only one in the republic and having no internal competition, it can become a hindrance for the linkage with external environment, thus forming a close circle.

For further development and improvement of quality, YSC should strive for other similar international institutions and should ensure mobility of students and teaching staff. Teachers to some extent carry out international cooperation but this is neither formal nor coordinated. The number of teachers at retirement age is still big which causes difficulties for the progress of young staff. The problem of regular teacher training, especially when referring to the pedagogical capacity building, still exists at YSC.

YSC carries out multibranch research activity. Being one of the most important spheres of YSC, research promotes the realization of YSC mission and goals. According to the international Experts' evaluation, one of the strongest points of the University is its research activity carried out in the sphere of Armenian traditional and contemporary music. The scientific and creative research is sufficiently developed. The impressive research activity carried out in the "Folklore Cabinet" is worth to be evaluated.

YSC teaching staff is involved in research activities, however, those carried out at international level are few. The research results are vastly invested in educational process. The application of results of research carried out in YSC in teaching process as well as MA students' involvement in research activities points out the existence of linkage between teaching and research.

The functioning mechanisms of student recruitment, selection and admission currently ensure stable flow of applicants. The efficiency of students' academic needs assessment is conditioned by the fact that the education provided by YSC is basically being carried out by individual classes. Students are mainly satisfied with the mechanisms putting forward the questions they raise, as well as solutions to the questions. Students are actively involved in research activities especially those being at MA level. Students have a positive attitude to the provided education services and general quality of education. Although they do not clearly realize the opportunities existing in the sphere of higher music education, still it is clear that they have an active participation in governing bodies and they strive to make some changes.

The governance of YSC served well to its goal previously. However, currently it faces new internal and external challenges which require student-centered approaches, more substantiated and more accountable decision-making processes, additional resources and good information system. YSC is in process of making structural changes, and the efficiency of the new system can be judged only after

the analysis of the results of one-cycle processes which were carried out in accordance with the quality management principle.

The quality of education and the quality assurance are given importance to at all levels of YSC although this is more conditioned by external requirements at present. Human, material and financial resources have been provided for the organization of respective processes at YSC. The internal quality assurance system is in the formation phase. Though some activities are in process, the participation of stakeholders is poor, and the main mechanisms are still to be developed.

The Conservatoire 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 formulate a clear and concise mission statement which will reflect YSC's real aspiration of being a bridge between Eastern and Western European cultures, a center of regional importance, a crossroad of different cultures (Islamic, Western, Arabic, Persian), an ambassador of Armenian music and musical tradition in the world, as well as preserving and building upon the best traditions of classical music performance.
2. To develop a separate mission statement for the YSC Gyumri branch.
3. To develop procedures for evaluating the achievement of mission and goals as well as mechanisms for regular monitoring of the Strategic Plan. To make surveys maximum compliant with the assessment of efficiency of YSC mission and Strategic Plan fulfillment.

Governance and Administration

4. To review the surveys and find ways which will allow to find the discrepancies between the goals and reality, to amend them and to reinforce the institutional strengths.
5. To develop mechanisms evaluating the effectiveness of the University performance.
6. To find effective means for the dissemination of information. For this purpose the website needs to be widely used.
7. The University should make a research on different contemporary methods of teaching and learning with the aim to modernize curricula and make them in compliance with international standards.
8. The learning outcomes should serve as a basis for the students' knowledge assessment.
9. To increase the role of chairs in the development and enhancement of APs.

Students

10. To develop mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of student recruitment, professional orientation processes.
11. To establish a body of educational consultants.
12. It is desirable to establish a Career Center or any other unit like that.

Teaching and Support Staff

13. It is necessary to establish procedures ensuring professional development and promotion of teaching staff.
14. It is necessary to develop policy on professional development as well as to organize trainings for the teaching staff especially regarding the development of pedagogical skills.
15. To make the feedback received from teacher surveys more effective.
16. To pay special attention to the organization of activities of beginner-teachers of YSC.

Research and Development

17. To take action in the direction of internationalizing research outputs of the University.

Infrastructure and Resources

18. To support all the efforts towards building a proper concert hall on the YSC premises.
19. To analyse and evaluate the effectiveness of the University resources.
20. To enhance the resources of the Gyumri branch of YSC.

Social Responsibility

21. To complete the activities of rebuilding the website and to ensure its proper maintenance.
22. To formalize the communication with alumni and other respective activities.
23. To analyze the effectiveness of current mechanisms.

External Relations and Internationalization

24. To be seriously concerned with the current situation of YSC in this sphere and to take stable steps towards improvement of the situation.
25. To develop clear internationalization policy promoting experience exchange and enhancement of international relations with an emphasis on the internationalization of the University.
26. To bring professional academic programs closer to the international standards.
27. To ensure appropriate level of foreign language proficiency among internal stakeholders.

Internal Quality Assurance System

28. To assure full applicability of the stipulated procedures.
29. To enlarge human, material and financial resources to increase the effectiveness of quality assurance processes.
30. To ensure the involvement of a wider group of stakeholders, especially faculty, for the establishment of quality culture.
31. To develop a regulation for regular review of internal quality assurance system, as well as feedback mechanisms and ensure their applicability.
32. To strengthen the link between management and quality assurance systems to develop quality assurance procedures on governance and administration.'

Observing the presented package of documents and considering the opinions of head of the Expert Panel and other representatives, the Accreditation Committee finds that YSC sufficiently fulfills its goals. APs suggested by YSC are in line with state academic standards, learning resources and the teaching staff create sufficient educational environment to provide professional education in line with

the National Qualifications Framework to the improvement of which the functioning quality assurance system is aimed.

The shortcomings which were put forward in the sphere of *“External Relations and Internationalization”* do not directly put under risk the preparation of specialists in music education for this transitional period,

Although the higher institution has taken sufficient steps towards establishment of external relations and internationalization in the previous academic year (particularly development strategy of international sphere has been developed, a number of partnership agreements have been signed, the University has become a full member of AEC and it has participated in a many international contests), carried out activities from the perspective of educational process are not sufficient for internationalization.

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

Taking into consideration the recommendations on all the 10 criteria which is a matter of time, YSC has developed an “Action plan for the elimination of shortcomings mentioned in the Expert Panel report”. The action plan is realistic and is aimed at the improvement of the University’s performance. All the recommendations requiring urgent changes are involved in the Action Plan. However, it should be mentioned that the University’s feedback on peer reviewed recommendations provided by the international experts is poor.

Taking into consideration that YSC can eliminate the shortcomings mentioned in the Expert Panel report by methodically operating its internal QA mechanisms and fully accomplish vital state goals in a reasonable time period, as a result of voting the Committee:

DECIDED

1. To award **institutional accreditation** to Yerevan State Conservatoire after Komitas 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 to ANQA within two months taking into account:
 - a. the necessity of giving urgent solution to the existing problems existing in the field of **“External Relations and Internationalization”**, peer reviewed results in accordance with international standards, recommendations;

- b. the remarks on the preliminary action plan for the elimination of shortcomings, mentioned in the “Conclusion on institutional capacities of Yerevan State Conservatoire after Komitas”.
3. In order to improve the activities of the University in line with current demands, to pay special attention to the stabilization of quality assurance system, upgrade of material and technical bases necessary for the implementation of academic programs, mobility of teaching staff and students, reinforcement of linkage between research and learning, generation change and training of the teaching staff as well as Gyumri branch.
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.

Chair of ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

17 April 2015

Yerevan

V. Urutyan