



CONCLUSION

On Accreditation of Institutional Capacities of Yerevan Agrarian University

General Information about the Institution

Full name of the Institution	Yerevan Agrarian University
Acronym	YAU
Official address	27/5 Fuchik str., 0048, Yerevan, Armenia
Previous accreditation decree and date	Certificate N 091, 14.01.2004 without validity period

LEGAL BASIS

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” as well as by the Procedure on the Formation and Functioning of Accreditation Committee of “National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance” foundation (ANQA), the Accreditation Committee of “National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance” foundation (hereinafter referred to as the Committee) discussed the ANQA draft conclusion on the institutional capacities of Yerevan Agrarian University (hereinafter: YAU) on the basis of self-analysis presented by YAU, Expert Panel report, YAU action plan for the elimination of shortcomings mentioned in the Expert Panel report as well as Expert panel opinion based on the YAU action plan with the presence of the ANQA representatives, the Expert Panel, and ANQA coordinator of the accreditation procedure.

As a result of discussion the following was registered:

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

Submission of application	13 June, 2013
Submission of self-evaluation report	12 December, 2013
Site-visit	12-16 May, 2014
Submission of expert panel report	1 September, 2014
Submission of action plan for elimination of shortcomings	6 October, 2014

RESULTS OF PEER REVIEW

The expertise of YAU has been carried out by an independent expert panel formed in compliance with the requirements set forth by the ANQA Regulation on the Formation of Expert Panel¹. The evaluation has been made according to 10 criteria of institutional accreditation approved by N 959-Ն Decree of the RA Government, 30 June 2011².

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While carrying out the evaluation the Committee has taken into consideration the fact that “YAU strives to prepare competent specialists with BA and MA qualifications to the benefit of the development of agrarian sphere of Armenia”. Currently there are 235 full-time and 668 part-time BA students and 6 full-time MA students studying at the University.

YAU has undergone accreditation in accordance with the state accreditation standards and regulation which were being operating before 2011.

The current accreditation of institutional capacities is the second experience of the University. In 2012 YAU applied for institutional accreditation to ANQA. According to the requirements of accreditation regulation, the expert panel was composed which made preliminary evaluation of self-assessment and attached documents, had a site-visit and prepared an expert panel report. After having the expert panel report with respective recommendations YAU applied to ANQA for the suspension of the process.

Currently YAU is authorized to provide education in the following 5 professions: 1. Bread, Confectionery and Macaroni Production Technology, 2. Veterinary Sanitary Expertise, 3. Law, 4. Finances, 5. Design; the first four of them are also provided for MA level. The academic programs (henceforth APs) are partially in compliance with the mission of the University. There is no generic approach to the development and implementation of the APs and curricula in particular as well as to the selection of teaching and learning methods.

The University has adopted the student-centered approach, however, the transition to it is yet incomplete. It should be mentioned that with the aim to achieve intended learning outcomes (henceforth LOs), standardized teacher-centered methods of teaching and learning are mainly used at the University which hardly foster the implementation of student-centered education. The University still has much to do in terms of defining LOs of APs. The LOs are described too generally and they do not comprise thorough mapping which hinders the activities to be more coordinated. Neither the link between LOs and assessment, nor the effectiveness of teaching and learning methods for the acquisition of LOs are clear. Although the majority of YAU teaching staff and students are content with the current assessment system, the lack of student assessment based on LOs and the unclearness of mechanisms for plagiarism prevention cannot guarantee the objectiveness of assessment, neither foster the formation of fair academic environment. The University gives importance to the review of APs and courses, however, YAU has not carried out activities regarding improvement of APs, and it has no policy on monitoring, evaluation of effectiveness and improvement of APs except for class observations.

There are no mechanisms which could link research and education at the University. YAU also lacks comprehensive policy which would include research and scientific approach within the frame of APs.

The teaching staff of the University is mainly recruited by means of interviews. The teaching staff currently teaching at YAU is employed on contractual main and external double jobbing bases. Currently YAU does not have clearly defined requirements set for professional qualities of teaching staff for APs. The Expert

¹ APPENDIX 1: EXPERT PANEL COMPOSITION

² APPENDIX 2` SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

Panel concerns more about the fact that there are few specialists at YAU who have respective qualifications for provided professions; one and the same teacher has several classes (3-9) which definitely influences the quality of teaching. The evaluation of YAU teaching staff is carried out by means of class observations and surveys being held among students. So far no trainings for development and modernization of teachers' professional competences have been organized at YAU. The teaching staff mainly participates in trainings that are organized by other higher education institutions or organizations.

The facilities (classrooms) are sufficient to have theoretical and some practical classes, and though the classrooms are full of audiovisual equipments, the internet is not available to students. The existing equipments at YAU laboratories are outworn and cannot contribute to the acquisition of LOs sufficiently. The library and information center are vital for the creation of research atmosphere and culture, while the level of resource provision is rather low at the University.

The lack of clear policy on distribution of financial resources for fulfillment of YAU vision and goals, as well as implementation and continuous assurance of APs weakens the targeted and efficient usage of financial resources.

There are standards set for student recruitment, selection and admission, however, the assurance of the mentioned processes is not guaranteed. The survey results mentioned in the self-evaluation report (henceforth SER) are also worrisome; according to them, the 48.75% of students who took part in surveys find that the YAU admission is not transparent. The lack of clear mechanisms for the YAU students' needs assessment and improvement of education process reduces the opportunity to evaluate the performance of the University. Though YAU lacks a clear system of organization of facultative classes and provision of consultancies to students, the Expert Panel positively assesses the non-formal communication between students and teachers. Student coaching or support is not systemized. The students are not involved in research activities irrespective of the fact that there are applied and agricultural professions among the list of professions of the University. YAU does not give any services for students with special needs.

The administration of the University gives importance to the practice exchange, formation of environment fostering development and internationalization, however, it is not clear how the University is going to assure appropriate environment. The University does not provide joint academic and research programs. YAU plans to develop a strategy for internationalization. To carry out academic, scientific-research and scientific-pedagogical internships, the University has signed agreements with a number of laboratories and organizations. Some agreements have been signed with international organizations but nothing has been undertaken within those agreements. The level of foreign language knowledge of students and teaching staff is low which is a serious obstacle for the internationalization of the processes of the University, the cooperation with international structures and the mobility assurance.

There is a map of distribution of bodies involved in organizational structure of the University and respective documents regulating the activities of those bodies. Nevertheless, the whole administration of the University is not based on the principles of quality management. The lack of all kinds of planning and monitoring mechanisms puts the efficiency of management system under risk. The surveys being currently in use are considered to be the main mechanism for the identification of factors having an impact on the performance of the University in general as well as its academic activities. The aims, frequency, and methodology of surveys as well as the scope of respondents do not allow surveys to be viewed as an effective tool for the identification of opinions of internal stakeholders. There are few cases of data collection and analysis on efficiency of professions and academic activities of the University, as well as those of decision making based on those data and respective mechanisms which puts the effectiveness of management under risk. This is conditioned by the fact that without aforementioned information it is impossible to assess the academic activity of the University, the acquisition of the LOs of APs, the effectiveness of teaching method as well as the substantiation of managerial decisions.

All the levels of the University give importance to quality of education and quality assurance though currently it is more conditioned by the external requirements. With the aim to provide education with high quality, YAU presently invests internal quality assurance system which is under process. Human, financial and material resources have been provided to organize respective activities. Although some activities are being processed, it is not clear whether these approaches of internal quality assurance are sufficient and efficient for the whole University. It is obvious that the quality culture is not fully formulated and that the Plan-Do-Check-Act (henceforth PDCA) cycle is not completed yet.

STRENGTHS

1. The involvement of students in all levels of management is praiseworthy. Students are aware and they take part in decision-making processes.
2. Teaching staff is motivated and devoted. Students' satisfaction with teaching staff, generally taken, is very high. Staff tightly cooperates, and the problems are solved unitedly.
3. The administration directly communicate with internal stakeholders. YAU administration is well aware of the University's internal procedures.
4. Teaching staff is interested in students' progress. Non-formal consultancies are given to students.
5. The agreement signed with the National Library of Armenia is a good start to ensure accessibility for students and teaching staff to modern library.
6. The existence of agreements signed with local organizations and laboratories is welcomed as far as those can be considered to be the first step towards organization of internship for students as well as the development of their practical skills.
7. The initiation of foreign language trainings/courses for teaching staff is a crucial step towards internationalization of the University.

WEAKNESSES

1. The involvement of teaching staff and students in decision-making processes is not sufficiently coordinated. The involvement of external stakeholders needs improvement.
2. The link among learning outcomes, teaching methods and assessment system is not strong.
3. The University has adopted student-centered approach which is one of the important guarantees of making education modern. However, the transition is not fully made yet.
4. There are few specialists who have respective qualifications for provided professions at the University.
5. The University does not yet fully accept the fact that the research in education is the main method of learning.
6. The laboratorial equipments of YAU are outworn and they cannot sufficiently contribute to the acquisition of intended learning outcomes.
7. The conditions necessary for the assurance of education of students with special needs are missing at the University.
8. Classrooms are not equipped with audiovisual equipments, and there is no internet available to students at the University.
9. YAU website does not contain comprehensive information on the University's general and daily activities.
10. There is no electronic system of information collection at the University.

11. The low level of the knowledge of English within the process of internationalization development is a serious shortcoming. The level of knowledge of English among teaching staff is rather low.
12. There are no grounds for the implementation of joint academic programs and research projects at the University.
13. The quality culture is not fully formed. The PDCA cycle is not completed yet, and the evaluation results are not clear yet.
14. The level of involvement of external and internal stakeholders in quality assurance processes is low.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Mission and purpose

1. To clarify the University mission by making more specification on the levels of learning outcomes and by aligning its activity with the mission (or to rename the University);
2. To invest clear mechanisms on needs assessment and analysis of internal and external stakeholders;
3. To include assessment indicators of achieved strategic goals in the strategic plan;
4. To invest mechanisms and procedures for evaluation and improvement of results of the fulfillment of mission and goals.

Governance and Administration

5. To simplify the organizational structure of the University; to select a flexible option for organizational unit which will continue the collegial academic culture and will contribute to the increase of the level of management effectiveness;
6. To adjust management system in a way that the teaching staff's investment in education policy development, application and review processes will be more significant;
7. To develop job descriptions for the administrative staff by clearly differentiating their authorizations, describing their main responsibilities as well as precise requirements set for the given job;
8. To regulate the decision-making process in a formal way;
9. To develop and invest clear mechanisms for the implementation and monitoring of short-term, mid-term and long-term planning.
10. To invest clear mechanisms which will identify factors having an impact on the University's general and academic activities;
11. To complete the PDCA cycle in all the levels of management to effectively achieving strategic goals;
12. To develop and invest clear mechanisms which will collect, analyze and evaluate the data on the effectiveness of professions and academic processes;
13. To involve external experts in the research of factors having an impact on the University's performance; this will give a clearer and more comprehensive vision about the strengths and weaknesses of the University's activity.

Academic Programmes

14. To review academic programs (to clearly define learning outcomes) making them in compliance with the University mission and taking into account the stakeholders' opinions;
15. To invest policy on selection and evaluation of teaching and learning methods;
16. To improve the system assessing students' knowledge in a way that it reflects the acquisition of learning outcomes;
17. To invest interactive, student-centered teaching methods in more practical courses;
18. To improve mechanisms preventing plagiarism at technical (if possible, by using respective computer programs) and education (exception of plagiarism within the framework of academic honesty) levels;

19. To carry out targeted benchmarking with similar academic programs of other higher education institutions at national and international levels;
20. To develop policy and procedures on monitoring, evaluation of effectiveness and improvement of professional academic programs.

Students

21. To review the policy on student recruitment, selection and admission by ensuring transparency and honesty of the processes;
22. To regulate the process of students' academic needs assessment and make it more coordinated;
23. To develop clear mechanisms and toolset for students' academic needs assessment;
24. To regulate the process of delivering facultative classes and providing consultancy;
25. To develop regulation and time-schedule for applying to the administrative staff;
26. To clarify the functions of the Career Center and to integrate it in education processes by activating the Center's activity and expanding its scope; this should be aimed at the assurance of alumni's employability as well as their feedback;
27. To organize a process for involving students in scientific-research activities, and to direct it to the formation of students' knowledge, skills and competences (this can foster the formation of Education Scientific Center);
28. To increase the effectiveness of Student Council's activity, in particular from the perspective of improving relations between Student Council and students;
29. To develop and invest quality assurance mechanisms which will evaluate educational, consultancy and other services being delivered to students.

Teaching and Support Staff

30. To develop clear indicators set for the categories of teachers' recruitments;
31. To define clear professional qualities set for the teaching staff in accordance with education requirements;
32. To improve mechanisms of evaluation of teaching staff;
33. To study the effectiveness of surveys and apply their results with the aim to guide and individualize qualification enhancement programs;
34. To improve training system of beginner-teachers;
35. To improve the knowledge of teachers' foreign language;
36. To provide trainings for the teaching staff on such vital academic issues as compliance of teaching & learning methods and assessment system, organization of student-centered education, interlinking learning outcomes of the course to assessment system;
37. To interlink professional development courses to qualifications set for academic programs;
38. To invest policy and procedures which are aimed at assurance of professional development of the teaching staff;
39. To develop professional standards and improvement mechanisms for the attestation of administrative and support staffs.

Research and Development

40. To develop strategy reflecting the University's interests and ambitions in research by actively involving teaching staff and students in scientific research activities;
41. To develop mechanisms and tools of research strategy implementation and quality control;
42. To develop mid-term and short-term plans on the basis of the strategy which reflects the University's interests and ambitions in research;

43. To take steps towards internationalization of planned research activities, including improvement of foreign language knowledge of teaching staff and students;
44. To ensure a larger number of teaching staff members with scientific degree in education process;
45. To interlink research with education process, including respective policy, procedures and mechanisms.

Infrastructure and Resources

46. To find external financial sources to fully achieve goals planned by academic programs (consultancy, other services);
47. To improve the University's educational-material basis, infrastructure, equipment of laboratories with the aim to assure academic environment necessary for the implementation of professional academic programs;
48. To make annual estimate of budget inflows and outflows which will significantly increase the efficiency and expedience of expenses throughout financial year;
49. To develop mechanisms of needs assessment directed to the fulfillment of goals of academic programs;
50. To create and invest policy on efficient allocation of financial resources;
51. To develop clear mechanism to assess the efficiency of budget expenses;
52. To develop clear policy and procedures for management of information and documentation related processes;
53. To invest electronic paperwork management system which will be in compliance with information management policy and respective procedures;
54. To make an analysis to what extent the existing resources ensure an environment necessary for the implementation of educational activities derived from the strategic goals;
55. To develop mechanisms for the assessment of application, availability and effectiveness of resources provided to students and teaching staff.

Social Responsibility

56. To assess the effectiveness of in-process internal accountability system and invest external accountability system;
57. To assure transparency of internal processes of the University for external stakeholders;
58. To enrich information of the website and make it more usable;
59. To develop policy, procedures and clear mechanisms for the establishment of feedback fostering public relations;
60. To analyze the efficiency of existing mechanisms of assuring feedback of stakeholders;
61. To develop mechanisms for the transition of knowledge in agrarian sphere to the society.

External Relations and Internationalization

62. To develop policy and procedures which will be directed to the creation of environment which fosters experience exchange, development and internationalization of the University;
63. For the internationalization of the University to establish a structural unit or to recruit a respective responsible staff member together with clear regulations on the scope of his/her activity and respective functions;
64. To activate the external relations with local higher education institutions, the signed international agreements as well as to sign new realistic agreements;
65. Within the framework of the curricula to review:

- subject plans of foreign language teaching with emphasis on teaching of foreign language for the professional field;
 - teaching methods giving importance to the development of foreign language skills necessary for the professional field.
66. To review the training courses of foreign language organized for the administrative and teaching staffs and to enlarge the scope of their participation.

Internal Quality Assurance

67. To review the YAU policy of internal quality assurance making more clarifications in terms of actions/;
68. To improve QA mechanisms reviewing the toolset;
69. To evaluate the efficiency of the QA Center activity (to elaborate scheme/methodology of data collection, what kind of survey is necessary to develop, what target groups will be chosen, how frequent the surveys will be held, etc.);
70. To develop a comprehensive QA manual;
71. To involve stakeholders (especially external ones) in QA processes;
72. To evaluate the efficiency of stakeholders' participation in QA processes;
73. To monitor QA processes;
74. To complete the PDCA cycle in all the management levels of YAU.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

A peer review of the University in accordance with international standards was also carried out which is aimed at the increase of competitiveness of the University at international level as well as at the integration of the University into EHEA.

Observations

1. The overall impression shows that **the activity of the University is not directly linked to the University's mission**. The three professions (Law, Finances and Design) among five provided in the University do not have agricultural direction.
2. **The mission is too general, the strategic priorities, and the mechanisms measuring the accomplishment of goals are missing**. The mission and the activities towards the fulfillment of the mission are rather directed to internal stakeholders and they do not reflect the needs of external stakeholders as well as requirements of labour market and international tendencies.
3. **The management system of the University is not flexible**, and the scarcity of financial resources does not let the University become competitive at international level.
4. **The lack of allocation of financial resources according to academic programs** is a serious hindrance from the perspective of competitiveness of academic programs at international level. The education services which are currently being suggested are not in line with international standards. **The academic programs do not foster international mobility**.
5. **The academic programs** are rather **traditional** in terms of teacher-centered and subject-oriented approaches. Greater emphasis is given to theoretical knowledge than to the formation of professional behavior and skills. And if the University intends to modernize the programs, **it ought to adopt student-centered approach**.

6. **The link between intended learning outcomes and assessment system is not clear;** the assessment of professional behavior and skills especially needs further improvement.
7. **The internal system for the provision of information on quality of academic programs is complicated.**
8. **The lack of clear mechanisms for the improvement of education process and YAU students' academic needs assessment** limits the opportunity to assess the performance of the University.
9. From the perspective of integration into EHEA **the skills and competences of the University's teaching staff are not sufficient.**
10. The data collection is mainly carried out in paper version which makes the analysis of data more difficult and limits the effectiveness.
11. **The feedback mechanisms fostering the establishment of public relations are imperfect** and they need further improvement.
12. **The newly established QA system has registered some results.** The internal stakeholders are mainly involved in QA processes while the involvement of external stakeholders need to be further improved.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended to visit European universities of the sphere of agriculture **with the aim to get acquainted with the European standards set for similar Universities.**
2. The University should try to make its internal structure clearer and correspondingly more effective. It can choose a model of **flexible structural unit** which will be more coordinated, not bureaucratic and will continue to function on the basis of collegial academic culture.
3. Without having stable financial and human resources, the improvement of management structure is not realistic. It needs cardinal reforms.
4. The University needs **such planning of education processes** that will include the acquisition of learning outcomes as well as the University's approaches towards **the investment of modern teaching and learning methods.** The expert panel recommends **to develop concept of education** on the institutional level which will reflect research and will be aimed at the education and training of teaching staff. The key elements of concept of modern education can be the following:
 - internationally benchmarked curriculum plan which will contain the defined intended learning outcomes;
 - Student-centered learning by interactive participation of learners and learning in small groups;
 - case study;
 - close interconnection between research and education starting from the beginning of BA level.
5. The Expert Panel recommends **to carry out international benchmarking** on the institutional level. The University can also try to implement the programs (some of the programs) in English in order to promote internationalization.
6. **The involvement of international students** is encouraged by means of providing competitive academic programs in English.
7. International orientation of the teaching staff, **proficiency in English** as well as existence of scientific degrees are necessary preconditions to be involved in EHEA. Cooperation with other RA universities can be beneficiary for the accomplishment of the above mentioned goals. The requirements set for professional qualities of the teaching staff should be developed in order to be in compliance with European standards.
8. The teaching staff of the University should devote at least 20% of their workload to **scientific research** activities. Without research activities the University cannot operate in EHEA.

9. **The improvement of infrastructural resources** is a necessary precondition for the provision of quality education. The University should enrich its laboratory basis with modern equipments and the classrooms with audiovisual facilities.
10. The University should **establish close relations with employers and public** in order to carry out its responsibilities in service to society. From the international perspective having the council of consultants on the institutional level is a necessary precondition.
11. The tight relations with employers, secondary schools and the Government should be developed and put onto the institutional level. The Expert Panel wants to encourage the University **to develop a concept of strategic cooperation** with external stakeholders and society. The University should also improve mechanisms of stakeholders' needs assessment. To achieve this the cooperation with other RA universities for the exchange of practice will be favorable.
12. **The University staff should participate in qualification enhancement programs** both at national and international levels in order to form an understanding of QA management as well as to develop skills. The University should carry out benchmarking in terms of all the goals that it wants to accomplish by intensively examining international standards concerning QA and education quality.

Having examined the draft report of Expert Panel, YAU agreed upon all the facts registered by the Expert Panel. The University plans to fulfill them during its further activity. Paying attention to the separate criteria YAU presented possible ways of overcoming the difficulties rather than remarks on the facts mentioned in the Expert Panel report. Based on the University's feedback in the final version of the Expert Panel report in the 3rd criterion it was stated that the University has developed a guideline for the development of academic programs.

YAU ACTION PLAN ON THE ELIMINATION OF THE SHORTCOMINGS MENTIONED IN THE EXPERT PANEL REPORT

Yerevan Agrarian University admits that the recommendations presented by the Expert Panel are within the framework of the University's strategy and the University has presented action plan and time schedule for the elimination of shortcomings mentioned in the Expert Panel report. This action plan and time schedule were approved by the Rector on 06.10.2014.

Having examined the University's action plan based on the recommendations presented in the final Expert Panel report, the Expert Panel comes to a **conclusion** that:

- According to the action plan, the University plans to follow the recommendations concerning all the 10 criteria. The Expert Panel finds that all the recommendations requiring urgent change or improvement are involved in the action plan of the University, and necessary resources will be provided in the upcoming two years, i.e. until the end of 2015 for their fulfillment. However, it should be mentioned that a number of issues requiring urgent solution have not been given sufficient importance to:

Mission and Goals

- The mechanisms which should be invested for the needs assessment of internal and external stakeholders are poorly presented. In addition, the ways of carrying out needs assessment and its frequency are vague.

Governance and Administration

- In order to simplify the University's organizational structure and to invest a more flexible structure, the University plans to study management and administration system of leading universities. However, the problem is not the study of practice of leading universities but the investment of more flexible and clear system in accordance with the University's peculiarities and priorities for the assurance of the transparency of decision-making procedures.
- It seems that the University should have prioritized **the regulation of decision-making process, the investment of formal institutions and development of clear and transparent mechanism of decision making** as one of the most important issues affecting the efficiency of management. However, clear actions towards the investment of the mentioned activities are missing in the action plan of the University.

Academic Programs

- The Expert Panel has given importance to the **development and investment of policy and procedures on the monitoring, evaluation of effectiveness and improvement of academic programs**. However, the activities mentioned in the action plan are not aimed at their assurance.

Students

- It seems that the University should have prioritized the **review of the policy on student recruitment, selection and admission**. However, under the review and clarification of the regulation on admission YAU plans to organize the admission for full-time study without unified exams which is against the current legislation and very disputable.
- The University prioritized **the scientific-research activities carried out by the teaching staff and students in the sphere of agriculture at the international level** as a result of which the scientific-technical achievements will be invested in the production. However, the presented activities and actions do not identify the logic of ensuring the mentioned goal taking into account that so far the University hasn't had clear policy either on internationalization or promotion of scientific-research activity. The encouragement of students' scientific activities and the experience of students' involvement in scientific-research activities are lacking which proves non-clear understanding of goals as well as not substantiated ambitions.

Teaching Staff

- The University has properly analyzed the recommendations of the Expert Panel concerning this criterion, and the practical application of those recommendations can lead to some extent of success. Nevertheless, the current situation does not guarantee the implementation of activities derived from the recommendations and to some extent has non-realistic nature as the current requirements for the recruitment and professional qualities of the teaching staff are not satisfactory at all.

Research and Development

- The University's policy concerning this criterion is disputable. In spite of the fact that the University plans to interlink education process with research activities, a necessary step towards its implementation is considered to be the assurance of education process in line with the demands of the labor market or the review of policy and mechanisms of students' internship. Following the logic of the mentioned steps, it is impossible to accomplish the mentioned goal. Though outcomes are somehow defined, the planned actions do not guarantee their achievement as clear indicators for their assessment are missing.

Infrastructure and Resources

- **The Expert Panel has especially stressed the improvement of the University's material, technical bases and the equipment of laboratories** for the assurance of necessary academic environment for the implementation of the academic programs. Besides, the development of mechanisms for revealing the needs aimed at the accomplishment of goals of the academic programs is considered to be an urgent issue for the HEI with such direction. Nevertheless, the University hasn't mentioned the way it is going to improve the resource base and ensure the availability of necessary laboratory resources. The fact is confusing taking into account the low level of assurance of infrastructure and the impact of the latter on the achievement of learning outcomes.
- The activities and actions towards the improvement are partially in line with the requirements of the Expert Panel. However, it is obvious that the University gives more importance to the regulation of the documentation, i.e. the development of policy, procedures and mechanisms rather than their implementation and study of their impact in line with the goals.
- **Responsible people/working groups** are mentioned for all the actions. Though recommendations requiring urgent change and improvement are involved in the action plan, the Expert Panel finds that their resource base is **insufficient** from the perspective of the implementation of the mentioned activities. Information about what material and financial resources will be required for the fulfillment of recommendations and improvements as well as the possible sources of their formation is missing. The mentioned circumstance somehow limits the opportunities of evaluating the feasibility and rationale.
- The logical succession of activities concerning 10 criteria is mainly maintained, however, in some cases it is not clear how the achievements of intended goals and objectives can be ensured.
- Deadlines for the implementation of activities are mainly clear, however, not in all cases they are realistic. The logic of deadlines for the implementation of some activities needs additional clarification. The University plans to solve the urgent issues and improve the situation in most cases till the mid 2015 or 2016 which is not that much realistic taking into consideration the University's potential and the time period needed for the solution of the problems. The long-term planning in the action plan is planned for 2018 which cannot be viewed as a target time period as the majority of activities and actions can take more time.
- The outcomes defined in the action plan are generally directed to the accomplishment of goals, however, not in all cases they are tangible and visible. It is often not clear what qualitative change can be expected at the end of the current activity. The development of a number of policies, procedures, mechanisms and tools for the regulation of main spheres of the University is planned which is somehow an attempt to respond to the recommendations.

- One or in some cases a few performance indicators are defined in the action plan in order to evaluate the effective implementation of the activities. However, not in all cases the indicators evaluating the impact are mentioned.

Conclusion. *The Expert Panel finds that the main part of the implementation of the action plan is at a risk. The implementation of activities mentioned in the action plan can form bases for the improvement of normative field regulating the activities of the University. However, this does not yet guarantee the improvement of the effective implementation of the main activities as the problem is not just the formation and improvement of documentation base but the readiness to put it into practice and the opportunity to objectively evaluate the current potential.*

Based on the aforementioned, ANQA suggests the Accreditation Committee to draw YAU's attention especially to the implementation of the following activities while making decision:

- 1) To give urgent solution to the problems existing in the spheres of **Academic Programs, Teaching and Support Staffs, Infrastructure and Resources, Internal Quality Assurance.**
- 2) According to the requirements of clause 12 of the Regulation on "State Accreditation of RA Institutions and their Educational Programs" or according to the deadlines set by the Accreditation Committee, regularly present a written report to ANQA on the results of the carried out activities.
- 3) Taking into account the ambitions concerning the internationalization of the University's activities, to **review the action plan** paying attention to the **results of peer-review against international standards and recommendations.**
- 4) To review the action plan for the elimination of shortcomings mentioned in the Expert Panel report taking into account the remarks about the action plan mentioned in the current conclusion.

ANQA finds that the presented improvements will foster the fulfillment of the University's ambitions mentioned in the SER and will serve as a basis for the next evaluation.

Aghavni Hakobyan, Head of the Expert Panel

Ani Mkrtchyan, ANQA Coordinator

Expert Panel Composition

- **Aghavni Hakobyan** – Chief specialist in the Department of External Relations at ASUE, PhD in economics, Associate Professor
- **Teo Vabels** – Dean on Admission at Utrecht University, Professor in Education
- **Garegin Hambarcumyan**- associate professor at the chair of physiology at Yerevan State Medical University, PhD in veterinary sciences
- **Gayane Marmaryan** – Associate Professor at the Chair of Biochemistry at YAU, PhD in Biological Sciences
- **Luiza Abrahamyan** – student at the faculty of Anticrisis Management at ASUE

ANQA Support Staff

- **Ani Mkrtchyan** – responsible for internal QA at ANQA, coordinator of institutional accreditation process of YAU
- **Zaruhi Soghomonyan** – Head of Chair of Foreign Languages at French University in Armenia, translator of institutional accreditation process of YAU

SUMMATIVE EVALUATION ³

The expert panel presented its evaluation per accreditation criteria in the following table:

CRITERION	CONCLUSION
1. <i>Mission and Goals</i>	SATISFACTORY
2. <i>Governance and Administration</i>	UNSATISFACTORY
3. <i>Academic programs</i>	UNSATISFACTORY
4. <i>Students</i>	UNSATISFACTORY
5. <i>Teaching and Support Staff</i>	UNSATISFACTORY
6. <i>Research and Development</i>	UNSATISFACTORY
7. <i>Infrastructure and Resources</i>	UNSATISFACTORY
8. <i>Social Responsibility</i>	SATISFACTORY
9. <i>External Relations and Internationalization</i>	UNSATISFACTORY
10. <i>Internal Quality Assurance System</i>	UNSATISFACTORY

³ While carrying out the evaluation the expert panel followed the Regulation on “State Accreditation of RA Institutions and their Educational Programs” and the procedure described in the ANQA Accreditation Manual carrying out firstly evaluation per standards and then per criteria. “Satisfactory” and “Unsatisfactory” evaluation scale was applied

The expert panel followed the below mentioned principles while carrying out the evaluation:

-**unsatisfactory**: if the University does not meet the demands of the criterion and it is not allowed to continue the activities that way and urgent improvements are needed

-**satisfactory**: if the University meets the demands of the criterion yet there might be need for improvements as well.