



NATIONAL CENTER FOR PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE, FOUNDATION

**EXPERT REPORT
PILOT INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION OF YEREVAN STATE CONSERVATOIRE AFTER
KOMITAS**

Yerevan 2013

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I. COMPOSITION OF EXPERT PANEL¹

The pilot institutional accreditation at Yerevan State Conservatoire (YSC) was carried out by the following expert panel:

1. **Gurgen Hovhannisyan**, PHD in Geography, Associate Professor, the head of Bachelor Division at the Methodological Department of Yerevan State University/ the panel chair/
2. **Anna Erznkryan**, Professor, Honorary Worker of Art of the Republic of Armenia (RA), dean of the Faculty of Cinema, TV and Animation at Yerevan State Institute of Cinema and Theatre (YSICT)
3. **Grzegorz Kurzyński**, Member of the AEC Accreditation Committee, former Rector of the Karol Lipiński Academy of Music in Wrocław/Poland/
4. **Mist Thorkelsottir**, Dean of Music, Iceland Academy of the Arts, Chair of AEC Quality Enhancement Committee
5. **Sona Ter-Minasyan**, Master's degree student in the "Art education" faculty, music division at Armenian State Pedagogical University after Kh. Abovyan

The composition of the panel was agreed upon with the university and appointed by the decree of ANQA Director.

The panel activities were coordinated by Anahit Utmazyan, the Head of ANQA Secretariat. Two observers were involved in the process- the Head of ANQA Institutional and Program Accreditation Division Anushavan Makaryan and Ani Mkrtchyan.

The translation was provided by Alina Khachikyan.

All panel members and the secretary signed a statement of independence and confidentiality.

II. DESCRIPTION OF EXTERNAL REVIEW

The preparatory phase

On the 12th of March, 2012 Yerevan State Conservatoire applied for pilot institutional accreditation by submitting to ANQA the application form, the copies of the license and respective appendices.

The ANQA Secretariat checked the application package against the ANQA requirements: the data presented in the application form, the appendices and the ANQA electronic questionnaire completed by the university.

According to the decision on accepting the application request made on the 2nd of April 2012, a tripartite agreement was signed between ANQA, the Centre for Education Projects (Ministry of Education and Science PIU) and Yerevan State Conservatoire on 18th of April.

The timetable of activities was prepared and approved, respectively.

Based on the Decision by the RA Ministry of Education and Science and the Centre for Education Projects, the pilot institutional accreditation process at Yerevan State Conservatoire was postponed to the second phase of "Education Quality and Relevance Project 2". Dwelling from the necessity, an additional agreement of tripartite agreement was signed on the 2nd of August 2012, and the process timetable was amended accordingly, agreed with the university and approved.

The university presented the self-evaluation report (SER henceforth) of its institutional capacities in Armenian and English, as well as the relevant document package within the timeframes stipulated by the timetable.

The self-evaluation of YSC was implemented by the working group formed by the decree of the Rector.

In the receipt of positive reflection from the coordinator appointed by the ANQA Director, ANQA made a decision on accepting the SER on the 12th of July.

The expert panel, analysing the university SER and relevant documentation package, conducted a preliminary assessment based on the relevant format, made up a list of documents, issues and questions that require further investigation, as well as specified the target subdivisions and groups.

The preparatory visit

The coordinator, based on the revealed questions and issues to be clarified, has made up the site visit agenda¹ together with the expert panel: the agenda was agreed with the university during the preliminary visit by the coordinator and panel chair. Guided by the ANQA Accreditation Manual, the meetings of the panel with all target groups, the open and closed meetings, the desk review, the visits to the subdivisions, investigation of resources of Gyumri branch of Yerevan State Conservatoire etc. were included in the agenda. The list of documents requiring additional investigation was also presented to the university.

A visit was paid to the expert panel working room equipped with the necessary facilities, as well as an auditorium for carrying out meetings.

The site-visit

The expert panel has conducted the site visit from 30th of September to 4th of October.

The day prior to the actual visit to the university all the panel members convened at ANQA. The meeting aimed at exchanging the initial impressions with the international experts, discussing the list of issues and documents to be reviewed during the site visit, clarifying the evaluation framework, as well as identifying target groups for the sessions.

The group as a whole participated in the site visit, including the coordinator, the translator, and the observers.

During the site visit the expert panel had the following meetings set out in the Schedule:

- Rector,
- Self-assessment team,
- Vice-rectors (2 meetings), head of the educational department,
- Deans and heads of respective educational process management units,
- Teaching staff,
- Heads of chairs,

¹ Schedule of the five-day site-visit of the expert panel to Yerevan Komitas State Conservatoire

- Representatives of Student Council and Student Scientific Association,
- Employer representatives,
- Graduates,
- Internal Quality Assurance Division (IQA).

The expert panel randomly selected the representatives of the target groups to meet with.

The panel scrutinized the documents² provided by the rectorate, chairs, educational department and IQA division.

The panel also conducted observation of resources³ - auditoriums, cabinets, library, reading hall, polyphonic hall, opera studio, national orchestras, Laboratory of Armenian Folklore Studies, the publishing office of “Erazhisht” newspaper and “Erazhshtakan Hayastan” journal.

Within the frames of resource observation the panel listened to a number of performances by local and international experts, was present during the rehearsal in the opera studio.

According to the Schedule, the panel visited the Gyumri branch on the 3rd of October, where meetings were organized with the Director of the branch, administrative and teaching staffs, students, conducted observation of resources/ audio-sound recording library, library, canteen/, listened to the student performances.

The site visit and the organisation of the different meetings was very well prepared and conducted by the staff. For this reason the panel managed to keep within the timeframes stipulated by the Schedule.

The major findings (information gained through the interviews, desk review results and major observations) were summarized during the closed meeting at the end of the site visit.

The expert panel report

The external evaluation by the experts was conducted according to the State Criteria and Standards for Accreditation in the Republic of Armenia, as well as within the frames of ANQA procedures that stipulates two-level evaluation scale: 1) does not meet the criterion and 2) meets the criterion.

After the site visit the panel chair and the coordinator prepared the initial accreditation report. All panel members gave feedback and their comments were taken into consideration when finalizing the report. The accreditation report evolves around the major findings, consideration, judgement and recommendations.

The final report endorsed by all panel members has been submitted to the university on [*date*].

The report includes both the outcomes of the pilot institutional audit and of the peer review on the basis of international standards.

III. BRIEF INFORMATION ON YEREVAN STATE KOMITAS CONSERVATOIRE

Yerevan State Conservatory named after Komitas presents itself to a global community as an Armenian national educational institution with its own face, and its own national handwriting, which solves creative issues specific to Armenian music and Armenian culture in general.

² APPENDIX 3. List of reviewed documents

³ APPENDIX 4. Resources observed by the panel

The most important task for the Conservatory is to educate its students in such a way that they would respect their national traditions, would deeply master their national roots, and, eventually, would be proud to be the bearers of the national culture.

Conservatory pays special attention to the relations with the Armenian diaspora and all the centres populated by Armenians abroad.

At present there are more than 1000 students in the 3 basic faculties of the Yerevan State Conservatory after Komitas. About 160 foreign students study at the YSC. Head office of YSC is in Yerevan, and its branch is in Gyumri.

The regulated decision-making procedure is approved by the university managerial system.

YSC's administrative bodies are the Conservatory's Council; the Scientific Council, in which 25% are students, the majority are teachers; as well as the Rectorate, and the Student Council.

YSC's main teaching staff consists of more than 600 members; most of them have international and honorary titles, medals, certificates, and scientific degrees, etc. Conservatory implements higher and postgraduate education of "Music Arts" specialty providing 3 basic cycles of education: bachelor's, master's and researcher's degrees. Along with the mentioned basic programmes YSC also offers additional academic programmes.

In 2011 the Internal Quality Assurance Department (IQAD) was established. The policy and strategy, as well as regulations and procedures for the centre were set up, which are directed towards the quality assessment of different units operating at the institution.

IV. THE BRIEF FINDINGS OF THE PILOT INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION CARRIED OUT IN YEREVAN STATE CONSERVATOIRE

Having scrutinized the evidence presented and after the interviews with the institution's representatives the panel comes to the conclusion that, Yerevan state Conservatoire meets the majority of the 10 State Accreditation Criteria except one Criterion, which is assessed as negative: External relations and internationalization.

Strengths

The SER analysis and the site visit allow us to state that the YSC has the following strengths:

- YSC, generally, is a well-structured **organisation** with a clear and well-articulated **mission**.
- YSC's involvement in the creation of a **musical environment**.
- Progressive **leadership** determined towards reforms.
- A committed **teaching staff**, involved in the organisation of the curriculum and guidance of the students.
- The **programmes** have a well-detailed and very structured curricula. The intended learning outcomes comply with the State Academic Standards.
- **Research** outcomes are widely used in the teaching and learning processes.
- The **students' involvement** at all levels is something to cherish. Students are heard, and have an influence on the decision making.
- Involvement of YSC students in various international ensembles at different international festivals, contests, concerts.
- YSC has managed to create a sufficient academic environment: the library, rich audio-sound recording library, folklore cabinet, opera studio, publishing office, etc.
- The **acknowledgement of its own weaknesses** and **willingness** to fix and improve them.

Weaknesses

- High age of the teaching staff. Staff aging can lead to conservatism of programs and teaching methodologies.
- The curricula are not flexible, with little opportunity for selective. They do not yet create opportunities for internationalization.
- The credit system is not appropriately established yet.
- The link between the intended learning outcomes and assessment system is not clear.
- Lack of financing of international activities.
- Although the infrastructure of the university is sufficient for the moment, however, it can frustrate future development of the institution: absence of a concert hall, sports hall, hostel; the level of musical instruments should be much higher.
- The Gyumri branch.
- Limited influence from the external stakeholders.

Recommendations

- In general the university needs to **open up to the world**: there is need for more international benchmarking, more influence of external stakeholders, and more **international mobility** of both staff and students.
- It is necessary to optimize **the university structure, the teaching staff**.

- Assure involvement of wider group of stakeholders, particularly teaching staff, in the establishment of **quality culture** within the institution.
- The university is encouraged to ensure there is sufficient **management data** and preferably in an integrated digital system.

Peer Review on the Basis of International Standards

As critical friends the panel also conducted a peer review according to international standards resulting in a number of observations and recommendations related to the integration of YSC into the European Higher Education Area.

Observations

1. The university is clearly in a phase of transition.
2. The teaching staff is not open enough to other career opportunities created for musicians.
3. The curricula are developed in a rather traditional/ conservative manner.
4. The teaching staff should adopt a wider approach (considering the external experience) when developing the content and implementation methods of the curricula.
5. There is no strategy for internationalization (especially, for recruiting foreign students). Teachers are to some extent engaged in international cooperation, but their activities are non-formal.
6. There is an office for quality enhancement that employs two people. This ensures to a certain extent the sustainability of continuous quality enhancement, however, sufficient funding needs to be allocated for this purpose.
7. One of the strongest points about this university is research in Armenian traditional and modern music field. Scientific and creative research is rather developed. The impressive research activities carried out in the Folklore Music Chair is something to cherish.

Recommendations

The panel's recommendations relate to issues that concern amongst others: modernizing of academic programmes, strengthening links with graduates, training of the teaching staff, internationalization of the institution, further investment in internationalisation, quality assurance.

The chair of the expert panel and the coordinator declare that this report reflects the opinion and judgements of the panel. The panel has analysed the report and agrees with the judgments included in the report. The panel members confirm that the evaluation was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the principle of independence.

Gurgen Hovhannisyan, Chair

Anahit Utmazyan, Coordinator

V. PILOT INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION

CRITERION I. MISSION AND PURPOSE

The institution's mission and purpose are in accordance with the relevant reference levels and are consistent with the policies and practices that guide its operations.

FINDINGS

1.1. Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory (the YSC) with its national role in educational, scientific and creative spheres of musical culture, has the following primary mission- to provide music education at all cycles of higher education. The university has three basic strategic goals: assure high quality education, carry out high-quality research and innovation, and provide public involvement and services. Conservatoire promotes development of music arts and maintenance, development and dissemination of national cultural values.

Conservatoire is meant to become a student-cantered institution by preparing high-quality artist-specialists who will comply with contemporary needs. Conservatory implements higher and postgraduate education providing 3 basic cycles of education: bachelor's, master's and researcher's degrees.

One of the aims of the higher educational institution (HEI henceforth) is to provide link between learning-teaching-science as well as to become a crossroad between East and West taking the role of the leader in the region.

YSC's mission statement is not clearly articulated, it mostly has descriptive character.

1.2. In order to reveal the needs of internal and external stakeholders, YSC regularly conducts surveys, organizes wide- group discussions, and the results are presented to the rector, discussed at the Scientific Council's session, which result in respective decisions.

Aiming at revealing the needs of internal stakeholders, the IQAD has developed survey methodology- selection of methods for gathering information, development of tools.

During the development of YSC 2012-2017 Strategic Plan, the IQAD analysed the needs on internal and external stakeholders, organized group discussions with the administrative staff members, students, teachers, employers, graduates and staff of the branch in 2011-2012. YSC's 2012-2017 Strategic Plan is based on Conservatory's long-lasting traditions, realistic assessment of environmental factors, and compliance with the requirements of the Bologna process.

1.3. According to the university, the achievement of YSC's mission and purpose is assessed through the guiding indicators evaluating the achievement of the respective steps dwelling from the Conservatoire's strategic goals, which are introduced in the short-term and long-term strategic plans.

Although Conservatoire's Governing Board and Scientific Council regularly, and the Rectorate, when necessary, discuss the achievement of the mentioned plans during their sessions, make the necessary amendments and take respective decisions, there is still no formal procedure or mechanisms to evaluate and enhance the university mission.

The YSC continuous enhancement is the issue of IQAD.

CONSIDERATIONS

YSC clearly defines its scope of activities and goals, which are implemented by the university Charter.

The implemented changes promote the achievement of knowledge, skills and competences that comply with the National and European Qualifications Framework (NQF & EQF), as well as the Bologna requirements.

The mission statement introduced in the self-evaluation package, is not always clear. Sometimes it is more like a description of what the university does or wishes to do (*t.i. provide education and promote culture*). More distinct alignment between the YSC's current and future goals and aspirations of the leadership could be assured, as well as the goals and procedures regarding academic programmes, research and services to the society. *Anyhow, it complies with the National and European Qualifications Framework.*

In order to reveal the needs of internal and external stakeholders, regular surveys are conducted. Such an approach is effective in regard that it promotes establishment of cooperation with stakeholders, based on which respective decisions are made.

Assessment of achievement of YSC's mission and purpose is made at the Governing Board's session, through the annual report by the rector. Since the YSC's Governing Board is introduced by internal and external stakeholders, hereby the university considers that they are informed about the Strategic Plan performance, have possibility to discuss and evaluate it. Actually, the university does not present the policy and procedures for evaluating the achievement of its mission and goals in the report, the policy for evaluating the achievement of its Strategic Plan, etc. The mentioned policies and procedures, according to the SER, are included in the action plan of the IQAD and will be developed by the latter.

According to the SER, the lack of relevant experience in evaluating YSC performance, as well as the implementation of the Strategic plan, did not enable the university to assess properly the achievement of its mission and purpose. The absence of regular monitoring mechanisms of the Strategic Plan also hinders the process. However, the university considers it as one of its weaknesses, and, will, naturally, initiate its review and enhancement in the upcoming future.

The institution puts as an external threat "the lack of interest of external stakeholders in the formulation and implementation of the YSC's Strategic Goals".

The expert panel believes that the risk will be minimized if external stakeholders have active involvement in the development of the Strategic Plan, thus considering the labor market requirements.

Quality Culture is yet in the development phase among university stakeholders. One of the challenges for YSC is to eliminate the lack of trust among students and teachers towards the university enhancement, *t.i.* implementation of the mission and statement.

Generally the SWOT analysis for Criterion 1 is objective, but in individual cases the material of analysis has nothing to do with the given Criterion.

As an institution of unique regional role, it would be logical if Gyumri branch had its own mission.

SUMMARY

Despite the unfavourable modern conditions for musical professional education, YSC sticks to its mission by looking for new ways to solve these issues.

The positive assessment of this Criterion is conditioned by the fact that the university's policy and procedures comply with its mission statement, which, in its turn, complies with the RA NQF. The expert panel believes, that the Criterion could be assessed as positive, but there are still things to be done within the frames of the Criterion.

CONCLUSION. YSC's institutional capacities concerning Criterion 1 meet the requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS. It is necessary to:

1. write a clear and concise mission statement, that mirrors their true aspirations of being a bridge between Eastern and Western European cultures, a center of regional importance, crossroads of cultures (Islamic, Western, Arabic, Persian), an ambassador of Armenian music and musical tradition, as well as preserving and building upon the best traditions in classical music performance.
2. have a separate formulation concerning Gyumri branch in the YSC's Mission or develop a separate mission for the YSC Gyumri branch taking into account regional peculiarities.
3. redevelop the procedure for conducting surveys. Create some link between the questions involved in the surveys and university Mission, Strategic Plan.
4. develop monitoring mechanisms for evaluating the achievement of mission and goals.

CRITERION II. GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The institution's system of governance ensures ethical decision-making and efficient provision of human, material and financial resources to effectively accomplish its mission, educational and other purposes.

FINDINGS

2.1. The university management is carried out in accordance with the RA legislation and university's Charter, based on the self-management approach combined with the principles of collegiality and personal management, and through the implementation of the functions of Governing Board, Scientific Council and Rectorate.

The management system of YSC, its capacities and interrelations are determined by the University's Charter and do not violate the RA law.

The highest governing body of the university is the YSC Governing Board. It is composed of teacher, student and state governing body representatives and is approved by the Minister of the RA.

General management of YSC is carried out by the Scientific Council, an elected representative body, presided by the Rector.

The university's educational, creative and research activities are provided by the YSC faculties and chairs.

One of the university's infrastructures is the Gyumri Branch, which operates under the YSC's Charter.

The activities of all the infrastructures operating at YSC are regulated by the statutes approved by the Scientific Council.

The interrelation of YSC's organizational structures is carried out through respective local documents and operative management means.

For implementing its educational and other goals, the university has limited material and financial resources, is equipped with necessary human resources.

2.2. Teachers and students are involved in all governing bodies of YSC, which is stipulated by the RA Law on "Higher and Postgraduate Professional Education" and YSC Charter.

Teacher and Student involvement in governing bodies is regulated, the selection process is conducted according to the existing procedure- bottom-up.

2.3. Based on the YSC mission and goals, a 5-year-strategic plan has been developed and approved by the YSC Council as a long-term plan.

Along with the 2012-2017 Strategic Plan, the Schedule was approved, which introduces solutions to the issues dwelling from the goals of the Strategic Plan. The Schedule conveys the long-term, mid-term and short-term planning. The YSC Strategic Plan Schedule clearly defines deadlines of the implementation of each goal as well as minor steps, the person responsible and performance indicator, and all this creates monitoring opportunities.

The performance of the Strategic Plan and its effectiveness are introduced in the Rector's annual report, which is presented and evaluated during the session of the Governing Board.

After summarizing and analysing the results of the current annual plan, the activities of the upcoming year are planned, which is the only **mechanism for the monitoring of YSC Strategic Plan**.

2.4. Besides, for environmental scanning YSC conducts surveys (questionnaires, meetings) among graduates and employers to reveal their degree of satisfaction from the YSC students (skills and knowledge). For analysing internal factors, the institution conducts questionnaire surveys among students to reveal their satisfaction from academic programmes, library services, administration and auditoriums. Based on the analysis of the survey results, improvement actions are taken.

The surveys serve a basis for evaluating the quality and effectiveness of YSC's activities and are used to conduct internal and external environmental scanning, for revealing strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) for the university.

2.5. YSC starting from 2011, since the establishment of IQAD, has adopted the PDCA (Plan, Do, Check, Act) quality management principle.

YSC's managerial activities are regulated by the university 5-year-strategic plan, which is implemented through the action plan developed, discussed by Scientific Council and approved by the Governing Board.

YSC's academic subdivisions (branch, faculty) operate according to their strategic plans. Other organizational structures (chairs, publishing house, opera studio) operate in accordance with the annual working plans.

General evaluation of YSC's performance is conducted based on the annual analysis and reporting according to indicators stipulated for different fields of activity. The evaluation process targets achievements, as well as reveals deficiencies and shortcomings.

In order to eliminate the deficiencies and improve the activities respective changes are made in the action plan for the upcoming year thus ensuring the enhancement of YSC performance.

2.6. YSC is attempting to develop and invest mechanisms ensuring data collection, analysis and application on the effectiveness of the academic programmes and other processes.

The institution implies different means of data collection and publishes the results. There is a permanent committee, which develops statutes, procedures based on the national and international higher education quality assurance standards. This committee, with the support of a legal consultant and staff from IQAD, has developed the list of necessary regulatory documents. The documents are yet in the development phase.

Within the frames of YSC accreditation process much information has been gathered and analysed through surveys conducted among students, graduates, employers and other stakeholders.

The analysis results of different subdivisions have enabled to evaluate the university achievements and success, to reveal shortcomings and deficiencies, to develop an action plan towards their elimination.

The effectiveness of mechanisms is yet difficult to assess.

2.7. In YSC there are numerous means in place providing quality information on the academic programmes offered and qualification awards-the Strategic Plan, the achievements of students and graduates in various international festivals, the AEC website, and guidebooks published by the YSC IQAD, materials published in "Erazhisht" newspaper, "Erazhshtakan Hayastan" magazine.

However, there are no mechanisms evaluating the objectiveness and impartiality of the quality (quantitative and qualitative) information on the academic programmes offered and qualification awards.

CONSIDERATIONS

Judging from the university structure, the mentioned regulatory documents and regulations specified in the Appendice, it is obvious that the university has the necessary legal basis for effective management.

Along with a rather detailed university Charter there are regulations for separate units/it might be useful to lessen the details regarding organizational units in the Charter/.

Judging from the university structure and teacher-student ratio, the university has the necessary human resources. It is difficult to judge to what extent they promote the implementation of university mission and goals.

The site visit revealed that the university has initiated structural reforms and a respective Committee was formed based on the Rector's order/Order N 05.09.13 1920-N/.

The governance and administrative structure show effective and ethical leadership practices, congruent with the purpose of the institution.

Internal stakeholders are rather actively involved in the decision making process through their participation in managerial units. Internal stakeholders are involved in all internal managerial units of the institution.

The Strategic Plan has a Schedule which involves planning for different periods/permanent procedures, as well as semestrial ones/. The effectiveness evaluation of the planning process and its implementation take place only in Rector's annual report.

The institution is in the beginning stages of implementing a new attitude towards higher education in music, according to the Bologna process. For this reason, it has not had the opportunity to demonstrate long term planning, however, the short term planning and monitoring there of, is in place.

In order to conduct environmental scanning, the YSC basically applies interview, meetings and discussions, that need to be considered reliable information.

The university has not addressed the results of environmental scanning for the last 3 years and their reflection in the strategic plan.

"Plan, do, check, act" (PDCA) principle is used by the management of YSC, particularly with the establishment of the QA center. The application of quality management mechanisms is a rather new process and, hence, the mechanisms are not entirely used since the cycle is not closed yet.

The large-scale information on the effectiveness of the academic programmes and activities is collected through surveys among stakeholders. The self-assessments conducted by different sub-divisions also served as an important source of information.

The institution implies different ways of information gathering, analysis and application, however, there are no clearly defined evaluation mechanisms. There are no regulated mechanisms evaluating the availability and objectiveness of publications.

SUMMARY

The governance and administrative structure show effective and ethical leadership practices, congruent with the purpose of the institution.

YSC structure generally complies with the university's functional issues and the Charter. The university structure is in the improvement stage. The university still has to take actions in this regard.

The managerial units of the university basically operate well. The information dissemination from the highest governing board up to the departments is ensured. Student involvement is valued in all levels. There are surveys and other mechanisms, however, it is a new practice and hence, there are not too many evidences on how the university implies these mechanisms to enhance the quality.

CONCLUSION. YSC's institutional capacities concerning Criterion 2 meet the requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS. It is necessary to:

1. review the surveys and find ways to use any evidence of discrepancies between the goals and reality, to amend and also to reinforce the institutional strengths.
2. develop quality assurance procedures for university governance and administration.
3. develop mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of university performance.

4. find effective means for information dissemination. For this purpose the web-site needs to be widely used.

CRITERION III. ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES

The programmes are in concord with the institution's mission, form part of institutional planning and resource allocation, are intellectually credible and promote mobility.

FINDINGS

3.1. YSC, according to its mission, carries out education within the frames of "Music Arts" specialty, which has 5 specializations. The constituents of the academic programme- the curriculum and syllabi, comply with the state academic standard. The curricula and syllabi are yet traditional and teacher-centered.

The intended learning outcomes are stipulated in the YSC's diploma supplements for the bachelor and master degree.

Since 2007 YSC has passed to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), which is not yet fully applied.

3.2. The basic issue of YSC is to create the necessary conditions for the smooth implementation of its academic programs, quality enhancement and continuous increase in effectiveness.

The YSC course syllabi comply with the requirements set forth by the state academic standard. The syllabi are not yet described by learning outcomes: knowledge, skills, and competences.

The syllabi introduce teaching methods, as to learning methods, particularly for the formation of professional competences, the accepted ones are on-to-one lessons, home exercises, and comparative analysis of musical performances, which is clearly separated in the curriculum. The teaching methods are also mostly traditional.

The one to one policy the institution has, ensures alignment between teaching and learning in the main subject area.

The Bachelor Programme does not sufficiently introduce the selective courses, as to the Master Programme, they are tangible.

3.3. Based on the NQF, the state academic standard, YSC has developed respective learning outcomes for each specialization, which reveal student's knowledge, skills and competences.

The institution tries to ensure impartial evaluation of student's knowledge, skills and competences through various methods. Student assessment in YSC is conducted through the YSC Students' knowledge testing and assessment procedures. For academic integrity, loyalty, fair and objective assessment there are examination committees, which include representatives from different chairs, the student is assessed by the mentioned committees.

Through this approach the institution tries to assure transparent and objective assessment procedures. The student appeal procedure is not clear.

3.4. Yerevan State Conservatoire is the only musical higher education institution in the RA, for this reason the university has conducted benchmarking with the respective leading universities abroad- in

Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kiev, Minsk, Riga, Vilnius, Tallinn, Tbilisi, Amsterdam. The academic programmes of the Conservatoires in the mentioned cities are contextually equivalent since they are based on a common methodological framework, developed by the former Soviet Union for musical HEIs.

According to the impression the panel gained, the institution appears to be rather conservative in its approach to teaching and learning. There is no evidence of existence of procedures for updating innovation in study programmes, hence mobility and internationalization are not taken into account.

However, currently the YSC has wider opportunities for establishing links with the best European Conservatoires due to full membership in AEC, and the panel estimates it as a good opportunity promoting modernization of academic programmes. The institution also studies the “Poliphonia” manuals published by the AEC.

3.5. According to the YSC SER and different meetings conducted by the expert panel, one of the most important units for academic programme monitoring are the chairs, which assure development and effectiveness of the syllabi. An example of evaluating the effectiveness of academic programmes is the surveys conducted among the teachers and students by the IQAD. In this context one should also highlight the participation of students and teachers in different concerts, conferences and other events. However, it is not clear, how the monitoring results are applied, and how this process influences the future enhancement of academic programmes.

CONSIDERATIONS

In the field of higher musical education, the institution’s academic programmes are contextually credible and comply with the state academic standards.

[The learning outcomes are basically compliant with the university mission and comparable with the NQF, as well as the state academic standard.

The institution still uses the academic programmes and curricula of Russian conservatoires developed decades ago. The contextual discrepancies of academic programmes with other relevant programmes impede the free mobility of students and faculty, as well as internationalization.

Within the frames of educational reforms the university tries to break this stereotype.

The intended learning outcomes are in place and stipulated in the YSC’s diploma supplements for the bachelor and master degrees. Currently the academic programme descriptions and course syllabi are developed according to the respective template.

Although the university has made a transition towards the ECTS in 2007, it is still not complete. Albeit, the full implementation of the ECTS would be a useful tool for updating the academic programmes, would create opportunities for student mobility, as well as would ensure comparativeness with European musical institutions.

At the same time the expert panel should mention that YSC students are able to work in other countries and study in other similar European universities. YSC graduates have successful performances in the best stages of the world, participate in prestigious competitions, and all this proves the effectiveness of YSC academic programmes.

The analysis of teaching and learning methods reveals that the teaching system of the university does include separate components of student-centered education.

Dwelling from the peculiarities of YSC, the one to one policy the institution has, ensures alignment between teaching and learning in the main subject area. There is, however, substantial evidence that the teaching methods are effective regarding the main subject.

The analysis of the curriculum reveals, that there is little opportunity for selective.

The institution has reviewed and approved its Students' knowledge testing and assessment procedure, which, however, needs clarification.

The institution tries to ensure impartial evaluation of student's level of achievement through various methods. The examining panel's are large, ensuring objectivity. The students also have an opportunity to be present in the examination process, which ensures the transparency of the assessment process. The meetings revealed that both teachers and students are basically satisfied with this way of assessment.

Benchmarking has been conducted basically with the former Soviet Union musical institutions. It is explained by the fact that they are all post-soviet countries and have the same background. Their experience might be instructive for YSC. The contracts signed with different universities in 2012 enable us to note that student and teacher exchange and mobility opportunities will be created.

Although the academic programmes are monitored and periodically reviewed, however, it is not clear, what happens with the results of the monitoring

SUMMARY

Taking into account that the academic programmes comply with the university mission, are creditable and are compliant with the state academic standards; and that the university has taken steps in developing academic programmes described by learning outcomes and creating compliance of its curricula with such of leading universities and international standards, the expert panel believes, that the Criterion could be assessed as positive,

JUDGEMENT. YSC's institutional capacities concerning Criterion 3 meet the requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS. It is necessary to:

1. fully apply the ECTS.
2. look into different methods of teaching and learning with the aim of modernizing its curriculum to meet international requirements.
3. use learning outcomes as a basis for assessing student's achievements.
4. develop a respective regulation on academic programme monitoring, evaluation and review and respective mechanisms.
5. increase the role of the chairs in the academic programme development and enhancement.

CRITERION IV. STUDENTS

The institution has student advising and support services which provide for productive and learning environment.

FINDINGS

4.1. For the Professional orientation of students YSC provides services to different age groups. The faculty of YSC, who also work in other musical establishments- musical or arts colleges, elementary

schools etc., also promote potential student professional orientation. Concerts, recitals, master classes, concerts, lectures, etc. are organized, in which participate not only YSC's professors but also students.

The “Music interlocutor” initiated by Conservatory organizes musical coverages- concerts, lectures in the secondary schools, universities of Yerevan and the regions with the participation of YSC staff and students.

With YSC initiative the faculty representatives participate in auditorium and final concerts, as well as chair the final certification examination committees or act as a committee member at different institutions, hence they use the opportunity to get acquainted with the potential applicants and their competences. YSC has not analysed and evaluated to what extent these procedures promoted student recruitment.

The entrance examination at YSC is carried out in accordance with the Statute for admission to higher educational institutions in the RA.

The examination of subject specific courses is local. Conservatoire submits respective proposals to the RA Ministry of Education and Science (RA MoES) for each academic year in connection with changes in the list of specializations, examination process, vacant admission positions and tuition fees, as well as activities connected with the organization of the necessary documentation for application. The entrance is carried out based on the requirements set forth the applicants by the academic standards. After each year's entrance procedure the activities carried out connected with the organization and implementation of entrance exams are discussed and analysed during the sessions of the Scientific Council, Rectorate, Management of Gyumri branch and Governing Board. The analysis results are included in the annual report and are directed towards the enhancement of the overall process.

4.2. The effectiveness of revealing students' educational needs is conditioned by the circumstance that education at YSC is basically carried out through one-to-one method in the professional classes, accompaniment, chamber ensemble, quartet classes, where the students always have a chance to raise their concerns and get the answers through individual contact with the teachers. Each student's progress, his/her issues and shortcomings are discussed regularly in professional chairs, based on which respective judgments and recommendations are made.

One of the main components of revealing the students' educational needs are the surveys carried regarding the teaching quality and satisfaction of education provisions.

Consulting services provided by the conservatory also aim at revealing the students' educational needs. The subject-specific consultation service makes up the main portion of the teacher's methodology.

4.3. Dwelling from his/her own educational needs a student can use their educational services provided by YSC- preparatory and paid courses, as well as supplementary education. The latter does not impose any age limitations and is considered also as an opportunity for continuous education by the university.

4.4. The university lacks clear procedure and schedule to apply to administrative staff, anyhow, any student of YSC can apply to the appropriate administrative staff member at any time. The university also has a box for students' opinions and suggestions.

Conservatory's office receives and registers the applications according to the established “Office procedures”, and the applications readdressed to certain performers by the Rector reach the addresses.

4.5. The best students of YSC participate in indoor, national and international concerts, competitions and festivals. It gives them opportunity for recognition; they get business invitations from various organizations, as well as invitations to continue their studies abroad.

The university does not have any career centre. Rector's assistant on youth and management affairs is responsible for providing consultation services regarding students' career.

4.6. It is the “Students’ scientific and creative” centre that contributes to the YSC’s students’ involvement in the research activities. Each semester it organizes conferences for musicologists and many students make reports during these conferences.

All the students of master’s and bachelor’s degrees can participate in these conferences.

The authors of the best reports are involved in the scientific research activities of the field.

4.7. The YSC Student Council ensures the students’ self-governing activities, expresses and defends their interests.

It is also envisaged to establish committee for the protection of students’ rights.

4.8. In order to reveal the students’ academic and other issues, as well as to assess the provided services and to assure quality, IQAD has elaborated and uses various questionnaires where a student can assess the activities of administration, faculties and departments, support staff and infrastructures.

CONSIDERATIONS

The institution does not need to advertise, as it is the only one in the country. It draws students from the neighboring countries (as well as others) through distinguished teachers or tradition.

The university implements several activities directed towards student recruitment, selection and admission. Almost all measures are taken for this purpose/ university-college link, university-high school link, foreign students, preparatory courses, students from the diaspora etc./. There is, however, no action plan directed towards the evaluation and enhancement of mentioned measures. Although, taking into account the favourable conditions created in the modern market for the development of arts, the inflow of YSC can be considered stable, we might say that the student professional orientation activities are effective.

It is clearly guided by the RA admission procedures.

The university has useful mechanisms for revealing students’ needs, although there is no developed policy and procedures for this purpose. In separate instances the publications in the university newspaper, the surveys are effective means for revealing students’ needs. Students are mostly satisfied with the solutions to the issues they raised.

The YSC has refused the services of an academic consultant stating that this issue is solved through one-to-one trainings.

There are a number of surveys concerning student’s educational needs. The Student Union takes responsibility for monitoring and collecting ideas from students, and presents these findings during meetings with the Chairs, Deans or in the Scientific Council.

The institution provides preparatory and paid courses as well as additional education. The availability for additional support and guidance from the administrative faculty is assured. Although there are no formal hours in place, due to the one to one teaching and the special character of music education in this respect, this is not a problem.

There is no carrier service support, however, because of the nature of the music profession and the inevitable close ties to it (i.e. several teachers are also active in the profession) students receive guidance.

The primary research is in the fields of musicology and Armenian folk music. Students are actively involved in this research (as well as other research), especially at the MA level. Students are encouraged to write a “reflective” report on their final performance project.

The articles of the workshops are published in the scientific journals.

The tool for evaluating student educational, consultation and other services are the surveys, and their results are presented to the rector, as well as are discussed with the respective infrastructure. However, there is no policy and procedures to evaluate the services provision and quality assurance. Within the frames of this issue as well the quality assurance culture is in the establishment phase in YSC.

It is envisaged to introduce the survey results in the reconstructed YSC website.

Student Council has the students' rights protection task, and appears to be well aware, hence there is no need for a separate committee responsible for the protection of students' rights.

Students are involved in quality assurance practices through the student surveys and through the "open door" attitude of the chairs and management.

Students have a high representation on all levels of governance. Students participate in the departmental (chair) structure as well. The Student Council is lively and active.

Students have positive attitude towards the academic services provided to them and the general quality of education. They are entirely free in selecting the subject-specific professors. Although they do not fully realize the opportunities available in the field of higher music education, but they are active in managerial units and want to have their input in that sphere. The Student Council takes its role seriously and has an active role in the improvement of academic environment.

SUMMARY

YSC generally provides respective support to its students aiming at the effectiveness of the academic environment.

CONCLUSION. YSC's institutional capacities concerning Criterion 4 meet the requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS. It is necessary to:

1. develop mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of student recruitment, professional orientation processes.
2. establish the body of educational consultants in the university.
3. stipulate a schedule and procedure to apply to the administrative staff.
4. establish a career centre or any such a unit.

CRITERION V. FACULTY AND STAFF

The institution provides for a high quality faculty and staff to achieve the set goals for academic programmes and institution's mission.

FINDINGS

5.1. YSC highlights the role of a qualified staff in its Strategic Plan.

YSC has a selection procedure for the teaching staff. This document stipulates criteria for establishing pedagogical positions and their distribution, as well as the principles for teacher assignment to the position and resigning of the contracts.

Qualifications of the scientific and pedagogical staff fully correspond to the set requirements. The principles of the teaching staff formation are professionalism, generations' heritage and experience. Following these principles allows to preserve and develop the teaching level, it also contributes to the establishment of scientific and creative schools.

Competitive selection of the teaching staff is carried out based on the criteria published in advance. Such criteria are professional education, qualification, specialization, and their compliance to the subject area, as well as the work experience, pedagogical skills, scientific degree and title.

The terms of the teaching staff formation and the principles of job assignment are presented in the YSC Regulation on Teaching Staff Formation and in the respective YSC Procedure on job assignment, transfer to another job, dismissal, promotion, encouragement and application of disciplinary penalty.

98% present of the faculty are graduates of YSC.

The university has initiated optimization of the administrative staff and creating sustainability in the faculty. In 2011-2012 the faculty made up the 58% of general staff, and in 2013- 72%.

According to the Decree of the Scientific Council in 2012, the positions of illustrators and accompanists were eliminated from the YSC support staff positions, as a result, it was reduced 5 times and vacant positions for academic assistants were established.

One of the YSC most important strategic goals is the renewal of the staff in general and of the teaching staff in particular. Today 22% of the YSC workers are pensioners. Since 2012 short-term contracts of up to 2 years have been signed with them.

5.2. YSC provides academic programmes for Bachelor in Arts, Master in Art and Researchers. In order to ensure professional progress, the assessment of the teaching staff quality is carried out through competitive system, and on these results contracts are signed for maximum 5 years. Academic, scientific, pedagogical and social activity indicators of previous years are taken into account. The applications of potential teachers are discussed in the corresponding chairs, which stipulate clear requirements for professional skills.

All the teachers in Master's programme have professional or associate degrees. All the teachers of postgraduate PhD programme have PhD or Doctoral degrees. Most supervisors of postgraduate students' research are permanent professors of YSC; they have thesis, scientific articles and corresponding permission to supervise research within the given field.

5.3. The results of surveys conducted among the students and graduates indicate the effectiveness of the teaching staff.

Each head of Chair has the opportunity to get acquainted with the results of the mentioned assessments of the teachers involved in the Chair.

In the sociological surveys the questions addressed to students are grouped in corresponding themes, aimed at revealing the teacher's effectiveness in the given aspect.

YSC Piano Faculty Council has developed a new policy; all the teachers of the faculty's subject-specific chairs have to conduct an open class during each academic year. These classes differ greatly from traditional class hearings: both the students and the teachers, or any external stakeholder have an opportunity to participate at these classes.

Student concerts organized by the YSC teaching staff, as well as their performing and research activities are also criteria quality assessment. Teacher regular assessment is particularly carried out through surveys conducted among students. The assessment procedure is not regulated.

5.4. Scientific Council and Rectorate pay great attention to the preparation and training of the pedagogical staff, and to the enhancement of the teaching process.

Because of lack of financing YSC still postpones the establishment of the faculty for raising qualification of teachers. The university lacks a policy for professional development.

5.5. 96% of the YSC teachers are permanent staff of YSC which ensures its stable academic-scientific activities. The majority of teaching staff are the graduates of YSC, which ensures to some extent the stability of the teaching staff. The best graduates of the university become assistants in respective chairs perusing the prospects for scientific and methodological development.

5.6. The numerical data indicated in the SER prove the positive changes in the formation of its human resources.

The following factors promote teaching staff professional progress: the PHD studies (currently they have three PHD students), in the PHD system YSC provide sabbatical vacations to the students to prepare their thesis, as well as to participate in concerts, festivals, workshops.

During the last 5 years 19 teachers have defended their PHD thesis, and one- doctoral thesis.

5.7. Staff policy of the YSC administrative department is aimed at the formation, regulation and enhancement of the professionalism of the teaching staff; it also ensures stable progress for qualified specialists. The administrative department implements organizational and pedagogical activities, thus contributing to the successful resolution of the current issues, as well as to the self-development and progress of staff.

CONSIDERATIONS

The teaching staff fully meets the stipulated professional quality and requirements. Teaching staff appears “well equipped” and highly qualified for the delivery of a traditional music conservatory education. The student -teacher ratio is extremely high and does not seem justified. After analysing the organizational structure of similar universities abroad, YSC has started to optimize its staff since 2012, it is yet early to assess the results.

Most of the teaching staff are graduates of this institution. This can be viewed as a precondition for teaching staff stability, but at the same time there is a danger that this hinders openness to outside influence, creating a closed circle (eco-system).

To ensure a continuing quality of its teaching staff, there are teacher assessment surveys, based on the teacher qualification assessment policy, and teachers be re-evaluated every 5 years.

The compliance of teaching staff competences to the qualifications granted within the academic programmes is introduced through their titles, awards, medals, which make up a rather high percentage and are a reasonable evidence. 47% of the teaching staff have doctor's or associate professor's scientific degree, moreover, in the Master's and PHD degrees only teachers with respective titles are allowed to teach, which is a positive approach and is stipulated by the YSC Teaching Staff Formation Regulation. The regular assessment of the teaching staff is carried out through surveys conducted among students. Dwelling from the university's peculiarities, the students chose their subject-specific teachers themselves, which is another means to evaluate the teachers. Another assessment method are the

student concerts. The latter, however, is not regulated. It is not stipulated in the teacher's job obligations either, or in any other procedure etc.

There is no teacher professional development policy. According to the university, this is the consequence of lacking the unit for raising teacher qualification due to financial restrictions. We think that lack of financing could not be an obstacle in establishing any qualification raising unit/not necessarily a department/ if the university highlighted its importance. Teachers themselves feel the need of development/not so much professional, but rather pedagogical/.

It is apparent that the permanent staff of the institution is well qualified to deliver high level education.

There don't appear to be clear procedures in place for staff promotion, and as there is no retirement policy, it is difficult for younger staff to advance.

SUMMARY

YSC has a high quality faculty and staff to achieve the set goals for academic programmes and institution's mission, and the organizational activities and human resource policy of the university provide for stable human potential. The expert panel believes that the Criterion could be assessed as positive, but there are still things to be done within the frames of the Criterion.

CONCLUSION. YSC's institutional capacities concerning Criterion 5 meet the requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS. It is necessary to:

1. establish procedures promoting teaching staff professional development and promotion.
2. develop teacher professional development policy, organize faculty trainings especially regarding the development of pedagogical skills.
3. make the student feedback on teacher assessments more effective.
4. pay certain attention to the organization of activities of start-up teachers.

CRITERION VI. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The institution has a clear strategy promoting its research interests and developments.

FINDINGS

6.1. In YSC research strategy and directions are based on the Conservatory's 2012-2017 Strategic Plan articles.

The link between YSC Strategy and research directions is ensured by the scientific development strategy approved by the YSC Scientific Council.

6.2. YSC has a scientific development strategy approved by the Scientific Council. Dwelling from the peculiarities of the university, basically for the performance field, short-term and medium-term planning is impossible.

The choice of research implementation methodology is left to the researcher. It is up to researcher to choose the preferable and efficient means for developing his topic.

Requirements set forth the publication of research articles in YSC are stipulated according to the requirements of peer-reviewed scientific journals included in the list published by the Higher Qualification Commission in RA (HQC).

YSC's Scientific Council has approved the concept of technical and other requirements set forth the research publications in YSC's scientific journals.

YSC has not conducted effectiveness analysis of YSC's medium- and short-term plans in research for the last 3 years, as all the corresponding regulatory documents were approved in the university in 2013.

6.3. YSC provides publication opportunities to those engaged in research in the university. There is a scientific journal "Erazhshtakan Hayastan" and the "Journal of methodological and scientific articles of the YSC teachers". YSC's web-site will be activated in 2013, and it will enable to have new electronic scientific press.

YSC stipulates equal opportunities for the publication of scientific and research articles for both the young staff and the distinguished and leading scholars.

The YSC publishing house has a scientific review committee, which oversees the process of scientific publications.

The development of budget indicators' system is implemented according to the field of activities and development trends.

Financing from the international organizations comes from certain grant projects, these finances are distributed respectively and allocated to the given purpose.

6.4. Involvement of the students and teachers in various international research initiatives is encouraged by the agreements and contracts signed between YSC and different foreign educational institutions.

Publication in CIS and foreign peer-reviewed journals is organized according to the general principles defined by such journals.

6.5. YSC's policy aimed at connecting research and educational process is implemented according to the YSC Charter, YSC 2012-2017 Strategy, YSC's scientific sphere development strategy, the sample regulations of respective subject-specific chairs thus covering their research interests.

At the end of each semester, YSC organizes National Student Workshop, as a summative event in the academic process in which the participation of students from the musicology department is obligatory.

In the professional departments of performing arts, along with the public presentation of performing skills (concerts) presentation of the scientific thesis is stipulated.

CONSIDERATIONS

|The research strategy and directions of the university are reflected in the YSC Strategic Plan. The university has set a goal to promote internationalization of research, re-establish the PHD degree as the third cycle of higher education according to the international qualification requirements basis.

The research outcomes of the university are widely used in teaching. Particularly in Master's degree the university stipulates research papers by the students.

There is substantial scientific research activity and the institution has its own publishing office. Submitted articles are peer reviewed. The SER tells of a new strategy for research that was approved in 2012. In addition to the above, there is much evidence of artistic practice and development, and active participation in national and international conferences.

The university promotes research based on individual interests.

The Folk Music study division work according to a strategic plan and in accordance with the institution's mission of promoting Armenian music traditions. Otherwise, the plans are implemented. The Scientific Council oversees research activities.

For research and development purposes there are increasing allocations from the budget annually/in 2008-0,45%, in 2012- 13,65%/. The progress is vivid, but not sufficient. The budgeting system is enhanced, providing for effective and transparent financial allocations, as well as correlation between the management of all spheres in order to achieve the stipulated strategic goals. The Scientific Laboratory of Armenian Folklore Studies conducts research in different RA regions and areas. These research outputs are widely used in the teaching process. For research purposes the laboratory organizes scientific tours, and students participate in them.

The "Erazhshtakan Hayastan" scientific journal, which is registered by the RA HQC, creates wide opportunities for research activities, as well as for the publication of research outputs.

The institution promotes its research activity and the impressive research carried out within the "Folklore Cabinet" is to be commended. Permanent staff must submit a report on "research and development" activity twice a year. Financial support for staff research and development is not sufficient.

The effectiveness of research internationalization and achievements for the last 5 years is introduced by the research articles of the university teaching staff published in 2007-2013. The number of publications in international journals is not yet high. The university has to take action in this direction.

The institution is aware of the necessity of being internationally active in the field of research, however, it appears that lack of appropriate funding halts activities in this area.

The mechanisms connecting research and educational process are stipulated in a number of regulatory documents of the university.

The outputs of research are widely used in the teaching process, most often become textbooks and manuals.

One of the strongest points of the university is research in the fields of national traditional and contemporary music. Scientific and creative research is sufficiently developed.

SUMMARY

YSC is engaged in diversified research activities. Research promotes the implementation of the university mission and goals since it is one of the most important spheres of university performance. Research outputs are widely used in the educational process. The expert panel assesses Criterion 6 as positive.

CONCLUSION. YSC's institutional capacities concerning Criterion 6 basically meet the requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS. It is necessary to:

1. take action in the direction of internationalizing research outputs.
2. stipulate research implementation procedure.

CRITERION VII. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

The TLI has its own property and resources, which effectively support the implementation of its stated mission and objectives and create a learning environment.

FINDINGS

7.1. Pursuing its mission and goals, the YSC implements targeted measures regarding its specializations, academic programs, human and logistical resources thus ensuring their continuous replenishment and quality improvement.

YSC is operated in Yerevan and Gyumri.

Both the YSC headquarter in Yerevan and the Gyumri Branch are equipped with necessary infrastructures for organizing auditorium, practical and research activities.

There is an Opera Studio in both the headquarter and the branch, a Folk studies cabinet and laboratory (only in the headquarter), rehearsal rooms, libraries, audio studios, medical centres, canteens, workshops.

YSC library has computers, batteries, network devices, etc. YSC scientific and methodological libraries possess sufficient number of general and professional literature (in Armenian, Russian and foreign languages). The total YSC library fund (including the branch) is 255,752 pieces of textbooks, books, literature on musical scores. The renewal of professional literature is made according to the YSC academic-methodical annual publishing plan, also due to donations.

In the YSC headquarter and the branch there are audio studios.

For the reason of preserving and disseminating rich ethnographical (folk) heritage the Folklore Study Department with its cabinet and laboratory are of high importance for the Conservatory.

In the YSC headquarter there is the opera studio, whose basic aim is the professional training of opera artists.

7.2. The Conservatory, at the end of the each year, makes its annual budget for the upcoming year, which is approved by the Governing Board.

A separate table indicates budget allocation according to the basic directions of the university mission.

7.3. YSC's strategic planning of its annual budget covers all fields of its activities, based on the number of students, human and information resources, logistics base.

The budget system is being enhanced, ensuring an efficient and transparent distribution of financial resources, and correlation of management processes in all fields with proposed strategic objectives.

Respective annual proportions are determined for the university development, salaries and maintenance of the infrastructure.

In order to implement the YSC financial resource planning, management and monitoring policy, the university activates its programs, services, as well as all spheres of university activities.

It is envisaged to increase the total volume of YSC income through the sums accumulated from educational, scientific and information services by expanding their volume and increasing profitability.

The funds are spent according to the orders of the University's Rector covering relevant directions. The deans of departments, the Vice Rector on academic affairs are involved in the process.

International funding comes from concrete grant projects, it is allocated and spent on purpose. These finances are allocated and exploited by the infrastructures who received the grant.

If necessary, Conservatory makes use of the services of an independent auditing company and is given Auditor's Conclusion.

7.4. YSC comprehensive activities aim at the implementation of the existing Strategic Goals, and are in the centre of attention of the leadership. Conservatory highlights the importance of upgrading professional musical instruments (18 pieces "Kawai" Japanese grand piano, wind and other instruments), upgrade of the technical equipment in the Folk studies laboratory, improvement of the Conservatory's electronic Website.

7.5. According to the SER, dwelling from the need of modernizing the information flow and documentation processes, as well as providing control, Mulberry electronic document circulation system is embedded in YSC, however it does not function. It should be noted that the administrative and teaching-administrative staff carry out the documentation process in a traditional manner.

7.6. The health care services in YSC are provided by the medical centre. Similar services are also provided in the branch. There is a doctor and a nurse working in each medical centre. Medical centres is equipped with first-aid medicines and medical instruments.

The activities of the medical centre are regulated by the RA MoES, YSC Rector's respective orders, instructions that are intended towards students and staff health and safety protection. The facilities can accommodate disabled students (elevator, special ramp) and staff have experience in working with handicapped people.

7.7. Surveys are carried out regularly among faculty and students, regarding applicability, accessibility and efficiency of resource.

CONSIDERATIONS

The resources of YSC comply to the university mission and are properly maintained.

YSC has the necessary learning environment for implementing its academic programmes and research activities, and it can be considered sufficient.

Stakeholders are generally satisfied with the resources. Their needs are taken into account during the allocation of YSC budget, and, if possible, are met.

The university has an IT cabinet, where students can use internet without limits.

In 2008-2012 the state funding remained almost the same /around 50%/, the amount of funds from grant projects has increased.

All the internal stakeholders are involved in the formation of the initial budget. Generally they are satisfied with efficacy of budget distribution realizing the financial challenges the university faces.

The institution allocates around 85% of its funds to teachers' salaries. The University has indicated this as a weakness.

The institution has sustainable financial resources to continue delivery of programmes, however, it does not have the capacity to develop new programs that rely on new equipment and/or services.

The institution has no policy to manage information and documentation.

Necessary conditions are provided to students with special needs, for example, free individual courses are organized for blind pianists, and individual teachers are attached to such students. The facilities can accommodate disabled students (elevator, special ramp) and staff have experience in working with handicapped people.

Surveys are the mechanism to evaluate the availability, applicability and effectiveness of resources. Based on the survey results the building has been repaired- the windows were changed and the toilets refurbished.

The intensive usage of musical instruments and their physical depreciation remain a serious issue for the university, also the tuning of instruments. YSC does not have a concert hall and sports hall.

YSC Gyumri branch lacks necessary resources- auditoriums, musical instruments. It has a rather reach library and audio-tape studio.

Diversification of funding sources and increase of financial inflows continue to be top priority for the Conservatory.

SUMMARY

The expert panel believes that YSC has managed to create effective learning environment although it has limited financial opportunities. The resources and facilities promote the implementation of YSC mission and goals. The developmental opportunities are yet challenging. The expert panel assesses Criterion 7 as sufficient.

CONCLUSION. YSC's institutional capacities concerning Criterion 7 basically meet the requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS. It is necessary to:

1. support all efforts towards building a proper concert hall on the premise.
2. analyse and evaluate the effectiveness of university resources.
3. enhance the resources in the Gyumri branch.

CRITERION VIII. SOCIETAL RESPONSIBILITY

The institution is accountable to the government, employers and society at large for the education it offers and the resources it uses to meet these objectives.

FINDINGS

8.1. YSC ensures accountability to the society and other stakeholders by defined formats: through the unified annual report based on the annual academic and scientific reports of the chairs, faculties and departments, as well as on the reports of the administrative and economic subdivisions. They are formed according to the YSC strategic objectives and goals.

There are two types of reporting in YSC: report on the educational process and report on the scientific activities. The reports are presented at the scientific council session once a year. After the discussions in the scientific council, reports are unified into Rector's summative report and presented to the YSC Governing Board.

One of the conservatory's peculiarities is the students' and teachers' participation in all the RA musical and cultural events, thus ensuring YSC's accountability both to the state and to the society.

Another type of accountability is YSC's participation in annual academic exhibitions.

8.2. YSC's diverse activities (educational, performing and research) are always covered in press and by television.

"YSC publishing house" contributes to presentation and dissemination of the YSC's best outcomes. There is a "Erazhisht" newspaper published in YSC; which covers each activity of YSC (organizational, creative and scientific). "Erazhshtakan Hayastan" journal is also published in YSC; diverse materials (scientific, critical, jubilee, etc.) are published there. Besides, methodological manuals, monographs, note literature and other materials are published by "YSC publishing house".

In the most visible parts of the YSC's headquarter regularly updated announcements are placed.

Information on YSC's activities, as well as regulatory and procedural documents are presented in the "Education Quality and Compliance" guidelines.

The official website of YSC - www.conservatory.am, as well as videos posted on YouTube promote the dissemination of information.

8.3. YSC performs activities in several directions: education, research, coverage, participation in the RA musical life and so on. A musician is directly interrelated with the society. Performances in all the RA concert halls, schools and universities enable him/her to establish a direct contact. YSC's teaching staff's and students' performances in schools and universities of Yerevan and RA regions enable the audience (students) to discuss and express their opinions.

The reflection of the RA TV channels and mass media regarding all the RA musical and cultural events is considered a feedback, as it is implemented by the YSC's teaching staff, graduates and students.

The YSC official Facebook page promotes direct link with the graduates.

The effectiveness of feedback mechanisms has not been analysed.

8.4. Within the frames of its elucidation activities, YSC presents national spiritual values, educates the audience to classical and contemporary music, and strives to struggle against poor quality music.

"YSC publishing house" prints periodicals (newspapers, journals, and conference materials), monographs, methodological manuals, note literature and so on, which are available for the stakeholders.

Other mechanisms of knowledge transfer are the additional courses and preparatory trainings implemented by YSC. These courses are for RA and foreign citizens: in one case, for mastering any musical instrument without any age restrictions, and in the other case, for the applicants' proper preparation for the entrance exams in the following specialties- "singing" and "instrumental performance".

Concert-lectures implemented in Yerevan and RA regions are another mechanism of knowledge transmission; they are implemented by the initiative of YSC's "Musical Interlocutor".

Representatives of YSC teaching staff are invited to music events implemented by diverse organizations; they act as organizers, performers, and head and/or member of juries and so on. Paralelly, they conduct trainings on the spot on their own initiative.

Another mechanism for knowledge transmission is free consulting service provided to foreign citizens aimed at professional orientation.

Not only various organizations and mass media from RA, but also individuals and organizations from abroad, particularly from the Diaspora apply to YSC on musical and cultural issues.

The effectiveness of additional academic and consultation services is not analysed by the institution.

CONSIDERATIONS

There is certain accountability procedure in the university. The Rector's annual summative report reaches the external stakeholders through the members of the Governing Borad, most of which are external stakeholders.

The report is published in the university newspaper. For this purpose the website should be actively used.

For the transparency and availability of university activities and procedures YSC uses diverse means, such as the website, but since it is under reconstruction, there is no present evidence that the procedures are publicly available. However, the meeting with the stakeholders revealed that the stakeholders are being aware and nothing is being hidden.

The university uses its exceptional opportunities to assure feedback with the society. The institution is involved into regional policy development. Alumni and other social partners are involved in this activity. Several of the institutions teachers are active participants in the profession and initiate a substantial amount of cultural events. As the only institution of higher education in music in Armenia, its importance for preserving, sustaining and developing relations with other cultural organizations is natural. There is need to conduct regular meetings with external stakeholders including the graduates to discuss various questions. Anyway, the external stakeholders and graduates are willing to work in various meetings and discussions.

The university conducts knowledge (values) transfer to the society in an appropriate manner, using its opportunities.

Continuing educational service to local and regional communities assures knowledge transfer. Lectures, concerts, and other events augment the general conscientiousness. The university has great input into the formation of musical taste among the citizens of RA.

The university has to analyze the effectiveness and relevance of its additional academic and consultation services.

SUMMARY

YSC has aimed to diversify forms, resources and scope of information dissemination, focusing on intensive use of modern information technologies. The university website is under construction (structure, content and technical aspects). YSC has meant to implement analysis of public opinion on its activities, as well as to coordinate and aim all informative-advertising means towards the maintenance of positive image of YSC, also to raise its societal reputation.

CONCLUSION. YSC's institutional capacities concerning Criterion 8 meet the requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS. It is necessary to:

1. put an emphasis on completing the website and ensure that it will be properly maintained
2. formalize ties and activities in connection to alumni
3. analyse the effectiveness of current mechanisms.

CRITERION IX. EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND INTERNATIONALIZATION

The institution promotes experience exchange and enhancement through its sound external relations practices, thus promoting internationalization of the institution.

FINDINGS

9.1. Dwelling from strategic goals, YSC tries to provide education in line with international standards, to become a leading regional centre for musical higher education, to widen its international cooperation network. In December 2012 YSC Governing Board approved the international development strategy. However, the institution lacks policy and procedures promoting experience exchange, development and internationalization.

Since July, 2012, YSC is a full member of the Association of European Conservatories, which greatly promotes and assures YSC internationalization.

9.2. YSC's external relations are coordinated by the Vice Rector for International Relations, and he is the head of the International Relations Department. Its objectives are to enhance YSC's external and international relations cooperating with all subdivisions of the institution and diverse international organizations (educational, scientific, social, charity, etc.). One of the department's functions is to organize various cultural events, e.g. concerts, competitions, festivals and conferences.

International Relations Department is only in YSC's headquarter, and there isn't any such subdivision in Gyumri branch.

Main indicators of assessment of YSC international relations are expressed through the opinion of international peers, which were published in the form of interviews in RA mass media and were spread in social networks, etc.

9.3. YSC is the only higher music institution in Armenia, that's why it cooperates with all music institutions (schools, colleges, etc.) and scientific, social, charity and other organizations. YSC has gained full membership of Association of European Conservatories since 2012.

During 2012 new contracts on cooperation were signed, as well as the existing ones were renewed with 16 international organizations, including musical institutions in Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Georgia, the Baltic Countries, Belgium, USA, Netherlands, Montenegro.

YSC continues its cooperation with the International Foundation for Humanitarian Cooperation of CIS.

YSC also continues to cooperate with CIS countries' youth music academy headed by Yu. Bashmet. Within the framework of cooperation, YSC's students participated in master classes and joint concerts.

Master classes are of great importance for performing schools development and dissemination; the best musicians and performers are invited to the conservatory to present the peculiarities of their performing arts.

Specialists were invited from the USA, Belgium, Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Russia and other countries.

9.4. Initially the need to provide respective level of English language proficiency among internal stakeholders was not highlighted by YSC (Russian is not considered a foreign language). However, since 2010 YSC has organized TOEFL courses for postgraduate students, as well as English language courses for the teachers. For teachers English language courses are provided by YSC's Languages Chair. In the YSC's academic programmes there are foreign language courses for students which correspond to Academic Programme standards.

Within the frames of "Academic Vocal Singing" specialty, the YSC's students study Italian dwelling from professional requirements.

There are few teachers mastering a foreign language, since preparatory courses are carried out for YSC foreign students to learn Armenian. It should also be mentioned that the vast majority of the foreign applicants are representatives of the diaspora.

CONSIDERATIONS

In the last few years YSC has taken respective steps towards internationalization and establishing external links, particularly the strategy for international development was developed, a number of international cooperation agreements were signed, and YSC has become AEC member, has participated in numerous international contests, as well as has organized such events on his own initiative. However, from the perspective of academic process, the implemented activities are not yet enough for internationalization.

Internationalization is particularly important since YSC, being the only one in Armenia, does not have competition within the country, but from the perspective of future development and quality assurance it should be meant towards similar international institutions and assure the mobility of its students and teachers.

Teachers, to some extent, establish international cooperation but their activities are informal and not coordinated.

SUMMARY

Based on the above mentioned, the expert panel believes that despite the implemented activities, the internationalization of the university is yet at the initial stage, hence Criterion 9 is assessed as negative.

CONCLUSION. YSC's institutional capacities concerning Criterion 9 do not meet the requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS. It is necessary to:

1. develop clear internationalization policy and regulations promoting experience exchange, establishment of international links
2. bring the academic program closer to international standards
3. assure appropriate level of foreign language proficiency among internal stakeholders.

CRITERION X. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

The institution has a set infrastructure for internal quality assurance, which promotes establishment of a quality culture and continual development of the institution.

FINDINGS

10.1. The YSC Internal Quality Assurance Department was established in 2011. The IQAD's strategy is approved by the YSC Academic Council. The Council also approved the regulation of the IQAD.

The Department, together with the respective units develops policy and procedures for academic programs, academic degrees and quality assurance standards. The department constantly contributes to quality assurance and establishment of quality culture by enhancing the quality and applying the quality assurance strategy.

According to the Rector's N17-L 09.12.2011 order and the functions of the IQAD, the quality assurance of all infrastructures and the branch was initiated and implemented by the Department.

IQAD-functions In Conservatory According prepared and was carried out by the Department YSC's all the units and Branch activity quality assessment process is carried out in multi indicator system.

10.2. IQAD is equipped with necessary resources for the management of its processes. The presented material is primarily achieved by the means of " Internal Quality Assurance System Implementation", Grants in support. Particularly, the IQAD is equipped with computers, multifunction printers, copying and scanning engines, projectors, screens, etc. The department has 4 staff members.

The establishment of QA culture is yet at the preliminary stage in YSC, hereby the institution is in need of trained specialists.

10.3. All the procedures concerning quality assurance at YSC are approved by the Scientific Council based on their approval mechanisms.

The strategic plan, which includes the quality assurance policy, IQAD strategy and procedures, are published in a handbook.

YSC's staff members are playing in the State Philharmonic, the Opera Theatre, the Art Institute and other organizations, that is the reason why the surveys conducted among them express the feedback of both internal and external stakeholders.

10.4. YSC's Quality Assurance Unit is in the focus of YSC leadership, taking into account the importance of this structure in all fields of university activities. The scope of activities of this unit is based on the Conservatory short-term and long-term Strategic Plan, decisions of the Academic Council, Rectorate.

Taking into account the fact that YSC's Quality Assurance Unit was established in 2011 and is still very young, it is yet too early to talk about review.

10.5. YSC, taking into account the state policy of overall control over the quality of education, took into account the institutional accreditation standards in its 2012-2017 Strategic Plan. The above mentioned is reflected in YSC's development directions, goals and objectives, which are reflected in the short-term and long-term plans.

Conservatory's further activities in quality assurance are to prepare the university for external evaluation and accreditation of academic programs according to the state unified criteria for quality assurance.

10.6. The publicity of YSC activities and the transparency of the internal quality assurance system is assured through the provision of regular information on the university by using all possible internal and external resources- meetings with students and faculty, discussions and exchange of ideas in the Conservatory, as well as YSC's website and use of the mass media, etc.

Another evidence of university's transparency is the Rector's annual report, which includes detailed information of YSC's annual activities and a financial report.

Another manifestation of university transparency are the guidelines published by the Quality Assurance System, which contain the YSC strategic plan, the strategic plan schedule, YSC's Charter, YSC's regulations, the analysis of the survey results and more.

Yet another evidence of transparency are various meetings with students and faculty, public discussions. For example, through the initiative of the IQAD and YSC Student Council seminar discussions with the students from all faculties was held regarding issues of quality assurance.

CONSIDERATIONS

The university has established an internal quality assurance department which has its regulation, clear functions and activities plan. The activities of the department were promoted by grant project "Internal quality assurance system implementation" within the frames of "Education Quality and Relevance" Project 2. The quality assurance policy, documents regulating internal quality assurance processes were developed. A quality assurance handbook was developed.

The IQAD has conducted quality evaluation of the activities of different infrastructures of the YSC.

The university allocates certain human, material and financial resources to the management of internal quality assurance processes, however, it is not yet possible to assess their effectiveness.

Quality culture is yet in the establishment phase at the university, however the institution is determined to finalize its efforts towards creating a quality culture within the institution. Several procedures to this effect have been instigated.

YSC highlights the participation of internal and external stakeholders in the quality assurance procedures, which is covered through meetings with students, faculty, as well as representatives of main employers and respective public organizations, as well as through surveys conducted among the mentioned target groups. Materials and finding are available and students and stakeholders form an important interlocutor in this process.

As the internal quality processes are relatively new in the institution, they have not yet reached the point of being periodically reviewed. It should be noted that it is in need of continuous review according to the university mission and strategic planning. However, from the materials presented, it is not apparent, if this is planned in a formal way.

The quality assurance is not yet completely systemized, and therefore not possible to talk about transparency of the process and as it is new there is no feedback on the quality of the latter.

SUMMARY

The expert panel concludes that YSC has developed guiding principles for quality assessment and establishment of internal quality assurance system based on ENQA criteria, has established an internal quality assurance unit- the IQAD, thus highlighting the importance of quality assurance.

The department has carried out self-assessment of all YSC infrastructures. A planned internal quality assurance process has launched. Several regulations available at YSC have been reviewed and amended, new procedures have been developed. An attempt was made to involve different stakeholders in the quality assurance processes, to conduct surveys, the results have been analysed and published. All this serves as a good basis for establishing quality culture.

Taking into account that the quality assurance system at the university is yet at the establishment phase, the Criterion can be assessed as positive.

CONCLUSION. YSC's institutional capacities concerning Criterion 10 meet the requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS. It is necessary to:

1. assure full applicability of the stipulated procedures.
2. enlarge human, material and financial resources to increase the effectiveness of quality assurance processes.
3. ensure the involvement of a wider group of stakeholders, especially faculty, for the establishment of quality culture.
4. develop internal quality assurance system regular review procedure and feedback mechanisms and ensure their applicability.
5. strengthen the link between management and quality assurance systems.

Panel Chair

G. Hovhannizyan

EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

CRITERION	DECISION
<i>1. Mission and purpose</i>	YES
<i>2. Governance and administration</i>	YES
<i>3. Academic programmes</i>	YES
<i>4. Students</i>	YES
<i>5. Faculty and staff</i>	YES
<i>6. Research and development</i>	YES
<i>7. Infrastructure and resources</i>	YES
<i>8. Social responsibility</i>	YES
<i>9. External relations and internationalization</i>	NO
<i>10. Internal quality assurance</i>	YES

VI. PEER REVIEW ON THE BASIS OF INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

Observations

1. The university is clearly in a phase of transition.
2. It seems that YSC approaches innovations cautiously.
3. The academy is not open enough to 'other' types of careers for musicians, such as in management or 'social functions'.
4. Curriculum development is rather conservative. The academy should adapt the some outward-looking attitude for content and methods used in realization of the curricula.
5. There is no international strategy (especially student recruitment). To certain degree the Academy participates in international partnerships, but its activity is rather informal and it is not reflected in the international perspectives offered by the curriculum and the educational processes.
6. Lack of the graduate surveys and a well-developed systems of interaction between the institution and its alumni.
7. There is an office for quality enhancement that employs two people. This ensures to a certain extent the sustainability of continuous quality enhancement, if sufficient funding will be allocated when the current grant funds are depleted. Otherwise the institution cannot move forward.
8. The institution promotes its research activity and the impressive research carried out within the "Folklore Cabinet" is to be commended.

Peer recommendations

- The institution is encouraged to formulate its identity and goals more clearly, both for the institution itself and the separate academic programmes.
- To identify the key features of each course and to explore ways to develop and promote these specificities.
- Learning Outcomes need to be developed and implemented, based on the AEC developed Learning Outcomes and the Polifonia Dublin Descriptors.
- The institution's mission is to have a student-centered learning environment. Therefore, our sincere recommendation is that the institution make an effort to free up the curriculum, offering more possibilities for students to take elective courses that enhance their personal development.
- Assessment criteria should be connected (related) to the Learning Outcomes students are expected to achieve.
- Assessment scales should be examined for anomaly: they should ideally map across each other and across other disciplines as well.
- The role of research in the culture of the department needs to be defined more fully - there should be a closer dialogue between research and the curriculum.
- Departments should ensure mechanisms for research feeding back into the curriculum.
- Formulate what role research could or should play in the education of students.
- The number of musical instruments is sufficient, but their standard should be much higher.
- Very often the library is not adequate to support curriculum requirements. This mainly has to do with the lack of international literature and (probably) no subscriptions to research databases.
- Opening hours to Library and Phonotheek should be increased to ensure open access of the students.
- more systematic involvement of students, former students and professional bodies in course design and review should be developed, as their feedback is essential to check the relevance of the course and how it is perceived by different stakeholders.
- Student and staff should be informed of responses and action taken as a result of feedback.

- Links with the profession: should be created a mechanism to discuss and plan the cooperation with the representatives of the profession to collect their feedback on the graduates and on the curricula in order to ensure the quality of the training and its relevance for the profession.

APPENDICE 1: CVS OF EXTERNAL PANEL MEMBERS

Gurgen Hovhannisyan. 1979-83 has studied and graduated with honours Yerevan State Pedagogical Institute after Kh. Abovyan (currently university) with major in geography, qualified as geography teacher. 2006 has defended his dissertation and got his PHD degree in geography, is an associate professor since 2007. The dissertation topic is "The problems of improving the content of school geography in the RA". The published articles mainly concern geography at schools, the methodology. He is an author of school textbooks, methodological handbooks.

Since 1995 has taught in the Socio-Economic Geography Chair of the Geography department at YGU, currently is an associate professor of that chair.

In 2000-2006 was the Deputy Dean of the Geography Department. 2008-2010 was the secretary of geography (005) academic board. Since 2006 up to present is the head of bachelor division at YSU methodological department. 2009թ. 30.11-12.12 has participated in the winter school "The promotion of European Dimension in higher educational institutions". In 2010, October 7-28 has had a training program in the USA "Workforce development partnership between and with universities".

Anna Erznkyan. Professor, Honorary Worker of Art of the Republic of Armenia (RA), the dean of the Faculty of Cinema, TV and Animation at Yerevan State Institute of Cinema and Theatre. Research and published articles cover the fields of cinema, theatre. The author of two books. The job positions occupied are: Creative Branch President / Armenia Filmmakers Association /, Board Secretary of the Union of Cinematographers, Vice - Rector on Academic and Scientific Affairs at YSICT, the dean of the Faculty of Cinema, TV and Animation at YSICT, member of the YSICT Scientific Council and the Recotare, member of the RA Union of Cinematographers, member of the Film Critics' Association, member of the FIPRESS international organization, member of State Awards Committee, member of board of Trustees of Fridtjof Nansen Foundation, etc. Has participated in numerous international conferences on arts and professional education. Has undergone ANQA trainings.

Grzegorz Kurzyński (born: February 23, 1949 in Poznań – Poland) is a graduate of the Karol Lipiński Academy of Music in Wrocław (Poland), under the tutelage of Professor Włodzimierz Obidowicz. He has also earned degrees from the Royal Conservatory of Music in Brussels where he studied under Professor Jean Claude Vanden-Eynden, and the prestigious Juilliard School of Music in New York, where he studied under Professor Joseph Kalichstein and Professor Abbey Simon. He was awarded fellowships by Belgium's Ministry of Culture as well as The Barbara Piasecka-Johnson Foundation in the United States, and also received a scholarship from the outstanding American pianist Malcolm Frager.

Professional and academic experience: He has been teaching piano since 1972 at the Karol Lipiński Academy of Music in Wrocław and the Ignacy Jan Paderewski Academy of Music in Poznań (Poland), has been the head of the piano section of the Academy of Music in Wrocław and Rector of the Karol Lipiński Academy of Music in Wrocław (2002-2008). Since 2008 he is Rector's Plenipotentiary for Integration with the European Higher Education Area (equivalent to Vice-Rector's duties and responsibilities). **Membership in Councils and Boards** Member of the Polish Council on Art Education (2002-2004); Member of the Accreditation Commission – Bologna Process of the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland (CRASP); Head of the Accreditation Commission of Schools of Art in Poland (AKUA) (2002-2008); Deputy head of the Conference of Rectors of Universities of Art in Poland (KRUA) (2005-2008); Expert in defining standards in instrumental education, jazz and stage music on the Polish Council on Higher Education; Member of the Economic Committee of the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland; Member of the Panel for Creating a Model of Academic Advancement; Member of the board of the European higher schools of art network CHAIN; Member of the Accreditation Commission – Bologna Process of the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland (CRASP); Member of the Polifonia Bologna working group (2004-2007) within the framework of the Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC),

AEC Tuning Counselor; Member of the AEC Polifonia Accreditation working group (2007-2010); Member of the AEC Accreditation Committee (2011-) Member of the panel for creating procedures and criteria of academic output evaluation at the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education; Member of the Polish National Accreditation Commission; Head of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education working group preparing and implementing the National Qualification Framework for higher artistic education, Member of the Main Council of Higher Education in Poland.

Mist Thorkelsottir. **Education:** M.A. in music, Boston University, Boston MA, U.S.A. Studies with Lucas Foss. 1983 Studies in composition at SUNY at Buffalo, Lejaren Hiller and Morton Feldman. 1982 One term at the University of Minnesota, composition and linguistics. 1982 B.A. in music, Hamline University St. Paul, MN, U.S.A. 1981 Course in children's theater at St. Catherine's College, St. Paul, MN U.S.A. 1980 Student exam, music, ancient and modern languages

Positions: 2001 - Dean of Music, Iceland Academy of the Arts. 2001 – 2005 Teacher of composition, Iceland Academy of the Arts. 2001 Project manager in founding a music department at the Iceland Academy of the Arts. 1999 Hired to make suggestions about forming a university level music department in Iceland. 1998 – 1999 Teacher at the Reykjavik College of Music, theory and composition. 1984 – 1989 Teacher at Gardabaer Music School, music history, theory and piano

1986 – 1988 Teacher at Reykjavik Music School, theory. **Committees:** 2011- Chair of AEC Quality Enhancement Committee. 2006 - Council member of AEC, Association Européenne des Conservatoires. 2005 – 2008 General Secretary of ANMA, Association of Nordic Academies. 2001 - Council members of ANMA, Association of Nordic Academies. 2005- On the board of “Music in the Schools”. 2003- On the governing board of the Icelandic government “artist salary committee”, issuing grants and stipends to individual artists, theatre companies and ensembles of all disciplines, besides supervising all the artists salary funds. 1998- 2008 On the board of the Icelandic Composer's Society. 2000-2005 On the program committee for the Reykjavik Arts Festival. 1998-2002 Head of Iceland Music Information Center, policy making for the MIC and hiring of managers staff. 1984-1990 On the board of Musica Nova Iceland. 1984-1989 On the board of Young Nordic Music Days, organized the festival in Iceland 1987. **Music research, articles and lectures:** Hafliði Hallgrímsson Poemi, publisher Florian Noetzel Verlag 1997. 1993, one of five participants in a live broadcast panel discussion at the World Harp Congress in Copenhagen. 1999, guest lecturer at Brown University, RI, U.S.A. 2000, designed a summer music composition course for the Reykjavik Cultural Center, Gerðuberg Papers written and presented to the Ministry of Education and Culture on the structuring and curriculum of the Music Department at Iceland Academy of the Arts. **Compositions:** *List of works performed during the last 20 years, available through the Iceland Music Information Center, ITM (mic.is)*

Sona Ter-Minasyan. Since 2012-present Master's degree student in the “Art education” faculty, music division at Armenian State Pedagogical University (ASPU) after Kh. Abovyan. Received her Bachelor Degree in ASPU in 2008-2012, faculty- “Art education”, department “Musical education”. Graduated from State Musical College after R. Melikyan, qualification- concertmaster, ensemble performer, musical teacher, has been engaged in “Ave Maria” chorus since 2008 as a singer. Has participated in the musicians-performers intercollegiate competition, International Students Forum, the UN courses.

APPENDIX 2: SCHEDULE OF SITE-VISIT

30.09.2013 – 4.10.2013

30.09.2013

		<i>Launch</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Duration</i>
1	Expert panel closed meeting	9:15	9:45	30 minutes
2	Meeting with the Rector	10:00	10:30	30 minutes
3	Meeting with the self-assessment working group	10:30	11:45	75 minutes
4	Meeting with the vice-rectors	11:45	12:45	60 minutes
5	Lunch break (expert panel discussions)	12:45	13:45	60 minutes
6	Observation of resources /local student performances	14:00	14:45	45 minutes
7	Meeting with the deans and heads of respective educational process management units	15:00	16:00	60 minutes
8	Expert panel discussions	16:30	17:30	90 minutes

1.10.2013

		<i>Launch</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Duration</i>
1	Expert panel closed meeting	9:00	9:30	30 minutes
2	Meeting with the Internal Quality Assurance Department	9:30	10:30	60 minutes
3	Meeting with the heads of chairs	10:45	11:45	60 minutes
4	Meeting with the student representatives /local, foreign students, Master students/	11:45	12:45	60 minutes
4	Lunch break (Expert panel discussions)	12:45	13:45	60 minutes
5	Observation of resources /library, publishing, opera studio, audio-sound recording library, folklore cabinet etc.	14:00	15:30	90 minutes
6	Meeting with the Students' council, Student-scientific center	15:45	16:15	60 minutes
7	Expert panel discussions	16:30	18:00	90 minutes

2.10.2013

		<i>Launch</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Duration</i>
1	Expert panel closed meeting	9:00	9:30	30 minutes
2	Meeting with the employer representatives	9:30	10:45	75 minutes
3	Open meeting	11:00	11:30	30 minutes
4	Meeting with the graduates	11:45	13:00	75 minutes
4	Lunch break (Expert panel discussions)	13:00	14:00	60 minutes
5	Meeting with the faculty	14:15	15:30	75 minutes
6	Observation of resources / national orchestras, foreign student performances/	15:30	16:30	60 minutes
7	Expert panel discussions	16:30	18:00	90 minutes

Visit to YSC branch in Gyumri

3.10.2013

		<i>Launch</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Duration</i>
1	Expert panel departure to Gyumri	8:30	10:30	120 minutes
2	Meeting with the Director of the Branch	10:45	11:00	15 minutes
3	Meeting with the heads of administrative and educational subdivisions	11:15	12:15	60 minutes
4	Meeting with the Students' council, Student-scientific center and student representatives	12:30	13:30	60 minutes
5	Lunch break (Expert panel discussions)	13:30	14:30	60 minutes
6	Meeting with the faculty	14:45	15:45	60 minutes
7	Observation of resources	16:00	17:00	60 minutes
8	Expert panel discussions	17:00	17:45	45 minutes
9	Meeting with the Director of the Branch	17:45	18:00	15 minutes
10	Departure from Gyumri	18:00	20:00	120 minutes

4.10.2013

		<i>Launch</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Duration</i>
1	Expert panel closed meeting	9:00	9:30	30 minutes
2	Meeting with the staff selected by the expert panel	9:30	10:30	60 minutes
3	Observation of resources/ document review, discussions /	10:45	11:45	60 minutes
4	Expert panel discussions	11:45	12:45	60 minutes
5	Lunch break (Expert panel discussions)	13:00	14:00	60 minutes
6	Expert panel discussions	14:00	15:00	60 minutes
7	Observation of resources/preparatory groups, youth orchestra/	15:15	16:00	s45 minutes
8	Meeting with the Rector	16:00	16:30	30 minutes
9	Expert panel summative discussions	16:30	18:00	90 minutes

APPENDICE 3: LIST OF DOCUMENTS OBSERVED

N	Name of the document	Criterion
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1.	Decisions on revising YSC mission statement (documents)	1
2.	Rector's last report to the Governing Board	2
3.	Regulation on the Educational Department's operation	2
4.	Annual reports of the Department/s/	2
5.	Rector's order on organizational changes	2
6.	State Academic Standard	3
7.	Curricula	3
8.	Syllabi	3
9.	Examination transcripts	3
10.	Curriculum of additional education	3
11.	Diploma supplements for Bachelor and Master Degrees	3
12.	YSC Admission Regulation	4
13.	Advertisement bulletins, announcements	4
14.	Contract signed between the university and the student	4
15.	Regulation on cutting the tuition fees and granting scholarships	4
16.	Decision on establishing a Committee for the protection of students' rights.	4
17.	Students Council's working plan	4
18.	Course papers, term papers, graduation thesis	4
19.	YSC Procedure on job assignment, transfer to another job, dismissal, promotion, encouragement and application of disciplinary penalty.	5
20.	Chair workloads	5
21.	Annual plans of several chairs	5
22.	Scientific development strategy approved by the YSC Governing Board.	6
23.	Record/s/ of the Scientific Council's Sessions	6
24.	The concept of technical and other requirements set forth the research publications in YSC's scientific journals approved by the YSC Scientific Council	6
25.	Journal of methodological and scientific articles of the YSC teachers	6
26.	Regulation of the Laboratory of Armenian Folklore Studies	6
27.	"Erazhisht" newspaper, "Erazhshtakan Hayastan" journal	8
28.	agreements and contracts signed between YSC and different foreign educational institutions	9
29.	Documentation on full membership to the Association of European Conservatories (AEC)	9
30.	IQAD strategy	10
31.	IQAD working plan	10
32.	Guidelines developed by the IQAD	10
33.	Questionnaires and results of analysis	10
34.	Analysis of stakeholder interviews and sociological surveys	10

APPENDICE 4: RESOURCES OBSERVED

1. Library and reading hall
2. Audio- recording library
3. Publishing house
4. Chair of Folk Studies
5. Opera studio (rehearsal)
6. Chair of National Orchestras
7. Rehearsal of the Youth Orchestra
8. “Armenian folk music study” scientific laboratory
9. Educational-methodological department
10. Gyumri branch