



COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF THE  
ACCREDITATION PROCESS

2014

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### SUMMARY

#### Foreword

Immediately after its establishment ANQA launched a comprehensive analysis of needs by observing the current state of institutional and academic programs' management of public and private Universities and tried to reveal the factors that promote or hinder the reforms and basis of quality education. Based on the obtained data, an attempt was made to bring European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) in compliance with local educational needs.

Recently developed quality assurance criteria and standards were introduced as a self-evaluation approach for meeting national and international requirements. 15 public and private universities were invited to take part in pilot testing of processes, criteria and standards concerning institutional and program accreditation for ensuring legitimacy of mechanisms and meeting the needs of the system which are the base for standards, assessment methods, tools and self-evaluation approach. The pilot program consists of two phases: submission of applications by TLIs, institutional and program self-evaluation, desk review, site visits and report production.

ANQA attaches great importance to the continuous improvement of the accreditation process; hence it conducted a review of area regulatory documents. The observation of the effectiveness of the accreditation process by ANQA allows to identify the actual state of the process, existing problems and flaws, to revise and improve (according to goals and objectives) the documentation basis and the process itself.

Thus, research carried out by ANQA is necessary due to the following two factors:

- ▶ the accreditation process is subjected to a comprehensive analysis
- ▶ It gives an opportunity to improve the process and revise the area regulatory documentation based on the empirical evidences.

## The purpose, objectives and methodology of research

The purpose of research conducted by ANQA is to observe the accreditation process in the following successive phases:

- ▶ self-evaluation of TLIs,
- ▶ External evaluation by the independent expert panel,
- ▶ Final panel report production.

It assumes:

- ▶ Identifications of imperfections and flaws of the accreditation process, as well as its comprehensive analysis,
- ▶ assessment of the effectiveness of the accreditation process,
- ▶ Revision of the documentation basis.

The objectives of research are:

- ▶ to describe the current state of the accreditation process,
- ▶ to obtain information on
  - expert trainings,
  - information and documentation package provided by ANQA,
  - acceptance of the application,
  - ANQA electronic questionnaire,
  - composition of the expert panel,
  - implementation of self-evaluation and acceptance of the report,
  - desk review,
  - site visit,
  - panel report,
  - TLI's follow-up plan,
  - independence of the expert,
  - relations between expert and coordinator,
  - professional skills of the coordinator,
  - cooperation with the international expert,
  - working environment,
  - realistic timeframes of the accreditation process,
  - provided recommendations,
- ▶ To describe the accreditation processes based on the obtained quantitative and qualitative data, and then discuss the challenges, development trends and perspectives of the process.

A mixed methodology applied for conducting research, presumed the quantitative, qualitative, descriptive and explanatory nature of research.

Research was aimed at

- ▶ describing the structural elements of the accreditation process by quantitative data,
- ▶ explaining the existing obstacles and their possible solution by qualitative data.

For ensuring the descriptive and quantitative aspect of research, it was appropriate to use the method of online anonymous survey (among the people who were well-informed about TLIs' quality assurance processes and experts who implemented the process), which enabled the participants of the survey to express their opinions freely. It helped to increase the reliability of the obtained information. 38 experts<sup>1</sup> from ANQA and 13 Universities out of 15 that have undergone accreditation process participated in the survey.

The method of focus groups was applied for the collection of qualitative data. It gave an opportunity to receive detailed information on the accreditation process, ensuring the involvement of the main groups (experts, persons who implemented self-evaluation and those responsible for the quality assurance) in research. A special reference was made to the first method i. e. the clarification and observation of data received via online survey through the application of this method.

The two above-mentioned methods were the precondition for the comprehensive analysis of the process. The information provided by groups was generalized in the analysis and is represented in the chapters below.

## **PART 1. APPLICATION FOR STATE ACCREDITATION**

The actual purpose of the quality assurance system is the continuous enhancement of TLIs' educational processes and/or educational outcomes which aim at fulfillment of TLI's needs. It actually refers to the management of the TLI's quality assurance system and the organization of the accreditation process.

Since the accreditation process begins with the submission of the application by HEI, we started the research with the observation of the structure and content of the application. We focused

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<sup>1</sup> The selection of ANQA experts is described in Appendix 1

on the identification of obstacles while filling in the application form and changes needed for the improvement.

Structure and content of the application (required documents) What obstacles did you face while filling in the application form	Frequency of responses	% according to the overall frequency of responses
1. There were no obstacles	10	83%
2. Extremely detailed information was required on the given fields, which, in our opinion, has more to do with the licensing than the accreditation process itself.	1	8%
3. The application form was the same in case of both institutional and program accreditation	1	8%
Total	12	100%

Summarizing the responses, it should be noted, that most of the participants did not face any obstacles while filling in the application form and do not see any need for changes. The observations mainly related to the issue of making distinctions between institutional and program applications and activation of the website, as the latter restricts the University to make effective changes.

Structure and content of the application (required documents) What would change in the application form	Frequency of responses	% according to the overall frequency of responses
1. No need for changes	10	83%
2. We would change it completely	1	8%
3. To activate the website, which would allow to make changes more effectively and directly. It would facilitate the production of our annual reports.	1	8%
Total	12	100%

Based on the results of research, it should be stated that there were only technical difficulties in filling in the application form.

ANQA electronic questionnaire What obstacles did you face while filling in the questionnaire	Frequency of responses	% according to the overall frequency of responses
1. Technical problems	7	41%
2. Time limit	4	24%
3. The program was not flexible, i.e. the specifications of HEIs were not taken into account and it was impossible to continue if any of the lines was not filled in.	1	6%
4. There were no obstacles while filling in the application form, but there were some difficulties because of our inexperience. Not all the standards were clear.	1	6%
5. Questions are not formulated correctly	1	6%
6. Coordination difficulties	1	6%
7. The issue of the changed data entry is not clear	1	6%
8. No need for changes	1	6%
Total	17	100%

Analyzing the effectiveness of ANQA electronic questionnaire, it should be noted that according to most of the participants, the questionnaire should be improved technically and be simplified in structure, i.e. all the questions, the answers of which have been somehow provided to ANQA before, for example, in the self-evaluation text or in its appendices or are licensing requirement, should be removed. Thus, it would not be overloaded with too much information.

ANQA electronic questionnaire What would you change in the questionnaire?	Frequency of responses	% according to the overall frequency of responses
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1. To improve it technically	3	33%
2. To clarity and simplify it	2	22%
3. To organize seminar before filling in the questionnaire	1	11%
4. To edit the questions and answers	1	11%
5. The principles of the organization	1	11%
6. To remove all the questions, the answers of which have been somehow provided to ANQA before, for example, in the self-evaluation text or in its appendices or were licensing requirement.	1	11%
Total	9	100%

## PART 2. SELF-EVALUATION

For contributing to TLI's effective implementation of the self-evaluation process, ANQA has developed a number of guidelines, including institutional and program self-evaluation formats, which are the part of the Accreditation statute. In order to assess the effectiveness and applicability of the above mentioned formats, we tried to find out whether the stakeholders are satisfied with the formats and what obstacles they have encountered in terms of its structure and content. Summarizing the results of research, it can be stated, that the main obstacles in the formats were the repetitions and interpretation of terms in different standards that were caused mainly by the formulation of questions and translation.

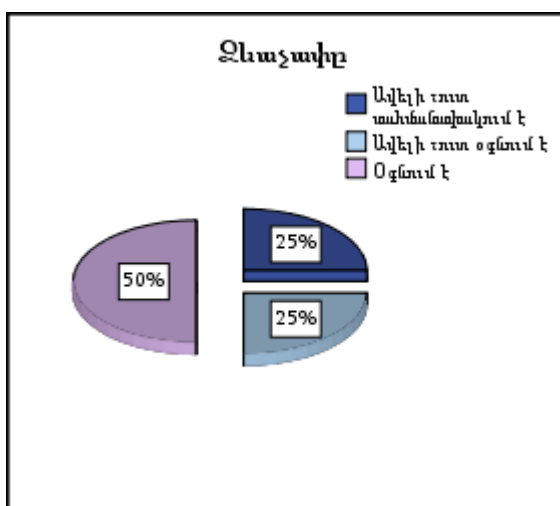
2.2 Structure of the institutional accreditation self-evaluation format What obstacles did you face? What would you change?	Frequency of responses	% according to the overall frequency of responses
1. There were repetitions in different standards	4	25%
2. There was a confusion between the terms "standard" and "criterion"	2	13%
3. Difficulties in understanding terms, questions and standards, translation problems	3	19%
4. Compile and publish glossary of Accreditation	1	6%

5. Large volume	1	6%
6. Inconveniences in filling in the tables of the format	1	6%
7. Technical problems	1	6%
8. Clarification of the requirements of standard analyses or their exclusion	1	6%
9. No need for changes	2	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100%</b>

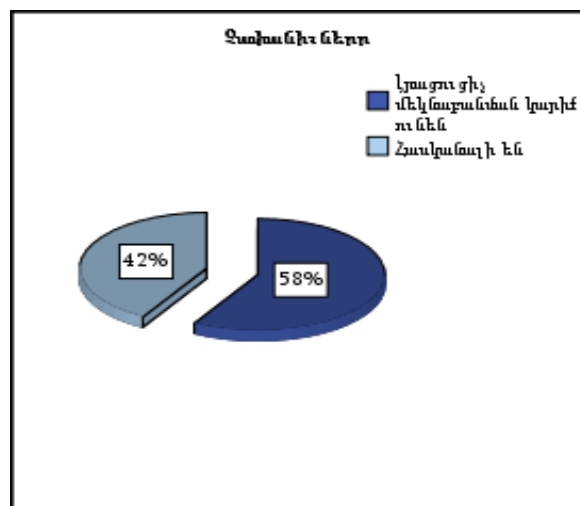
In the frames of research, the self-evaluation format was observed from the following perspectives:

- to what extent it restricts or contributes to the implementation of self-evaluation,
- whether additional interpretation of criteria/standards is needed,
- whether the evidences presented in the format interfered or guided.

**Format**

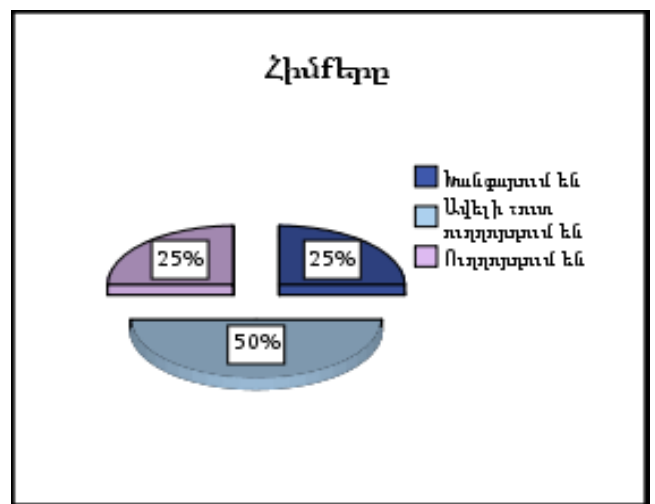
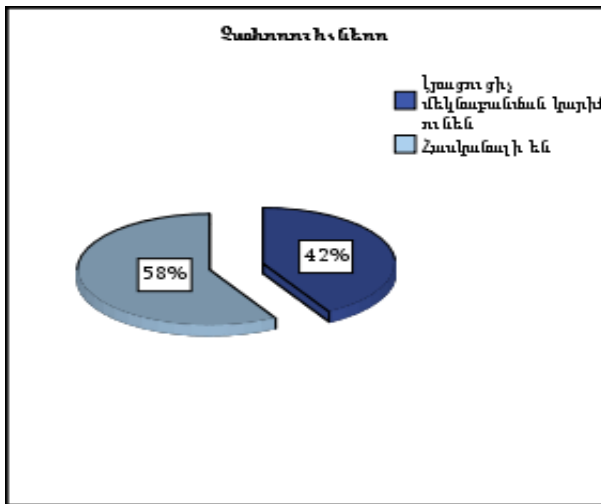


**Criteria**



**Standards**

**Evidences**



Analyzing the information provided by TLIs of the Republic of Armenia, it should be noted, that according to most of the respondents, the self-evaluation format helps and guides them in their activities and no changes should be made. However, there were suggestions to simplify the format, to combine some provisions in standards that are close in content enabling the Universities to analyze several standards together. It was also suggested to remove SWOT table from the format and include the sections “Strengths”, “Weaknesses” and “Improvement directions” instead. They grounded it by the fact that SWOT is a tool for predicting future, while the format summarizes the processes of the past 5 years. What concerns the interpretation of criteria and standards, the Universities are of opinion that more measurable requirements should be defined. Most of HEIs noted that there are some misunderstandings in standards and an additional clarification and interpretation of formulations and terms are needed. It was also noted that specifications of RA educational system and current state of the Universities were not taken into account during the development of criteria/standards.

As to the evidences in the format, they are mainly of guiding nature and only 25% of respondents think that they do not always comply with the requirements of the criterion, and that there are lots of required appendices.

After a comprehensive observation of the structure and content of the self-evaluation format, we tried to find out to what extent the development of certain guidelines on criteria/ standards would be useful and can guide or restrict the implementation of the self-evaluation.

To what extent the development of certain guidelines on criteria/ standards would be useful during the implementation of the self-evaluation? Advantages	Frequency of responses	% according to the overall frequency of responses
1. The formulations would be clear and would not give rise to any misinterpretations	6	55%

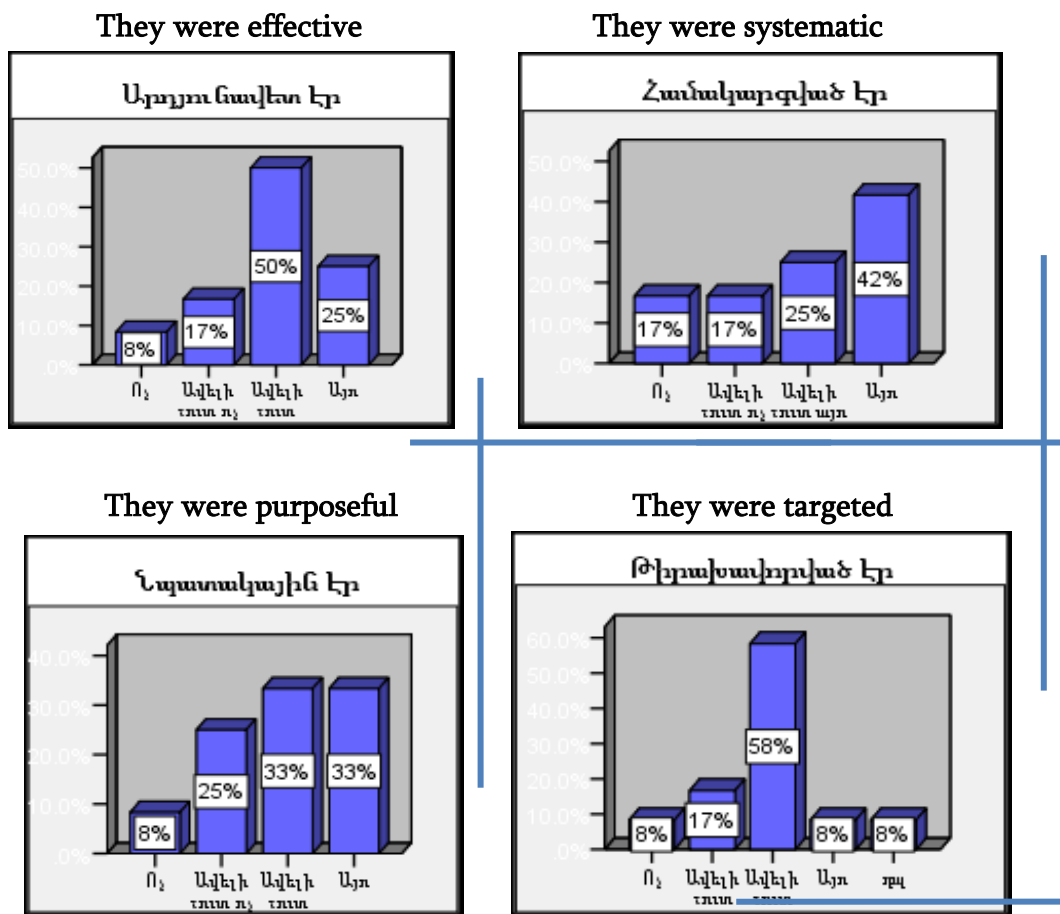
2. It would be much more effective	3	27%
3. The guidelines would allow the University to present the self-evaluation report based on the exemplary version	1	9%
4. Those guidelines may be useful only during the first self-evaluation process. This function can be carried out by ANQA experts as well.	1	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100%</b>

From the table above, it is clear that the existence of guidelines will specify the criteria / standards, and thus, don't give rise to misinterpretation. However, it was also noted that they may restrict the University's creative and unique approach to the analysis.

To what extent the development of certain guidelines on criteria/ standards would be useful during the implementation of the self-evaluation? Restrictions	Frequency of responses	% according to the overall frequency of responses
1. The guidelines would restrict the autonomy of the HEI in the implementation of the self evaluation / they would restrict HEI's (due to its professional orientation) creative and unique approach to the analysis	5	45%
2. There aren't any restrictions	3	27%
3. First of all, the terminology should be clarified. Besides, the creative Universities, such as Komitas State Conservatory of Yerevan, has different profiles too, which are restricted by this format.	1	9%
4. They would restrict the process, as they can't take into account the specifications of all the Universities	1	9%
5. Some guidelines may not reflect our reality and comply with our experience	1	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100%</b>

In the frames of research, we also observed the effectiveness of recommendations provided by ANQA on the implementation of self-evaluation. The recommendations were observed from the following perspectives:

- to what extent they were effective,
- to what extent they were systematic,
- to what extent they were purposeful,
- to what extent they were targeted.



As it can be seen from the charts above, recommendations provided by ANQA, generally served their purpose. It is evidenced by the positive assessments of most of the Universities. However, the recommendation provision process should be improved. University employees noted that they need an additional training, especially on the following themes:

Do you need an additional training on the implementation	Frequency of	% according to
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of self-evaluation? Note the themes	responses	the overall frequency of responses
1. Interpretation of criteria and standards	2	22%
2. Mechanisms for the implementation of self-evaluation	1	11%
3. The experts' approaches to the assessment of the self-evaluation	1	11%
4. Presentation of mechanisms for collecting information and representation of methods	1	11%
5. The presentation of mechanisms and ways of involving and motivating external and internal stakeholders	1	11%
6. Organization of internal audit	1	11%
7. Linking of educational and research activities	1	11%
8. Review of the internal quality assurance system	1	11%
9. Presentation of the international experience	1	11%
10. Revision of academic programs	1	11%
Total	9	100%

In the frames of research conducted among experts, as well as during the discussions with focus group, we observed the issues of self-evaluation process. We tried to find out especially in what cases self –evaluation report should be returned to the TLI for revision and what data (quantitative or qualitative) are needed in the self-evaluation package to enhance the effectiveness of the external evaluation.

In what cases the self-evaluation report should be returned to TLI for revision?	Frequency of responses	% according to the overall frequency of responses
1. If criteria/standards requirements were not understood correctly, and the text does not reflect the requirement of the criterion	11	28%
2. If the minimum threshold of information necessary for the implementation of the assessment is not ensured	8	20%

3. If it is more descriptive than analytical	7	18%
4. If there are deviations from the format or the appendices are missing	6	15%
5. If the report does not give an opportunity to develop a clear idea about the University	5	13%
6. Before accepting the report, it is desirable that apart from the coordinator's technical review, it is also reviewed by the experts	3	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>

As you can see, the main obstacle is the wrong perception of requirements of criteria/standards. The text of the self-evaluation reports doesn't often reflect the requirement of criteria/standards because of this factor. And as a solution to this problem, the experts suggest to return the self-evaluation report to the Universities, if the minimum threshold of information necessary for the implementation of the assessment is not ensured. It was suggested to involve the experts in the process of accepting self-evaluation reports. The experts think that apart from coordinator's technical review, they should also assess the report.

What important data (quantitative and qualitative) are needed in the self-evaluation package to enhance the effectiveness of the external evaluation?	Frequency of responses	% according to the overall frequency of responses
1. budget	3	16%
2. criteria assessment indicators	2	11%
3. Statistical data / performance indicators regarding different spheres of HEI's activities	12	63%
4. Evidences for the validity of data	2	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on the results of research, it can be stated, that the experts want to see more analytical data and not just descriptions of facts and figures. In other words, there should not be quantitative data, but analysis of their dynamics, causes of their reduction or increase, etc.

## PART 3. EXPERT PANEL FORMATION AND COMPOSITION

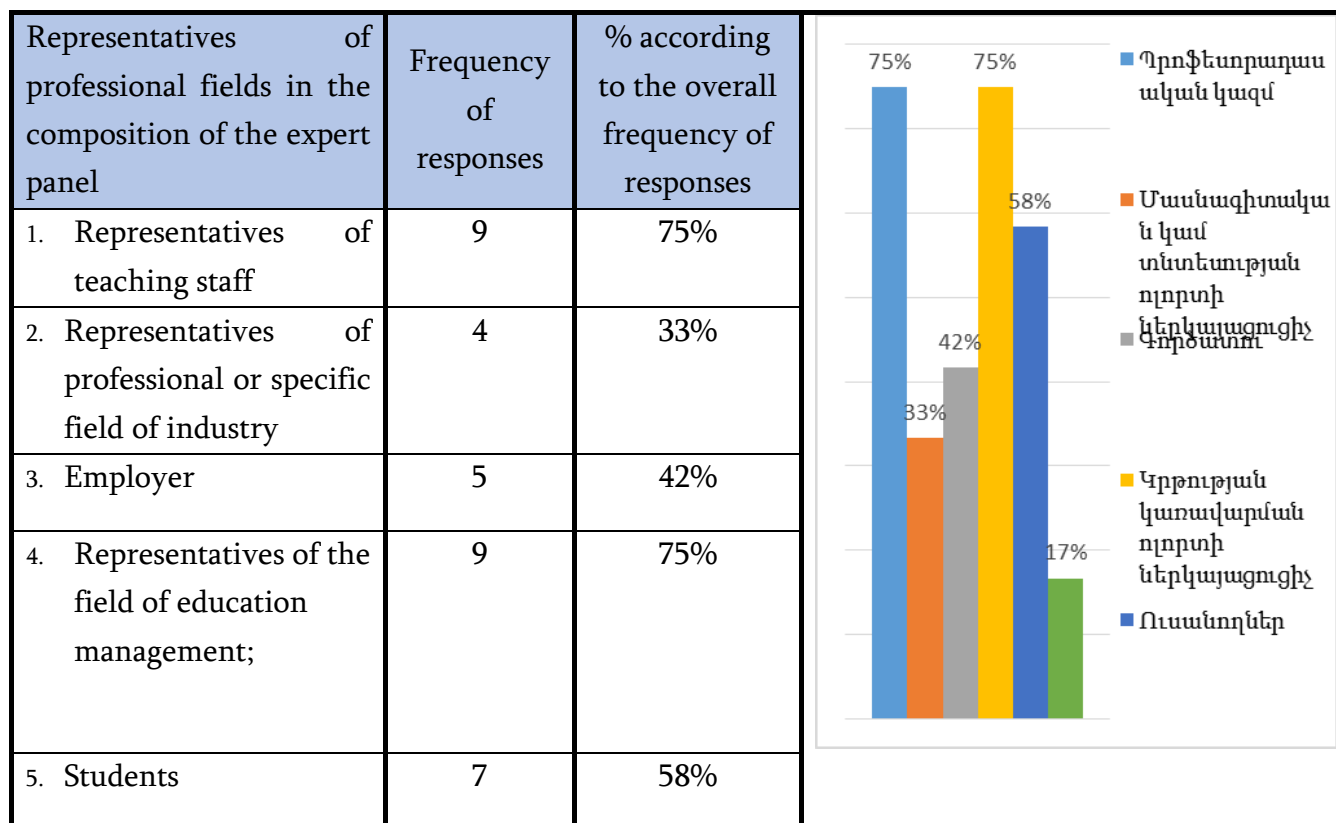
### 3.1 EXPERT TRAININGS

The selection of peer-review experts is one of the most important steps of the accreditation process to be taken, inasmuch as the recognition of accreditation decisions mainly depends on the level of adherence to both the selection criteria of external experts and the implementation of established procedures. The selection criteria of ANQA experts and procedures are in line with standards set by the European Consortium for Accreditation. Highly qualified, well-known local and international experienced professionals are selected for the implementation of the external evaluation.

Generally, the expert panel consists of:

- representatives of the teaching staff,
- representatives of professional or specific field of industry,
- representatives of the field of education management;
- students,
- employers.

In the frames of research we tried to find out the 3 most important professional fields the representatives of which TLIs would like to see in the expert panel.



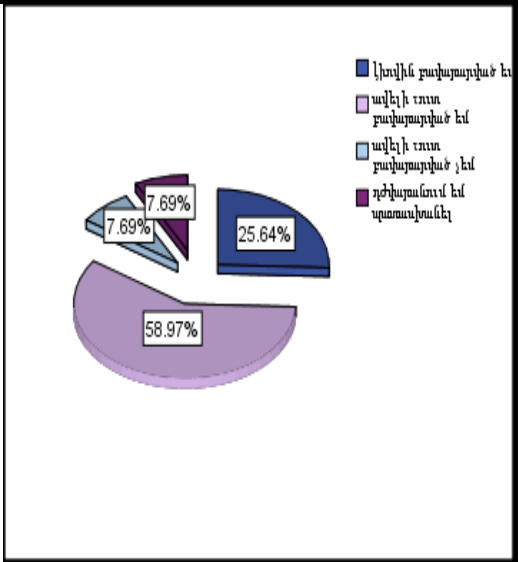


6. Other	2	17%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>300%</b>	

Based on the results of research, it can be stated that most of the respondents think that the expert panel should be composed of the representatives of teaching staff, educational management and students. The next most frequently mentioned group was the employers.

Besides, the experts' verbal and written communication skills, abilities to conduct meetings and to analyze large volume of information as well as their personal qualities that help them to ensure an impartial and objective assessment, are also taken into consideration in the selection process. For applying these skills in practice, for implementing an effective and purposeful peer-review, ANQA regularly organizes trainings for expert panel members. We conducted a survey among the experts to find out **whether they are satisfied with the trainings**.

Satisfaction with expert trainings	Frequency of responses	% according to the overall frequency of responses
1. Fully satisfied	10	26%
2. Mostly satisfied	23	59%
3. Mostly dissatisfied	3	8%
4. Difficult to answer	3	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>100%</b>



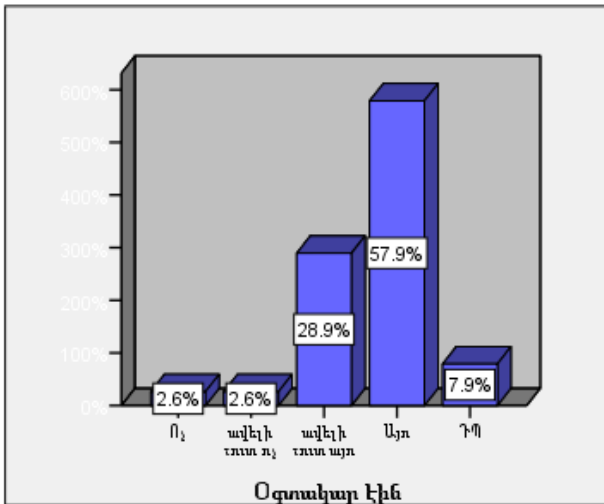
- Լիովին բավարարած եմ
- ավելի շատ բավարարած եմ
- ավելի շատ բավարարած չեմ
- դժվարացում եմ պատասխանել

Summarizing the results of research, it can be stated that the trainings were generally effective. The complete methodology and procedures that are in line with the self-evaluation requirements, the role and responsibilities of the experts, as well as the most effective ways of carrying out the assessment were presented during the trainings. As a whole, the respondents are of opinion that the trainings served their purpose, i. e. the information on further steps was fully provided. However, the experts noted that they would like this process to be continuous. The main observations were mainly on the target and not accurately selected training groups.

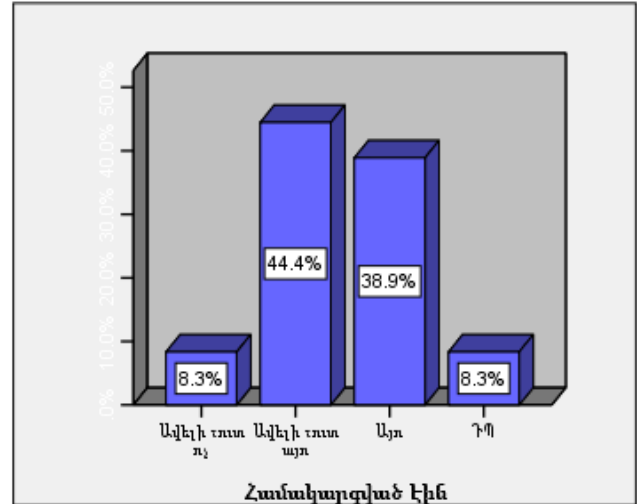
Satisfaction with the expert trainings Please, justify your answer	Frequency of responses	% according to the overall frequency of responses
1. The trainings were purposeful and effective	4	13%
2. Complete and comprehensive information was provided on the role, rights and responsibilities of the expert	9	28%
3. The themes of the trainings were chosen accurately	3	9%
4. Individual and continuous training with students would be more effective	1	3%
5. Due to the trainers' professionalism, the comprehension of the material was much easier	1	3%
6. The trainings were not coordinated in terms of materials \ further revision and improvement are needed	3	9%
7. The trainings were not continuous	1	3%
8. The trainings were held in healthy working environment, accompanied with constructive debates and discussions	3	9%
9. Trainings contributed to the acquisition of knowledge and new skills and competences	6	19%
10. Training methods need further improvement	1	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100%</b>

In the frames of research we tried to **observe the implemented trainings from the perspective of their usefulness, systematic, purposeful and targeted nature**. As a whole the results of the research proved that the trainings were purposeful and useful.

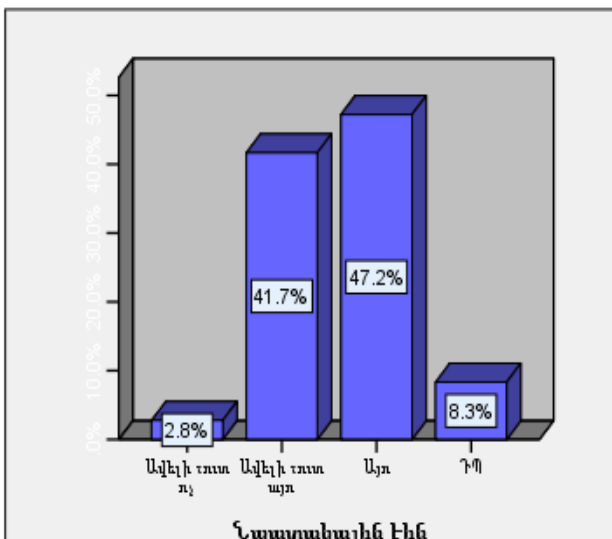
**Trainings were useful**



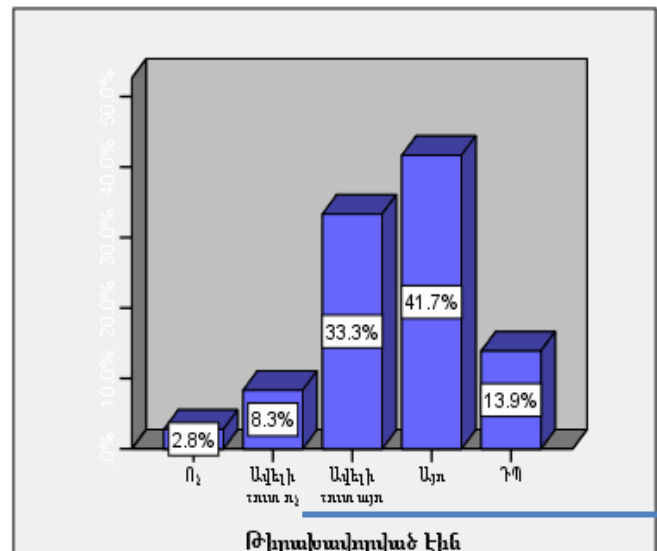
**Trainings were systematic**



**Trainings were purposeful**



**Trainings were targeted**



The usefulness and purposefulness of the trainings were highly evaluated by the experts, as these kinds of trainings help and guide them in their activities. What concerns the **targeted nature** of the trainings, there were many positive responses, however, the experts suggested to form target groups according to level of preparedness (to form separate groups for the students and groups for those who have implemented external evaluation once or more than once, and for those who recently joined the training). It was also suggested to present the information in a more **systematic way**.

	Frequency of responses	% according to the overall frequency of responses

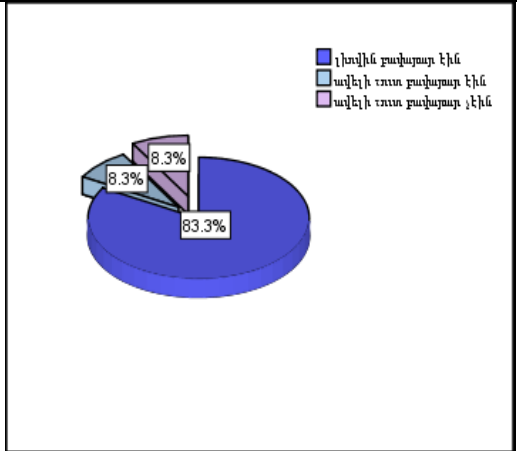
1. They were useful and purposeful, as they clarified the further steps and the role of the expert in the process. All the procedural issues were discussed, too.	13	54%
2. The trainings were not carried out in a systematic way	4	17%
3. The trainings were very useful and effective. It can be stated, that the ANQA coordinators institute is successfully established	4	17%
4. The targets were not chosen appropriately, the groups should be formed according to the level of preparedness	3	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100%</b>

The purposes of expert trainings were:

- to develop necessary professional competences for the implementation of external evaluation,
- to provide necessary information on ANQA activities, mission, accreditation process and criteria,
- to provide necessary documents for the implementation of external evaluation.

We tried to observe all the above mentioned points in the frames of research. In the first point we observed **to what extent the trainings carried out by ANQA were sufficient for the formation of necessary skills for the implementation of the external evaluation.**

Formation of necessary skills for the implementation of external evaluation.	Frequency of responses	% according to the overall frequency of responses
1. They were sufficient	30	83%
2. They were insufficient	3	8%
3. Difficult to answer	3	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100%</b>



■ լիովին բավարար էին  
■ ավելի տես բավարար էին  
■ ավելի տես բավարար չէին

As it can be seen, the trainings mostly served their purpose. 83% of positive responses proved that the trainings were sufficient for the formation of necessary skills and competences. However, there is a need for additional trainings. The experts suggested the following themes for the training:

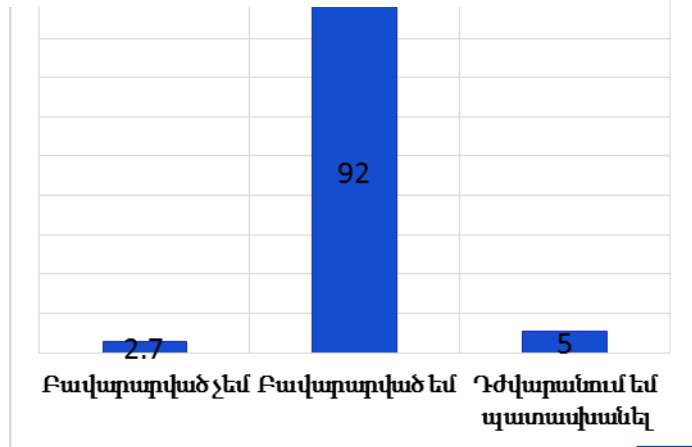
	Frequency of responses	% according to the overall frequency of responses
1. Comparison of international and national experience	2	9%
2. Presentation of legal field and normative acts of the area	1	4%
3. Interpretation of criteria/standards	3	13%
4. Improvement of the ability to work in team	1	4%
5. Clarification of assessment methods	1	4 %
6. Presentation of issues of education management	5	22%
7. Additional trainings are not needed.	10	43%
Total	23	100%

As it was mentioned above, the trainings aimed to raise the general awareness of the experts about processes and ANQA activities. Therefore, in the frames of research, we observed the effectiveness and usefulness of the information provided by ANQA. We tried to find out **to what extent the experts are satisfied with the information provided by ANQA**, regarding

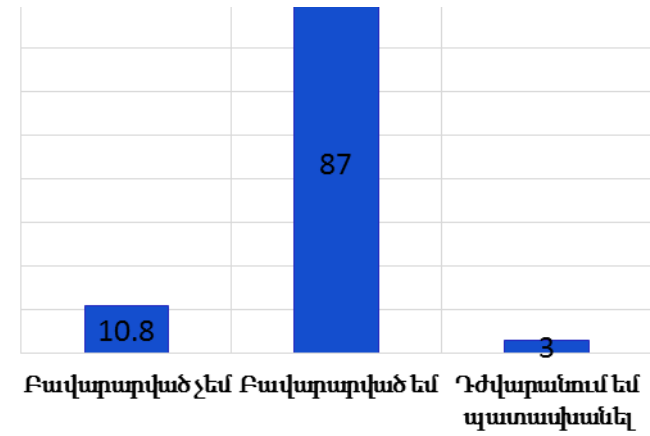
- the purpose and objectives of the accreditation process,
- the accreditation procedure,
- the role of the expert in the process,
- the assessment methods,
- the interpretation of criteria and standards.

Information provided by ANQA

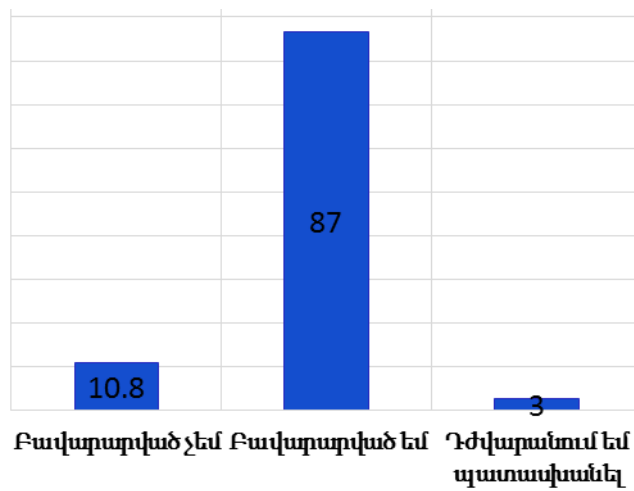
On the purpose and objectives of the accreditation process



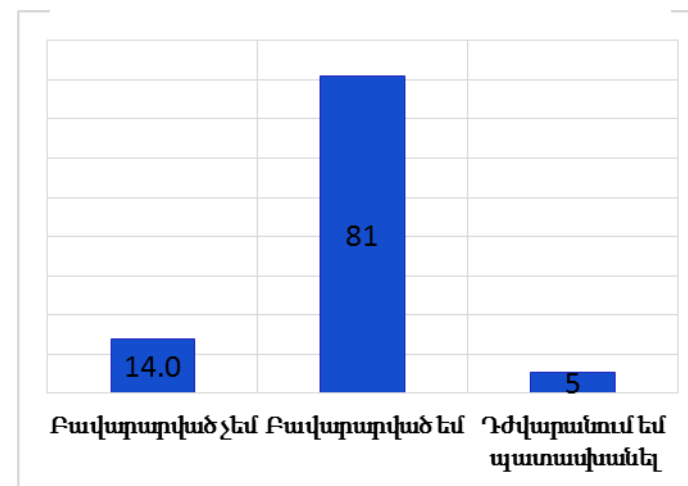
On the accreditation procedure



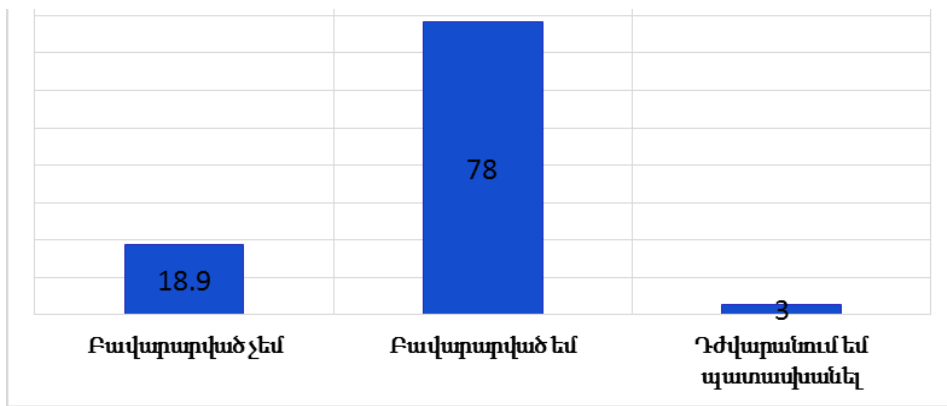
On the role of the expert in the process



On the assessment methods



### On the interpretation of criteria and standards



The results of the survey conducted among the experts who implemented external evaluation in RA TLIs, as well as the summary of results of focus groups, showed that they are generally satisfied with the information provided by ANQA. However, the 14% of the respondents are not satisfied with the provided information on the assessment methods, 19 % - with the interpretation of criteria and standards.

We tried to find out **whether the skills and competences acquired by the experts were fully applied during the peer-review.**

Application of competences during the peer-review	Frequency of responses	% according to the overall frequency of responses
1. Yes	33	87%
2. No	3	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100%</b>

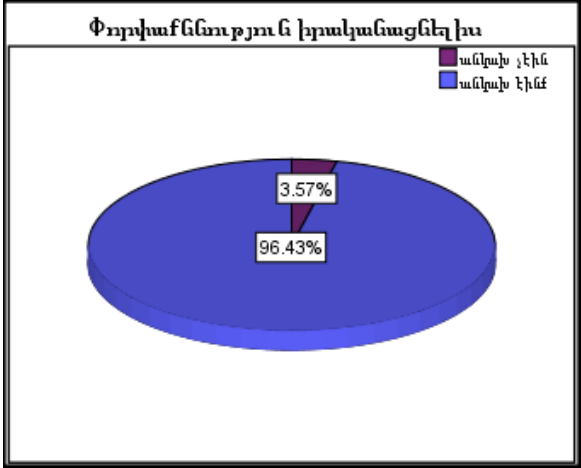
Response	Percentage
Yes	88.5%
No	11.5%

The results of research showed that most of the experts successfully applied the acquired skills and competences during the peer-review. **Moreover, 92% of experts have expressed a wish to take part in the accreditation processes in future.**

ANQA attaches great importance to the independent and impartial implementation of external evaluation; hence it takes all the necessary measures to ensure that the experts do not subject to any influence or pressure. They should be completely objective and independent. So, we observed the concept of **expert's independence** too. We tried to find out to what extent they are independent during

- the implementation of external evaluation,
- the implementation of assessment,
- decision-making.

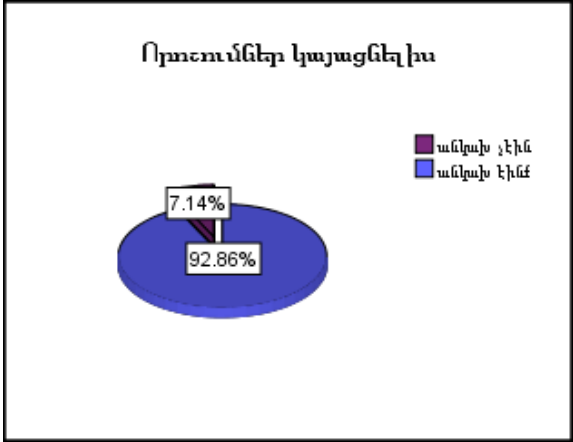
**During the implementation of external evaluation**



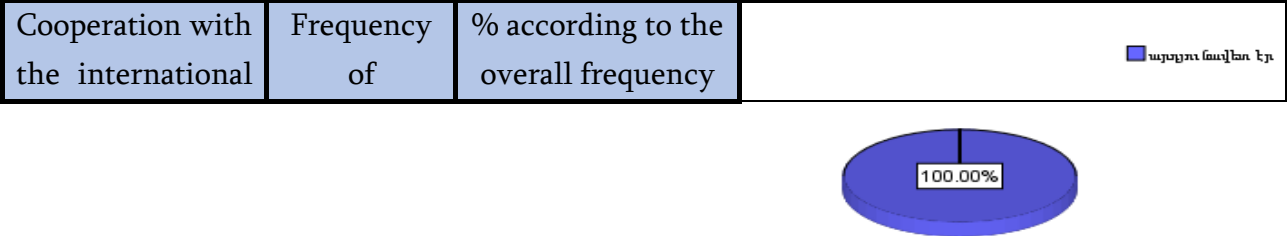
**During the implementation of assessment**



**During decision-making**



It is obvious that the experts were independent during the implementation of these processes. According to the experts there were not any obstacles to restrict their independent and impartial activities. During the survey conducted among the experts and focus group discussions we asked them to **assess the effectiveness of the cooperation with the international expert.**





expert	responses	of responses
It was effective	36	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100%</b>

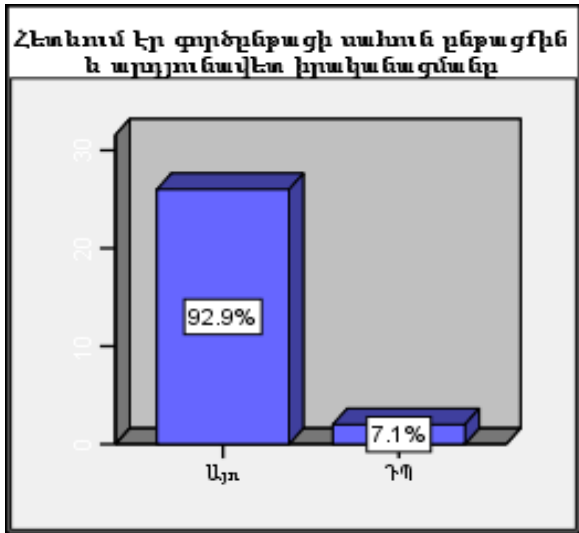
It is obvious that the cooperation with the international expert was quite effective. The experts consider that the international expert should be involved in the process from the desk review phase (through Skype) for increasing the effectiveness of the process. Moreover, the international expert should be provided with the information about the educational system of Republic of Armenia. It will give equal opportunities and the assessment will be more effective and easy for him/her.

**3.2 THE ROLE AND NECESSARY SKILLS OF THE COORDINATOR IN ACCREDITATION PROCESS**

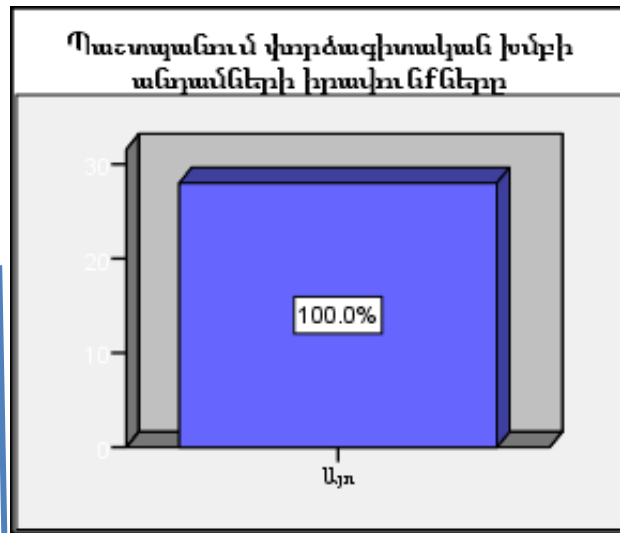
The expert panels are usually formed from the stakeholders who participated in the training, who have appropriate qualification and are interested in TLI’s quality assurance system. ANQA employee is also involved in the expert panel as a coordinator. The coordinator consolidates the link between the expert panel and the TLI under review. He/she is a guarantor of the accreditation methodology. We tried to assess the following responsibilities of the coordinator:

- the smooth flow and effective implementation of all procedures (holding discussions, regulating misunderstandings);
- protection of the rights of all panel members;
- the analysis of situations;
- in case of need coming up with right decisions and solutions
- keeping to the site visit agenda

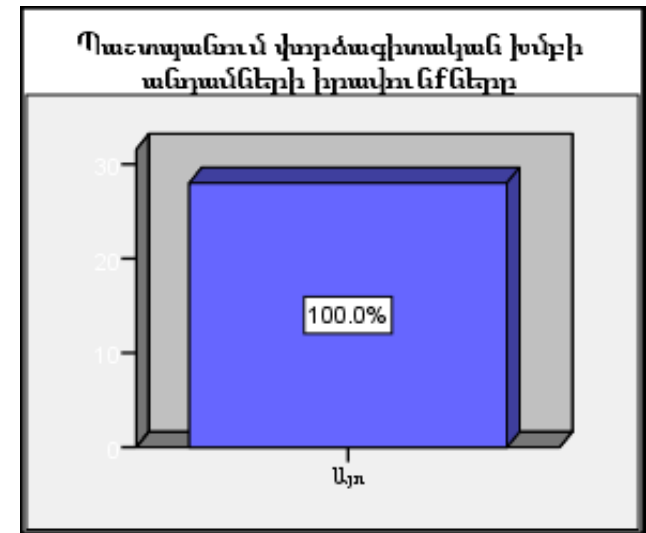
Analyzing the results, it can be stated that the coordinators carried out their duties properly. The positive responses are the proof of it. In some cases there were shortcomings in decision-making process and monitoring the smooth flow and effective implementation of the process.



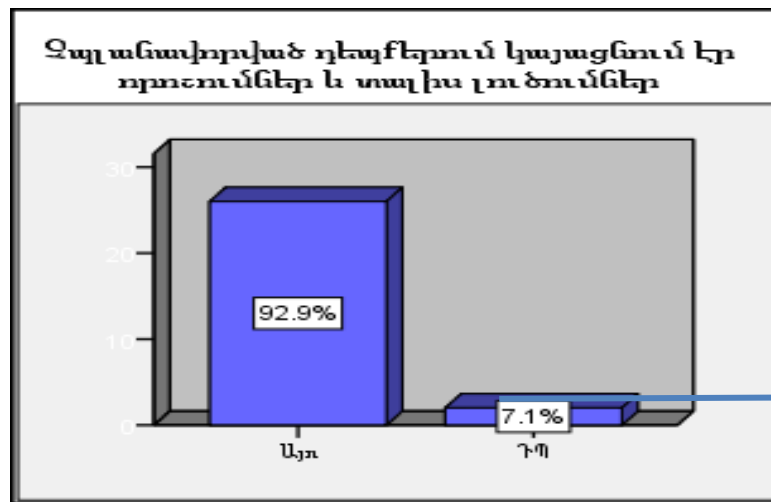
The smooth flow and effective implementation of all procedures



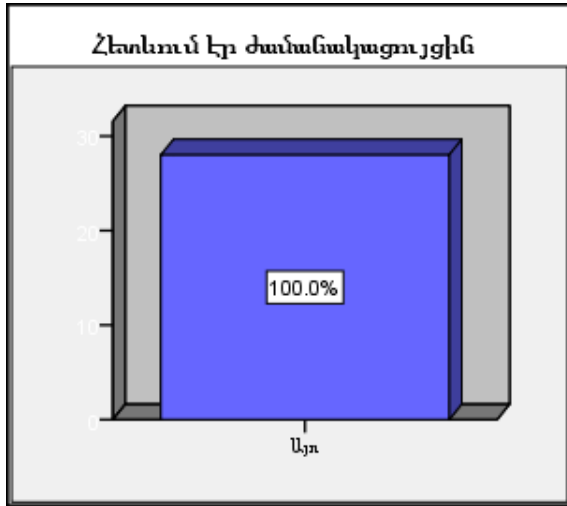
Protection of the rights of all panel members



Protection of rights of all panel members



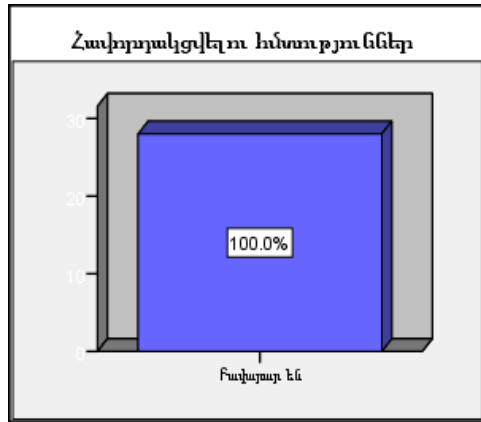
In case of need coming up with right decisions and solutions



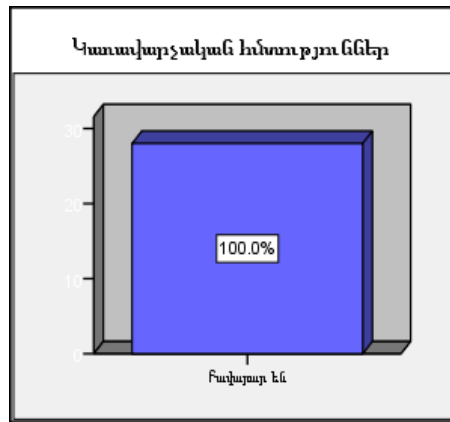
Keeping to the site visit agenda

The participants of the research were asked to assess some skills of the coordinator that are the prerequisite for being the part of the expert panel and for coordinating the processes effectively.

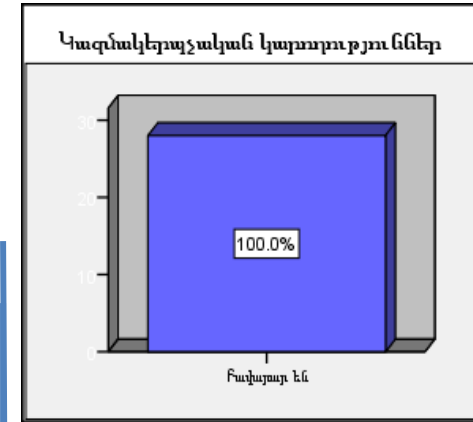
**Communication skills**



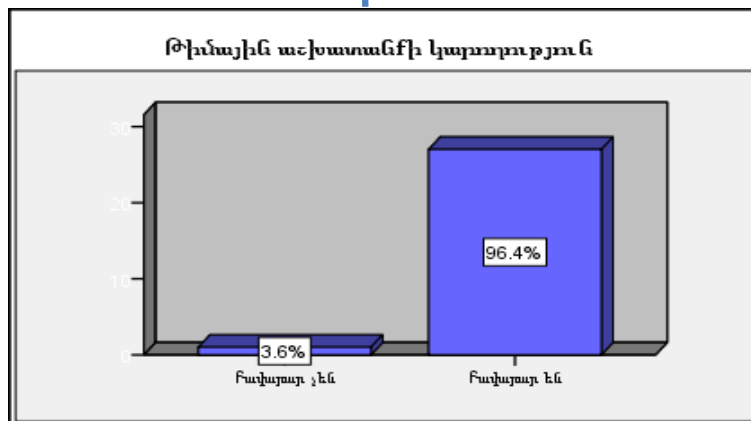
**Management skills**



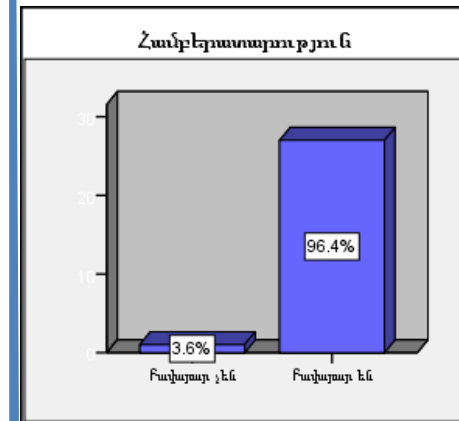
**Organizational abilities**



**Ability to work in team**



**Patience**



Based on the results of research, it can be stated that the coordinators worked effectively in team demonstrating communication, management, organizational and teamwork skills, and were very patient.

## PART 4. PEER-REVIEW (EXTERNAL EVALUATION)

The aim of external evaluation is to externally evaluate the institutions infrastructure, processes, and also institutions individual academic programmes and make a report to present it to ANQA Accreditation Commission.

The external evaluation evolves three main steps:

1. Desk review,
2. Site Visit,
3. Report production,
4. Decision making

We observed the above mentioned steps in the frames of research and tried to assess the effectiveness of each process and identify the problems.

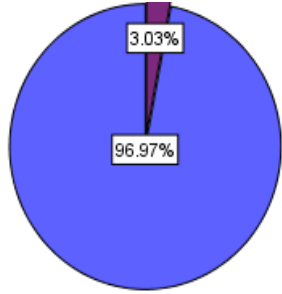
### 4.1. DESK REVIEW

During the desk review the experts assessed the adequacy of the self-evaluation report, academic programs and respective documentation submitted by TLI to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of a TLI/AP according to ANQA criteria and standard.

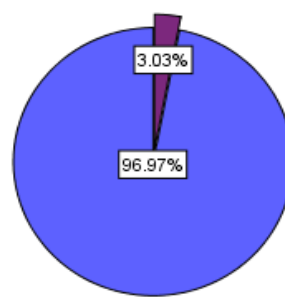
**We observed the effectiveness** of desk review according to the following perspectives:

- developing a clear idea about TLI,
- writing out issues that are subject to examination at the time of a site visit,
- production of a panel report.

From the perspective of developing a clear idea about TLI



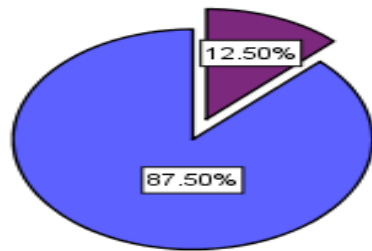
From the perspective of writing out issues and questions



Yes

No

From the perspective of producing a panel report

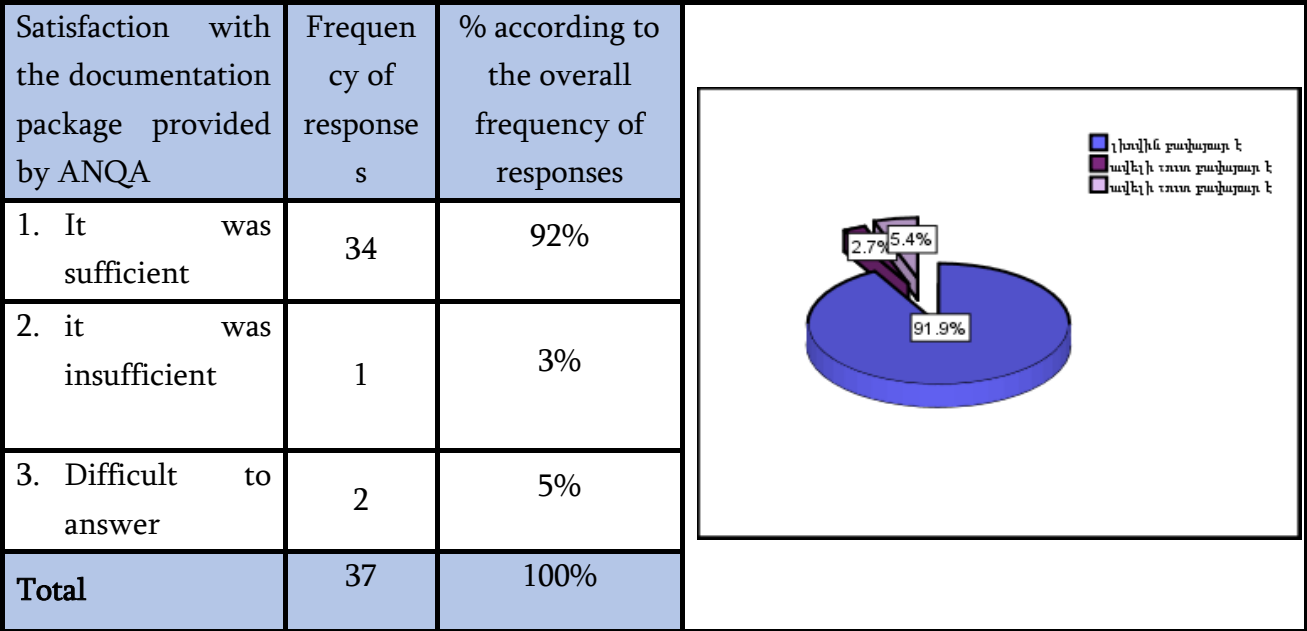


Yes

No

Based on the data obtained, it can be stated that the desk review was implemented effectively in different expert panels. Thus, the process has served its purpose; the experts were able to develop a clear idea about the TLI and to assess its strengths and weaknesses. The problematic issues/questions that were not introduced sufficiently and were subject to examination at the time of a site visit were written out. According to experts the latter was very useful for effective organization of site visits.

The experts were provided with all the necessary documents, including normative acts and legal documents for the effective assessment of TLI’s activities and the implementation of academic programs. As it is seen in the chart below, the **experts are satisfied with the documentation package (legal and normative acts, guidelines, formats, etc.) provided by ANQA** and are convinced that they are sufficient for the implementation of external evaluation.



However, it should be mentioned that, though the coordinators were trying to clarify misunderstandings in the formats, they are still very complicated and need to be revised.

	Frequency of responses	% according to the overall frequency of responses
1. The formats are complicated and need to be revised.	6	33%
2. The information is not complete. It is desirable to learn about the issues of the educational system beforehand	2	11%



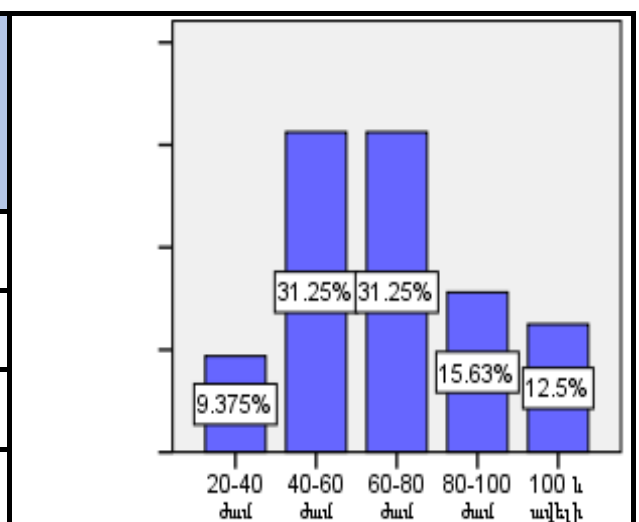
3. The coordinators clarified the misunderstandings in formats and documents	4	22%
4. The documentation package provided by ANQA was complete and sufficient	6	33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100%</b>

As to the desk review format, the experts are mostly satisfied and think that it is quite applicable. However, they made some observations, in particular, concerning the interpretation of criteria / standards and compliance of preliminary and final assessment formats.

Desk review format	Frequency of responses	% according to the overall frequency of responses
1. To interpret criteria/standards	2	33%
2. To comply preliminary and final assessment formats	2	33%
3. To present the draft report after the site visit including changes and revisions	1	17%
4. To expand the assessment scale	1	17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100%</b>

Apart from the observation of the effectiveness of the process and appropriateness of formats, we tried to find out how long it took from the experts to carry out desk review. It turned out that most of the experts implemented desk review for 40-80 hours. Though there were experts that implemented it for 20-40 or more than 100 hours.

Time allocated for desk review	Frequency of responses	% according to the overall frequency of responses
1. 20-40 hours	3	9%
2. 40-60 hours	10	31%
3. 60-80 hours	10	31%
4. 80-100 hours	5	16%

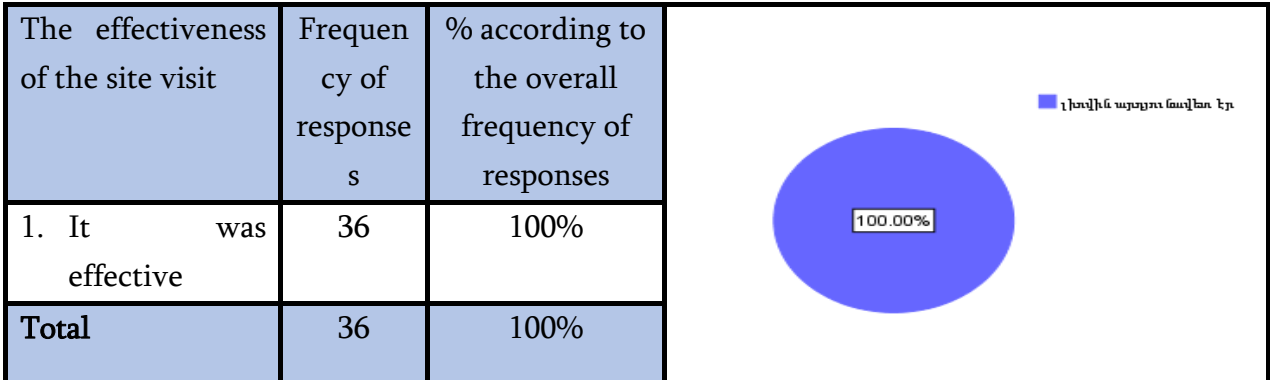


5. 100 hours and more	4	13%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**4.2. SITE VISIT**

A site visit is part of the external evaluation process during which the expert panel visits the TLI under review to check the validity of facts and information specified in the self-evaluation report, to receive some additional information through meetings and surveys, to access relevant documentation on educational processes and to develop a clear idea about the general activities of TLI.

We tried to assess to what extent they managed to accomplish the goals set before them. We observed the effectiveness of site visits, the appropriateness and usefulness of meetings from the perspective of obtaining necessary information, the effectiveness of separate meetings and the willingness of the University to provide the expert panel with additional information. We observed the optimal duration of meetings, too.



As it can be seen from the chart above, the site visits to TLI under review was quite effective.

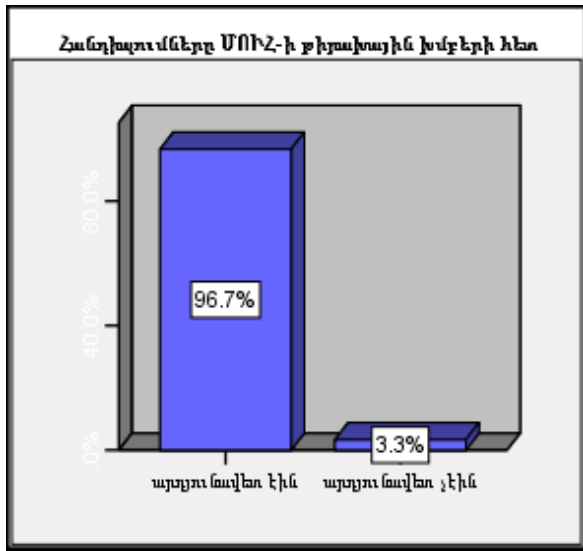
We also observed **the effectiveness of separate agenda-fixed meetings, particularly,**

- meetings with TLI’s different target groups,
- meetings at TLI’s different departments,
- open meetings,
- observation of resources,
- desk review,
- Closed

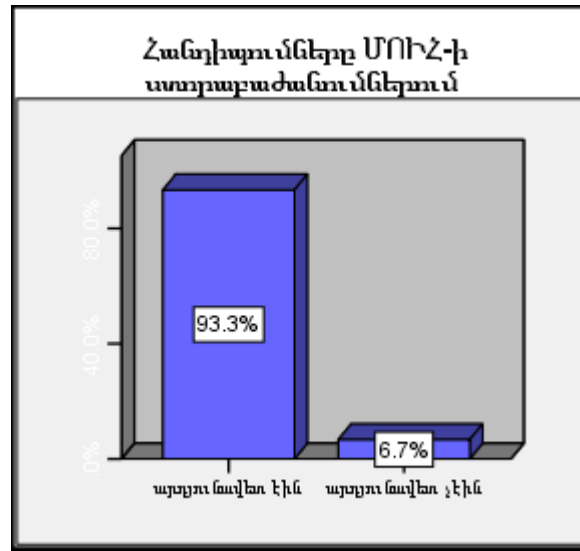
meetings.

The effectiveness of meetings during the site visit from the perspective of obtaining necessary information

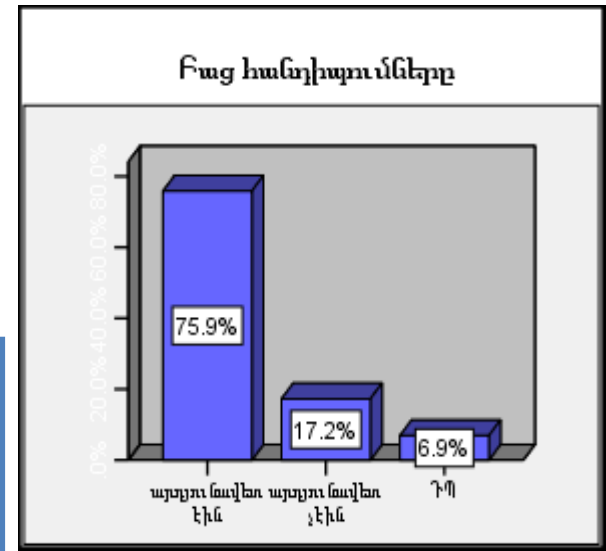
Meetings with TLI's different target groups



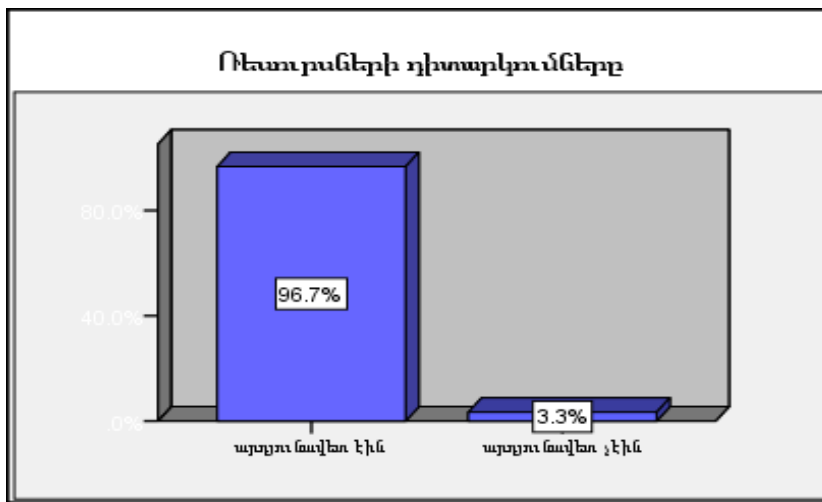
Meetings at TLI's different departments



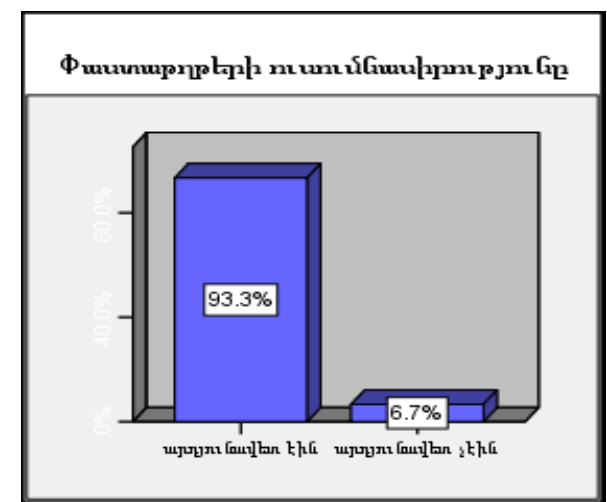
Open meetings



Observation of documents



Desk review

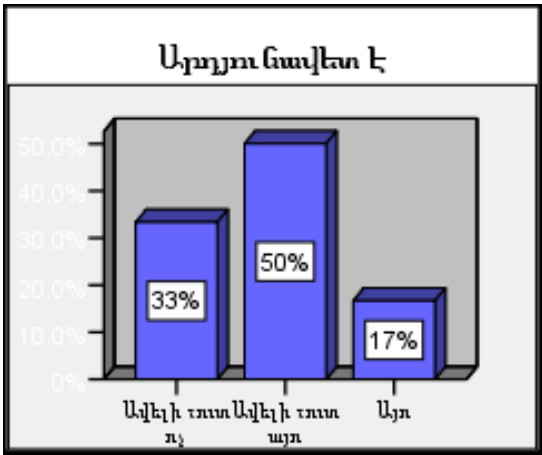


All the meetings were effective for developing a clear idea about the University. Maintenance of procedure is a necessary prerequisite for the effective meetings. According to the results of research, the open meetings are less effective, as there are usually no participants in it. Even if there are some participants, they avoid of raising problems and usually try to ask questions to expert panel instead.

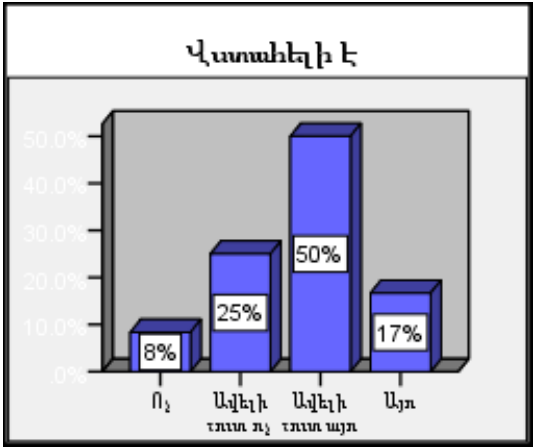
We observed question and answer format from the perspective of its

- Effectiveness,
- Reliability,
- Appropriateness.

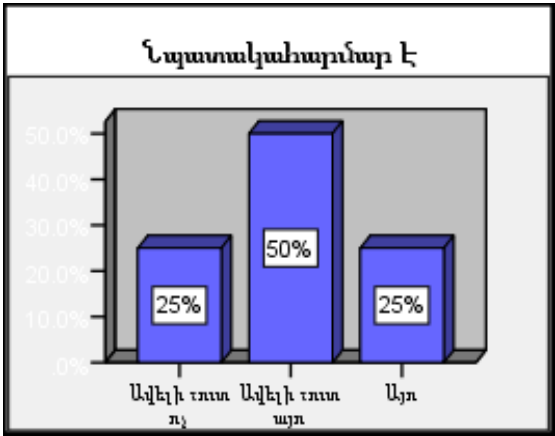
It is effective



It is reliable



It is appropriate



As you can see, the question and answer format of the site-visit isn't considered to be very effective, reliable and appropriate.

Question and answer format of site visit meetings	Frequency of responses	% according to the overall frequency

What would you change?		of responses
1. No need for changes	2	25%
2. To observe the creative processes in creative Universities during the site visit along with other issues on the organization of education, etc	1	13%
3. Approach to the formation of focus groups	1	13%
4. Each expert panel decides the frames of questions itself based on the self-evaluation report and desk-review. Questions may arise during the site visit. Thus, the format of questions depends on the professionalism of the experts.	1	13%
5. Experts should learn about the names and terms of activities implemented in the University beforehand, as there were cases during which the expert received a negative answer to his question addressed to the supporting staff only because of misunderstanding. E.g. the expert asked whether the students are provided with advising services and got a negative answer while in reality, the process was implemented in the university and was included in the workload of the lecturer with the name "Individual work with students"	1	13%
6. The questions must be elaborated beforehand, addressed to the right target group, be specific and objective	1	13%
7. to conduct recording, take measures on confidentiality and involve specialists in focus groups	1	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100%</b>

According to ANQA accreditation manual, closed meetings are intended for the expert panel members only and aim to bring in the key findings and achieve common understanding and agreement on each of them, as well as initiate drafting of the final report. For assessing the

effectiveness of closed meetings we tried to find out **the 3 main issues the solution of which they contributed to and to what extent they were effective.**

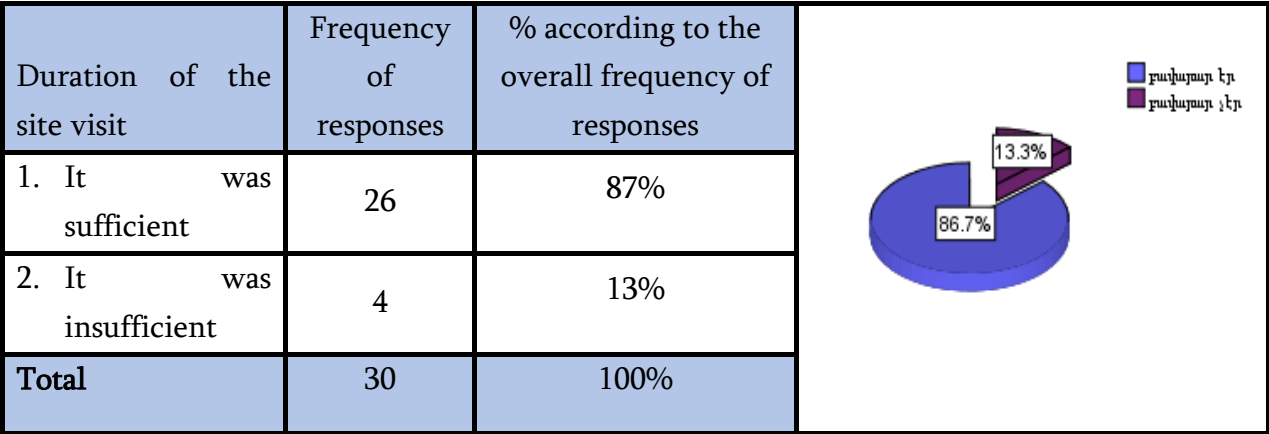
Effectiveness of closed meetings	Frequency of responses	% according to the overall frequency of responses
1. They were effective	27	90%
2. They were not effective	1	3%
3. Difficult to answer	3	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100%</b>

According to most of the respondents closed meetings were effective and contributed to the solution of the following issues:

Closed meetings contributed to the solution of the following issues	Frequency of responses	% according to the overall frequency of responses
1. Clarification of issues and steps of site visit	3	12%
2. Desk review	2	8%
3. Discussion of the results of desk review and outlining the strengths and weaknesses of the University	3	12%
4. Discussion and clarification of issues under review	4	15%
5. Assessment of criteria/standards	5	19%
6. Review of the results at the end of each site visit day and their generalization	4	15%
7. Exchange of ideas and formation of general views/conclusions	5	19%
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100%</b>

According to most of the respondents, closed meetings give a great opportunity to exchange ideas and share experience and are based on the most important principles of democracy – accepting the opinion of the majority by taking into account the opinion of the minority.

Site visit can last 3-7 days depending on the size and specifications of TLI under review, as well as the type of accreditation. We tried to find out **whether the duration of the site visit was enough to obtain all the necessary information about the University.**

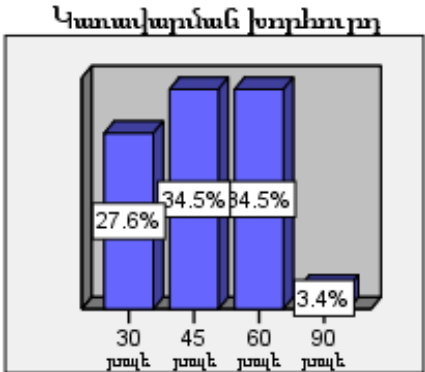


According to experts, the duration of the site visit was sufficient to develop a clear idea about the University and to identify its strengths and weaknesses.

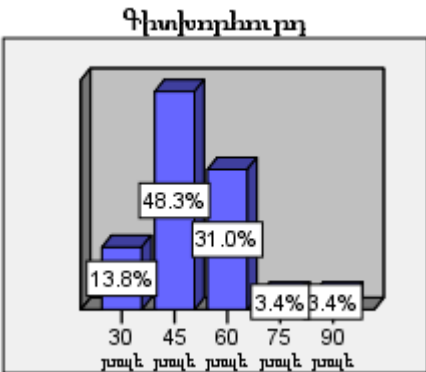
We also observed the duration of meetings with different target groups, so as to determine the optimal duration of meetings for drawing up future agendas. In the chart below, it is clearly seen that **the most optimal duration of meetings is 45-60 minutes** depending on the specifications of the meetings. In separate cases time interval can be different, e.g. according to experts the meeting with rector can last 30 minutes, while the meeting with lectures – 75 minutes.

The optimal duration of meetings according to target groups

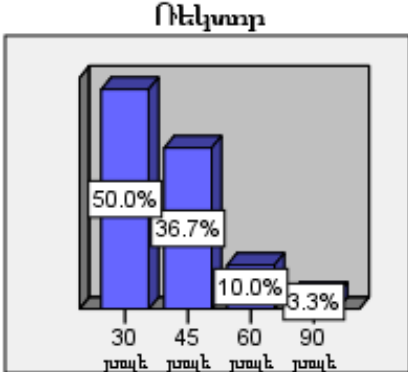
Management Council



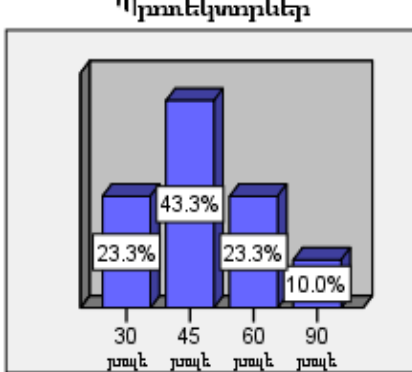
Academic Council



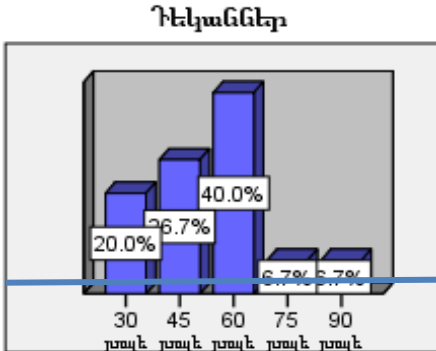
Rector



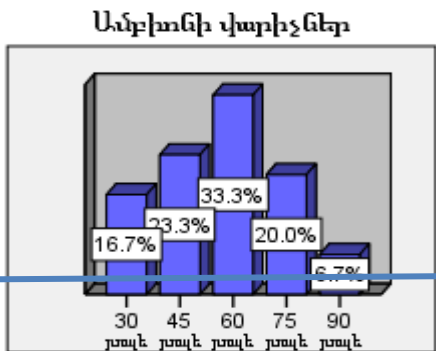
Vice-rectors



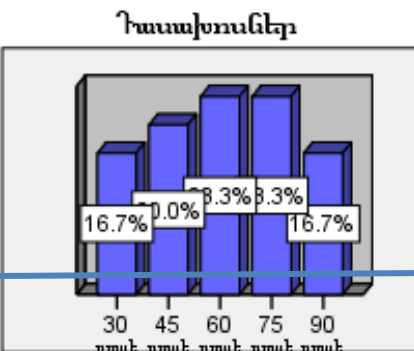
Deans



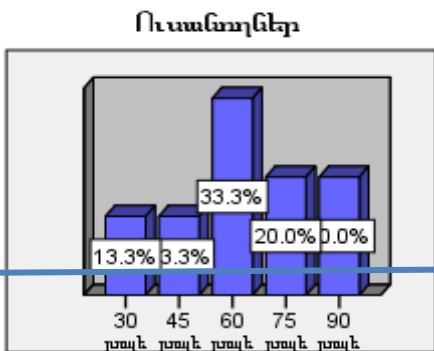
Heads of chairs



Lecturers



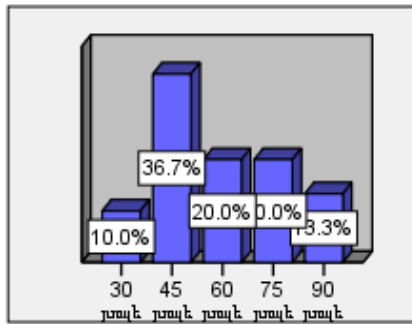
Students





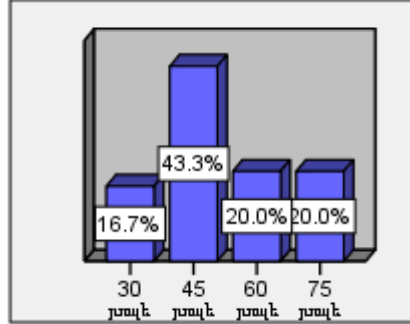
### Responsibles for QA

ՈԱ պատասխանատուներ



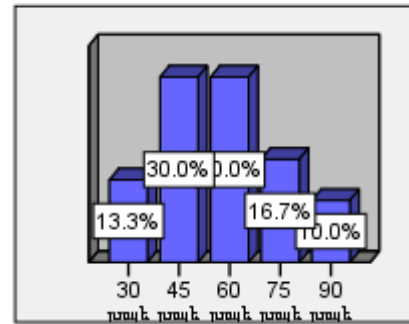
### Heads of subdivisions

Ստորաբաժանի ղեկավարներ



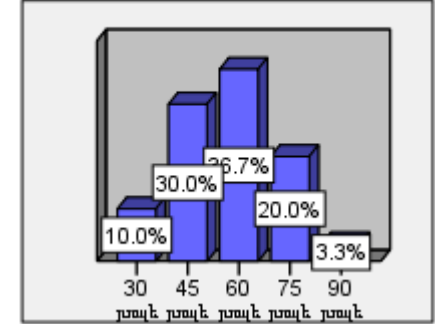
### Graduates

Շրջանավարտներ



### Employers

Գործատուներ







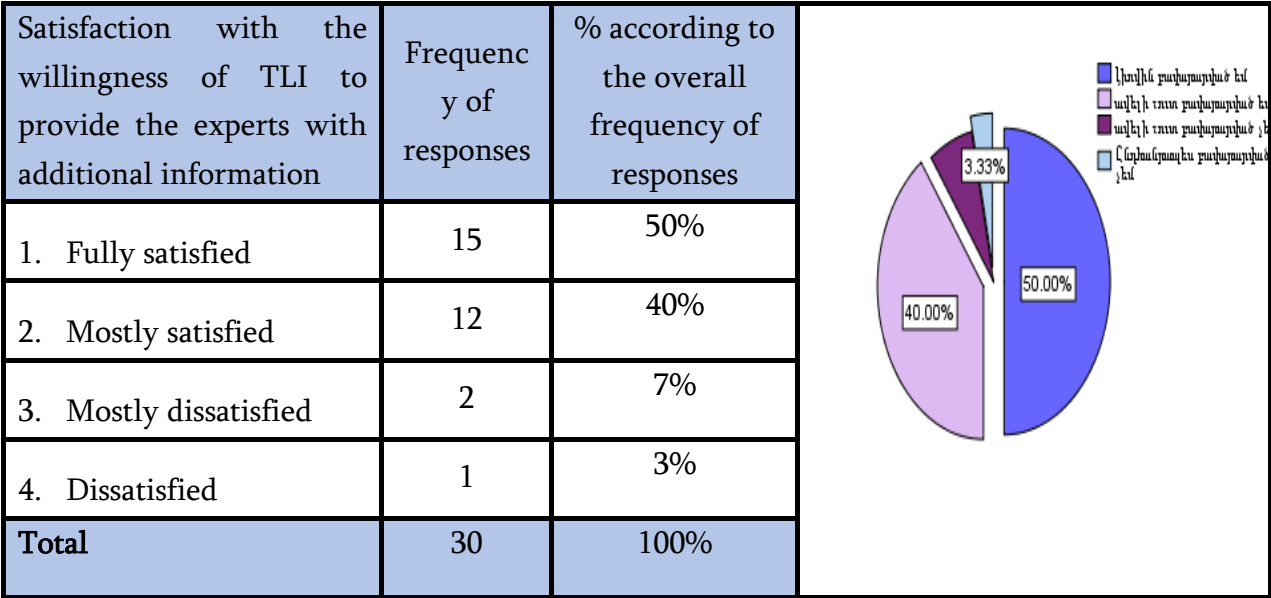
After each meeting the participants assess the effectiveness of the meeting, including the behavior of experts, some professional and general skills and the ability to receive information. These data are also included in research for developing a clear idea about the effectiveness of the site visits.

	Institutional accreditation %			Program accreditation %		
	Yes	No	Difficult to answer	Yes	No	Difficult to answer
The rules of conducting the meeting were represented in details	91.6	5.1	3.3	95.1	2.4	2.5
The participants of the meeting expressed their opinions freely	91	6.6	2.4	97.8	2.2	
The expert panel was professional in revealing the information about the TLI	89.2	3.3	7.5	88	1.6	10.4
The meeting with the expert panel members is of cooperative nature	92.5	3	4.5	91.1	6.4	2.5
The expert panel members conducted the meeting effectively	91.9	4.3	3.8	91.7	3.3	5
The expert panel was consistent in issues under review and discussion	92.5	3	4.5	93.8	3.8	2.4
Expert panel members had a proper style in delivering and receiving information	95.4	2.3	2.3	95.2	2.4	2.4
The questions were clear and understandable	94.9	2.2	2.9	91.5	2.7	5.8
The issues and needs of the University were revealed during the meeting	89.8	7.8	2.4	91	6.6	2.4
The expert panel members demonstrated listening and communicating abilities.	94.5	1.3	4.2	92.5	3	4.5
Expert panel members are not affected by any organization, are impartial in identification and interpretation of facts	88.8	5.6	5.6	94.9	2.2	2.9

The positive answers prove that the separate meetings of the site visit served their purpose and experts were able to receive the necessary information for the implementation of objective assessment.

We also observed the willingness of the University to provide experts with additional information and necessary working conditions.

Based on results of research, it can be stated that HEIs were generally willing to provide experts with additional information.



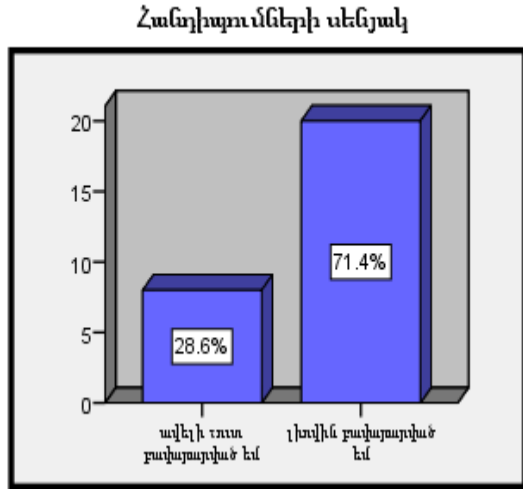
The working conditions allocated by TLI were observed from the following perspectives:

- working area,
- meeting halls,
- technical means,
- means of transportation,
- organization of breaks.

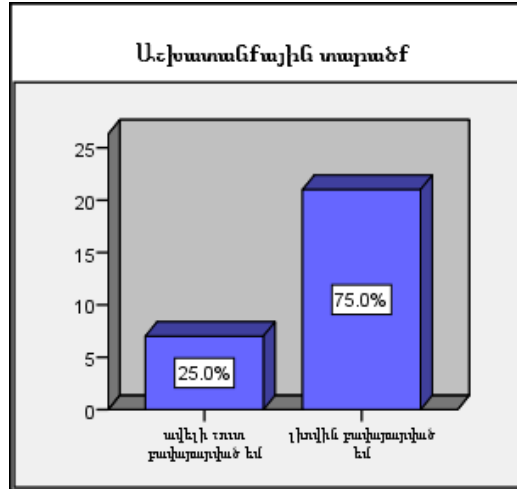
In the chart below, it can be seen that the resources provided by the University were sufficient for the effective implementation of site visits and revealing necessary information.

Working conditions provided by TLI

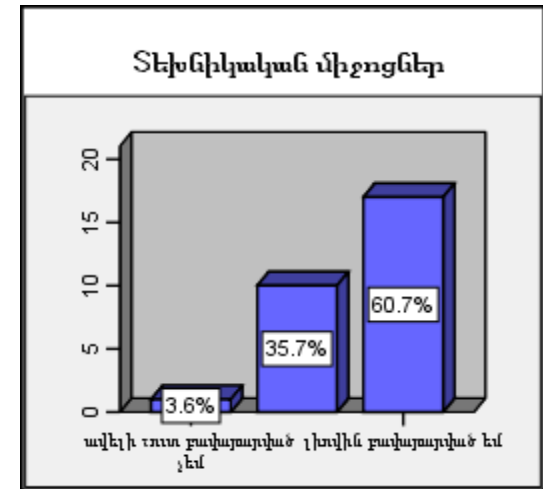
Meeting halls



Working area



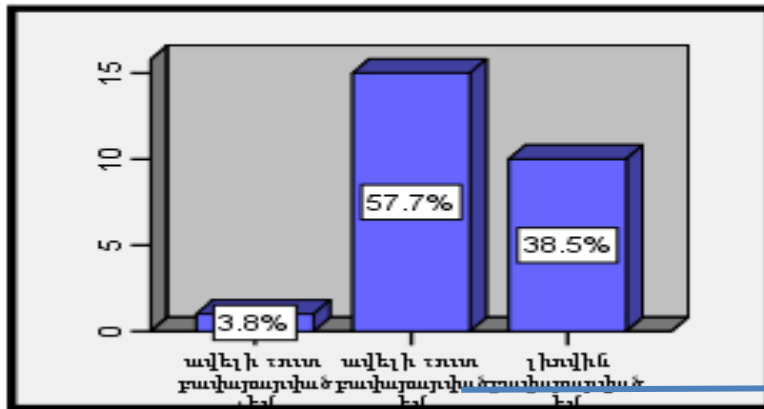
Technical means



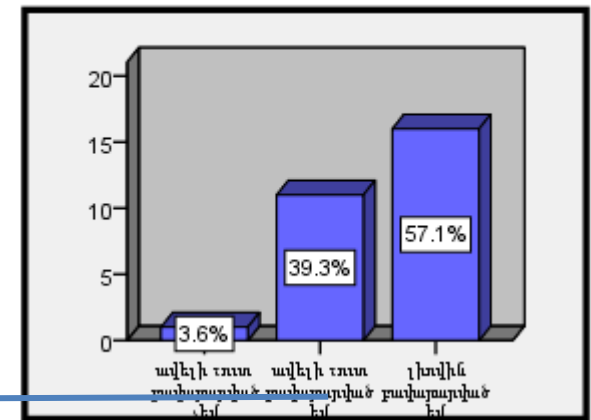
Means of transportation

Organization of breaks

Տրանսպորտային միջոցներ

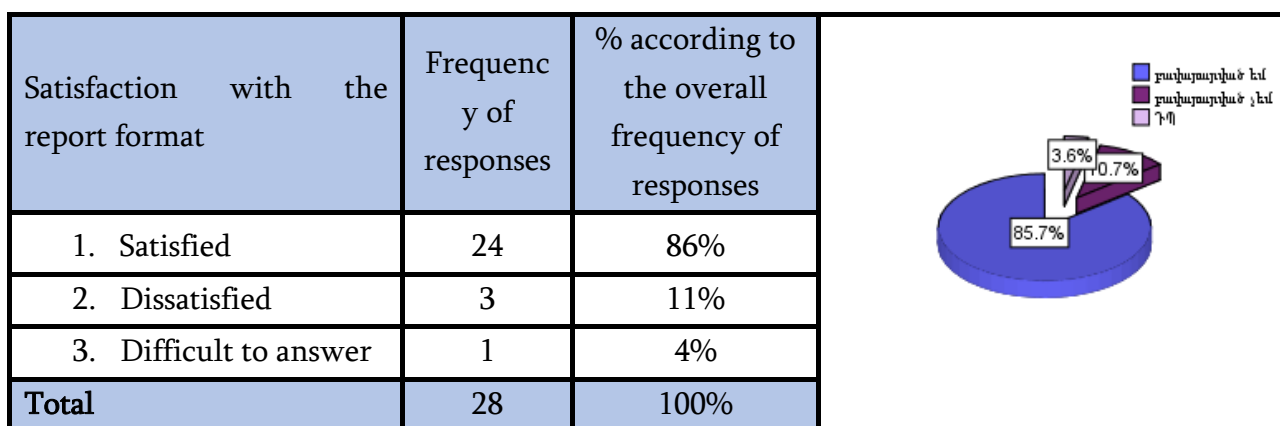


Հերմիջումների կազմակերպում



### 4.3 REPORT PRODUCTION

After the site visit the expert panel and the ANQA coordinator produced the panel report based on desk review and findings brought out from the site visit. Based on the findings the expert panel conducted in-depth analysis in accordance with the format. The applicability and effectiveness of the format was also observed in research.

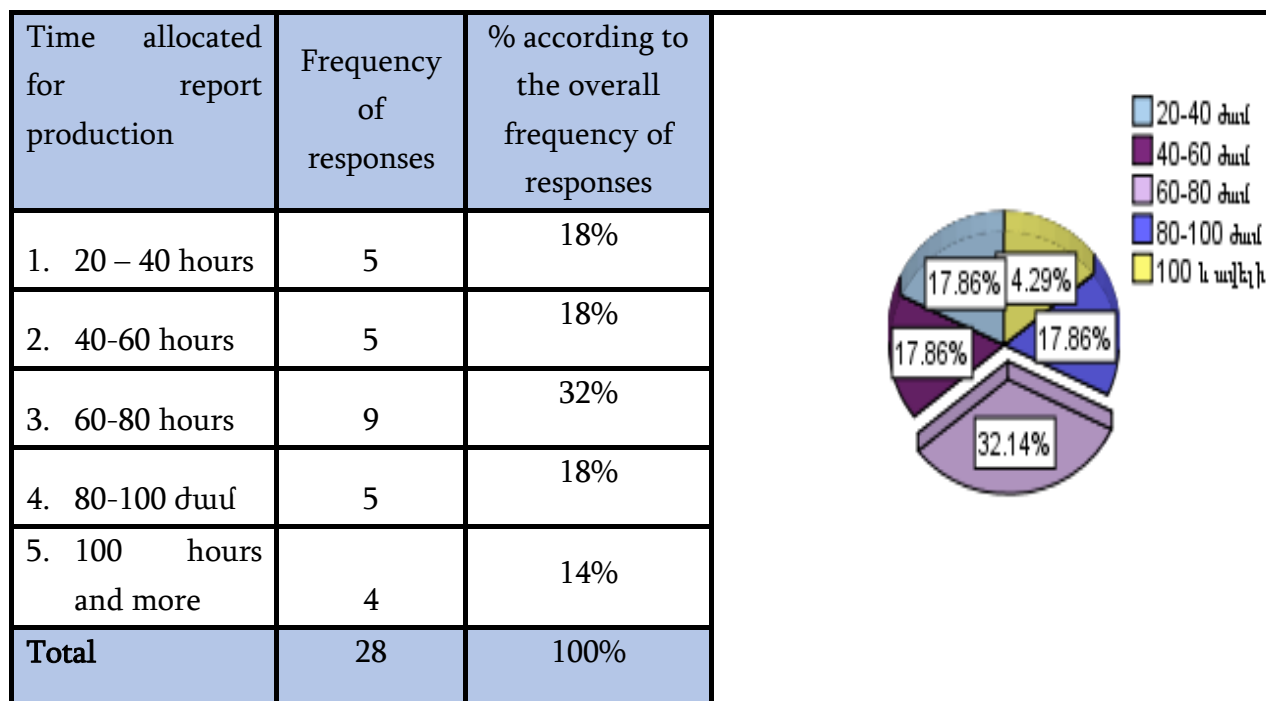


Summing up the results of research, it can be stated that **the experts were generally satisfied with report format**. However, they suggested the following changes for the improvement of the report.

Closed meetings contributed to the solution of the following issues	Frequency of responses	% according to the overall frequency of responses
1. To clarify the assessment system: more simple and clear scheme should be introduced	6	25%
2. To reduce the volume of the report, it's too large	1	4%
3. To revise the format, especially the following parts – description of the current situation, recommendation, criteria assessment	1	4%
4. To combine findings and considerations to preserve the logical order	4	17%
5. To analyze several standards together	2	8%
6. To clarify-interpret criteria/standards	4	17%
7. To simplify the language of the report; long	6	25%

sentences abundant with terms make the comprehension of the content difficult		
<b>Total</b>	24	100%

The duration for the report production was also observed in research. We tried to find out **how long it took the experts to produce the report.**



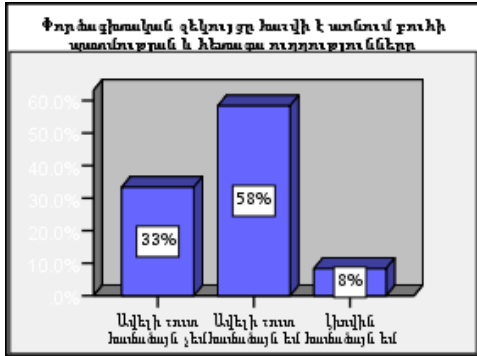
Based on the results, it can be stated that most of the respondents have worked on the report for 60-80 hours, in few cases more than 100 hours.

Apart from structural elements, we observed the content issues of the report:

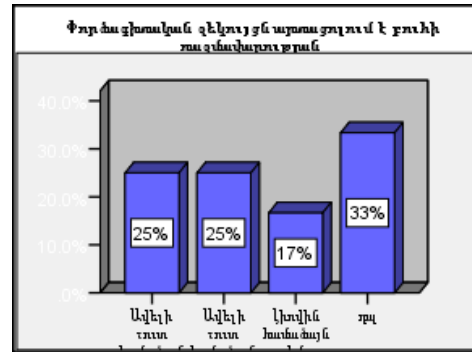
- to what extent the language of the report was understandable,
- to what extent the panel report was linked to HEI’s self-evaluation report,
- to what extent report reflected the perception of HEI’s environment,
- to what extent the panel report takes into account HEI’s history and further development directions,
- to what extent the report reflects the strategy of HEI,
- to what extent HEI accepts the weaknesses outlined in the report,
- to what extent the report can have an impact on HEI’s new strategy,
- to what extent the report can have an impact on the administration and governance of HEI
- to what extent the report can provide the University with new analytical opportunities.



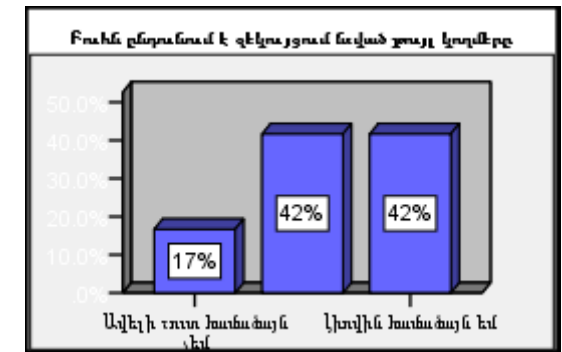




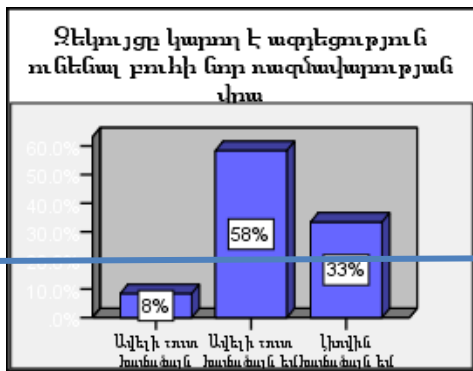
The panel report takes into account HEI's history and further development directions



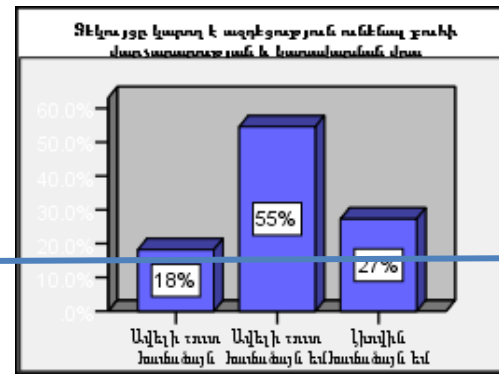
The report reflects the strategy of HEI outlined in the report



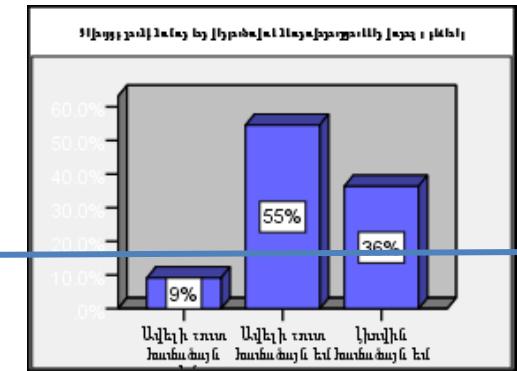
HEI accepts the weaknesses outlined in the report



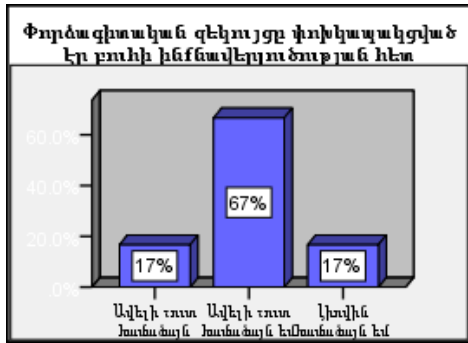
The report can have an impact on HEI's new strategy



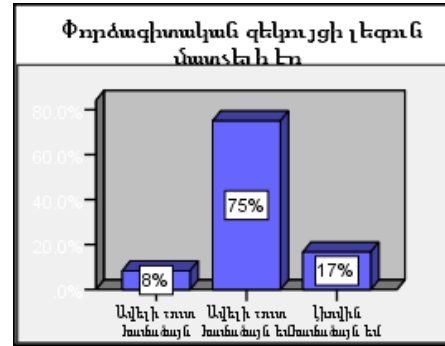
The report can have an impact on the administration and governance of HEI



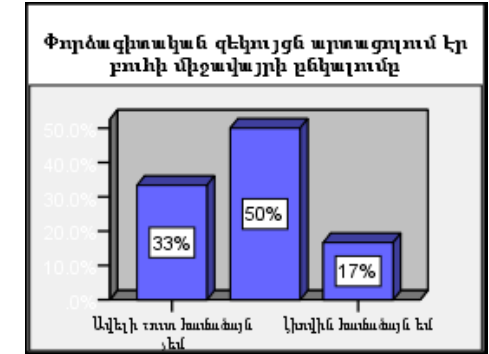
The report can provide the University with new analytical opportunities



The report was linked to HEI's self-evaluation report



The language of the report was understandable



The report reflected the perception of HEI's environment

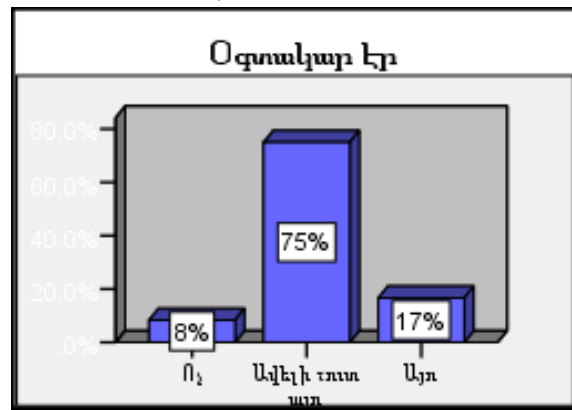
Based on the results of research conducted in Universities, it can be stated that the panel report generally served its purpose; particularly **it can have an impact on the strategy of the University, as well as on its administration and governance.** However, relatively negative responses were on the perception of the University's environment and reflection of history and further development of directions: 33% of Universities think that the report doesn't reflect these two issues. The language of the report was generally clear and understandable for the Universities.

During the surveys as well as discussions with focus groups the participants of research mentioned that the imperfections outlined in the report served as a guide for University's further activities.

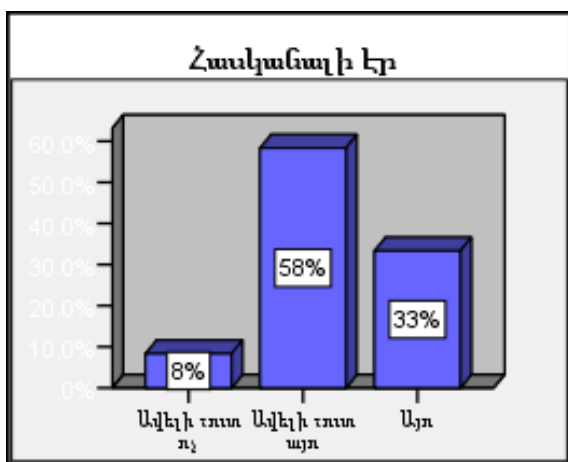
Panel Report	Frequency of responses	% according to the overall frequency of responses
1. The imperfections outlined in the report served as a guide for University's further activities	5	63%
2. Almost all weaknesses were taken into consideration in recommendations, however there were also unrealistic recommendations from the perspective of their implementation	1	13%
3. To provide more evidences in the report	1	13%
4. There would be some difficulties in the accreditation process if there were no experts who participated in the accreditation process in European Universities.	1	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100%</b>

**The usefulness, comprehensible and realistic nature of implementation of the recommendations** were also observed in the frames of research.

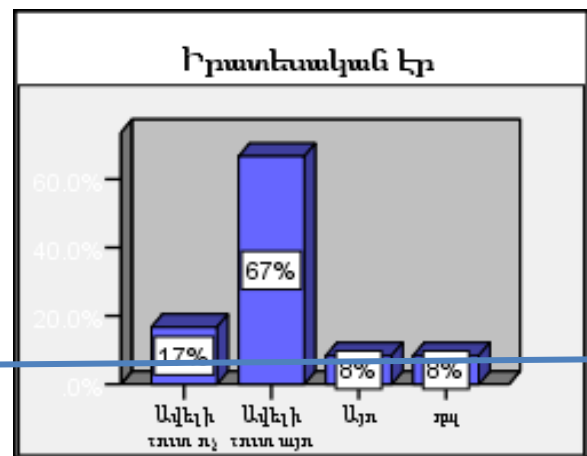
They were useful



They were understandable



They were realistic



Based on the obtained data, it can be said that recommendations were very useful from the perspective of further development and improvement of the University, they were understandable from the perspective of their implementation, though there are some controversy opinions regarding the realistic nature of their implementation: 17 % of respondents think that the implementation was not realistic, and 8 % found it difficult to answer the question.

According to the Statute on Accreditation, TLI should present its remarks on each assessment of criteria and about the draft version of the report. The chairman of the expert panel and ANQA coordinator revise the report if the remarks are grounded. So, we tried to **find out to what extent the expert panel took into consideration the TLI's remarks about the report.**

	Frequency of responses	% according to the overall frequency of responses
1. Yes	3	25
2. Partially	6	50
3. No	3	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100%</b>

A pie chart illustrating the distribution of responses. The chart is divided into three segments: a large blue segment representing 'Partially' at 50%, and two smaller purple segments representing 'Yes' and 'No', each at 25%. A legend to the right of the chart identifies the colors: purple for 'Ναι' (Yes), blue for 'Μερικώς' (Partially), and light purple for 'Όχι' (No).

As you can see, in most cases Universities' remarks were partially taken into account while producing the final report. The expert panel provided reasonable grounds in case the remarks were not included in the report.

Did the expert panel take into consideration your remarks? Please, specify	Frequency of responses	% according to the overall frequency of responses
1. The remarks were taken into consideration	5	63%
2. The remarks made in the preliminary report were either not included in the final report or if the expert panel didn't agree with our objections, they grounded it in the final report	1	13%
3. Some formulations were changed	1	13%
4. Some provisions of the report were clarified by HEI	1	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100%</b>

We asked the respondents **what they would change in HEI's follow-up plan format**. Most of the Universities think that it doesn't need any revision. The only thing they would change is to make the format in compliance with the existing approaches of the strategic planning.

What would you change in HEI's follow-up plan format	Frequency of responses	% according to the overall frequency of responses
1. No need for changes	9	75%
2. We would make the format in compliance with the existing approaches of the strategic planning.	1	8%
3. A free format is preferable	1	8%
4. To be more consistent /a number of activities should be documented and made procedural/	1	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100%</b>

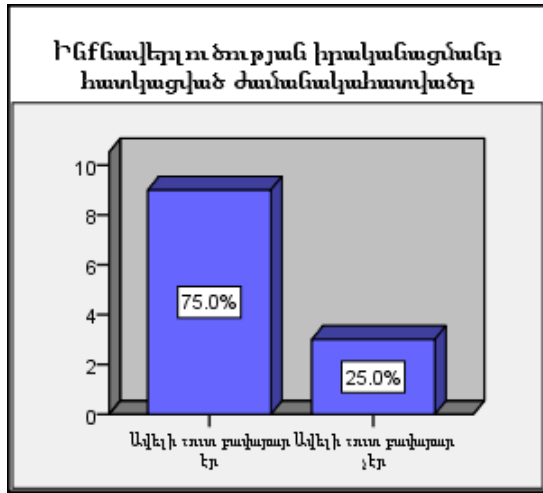
## PART 5. THE REALISTIC TIMEFRAMES OF EACH STEP OF ACCREDITATION PROCESS

The realistic timeframes allocated for each process were observed to develop a clear idea about the whole accreditation process. We tried to find out whether the timeframes were sufficient and what the most realistic time of the process is.

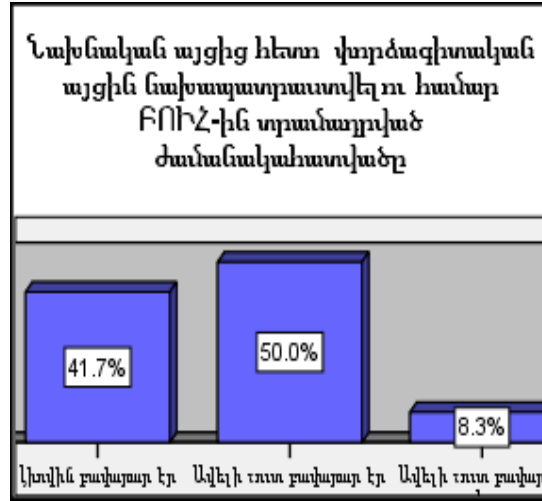
- Time allocated for the implementation of self-evaluation,
- time allocated to the University for getting ready for the site visit after the preparatory visit,
- duration of the site visit,
- time allocated for the development of follow-up plan,
- time allocated for making remarks or objections about the draft version of the report.

The realistic timeframes of the accreditation process

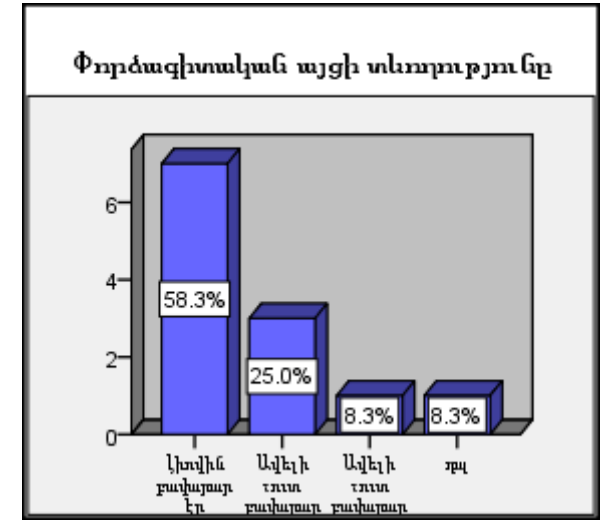
Time allocated for the implementation of self-evaluation



Time allocated to the University for getting ready for the site visit after the preparatory visit

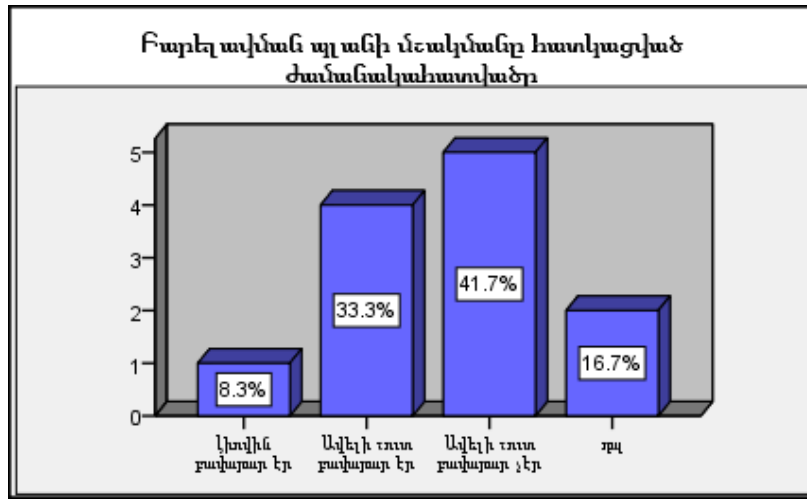


Duration of the site visit

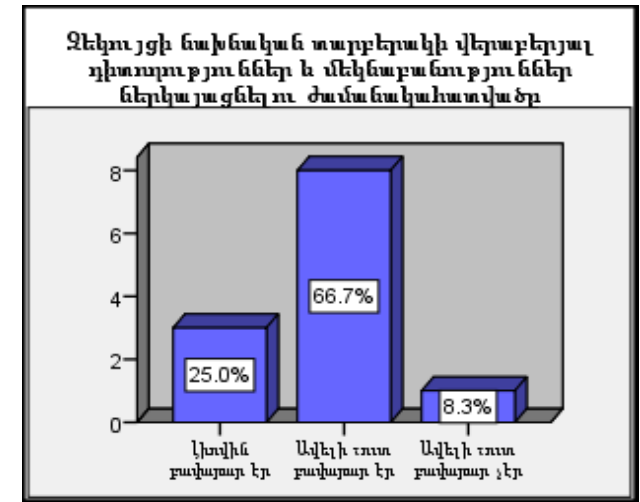




Time allocated for the development of follow-up plan



Time allocated for making remarks or objections about the draft version of the report



As it can be seen from the chart above, the timeframes set in agenda were generally sufficient for the organization of the process, while time allocated for the follow-up plan was not realistic. **Time allocated for the implementation of self-evaluation** was generally optimal. All the difficulties were mainly because of the lack of experience. According to the respondents 1 year is not enough for the implementation of self-evaluation for the first time. The most optimal duration is 1.5 years.

According to most of the Universities, **time allocated to the University for getting ready to the site visit after the preparatory visit was fully sufficient**. Here are the most optimal timeframes for the Universities:

Time allocated to the University for getting ready to the site visit after the preparatory visit	Frequency of responses	% according to the overall frequency of responses
1. It was sufficient	7	58%
2. 2-3 months	2	17%
3. 2 months	2	17%
4. 1 month	1	8%
Total	12	100%

According to most of the Universities **the duration of the site visit** was quite enough for receiving a clear idea about the University. However, the employees of the HEI think that the duration of the site visit should be determined according to the size of the University. Some Universities noted that 1 week is an optimal duration, some others consider that 5 days would suffice, if the University doesn't have branches (otherwise one more day is need).

Time allocated for making remarks and comments on the preliminary report was mainly sufficient.

The time allocated for making remarks and comments on preliminary report	Frequency of responses	% according to the overall frequency of responses
1. Time allocated was optimal	7	58%
2. 1-2 months	1	8%
3. 4 months	1	8%
4. 2 months and more	3	25%
Total	12	100%

Time allocated for making remarks and comments about the preliminary report was generally sufficient. Here is the most optimal timeframe according to the Universities:

Time allocated for making remarks and comments about the preliminary report	Frequency of responses	% according to the overall frequency of responses
1. Time allocated was optimal	7	58%
2. 1-2 months	1	8%
3. 4 months	1	8%
4. 2 months and more	3	25%
Total	12	100%

Though the time allocated for the development of follow-up plan was sufficient, according to most of the respondents, the most optimal options are the following:

Time allocated for the development of follow-up plan	Frequency of responses	% according to the overall frequency of responses
1. Time allocated was optimal	4	33%
2. It depends on the remarks and comments / it depends on the complexity of the plan and the duration of acceptance and approval of the procedure	2	17%
3. 2-3 months	2	17%
4. 1 month and more	2	17%
5. 2-3 months	2	17%
Total	12	100%

The participants of the accreditation process were given an opportunity to make remarks and suggestions that are presented below:

Remarks/suggestions	Frequency of responses	% according to the overall frequency of responses
1. To clarify and interpret criteria/standards	7	18%
2. To make the payment of the expert in compliance with the work done	6	15%
3. To organize intensive expert trainings	7	18%
Total	20	100%

## ԱՄՓՈՓՈՒՄ SUMMARY

### Structure and content of the application

Summarizing the responses, it should be noted, that most of the participants did not face any obstacles while filling in the application form and think that no changes in structure and content are needed.

### ANQA electronic questionnaire

The obstacles encountered while filling in ANQA electronic questionnaire were mainly of technical nature and connected to time constraints. What concerns the effectiveness of the questionnaire, it should be noted that according to most of the participants, the questionnaire should be improved technically and be simplified in structure.

### Self-evaluation

The main obstacles in the formats were the repetitions and interpretation of terms in different standards that were caused mainly by the formulation of questions and translation. An additional clarification and interpretation of criteria/standards are needed.

According to the participants of research, the existence of guidelines will specify the criteria / standards, and thus, don't give rise to misinterpretation. However, it was also noted that they may restrict the University's creative and unique approach to the analysis.

## **Recommendations provided by ANQA**

Recommendations on the implementation of self-evaluation generally served their purpose. It is evidenced by the positive assessments of most of the Universities.

In the frames of research conducted among experts, as well as during the discussions with focus group, we observed the issues of self-evaluation process. We tried to find out especially in what cases self –evaluation report should be returned to the TLI for revision and what data (quantitative or qualitative) are needed in the self-evaluation package to enhance the effectiveness of the external evaluation. The main obstacle is the wrong perception of requirements of criteria/standards. The text of the self-evaluation reports doesn't often reflect the requirement of criteria/standards because of this factor.

And as a solution to this problem, the experts suggest to return the self-evaluation report to the Universities, if the minimum threshold of information necessary for the implementation of the assessment is not ensured. It was suggested to involve the experts in the process of accepting self-evaluation reports. The experts think that apart from coordinator's technical review, they should also assess the report. Based on the results of research, it can be stated, that the experts want to see more analytical data and not just descriptions of facts and figures. In other words, there should not be quantitative data, but analysis of their dynamics, causes of their reduction or increase, etc.

## **Expert panel Formation and Composition**

According to most of the respondents, the expert panel should be composed of the representatives of teaching staff, educational management and students. The next most frequently mentioned group was the employers.

Summarizing the results of research, it can be stated that the trainings were generally effective. The positive responses prove that the trainings were sufficient for the formation of necessary skills and competences and the information on further steps was provided.

The results of the survey conducted among the experts who implemented external evaluation in RA TLIs, as well as among the focus groups, showed that they are generally satisfied with the information provided by ANQA. However, the 14% of the respondents are not satisfied with the provided information on the assessment methods, 19 % - with the interpretation of criteria and standards.

The results of research proved that most of the experts successfully applied the acquired skills and competences during the peer-review. Moreover, 92% of experts have expressed a wish to take part in the accreditation processes in future. According to the obtained data the experts

were independent during the external evaluation. There were not any obstacles to restrict their independent and impartial activities.

The cooperation with the international expert was quite effective. The experts consider that the international expert should be provided with the information about the educational system of Republic of Armenia. It will give equal opportunities and the assessment will be more effective and easy for him/her.

### **The role and necessary skills of the coordinator in accreditation process**

Analyzing the results of research, it can be stated that the coordinators carried out their duties properly. The positive responses are the proof of it. In some cases there were shortcomings in decision-making process and monitoring the smooth flow and effective implementation of the process. It can be stated that the coordinators worked effectively in team demonstrating communication, management, organizational and teamwork skills, and were very patient.

### **Peer-review (External evaluation)**

#### **Desk review**

Based on the data obtained, it can be stated that the desk review was implemented effectively in different expert panels. Thus, the process has served its purpose; the experts were able to develop a clear idea about TLI and to assess its strengths and weaknesses. The problematic issues/questions that were not introduced sufficiently and were subject to examination at the time of a site visit were written out. According to experts the latter was very useful for effective organization of site visits.

The experts are satisfied with the documentation package (legal and normative acts, guidelines, formats, etc.) provided by ANQA and are convinced that they are sufficient for the implementation of external evaluation.

As to the desk review format, the experts are mostly satisfied and think that it is quite applicable. However, they made some observations, in particular, concerning the interpretation of criteria / standards and compliance of preliminary and final assessment formats.

Apart from the observation of the effectiveness of the process and appropriateness of formats, we tried to find out how long it took from the experts to carry out desk review. It turned out that most of the experts implemented desk review for 40-80 hours. Though there were experts that implemented it for 20-40 or more than 100 hours.

## **Site visit**

The site visits to TLI under review was quite effective for all the experts. All the meetings were effective for developing a clear idea about the University. Maintenance of procedure is a necessary prerequisite for the effective meetings. According to the results of research, only the open meetings are less effective, as there are usually no participants in it. Even if there are some participants, they avoid of raising problems and usually try to ask questions to expert panel instead.

Question and answer format of site visit meetings site-visit wasn't considered to be very effective, reliable and appropriate from the perspective of receiving necessary information about TLI, therefore, it should be improved.

According to most of the respondents closed meetings were effective.

Experts are of opinion that the duration of the site visit was sufficient to develop a clear idea about the University and to identify its strengths and weaknesses.

We also observed the duration of meetings with different target groups, so as to determine the optimal duration of meetings for drawing up future agendas. The most optimal duration of meetings is 45-60 minutes depending on the specifications of the meetings. We also observed the willingness of the University to provide experts with additional information and necessary working conditions.

Based on results of research, it can be stated that HEIs were generally willing to provide experts with additional information. The resources provided by the University were sufficient for the effective implementation of site visits and revealing necessary information.

## **Report Production**

Summing up the results of research, it can be stated that the experts were generally satisfied with report format. Based on the results of research conducted in Universities, it can be stated that the panel report generally served its purpose; particularly it had an impact on the strategy of the University as well as on its administration and governance. However, relatively negative responses were on the perception of the University's environment and reflection of history and further development of directions: 33% of Universities think that the report doesn't reflect these two issues. The language of the report was generally clear and understandable for the Universities.

Based on the results, it can be stated that most of the respondents have worked on the report for 60-80 hours, in few cases more than 100 hours.

Based on the obtained data, it can be said that the recommendations were very useful from the perspective of further development and improvement of the University, they were understandable from the perspective of their implementation, though there are some

controversy opinions regarding the realistic nature of their implementation: 17 % of respondents think that implementation was not realistic, and 8 % found it difficult to answer the question.

Most of the Universities think that follow-up plan doesn't need any revision. The only thing they would change is to make the format in compliance with the existing approaches to the strategic planning.

### **The realistic timeframes of each process of the accreditation process**

The timeframes set in the agenda were generally sufficient for the organization of the process. Only the time allocated for the follow-up plan was not realistic and needs to be revised.

Time allocated for the implementation of self-evaluation was generally optimal.

All the difficulties were mainly because of the lack of experience. According to the respondents the most optimal duration for the implementation of self-evaluation is 1.5 years.

According to most of the Universities time allocated to the University for getting ready to the site visit after the preparatory visit and the duration of the site visit were fully sufficient. However, the employees of the HEI think that the duration of the site visit should be determined according to the size of the University.

Time allocated for making remarks and comments on the preliminary report and the development of follow-up plan was generally sufficient.



## APPENDIX 1

### Selection of ANQA experts who participated in research

