CONCLUSION

On Accreditation of Institutional Capacities of Yerevan State Linguistic University

General Information about the Institution

Full name of the Institution	Yerevan State Linguistic University
Acronym	YSLU
Official address	42 Toumanyan str., 0002, Yerevan, Armenia
Previous accreditation decree and date	Not available

LEGAL BASIS

Guided by the regulation on "State Accreditation of RA Institutions and their Educational Programs" approved by the RA Government on 30 June, 2011 N 978-Ն decree; by RA Government decree N 959-Ն (30 June, 2011) on "Approval of RA Standards for Professional Education Accreditation" as well as by the Procedure on the Formation and Functioning of Accreditation Committee of "National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance" foundation (ANQA), the Accreditation Committee of "National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance" foundation (hereinafter referred to as the Committee) discussed the ANQA draft conclusion on the institutional capacities of Yerevan State Linguistic University (hereinafter: YSLU) on the basis of self-analysis presented by YSLU, Expert Panel report, YSLU action plan for the elimination of shortcomings mentioned in the Expert Panel report as well as Expert panel opinion based on the YSLU action plan with the presence of the ANQA representatives, the Expert Panel, and ANQA coordinator of the accreditation procedure.

As a result of discussion the following was registered:

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

Submission of application	**12 March 2012**
Submission of self-evaluation report	**27 December 2012**
Site-visit	**13-17 May 2013**
Submission of expert panel report	**1 August 2013**
Submission of action plan for elimination of shortcomings	**14 February 2014**

<div align="center">RESULTS OF PEER REVIEW</div>

The expertise of YSLU has been carried out by an independent expert panel formed in compliance with the requirements set forth by the ANQA Regulation on the Formation of Expert Panel[1] . The evaluation has been made according to 10 criteria of institutional accreditation approved by N 959-Ն Decree of the RA Government, 30 June 2011[2].

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While carrying out the evaluation the Committee has taken into consideration the fact that YSLU is a key player in providing education on linguistic and intercultural communication, as well as humanities. It strives to become a hub to disseminate information on languages and diverse cultures, to promote tolerance, cooperation ideas, and democratic values. Throughout its activity YSLU didn't undergo accreditation; the quality assurance was carried out through the quality control of application of some mechanisms. The current process of accreditation of institutional capacities is the University's first experience which is aimed at self-assessment of satisfaction of educational environment, efficiency of academic programs, social responsibility as well as functioning of invested internal quality assurance system.

YSLU implements educational programs at all the three levels of education (BA, MA, and PhD). BA academic programs are implemented in the following professions: "Linguistics", "Foreign Language and Literature", "Linguistics and Intercultural Communication", "Translation Studies", "Russian Language and Literature". MA academic programs are implemented in the following professions: "Linguistics", "Linguistics and Intercultural Communication", "Translation Studies", "Foreign Language and Literature", "Public Administration", "Journalism", "European Studies". PhD academic programs are implemented in the directions of Philology, Linguistics, General and Applied Linguistics, Slavonic, German and Romanic Languages, History and Theory of Pedagogy as well as Teaching Methods.

There are clearly defined intended learning outcomes at course level of BA and MA academic programs of YSLU, and the diverse teaching and learning methods applied at YSLU mainly contribute to the formation of those outcomes.

The investment of current research outcomes in teaching process at YSLU is still at low level.

Currently YSLU actively works towards clear definition of outcomes at academic program level in accordance with the international standards. Aimed at internationalization of its academic programs, the University collaborates with a number of European universities within the TEMPUS Projects.

YSLU ensures a learning environment appropriate to the academic programs offered, which includes building and property conditions, library, information and communication equipment. YSLU also ensures necessary conditions ensuring safety and health but the conditions ensuring catering and sport activities need to be improved. The security system at YSLU also includes Guard Service and Civil Defence.

The scarcity of financial resources hinder the efficient cooperation with local and international institutions and organizations for the internationalization of research activities. The opportunities of additional inflow of financial resources through international grant projects is not fully taken.

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[1] **APPENDIX 1**: EXPERT PANELCOMPOSITION AND ANQA SUPPORT STAFF
[2] **APPENDIX 2**` SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

In recent years YSLU makes attempts to find new financial sources. The University has succeeded in receiving support by the Governments and Embassies of foreign countries due to which resources for YSLU teaching staff and students have been enriched. The resources have been also enhanced to some extent through local cooperation.

YSLU ensures teaching staff for the implementation of its academic programs. 12 members among 383 teaching staff have PhD level (Doctor), 12 are professors, 145- PhD, and 81- Associate Professors.

YSLU carries out some activities for the enhancement of teaching staff, however they are not coordinated. As a rule, the trainings are implemented with the initiation of the teaching staff within the framework of grants.

For the internationalization and contribution of research activities of the teaching staff YSLU regularly organizes scientific events ensuring the participation of foreign scientists/academicians. With the aim to ensure international cooperation in the sphere of science, the University organizes joint research activities the outcomes of which are published in international scientific journals. However, in this respect the University has not yet registered significant results, and the list of articles published outside Armenia is comparatively limited.

With the aim to support students and make the education more available to them, YSLU creates opportunities for the provision of facultative courses and consultancy; the latter is carried out according to the defined timetables.

YSLU Student Council actively functions in the direction of organization of various events, contribution and protection of rights of students; separate budget is allocated for the Student Council. YSLU Career Center regularly organizes meetings for employers and students. There are clear mechanisms of student recruitment, selection and admission at YSLU. The University has a number of regulations supporting the needs assessment of YSLU students. YSLU has elaborated surveys on "Assessment of Student Satisfaction", and a questionnaire has been piloted.

YSLU has clearly set management system. YSLU functions clear regulations on selection of Governing bodies and occupation of positions for heads of scientific and educational structural units. YSLU has necessary human, material and financial resources. The functioning management system gives the opportunity to teaching staff members and students to participate in decision making processes regarding their activities at YSLU through their involvement in Governing Board, Scientific and Faculty Councils.

YSLU gives importance to the investment of internal quality assurance system. Center for Quality Assurance has developed QUALITY – 2015 Strategic Plan and Action Plan of YSLU QA Center which is a unified document regulating the functional framework of internal quality assurance system of YSLU. It presents the QA policy implemented by YSLU. All the structural units of YSLU has initiated activities within their functions towards investment of QA cycle. Nevertheless, QA Center does not ensure sufficient grounds for the processes of external evaluation of quality assurance yet.

STRENGTHS
1. YSLU has clearly set management system. There are clear regulations on selection of Governing bodies and occupation of positions for heads of scientific and educational structural units.

2. Diverse teaching and learning methods are applied at YSLU and they mainly foster the acquisition of learning outcomes of the courses.
3. YSLU creates opportunities for the provision of facultative courses and consultancy; the latter is carried out according to the defined timetables.
4. YSLU ensures the transparency of its activity through Rector's annual reports and through posting all the official documents on the YSLU website. The website is also used as a tool of feedback received by the society.
5. YSLU gives much importance to the internationalization and there is a separate section in the YSLU Strategic Plan devoted to it. YSLU mission stresses the importance of its integration into Europe, but it also collaborates within the Eurasian and Eastern areas. YSLU cooperates with a number of international organizations such as EU, CoE, UNESCO and CIS institutions responsible for the development of language and culture polices. The University also has collaborates with a number of universities from other countries within the TEMPUS Projects.

WEAKNESSES
1. YSLU policy and activity are not fully reflected in YSLU mission.
2. YSLU has a Strategic Plan. However, the mid-term and short-term plans are not always linked to the Strategic Plan.
3. YSLU policy and procedures are planned and implemented but the evaluation processes are carried out partially, and the improvement processes are not mainly based on evaluation results.
4. There are clearly defined intended learning outcomes at course level of BA and MA academic programs of YSLU. However, at general academic program level the outcomes are not clearly defined.
5. YSLU carries out some activities directed to the enhancement of teaching staff activity but they are not coordinated. As a result, some chairs have a very high level of performance in terms of training, and some others – rather low level of performance. As a rule, the trainings are implemented with the initiation of the teaching staff within the framework of grants.
6. YSLU has a clearly set procedure for the allocation of financial resources. The expense planning is made from the perspective of implementation of annual processes, and while forming estimate or performance of annual budget the University is not led by the strategic priorities which makes the evaluation of financial resource allocation more difficult.
7. The internal quality assurance system are in the phase of formation, and it is necessary to elaborate and put into process the Concept on quality assurance, respective policy and QA Manual.
8. The mechanisms ensuring internal and external stakeholders' involvement in QA processes are missing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Mission and Purpose
1. To clarify the mission, ensure the compliance of YSLU mission with National Qualifications Framework. Meanwhile it would be desirable to ensure compliance with European Qualifications

Framework as well which will ensure the University's competitiveness in the phase of RA NQF revision and investment.

2. To clarify the points regarding the "pedagogical" direction of the University which are mentioned in the mission.
3. To develop approved mechanisms and tools evaluating and improving the implementation results of mission and goals.

Governance and Administration

4. To coordinate and specify the efficient interaction with all the structural units.
5. To develop inter-chair and inter-faculty mechanisms for best experience exchange.
6. To clarify the time schedule for the implementation of the Strategic Plan.
7. To make the time schedule of the implementation of the Strategic Plan as a basis for the short-term and mid-term plans of the structural units, fostering the efficient fulfillment of the Strategic Plan.
8. To study and analyze external factors affecting the activity of the University.
9. To develop efficient Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle. Immediately after the development of the PDCA cycle it is necessary to organize training for administrative staff as for the efficient management not only policy and procedures describing respective processes are required but also competent staff with proper skills of application of those documents is needed.

Academic Programs

10. To clearly define intended learning outcomes for BA and MA academic programs and ensure their compliance with NQF.
11. To implement evaluation system based on course outcomes.
12. To develop a clear document regulating issues of academic honesty.
13. To develop a clear methodology of implementation of benchmarking.

Students

14. To improve procedures and mechanisms of students' needs assessment and make them more coordinated.
15. To improve the policy on recruitement of foreign students.
16. To involve target employers in the development of academic programs in order to contribute to students' career.
17. To develop mechanisms for involving students in the University's scientific-research activities.

Teaching and Support Staffs

18. To reveal requirements set for the teaching staff for each academic course.
19. To develop precise requirements set for the teaching staff according to academic programs, taking into consideration the peculiarities of the given academic programs.
20. To plan the development of the teaching staff's competencies.
21. To develop position profiles for the teaching and support staff.

Research and Development

22. To develop and apply tools for the assessment of effectiveness and actuality of scientific-research activities.
23. To ensure the linkage between research and learning.
24. To add relevant financial investments for increasing the effectiveness of the University's scientific activities.
25. To develop a clear strategy of research internationalization.

Infrastructure and Resources

26. To improve the University's infrastructure providing funds not only for computer equipment but also for furnishing auditoriums.
27. To establish auditoriums equipped with necessary literature and computers for students to have team-working activities after classes.
28. To develop appropriate mechanisms for the evaluation of the learning environment necessary for the implementation of existing academic programs.
29. To make monitoring of financial resources allocation according to strategic goals and directions.
30. To ensure necessary conditions for the students with special needs.

Social Responsibility

31. To develop public relations strategy.
32. To ensure continuity of public relations.
33. To plan activities increasing effectiveness of the process.

External Relations and Internationalization

34. To develop precise policy, procedures and strategic plan of internationalization of the University.
35. To develop tools for evaluation of the effectiveness of policy and procedures fostering experience exchange, development, and internationalization.
36. To reduce the risk of incomplete implementation of agreements of collaboration seeking new financial sources.

Internal Quality Assurance System

37. To develop quality assurance concept and policy.
38. To formulate internal quality assurance system which will be in compliance with RA state accreditation criteria and ESG standards.
39. To develop quality assurance mannual.
40. To ensure financial independence of QA Center and all necessary material resources.
41. To create mechanisms for ensuring stakeholders' participation in quality assurance processes.
42. To develop clear mechanisms which will allow to evaluate and regularly review internal quality assurance system.

Yerevan State Linguistic University after V. Brusov accepts that the recommendations presented by the Expert Panel are within the scope of the University's strategy, and it has submitted for the action plan on the elimination of shortcomings, approved by the Rector (7.02.2014).

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

Having examined the University's action plan on the elimination of shortcomings mentioned in Expert Panel report, it can be concluded that:

1. The presented actions of the time schedule have been brought out from the Action Plan of the YSLU 2013-2017 Strategic Plan which was approved by the YSLU Scientific Council (20.12.2013).
2. In the plan the actions are mentioned in accordance with almost all the recommendations provided in the Expert Panel report, except for recommendations relating:
   a. Criterion 7 – "To ensure necessary education conditions for students with special needs"
   b. Criterion 10 – "To ensure financial independence of QA Center and all necessary material resources.

   However, it is mentioned that they are planned to be involved in the following five-year Strategic Plan.
3. The sequence of actions is logical but the actions and steps towards their fulfillment are not separated which makes it difficult to assess the effectiveness of those steps.
4. In the plan only structures responsible for the fulfillment of the actions are mainly mentioned, and responsible staff members are mentioned for the implementation of some actions only.
5. The deadlines set for the fulfillment of actions are realistic. However for some concrete actions no deadlines are mentioned.
6. The results and key performance indicators are not linked to each other in some cases.

Conclusion: The implementation of the majority of the Plan does not contain risks. The University has planned to initiate necessary activities in the main spheres within the upcoming two years. If the University succeeds in the fulfillment of the action plan on the elimination of shortcomings, respective improvement tools and procedures evaluating effectiveness of the University's main spheres will be developed, and the main activities towards improvement will be processed.

Taking into consideration the above mentioned, ANQA suggests the Accreditation Committee to pay special attention to the implementation of the following activities while making decision:

To give urgent solution to the problems existing in the spheres of Academic Programs, Teaching and Support Staff, Research & Development.

   1) To give urgent solution to the problems existing in the spheres of **Academic Programs, Research and Development, Infrastructure and Resource, Internal Quality Assurance System.**

2) According to the requirements of clause 12 of the Regulation on "State Accreditation of RA Institutions and their Educational Programs" or according to the deadlines set by the Accreditation Committee, regularly present a written report to ANQA on the results of the carried out activities.

3) To take into consideration the remarks about the action plan mentioned in the current conclusion while reviewing the action plan for the elimination of shortcomings mentioned in the Expert Panel report.

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

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    Head of Expert Panel   **ANQA Coordinator**

EXPERT PANEL COMPOSITION

- **Lilit Zakaryan** – PhD in Historical Sciences, Associate Professor, Senior Specialist of the Institute of History in the RA National Academy of Sciences, Head of the expert group, RA;
- **David Timms** – Prof., PhD, Expert in Education Quality Assurance, Great Britain;
- **Yelena Yerznkyan**- Doctor of philology, professor, head of the Second Chair of English language at Yerevan State University, RA;
- **Aghavni Hakobyan –** Chief specialist in the Department of External Relations at ASUE, PhD in economics, Associate Professor, RA;
- **Ani Gasparyan –** Student of Yerevan State Medical University after M. Heratsi.

ANQA support staff

- Mkrtich Ayvazyan – PhD in Physics and Mathematics, Associate Professor, Head of the Department on Institutional and Program Accreditation and coordinator of expert panel activities.
- Alina Khachikyan – Specialist of the Department of Institutional and Program Expertise Department of ANQA, translator
- Lilit Ghazaryan – Specialist at ANQA Secretariat, Secretary-Stenographer

SUMMATIVE EVALUATION[3]

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

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

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

The expert panel followed the below mentioned principles while carrying out the evaluation:
-**unsatisfactory:** if the University does not meet the demands of the criterion and it is not allowed to continue the activities that way and urgent improvements are needed
- **partially satisfactory:** if the University does not meet all the demands of the criterion but it is realistic that the University can make necessary improvements within reasonable period of time and meet the demands of the criterion
-**satisfactory:** if the University meets the demands of the criterion yet there might be need for improvements as well