

NATIONAL CENTER FOR PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE FOUNDATION



National Center For Professional  
Education Quality Assurance  
Foundation

**EXPERT PANEL REPORT**  
**ON INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION OF**  
**CRISES MANAGEMENT STATE ACADEMY OF THE MINISTRY OF EMERGENCY SITUATIONS OF**  
**THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA**

Yerevan – 2017

## INTRODUCTION

Institutional Accreditation of Crises Management State Academy of the Emergency Situations of the Republic of Armenia (hereinafter referred to as the Academy) is carried out with the initiative of the Academy and based on the application presented by the Academy.

The process of institutional accreditation is organized and coordinated by the National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation (ANQA). ANQA is guided by the regulation on “State Accreditation of RA Institutions and their Educational Programs” set by the RA Government on 30 June, 2011 N978 decree as well as by N959-Ն (30 June, 2011) decree on approving RA Standards for Professional Education Accreditation. The expertise was carried out by the expert panel formed according to the requirements of ANQA Regulation on the Formation of the Expert Panel. The expert panel consisted of 4 local experts and 1 international expert.

Institutional accreditation aims not only at the external evaluation of quality assurance but also to the continuous improvement of the institution’s management and quality of educational programs. Hence, there were two important issues for the expert panel members:

1. To carry out an expertise of institutional capacities in line with the RA standards for state accreditation
2. To carry out an evaluation for the improvement of university’s quality and for its integration to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

The report includes the results of the evaluation of the Academy’s institutional according to the state criteria and standards for accreditation as well as the results of peer review by the international expert from the perspective of being integrated into EHEA.

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## SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION

### EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

The expertise was carried out by the expert panel<sup>1</sup> formed according to the requirements of ANQA Regulation on the Formation of the Expert Panel. The evaluation was carried out according to the 10 criteria set by the RA Government on 30 June, 2011 N 959–Ն decree.

While carrying out the evaluation the expert panel took into consideration that first of all “the Academy has an important role and responsibility in terms of preparation and development of professionals for the departments within the system of RA Ministry of Emergency Situations as well as for the development of policy of the RA education system dealing with the issues of civil defence and emergency situations”. The mission of the Academy is also “the preparation of specialists (6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> levels of National Qualifications Framework: bachelor and master qualifications) meeting the requirements of spheres of the departments under RA Ministry of Emergency Situations; the implementation of educational, scientific, methodical and practical activities in the sphere of protection of population in emergency situations; as well as the implementation of postgraduate academic programs, additional and continuing education, scientific and applied research”.

The Academy has not undergone accreditation according to the previous standards and regulation of accreditation that were operating until 2011. In this current process of accreditation the Academy is participating based on its own application.

The Academy provides 7 full-time and part-time BA (Crisis Management, Management, Fire Protection, Defense in Emergency Situations (Pedagogy), Civil Defense, Rescue Services, Exploitation and Service of Transport and Fire Rescue Special Equipment) and 2 MA (part-time) programs (Crisis Management, Rescue Services). Full-time Bachelor education in the professions of Fire Protection and Rescue Services is free of charge.

The programs are formed on a credit base. There are no set standards for those programs. The outcomes based description of academic programs and courses was carried out in 2016. Teaching/learning and assessment methodology is not described in the program descriptions. A positive fact is that together with traditional teaching methods of new methods of student-centered learning are also applied and the students are satisfied with those methods. In the operational level the academic programs are not yet implemented based on the learning outcomes.

Student-lecturer (full time) ratio in 2012-2013 was 13.0 now it has reduced to 11.6. Until 2016-2017 academic year the average age of the teaching staff was about 50. During the recent years the number of teaching staff members has increased and the average age is 49. The Academy was able to recruit its teaching staff with specialists of different spheres (academic, practical, servant and civic specialists) however mechanisms evaluating professional qualities of the teaching staff does not yet have the necessary effect: in some cases because of the unsatisfactory results of evaluation a reduction of hours for lecturers was applied, in rare cases also fire from work. Students and alumni of the Academy highly evaluate professional and personal qualities of the teaching staff members.

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<sup>1</sup>Appendix 1: CVs of expert panel members

It's worth mentioning about the involvement of quality rescue workers from the Ministry of Emergency Situations in the activities of the teaching staff. Steps are taken towards stabilization and rejuvenation of the staff of the Academy by involving graduates as teaching and support staff members and by sending them to other universities as PhD applicants. The expert panel highly evaluated the active participation of the teaching staff members in training within international projects.

The current infrastructure and resources of the Academy form an effective learning environment and are sufficient for the implementation of professional education. However in terms of continuous improvement of education quality there is still need to enrich laboratory base and the training ground of the Academy in Lusakert as well as to enlarge the use of ICT in the education process.

Financial incomes are formed from state budget, students' fees and other sources. Main part of the budget allocation goes to the salaries. The small number of students and student-lecturer low ratio make the Academy pursue such a policy to save recourses. The current mechanisms of student recruitment and admission gave an opportunity to the Academy to ensure stable number of students for the recent years. The abrupt increase of the rate of dismissal and recovery is bothersome and the Academy has not yet created mechanisms towards their control. Surveys revealing students' educational needs have recently been introduced and are not sufficiently operation yet. The expert panel positively assesses current mechanisms of providing additional consultancy and support to students as well as the availability of the staff for students. Generally the students are satisfied with the environment of Academy and they appreciate the Academy's desire for the students' centered learning however student bodies need more attention and necessary resources. The fact that for the last 5 years 40-46% of graduates are unemployed and 5-10% graduates continue their education after graduation is troublesome.

The research interests of the Academy have clear field directions. However the defined research goals are rather ambitious: there are no clear plans for the institution that desires to be involved in European research area. Research activities are generally not regulated. Outcomes of internationalization in the research sphere are not tangible. Financial resources are allocated only for the publications in the scientific journals of the Academy and the carried out research do not ensure any kind of financial inflows.

Students' participation in the research activities is rather low conditioned also by the small number of research activities carried out at the Academy. Bachelor students are not involved in scientific-research activities. Research activities of Master students should be expressed through master theses however there are repetitions of thesis topics for the last three years and in some cases the works are fully repeated. In 2012-2016 only 1 scientific article with a student as co-author was published and in the leading scientific-research activities of the Academy 3 master students were involved. The overwhelming majority of students present at the meeting with expert panel was not aware of the activities of Students' Scientific Union.

The Academy gives importance to the expansion and diversification of international relations in educational and scientific spheres. International partnership agreements fostered implementation of trainings for the teaching and administrative staffs and the creation of educational cabinets. The impact of international cooperation on the academic programs and educational process is not yet significant, exchange programs for students and teaching staff are still in perspective however there are agreements fostering it. One of the main reasons hindering internationalization of activities is the low level of English language proficiency.

The current management system is the one typical to universities, it is acceptable and is in line with the Academy's strategic goals and objectives. The absence of some necessary structural units in the structure of the Academy for the implementation of certain strategic objectives affects the efficiency of those activities. Transparency and accountability of the management system is ensured through the availability of documents, through the internal information system and web-site. The management system gives an opportunity to both teaching staff and students to express their benefits in management activities. The lack of financial planning in accordance with strategic directions breaks the ties between financial policy of the Academy and strategic development as well as affects on the effectiveness of the development of the Academy. In terms of investment of the principle of full quality management in the activities of administration currently only planning and partially implementation phases are in place. QA system of the Academy is still in the phase of investment and does not fully fulfill its functions. QA Center does not yet collect sufficient data for the evaluation of the effectiveness of academic programs and other services. Factually, implemented QA activities do not ensure the implementation of the policy set by the Academy. Some stakeholders participate in different surveys however they are not aware of the further results and impact of the survey results. In order to establish a functional team QA staff of the Academy strongly needs further professional development. The center is provided with necessary material-technical resource base, which was purchased within the World Bank grant project.

QA Center has little commitment in forming trust towards the Academy among the stakeholders.

#### **STRENGTHS OF THE INSTITUTION:**

- 1) Developed strategic plan with its time-schedule.
- 2) Acceptable management system with operating clear mechanisms of accountability.
- 3) Students' involvement in governing bodies.
- 4) Teaching staff with high professional practical skills.
- 5) Active involvement of teaching and administrative staffs in trainings within the framework of international cooperation.
- 6) Existence of mechanisms evaluating the teaching staff through class observations, students' surveys and rating scales.
- 7) Organization of international conferences and publication of research results in scientific and methodical journals approved by RA Supreme Certifying Committee.
- 8) Existence of classroom, professional cabinets, library, technical, software and other necessary conditions for the organization of educational process.
- 9) Desire to ensure transparency and publicity of the activities and application of different mechanisms for this purpose.
- 10) Great commitment and practical actions taken towards the transfer of knowledge and service to society.
- 11) Existence of set QA policy and concept.

#### **WEAKNESSES OF THE INSTITUTION:**

- 1) Insufficient participation of external stakeholders (including the Ministry of Emergency Situations) in the definition and implementation of strategic goals and objectives of the Academy.
- 2) Lack of mid-term and short-term plans derived from the strategic plan, lack of application of key performance indicators defined in the strategic plan.
- 3) Absence of some structural units necessary for the implementation of strategic goals and partial implementation of those activities by other staff members on a voluntary basis.
- 4) Absence of exchange and mobility of students and teaching staff within the framework of similar programs in RA and other countries.
- 5) Lack of outcome-based teaching/learning and assessment methodology in the academic programs.
- 6) Insufficient involvement of teaching staff and students in research activities, lack of tangible achievements in the research sphere.
- 7) Absence of research component in the cooperation with other universities.
- 8) Absence of financial planning according to research goals.
- 9) Absence of environment fostering internationalization of education processes, lack of impact of international cooperation in the academic programs.
- 10) Incomplete application of QA system and mechanisms, lack of the further impact of results, insufficient level of professionalism of QA staff, lack of involvement of internal and external stakeholders in QA activities.

## **MAIN RECCOMENDATIONS:**

### ***Mission and Goals***

- 1) To define the strategic goals based on the analysis of external factors and opportunities influencing the activities of the Academy and also include external stakeholders.
- 2) To review time-schedule of the strategic plan aligning it with the strategic plan and do clear resource allocation.
- 3) To reasonably define key performance indicators of the strategic plan. To make analysis on the effectiveness of the implementation of strategic goals applying those indicators.
- 4) Develop mechanisms and procedures for the evaluation and improvement of mission and goals and the evaluation of the results of the latter.

### ***Governance and Administration***

- 5) To clarify organizational structure of the Academy and to replenish with structural units necessary for the fulfillment of strategic goals.
- 6) To carry out financial planning according to strategic directions and to link the budget with strategic goals and objectives to prevent failure of the implementation of strategic plan.
- 7) To develop mid-term and short-term clear plans derived from the strategic plan and corresponding reports for the structural units.
- 8) To review the administration of the Academy by introducing PDCA principle of quality management in all the activities.

- 9) To create necessary information data of the Academy for the evaluation of effectiveness and analysis of academic programs and other processes, make these data available for the stakeholders.
- 10) To develop mechanisms evaluating awareness of the stakeholders and provide information not only about the content of the academic programs but also about their quality.

### ***Academic Programs***

- 11) To clarify the mapping of academic programs and course learning outcomes, as well as to clarify the academic program and course descriptions in accordance with the Methodical Guideline for the development of Academic programs at the Academy.
- 12) To describe teaching, learning and assessment methodology in the course descriptions and to substantiate their alignment to the learning outcomes.
- 13) To review the methodology of practical lessons in order to ensure the creating of necessary skills among the students to achieve the learning outcomes.
- 14) To introduce mechanism preventing plagiarism, to clarify the policy of peer-review of master theses in order to enhance the objectiveness of assessment.
- 15) To develop policy and procedure of benchmarking, to carry out benchmarking with partner universities in order to ensure contextual alignment of academic programs and to foster mobility.
- 16) To carry out monitoring of academic programs according to the set regulation and to clarify the corresponding mechanisms.

### ***Students***

- 17) To make qualitative studies of admission and recruitment mechanisms in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the applied policy. To develop mechanisms regulating students' dismissal and readmission indicators as well as clear criteria for the MA admission.
- 18) To develop policy and procedures for the further development of the Academy based on the results of students' needs assessment. To make analysis of the effectiveness of students' needs assessment mechanisms.
- 19) To establish a unit fostering career development of graduates and to allocate additional resources in order to enhance the quality of educational services and to promote students' career development. To align the activities aimed at ensuring employability and competitiveness of graduates in the labor market with strategic plan.
- 20) To develop clear mechanism of involving students in scientific research activities. To develop promotion mechanisms for students involved in the scientific research activities.
- 21) To make the activities of Students' Council and Students' Scientific Union more active and clear by appointing coordinators of the activities.
- 22) To make analysis on the evaluation of the services provided to students in order to record about their reliability and impact of the results.

### ***Teaching and Support Staffs***

- 23) To clarify the requirements of recruiting support staff by defining professional qualities relevant for the teaching staff of the current academic program.



- 24) To interconnect the current mechanisms of evaluating the teaching staff, to carry out general quality analysis and to develop improvement policy based on the results of the analysis.
- 25) To make the results of internal and external evaluation the basis for the trainings of the teaching staff and to carry out evaluation of the effectiveness of the trainings.
- 26) To develop criteria for the professional attestation of the teaching and administrative staffs as well as to develop improvement mechanisms.

### ***Research and Development***

- 27) To develop separate strategy for the organization of scientific research activities of the Academy by defining more clear goals.
- 28) To carry out joint research with chairs and to interconnect research projects.
- 29) To develop joint research projects with international partner institutions, to make the implementation of applied research more active to foster inflow of financial income.
- 30) To develop clear mechanisms of interconnecting research and educational processes by involving students in research activities.

### ***Infrastructure and Resources***

- 31) To describe resources necessary for the implementation of each academic program.
- 32) To develop mechanisms of decision making concerning financial resource allocation.
- 33) To enrich laboratory and library base in line with the requirements of the academic program.
- 34) To carry out evaluation of the resources and services provided to students in the Academy in accordance to the requirements of academic programs and the strategic plan.

### ***Social Responsibility***

- 35) To review the format of Rector's reports by linking it with strategic objectives and by viewing it as mechanism of evaluating the performance of the strategic goals.
- 36) To update the web-site of the Academy with necessary information.
- 37) To develop policy and procedures of public relations and needs assessment.
- 38) To develop mechanisms means for the evaluation of the effectiveness of mechanisms applied by the Academy towards the formation of public relations.

### ***External Relations and Internationalization***

- 39) To develop separate policy promoting internationalization which will be basis for the work plans of the structural units dealing with internationalization.
- 40) To establish separate infrastructure or to appoint a staff member responsible for the enhancement of the effectiveness of the activities towards internationalization.
- 41) To develop mechanisms ensuring and evaluating the link between external relations and education process.
- 42) To develop exchange programs for students and teaching staff within the framework of international cooperation, to ensure sufficient level of foreign language proficiency among the students and teaching staff, to update information in a foreign language on the official web-site of the Academy about the academic programs and the activities of the Academy.

### ***Internal Quality Assurance System***

- 43) To carry out evaluation of the effectiveness of QA policy and procedures.
- 44) To involve internal and external stakeholders in QA activities.
- 45) To carry out qualitative analysis of the results of stakeholders' needs assessment.
- 46) To carry out analysis of the effectiveness of QA system of the Academy, to review the system and to align it with the needs of the Academy.
- 47) To introduce mechanisms ensuring the transparency of QA procedures for the internal and external stakeholders.

## **PEER-REVIEW FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF EDUCATION INSTITUTION'S INTEGRATION INTO EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA**

The international expert ascertains that this part of the general expert panel report will be useful for the Academy and its stakeholders from the perspective of internationalization and continuous development of the activities of the Academy.

### **OBSERVATIONS**

#### **I. Mission and Goals**

Undoubtedly it is an advantage that mission, goals and the Charter of the Academy are in concord with one another. The Academy provides specialized programs and prepares demanded specialists. However it should be mentioned that there is an absence of the culture of internal and external circulation of documentation as well as there is a semi-developed system of planning and reporting. There is an infrastructure in place however systematic approach to planning and reporting is currently missing.

#### **II. Governance and Administration**

One of the strong points of the Academy is the system of interaction among the administration of the Academy, the teaching staff and students, the system operates effectively. Students' Union expresses its opinion, the teaching staff makes highlights in the educational process and as a result they have the opportunity to influence on the decisions and policy of the administrative staff of the Academy.

#### **III. Academic Programs**

The academic programs are in line with the mission of the Academy. Individual approach is ensured. However the meetings with the administrative and teaching staffs showed that monitoring, evaluation of the effectiveness and development are poorly developed in terms of labor market demands and academic programs. There are no external peer-reviews, there are no joint academic programs with the Academy which could serve as a basis for the preparation of specialists.

#### **IV. Students**

There are clear mechanisms of students' admission, selection and education in the Academy. The Academy provides students with the opportunities of getting additional lessons and consultancy as well as ensures the protection of students' rights. The mechanisms evaluating the quality of consultancy

services are missing, and the mechanism for supporting students in the research sphere is weakly presented.

#### **V. Teaching and support staffs**

It is undoubtedly an advantage that the Academy is recruited with professional teaching staff and most of them have practical working skills in the projects being implemented at the Academy. Except for the profession of Rescue Services the selection policy and procedures of the teaching staff of which is approved by the order of the Minister, selection policy and procedures are not defined for the teaching staff of the rest of the professions. There are no clear requirements for the professional qualities of the teaching staff, there is no developed procedure for the support and evaluation of the teaching staff.

#### **VI. Research and Development**

Implementation of scientific-research activities is highlighted in the strategic plan of the Academy. The strategic objective is set. Currently the implementation of the current objective is missing first of all because of the absence of necessary material (technical), financial and promotional resources for the scientific-research activities. The mechanisms of interaction of scientific research activity and lecturer on the one hand and lecturer and student, on the other hand is not defined.

That's why the investment of scientific research activities in the educational process of the Academy is missing.

#### **VII. Infrastructure and Resources**

There is a learning environment formed in the Academy. Infrastructure and resources partially cover the minimum necessary needs for the implementation of the specialties. However limited financial resources and policy of the allocation of financial resources do not allow to fully ensure the effective implementation of practical and laboratory works within the framework of the courses of specialties. The meetings with students and the teaching staff showed that the Academy mainly has sufficient material technical base but in some cases there is lack of necessary equipment. For example, the Academy does not have a chemical laboratory, during the practical works within the framework of Rescue on Water Objects a group of 25 people is given one aqualung and one hydra costume. Currently the means are not sufficient for the strategic development.

#### **VIII. Social Responsibility**

I think that the Academy has a clear policy of reporting. However reports are neither transparent nor available to the public for the external evaluation, i.e. only one mechanism of internal evaluation is developed- surveys among staff and students. The web-site of the Academy is in the phase of development. Forums and simultaneous and timely communication are missing.

#### **IX. External Relations and Internationalization**

External relations and internationalization perfectly work in the Academy only through the training programs and programs of enhancement of qualification. Exchange of BA and MA students has not yet been implemented.

The system of international cooperation is not established in the Academy. Documents for the planning are not developed hence the assessment system is not presented. In order to establish external relations and foster internationalization proficiency in a foreign language is needed. It is already two years since foreign language courses are officially organized for the teaching staff. However entry check up is

missing, the analysis of the dynamics of teaching a foreign language is not presented, there is no final control and motivation among both the learners of a foreign language and the trainers.

## **X. Internal Quality Assurance System**

I think that currently internal quality assurance system of the Academy is in the phase of investment. There is a unit in the Academy that is responsible for the quality assurance of the education process, it is QA Center. A number of documents have been developed: manual, concept paper, regulations among others which have not been operated yet, unified approach to the formation of documents is missing. The Center does not provide methodical assistance to the chairs. Analysis of the implementation of education process is lacking, monitoring are not conducted, there is no systematic approach to assessment criteria and assessment of internal quality assurance system.

Analysis of education plans of the following courses “Crisis Management”, “Rescue Operations” (bachelors’ and masters’ degrees), “Fire Protection”, “Civil Defence” (bachelors’ degree) showed that:

1. The ratio of lecture, seminar and practical hours is sufficient for the preparation of quality specialists.
2. Material-technical base for the educational process in the Academy is troublesome. Particularly, the laboratory base is weak that’s why additional agreements were signed with other universities to provide laboratories for the implementation of practical courses. Moreover, the number of equipment does not correspond to the number of students. Accordingly, the students won’t get education and skills necessary for the specialists of RA Ministry of Emergency Situations
3. First internship of BA students is organized in their third year of study, as for MA students- in the final year of their study.

I think that in order to prepare quality specialists the Academy should increase the number of practical courses and initiate internship for students from the very first year of study.

For example:

1<sup>st</sup> year of study- 2 weeks’ educational internship

2<sup>nd</sup> year of study-4 weeks’ internship

3<sup>rd</sup> year of study- 4 weeks’ internship

4<sup>th</sup> year of study- 4 weeks’ pre-diploma internship

The documents concerning the organization of internship as well as methodical guides are not sufficiently developed. For example concerning “Fire protection” course there is no plan for internship. An attention should be paid on the fact that the schedule of lessons does not correspond to the plan of internship. For example concerning the course on “Fire protection” the following places for internship are missing in the plan: airport, scientific library, hydroelectric power plants, underground, rescue service. But in the schedule of internship those places are mentioned.

For the course on “Rescue Operations” national gallery is mentioned in the internship diary, but it is not mentioned in the time schedule. For example in the internship reports of students as of 11.03.2017 the place of internship is mentioned national gallery however it is missing in the schedule. The opposite situation is mentioned as of 31.03.2017: both in the report and in the schedule the place for internship is hydroelectric power plant, but it is not mentioned in the internship plan.

I would like to bring your attention to the fact that the deadlines mentioned in the time-schedule for the implementation of internship should be followed. The study of internship diaries as well as meetings with students and teaching staff showed that within the mentioned period one-time visits are

organized to different places and the rest of the time the students describe what they have seen. Practical skills and competences are not properly developed among the learners, so this can have a negative impact on the quality of preparing specialists for the sphere of RA Ministry of Emergency Situations.

**25.07.2017**

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**Signature of the Chair of the Expert panel**

## DESCRIPTION OF EXTERNAL REVIEW

### COMPOSITION OF THE EXPERT PANEL

The external evaluation of the Academy's self-evaluation was carried out by the expert panel with the following members:

1. **Gagik Ktryan**- Head of the Department of Quality and Analysis at the Military Aviation University after A. Khanperyants, candidate of physics-mathematical sciences, Head of the expert panel
2. **Sona Sargsyan**- Lecturer at the Chair of ENT Diseases at Yerevan State Medical University, candidate of medical sciences, associate professor
3. **Suren Danielyan** - Associate professor at the chair of applied sports at Armenian Institute of Physical Training, senior specialist of rescue preparation
4. **Yulia Dubrovskaya**- Deputy Head of Educational-methodical Department at St. Petersburg University of Fire Service of Russian Federation, Certified Expert at the Federal Service of Control over Education and Science at the Ministry of Education of Russian Federation, candidate of pedagogical sciences, associate professor
5. **Misha Tadevosyan**-4th year student of the faculty of Education, Psychology and Sociology at Armenian State Pedagogical University.

The works of the expert panel were coordinated by Anushavan Makaryan – Head of ANQA Department of Institutional and Program Accreditation.

The translation was provided by Ani Mazmanyanyan- the Coordinator of the QA Center of Yerevan Brusov State University of Languages and Social Sciences and by Arpine Hakhverdyan- alumnus of Armenian-Russian Slavonic University.

The minutes were taken by the ANQA lawyer Ofelya Petrosyan.

All the members of the expert panel, including the Coordinator and the translator have signed independence and confidentiality agreements.

## PROCESS OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW

### **Application for State Accreditation**

The Academy applied for institutional accreditation by submitting the application form, the copies of the license and respective appendices to ANQA on December 12, 2016.

The ANQA Secretariat checked the correspondence of the application package with ANQA requirements, the data presented in the application form and attached documents. On January 18, 2017 according to the decision on accepting the application an agreement was signed between ANQA and the Academy. The timetable of activities, which is an appendix of an agreement, was prepared and approved.

### **Preparatory Phase**

The initial extended composition of the expert panel set by ANQA Department of Institutional and Program accreditation was agreed upon with the Accreditation Committee after which the members signed agreement on working in the expert panel and excluding conflict of interests. Afterwards the expert panel composition was agreed upon with the Academy meeting the requirements of the

regulation on state accreditation as well as the requirements of expert panel formation. Service contracts with annex on confidentiality were signed with the panel members.

The expert panel underwent 5 trainings on the following topics:

1. RA regulation of accreditation, criteria and standards
2. Main functions of expert panel
3. Preliminary evaluation as preparatory phase of developing expert panel report, the main requirements of writing the report
4. Methodology of observation of documents and resources
5. Techniques and ethics of meetings and questions

On 17 March 2017 the self-evaluation report was sent to the expert panel for preliminary evaluation. The composition of the expert panel was formed according to the order of ANQA Director as of 17 March 2017. The peer-review was carried out within the period from 18 March till 12 May 2017. The expert panel had regular meetings to discuss the self-evaluation and attached package of appendices. The issues raised by the international expert were involved in the draft evaluation report. As a result the issues that needed to be clarified during the site-visit were identified and meetings with target groups were scheduled.

Based on the issues and problems to be observed, ANQA coordinator of the accreditation process together with the head of the expert panel developed the schedule of the site-visit. The schedule included meetings with all the target groups envisaged by the expert panel, open and close meetings, observation of documents and resources, visits to different structural units of the Center, etc.

Having separated the main issues and documents for review, the expert panel clarified the issues which should be discussed during the meetings. During the regular meeting questions per each standard were clarified and the preliminary package of the expert panel was formed. The package contained schedule of the meetings, issues per target group for the observation and clarification as well as list of additional documents which should be observed during the site-visit. From the list presented by the institution teaching staff members with whom the meeting was scheduled, were selected. Bachelor students were selected randomly from the classrooms by the expert panel and part-time BA and MA students were selected from the lists presented by the Academy.

### ***Self-evaluation of the Academy***

The Academy started to carry out self-evaluation since 2013 within the framework of grant project “Investment of Internal Quality Assurance System and its Further Development”. This is the second attempt of self-evaluation for the Academy.

The self-evaluation report and the package of appendices in Armenian and English were submitted to ANQA on 27 February, 2017. ANQA coordinator examined the self-evaluation in terms of checking its compliance with technical requirements set by the Regulation on Accreditation. Based on the positive opinion of the coordinator on March 3, 2017 ANQA made a decision on accepting the self-evaluation. In general the expert panel considered self-evaluation which was written with a critical approach a useful document to get information about the Academy and to organize meetings. However some parts of the report were missing and were not clear enough and an additional explanation was needed.

### ***Preliminary Visit***

On May 9, 2017 ANQA coordinator together with the head of the expert panel visited the Academy to finalize the schedule of the site-visit. The room provided for the panel, the meeting hall and technical

resources were observed. The list of documents to be observed and the structural units which the panel wanted to visit was presented to the Academy. Organizational and technical issues for the site visit as well as issues concerning the behaviour and ethical norms during the meetings were discussed with the Rector of the Academy and the contact person.

### *Site-visit*

On May 14, a day before the site-visit all the members of the expert panel gathered at ANQA for a close meeting according to the beforehand prepared agenda (the agenda of the meeting is attached).

During the meeting the expert panel exchanged its preliminary impression about the report, discussed strong and weak points of the institution, finalized the list of identified issues/questions, decided upon each responsible person per criteria as well as discussed the organization of meetings with target groups. Then the expert panel members discussed the evaluation scale which has two levels: 1. **Satisfies/meets the requirements** of the criterion 2. **Does not satisfy/does not meet the requirements** of the criterion.

The site-visit took place in the period of 15-18 May, 2017. All the meetings took place according to the time-schedule (it is attached). The site-visit launched and finished with the meetings with Rector of the Academy. Meetings were organized with representatives of the Ministry of Emergency Situations, heads of departments, heads of chairs, self-evaluation working group, teaching staff, students, alumni and employer representatives. The expert panel chose the participants of focus groups randomly. No one was registered for the open meeting envisaged in the schedule.

Besides meetings with different target groups the expert panel also conducted observation of documents<sup>2</sup> and resources<sup>3</sup>.

The expert panel highly appreciated the open discussions with the focus groups. The information got during the different meetings as well as the main results of the observation of documents and resources were summed up at the end of each day and during the close meetings. The expert panel discussed main outcomes and came to a general agreement about meeting the requirements of the criteria and standards by the Center. During the final close meeting the considerations and final conclusions per criterion and standard were agreed upon with all the members of the panel based on the consensus approach.

### *Expert panel report*

After the site –visit the head of the expert panel and ANQA coordinator prepared expert panel draft report. All the members of the expert panel had their contribution in the facts, considerations and evaluation of each standard as well as they all gave their feedback on the unified draft version. Comments of the expert panel members were taken into consideration during the finalization of the draft report.

The international expert prepared his conclusion and separate opinion on peer-review. Both documents were translated and provided to the head of the expert panel. The responsibility of involving the opinion and approach of the international expert in the expert panel report lied upon the head of the expert panel and ANQA coordinator of the process. International expert's opinion on the peer-review was fully integrated in the expert panel report. The draft report agreed upon by all the local members of the expert panel was translated and sent to the international expert. Based on his comments

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<sup>2</sup>Appendix 3. List of observed documents

<sup>3</sup>Appendix 4. Resources observed



the draft report was edited and currently it presents main results of the evaluation, considerations and recommendations.

Draft report was presented to the Academy on 23 June, 2017.

Comments of Academy were received on 07.07.2017. The comments of the Academy, given to the ANQA in Armenian were handed over to Armenian experts. An online response was organized with an international expert and her opinion has been included in the answer by the group leader. On July 14, 2017 the ANQA has organized a meeting of the representatives of the HEI and the Expert Panel during which the reply of the panel was presented. Taking into account the comments and observations of the Academy the Expert Panel has come up with the final version of the report, which was rectified by the Panel on July 25, 2017. The changes are reflected in the footnotes of corresponding pages.

**25.07.2017**

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**Signature of the Coordinator**

## EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

### BRIEF INFORMATION ABOUT THE EDUCATION INSTITUTION

**HISTORY:** Crises Management State Academy of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Republic of Armenia was established during the years of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Republic of Armenia according to RA Government decree as an Institute for the training of staff, later on it was renamed into Crises Management Institute of the Department of Emergency Situations. According to RA Government Decree No1055-Ն as of 29 June, 2005 it was renamed into “Crises Management State Academy” State Non-Commercial Organization. Since 1993 the first training courses of RA governing bodies and specialists were organized, an extended program for the course on radiation protection and a series of radio broadcast were introduced, massive training of the population on the issues concerning radiation protection was carried out. In 2010 the draft decree of RA Government on recognizing the Academy as regional center for distance learning was approved. The main mission of the Academy is “creation of knowledge, its transfer and dissemination within state strategy of the development of education, formation of safety culture”. While carrying out its activities the Academy is lead by the Strategic plan 2014-2019 and the time-schedule of its implementation. A number of points are defined in the self-evaluation, strategic plan and other documents that reflect aspirations and ambitions of the Academy in different spheres of its activities.

**EDUCATION:** the Academy delivers higher education programs by awarding qualifications of BA and MA degrees. Part-time and full-time education in BA is carried out through 7 professions and part-time education in MA is carried out through 2 professions. Higher professional education is implemented by the Faculty of Emergency Situations and Crises Management which is comprised of 4 chairs and 4 professional cycles. The Academy tries to “prepare competitive specialists having respective qualifications, knowledge, competences and skills, capable of solving problems of the field who meet the requirements of spheres of the departments under RA Ministry of Emergency Situations, to foster the establishment and development of civil defence, the creation of secure environment in emergency situations, the solution and improvement of respective problems as well as to ensure staff members for a number of important processes for the departments of RA Ministry of Emergency Situations”.

The Academy has set a goal to “recruit experienced and leading specialists of education sphere, teaching staff with high qualifications for the effective implementation of the academic programs by providing them the opportunities of continuous development and modern and favorable working environment”. One of the objectives of the Academy is “assurance of financial and material-technical (facilities and furniture) components, investment of innovative information and communication technologies in academic process, the improvement of mechanisms of protection, efficient management and development of academic environment for the effective implementation of set mission and goals”.

**RESEARCH:** The strategic objective of the Academy is “to create grounds for the establishment of higher education 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle (PhD education) in line with NQF requirements, to involve the teaching staff in scientific research activities, to promote international scientific cooperation of the Academy and to be integrated into European research area”. The main spheres of scientific-research activities are as follows: “the issues of crises management, civil defense, defense in emergency situations, regional and technological development, development of safety culture”.

**INTERNATIONALIZATION:** The Academy gives importance to the development of interuniversity and international relations and has taken steps towards internationalization of the Academy. For this purpose it tries to “expand and diversify international relations of the Academy in educational and scientific spheres, to promote internationalization of research activities of the Academy as well as to ensure comprehensive development of external relations of the Academy”. The Academy aspires to “be integrated into international educational-scientific system, to become its full member by introducing the practice of developed countries and leading institutions in the sphere of protection of the population in emergency situations and civil protection considering establishment and development of close international relations as a guarantee of success”.

**QUALITY ASSURANCE:** The Academy tries to “develop and introduce internal system of quality assessment and assurance in line with ESG standards”. In the sphere of quality assurance the Academy set the aim “to introduce official, transparent and reliable system of quality assurance based on internal and external evaluation of the results of activities and applied procedures and guided by ESG and ISO 9000-2000”. Strategic objectives for the Academy are “one the one hand the improvement of education quality with the current resources and on the other hand assurance of a certain threshold for optimal planning, development and effective usage of resources”.

While making evaluation, the expert panel has been led by the principle of “correspondence to the goals” and has considered the above mentioned information as main ambitions and goals of the university.

## CRITERION I.MISSION AND GOALS

**CRITERION:** The policies and procedures of the institution are in accordance with the institution’s mission which is in line with ANQF.

### FINDINGS

#### **1.1 The institution has a clear, well-articulated mission that represents the institution’s purposes and goals and is in accordance with National Qualifications Framework (hereafter NQF).**

Vision and mission of the Academy are defined in 2014-2019 Strategic plan. The mission of the Academy is “the preparation of specialists (6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> levels of National Qualifications Framework: bachelor and master qualifications) meeting the requirements of spheres of the departments under RA Ministry of Emergency Situations; the implementation of educational, scientific, methodical and practical activities in the sphere of protection of population in emergency situations; as well as the implementation of postgraduate academic programs, additional and continuing education, scientific and applied research”. The Academy factually has an important role and responsibility in terms of preparation and development of professionals for the departments within the system of RA Ministry of Emergency Situations as well as for the development of policy of the RA education system dealing with the issues of civil defence and emergency situations.

9 strategic goals are defined in the Strategic plan of the Academy:

1. Expansion of learners of the Academy in the rapidly changing environment
2. Assurance of quality education in line with Bologna developments
3. Assurance of development of continuous education

4. Assurance of effective and quality resource management and improvement of working environment
5. Improvement of material-technical base of the Academy in line with the requirements of educational and research programs, improvement of social projects and infrastructure
6. Assurance of efficient management of resources and financial stability of the Academy
7. Development of information resources of the Academy, expansion of scope of usage of information technologies
8. Assurance of the enhancement of efficiency of research and development of scientific potential in the Academy
9. Development of the activities towards internationalization and expansion of external relations

Certain objectives and actions are defined for the implementation of each of the goals. The administration of the Academy considers the following spheres as main directions for the development of the Academy: management, information, monitoring and quality assurance. Action-plan for the implementation of the Strategic Plan is developed which involves actions planned for the implementation of strategic objectives, deadlines of the actions, responsible people and necessary additional resources. However there are a number of repetitions of performers and deadlines in the action plan and some discrepancies with the Strategic plan. In fact the action plan was not viewed as a basis for planning and implementation of further activities of Academy's structural units. Budget allocation is not carried out according to the strategic goals and objectives, though one of the objectives mentioned in the Strategic plan defines financial planning in line with strategic goals and objectives of the Academy.

As a department of the Ministry of Emergency Situations the budget allocation is carried out by the Head of the Staff of RA Ministry of Emergency Situations and the Financial-economical Department. The budget of the Academy and report are presented to the RA Ministry of Finances by RA Ministry of Emergency Situations according to provision 11 of RA Government decree N1055-Ն as of June 29, 2005<sup>4</sup>.

## **1.2 The mission statement reflects the needs of the internal and external stakeholders.**

The Academy defines the scope of its external (Ministry of Emergency Situations, Local Self-Governing Bodies, employers, alumni and parents) and internal (students, teaching and administrative staffs) stakeholders. The reflection of the needs of RA Ministry of Emergency Situations as the main external stakeholder in the mission, goals and objectives of the Academy is carried out immediately through ministry imperatives. The Academy follows the needs of RA Ministry of Emergency Situations and implements clarification of professions or involvement of new professions. In spite of this, RA Ministry of Emergency Situations didn't have factual participation in the development and approval of strategic goals by the working group formed according to the Rector's order for the development of the Strategic plan. Strategic plan was developed without the participation of external stakeholders. Involvement of internal stakeholders and RA Ministry of Emergency Situations in decision making collegial bodies of the Academy (The Board of the Academy, Scientific Council) is ensured. Needs of the Ministry of Emergency Situations are taken into account also through the teaching staff members who are staff members of RA Ministry of Emergency Situations. The educational trainings of RA Ministry of

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<sup>4</sup>The text was edited as a result of discussions of the remarks and suggestions got from the Academy.

Emergency Situations, seminars and working group meetings are one of the mechanisms of revealing the needs of the graduates. The involvement of the Rector of the Academy in the attestation committee of different departments of RA Ministry of Emergency Situations gives an opportunity to assess theoretical and practical knowledge of the graduates, to hear opinions and suggestions for the improvement of educational processes in the Academy.

### **1.3 The institution has set mechanisms and procedures to evaluate the achievement of its mission and goals and further improve them.**

For each goal in the Strategic plan there are indicators for the evaluation of the progress. For the evaluation of the results of its activities the Academy has developed key performance indicators (KPIs) for 6 spheres: admission and students, education process, resources and management, infrastructure, science and innovation, external relations and international cooperation. The application of KPIs is in line with policy and procedures of the Academy. 61 indicators of KPIs are collected by the responsible units of the given sphere. The presented KPIs for 2012-2016 contain only numeral/percentage information and do not represent qualitative aspects of the progress as well as do not correspond to the indicators for the evaluation of the progress of the Strategic plan.

The only operating mechanism for the evaluation of the Strategic plan is Rector's annual report based on the reports of structural units. Rector's reports are formed according to the structure of annual reports developed by RA Ministry of Emergency Situations and are grouped into the following sections: education, information, scientific-methodical activities, cultural upbringing, internationalization and additional activities (including improvement of material-technical base). The reports do not reflect the progress of goals and objectives mentioned in the Strategic plan. In the section of shortcomings mainly the needs of educational-material base and the recruitment of teaching staff are presented. Analysis of the effectiveness of mechanisms (reports, KPIs) evaluating the results of implementation of mission and goals have not been carried out.

### ***CONSIDERATIONS***

The mission defined in the Strategic plan of the Academy is generally in line with NQF. The responsibility of preparing quality specialists for RA Ministry of Emergency Situations promotes to clearly define goals and objectives of the Academy. 9 strategic goals defined in the Strategic plan, the objectives derived from them and the action plan generally give an opportunity to implement the mission and goals. The action plan attached to the Strategic plan can serve as a basis for planning further activities in line with mission and goals. Nevertheless, the action plan still needs to be clarified to ensure the alignment with Strategic plan and to put into action. The Academy does not yet have a unified approach for mid-term and short-term planning. Budget allocation has not been carried out according to strategic goals and objectives thus this does not ensure the link between budget and strategic plan and puts the proper implementation of the Strategic plan under a risk. Involvement of internal stakeholders in the working group for the development of Strategic plan as well as the discussion of Strategic plan in the collegial governing bodies of the Academy shows that internal stakeholders are involved in the development and approval of strategic goals. Involvement of external stakeholders is weak, which in case of RA Ministry of Emergency Situations in particular, could foster more precise and purposeful planning of the activities of Academy. In some cases indicators for the evaluation of the progress of implementation of mission and goals do not fully correspond to the goals. Those indicators factually are not applied. The gathered indicators (KPIs) are not directed to strategic goals and in fact

cannot evaluate the effectiveness of their implementation as well as cannot serve as a basis for further development and improvement of the activities of Academy. The factually operating mechanisms of evaluation are Rector's annual reports but they aren't aligned to the strategic goals and action-plan, either.

Thus, qualitative evaluation of Strategic plan has not been carried out at the Academy yet and development and improvement of the strategic plan is not based on the analysis of reliable information. The absence of analysis of effectiveness of the operating mechanisms (reports, KPIs) does not allow evaluating the functionality of those mechanisms and their impact on the strategic planning and its implementation.

**SUMMARY:** Taking into account the clear definition of mission and goals of the Academy in line with NQF, the structure and content of strategic plan, the consideration of needs of RA Ministry of Emergency Situations and the principle of forming safety culture among the public as well as application of KPIs and clear mechanism of accountability of evaluating the performance of the Academy, it can be stated that policy and the activities of the Academy are in line with its defined mission and needs of RA Ministry of Emergency Situations, hence the expert panel concludes that Academy meets the requirements of Criterion 1.

***CONCLUSION: The correspondence of the Academy's institutional capacities to the requirements of criterion 1 is satisfactory.***

## CRITERION II. GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

***CRITERION:*** The institution's system of governance, administrative structures and their activities are efficient and are aimed at the accomplishment of mission and goals of the institution preserving ethical norms of governance.

### FINDINGS

**2.1 The Institution's system of governance ensures structured decision-making process, in accordance with defined ethical rules and has efficient provision of human, material and financial resources to accomplish its educational and other purposes.**

Decision making and implementation of the goals of the Academy are ensured through governing system the basis of which is RA model of university governance: approved Charter with the combination of autonomy, solitary and collegial managerial principles. Governance is carried out by RA Ministry of Emergency Situations, Board of Academy and Scientific Council. Daily management is carried out by the Rector and the rectorate is attached to him as an advisory body. Governing bodies and structural units of the Academy are operating based on approved regulations and charters. QA standing committee and temporary committees for methodical (deals with the approval of scientific titles) and ethical issues were formed attached to the Scientific Council however the staff is unaware of their activities. There are some inaccuracies in the organization structure related to the subordination of faculties and education department. Students' Council and Students' Scientific Union are not mentioned as operating units. The structural units necessary for the implementation of 1, 3, 9 strategic goals are still missing in the organizational structure (Center for alumni and career,

department of scientific-educational affairs, department of international relations and cooperation, methodical department as well as specialized council are planned to be established).

As a result there is a combination of some positions among the administrative staff: Vice-rector for Education coordinates also activities concerning the sphere of science, Head of Education Department is also a Science Secretary, the staff member of the Dean's office of part-time education also bears the responsibilities of career support for students on a voluntary basis. The list of staff members of the Academy is formed and approved by the Minister of RA Emergency Situations<sup>5</sup>.

During the last years, according to the data of KPIs, an increase of financial incomes and educational expenses was recorded: in 2015 the general incomes of the Academy have increased with 42%. As a result material-technical and educational conditions were improved. Audit of financial-economic activities is carried out by the RA Ministry of Emergency Situations. Financial planning according to strategic directions is missing in the Academy. General financial planning is carried out by RA Ministry of Emergency Situations<sup>6</sup>.

There are no approved ethical rules. Policy and procedures on recruitment, transfer, dismissal, promotion and application of penalties for the staff members are defined in the internal regulatory rules. Mechanisms for the evaluation of management system and monitoring of management procedures are missing.

## **2.2 The institution's system of governance gives an opportunity to student and the teaching staff to take part in decision making procedures.**

According to the regulations of the Board of Academy and Scientific Council the teaching staff and students are involved in the decision making collegial bodies with corresponding percentage (students-25%). Observation of the expert panel showed that the activeness of teaching staff and students in the decision making collegial bodies is not enough yet. Students' Council has been operating in the Academy since 2014 and the Students' Scientific Union-since 2016 however their activities are not sufficient yet and are limited only to the organization of some events. Students and the teaching staff can express their opinions about the decisions related to them in the deans' offices, to the Vice-Rectors and in case of extreme necessity also to the Rector through the meetings set in and beyond the time-schedule.

## **2.3 The institution formulates and carries out short-term, mid-term and long term planning consistent with its mission and goals as well as has appropriate mechanisms for the implementation and monitoring of those plans.**

Though the Academy mentions that it carried out the planning of its activities in three levels: long-term (strategic), mid-term and short-term during the observations it turned out that factually long-term (strategic) action plan is in place attached to the strategic plan and long-term (annual or per terms) planning of the structural units. Mid-term planning is carried out only for the financial issues according

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<sup>5</sup>The text was edited as a result of discussions of the remarks and suggestions got from the Academy.

<sup>6</sup>The text was edited as a result of discussions of the remarks and suggestions got from the Academy.

to the requirement by RA Ministry of Emergency Situations. Mid-term planning in other directions is not carried out<sup>7</sup>.

Each structural unit of the Academy created its short-term working plan for the academic year but strategic planning is not viewed as a basis for it.

The Academy considers current and annual reports of the structural units as mechanism for evaluating and monitoring the plans which are later on summed up in the Rector's reports. Rector presents a report about the performance of annual activities of the Academy to the staff, Scientific Council and to RA Ministry of Emergency Situations. Then the annual report is published in the web-page of the ministry. In case of necessity imperatives are set by RA Ministry of Emergency Situations.

#### **2.4 The institution conducts the study of factors influencing its activities and draws on reliable findings during the decision-making process.**

The Academy mentions that for the management procedure it highlights the identification of main factors impacting its activities, their analysis and prediction of their further influence. Evaluation of the effectiveness of its activities and the performance is carried out with KPIs. Contentwise analysis of the data presented in the KPIs concerning identification of factors influencing the activities of the Academy and their overcoming is missing. In order to identify factors influencing education quality surveys among the graduates and departments of RA Ministry of Emergency Situations implementing internship are carried out in order to reveal the level of their satisfaction from knowledge and skills of the students of the Academy. To study internal factors surveys and meeting with students and teaching staff are conducted. Deep study of environmental factors is not viewed as basis for the development of Strategic plan. There are no analyses of internal and external factors after the data collection. Mostly oral discussions with the specialists of RA Ministry of Emergency Situations are taken as basis. The need concerning resources necessary for the activities of the institution, the Academy evaluates itself and if necessary presents to RA Ministry of Emergency Situations. The decisions concerning the allocation of places for the applicants are made by RA Ministry of Emergency Situations taking into account territorial and resource opportunities of the Academy.

#### **2.5 The management of the policies and the processes draws on the quality management principle (plan-do-check-act /PDCA/).**

The Academy gives much importance to the application of PDCA cycle for quality management. The biggest step in this term was the development of Strategic plan in 2014. Besides, regulations of functions and working procedures of governing bodies, procedures and other legal acts were developed. However application of PDCA in the administration has not reached the 2 phases: check and act. The structural units do not apply the indicators developed for the evaluation of their works which are derived from the indicators for the evaluation of progress of Strategic plan. Evaluation is mainly carried out through the mechanism of reports as well as controlling functions of RA Ministry of Emergency Situations. QA system in the Academy is still in the process of investment and many evaluation mechanisms are only in the phase of planning. Cyclical approach to quality management has been relatively recently introduced in the institution and improvements based on the results of evaluation does not exist yet.

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<sup>7</sup>The text was edited as a result of discussions of the remarks and suggestions got from the Academy.



## **2.6 The institution has evaluation mechanisms in place ensuring data collection, analyses and application of the data on the effectiveness of the academic programs and other processes.**

To evaluate the effectiveness of the current academic programs a regulation of monitoring of academic programs was approved which has not been applied yet. Evaluation of some components of academic programs is carried out through surveys among students and teaching staff. Regulations of conducting surveys are approved, in particular, teaching quality and effectiveness, satisfaction of internal stakeholders and ranking of the activities of teaching staff. Analysis of survey results are quantitative, qualitative analyses were not carried out and do not yet serve as basis for improvement.

Main mechanisms for the collection of information about the effectiveness of academic programs and other procedures are reports. Improvements based on surveys and reports have not been carried out. Studies of the effectiveness of evaluation mechanisms are not in place either.

## **2.7 There are objective mechanisms in place evaluating the quality of quantitative and qualitative information on the academic programs and qualification awarded.**

The Academy disseminates information about its academic programs and awarded qualifications through a few tools. The Academy publishes “Guide for learning with credit system and information book of courses” for BA students. Information and descriptions about the Academy are published in the web-page and facebook page of the Academy, in the following newspapers: “911 emergency paper”, “Process” and “Overcoming Crisis”, in booklets, through announcements and programs in radio broadcast and TV among others. The information in the web-page of the Academy is rather poor and needs to be edited. Currently a new separate web-site is being developed.

The departments of RA Ministry of Emergency Situations on “Journalism” and “Monitoring and Analysis of Mess Media” illustrate the activities of the Ministry and also the Academy. They publish educational materials, information about the rescuers and they also touch upon the activities of the graduates. Once every 2-3 months they analyze and present to the Academy the materials that were paid much interest to. The Academy does not carry out evaluation of the effectiveness of publication means and ways.

## **CONSIDERATIONS**

In general the management system of the Academy is an acceptable system typical to the environment and based on the separation of structural units and principles coordinating their activities. This system fosters the fulfillment of the mission. At the same time non clearness of the organizational structure in terms of the subordination of structural units and administrative staff and combination of a number of positions among the administrative staff can hurt the efficient operation of management system. On the other hand the absence of some units necessary for the effective implementation of some of the strategic goals can influence on the effectiveness of implementation of those processes.

The regulations set in the Academy give an opportunity to internal and external stakeholders to be involved in decision making procedures. The observations showed that stakeholders, including Students’ Council in fact passively use the opportunities given to them concerning decision making, expressing opinions and suggestions, and in most cases their participation is formal.

Absence of planning according to strategic directions breaks the link between financial policy of the Academy and strategic development as well as has an influence on the effectiveness of development. Educational-material base of the Academy is enough for the implementation of educational and other

procedures. The absence of clear mechanisms for monitoring management processes and evaluation of the effectiveness of management system does not allow the University to reveal the issues concerning the management system of the academy.

The absence of mid-term and short-term planning derived from the long-term plan puts the implementation of strategic goals at a risk. On the other hand poor link between working plans of the structural units and Strategic plan can also lower the effectiveness of the implementation of those plans. For the evaluation of its activities the Academy applies mechanism of reports in all levels of management however even the indicators of evaluating the progress of Strategic plan are not analyzed and they do not evaluate contentwise part of the implementation of strategic goals. The Academy considers KPIs as factors for the evaluation of the activities of the institution. However KPIs are not contentwise analysis of data in terms of identification and overcoming factors influencing the activities of the Academy. Thus they cannot give the general depiction of factors influencing the activities of the Academy.

The Academy has quality management cycle in place only in terms of planning and partly also implementation conditioned by the fact that the structural units do not apply indicators for the evaluation of their activities. And the applied mechanism of accountability does not serve as a basis for improvement.

Gathering of information about the effectiveness of educational-scientific activities, its analysis and application of evaluating mechanisms are being developed and ground about them can be found in the new documents developed by QA Center. Feedback mechanisms developed by the Center factually do not operate and this does not allow considering PDCA cycle completed.

The Academy so far has not carried out regulated process towards the evaluation of the activities of gathering and analyzing information about the academic programs and other procedures. The application of set regulations for the conduction of surveys among internal and external stakeholders can foster the evaluation of effectiveness of the provided educational services however mechanisms of their contentwise analysis and further application are not operating. Regularly conducted oral discussions with RA Ministry of Emergency Situations also foster improvements of academic programs. Nevertheless the involvement of external stakeholders in the management system is weak.

Electronic and printed press as well as separate web-page of the Academy in the web-site of Mechanisms of RA Ministry of Emergency Situations are applied as mechanisms of disseminating information about the Academy. Though the web-page needs to be updated together with other mechanisms it gives an opportunity to ensure enough publicity of information about the Academy. Departments of "Journalism" and "Monitoring and Analysis of Mass Media" of the Ministry also promote these activities by carrying out analysis of dissemination of information.

**SUMMARY:** Taking into account the existence of management system in line with the mission, the activities of structural units derived from goals and objectives or the combination of some activities by other units conditioned by the fact that this is a small Academy, the coordinated activities of structural units, bottom-up accountability as well as the opportunities given to stakeholders to be involved in decision making procedures, it can be stated that governance and administration of the Academy sufficiently foster implementation of mission and goals, hence the expert panel concludes that the Academy meets the requirements of Criterion 2..

**CONCLUSION:** *The correspondence of the Academy's institutional capacities to the requirements of criterion 2 is satisfactory.*

### CRITERION III. ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

**CRITERION:** The academic programs are in concord with the Institution's mission, form part of institutional planning and promote mobility and internationalization.

#### FINDINGS

**3.1 The academic programs are in line with Institution's mission, they correspond to the state academic standards and are thoroughly described according to the intended learning outcomes of the qualification awarded.**

Part-time and full-time education in BA is carried out through 7 professions and part-time education in MA is carried out through 2 professions. There are no state standards set for those professions. As basis for the development of academic programs the Academy considers its mission, requirements of RA Ministry of Emergency Situations and compliance with NQF. The Academy aspires to prepare "competitive specialists with necessary knowledge and skills, solving professional problems and having comprehensive competences". The current academic programs of the Academy were developed on an outcome based approach according to the methodical guide for the development of academic programs approved in 2014. Academic programs were approved in 2016 and with the structure they are in line with the general requirements for the current higher education system. In the program specification the aims, learning outcomes, admission criteria, further career opportunities, teaching learning and assessment methods are presented in separate sections. In spite of the requirements of the guide the requirements for the teaching staff providing current academic program as well as requirements for resources are missing. Mapping of the learning outcomes of academic program and courses is imperfect. The link of the learning outcomes with courses is not clear. There are some courses which do not cover any learning outcomes in the mapping. The observations showed that on a practical level the academic programs are not yet implemented with an outcome- based approach. During the site-visit it turned out that students, alumni and employers strongly see the need of increasing the practical hours.

The Academy mentions that benchmarking of academic programs was carried out with the Main School of Fire Service in Warsaw, as well as the academic programs of St. Petersburg University of Fire Service of Russian Federation were studied however there are not documental grounds of those analyses. As a result there are no improvements of the academic programs. While choosing format for academic programs the Academy carried out study of practice of leading local universities.

**3.2 The Institution has a policy that promotes alignment between teaching and learning approaches and the intended learning outcomes of academic programs, which ensures student-centered learning.**

The process of upgrading teaching and learning methods is one of the strategic problems of the Academy. Teaching and learning methods are enumerated for 3 separate parts of learning outcomes (professional knowledge and understanding, practical professional skills and general (transferable) skills) in the specifications of academic programs. Methodology is not presented in the course descriptions.

There is no set policy for the selection of methods. Lecturers are choosing teaching and learning methods based on the learning outcomes and peculiarities of academic programs. Young lecturers get guidance from senior and experienced lecturers while choosing methods. Learning is traditional and student-centered: group works, role play, real play, debates, etc. with the combination of different methods. Lecturers mention that they need methodical trainings.

There are mechanisms in place for the evaluation of the effectiveness of teaching and learning methods: surveys among students and alumni, class observation by the head of the chairs and peer-reviews. The results of surveys and class observations are discussed in the chairs and necessary consultancy is provided. The Academy takes steps to expand the application of IT in teaching methods by setting it as a strategic goal. During the observations it turned out that the students are satisfied with the methods applied.

### **3.3 The Institution has policy on students' assessment according to the learning outcomes and promotes academic honesty.**

New policy of assessment of students' knowledge has been operating in the Academy since 2015. This policy is expressed in the following regulations of the Academy: Regulation of Students' Assessment with Credit System, Regulation of the Implementation and Assessment of Final Papers of BA Students, Regulation of Peer-review of Final Papers of MA Students, Regulation of the Conduction of Final Attestation of Graduates.

Students' assessment methods are involved in the structure of academic programs and are chosen during the development of the program. Assessment methods/ways are presented in the 3 separate sections of intended learning outcomes in the specification of academic programs. In the academic programs only the type of assessment is presented: test or exam.

20 point grading scale is applied for the assessment of students in the Academy (the minimum is 8). The Academy has introduced 2 mid-term written exams. Testing mechanism of mid-term exams was improved during 2014-2015 academic year based on the feedback of students and teaching staff.

Internal stakeholders are aware of regulations on assessment and appeal. Cases of appeal are limited. During the observations it turned out that application of technical means during the final examinations for award of qualification practical skills are not checked.

Regulation on Academic Honesty is approved in the Academy. Availability and transparency of the results of examination are ensured through the operating regulations. There are no set mechanisms preventing plagiarism. During the observation of master theses it turned out that there is a repetition of topics even in some cases content of thesis paper was repeated entirely.

### **3.4 The academic programs of the Institution are contextually coherent with other relevant programs and promote mobility of students and staff as well as internationalization.**

The Academy tries to develop policy of the alignment of its academic programs with academic programs of other universities. For this reason "Management" academic program of YSU and ASUE as well as "Rescue Service" academic program of Armenian Institute of Physical Training were studied in terms of their structure, educational blocks, courses and credits allocated to them. The Academy does not have set policy and procedures for carrying out benchmarking, mechanisms and goals of benchmarking are not clearly defined either.

In 2014 working groups of the Academy for the development of academic programs studied academic programs of Main School of Fire Service in Warsaw. Comparative study of curricula of other universities has been made however there are grounds of analyses. The studies didn't foster internationalization of academic programs. Training of teaching staff in international organizations fosters investment of practical experience in the teaching process. The Academy does not implement exchange programs with partner universities however some agreements gave an opportunity for it.

In 2014-2015 the Academy invested credit system and the academic programs are formed based on ECTS. The information about credit system is not comprehensive among the staff. Principle of credit allocation is not identically applied in different academic programs. Alumni are given diploma supplement in line with current requirements.

### **3.5 The Institution has policies in place ensuring academic program monitoring, evaluation of effectiveness and improvement.**

Since 2014-2015 academic years the Academy has carried out review of structure and content academic programs according to the learning outcomes. Regulation of monitoring and review of academic programs was developed which has not been applied yet. According to the regulation monitoring should cover all the academic programs and courses of the Academy. For the evaluation of separate components of academic programs students' surveys were applied. One of the operating mechanisms of monitoring is the involvement of specialists from RA Ministry of Emergency Situations in final attestation committees and the report of the Head of the Committee.

The Head of attestation committee is the Rector and mainly repeated suggestions are presented in his reports (review of questionnaires, review of topics of theses papers). Comprehensive assessment of academic programs has not yet been carried out there are only results of current monitoring of chairs and faculties in place that are mentioned in the protocols of sessions.

The Academy also reviews its list of professions provided based on the requirement of RA Ministry of Emergency Situations. This way need for specialist of applied seismology and disaster psychology was revealed. The Academy takes steps for the investment of those specialties.

### **CONSIDERATIONS**

Not having defined state standards the Academy has put its mission and alignment with needs of RA Ministry of Emergency Situations as well as similar programs of other universities in the basis of its academic programs. Outcome based development of academic programs was carried out in a regulated manner being guided by the methodical guideline for the development of academic programs and set structure of the specification of academic programs. Thus the similar structure of the academic programs of the Academy is endured. Shortcomings of mapping of academic programs and learning outcomes do not clearly substantiate the acquisition of learning outcomes. The Academy gives much importance to the correspondence of learning outcomes for the selection of teaching and learning methods. Absence of methodology in the academic programs does not clearly show the link between methods and learning outcomes. The fact that new methods directed towards student-centered learning are applied together with traditional methods is assessed positively and students are satisfied with those methods. In spite of this, there is a strong need for the increase in the hours dedicated to practical lessons and internship. The study of diaries for internship showed that during the internship students mostly carry out observations which fosters acquisition of knowledge but does not develop

necessary practical skills. Application of class observations and surveys for the evaluation of methods fosters their further development. For the regulation of assessment procedures since 2015 the Academy has approved several regulations based on the requirements of learning through credit system. Assessment methodology is not described in course guides instead in the section “assessment methods and criteria” only the way of conducting test/exam is presented. Absence of set mechanisms preventing plagiarism can affect on the objectiveness of assessment. The chairs have approved topics for theses papers that concern to the problems of the field. Assessment requirements for master theses are defined with corresponding methodical instructions however in practice they are not always kept. At the same time repetition of master theses put the reliability of awarded qualification in a danger. Moreover, the fact that the Rector is the Head of final attestation committee is against the regulation of university system. In order to ensure alignment of its academic programs with similar ones in other universities the Academy studied the practice of some local and foreign universities. However because of the absence of policy and procedures on carrying out benchmarking those studies had a nature of getting familiar or partially replicating without resulting in the alignment of academic programs. This hinders mobility of students and teaching staff.

The Academy has not yet carried out comprehensive evaluation of its academic programs because of non operation of the regulation of monitoring of academic programs. Currently applied students’ surveys and reports of the Head of final attestation committees do not allow fully evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of academic programs. Reports of Head of final attestation committees do not reveal deep shortcomings and do not serve as basis for further improvement.

**SUMMARY:** Taking into account the existence of outcome based academic programs developed in line with the format set by the Academy; the existence of mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of academic programs, student-centered approach of applied teaching and learning methods; improvements of assessment system and coherent structure with academic programs of other universities, the expert panel concludes that in general academic programs of the Academy meet the requirements of the criterion 3.

***CONCLUSION: The Correspondence of the Academy’s institutional capacities to the requirements of criterion 3 is satisfactory.***

## CRITERION IV. STUDENTS

**CRITERION: The Institution provides support services to students ensuring productive learning environment.**

### FINDINGS

#### **4.1 The Institution has set mechanisms for promoting students’ recruitment, selection and admission procedures.**

The Academy applies a number of mechanisms of dissemination of information printed and electronically in order to recruit applicants: booklets, “911 emergency paper”, web-site of the Academy, facebook page, radio broadcast and TV as well as profession oriented activities at schools. In order to make the admission process easier one from each entrance exams for the bachelor studies were replaced

with non-competitive subjects (with two asteriks \*). In 2014 an agreement was signed with State Energetic College of Abovyan for the recruitment of students.

Admission of students is carried out according to the set regulations by the admission committee approved by RA Ministry of Emergency Situations. Admission places for full time studies in the profession of “Rescue Services” and “Fire protection” is free of charge as the fees are compensated by RA Ministry of Emergency Situations.

Currently MA studies are organized only in a part-time mode of study (correspondence study).

The admission is based on interview. Criteria (questionnaire, minimum requirements, passing score) for the conduction of interview are not clarified.

Education department of the Academy studies the dynamics of students’ dismissal and readmission. During the recent years outflow of students was recorded conditioned by emigration, family and social problems. The percentage of readmitted students is not stable, students mainly are readmitted for correspondent study (part-time).

For the current year the number of students in correspondence (part-time) education system is around 74%.

#### **4.2 The Institution has policies and procedures for assessing student educational needs.**

The Academy highlights the assurance of student-centred environment the basis of which is students’ needs assessment and satisfaction. Students have an opportunity to express their needs due to their involvement in Scientific Council (25%). The involved students are changed every year without any clear selection criteria. The communication of students involved in the Scientific Council with other students takes place during the sessions of Students’ Council, tet-a-tet meetings and through the Internet.

Representatives of Student Bodies and leaders of senior groups regularly take part in the sessions of Deans, meet with Vice-Rectors to discuss their problems and suggestions. During the observations it turns out that students have raised some problems that were solved, e.g. extension of deadline for tuition fees of students, retaking exams, etc. Students always have the opportunity of raising their problems during individual contact with lecturers and to get answers/solutions. Students’ needs assessment is one of the main aims of Students’ Council according to the charter. Students usually turn to the Students’ Council with oral requests. Besides that surveys are conducted to find out the satisfaction of students with the Academy. There are no contentwise analyses of survey results, the feedback and results are not available for students.

There is a “box of rapid feedback” in the Academy and students are aware of it but do not use.

#### **4.3 The Institution provides opportunities for extra-curricular activities and advising services aimed at supporting students’ effective learning.**

The Academy provides additional courses and consultancy through academic advisors and chairs. The service of academic advisors is on a voluntary base carried out by course leaders by organizing “reflection days”. Advisors present students’ interests, provide group and individual consultancy about the issues concerning education process. During the meetings with expert panel students appreciated the works of advisors and expressed their satisfaction with those services.

Besides this the chairs organize additional professional consultancy according to the set time-schedules in terms of courses provided by the chair and for the final attestation exams. During the observations

it turned out that information about additional courses in the Academy and their time-schedule is posted in different floors. There were tests for the evaluation of intended, current and final results of additional courses in the Academy.

Additional practical courses are also organized by the teaching staff for the participation in competitions among other universities, e.g. training in fire –applied sports.

#### **4.4 There are precise regulation and schedule set for students to turn to the administrative staff for additional support and guidance.**

The regulation of turning to the administrative staff of the Academy is in the process of development. In order to provide support and guidance to students the administrative staff organizes admission of students according to the set time-schedule. In order to turn to the administrative staff 3 days a week are scheduled at 13.30-16.00 for the meeting with Vice-Rector and once a week at 16.00 for the meeting with the Rector. The students can turn to the administrative staff also beyond the scheduled hours per necessity through academic advisor, Students' Council and Students' Scientific Union. Students are satisfied with support and guidance from the administrative staff.

#### **4.5 The Institution has student career support services.**

In the Strategic plan of the Academy it is mentioned: "to expand the services provided to students for professional orientation and career planning". At the same time Academy considers "ensuring the competitiveness of its alumni and their employability" as its main goals.

As a service promoting students' career development the Academy plans to establish Career Center (Center for alumni and promotion). Currently the contact with alumni of the Academy is ensured by the staff member of the faculty of correspondent studies on a voluntary basis. In case of a vacancy in RA Ministry of Emergency Situations alumni are called for the employment. According to the order from RA Ministry of Emergency Situations as of 2012 firstly the alumni of the Academy are employed in the departments of the Ministry. The Academy regularly sends the list of students with high performance to the human resource department of RA Ministry of Emergency Situations. Internships organized in the departments of RA Ministry of Emergency Situations also indirectly foster career development of students.

According to the data presented in the self-evaluation during the last 5 years 40-46% of alumni are unemployed and after graduation about 5-10% continue their education.

#### **4.6 The Institution promotes student involvement in its research activities.**

One of the strategic objectives of the Academy is assurance of involvement of learners in scientific-research activities and one of the mechanisms of fostering this is the scientific-methodical journal where students can publish their articles.

BA students are not involved in scientific-research projects. Scientific-research activities of MA students are expressed through the development of master thesis paper and defence. According to the presented data in 2012-2016 only one scientific article was published by a student as an author and/or co-author and in leading scientific-research activities in general 3 MA students were involved.

In 2016 Student's Scientific Union was established at the Academy and its charter was approved. Student's Scientific Union organizes seminars, discussion of scientific articles. In 2014-2015 two student conferences were organized with other universities. The Academy still considers the activities



of Student's Scientific Union insufficient. During the expert panel meeting it turned out that mechanisms promoting students' involvement in scientific-research activities are missing.

#### **4.7 The Institution has a special body, which is responsible for the protection of students' rights.**

In the Strategic plan of the Academy it is mentioned: "to promote the enhancement of awareness of students and staff about their rights and obligations and the role of student bodies in the Academy". The Academy mentions that in 2016 a committee for the protection of students' rights and legitimacy was established according to the decision of Scientific Council however during the observations it turned out that such a committee is not operating. In fact Students' Council is dealing with the issues of the protection of students' rights. The President of Students' Council is involved in the Scientific Council. Students' Council ensures link with students through group leaders. During the meetings with expert panel it turned out students are aware of the activities of Students' Council, they trust the latter and raise their problems through this Council. Students' Council is autonomous and is not accountable to and attached to any governing body. During the resource observation the expert panel recorded that one small classroom was provided to the Students' Council and there were no necessary resources for the effective implementation of their activities, in particular computer and didactic materials for the organization of students' daily life, etc.

#### **4.8 The Institution has set mechanisms for evaluating and ensuring the quality of educational, consultancy and other services provided to students.**

There are no mechanisms for the evaluation and monitoring of educational, consultancy and other services provided to students. Currently evaluation of some components is carried out through surveys among students for the evaluation of teaching quality and effectiveness as well as study of opinions of external stakeholders. During the site-visit it turned out that students take part in surveys however they are not informed about further results and impact of those surveys.

### ***CONSIDERATIONS***

Mechanisms of students' recruitment, selection and admission operating at the Academy give an opportunity to recruit students however criteria for admission of MA students are not fully clarified. Agreement signed with State Energetic College of Abovyan gives an opportunity to recruit students after passing exams of the difference of courses.

Different mechanisms applied for students' recruitment and on the other hand policy of affordable tuition fees and compensation of tuition fees foster formation of stable student base. Free of charge study of 2 professions of bachelor is an important stimulus for the applicants. Though indicators of dismissal and readmission of students of the Academy are not stable (there was a sharp increase for the last 2 years) the Academy has not yet created mechanisms for controlling it. Students' needs assessment is effectively carried out through the close link with course leaders and teaching staff as well as regular meetings with governing bodies. Other mechanisms operating for this purpose (surveys, involvement in councils, Students' Council, box of rapid feedback) do not yet operate effectively. Appreciation of the work of advisors by students stands for effectiveness of organization of additional courses and consultancy. Besides, additional professional consultancy organized by the chairs according to the schedule especially is directed to the preparation for final attestation exams. The expert panel positively evaluated the existence of time-schedule for contacting administrative staff. Though the

hours for turning to the administrative staff are set after the classes of full-time students, upon the necessity students can turn to head of the chair, dean, head of education department and Vice-rector beyond the hours for meetings.

Though ensuring competitiveness and employability of the alumni in the labor market is one of the main goals of the Academy activities in this term are not yet implemented according to the planning of Strategic plan. The absence of the Center for Alumni and Promotion (Career Center) affects on those activities as a result of which there is a poor link between the Academy and its alumni. Assurance of the link with alumni by the staff member of the faculty does not yet have significant impact on the career of the alumni. It is evidenced by rather high percentage of unemployment as a result of surveys among the alumni.

Indicators of the involvement of students in scientific-research activities are rather low. Students' Scientific Union which is responsible for the implementation of this mission is still in the process of development. Absence of mechanisms promoting involvement of students in scientific-research activities results in low motivation among the students.

The Academy tries to foster enhancement of awareness of students and staff of their rights and obligations. The main body dealing with the issues of the protection of students' rights is Students' Council which does not yet operate effectively enough. Taking into account that Students' Council and Students' Scientific Union does not yet have necessary experience and resources for carrying out their activities the expert panel finds that a coordinator from governing bodies attached to these Student bodies would foster enhancement of effectiveness of their activities.

Surveys that are currently applied for the evaluation of services provided to students do not yet operate effectively. The absence of the evaluation of their reliability and impact of the results on the provided services makes the operation of mechanism risky.

**SUMMARY:** Taking into account the operating mechanisms of recruitment, selection and admission of applicants, the policy of applied discounts and affordable tuition fees, the existence of mechanisms for students' needs assessment, the efficient organization of additional courses and consultancy, the existence of time-schedule to turn to the administrative staff and their availability for the students, the opportunities provided from RA Ministry of Emergency Situations promoting students' career the expert panel concludes that in general the Academy ensures effective learning environment for students, hence meets the requirements of Criterion 4.

**CONCLUSION:** *The correspondence of the Academy's institutional capacities to the requirements of criterion 4 is satisfactory.*

## CRITERION V. TEACHING AND SUPPORT STAFFS

**CRITERION:** The Institution provides a highly qualified teaching and supporting staff to achieve the set goals of the academic programs and institution's mission.

### FINDINGS

**5.1 The Institution has policies and procedures promoting recruitment of a highly qualified teaching and supporting staff capable of ensuring program provision.**

Teaching staff of the Academy is comprised of rescue servants and civil society. Requirements for rescue servants are defined in RA Law on Rescue Services, RA Government decree on the approval of requirements set for teaching staff of RA Rescue service education institution as well as RA decree on the approval of regulation of studying in RA Rescue Service Education Institution.

Specialists from RA Ministry of Emergency Situations, leading specialists from different spheres of education and economy, doctors and candidates of sciences who have basic education relevant to the directions of courses provided by the Academy and consistently carry out research and scientific-methodical activities as well as have appropriate working experience in the relevant sphere are invited on a double-jobbing and hourly paid basis. Selection of teaching staff is carried out based on a competition the requirements of which are defined in job descriptions. The Academy does not have set policy for the selection of support staff. In fact support staff is usually selected from the best graduates of the Academy.

### **5.2. The requirement for the qualifications of the teaching staff for each program are comprehensively stated.**

The main requirements for the professional qualities of teaching staff for rescue services of the Academy are defined in the legal documents mentioned in the previous standard. There are no set requirements for the professional qualities of teaching staff of other academic programs. The Academy plans to develop requirements for the professional knowledge and skills of teaching staff of the concrete academic programs provided by the chairs according to the learning outcomes of the given academic program. There are no defined requirements for the teaching staff in the academic programs.

### **5.3 The Institution has well established policies and procedures for the periodic evaluation of the teaching staff.**

Regular evaluation of the teaching staff of the Academy is defined as an objective in the Strategic plan: “Carry out evaluation of teaching staff from the perspective of the alignment with the requirements of quality assurance of academic programs”. There are mechanisms of evaluation of teaching staff of the Academy: surveys, planning of individual works and reports, evaluation of scientific-pedagogical activities, class observations by heads of chairs and deans according to the set time-schedule, peer-review. Surveys have newly been introduced and comprehensive analysis of their results is not in place yet. The Academy does not have procedures of influence of evaluation mechanisms. In some cases as a result of evaluation hours of teaching staff members were reduced, in rare cases there was also dismissal. Students and alumni of the Academy highly evaluate professional and personal qualities of the teaching staff.

### **5.4 The Institution promotes professional development of the teaching staff in accordance with the needs outlined during regular evaluations (both internal and external).**

As a strategic objective the Academy mentions: “to improve and replenish the teaching staff in accordance to the reforms of academic programs and requirements of quality assurance”. For the fulfilment of this objective the Academy highlights the expansion of opportunities for the teaching staff to be trained abroad.

Teaching staff of rescue services had participated in trainings in similar organization of different countries. The Academy developed educational-scientific program for the qualification enhancement of the teaching staff with credit system and this program will be operating since the new academic

year. Topics and directions for the qualification enhancement were selected based on the examples of RA other universities. Internal and external evaluation of the teaching staff did not serve as basis for it.

**5.5 The Institution ensures that there is a permanent staff to provide the coverage of qualifications adequately.**

The Academy does not yet have clearly developed policy ensuring stability of the main teaching staff however it mentions that it is taking steps in this term. According to the regulation on recruitment of teaching staff promotions and accordingly increase of salaries are made. Other mechanism ensuring the stability of teaching staff is the policy of mentoring according to which experiences lecturers support the younger ones. The Academy gives much importance to the involvement of young specialists prioritizing its alumni. During the site-visit it turned out that average age for the teaching staff was 35-40. In some spheres of emergency situations there is a lack of specialists.

**5.6 There are set policies and procedures for the staff promotion.**

The Academy sees professional development of the teaching staff in respective positions: professor, associate professor, assistant, lecturer/lecturer with their initiative. Promotion policy is also defined in internal regulatory rules of the Academy to support the teaching staff and to develop their professional skills. For the purpose of promotion mediation can be presented to higher bodies in order to award staff members with medals, certificates and titles. The Academy considers participation in conferences and free publication of articles in “Crisis Management and Technologies” scientific and scientific-methodical journal as mechanisms of professional development of the teaching staff

**5.7 There is necessary technical and administrative staff to achieve the strategic goals.**

Currently the Academy has 43 administrative and 35 support staff members. As a weak point the Academy mentions that there are no professional criteria and mechanisms of development for the attestation of administrative and support staffs. During the site-visit it turned out that there is generally combination of positions among the administrative and support staffs mainly on a voluntary basis. In particular, Vice-Rector for Education coordinates also activities concerning the sphere of science, head of chair of rescue services coordinates activities of international relations, Head of Education Department is also a Science Secretary, the staff member of the Dean’s office of part-time education also bears the responsibilities of career support, etc. The Academy does not evaluate correspondence of administrative and support staffs for the implementation of strategic goals. It should be mentioned that students and teaching staff are satisfied with the work of administrative and support staffs.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

Based on the legal documents for the formation of teaching staff the Academy was able to recruit its teaching staff with specialists of different spheres (academic, practical, servant and civil society). It is remarkable that quality rescue servants from RA Ministry of Emergency Situations are involved in the Academy as teaching staff members this gives an opportunity to transfer their practical knowledge and skills to students. At the same time involvement of leading specialists from other universities on an hourly paid basis gives an opportunity to form multiprofile teaching staff. Formation of support staff is not clarified enough. The absence of clear requirements set for the teaching staff per academic program

can hinder the fulfillment of academic program goals. However understanding its importance from the perspective of effective implementation of the academic programs the Academy plans to develop them. For the evaluation of the teaching staff the Academy applies mechanisms of both individual and collective evaluation which however are not interconnected. Some of the evaluation mechanisms are newly introduced in the Academy and have not been operated sufficiently enough. The expert panel finds it positive that the Academy actively enough carries out continuous trainings of teaching staff in RA and abroad. This is carried out due to the cooperation agreements. As a result the competences acquired by the teaching staff promote investment of modern practice in teaching. However it should be mentioned that those trainings refer mainly to the rescue services and are not based on the results of internal and external evaluation of the teaching staff. Besides, the purposefulness of the trainings in line with the needs of academic programs is not clarified. Though there is a lack of specialists in some spheres the Academy tries to ensure stability of teaching staff through promotion, increase of salary, mentoring and ensuring necessary working environment for the teaching staff. The Academy takes steps in the generation change of the teaching staff by guiding its best graduates to postgraduate education to other universities.

The Academy is able to ensure professional development of the teaching staff through nominating them in relevant positions with the policy of promotion in case of effective work. Besides, an effective mechanism for the progress in scientific-research activities is the opportunity of being published in scientific and scientific-methodical journals free of charge.

The activities of its administrative and support staffs the academy tries to direct to the implementation of the Strategic plan by mentioning in the Strategic plan the responsibilities of each structural unit per strategic objective. In spite of this, professional criteria for the attestation of administrative and support staffs have not been developed yet which hinders the evaluation of administrative and support staffs from the perspective of the implementation of strategic goals.

Conditioned by the fact that Academy is a small institution there is a combination of positions among administrative and support staffs and this can hinder effective implementation of activities. However internal stakeholders of the Academy highly evaluate the quality of the work of administrative and support staffs.

**SUMMARY:** Taking into account the availability of teaching and support staffs in accordance with the academic programs of the Academy, involvement of leading specialists of the sphere in education process, the existence of defined mechanisms for the evaluation and promotion of teaching staff, policy and procedures of progression, regular trainings of the teaching staff of rescue services abroad as well as assurance of the stability of teaching staff with its best alumni the expert panel concludes that Academy has teaching and support staffs with necessary professional qualities for the fulfillment of its mission and implementation of academic programs, hence it meets the requirements of the Criterion 5.

***CONCLUSION: The correspondence of the Academy's institutional capacities to the requirements of criterion 5 is satisfactory.***

## CRITERION VI. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

**CRITERION:** The Institutions ensures the implementation of research activity and the link of the research with teaching and learning.

## **FINDINGS**

### **6.1 The Institution has a clear strategy promoting its research interests and ambitions**

The Academy defined in the Strategic plan “assurance of sustainable development of scientific potential of the Academy and enhancement of the effectiveness of research activities” and as an objective the following was mentioned: “to create grounds for the establishment of higher education 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle (PhD education) in line with NQF requirements, to involve the teaching staff in scientific research activities, to promote international scientific cooperation of the Academy and to be integrated into European research area”.

In 2016 the Academy approved the concept for the development of scientific-research activities in 2017-2022 where priority directions are “the issues of crises management, civil defense, defense in emergency situations, regional and technological development, development of safety culture”.

### **6.2 The Institution has a long-term strategy and med-term and short-term programs that address its research interests and ambitions.**

The Academy has defined main directions of long-term strategy in research sphere in its Strategic plan. The institution does not have mid-term plans. Short-term plans in research sphere are expressed in annual work plans of the chairs. The implementation of those plans is not linked with long-term strategy of the Academy. Chairs carry out research each one according to its direction. During the observations it turned out that scientific-research topics of the chairs are not interconnected and the cooperation among the chairs in this sphere is lacking. The Academy admits that currently small part of teaching staff is involved in research activities and there is a serious problem of scientific potential. In 2016 the Academy approved the document on “Monitoring of educational and scientific-research activities” where formats for the monitoring are involved however there are no analyses of the effectiveness of implementing research programs yet.

### **6.3 The Institution ensures the implementation of research and its development through sound policies and procedures.**

Vice-Rector for Educational Affairs and Head of Education Department who also combines the functions of scientific secretary coordinate research activities in the Academy (the Academy does not have Vice-Rector on Scientific Affairs).

The Academy views improvement of necessary territorial and material-technical base, provision of scientific-educational resources as its policy of implementing and developing research activities. In this term one of the essential achievements was “Crisis Management and Technologies” journal of scientific and scientific-methodical articles (2010) which is involves in the “list of journals acceptable for scientific publications on the main results and concepts of PhD dissertation”.

Scientific and scientific-methodical works of the teaching staff of the Academy, RA other universities, the Republic of Poland, Russian Federation (Saint Petersburg), Japan, Korea are published in the journal. The expenses of publication are covered by the Academy. The presented peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed articles are discussed in the corresponding chairs and non-peer-reviewed articles

are peer-reviewed by 3 specialized council (according to professions). External peer-review of non-peer-reviewed internal articles is not carried out<sup>8</sup>.

According to the Regulation on Evaluation of the Activities of the Teaching Staff the teaching staff gets defined points (maximum 20) for publications, defense of doctoral or PhD papers and PhD exams (minimums).

In 2017 the Academy organized international conference where most part of speeches were devoted to regional issues as well as to civil defense and protection of population in emergency situations. On the other hand during the last 3 years out of 95 MA theses papers supervised by the teaching staff of the Chair of Crisis Management and the Chair of Rescue Services 92 were devoted to the above mentioned issues as well. Besides, research topics of 3 PhD applicant-lecturers of these chairs also relate to regional problems.

There is no separate article in the budget for funding of scientific-research activities, the direction of allocated financial resources does not directly relate to scientific research activities. The Academy allocates some amount for conferences and publications. Cases of commercializing research are missing.

#### **6.4 The Institution emphasizes internationalization of its research.**

One of the strategic objectives of the Academy is promotion of internationalization of research activities and integration into European research area. Internationalization of research is also defined in the concept for the development of scientific-research activities in 2017-2022. The Academy does not yet have joint international research projects. The number of publications of scientific works by the teaching staff in the scientific journals abroad is few and they are mainly related to humanities.

Works carried out in this term are limited to the publication by foreign authors in the journal “Crisis Management and Technologies” and participation of the staff of the Academy in international conferences and seminars. The Academy tries to support internationalization of research activities by organizing free of charge courses of foreign language for the teaching staff.

#### **6.5 The Institution has well established mechanisms for linking research with educational process.**

In order to make the students aware of the principles of carrying out scientific-research activities the Academy provides methodical manuals where main information for writing papers, course papers and master theses is described.

The teaching staff communicates the results of their research activities to students through thematic lectures organized within the framework of the course as well as through the provided literature.

Students take part in conferences and seminars. In 2014-2016 students of the Academy presented 34 educational –scientific speeches. Students are not involved in any research project. In some cases students on a voluntary basis are involved in research projects being implemented within the framework of international cooperation to support data collection. MA students present research activities through thesis papers however the requirement for research is not consistently applied when writing thesis papers. In most parts of the observed thesis papers innovative component of research was missing. During the site-visit it turned out that MA students can prolong the choice of topic for

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<sup>8</sup>The text was edited as a result of discussions of the remarks and suggestions got from the Academy.

their thesis paper till the end of the first year of their study. There is a repetition of topics even in some cases content of thesis paper was repeated entirely.

Students' Scientific Union which was established in 2016 organizes discussions of scientific articles and supports the organization of students' scientific conferences. The overwhelming majority of students who took part in the meetings during the site-visit were not aware of the activities of Students' Scientific Council.

## CONSIDERATIONS

The Academy has defined its research strategy in the Strategic plan as a separate goal giving importance not only to the involvement of the teaching staff but also international scientific cooperation and integration into European Research area. In research activities the Academy links its main interests with its mission focusing on research topics of civil defense and protection of population in emergency situations.

The absence of other educational and research institutions of this field results in slow progress of research activities and absence of joint research.

Absence of mid-term planning and the link of short-term plans with long-term strategic plan, as well as absence of analyses on the effectiveness of the implementation of academic programs endanger the fulfillment of strategic goals. In this respect cooperation of chairs in research filed and interconnection of research programs could also play a good role giving an opportunity for deep and comprehensive study of scientific issues.

The field is not clearly regulated yet in terms of implementation of research and assuring its development. The Academy carries out its policy of implementing and developing research through publication of research results of the teaching staff in Academy's scientific and scientific-methodical journal with its own finances.

The absence of external peer-review of the published materials can reduce objectiveness of evaluation and can bring to the isolation of results.

There is no separate article in the budget for funding scientific-research activities which makes fulfillment of Academy's strategic goal of research sphere risky. The Academy does not yet have practice of commercializing research which can serve as an additional source of income. In spite of internationalization of research activities and the definition of strategic goal on the integration into European research are the Academy does not have any success in this term yet. This is evidenced by the absence of international research programs and small number of publications by the teaching staff in foreign journals.

Involvement of students in research activities carried out by the Academy is poor. As a result of the absence of clear mechanisms interconnecting research and educational processes as well as poor involvement of students in research activities (and absence of involvement in case of BA students) the link between scientific research and education is weak in the Academy and the involvement of research component in education process is at the disposal of the lecturer. Activities of Students' Scientific Union that was established in 2016 cannot be considered sufficient yet.

**SUMMARY:** Taking into account that the Academy does not have short-term and mid-term plans in line with long-term research strategy, there is no budget-research interconnection, the allocated limited financial resources are not envisaged for the implementation of research activities, there are no



international research projects, the involvement of teaching staff and students in research activities is low, there is small number of publications in foreign journals as well as that there are no clear mechanisms interconnecting educational and research activities it can be stated that the Academy does not ensure sufficient implementation of research activities and their link with education process.

***CONCLUSION: The correspondence of the Academy's institutional capacities to the requirements of criterion 6 is unsatisfactory.***

## CRITERION VII. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

***CRITERION: The Institution has necessary resources to create learning environment and to effectively support the implementation of its stated mission and goals.***

### FINDINGS

#### **7.1. The Institution has an appropriate learning environment for the implementation of academic programs offered.**

The Academy aspires to “ensure technically equipped modern learning and working environment to promote effective activities of all learners and staff”. There is an educational territory in accordance with the requirements of licencing, there is a base for practical lessons: training ground in Lusakert. Education in the Academy is organized by two shifts. The Academy has equipped classrooms, projectors for presentations, educational cabinets, 3 computer rooms. The cabinets were established within the framework of international cooperation, including mini center-cabinet of crisis management, cabinet of biochemistry and rescue, cabinet of first aid equipped with necessary modern equipment. The Academy has also storage for firefighting equipments and clothing for mountaineering. There is no separate water-rescue cabinet and there is only 1 clothing for diving. There is also a sports hall, halls with technical resources, canteen, medical center and library. There is free wifi in the territory. In the library there are basic textbooks, journals, maps, manuals in accordance with curricula. 80% of literature is in Armenian written by the teaching staff of the Academy. The electronic materials that are available in 5 computers of the library can be downloaded or taken with USB carrier. There is no reading hall. Surveys conducted among teaching and support staffs and students evidence satisfaction of the latter with the resources of the Academy.

#### **7.2. The Institution provides appropriate financial resources with necessary equipment and facilities as needed to achieve its mission and goals.**

The Academy strives for effective resource management and financial stability considering as its strategic objective the harmonization of financial planning with strategic goals and objectives. Policy of budget allocation according to strategic goals and objectives is missing. Priorities of financial allocation are not defined. The Academy is financed by RA state budget, from the means got from entrepreneurial activities as well as from other means not contradicting RA legislation. Annual estimate of budget inflows and outflows is formed in the Academy and after each financial year annual budget performance is presented.

During the last 5 years income of Academy from tuition fees increased with 1%, from state budget- about 80%, from other means- 5%. The expenses have also increased conditioned by the acquisition of

resources and improvement of academic environment. Most part of allocation of budget expenses (65-70%) is for salaries. The need for new financial resources is assessed by the Academy and an application is presented to RA Ministry of Emergency Situations.

**7.3. The Institution has sound policy on the allocation of financial resources and capacity to sustain and ensure the integrity and continuity of the programs offered at the institution.**

Budget project of the Academy is formed by the Rector, Vice-Rectors and Chief Accountant based on the income calculated by the accounting department, total expenses to be made and needs of structural units. The budget project is discussed in the Scientific Council, then in the Board of the Academy and later on is presented to RA Ministry of Emergency Situations for approval. Purchase plan is presented to RA Ministry of Emergency Situations at the beginning of the reporting year and according to it purchase is made by the Department established in 2016 for regulating purchase and usage of buildings of the Academy. The Academy follows implementation of budget and at the end of each year budget performance is discussed in the session of Scientific Council, necessary changes are decided and incomes and expenses for the upcoming year are planned. Rector presents financial reports to RA Ministry of Emergency Situations.

In order to ensure financial stability the Academy strives to ensure sustainability of extra budgetary means, to effectively manage current resources and adopt policy of resource-saving. Annual financial audit of the Academy is carried out by RA Ministry of Emergency Situations.

**7.4. The Institution's resource base supports the implementation of institution's academic programs and its strategic plans, which promotes sustainability and continuous quality enhancement.**

There is a reference to necessary resources in the academic programs and strategic plan of the Academy. Resources (financial, material, human and information) provided for each strategic objective are mentioned in a separate column in the Strategic plan and in the academic programs there is a separate section on "resources and means supporting education process". The Academy views changes of academic programs in line with the requirements of labor market and the number of students as one of the most important factors from the perspective of resource planning and acquisition. As admission is organized according to the planned number of places hence abrupt increases and reductions of resource needs do not take place and this results in the stability of resources. From the perspective of continuous quality improvement the Academy gives importance to the investment and application of modern technologies in education process. For this reason in 2014-2016 new equipment was obtained including computers, laptops, printers, scanners, projectors, means for biology, rescue and first aid. The Academy itself evaluates needs for resource base and presents an application to RA Ministry of Emergency Situations. Currently replenishment of base in Lusakert is planned. There is a need for chemical laboratory in the Academy and this need is covered by the agreement signed with Armenian National Polytechnic University. Current monitoring of academic programs is considered as mechanism for the evaluation of resource base of the academic programs. There is a regulation (Regulation of current monitoring and review of the academic programs of the Academy) developed for this reason but it has not been operated yet. The Academy reveals issues related to resource base through conduction of surveys among internal stakeholders

**7.5. The Institution has a sound policy and procedure to manage information and documentation.**

Improvement of information and documentation management is one of the strategic objectives of the Academy. There is no regulation set for administration and circulation of documents. In 2011 electronic mulberry system of documentation was introduced in the Academy and it insures document circulation. In 2016 unified programs for management of human resources and development of database were invested. The system is used by the Rector, Vice-rector for Education Affairs, Dean of Rescue Service Faculty, Head of Exploitation Department and Accountant. In 2013 network for the exchange of internal data was ensured among the structural units of the Academy. In 2014 SuperVision YSU information management system and hosting Space 2 Service were introduced which are unified and centralized information systems with one general database. All the structural units, chairs and Education Department of the Academy are equipped with computers and most of them is connected with the network. The internet is available. The Academy states that it doesn't yet have unified system of information management.

**7.6. The Institution creates safe and secure environment through health and safety mechanisms that also consider special needs of students.**

The buildings of the Academy are equipped with security and fire protection systems, internal and nearby territories are monitored with camera system. There is a 24-hour guard service. Civil defense of students and staff during emergency situations is carried out by the Chair of Civil Defence of the Academy through Committees of Civil Defence Evacuation, security and Dean of faculty. There are evacuation plans and necessary equipment.

There is a medical centre in the main building of the Academy which works from 9<sup>00</sup> to 17<sup>15</sup> every day and is equipped with necessary medicine and some equipment for first aid. There is one staff member in the medical center. The Academy mentions that the medical centre still needs to be re-equipped. If necessary, transfer of the injured to the clinic or hospital is organized. The Chair of Rescue has significant investment in maintenance of health and physical training of students and staff members of the Academy.

The Trade of Union of RA Ministry of Emergency Situations also operates in the Academy and organizes the rest of the staff of Rescue Services, resort treatment, rest of children and other activities, as well as staff members having medical problems and those socially vulnerable are given financial support.

Only the fifth floor of the main building of the Academy is adjusted to the audience with special needs (the entrance has a ramp, and there is an elevator and toilet). The Academy has a canteen.

The conducted surveys show that students are satisfied with the above mentioned services.

**7.7. The Institution has special mechanisms in place for the evaluation of the effectiveness, applicability and availability of resources given to the teaching staff and learners.**

Surveys on satisfaction with resources conducted among teaching staff, alumni and students as well as meetings and discussions with the administrative staff are mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness, availability and applicability of resources and services provided to the students of the Academy. The students have the opportunity to raise the issues concerning the resources provided to them during the sessions of the faculty and to get feedback. There is a box for rapid feedback in the faculty.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

The Academy tries to ensure learning environment in line with the requirements of the academic programs. For this reason annual funding from the budget of the Academy gives an opportunity to improve the environment. The establishment of professional educational cabinets in the Academy within the framework of cooperation with foreign institutions has significantly improved the quality of learning environment. On the other hand, the separation of Biochemical and Rescue cabinets would foster the effectiveness of learning. The absence of Water-rescue cabinet and availability of only one clothing for diving negatively affects the formation of competences of the course on water-rescue.

In order to ensure stability of financial activities, the Academy strives on the one hand to enhance the financial inflows and make their sources diverse, and on the other hand to adopt resource-saving policy. In spite of the fact that the budget allocation in the Academy is not aligned with strategic goals and objectives, due to the operating financial policy there was an increase of income during the last years mainly conditioned by the increase of financial resources allocated from state budget. As a result the allocated financial resources in line with goals of academic programs have been enriched in order to ensure and operate necessary means and equipment.

The control over financial policy by RA Ministry of Emergency Situations leads to the clear and coordinated implementation of policy on financial resource allocation. On the other hand, priorities and principles on resource allocation which would be derived from the implementation of academic program goals and would lead to continuous development are not defined.

In general, the resource base of the Academy gives an opportunity to implement academic programs and strategic plan. The Academy has modern equipment, however, its possible usage by the RA Ministry of Emergency Situations can hinder the sustainable implementation of learning through their usage. In order to ensure continuous improvement and stability of quality, there is still a need to re-equip the laboratory base of the Academy, training ground in Lusakert and to expand application of IT in education process. The alignment of equipment in Lusakert with international standards would foster improvement and internationalization of quality. The Academy has necessary library fund and electronic literature for the provision of educational services. Though the professional literature in Armenian is not sufficient yet, the manuals developed by the teaching staff somehow solve this problem. Monitoring of the academic programs would promote the enhancement of effectiveness of resource allocation.

In the sphere of information and document circulation management the Academy has some achievements which are ensured by information and document circulation management systems which have significantly clarified and made those processes easier through the establishment of components of information system. They ensure a direct connection with the RA Ministry of Emergency Situations in terms of gathering and transfer of data in a short period of time. In spite of all these, the Academy still finds that it doesn't have a unified system of information management.

In general, the Academy has created a quite safe and secure environment through services directed to maintenance of health and safety. The assurance of buildings with necessary equipment and systems foster it. The medical centre can ensure relevant quality of health service through the existing medicine and equipment for first aid. Respective chairs of the Academy also contribute to the provision of these services. Only the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of the main building of the Academy is adjusted to students with special needs which still can cause difficulties for the proper organization of education for those students.

Surveys which are considered to be the main mechanism for the evaluation of resources and services provided to students are not fully carried out, and the evaluation of their effectiveness is not made yet.

**SUMMARY:** Taking into account the assurance of education environment with classroom and cabinet base, material-technical and professional equipment and library fund, the development of clear financial policy and its accountable implementation, investment of electronic systems for the organization of educational process, communication and document circulation, the efficient implementation of safety and health services as well as the conduction of surveys directed to the identification of needs related to resources, the expert panel concludes that the Academy has necessary resources to ensure learning environment and fulfill its strategic goals, hence meets the requirements of Criterion 7.

**CONCLUSION:** *The correspondence of the Academy's institutional capacities to the requirements of criterion 7 is satisfactory.*

## CRITERION VIII. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**CRITERION:** The Institution is accountable to the government and society for the education it offers and the resources it uses as well as for the research it conducts.

### FINDINGS

#### **8.1 The Institution has a clear policy on institutional accountability**

The aim of the policy on accountability of the Academy is “assurance of continuity, transparency and publicity of education process”. According to the legislation hierarchic (bottom up) principle of accountability is applied in the Academy which is defined according to regulations of the activities of structural units.

Accountability is ensured through the chain teaching staff-head of chair-dean-Rector-RA Ministry of Emergency Situations each member according to his annual work plan. Based on the reports of the structural units the Rector forms comprehensive report about annual activities of the Academy and presents it to Scientific Council ensuring top-down accountability. Summarized version of the report is presented during the session of RA Ministry of Emergency Situations. Issues discussed during the annual sessions of the Board of Academy mainly involve estimate and performance of the budget of Academy.

During the site-visit it turned out that in order to ensure feedback the Rector presents weekly and per trimester reports about the current activities of the Academy to the deputy Minister of RA Emergency Situations.

#### **8.2 The Institution ensures transparency of its procedures and processes and makes them publicly available**

As a strategic objective the Academy considers “further development of public relations and involvement of the Academy in public projects”. In order to communicate information, regulations and procedures about its activities to the public the Academy uses official web-page which is involved in the web-site of RA Ministry of Emergency Situations as a separate section, facebook page, “911 emergency paper”, other printed materials and mass media. Weekly newspaper is published in the Academy, it illustrates activities of the Academy and its staff and it's also a platform for the teaching

staff to publish articles. Departments of “Journalism” and “Monitoring and Analysis of Mass Media” of RA Ministry of Emergency Situations also illustrate the activities of the Academy.

During the meetings students, teaching and support staffs as well as alumni mentioned that they are satisfied with the structure of the web-page, illustration of news and the information they get through it. The Academy also presented its newly created separate official web-site ([www.cmsa.am](http://www.cmsa.am)) which is in the phase of operation.

### **8.3 The Institution has sustainable feedback mechanisms for establishing contacts with society.**

The Academy does not have set policy and procedures for the public relations. The coordination of these activities currently is carried out though the department of “Monitoring and Analysis of Mass Media”. The latter each trimester carries out analysis of public relations and news (including ones about the Academy) which are not available for the expert panel. Internet is considered as means of ensuring public relations: the section of frequently asked questions, groups in Facebook and surveys for the study of the opinion of alumni. Indirect feedback is also assured through organization or participation in different events in the Academy, regular visits to regions, communities and educational organizations.

### **8.4 The Institution has mechanisms that ensure knowledge /value/ transfer to the society.**

The enhancement of the level of creation of educational, scientific, methodical and safety culture in the sphere of the protection of population in emergency situations and civil defense is stipulated in the Charter of the Academy as one of the main objectives.

In this respect the Academy provides expert, cultural-informational, educational, scientific and methodical various services to society. The Academy regularly carries out activities with schoolchildren and applicants providing guidance for the profession orientation as well as concerning the issues of civil defense, protection of population in emergency situations and creation of safety culture. Campaigns and events with the participation of students are organized, information manuals and guides are published.

The Academy carries out large-scale activities during the regular trainings and qualification enhancement processes for RA system of Emergency Situations, state governing bodies, local self-governing bodies and wide layer of population by developing and implementing training and additional academic programs.

## ***CONSIDERATIONS***

Being part of RA Ministry of Emergency Situations the Academy takes the responsibility of publishing its annual report and ensuring its availability based on the current legislation. The Academy fulfils this goal by applying hierarchic principle of accountability which fosters comprehensive and interconnected implementation of accountability.

Rector’s annual, current weekly and trimester reports presented to RA Ministry of Emergency Situations give an opportunity to RA Ministry of Emergency Situations as the main client to evaluate the activities of the Academy and to give necessary instructions. On the other hand the selected format of Rector’s reports is not linked with the Strategic plan and does not allow viewing it as a performance of strategic goals.

Dissemination of information through web-page and facebook page, “911 emergency situations” newspaper and other means of mass media as well as through the department of “Journalism” of RA Ministry of Emergency Situations gives an opportunity to ensure enough transparency and publicity

among the public. Web-page of the Academy is not available in a foreign language and though the Academy insists that it has put large number of documents in its web-page the information that currently exists in the web-page is rather limited and this does not allow to effectively operate this mechanism. This problem is already being solved by the Academy by creating new separate web-site. The absence of set policy and procedures on public relations hinder effective implementation of those activities. At the same time analyses by the Department of “Monitoring and Analysis of Mass Media” of RA Ministry of Emergency Situations are not available thus the expert panel does not have an opportunity to evaluate their impact on the activities of the Academy.

The Academy has a great commitment in transferring knowledge and values to the public. By providing educational, expert, scientific, methodical and cultural services to society the Academy fosters creation of safety culture. At the same time The Academy at the same time takes an important role by implementing additional academic programs for RA system of Emergency Situations, state governing and local self-governing bodies as well as a wider layer of society. The Academy carried out cultural activities in line with its mission.

**SUMMARY:** Taking into account clearly operating system of accountability of the Academy for internal and external stakeholders, the mechanisms applied for the transparency and availability of processes and procedures, the support of respective department of RA Ministry of Emergency Situations as well as the great commitment in transferring knowledge (values) to the society the expert panel concludes that the Academy meets the requirements of the criterion 8.

**CONCLUSION:** *The correspondence of the Academy’s institutional capacities to the requirements of criterion 8 is satisfactory.*

## CRITERION IX. EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND INTERNATIONALIZATION

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

### FINDINGS

**9.1 The Institution promotes its external relations through sound policies and procedures aimed at creating an environment conducive to experience exchange and enhancement and internationalization.**

The Academy has set in its Strategic plan “expansion of external relations of the Academy and development of processes for internationalization”. There are some objectives for the implementation of this: to expand and diversify international relations of the Academy in educational and scientific spheres, to promote internationalization of research activities of the Academy, to ensure comprehensive development of external relations of the Academy.

The procedure for the above-mentioned objectives and actions derived from them the Academy has defined in the action plan of the Strategic plan which however is not in line with planning strategic objectives. In the action plan not all the activities have set deadlines for implementation, responsible people and necessary resources. On the other hand the Academy does not have Vice-Rector for international relations mentioned as a responsible person. The centralized coordination of international relations by RA Ministry of Emergency Situations as well as limited number of positions

do not allow having the position of Vice-Rector for international relations so the mentioned functions are factually implemented by the Head of the Chair on Rescue Services<sup>9</sup>.

### **9.2 The institution's external relations infrastructure ensure regulated process.**

The Academy does not have separate infrastructure for external relations and internationalization. Management system of international procedures is centralized and is under the Department of external relations of RA Ministry of Emergency Situations. This department deals with the issues of external relations and internationalization of the Academy, formation of necessary documents and visas for the invited specialists and delegations, organization of their reception, correspondence and exchange of official documents upon the approvals from the corresponding units of the Academy. Head of the Chair on Rescue Services and the Rector are responsible for international affairs from the Academy. Conduction of negotiations and signing agreements with foreign institutions for cooperation is carried out by the Rector of the Academy.

Most of the international agreements were obtained by RA Ministry of Emergency Situations and the Academy is carrying out them.

### **9.3 The Institution effectively collaborates with local and international institutions and organizations.**

The Academy has international cooperation agreements and contracts with institutions and international organizations from about 10 countries of the world. Promotion of external relations is not yet implemented from the perspective of exchange of students and scientific-pedagogical staff, student mobility is missing which was also given importance to by the alumni. Publications in international journals are few. Currently the Academy does not have foreign students. The Academy does not yet have joint research projects and participation of students in research activities implemented by international institutions is limited to the support in data collection.

Within the framework of international cooperation 4 professional cabinets were established and equipped in the Academy. Trainings and seminars were regularly organized within the framework of cooperation. Most part of the administrative staff and teaching staff of rescue services of the Academy as current specialists of the sphere have taken courses in foreign institutions, have had speeches in international seminars and conferences, have taken part in international trainings as heads of practical activities, security officials and result researchers.

Though notes are taken in the plans of the teaching staff about the business trips of administrative and teaching staffs comprehensive reports are not presented to the Academy. Instead of it the reports are presented to the Department of external relations of RA Ministry of Emergency Situations according to the defined format<sup>10</sup>.

From the local education institutions the Academy has contracts with Armenian National Polytechnic University, RA Military universities and State Energetic College of Abovyan.

### **9.4 The Institution ensures internal stakeholders' appropriate level of a foreign language to enhance productivity of internationalization.**

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<sup>9</sup>The text was edited as a result of discussions of the remarks and suggestions got from the Academy.

<sup>10</sup>The text was edited as a result of discussions of the remarks and suggestions got from the Academy.



*Since 2014 the level of foreign language proficiency for administrative and teaching staffs of the Academy has been analysed according to the data mentioned in the personal sheets<sup>11</sup>.*

As a result of analysis it was found out that level of English language proficiency of the staff is rather low. Currently courses of English language are organized for administrative and teaching staff and students of the Academy free of charge. However during the site-visit it turned out that participation of teaching staff and students in the mentioned courses is rather low. 15-20 members of teaching staff participate in the courses during the 3 years with the same composition. There is no mechanism checking the knowledge of a foreign language and the efficiency of these courses has not been evaluated. The Academy does not evaluate foreign language proficiency of its staff from the perspective of effectiveness of internationalization. In the strategic plan there are no threshold indicators of the goal of internationalization in the indicators for the evaluation of the progress. Information about international projects and cooperation is missing in the webpage, and the current information is available only in Armenian.

### **CONSIDERATIONS**

In spite of the fact that the Academy plans to expand its external relations and improve processes of internationalization by separate goals and objectives of its strategic plan, the planning of activities in the action plan is not aligned with the defined objectives. The inconsistency of the presented program for the creation environment promoting internationalization endangers the implementation of the adopted policy.

As the centralized management of external relations and assurance of processes for internationalization of the Academy are carried out by the RA Ministry of Emergency Situations, the Academy communicates its needs and ambitions in terms of internationalization to the RA Ministry of Emergency Situations through the rector. However, the absence of separate infrastructure or position responsible for internationalization decreases the effectiveness of processes towards internationalization and endangers the implementation of strategic goals.

The international cooperation agreements of the Academy foster the recognition of the Academy in the international level. However, most parts of the international agreements belong to the RA Ministry of Emergency Situations and the Academy with its staff takes the role of a performer. Within the framework of international cooperation the Academy managed to improve its material resources, training courses and business trips of teaching and administrative staffs foster improvement of current specialists of the sphere. The projects mostly refer to professional development of current specialists of Rescue Services and to the implementation of activities of awareness and trainings for different groups of society in terms of Civil Defense rather than to academic education. The impact of international cooperation on academic programs and education process is not significant yet, exchange programs of students and teaching staff are still perspective though there are agreements giving this opportunity. There are no research projects within the framework of cooperation in which the teaching staff and students would be involved.

The cooperation with local education institutions hasn't yet given significant outcomes. Accordingly, the expert panel finds that the Academy doesn't fully use national and international relations for the enhancement of effectiveness of its education process and improvement of its academic programs. The

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<sup>11</sup>The text was edited as a result of discussions of the remarks and suggestions got from the Academy.

international ambitions stipulated in the strategic plan are not implemented in a coordinated way. In general, the Academy takes steps towards expansion of international cooperation, however, the signed memoranda and contracts are not fully put into action and, as it is mentioned in the self-evaluation of the Academy, “there are still things to do in this term”.

In order to increase the level of foreign language (English) proficiency among staff and students, free of charge courses organized by the Academy do not have significant influence on the solution of the problem. The indicators of foreign language proficiency are still low and are considered as one of the main problems hindering the processes of internationalization. On the other hand, the policy adopted by the Academy in this term is not implemented purposefully. Absence of information about international programs and cooperation in the webpage and non-availability of information in Russian and English hinder internationalization and decrease recognition of the Academy by academic, scientific, international institutions and organizations which can be potential partners for the Academy.

**SUMMARY:** Taking into consideration that the Academy does not yet have corresponding procedures promoting the adoption of policy of external relations in its education process and academic programs, infrastructure for the management of activities of internationalization, projects of international education and research exchange, student mobility, and the impact of international cooperation on academic education is missing, international ambitions set in the strategic plan are not carried out in a coordinated way, English language proficiency is still a serious problem from the perspective of development of processes and internationalization, the expert panel concludes that the Academy does not yet sufficiently promote internationalization of its activities and establishment of external relations, hence does not meet the requirements of the Criterion 9.

**CONCLUSION:** *The correspondence of the Academy’s institutional capacities to the requirements of criterion 9 is unsatisfactory.*

## CRITERION X. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

**CRITERION:** *The Institution has an internal quality assurance system, which promotes establishment of a quality culture and continual improvement of all the processes of the Institution.*

### FINDINGS

#### **10.1 The Institution has internal quality assurance policy and procedures.**

The Academy has defined its QA policy and procedures through concept of Internal QA and QA policy approved in 2014. The aim of QA policy of the Academy is “to invest an official, transparent and reliable QA system based on the internal and external evaluation of applied procedures and results of activities led by European Standards and Guidelines for QA and ISO 9000-2000 standards”. The main QA spheres of the Academy defined in the policy are as follows: Academic Programs and Courses, Teaching Staff, Teaching and Learning, Evaluation of Learners, Support Services, Resources and Infrastructure, Scientific Research Activity, Expansion of Additional and Continuous Education, Public Involvement. Internal QA system was invested in the Academy in 2014. Currently QA new documents were developed in the Academy, e.g. approval of academic programs, internal expertise and official approval, annual monitoring and regular review of academic programs, programs for qualification enhancement

of the teaching staff, etc. which aren't being operated yet. QA mechanisms and procedures are approved by the Scientific Council of the Academy. Currently mechanisms of surveys and class observation are being operated according to the approved procedures. There are no qualitative analyses of surveys. The effectiveness of mechanisms is not evaluated.

#### **10.2 The Institution allocates sufficient material, human and financial resources to manage internal quality assurance processes.**

Since 2013 QA Center was established in the Academy within the framework of grant project by the World Bank. It functions in accordance with the approved charter. The QA Center has 4 staff members. It is a self-governing body which is accountable to the governing bodies and to the rector of the Academy. Reports are presented to the Scientific Council orally.

There are some contradictions related to the QA concept. According to the organizational structure presented in the concept, QA Center is hierarchically linked to the vice-rector and not to the rector, and QA Faculty Committees are presented but during the observations it turned out that they do not exist.

QA Center mentions that it still urgently needs professional trainings. The provision of material and financial resources to QA Center is implemented in the centralized way upon necessity. QA Center was equipped with necessary material-technical resources due to the grant project by the World Bank.

#### **10.3 The internal and external stakeholders are involved in quality assurance processes.**

One of the main principles of QA policy of the Academy is “full participation of learners, alumni, RA Ministry of Emergency Situations and other employers in QA procedures”.

The Academy tries to ensure the involvement of internal stakeholders in QA processes through involving the representatives in committees and working groups. Suchlike examples are still few; QA Standing Committee of Scientific Council, self-evaluation working group.

There are no examples of factual involvement of external stakeholders except the participation of departments of the RA Ministry of Emergency Situations that carried out internships in surveys conducted by the Academy.

#### **10.4 The internal quality assurance system is periodically reviewed.**

In the objectives of QA policy of the Academy it is defined: “to continuously improve QA system through regular reviews, to improve and upgrade QA functions, procedures, criteria and official documents related to them”.

QA Center still plans to develop clear mechanisms of review. While investing QA system for the development of policy and procedures, corresponding documents of Public Administration of Academy of the RA, Armenian National Polytechnic University, Yerevan State University, Armenian State University of Economics and branch of Yerevan State University in Ijevan were taken as an example.

#### **10.5 The internal quality assurance system provides valid and sufficient grounds for the external quality assurance processes.**

In the objectives of Strategic plan it is defined: “to prepare for external evaluation of the academic programs and to the accreditation according to the requirements of state unified criteria of external evaluation of higher education quality”.

The Academy views the self-evaluation of institutional capacities as basis for QA external evaluation. For the conduction of self-evaluation the Academy has used document packages approved by the Scientific Council as well as the data got through QA mechanisms. According to the requirements of self-evaluation format the working group carried out collection of necessary data and documents. The data were collected also from the reports of structural units (Education Department, HR, deans' offices, etc.), surveys and meetings. As a result study, analysis and evaluation of the spheres of activities of the Academy was carried out.

In spite of this some processes such as evaluation of the activities of QA Center and reports, qualitative and contentwise analysis of survey results, analysis of the effectiveness of QA and other mechanisms, minutes of meeting-discussions with administrative staff and other necessary documental base is missing.

#### **10.6 The internal quality assurance system ensures the transparency of the processes in the Institution providing valid and up to date information on their quality to the internal and external stakeholders.**

In the Strategic plan of the Academy it is defined: "To ensure transparency and publicity of criteria for the evaluation of QA processes and self-evaluation report for internal and external stakeholders, as well as to ensure participation and feedback of students in QA processes".

Analysis of the activities of the Academy in the spheres defined in QA policy is not carried out. In order to show the results of general activities of the Academy to internal and external stakeholders Rector's reports are applied. Reports of QA Center are orally presented in the Scientific Council and are not published. There are no contentwise analysis of survey results and the quantitative results are available only for the teaching staff. Self-evaluation report is not published in the web-page.

#### ***CONSIDERATIONS***

The Academy has invested its QA system in 2014 on the basis of Concept of Internal QA and QA policy. For this reason QA new mechanisms were created in the Academy however their application does not yet have an impact on the processes of the Academy. Their effectiveness is not analyzed. On the other hand there are no grounds that will give an opportunity to judge about full implementation of the policy. This is a point to conclude that actually implemented QA processes do not yet endure clear implementation of the policy.

QA center established in the Academy in 2013 and having 4 staff members can ensure management of internal QA processes of the Academy. However in order to establish functional team QA center still needs further professional trainings. Material and financial resources provided to the QA center due to also the World Bank are sufficient for the implementation of its activities.

Involvement of internal and especially external stakeholders in QA processes of the Academy is still passive. Rare cases of involvement of separate representatives of internal stakeholders in the committees or working group does not yet ensure involvement of entire staff. This hinders creation of reliability among the internal stakeholders towards QA processes.

The expert panel finds that in order to make QA system holistic the mechanisms envisaged by the Academy would foster revealing shortcomings and creating system in line with the needs of the Academy.

The carried out self-evaluation gave an opportunity to the Academy to make collection of necessary documents and data and to create necessary document base for external evaluation. In spite of this some important procedures were left out of attention.

The mechanism of Rector's report ensuring transparency of the activities for internal and external stakeholders does not provide information about the quality of activities of the Academy. Self-evaluation report and qualitative evaluation of the activities are not published for stakeholders which results in isolation of the activities of QA center.

**SUMMARY:** Taking into account that the operating QA mechanisms do not ensure complete implementation of QA concept and policy, not sufficient level of professionalism of QA staff; passive involvement of internal and external stakeholders in QA processes; absence of qualitative evaluation of the effectiveness of processes and reviews as a result of those evaluations; as well as urgent need of publishing the results of activities and data collection by the QA center, it can be stated that QA system does not yet sufficiently foster continuous improvement of processes and creating of quality culture, hence the expert panel concludes that the Academy does not meet the requirements of Criterion 10.

***CONCLUSION: The correspondence of the Academy's institutional capacities to the requirements of criterion 10 is unsatisfactory.***

## EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

| <b>CRITERION</b>                               | <b>CONCLUSION</b>     |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1. Mission and Goals                           | <b>Satisfactory</b>   |
| 2. Governance and Administration               | <b>Satisfactory</b>   |
| 3. Academic Programs                           | <b>Satisfactory</b>   |
| 4. Students                                    | <b>Satisfactory</b>   |
| 5. Teaching and Support Staffs                 | <b>Satisfactory</b>   |
| 6. Research and development                    | <b>Unsatisfactory</b> |
| 7. Infrastructure and Resources                | <b>Satisfactory</b>   |
| 8. Social Responsibility                       | <b>Satisfactory</b>   |
| 9. External Relations and Internationalization | <b>Unsatisfactory</b> |
| 10. Internal Quality Assurance System          | <b>Unsatisfactory</b> |

25.07.2017

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Signature of the Chair of the expert panel

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1. CVs OF THE EXPERT PANEL MEMBERS

**Gagik Qtryan:** Graduated from YSU in 2007 getting Master degree in Informatics and Applied Mathematics. In 2010 he defended his PhD dissertation on “On Multivariate Polynomial Interpolation and Gasca-Maeztu Conjecture” and was awarded the degree of a candidate of physical-mathematical sciences. He has been giving lectures in University after Movses Khorenatsi in Yerevan since 2008. Since 2012 he has been teaching MA students in YSU. In 2011-2015 he was the Head of QA Center in University after Movses Khorenatsi in Yerevan and Vice-Rector for education reforms. Since 2015 he is Head of the Department of Quality and Analysis at the Military Aviation University after A. Khanperiyants. In 2013 and 2014 he led self-evaluation process in University after Movses Khorenatsi in Yerevan. In 2013 and 2014 he took part in the accreditation process of Eurasia International University and in additional studies of the processes in Northern University as an expert. Besides he took part in accreditation process of Gyumri State Pedagogical Institute as an assistant of the coordinator.

**Yulia Dubrovskaya:** Deputy Head of Educational-methodical Department at St. Petersburg University of Fire Service of Russian Federation, Certified Expert at the Federal Service of Control over Education and Science at the Ministry of Education of Russian Federation, candidate of pedagogical sciences, associate professor. Graduated State Pedagogical University in Krasnoyarsk and Leningrad State University after A. Pushkin. She has been a certified Expert at the Federal Service of Control over Education and Science at the Ministry of Education of Russian Federation since 2015. In 2015-2016 she participated in 15 accreditation processes as an expert.

**Suren Danielyan :** graduated from Armenian State Institute of Physical Culture getting the qualification of “teacher of physical training, rescue servant”. He is a candidate of pedagogical sciences since 2001 and is an associate professor of the Chair of Applied Sports, senior specialist of rescue services in Armenian State Institute of Physical Culture. He has taken part in a number of courses of qualification enhancement and trainings: training on “Civil defense” organized with specialists of crisis management arrived from the USA, seminar on “Risk management” in Japan, Tokyo, training on “Modern issues of higher education and quality assurance”, educational project of education reforms “TWINNING”.

**Sona Sargsyan:** in 2004 graduated from Yerevan State Medical University after M. Heratsi (YSMU) with the degree of clinical residency in ENT Diseases. She is a candidate of medical sciences, associate professor. Since 2012 she has been working in “Armenia” medical center. She has participated in a number of trainings, exchange programs, conferences in RA and abroad. She is an author of educational manuals and textbooks. She has been expert panel member for the accreditation of Armenian state institute of physical training and sports.

**Misha Tadevosyan:** 4<sup>th</sup> year student of the Faculty of Education, Psychology and Sociology at Armenian State Pedagogical University after KH. Abovyan. He has been the president of Student Scientific Union of the Faculty of Education, Psychology and Sociology at Armenian State Pedagogical University after KH. Abovyan. He has participated in a number of trainings: “Quality Assurance”, “participation of students in QA processes in Scotland”, «Культурно-историческая психология и деятельностный подход в образовании» Moscow State University of Pedagogy and Pchycology, training courses for students-experts by ANQA. He was member of expert panel during he accreditation of Yerevan State Institute of Theatre and Cinematography.

## APPENDIX 2. SCHEDULE OF THE SITE-VISIT

15.05.2017–18.05.2017

| <b>15.05.2017</b> |  | <i>Launch</i> | <i>End</i> | <i>Duration</i> |
|-------------------|--|---------------|------------|-----------------|
| 1                 | Meeting with the Rector of the Academy   | 9:15          | 9:45       | 30 minutes      |
| 2                 | Meeting with representatives of RA Ministry of Emergency Situations coordinating the activities of the Academy   | 10:00         | 10:45      | 45 minutes      |
| 2                 | Meeting with Vice-Rectors  | 11:00         | 11:45      | 45 minutes      |
| 3                 | Meeting with the self-evaluation working group representatives   | 12:00         | 13:00      | 60 minutes      |
| 4                 | Break, discussions of the expert panel   | 13:15         | 14:00      | 45 minutes      |
| 5                 | Observation of documents and resources (Education Department, Scientific Council)  | 14:15         | 15:00      | 45 minutes      |
| 6                 | Meeting with alumni  | 15:15         | 16:00      | 45 minutes      |
| 7                 | Meeting with employers   | 16:15         | 17:00      | 45 minutes      |
| 8                 | Close discussions of the panel   | 17:15         | 18:30      | 75 minutes      |
| <b>16.05.2017</b> |  | <i>Launch</i> | <i>End</i> | <i>Duration</i> |
| 1                 | Meeting with head of education department and deans  | 9:30          | 10:15      | 45 minutes      |
| 2                 | Meeting with the heads of units (IT, external relations, Alumni and Career Development Department, library)  | 10:30         | 11:15      | 45 minutes      |
| 3                 | Meeting with the 3 academic program leaders presented in the self-evaluation report, the heads of chairs implementing those programs and the working group of the academic program (8-10 people) | 11:30         | 12:15      | 45 minutes      |
| 4                 | Observation of documents at the chairs and observation of resources  | 12:30         | 13:30      | 60 minutes      |
| 5                 | Break, discussions of the expert panel   | 13:45         | 14:30      | 45 minutes      |
| 6                 | Meeting with the representatives of full-time teaching staff (8-10 people)   | 14:45         | 15:30      | 45 minutes      |
| 7                 | Meeting with the representatives of teaching staff (double jobbers and hourly paid) (8-10 people)  | 15:45         | 16:15      | 30 minutes      |
| 8                 | Meeting with heads of chairs and head of cycles  | 16:30         | 17:15      | 45 minutes      |
| 8                 | Close meeting of the panel   | 17:30         | 18:30      | 60 minutes      |
| <b>17.05.2017</b> |  | <i>Launch</i> | <i>End</i> | <i>Duration</i> |
| 1                 | Meeting with the members of Students' Council and Students' Scientific Union (6-8 people)  | 9:30          | 10:15      | 45 minutes      |
| 2                 | Meeting with BA students (8-10 people)   | 10:30         | 11:30      | 60 minutes      |
| 3                 | Meeting with part-time students (8-10 people)  | 11:45         | 12:45      | 60 minutes      |
| 4                 | Break, discussions of the expert panel   | 13:00         | 13:45      | 45 minutes      |
| 5                 | Meeting with MA students (8-10 people)   | 14:00         | 14:45      | 45 minutes      |
| 6                 | Observation of resources and documents, visit to the base in Lusakert  | 15:00         | 17:00      | 120 minutes     |
| 7                 | Close meeting of the panel   | 17:00         | 18:30      | 90 minutes      |
| <b>18.05.2017</b> |  | <i>Launch</i> | <i>End</i> | <i>Duration</i> |
| 1                 | Meeting with the staff of QA Center  | 9:30          | 10:30      | 60 minutes      |



|   |  |       |       |            |
|---|--|-------|-------|------------|
| 2 | Meeting with staff members selected by the expert panel        | 10:45 | 11:15 | 30 minutes |
| 3 | Observation of documents (QA Center), observation of resources | 11:30 | 12:30 | 60 minutes |
| 3 | Open meeting with the panel                                    | 12:45 | 13:15 | 30 minutes |
| 4 | Break, discussions of the expert panel                         | 13:30 | 14:15 | 45 minutes |
| 5 | Meeting with staff members selected by the expert panel        | 14:30 | 15:00 | 30 minutes |
| 6 | Close meeting of the panel                                     | 15:15 | 16:15 | 60 minutes |
| 7 | Meeting with the Rector of the Academy                         | 16:30 | 17:15 | 45 minutes |
| 8 | Close meeting of the panel                                     | 17:30 | 18:30 | 60 minutes |

### APPENDIX 3. LIST OF DOCUMENTS OBSERVED

|     | NAME OF THE DOCUMENT  | CRITERION |
|-----|---|-----------|
| 1.  | Order NΩU-7, 12.12.2013 for the creation of working group for the development of Strategic plan   | 1a        |
| 2.  | Composition of the Board of the Academy, Scientific Council, Faculty Council  | 1b, 2b    |
| 3.  | Reports of the employers of the sphere, recordings of faculty session and sessions of Scientific Committee where the suggestions of the employers were discussed. | 1b        |
| 4.  | Analysis of the survey results  | 1b        |
| 5.  | Defined code of ethics  | 2a        |
| 6.  | Reports (for the last 3 years) of the Vice-Rector coordinating cultural processes   | 2a        |
| 7.  | Reports of Students' Council and Students' Scientific Union   | 2a        |
| 8.  | Documental base concerning the monitoring of short-term and mid-term plans  | 2c        |
| 9.  | Study of environmental factors  | 2c        |
| 10. | Results of internal audit   | 2a, 2d    |
| 11. | Grounds for the improvements made based on survey results and reports   | 2f        |
| 12. | Regulation of monitoring and review of academic programs  | 2f        |
| 13. | Study of the experience of other leading universities concerning the development of academic programs   | 3a        |
| 14. | Composition of the group developing academic program in order to understand who was involved  | 3a        |
| 15. | Sample of MA academic program   | 3a        |
| 16. | Sample of course program  | 3a        |
| 17. | Surveys on the satisfaction of alumni and their results   | 3b        |
| 18. | Analysis of other surveys, class observations /one analysis was sent/   | 3b        |
| 19. | Analysis of class observations  | 3b        |
| 20. | Regulation of academic honesty  | 3c        |
| 21. | Document describing mechanisms of preventing plagiarism   | 3c        |
| 22. | Minutes of the sessions of chairs and faculty about monitoring and current evaluation of academic programs  | 3e        |
| 23. | Agreement with the collage  | 4a        |
| 24. | Guideline for the applicant of Academy  | 4b        |
| 25. | Regulation on the activities of academic advisor of the Academy   | 4c        |
| 26. | Time-schedules of chairs fro consultancy and additional courses   | 4c        |
| 27. | Analysis of survey results carried out by QA center among the students about the consultancy services   | 4c        |
| 28. | Order of RA Minister of Emergency Situations on "ensuring the graduates of the Academy with work" (as of 02 February, 2012)                                       | 4e        |
| 29. | Methodical instructions for the implementation of thesis paper  | 4f        |
| 30. | Manual of students' conferences   | 4f        |
| 31. | Normative base of forming support staff   | 5a        |
| 32  | Policy and procedures on the recruitment, selection and professional development of the teaching staff  | 5a        |
| 33. | Job description of teaching and support staffs  | 5a        |

|     |   |     |
|-----|---|-----|
| 34. | Rating sheet of scientific-pedagogical activities of the teaching staff   | 5c  |
| 35. | Sheet of peer-review  | 5c  |
| 36. | Teacher training program  | 5d  |
| 37. | Indicators of inflow and outflow of the teaching staff for the last 5 years   | 5e  |
| 38. | Indicators of survey analysis concerning the satisfaction   | 5g  |
| 39. | Grounds of the trainings for administrative and support staffs  | 5g  |
| 40. | Research topics of the chairs   | 6a  |
| 41. | Concept for the development of scientific-research activities in 2017-2022  | 6a  |
| 42. | Document on monitoring of educational and scientific-research activities  | 6b  |
| 43. | Working plans of faculties and chairs   | 7a  |
| 44. | Regulation of the monitoring of academic program  | 7d  |
| 45. | Regulation on administration  | 7e  |
| 46. | Minutes of the sessions of faculties and Scientific Council   | 8a  |
| 47. | Samples of reports of teaching staff and heads of chairs  | 8a  |
| 48. | Regulation on conducting financial audit, conclusion of financial audit   | 8a  |
| 49. | Booklets, samples of magazine "overcoming crisis"   | 8b  |
| 50. | Packages of additional courses and trainings for RA Ministry of emergency Situations  |     |
| 51. | Agreements of international cooperation   | 8c  |
| 52. | List of teaching staff members who participated in international conferences and seminars                                     | 8c  |
| 53. | Business trip reports of teaching and administrative staffs   | 8c  |
| 54. | Package of the course of the English language and the list of participants  | 8d  |
| 55. | List of staff members of QA Center  | 10b |
| 56. | List of the members of QA standing committee of the Scientific Council and the grounds of their activities                    | 10c |
| 57. | Work-plan and time schedule of QA center  | 10d |
| 58. | Results of implemented internal monitorings for the evaluation of educational and scientific-research activities of faculties | 10f |
| 59. | Topics of master theses for the last 3 years  |     |
| 60. | Requirements set for the final works of bachelor programs   |     |
| 61. | Requirement set for master theses   |     |
| 62. | Approved criteria for the assessment of master theses   |     |
| 63. | Master theses   |     |
| 64. | Reports of internship   |     |
| 65. | Internship plan of BA students  |     |
| 66. | Plan of English language training course  |     |
| 67. | Annual reports of Students' Council   |     |

## APPENDIX 4. RESOURCES OBSERVED

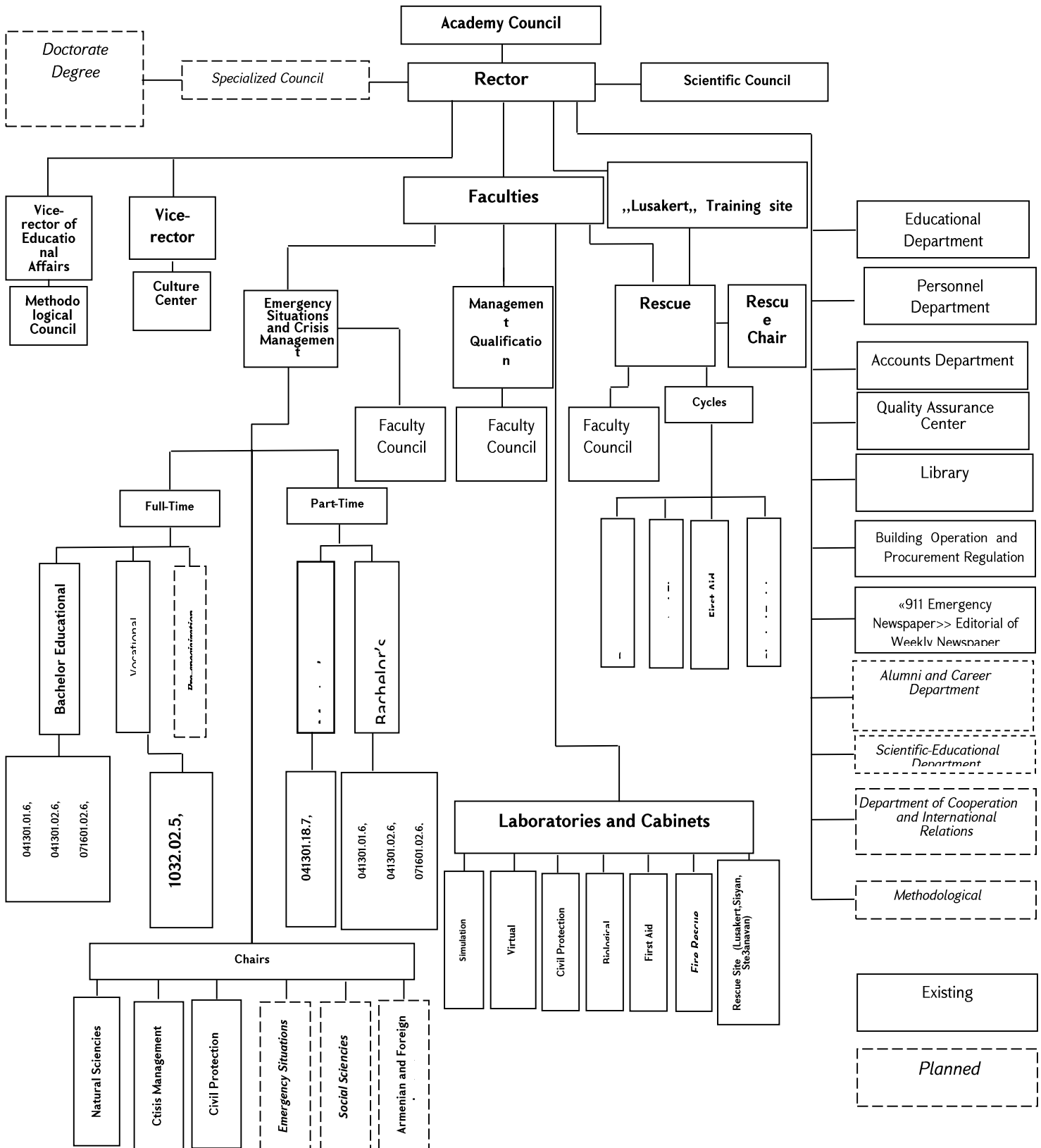
### In the building of the Academy

- 1) Mini center of crisis management for the education of dispatchers of 911 service
- 2) Cabinet of mountain rescue and biology protection
- 3) Cabinet for first aid
- 4) Diving equipment
- 5) Classroom fund
- 6) Conference hall
- 7) Medical center
- 8) Canteen
- 9) Equipment for rescue services in a special separate area
- 10) Educational machine for rescue with equipment
- 11) Library
- 12) 2 computer rooms
- 13) Chairs
- 14) Room of Students' Council/Students' Scientific Council, there is no computer

### «Lusakert» training ground

- 1) Hostel
- 2) Storages for building materials and tools for rescue services
- 3) Separated area for care and cleaning of property
- 4) Barriers for physical training
- 5) Educational machines for modelling accidents
- 6) Train carriages for modelling railway accidents
- 7) Model of helicopter for modelling landings and lifting cargo
- 8) Educational sports ground for working in case of collapse
- 9) Tower for mountaineering activities
- 10) Sports equipment for the activities to be carried out through balance, flexibility and working at height
- 11) Underground crossings for working in the dark and territory for working in smoky areas
- 12) Center for rest and rehabilitation of rescue servants

# APPENDIX 5. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE ACADEMY



## APPENDIX 6. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**ANQA** - National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation

**BA** - Bachelor of Arts

**ECTS** - European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

**EHEA** - European Higher Education Area

**HEI** - High Education Institution

**ICT** –Information-Computer Technology

**KPI** - Key Performance Indicators

**MA** - Master of Arts

**NQF** - National Qualifications Framework

**PDCA** – Plan-Do-Check-Act

**QA** - Quality Assurance

**RA** – Republic of Armenia