

Approved by the Board of Trustees of the
“National Centre for Professional Education
Quality Assurance” foundation,
Decree N 1-I, May 8, 2020

PROCEDURE

ON FORMATION AND OPERATION OF THE “NATIONAL CENTRE FOR PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE “FOUNDATION ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

/with new edits/

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. This procedure is defined based on sub point 3 of point 8 and sub point 3 of point 15 of the “Accreditation Statue on Professional education Institutions implementing vocational education programs and their programs in the Republic of Armenia” approved by the Government of the Republic of Armenia, June 30, 2011 N 978- N Decree.
2. The Accreditation Committee (hereinafter referred to as Committee) is formed with the aim to make decisions on institutional and academic program (program) accreditation.
3. The Committee is an independent, collegial, permanent body which carries out its authority defined by the Accreditation Statue on Professional education Institutions implementing vocational education programs and their programs in the Republic of Armenia” and by this procedure.
4. The expenses related to the organization of work of the Committee and the members’ remuneration are covered by ANQA.

II. STRUCTURE AND FORMATION PROCEDURE OF THE ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

5. The total number of the Committee members is 13, out of which 10 are stakeholders from higher education system and 3 from the secondary vocational education system.
6. The composition of the formed Committee shall represent different professional spheres and in the fields of higher and secondary vocational education shall have:
 - 1) capacity for management and administrative review;
 - 2) capacity for review the academic (vocational academic programs, human resources, material resources) and research processes by combining with national requirements and international context;
 - 3) capacity for review the effectiveness of the quality assurance system;
 - 4) capacity for review the external relations and public responsibility.

7. A member of the Committee may be a person who meets at least 3 of the following criteria:
 - 1) has experience in the development and implementation of quality assurance policy in the field of vocational education;
 - 2) has experience in conducting education quality expertise, external evaluation;
 - 3) has experience in education management and is not a manager in-office;
 - 4) has at least 10 years of teaching experience;
 - 5) has experience in the development, implementation and assessment of academic programs in the field of vocational education.
 - 6) has international experience in the field of education.
8. The same person cannot be a member of the Committee more than twice in a row.
9. Current executives of higher and secondary vocational institutions (rector, vice-rector, director, vice-director) cannot be included in the Committee.
10. The Committee's authorization period is 4 years. The first composition of the Committee is elected for a period of 2 years, and then the Committee is formed for the period of 4 years.
11. Candidates for the members of the Committee are nominated by vocational education institutions, employers, professional associations, as well as by ANQA.
12. The data of the candidates for the members of the Committees are submitted to ANQA Secretariat, by email to secretariat@anqa.am.
13. ANQA submits the list of candidates to the Board of Trustees for holding an election.
14. Nominal list of the Committee members and changes in it are approved by the decision of the ANQA Board of Trustees.
15. The Committee has a President and Secretary.
16. The functions of the Secretary of the Committee are performed by the ANQA Secretariat.
17. The first session is appointed and moderated by the President of the ANQA Board of Trustees before the election of the Committee President.
18. During the first session, the President of the Committee is elected from the members of the Committee.
19. A contract is signed between the Committee members and ANQA Board of Trustees.
20. The powers of the Committee member is terminated in the following cases:
 - 1) the member has lost the citizenship of the Republic of Armenia or acquired the citizenship of another state;
 - 2) pursuant to his application;

- 3) he/she has been declared incapacitated, semi-incapacitated, missing or dead by a court decision that entered into force, the person has been convicted by the court verdict that entered into force;
- 4) after becoming a member of the Committee he/she has been appointed for any position specified in point 9;
- 5) death of the member.

21. The powers of the Committee member can be terminated:

- 1) on justifying the inaction of the Committee member;
- 2) in case of violation of the requirements of the commitment of confidentiality and conflict of interests;
- 3) in case of unexcused absence from the meetings of the Committee more than twice or not participating in the online session more than twice;
- 4) in case of violation of the terms of the contract.

22. Vacant position of a Committee member is filled within a month according to this procedure.

23. The Committee member wanting to quit from the Committee is continuing to implement his/her responsibilities after submitting a resignation letter to the President until a new member is assigned by the Board of Trustees.

III. AUTHORITIES OF THE ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

24. The Committee:

- 1) defines the approaches and principles of decision making on accreditation;
- 2) examines the package of expertise: expertise report, the institution's agreement on the expert report or remarks and recommendations for the draft version of the expert report, final expert report as well as preliminary plans for drawback eliminations and ANQA conclusion;
- 3) makes a decision on the accreditation of TLI;
- 4) after the decision is made gives a conclusion on the plans for enhancement submitted by the educational institution;
- 5) under conditions recognized as force majeure based on the created situation makes relevant decisions.

25. For making decisions on challenging issues, the Accreditation Committee can require additional data and documents within a reasonable time.

26. The Committee makes suggestions to ANQA for the enhancement of accreditation standards.

IV. POWERS OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

27. Represents the Committee in relation with third parties during the intervals between sessions.
28. Constantly cooperates with ANQA.
29. Organizes the work of the Committee and is responsible for the maintenance of the legal base of its activities within the powers set forth in this procedure.
30. Gives instructions to the members of the Committee, decides their responsibilities within the frames of the Committee's functions.
31. Forms and signs the decisions of the Committee.
32. Presents the annual report of the Committee to ANQA Board of Trustees.
33. Can completely or partially transfer his/her powers to another member of the Committee temporarily.
34. Can make suggestions to the Board of Trustees about increasing the effectiveness of the Committee's work or improving the composition of members.
35. Performs other activities within the frames of this procedure.

V. POWERS OF THE ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE MEMBER

36. The Committee member has the right to:
 - 1) require additional information and documents from the expert panel and educational institutions,
 - 2) speak out on any issue under discussion;
 - 3) ask questions,
 - 4) make suggestions.
37. The Committee member is obliged to:
 - 1) be aware of the legal acts regulating the accreditation process;
 - 2) participate in all the sessions of the Committee, in some cases also connect online;
 - 3) get acquainted with the package of documents on the raised questions, take part in their discussions;
 - 4) to fulfill the assignments given by the President of the Committee within the framework of the issues under discussions;
 - 5) take part in the voting;
 - 6) sign the commitment of confidentiality and conflict of interests;
 - 7) comply with ANQA Code of Ethics and Rules of Conduct;
 - 8) declare self-withdrawal and not participate in the voting in case of being aware of some facts or circumstances about the educational institution that may provoke reasonable doubt on his/her impartiality. A note is taken about the member's self-withdrawal in the meeting protocol.

38. The following cases can be considered as a basis for self-withdrawal:

- 1) The Committee member has a biased approach to the educational institution undergoing accreditation process;
- 2) The Committee member or his/her spouse or a third degree relative is holding an official at the educational institution undergoing accreditation process;
- 3) The Committee member is aware that he/she himself or his/her spouse or a third-degree relative has economic interests from the educational institution undergoing the accreditation process.

39. Each member of the Committee has the right of one vote.

VI. POWERS OF THE ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE SECRETARY

40. The protocols of the Committee's sessions are conducted by ANQA Secretariat staff member selected by mutual agreement of the Committee and the Director of the foundation.

41. Prepares and at least two weeks prior to the session provides the Accreditation Committee members with the package of documents on the issues to be discussed in the agenda.

42. Notifies the Committee members about the day, place and agenda of the meeting in written form or by email at least two weeks before the meeting.

43. Registers the participants of the session.

44. Organizes the recording of the Committee's sessions in written and digital forms.

46. Prepares and signs the protocols of the Committee's sessions.

47. Submits the decision of the Committee and the accreditation certificate to the authorized body.

48. Provides the management of the state accreditation register.

49. Performs other authorities within the frames of this procedure.

VII. WORK REGULATION OF THE COMMITTEE, PREPARATION AND CONDUCTION OF SESSIONS

50. The Committee fulfills its activities through sessions.

51. The sessions of the Committee are held upon necessity at least 4 times a year and the dates are appointed by the President based on ANQA's offer.

52. The sessions of the Committee are valid if at least two-thirds of the members are attending. The session is postponed in case of the absence of a quorum. The session cannot be postponed more than 2 times. If the Committee session is not convened more than 2

times, the Committee is dissolved. The new Committee shall be formed in accordance with the closes established by this procedure.

53. The sessions of the Committee are prepared by the President and Secretary with the involvement of other Committee members if necessary. The coordinator of the expert panel supports these activities.

54. The Committee convenes a session to make a decision on accreditation.

55. The sessions of the Committee are led by the President of the Committee.

56. The Committee members can make a suggestion on the involvement of urgent questions into the agenda, which are put up for a vote.

57. Before making a decision on accreditation, the three members elected by the President of the Committee, examine the package of documents, meet with the coordinator of the accreditation process, and through him/her the expert panel, representatives of the educational institutions to clarify the factual circumstances of the expertise. The employee of the ANQA Secretariat also takes part in the meetings. The meetings are recorded.

58. During the Committee session, the three members elected by the President of the Committee present the result of the examination of expertise documents, the meetings with attendees and their conclusion based on the results for each standard as prescribed by ANQA format.

59. After hearing each question in the agenda the members of the Committee have a final discussion for making a decision after which an open vote is carried out.

60. Decision is made on the basis of voting results.

61. After the decision on accreditation, the Committee examines and discusses the plans for improvement provided by an educational institution accredited within the period of 2 months.

62. The Committee sessions are recorded and notes are taken.

VIII. DECISION MAKING OF THE ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

63. Two weeks before the session of the Committee, 3 members of the Committee, elected by the Chairman examine the package of expertise documents of the educational institution subject to the accreditation and the assessment given to each standard by the expert panel. They form and submit a conclusion on the results of the expertise to the Secretariat according to the prescribed format. The 3 members elected by the President of the Committee prepare the project of the accreditation decision.

64. The decisions of the Committee are made by open voting (for or against) by a simple majority of the votes of the participants. In the case of equality of votes, the President's vote is decisive. The ANQA Director with the right to an advisory vote, and the Secretary without the right to vote, also participate in the Committee session.

65. The Committee based on the approaches and principles on Accreditation decisions, the package of expertise documents of educational institution, justifications presented by the members of the Committee, makes one of the following decisions:

- 1) grant institutional or programme accreditation;
- 2) grant conditional institutional or programme accreditation;
- 3) reject institutional or programme accreditation.

66. A separate decision is made for each accreditation process.

67. The Committee's decisions on accreditation are published.

IX. PROTOCOLS OF THE ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

68. The sessions of the Committee are recorded in paper and digital forms.

69. The protocols of the Committee include:

- 1) the year, month, date and place, time of launch and end of the session;
- 2) the data of the Committee members and other people participating in the session;
- 3) the outline of the speeches on the issues under discussion, questions, their answers;
- 4) the results of the voting and the decision made.

70. The protocol is agreed with the members of the Committee.

71. The protocol is signed by the Committee President and the Secretary.

72. The process of the session is recorded and notes are taken. Digital recording is stored in a laser disk. The protocol, signed by the Committee President and the Secretary, is also saved.

X. APPEALING THE DECISION OF THE ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

73. The decisions of the Committee can be appealed to the ANQA Board of Trustees by an expert panel or an educational institution after having the decision within a month according to the appeal format developed by ANQA.

74. The appeal is submitted to ANQA Secretariat by email or in writing form.

75. After getting the appeal ANQA Secretariat sends it to the President of the ANQA Board of Trustees or sends it back within 2 working days in the following cases:

- 1) the appeal is not signed by the appellant or his/her representative;
- 2) the name of the body to which the appeal is submitted is not noted;
- 3) the year, month and date of the appeal format is missing;
- 4) the appeal is signed by a person not having that authority or the authorized person hasn't attached the letter of authorization to the appeal,

5) the deadlines for submitting the appeal were not kept.

76. The Board of Trustees, with the suggestion of the ANQA Director composes an independent body consisting of 3 members, an Appeal with the purpose to examine and give a conclusion on appeals.

77. The appeal commission members can be appointed persons from the ANQA expert database meeting the requirements set out in point 6 of this procedure.

78. The appeal committee member having a conflict of interests with the appellant can be replaced with another expert selected by ANQA expert database.

79. The Secretariat presents the appeal accepted by the Board of Trustees to the appeal commission.

80. The appeal commission examines and concludes the appeal against the decision of the Accreditation Committee within a month.

81. While drawing up a conclusion, the appeal commission is guided by the principles of legality, impartiality and objectivity.

82. The appeal commission gives one of the following conclusions on the appeal:

- 1) leave the decision of the Committee unchanged, rejecting the appellant's appeal,
- 2) send back with a proposal for a new decision to be made by the Committee.

83. The appeal commission for its conclusion is based on the submitted package of documents:

- 1) appeal;
- 2) self-evaluation of the educational institution;
- 3) draft report of the expert panel;
- 4) commendation, remarks and objections of the institution or on draft report (if any);
- 5) final report;
- 6) the decision of the Accreditation Committee;
- 7) arguments, statements, including new circumstances submitted by the parties during the examination of appeal.

84. The conclusion of the appeal committee is made on the principle of consensus.

85. The costs of remuneration of the members of the appeal commission are covered by the appealing party.

86. The functions of the Secretary of the appeal commission are performed by the ANQA Secretariat. The process of examination is recorded and notes are taken. The protocols are signed by the appeal commission members and the Secretary.

87. The conclusion made by the appeal commission is signed by all members of the appeal committee.

88. The appeal commission's conclusion is submitted to the Board of Trustees.
89. If the appeal is upheld, the conclusion of the Committee is sent to the Accreditation Committee with a proposal to make a new decision.
90. The decision of the appeal commission cannot be appealed to ANQA again.

XI. FINAL PROVISIONS

91. Amendments in this procedure are being made by the ANQA Board of Trustees, presented by ANQA Director as well as with proposal of the members of the Board of Trustees.
92. This procedure enters into force upon signing.

Samvel Karabekyan

President of the Board of Trustees of

“National Centre for

Professional Education Quality Assurance” foundation