



National Center For Professional
Education Quality Assurance
Foundation

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

ANQA-2020/37

DECREE

December 24, 2020 N 37

ON ACCREDITATION OF INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION ACADEMY OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

General Information about the Institution

Full name of the Institution: “Public Administration Academy of the
Republic of Armenia” State Non-
Commercial Organization /PAARA/

Official address: 8 Kievyan str., 0028, Yerevan, Armenia

Previous Accreditation decree and date: Institutional accreditation for 4 years
(21.05.2015-21.05.2019)

Guided by the regulation on the “State Accreditation of RA Education Institutions and their Academic Programs” approved by the RA Government Decree N 978-N as of 30 June 2011; by the RA Government Decree N 959-N as of 30 June 2011 on the “Approval of RA Standards for Professional Education Accreditation”; by the procedure on the “Formation and Functioning of the Accreditation Committee of the ‘National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance’ Foundation (hereinafter referred to as ANQA)” as well as by the regulation on the “Formation of the Expert Panel of ANQA”, the ANQA Accreditation Committee (hereinafter referred to as the Committee) discussed the issue of accreditation of institutional capacities of the Public Administration Academy of the Republic of Armenia (hereinafter referred to as PAARA) in the session of the Accreditation Committee held on 24 December, 2020.

Having examined PAARA self-evaluation, PAARA’s comments and suggestions on the draft report of the expert panel, the expert panel report, PAARA’s action plan on the elimination of shortcomings mentioned in the expert panel report, having heard the conclusions on the expert panel evaluation of the Academy which were made by the three members selected by the Chairman of the Accreditation Committee and were formed as a result of the meetings with the expert panel members and PAARA ’s representatives; as well the comments and suggestions made by the Accreditation Committee members, the Committee stated the following:

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

Submission of application- 24 April, 2018

Submission of revised self-evaluation- 11 April, 2019

Site-visit by expert panel- 29-31 May, 2019
Submission of expert panel report- 10 October, 2019
Submission of the action plan on the
elimination of shortcomings- 4 November, 2019

The expertise of PAARA was carried out by an independent expert panel formed in compliance with the requirements set by the regulation on the “Formation of the Expert Panel of the ANQA”. The evaluation was carried out according to the 10 criteria of institutional accreditation approved by the RA Government Decree N 959-N as of 30 June 2011.

While carrying out the evaluation, the expert panel took into consideration that following the recommendations given in expert panel report in 2015, PAARA has implemented changes aimed at improvement in a number of fields.

4 out of 10 accreditation criteria are unsatisfactory (“**Governance and Administration**”, “**Research and Development**”, “**External Relations and Internationalization**” and “**Internal Quality Assurance System**”) and in the other spheres in spite of the made changes there is still need for improvement.

1. Based on the results of the previous accreditation, the Academy has developed a new 2019-2024 strategic plan and has revised its mission: "Ongoing improvement of higher education and continuing educational programs that meet the requirements of training highly qualified managers for the public and private sectors, conducting scientific and applied research work, providing consulting services, providing the public administration with informative-analytical materials. as well as international scientific-educational cooperation in the field of public administration». The Academy has initiated the alignment of academic programs (APs) with PAARA’s revised mission. The learning outcomes of the APs are mapped, curricula are developed with general format and teaching and learning methods are presented in details. However, assessment of the impact of changes and a unified system of student assessment have not been analyzed. There are no criteria for the assessment of master's theses; its absence makes the transparency of the assessment, objectiveness and credibility of awarding qualifications risky. There are cases of obvious plagiarism. In general, the Academy has the necessary educational environment and resources for the implementation of the APs.

The academy has a highly qualified teaching and administrative staff who are experienced and leading specialists of various fields of management and economics. However, most of the teaching staff are invited lecturers on an hourly basis, which endangers the stability of the teaching staff. After the previous accreditation, the professional requirements for the teaching staff have not been developed. The placement of teaching staff positions is not carried out through a competition. There is no participation of external stakeholders in the process of monitoring of the academic programs. Lecturers do not participate enough in creating the content of academic programs. Since the previous accreditation, the quality assurance processes have not led to qualitative changes in the academic programs and improvements in the master's theses, as there are no comprehensive

analyzes, as well as assessments aimed at identifying directions that are strong or that need improvements at PAARA. There are examples of promoting the award of credible qualifications, but there are also some risks in terms of ensuring the quality of awarding credible qualifications.

2. After the previous accreditation, the Academy has registered positive dynamics in the field of management in general. The budget of PAARA has increased, the salaries of the employees have increased, the number of students and trainees has increased, the material and technical resources have been improved.

At the same time, there is a clear need to increase the efficiency of management, in particular, to ensure the interconnectedness of processes, to improve planning tools and documentation system. The Academy has a problem of outcome-based management, the management is situational, it is not carried out by achieving the goals of the strategic plan. Most of the administrative processes are in the stages of planning and implementation, there is a lack of strategic planning and analysis of the effectiveness of processes and impact of environmental factors besides, decision-making is not based on reliable data.

There are development trends and management is aimed at quality improvement, reliable awarding of qualifications, but productive management and quality assurance system are in the process of development.

3. After the previous accreditation a clear policy of research development and implementation has not been formulated, there are no appropriate procedures, which makes the continuous development of research and merchandise of research outcomes risky and makes it difficult to assess the quality of research activities. Some research projects are being implemented, research centers and a research laboratory have been set up, but the implemented research is not related to the scientific directions of the Academy, the interconnection with teaching process is not visible.

As with previous accreditations, there are currently no mechanisms for linking the research process to the educational process, which is a major risk for MA studies. Although the number of partner organizations has increased in the field of internationalization, in fact, cooperation activities are carried out with everyone, there is no interconnection of internationalization and educational processes. There are very unique cases related to mobility and international cooperation.

Internationalization and research activity do not support sufficiently the award of credible qualifications.

4. There are core shortcomings in terms of awarding credible qualifications however there are also improvement tendencies.

5. The plan presented by the Academy towards the elimination of shortcomings mentioned in the expert panel report is quite realistic but not complete and most likely the planned improvements will bring only to the partial implementation of qualitative changes.

Based on the above mentioned, as a result of the open voting, the Accreditation Committee

DECIDED

1. To award conditional institutional accreditation to the “Public Administration Academy of the RA” state non-profit organization for the period of 2 /two/ years that will allow to keep the development of the institution in the center of attention and to ensure continuous improvement of quality.
2. After the publication of the decision on accreditation award, to submit the reviewed action plan on the elimination of shortcomings mentioned in the expert panel report and respective time-schedule to ANQA within two months taking into account:
 - a. the urgent need to give solutions primarily to the problems existing in the fields of “Governance and Administration”, "Research and Development", “External Relations and Internationalization” and "Internal Quality Assurance System";
 - b. the requirement to ensure targeted goals and quantitative indicators for the evaluation of progress and efficiency of the Academy’s ongoing processes;
 - c. the necessity to clarify the mid-term results directed to the acquisition of expected outcome;
 - d. the necessity to clarify the defined deadlines and amount of financial means allocated to the ongoing processes taken by the Academy and their evaluation;
 - e. the international expert's peer-review results regarding the Academy’s ambitions to be integrated into the European Higher Education Area.
3. To pay special attention to:
 - a) the evaluation of efficiency and improvement of academic programs and carried out processes;
 - b) the reinforcement of the link between learning and research;
 - c) the enhancement of outcome-based management system;
 - d) the problems concerning the definition of principles for the recruitment of the teaching staff and maintenance of their stability;
 - e) the reveal of research priorities and formation of strategy on internationalization;
 - f) the establishment of an internal QA sustainable system and the creation of culture of continuous improvement.
4. To organize internal audit of academic programs provided by the Academy by ensuring the involvement of external experts.
5. In accordance with the requirements set by the Clause 12 of the regulation on the “State Accreditation of RA Education Institutions and their Academic Programs”, every 6 /six/ months to submit a written report to the ANQA on the results of carried out activities by ensuring the evaluation of improvement of the Academy’s activity, innovations and achievements.

6. To assign ANQA to carry out mandatory monitoring of efficiency of PAARA's activity in accordance with the KPIs.

Chairman of the Accreditation Committee:

A. Saghyan

24 December, 2020

Yerevan