National Center For Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

ANQA-2023/93

DECREE N 93

December 26, 2023

ON ACCREDITATION OF INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES OF EJMIATSIN STATE COLLEGE NAMED AFTER VARDGES HAMAZASPYAN

General Information about the Institution

Full name of the Institution:	Echmiadzin State College named after Vardges Hamazaspyan SNPO
Official Address:	1/2 Surb Movses Khorenatsu St., Vagharshapat 1101, Armavir, RA
Previous Accreditation decision and date:	**Not available**

Guided by the Statute on the State Accreditation of RA Education Institutions and their Academic Programs approved by the RA Government Decree N 978-N as of June 30, 2011, the RA Government Decree N 959-N as of June 30, 2011 on the Approval of Accreditation Criteria for Tertiary Education of RA, the Procedure on the Formation and Operation 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 ANQA's Expert Panel, ANQA's Accreditation Committee (hereinafter referred to as the "Committee") discussed the issue on accreditation of institutional capacities of the Echmiadzin State College named after Vardges Hamazaspyan (hereinafter referred to as "ESC", "TLI") in the session of the Accreditation Committee held on December 26, 2023.

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

Submission of application:	January 13, 2023
Submission of the self-evaluation:	March 31, 2023

Site visit by the expert panel: May 18–21, 2023

Submission of the expert panel report: July 31, 2023

Submission of the preliminary follow-up plan September 15, 2023

The external review of the ESC's institutional capacities 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. The evaluation was carried out according to the 10 criteria of institutional accreditation approved by the RA Government Decree N 959 as of June 30, 2011.

Among 10 criteria of the institutional accreditation, "**Governance and Administration**", "**Research and Development**" and "**Infrastructure and Resources**" were evaluated as unsatisfactory.

Having examined the ESC's self-evaluation of institutional capacities, the expert panel report, the follow-up plan; having heard the conclusions on the expert panel evaluation, which were made by the three members selected by the Chair of the Accreditation Committee and were formed as a result of the meetings with the expert panel members and the ESC's representatives; as well the comments and suggestions made by the Accreditation Committee members, the Committee stated the following:

1. The ESC generally ensures the credible award of qualifications.

The ESC's nine academic programmes (APs) align with its mission and National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and aim to meet the needs of the regional labour market. The academic programmes' content is consistent with that of comparable APs of the RA VET institutions, facilitating the students' internal mobility. The TLI has conducted monitoring and enhancement of the APs, considering the needs identified by internal stakeholders.

Most of the ESC's teaching methods foster student-centered learning. The TLI takes active steps to improve the assessment process. The internship premises have been diversified based on professions.

The ESC has a teaching staff with relevant qualifications for the implementation of professional Aps, supported by an effective competitive process for the teacher selection. Most TLI teachers are full-time employees. In recent years, teachers with practical experience have been involved. The ESC recruits promising young specialists. The TLI implements effective mechanisms for the

evaluation of teachers. The ESC highlights the need of trainings for the development of teachers' professional skills. However, the institution has not yet conducted any professional trainings.

The technical condition of the ESC's building is evaluated as unsatisfactory. The building is highly vulnerable to seismic activity. With the increase in student numbers, the building's overcrowding poses a security concern. The TLI makes efforts to improve building conditions but faces a lack of financial resources and alternative funding sources.

Due to the building conditions, the ESC is unable to offer new professions that are sought after in the region. The TLI needs material and learning resources. The APs with high resource demands lack relevant laboratories, equipment and materials. In addition, the TLI does not implement a policy for the joint use of resources with partner employers.

2. Governance and quality assurance systems generally support the enhancement of the credible award of qualifications.

The ESC's mission aims to meet the country's socio-economic development requirements and labour market needs. The TLI has clearly assessed the key issues of its activities and, within a short period of time, has launched the development and implementation of tools to identify the stakeholder needs.

The ESC has strategic management issues. The long- and short-term plans are not comparable. The mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of long- and short-term plans have not been developed. The tools for summarising the key identified issues and incorporating them into future plans are not highlighted. The ESC has not established a system for managing internal and external risks impacting its activities. Teachers and students, as key stakeholders, do not have proactive participation in the decision-making process related to them.

The ESC's PDCA cycle of quality assurance at the governance level is still in the planning and implementation stages.

Since 2022, the ESC has launched internal quality assurance processes. Within a short period of time, the TLI has formed a documentary and operational framework to coordinate and guide the quality assurance processes. As outlined in the new Strategic Plan (SP) 2023-2028, the enhancement of internal quality assurance is considered a strategic priority. The internal stakeholders are

involved in the quality assurance processes to the greatest extent possible. Among the internal stakeholders, students have voluntarily joined survey groups, forming a student community for quality assurance. However, the involvement of external stakeholders is less evident.

3. Internationalisation and research activities have development trends and support the credible award of qualifications.

The ESC has a structured process for applicant recruitment, resulting in the increasing number of students each year. The TLI's Career Centre carries out activities such as establishing partnerships, offering courses and organising professional tours, which support the students' professional orientation.

The Strategic Plan does not define the ESC's research priorities and interests. The TLI does not have a policy for research development, nor are there any mid- and short-term plans arising from it.

The assignments, course papers and project work that include components for the development of research and creative skills are not separated and classified. Generally, the teaching staff does not carry out research activities.

The ESC has an internal and external accountability system. The TLI has active mechanisms to raise public awareness of its activities and ensure transparency in its operations. Mechanisms to facilitate feedback are also in place. To transfer knowledge to society, the ESC regularly runs various short-term programmes, which have generated extra income for the institution.

The ESC has adopted an approach of continuously increasing the number of external collaborations and stakeholders in the implementation of external policy. The ESC cooperates with various state and private organisations in Vagharshapat, contributing to the strengthening of the TLI-employer partnership.

Over the past three years, the ESC has expanded its partnerships with various organisations, with agreements and memoranda signed, leading to an increase in the number of internship premises. Though the cooperation with international organisations has not yet yielded tangible results, the ESC has taken certain steps to join international initiatives related to the VET sector. An importance is attached to the enhancement of the level of foreign language proficiency among students and staff.

4. There are shortcomings that do not have crucial impact in terms of the credible award of qualifications. Grounds are laid for enhancement.

5. The follow-up plan in the expert panel report realistic and its implementation will lead to qualitative enhancements.

Taking into consideration the above mentioned, as a result of an open voting, the Accreditation Committee:

DECIDED

1. **To award institutional accreditation to the Echmiadzin State College named after Vardges Hamazaspyan SNPO for 4 /four/ years.**
2. After the publication of the decision on accreditation award, to submit a revised follow-up plan based on the expert panel report and respective time schedule to ANQA within two months, taking into account the need to give urgent solution to the problems existing in the fields of **"Governance and Administration", "Research and Development"** and **"Infrastructure and Resources".**
3. To pay special attention to:
    a) the introduction of practical mechanisms for the SP evaluation;
    b) the specification and implementation of mechanisms for the SP evaluation;
    c) the integration of research-based assignments and activities that form practical skills and competencies across all professions;
    d) the improvement of the assessment system, with an emphasis on the assessment of practical skills;
    e) the link between research and educational processes;
    f) the improvement of mechanisms to encourage the external stakeholders' participation in the AP enhancement;
    g) the organisation of professional development events for teachers tailored to the identified needs;
    h) the continuous development of a quality culture, full implementation of the PDCA cycle in all processes.

4. In accordance with the requirements set by point 12 of the Statute on the State Accreditation of RA Education Institutions and their Academic Programs, every 2 /two/ years to submit a written report to ANQA on the results of carried out activities by ensuring the evaluation of enhancement of the TLI's activity, innovations and achievements.
5. To assign ANQA to carry out mandatory monitoring of effectiveness of the TLI's activities in accordance with the KPIs.

Chair of the Accreditation Committee: **A. Saghyan**

December 26, 2023

Yerevan