



ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

DECREE № 6

21 March 2015

On Awarding Institutional Accreditation to YEREVAN GLADZOR UNIVERSITY

General Information on the Institution

Full name of the Institution: **Yerevan Gladzor University**

Acronym: **YGU**

Legal Form: **educational-industrial cooperative**

Official Address: **7/1 Grigor Lusavorich, Yerevan, 0015, RA**

Decree and date of Previous Accreditation: **Accreditation № 002
without expiry date**

Guided by the regulation on “State Accreditation of RA Institutions and their Educational Programs” approved by the RA Government on 30 June, 2011 N 978-Ն decree; by RA Government decree N 959-Ն (30 June, 2011) on “Approval of RA Standards for Professional Education Accreditation”; by the Procedure on the Formation and Functioning of Accreditation Committee of “National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance” foundation (ANQA) as well as by ANQA Regulation on the Formation of the Expert Panel, in the open session held on 21 March 2015, the Accreditation Committee of “National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance” foundation (hereinafter referred to as the Committee) discussed the issue of state institutional accreditation of Yerevan Gladzor University (YGU) with the presence of the representatives of the RA Ministry of Education and Science, Chair of the Expert Panel, ANQA coordinator of the accreditation procedure as well as YGU representatives.

Having examined the self-analysis presented by YGU, the Expert Panel report, YGU action plan for the elimination of shortcomings mentioned in the Expert Panel report as well as ANQA conclusion, the Committee stated the following:

The main phases of the accreditation process were carried out **following the below-given time-frame:**

Submission of the Application	5 March 2012
Submission of the Self-assessment report	2 October 2012
Site-visit	3-7 December 2012
Submission of the Expert panel report	1 March 2013
Submission of Follow-up plan	14 February 2014

The expertise was carried out by an expert panel formed according to the requirements of the regulation on “The Formation of expert panel at “National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance” Foundation”. The evaluation was carried out based on the 10 criteria of institutional accreditation *established by N959-Ū (30 June, 2011) decree on approving RA Standards for Professional Education Accreditation.*

YGU was established in 1990 as an educational-industrial cooperative, and it carried out its activity in humanities and socio-economic science. Currently the University is authorized to prepare specialists in the 5 professions for Bachelor’s degree (Law, Finance, International Relations, Journalism, Foreign Language) as well as to implement academic programs at MA and PhD levels.

The 5 professions carried out by the University were accredited in 2000-2001, and in 2001 №002 Gladzor University was awarded with the status of accredited University without expiry date.

Giving much importance to the education quality assurance, the University took the initiation to join in the activities of investing QA system in the Republic from the very beginning. In 2010 the University took part in the piloting processes which were aimed at field study and experience of accreditation procedure and criteria, made a self analysis, underwent external evaluation and launched activities directed to the formation of internal QA system.

The University has a hierarchical management system the operations of which are aimed at the fulfillment of the University's mission and goals at decision-making and implementation levels. The issues on making decisions which refer to the teaching staff and students and which are put forward by them, are being discussed during sessions of the Chair, Scientific Council and Student Council.

Administration partially implements the plan-do-check-act cycle based on the internal and external stakeholders' needs assessment. The Quality Assurance Center and Career Center have already been established and have started functioning.

YGU academic programs (APs) are in compliance with the set state education standards. The majority of the programs have been reviewed in recent years and as a result of comparative analysis AP and course descriptions with respective learning outcomes (LOs) have been developed. The

intended LOs are mainly in compliance with the requirements referring to the professional skills and competences for BA level set by RA NQF, and APs are aimed at preparing competitive specialists.

The University gives importance to the issue on students' needs assessment, analysis and satisfaction and respectively it conducts different surveys, organizes meetings, puts forward questions that rise during education process etc. which states about the usage of some tools. Taking into consideration students' needs, the University takes steps to obtain professional literature resources, new educational-methodical materials, as well as to improve infrastructure and to change courses taught at the University.

YGU teaching staff mainly comprises proficient teachers who have necessary professional potential for the fulfillment of the AP goals. In 2011-2012 66 teaching staff members carried out teaching activity at the University, and 38 of them (58%) are main staff members, 43 of them (65%) have scientific degree. YGU also has some problems characteristic to the RA education system, in particular, the high age average of the teaching staff, low salary and lack of motivation which make the involvement of young and proficient specialists difficult.

The vast majority of the teaching staff is involved in scientific-research activities, however, they have little international experience. The University aims to ensure high level of proficiency in foreign languages and computer skills of the teaching and administrative staffs. If the University succeeds, this initiative will form bases for ensuring their mobility and progress.

The outcomes of the research carried out at the University are not directly linked to the teaching. The functioning mechanisms of involving learners in scientific-research activities are not much efficient either. To solve this problem, the University needs to find additional resources. The financial resources basically formed through tuition fees are mainly directed to the expenditure of salaries and they do not serve for the promotion of scientific-research activities, professional development of the young teaching staff or qualification enhancement of the teaching staff. Respective means for international cooperation are hardly allocated either which endangers the international mobility of students and teaching staff.

The University's infrastructures and human resources are mainly sufficient for the fulfillment of the mission and strategic objectives. At the same time in the competition with the state universities in recent years YGU has been facing problems regarding recruitment of students especially at BA full-time education level. Nevertheless, the demand for part-time and MA programs of YGU has been increased.

The University enhances its QA system aimed at comprehensive assessment of educational, consultancy, administrative and other services. Besides, the stable mechanisms of feedback by internal and external stakeholders are in the process of formation.

With the aim to ensure transparency and availability of its activity, the University tries to apply a number of mechanisms, however, it does not have necessary grounds and tools for external stakeholders' needs assessment yet, neither it has officially approved policy and procedures ensuring accountability to society.

The University strives to implement some programs towards enrooting processes regulating external relations and internationalization. Nevertheless, the planned steps are mainly conceptual and they are not fixed by respective work plans. Besides, material and financial resources are still insufficient for ensuring proper level of international mobility of learners and teachers.

The University gives importance to the quality of education and quality assurance. Human, material and financial resources are provided for the organization of QA processes. The internal QA system is still at a formation stage; respective units responsible for QA have been established, and some procedures have been developed but the involvement of stakeholders in the system is weak.

The University is given the following recommendations which should be fulfilled out within its strategy and which are aimed at the solution of problems put forward by the Expert Panel during the accreditation as well as at further improvement of the University.

Mission and Purpose

1. To specify the University mission, strategic goals and objectives as much as possible, to activate the activities of the Quality Assurance Center and Career Center in the direction of full identification of internal and external stakeholders' needs.

Governance and Administration

2. To increase the transparency of the decision-making process, to develop a clear policy and procedures which will enable more effective involvement of students and teachers in the decision-making process.
3. To involve all the stakeholders and subdivisions in the environmental scanning of the University through developing clear procedures for revealing, researching, analyzing and evaluating all the factors.
4. To appoint external stakeholders as supervisors of master's theses and research papers and involve them in the development of the topic.

5. To establish financial allocation procedure and its accountability mechanisms.

Academic Programmes

6. To plan and organize selective and facultative courses irrespective of the number of students.
7. To develop a regulation on examinations and respective checkings ensuring clear mechanisms of appeal and examination retaking.
8. To carry out benchmarking within the scope of all the professions and processes at all levels of education.
9. To regulate monitoring, assessment of effectiveness and regular review of APs.
10. To ensure participation of all the stakeholders while developing APs and describing their LOs.

Students

11. To review the student recruitment, selection and admission policy and procedures taking into consideration the University's ability to increase its attractiveness and the number of potential applicants.
12. To regulate the organization processes of extra-curricular activities for providing academic support and guidance to the students, in particular, envisage facultative courses for students with poor academic progress by raising their level.
13. To develop procedure and time schedule on applying for the administrative staff.
14. To activate the Career Center activity by fostering the establishment of the link between students and employers. To keep students updated about vacancies.
15. To establish a unit responsible for the coordination of research activities at the University which will be managed by the vice-rector on scientific affairs and which will also include the activists from the Student Scientific Association.

Teaching and Support Staffs

16. To develop clear procedures of attestation, peer-review, performance analysis which will enable to more clearly evaluate the compliance of faculty professional competences to the AP goals and intended LOs.
17. Besides indicating directions of faculty professional development, to develop targeted procedures for the allocation of financial and other resources.
18. Develop regulation on competition for the staff selection. Pay special attention to the young and future teachers by preparing them for teaching activity.
19. To establish multifunctional scheme for the evaluation of faculty professional growth.

Research and Development

20. To specify the University's research interests and research strategy. To develop unified research directions for the University and/or chairs.
21. To develop procedures promoting young staff, academic honesty and struggle against plagiarism.
22. To ensure the link between research activities and education processes.

Infrastructure and Resources

23. To activate cooperation with other universities in order to accumulate additional resources and to improve the learning environment.
24. To develop criteria for the evaluation of the effectiveness of resource usage based on the result analysis of educational processes.
25. To make the allocation of the budget for the research development and innovation more transparent and publically available, to plan optimal structural scheme of budget expenditure and follow it.

Social Responsibility

26. To develop appropriate mechanisms /accountability regulation/ which will ensure that the accountability system set for the internal and external stakeholders is effective enough.
27. To develop long-term and sustainable cooperation projects with the state and public organizations which will foster the enhancement of public relations.
28. To invest efficient means of service provision and transfer of knowledge by the University to the society.

External Relations and Internationalization

29. In addition to the development of strategy on external relations and internationalization, to set up clear action plan for the next few years.
30. To coordinate foreign language courses for the staff. Set up effective mechanisms which will identify the foreign language proficiency among students and teachers.
31. To create an environment at the University which will foster experience exchange, internationalization and development, as well as to improve the functioning of the infrastructure ensuring external relations and internationalization.

Internal Quality Assurance System

32. To develop procedures in accordance with the YGU policy on education quality assurance, and a QA handbook. To publish all the documents on the University website.
33. To develop and approve internal QA structure and clearly differentiate the role, functions, responsibilities and authorities of separate units.

34. To evaluate the satisfaction with human, material and financial resources which the University provides for the management of internal QA processes as well as to take into consideration the results in planning.

Observing the presented package of documents and considering the opinions of head of the Expert Panel and other representatives, the Accreditation Committee finds that YGU mainly fulfills its goals. The suggested APs, teaching staff, infrastructures and resources mainly form sufficient educational environment for the implementation of professional education in accordance with the NQF. The QA system is at the development stage which will in its turn foster the process of ensuring quality of education. On the basis of defined objectives, YGU carries out respective activity within the field of “Research and Development” by involving teaching staff members in research processes, however, the link between research and educational processes is still poor.

In the fields of “Social Responsibility” and “External Relations and Internationalization” the University has planned and launched some activities, however, the functioning mechanisms need to be specified.

Taking into consideration the identified shortcomings and provided recommendations the implementation of which is a matter of time, YGU has developed an “Action Plan for the elimination of shortcomings mentioned in the Expert Panel report”. The identified shortcomings do not directly endanger the proper provision of specialists by the University which is currently in a transition period. The Action Plan is realistic and is aimed at further improvement of the University’s performance as well as at the investment of mechanisms of giving operational solution to the emerged problems, which will ensure compliance of the University's goals with the educational needs of selected social sector.

Taking into consideration that YGU can eliminate the shortcomings mentioned in the Expert Panel report and implement the recommendations by reinforcing, methodically developing and applying its internal QA mechanisms in a reasonable time period, as a result of open voting the Committee:

DECIDED

1. **To award institutional accreditation** to Yerevan Gladzor University **for 4 /four/ years.**
2. After the publication of the decision on accreditation award, to submit the Action Plan for the elimination of shortcomings mentioned in the Expert Panel report and respective time schedule within two months taking into account:

- a. the necessity of giving urgent solutions primarily to the problems existing in the fields of “**Research and Development**”, “**External Relations and Internationalization**”, and “**Social Responsibility**”;
 - b. the remarks on the preliminary action plan for the elimination of shortcomings, mentioned in the “Conclusion on institutional capacities of Yerevan Gladzor University”.
3. In order to improve the activities of the University in line with current demands, to pay special attention to the development of quality assurance system, refreshment of material-technical base necessary for the implementation of academic programs, teaching staff and student mobility, reinforcement of the linkage between learning and research, generation change and training of the teaching staff.
 4. According to the requirements of clause 12 of the Regulation on “State Accreditation of RA Education Institutions providing professional academic programs and their Professions” every 2 /two/ years to submit a written report to ANQA on the results of the carried out activities.

Chair of Accreditation Committee

V. Urutyán

26 March 2015

Yerevan