



## ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

ANQA-2022/63

### DECISION N 63

22 April 2022

### ON ACCREDITATION OF INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES OF INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC EDUCATIONAL CENTER OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

#### General Information about the Institution

Full name of the Institution:	International Scientific Educational Center of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia (ISEC)
Official Address:	24d Baghramyan str., Yerevan, Republic of Armenia
Previous Accreditation Decision and Date:	<b>Institutional accreditation for 4 years, 11.05.2017- 11.05.2021</b>

Guided by the "Regulation on State Accreditation of RA Education Institutions and their Professional Academic Programs" approved by the RA Government Decree N 978-N as of 30 June 2011, by the RA Government Decree N 959-N on "Approval of Criteria for Accreditation of Professional Education of the Republic of Armenia" as of 30 June 2011; by the "Procedure on Formation and Functioning of the Accreditation Committee of "National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance" foundation (ANQA)", by the ANQA "Regulation on Formation of the Expert Panel", the ANQA Accreditation Committee (hereinafter as Committee) discussed the issue of state institutional accreditation of International Scientific Educational Center of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia (hereinafter as ISEC or the Center) in the session held on 22 October 2021.

**The main phases of the accreditation process were fulfilled the following deadlines:**

Submission of application	5 October 2020
Submission of revised self-evaluation report	31 May 2021
Site-visit	13-16 September 2021
Submission of expert panel report	30 December 2021
Submission of action plan on elimination of shortcomings	21 February 2021

The expertise of the ISEC was carried out by the independent expert panel formed in compliance with the requirements set by the ANQA "Regulation on 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-N as of 30 June 2011.

Among the 10 accreditation criteria, the "**Governance and Administration**" was evaluated as unsatisfactory.

While examining the self-evaluation report of the Center, the expert panel report, the action plan on elimination of shortcomings, as well as hearing the conclusions on the expertise which were made by three members selected by the Chairman of the Committee, based on the results of meetings with the expert panel members and ISEC representatives, as well as taking into consideration the observations and proposals of the Committee members, the Committee stipulated the following:

In 2015 the ISEC was granted institutional accreditation for 4 years and taking into consideration the recommendations provided within the framework of the accreditation process, the Center compiled an improvement plan. The ISEC has made changes towards improvement in a number of fields.

***1. The Center mainly ensures the awarding of reliable qualifications.***

After the previous accreditation, the ISEC has carried out improvement activities in its professional academic programs (hereinafter as PAPs) from the perspectives of revision of learning outcomes, selection of teaching and learning methods and integration of a new form of syllabi. The PAPs are linked with the priorities of the institutes of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia (hereinafter as RA NAS). The direct link with the RA NAS institutes has fostered the assurance of the scientific-research component of PAPs.

In 2020 the ISEC developed and approved the "Regulation on Monitoring and Regular Revision of Professional Academic Programs of the RA NAS" which defines the processes related to the current monitoring and regular revision of the Center's PAPs. However, the PAPs do not mainly undergo external evaluation. In terms of implementation of some professions and replenishment of the content, teaching staff and material-technical resources there is some good practice which, however, is not institutionalized yet and is limited by some PAPs (e.g. "Environmental Protection and Natural Resource Management").

The ISEC has the necessary teaching staff for the implementation of its PAPs, however, it is mainly based on human resources of the RA NAS institutes. In order to ensure sustainability of the teaching staff, the Center has envisaged the following activities according to its strategic development plan: to apply compensation and rewards system, to clearly regulate legal labor relations, to foster professional development of young teachers, etc.

For the implementation of PAPs the Center creates an environment by using the RA NAS resources.

The ISEC mainly ensures the awarding of reliable qualifications, and it can overcome the existing problems and risks due to improvement of the management system.

## ***2. The management and quality assurance systems mainly support the improvement of awarding of reliable qualifications.***

The Center is led by the approved Strategic Plan (hereinafter as SP) and after the first accreditation it has developed key evaluation standards but the KPIs evaluating the efficiency are missing which makes it difficult to evaluate the efficiency of investment of the strategy as well as to ensure targeted KPIs-based strategic management. The mentioned shortcoming also causes problems for the mid-term and short-term planning, for the distribution of functions among structural units as well as for the assurance of efficiency of accountability and monitoring mechanisms.

The management system stresses the importance of quality assurance (hereinafter as QA) and its development. There are data collection mechanisms and systems; in particular, the QA Center ensures a large number of analyses and data. Nevertheless, the decision making based on analyses which are made by the QA Center is not a rooted culture yet.

The management and QA systems are not sufficiently institutionalized yet, and the Center does not sufficiently apply strategic approach which puts at risk the sustainability of development.

## ***3. The internationalization and research activity have development tendencies and support the awarding of reliable qualifications.***

The ISEC has strategic directions which reflect its research ambitions, fosters the fulfillment of research and its interlink with learning, makes attempts to create prerequisites for the internationalization of its research activity as well as to establish effective links with respective institutes of the RA NAS, thus fostering the linkage between education and research.

After the previous accreditation the ISEC has regulated the activities directed to the internationalization and development of external relations and has elaborated a development strategy, as well as has activated its links with both local and international partners which has fostered the study and adaptation of international practice in PAPs and in different courses.

The coordination of processes has had some impact on the internationalization of PAPs as well as on the capacity building of the staff.

The research activity, processes directed to the internationalization and external relations as well as feedback with stakeholders give opportunities for the development and advancement of the Center. At the same time, there aren't sufficient outcomes for reaching research and internationalization ambitions yet though there are development prerequisites based on the RA NAS capacity. The problem again relates to the lack of strategic management and institutionalization.

There are shortcomings which do not have a significant impact on the reliable qualification awarding, and respective bases are created for the improvement.

The ISEC action plan on the elimination of shortcomings mentioned in the expert panel report is mainly realistic, still, in order to reach qualitative changes, the ISEC should give more importance to the solution of problems existing in the management system as well as to the institutionalization of processes.

Based on the above mentioned and on the open voting results, the Committee:

### DECIDED

1. To award **institutional accreditation** to the International Scientific Educational Center of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia **for 4 /four/ years**.
2. After the publication of the decision on accreditation award, to submit an action plan on the elimination of shortcomings mentioned in the expert panel report and respective time-schedule within two months, taking into account the necessity to give urgent solutions to the problems existing in the field of "Governance and Administration".
3. **To pay special attention to:**
  - the necessity to make the indicators evaluating the strategic planning outcomes more realistic and measurable as well as to ensure their link with the goals, objectives and actions;
  - the necessity to have clear and measurable qualitative and quantitative KPIs for evaluating the efficiency of carried out processes;
  - the improvement of the policy of financial distribution by directing it to the implementation of the SP and PAP goals;
  - the decision making and reporting, based on analyses, clear quantitative and qualitative data;
  - the involvement of external stakeholders in the processes of QA, development and revision of PAPs;
  - the improvement of PAPs by involving detailed and measurable outcomes at the syllabus level, teaching and learning methods and tasks assigned to students;
  - the application of the PDCA cycle in all processes;
  - the reinforcement of the link between learning and research;
  - the centralized development of external relations and promotion of less active chairs;
  - the increase of the impact of QA processes on the Center's activity, to the improvement of mechanisms of bringing out and disseminating best practice among different chairs/institutes of the ISEC.
4. To organize internal audit of PAPs implemented at the ISEC by involving external experts.
5. In accordance with the Clause 12 of the "Regulation on State Accreditation of RA Education Institutions and their Professional Academic Programs", to submit a written report on the results of carried out activities to ANQA once every 2 /two/ years by evaluating the progress of the Center's activities, innovation and achievements.
6. To assign ANQA to make a mandatory monitoring of effectiveness of the ISEC's activity according to KPIs.
7. The decision enters into force upon registration in the state accreditation registrar.

**Chairman of the Accreditation Committee**

**A. Saghyan**

22 April 2022, Yerevan