



ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

ANQA-2024/97

DECREE N 97

February 15, 2024

ON ACCREDITATION OF INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES OF VARDENIS MEDICAL-HUMANITARIAN COLLEGE

General Information about the Institution

Full name of the Institution:	Vardenis Medical-Humanitarian College LLC
Official Address:	19 Hambardzumyan St., Vardenis, RA
Previous Accreditation decision and date:	Conditional institutional accreditation for a period of two years

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 Vardenis Medical-Humanitarian College (hereinafter referred to as “VMHC”, “TLI”) in the session of the Accreditation Committee held on February 15, 2024.

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

Submission of application:	April 10, 2022
Submission of the revised self-evaluation:	July 11, 2023
Site visit by the expert panel:	September 10–13, 2023
Submission of the expert panel report:	November 29, 2023

The external review of the VMHC'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 **“Internal Quality Assurance”** were evaluated as unsatisfactory.

Having examined the VMHC'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 VMHC's representatives; as well the comments and suggestions made by the Accreditation Committee members, the Committee stated the following:

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

The VMHC implements vocational academic programmes (APs) in the medical and humanitarian fields aligned with level 5 of the Armenian National Qualifications Frameworks (ANQF). The implemented Aps hold demographic and strategic significance for the border town Vardenis and adjacent villages.

The Aps are developed based on the state academic standards, and since 2023 the VMHC has switched to teaching through modular programmes. Following the previous accreditation recommendations, the VMHC has revised the APs, taking into consideration stakeholder suggestions. The main revisions have been implemented as part of special professional courses. Employers and the VMHC's teachers of practical courses, who are also employers in the field, have participated in the development of modular programmes. In 2022, then TLI conducted benchmarking against similar Aps of local medical VET institutions. The VMHC has developed a procedure for continuous monitoring and revision of the academic programmes.

The VMHC lacks a policy for the selection of teaching and learning methods aligned with the expected learning outcomes. However, the teaching staff tries to use interactive methods that cultivate practical skills alongside traditional methods.

Following the previous accreditation, the TLI has acquired and equipped a classroom for professional courses and practical classes at the Vardenis Medical Centre, which provides students with the opportunity to develop practical skills through interactions with real patients.

Despite the region's less than ideal location, the VMHC has managed to recruit a teaching staff actively engaged in the field to implement the APs. In recent years, there has been a rejuvenation of the teaching staff. The TLI has a mentoring system that facilitates the smoother integration of young teachers and practitioners without pedagogical education into the educational process. The VMHC generally ensures the stability of the teaching staff. There is a pool of teaching staff.

The TLI allocates budget funds for the annual training of the teaching staff.

Following the previous accreditation process, the VMHC has taken active steps towards the replenishment and enhancement of its resources, including the allocation of financial resources for educational and material needs. To address the resource gap in some Aps, the TLI collaborates with employer organisations to jointly leverage their capabilities. SMART classrooms have been set up. The TLI has identified priorities for resource acquisition and has initiated the opening of a student cafe. To enrich library resources, an electronic library has been set up, available to students.

2. Governance and quality assurance systems are at the stage of formation. However there are development trends and the governance is aimed at quality enhancement and the credible award of qualifications.

After the previous accreditation, the VMHC has taken prompt and practical steps to address the identified shortcomings, achieving progress in almost all areas.

The VMHC has refined its mission, which ensures the preparation of secondary vocational staff for the border region. The TLI's mission reflects the needs of the region's stakeholders. The VMHC has developed and adopted a long-term 2021-2026 Strategic Plan (SP), defining strategic goals, objectives and KPIs. The TLI has reviewed its organisational structure. During the past year, a number of policies, regulations, procedures and position passports have been developed. However, the VMHC's processes are not yet fully coordinated. The TLI lacks short-term plans and KPIs to evaluate the employees' activities. The decision-making process is not yet supported by substantiated and analysed data.

The VMHC has developed an appropriate documentation framework for the implementation of quality assurance processes. The documents coordinating the QA processes have not yet been fully implemented. The mechanisms for the identification of stakeholder needs are not geared towards problem-solving. The surveys need revision. The PDCA cycle of quality assurance is not yet fully completed. Some processes are in the planning stage, while others are in the implementation stage.

The VMHC's governance system attaches importance to quality assurance and takes certain steps for the establishment and development of the system.

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

The VMHC has mechanisms for the recruitment, selection and admission of students. In the past two years, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of students, driven by the TLI's active cooperation with schools, the enhancement of building conditions and the transportation services provided to students from remote villages.

There are certain mechanisms that contribute to the identification of the students' educational needs. The administrative staff is always available for student support. The supervisors work effectively. The VMHC studies the alumni's employment rates and maintains a database of alumni from the past three years. The TLI has a council that represents student rights, as well as a certain set of tools to ensure the quality of the services provided.

The VMHC has not set research goals and has not followed the recommendations from the previous accreditation. The TLI has a limited number of assignments that include a research component. The teaching staff does not conduct research activities. There is no link between research and learning process. Individual works and and course papers are assigned as research activities.

After the previous accreditation, the accountability framework has been completely revised and aligned with strategic goals. A unified reporting template has been set for the divisions. The official website has been launched. Mechanisms have been established to facilitate feedback from employers, alumni and internal stakeholders.

External relations and internationalisation processes are one of the VMHC's strategic priorities, as part of which the institution has taken steps to establish new partnerships. In the past two years, the

TLI has organised reciprocal visits to other education institutions offering similar APs and actively cooperated with local partners, employers, hospitals, polyclinics, and schools, signing memoranda and agreements. The cooperation agreements are mutually beneficial for both parties. When there is a vacancy, the employers contact the VMHC and acquire qualified specialists, and the education institution provides alumni with jobs.

The TLI has tried to find international partners and create a framework for cooperation.

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 is 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 Vardenis Medical-Humanitarian College LLC 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 **“Internal Quality Assurance”**.
3. To pay special attention to:
 - a) the clarification of financial and material resources outlined in the strategic planning process;
 - b) the diversification of interactive teaching methods, contributing to the development of students' analytical thinking;
 - c) the need to revise final attestation questionnaires to add questions testing practical competencies and skills;

- d) the design of assignments that foster the development of students' creative, analytical, and research skills;
 - e) the need to enrich the electronic library with Armenian and foreign language professional literature;
 - f) the introduction of students' career support services, the increased engagement of the Student Council;
 - g) the organization of professional trainings for teachers;
 - h) the 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 the 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 the 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

February 15, 2024

Yerevan