

**“NATIONAL CENTER FOR PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE”
FOUNDATION**



**EXPERT PANEL REPORT
INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION OF
ARAGATSOTN REGIONAL STATE COLLEGE**

Yerevan – 2026

INTRODUCTION

The institutional accreditation of Aragatsotn Regional State College (SNCO) (hereinafter referred TLI or College) is carried out based on the application submitted by the College. The process of institutional accreditation is organised and coordinated by “National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance” Foundation (hereinafter ANQA), guided by regulation on “State Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and Academic Programmes in RA” set by RA Government Decree N 978-Ն (dated June 30, 2011) and by Decree N 959-Ն on “Approval of RA Standards for Professional Education Accreditation” (dated June 30, 2011).

The expert examination was carried out by the independent expert panel formed in accordance with the requirements set by the “National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance” foundation in the regulation on “Formation of the Expert Panel”. The Panel comprises 4 local experts.

The accreditation process was funded by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of the Republic of Armenia.

The institutional accreditation is aimed not only at external evaluation of quality assurance but also at continuous improvement of the quality of management and academic programmes at the institution. Special emphasis was placed on the cooperation between the institution and employers, as well as its impact on the content of education.

The report hereby comprises the results of the evaluation of the institutional capacities of the TLI by the State Accreditation Criteria and Standards.

Background and History of the Institution

The “Aragatsotn Regional State College” SNCO (hereinafter, the College) was established in 1979. By Decree No. 199-N of the RA Government dated March 3, 2011, the “Talin Vocational School” SNCO was reorganised into the “Aragatsotn Regional State College” SNCO, based on the former institution. In 2007, the College was included in the list of 12 multifunctional colleges envisaged under the European Union Budget Support Program. The College is currently undergoing its first cycle of institutional accreditation.

Development Directions and Educational Programmes

The “Aragatsotn Regional State College” SNCO implements academic programs aligned with Levels 4 and 5 of the NQF, in line with state educational standards.

The College is licensed to deliver 3 secondary vocational academic programs: “Technical Maintenance of Computing Equipment and Computer Networks,” “Electrical Machines and Apparatus,” and “Accounting,” as well as 7 primary vocational (craftsmanship) programs: “Laboratory Research and Measurements in Production,” “Technical Support for Road Construction and Improvement Works,” “Technology of Garment Production,” “Technology of Oil, Cheese, and Milk Production,” “Hairdressing Art and Decorative Make-up,” “Technical Operation of Lifting Transport Vehicles,” and “Operation and Maintenance of Vehicles /by types/.”

Currently, the College delivers 1 secondary vocational academic program, namely “Technical Maintenance of Computing Equipment and Computer Networks,” and 3 primary vocational (craftsmanship) education programmes: “Laboratory Research and Measurements in Production,” “Technical Support for Road Construction and Improvement Works,” and “Technology of Oil, Cheese, and Milk Production.” Instruction in all the above-mentioned specialities is provided free of charge and in full-time mode.

The College has 184 students enrolled. The teaching staff comprises 27 lecturers, 3 of whom are employed part-time, primarily combining their work with roles at general education institutions. The expert panel visit found that no practitioners from the professional field are involved in teaching at the College. Three members of the teaching staff hold secondary vocational qualifications, while the remaining members possess higher education qualifications.

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

During the institutional accreditation expert evaluation of the “Aragatsotn Regional State College” SNCO, the expert panel noted that the College was undergoing its first institutional accreditation. The panel also recognised the College’s significant role in providing vocational education to the youth of Talin town and the surrounding communities. The College is one of the main providers of vocational education in the region and ensures young people from these communities have access to it. Internal and external stakeholders emphasise the College’s role in the region and generally share the institution’s mission.

At the same time, the expert panel notes that the region’s economic structure somewhat limits opportunities for employer cooperation. The region is mainly characterised by small and medium-sized enterprises and individual entrepreneurs, which complicates the establishment of stable, systematic cooperation with employers. There is demand within the region for specialists in several secondary vocational fields, particularly accountants, technical specialists, operators of agricultural and construction machinery, garment production specialists, and professionals in other areas. Nevertheless, the College has not yet conducted a systematic study of labor market needs, so the planning of academic programs is not fully based on labor market demands and applicants’ interests.

The study of the institution’s strategic development and governance processes indicates that certain prerequisites for strategic planning have been established at the College. A strategic plan and an implementation timetable are in place. However, the link between the strategic plan and the annual operational plans of the structural units is not yet clearly articulated. Strategic goals generally lack measurable indicators, and their implementation is not systematically assessed. From this perspective, it is important that the strategic plan serves as the key instrument for defining the institution’s main directions and is integrated with current planning processes.

The analysis of the governance system shows that a top-down, vertical governance model prevails within the institution, with decision-making primarily resting with management staff. Although lecturers and students are involved in governance bodies, they are not yet sufficiently proactive in decision-making. A similar situation exists regarding the involvement of external stakeholders. Systematic mechanisms for identifying needs and maintaining dialogue with stakeholders have not yet been established, which affects the effectiveness of governance processes.

From the perspective of enhancing institutional governance effectiveness, establishing a quality assurance system is also of key importance. Expert studies indicate that certain documents related to

quality assurance policy and regulations have been developed at the College. However, the system is still in the early stages of development and does not yet serve as the main tool for governance and continuous improvement processes. The full implementation of quality assurance mechanisms may contribute to the systematic collection of institutional data and support evidence-based managerial decision-making.

In designing vocational academic programs, the College is primarily guided by state educational standards and ensures their implementation. The availability of teaching staff and existing resources enables the delivery of the educational process and the achievement of the main intended learning outcomes of the academic programs. At the same time, the processes for reviewing and improving academic programs are not yet carried out systematically. The development of program content is mainly limited to the application of state standards, while initiatives to contextualise and align the program with labor market needs remain limited.

The expert panel also emphasises the need to strengthen the practical component of the educational process. Expanding the practical and applied components within the structure of assignments and tasks may contribute to the development of students' professional competencies. In this process, expanding cooperation with employers and the shared use of resources may also be particularly important.

The development of research and analytical skills is not currently organised systematically at the College. Students' assignments are predominantly theoretical, and creative and analytical work is not carried out systematically. The expert panel highlights the importance of integrating creative and analytical assignments into academic programs and establishing a corresponding database of assignments. At the same time, given the existing human resource limitations, the College may consider involving employer representatives as specialists and engaging its best graduates as teaching staff.

The study of student support and career guidance processes indicates that the College undertakes measures to support students' professional orientation and employment placement. However, systematic monitoring of graduates' career trajectories is not conducted, and employment rates in the field of specialisation remain low. From this perspective, it is necessary to strengthen cooperation with employers and systematically monitor graduate employment outcomes.

The expert panel also notes that the transparency of the institution's activities and public communication remains limited. At present, the College disseminates information mainly through

social media platforms. However, the absence of an official website limits external stakeholders' access to information. The establishment of an official website may increase transparency and expand opportunities for cooperation.

The analysis of the institution's financial activities indicates that the College's budget is primarily funded by state funding, while opportunities to generate extra-budgetary resources remain limited. At the same time, the institution possesses professional capacity and resources that could be utilized to attract additional financial means through the implementation of short-term academic programs. This process may be achieved through the study of labor market needs and the expansion of cooperation with employers.

The expert panel concludes that, for the further development of the institution, it is necessary to strengthen strategic planning, develop governance and quality assurance systems, enhance stakeholder engagement, and ensure closer alignment of academic programmes with labor market requirements.

Strengths of the Institution:

- The provision of opportunities to access vocational education in line with the socio-economic conditions of the region, particularly through the availability of tuition-free places,
- The implementation of academic programs in priority specializations and their potential contribution to preparing specialists for the region's production sectors,
- The established cooperative links with regional employers and their willingness to support the organization of student internships,
- The opportunity to engage the resources of local production entities in the educational process to develop students' practical skills.

Weaknesses of the Institution:

- The weak interconnection between strategic planning, governance, and accountability processes, as well as the absence of systematic evaluation of the implementation outcomes of strategic goals,
- The absence of systematic studies of regional labor market needs and of data-driven decision-making mechanisms linked to academic program planning,
- The limited application of outcome-based planning within academic programs and teaching

methods, as well as the absence of mechanisms for periodic program review,

- The low employment rates among graduates in their respective fields of specialisation and the absence of systematic monitoring of graduate career trajectories,
- The absence of a policy for the recruitment and rejuvenation of the academic staff,
- The limited implementation of systematic activities aimed at developing research and analytical capacities among lecturers and students,
- Limited financial opportunities and the absence of mechanisms to generate extra-budgetary resources.

Main recommendations:

Data-Driven Management

Strategic Management and Planning

1. Review the College's mission to align it more clearly with the directions of the implemented academic programs and the demands of the regional labor market.
2. Define measurable indicators and expected outcomes for the implementation of strategic goals to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation of the strategic plan's implementation.
3. Conduct periodic studies of regional labor market demands and stakeholder needs to review and further develop the directions of the College's academic programs on that basis.
4. Include periodic discussions of the College's development issues on the agenda of the Governing Board meetings (at least twice a year), informed by analysis of student enrolment trends, graduate employment outcomes, labor market demands, and available resources, and ensure that these discussions lead to concrete decisions on introducing new programs or revising existing ones.

Governance Structure and Cooperation Between Structural Units

5. Review the College's organisational structure by clearly defining the functions and scope of responsibilities of each staff member (through the revision of job descriptions), and by establishing mechanisms for cooperation between departments (e.g. regular joint discussions or working meetings). Clarify the functions of the methodological committees by defining that they meet periodically (at least once per semester) to discuss the content of specific academic programs, teaching and assessment methods, and to submit recommendations for program improvement.
6. Introduce unified formats for planning and accountability by requiring all structural units to prepare annual work plans with clear objectives and measurable outcomes, and to submit semi-annual reports that include not only completed activities but also an analysis of challenges and proposals for improvement.

Data-Driven Decision-Making and Quality Assurance

7. Establish a quality assurance working group at the College, ensuring that processes are carried out not only by a single responsible person, but also with the participation of relevant stakeholders.
8. Introduce quality assurance tools (e.g. student surveys, internship evaluation mechanisms, etc.) and ensure the analysis of their results and their application in planning improvement actions.
9. Ensure that the results of self-analysis and evaluation are used to identify specific issues and to develop actions to address them.

Credible Awarding of Qualifications

Improvement of Academic Programs and Preparation of Specialists Aligned with Labor Market Needs

10. Conduct a comparative analysis of academic programs by studying best practices from similar programs and contextualising them, considering the College's teaching conditions and regional labor market demands.
11. Introduce elective and professionally specialised modules into the curricula to support the development of students' specialised professional competencies and increase the flexibility of academic programs.
12. Clarify the intended learning outcomes of the modules by defining measurable indicators of their achievement and aligning teaching and assessment methods with the attainment of those outcomes.
13. Introduce mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of academic programs, including the regular collection of stakeholder feedback, to continuously improve academic programs and align them with labor market requirements.

Assessment System

14. Define clear assessment criteria and grading rubrics for student assignments and learning outcomes to enable monitoring of student progress and ensure systematic feedback.
15. Review the structure of the state final attestation examinations by expanding the practical component to ensure a more comprehensive assessment of students' professional skills and applied competencies.

Development of Academic Staff Capacities

16. Introduce a policy for the recruitment and rejuvenation of academic staff, which will contribute to the involvement of young specialists and the continuous development of human resources.
17. Establish a staff reserve to ensure the implementation of academic programs in the event of a possible shortage of lecturers and to reduce the risks to the sustainable delivery of programs in cases of staff turnover.
18. Plan the class observation process by defining its frequency, responsible individuals, and the format for summarising the results.

19. Ensure the systematic analysis of the results of class observations and student surveys, and their application to professional development and teaching improvement processes.
20. Plan professional development training for lecturers based on the needs identified during the teaching process.
21. Strengthen the role of methodological committees in monitoring the teaching process and mentoring lecturers.

Involvement of Employers in the Teaching Process

22. Expand the involvement of employers and field specialists in the teaching process to develop students' practical competencies.

Resource Management

23. Introduce mechanisms for the periodic evaluation of material and technical resources and for identifying related needs.
24. Plan the phased modernization of laboratories and specialized classrooms in line with the requirements of academic programs.
25. Ensure the operation of unused equipment or equipment requiring adjustment and maintenance.
26. Modernize library resources and expand access to electronic information sources for lecturers and students.
27. Explore opportunities to attract additional funding sources, including participation in grant programs.
28. Expand the use of virtual experiments and simulation software in education.

Long-Term Development

Student Recruitment and Meeting Labor Market Demands

29. Activate the student recruitment process by involving lecturers, students, and employers.
30. Review the demand for academic programs and admission indicators by taking into consideration the socio-economic conditions of the region and labor market requirements.

Student Support and Career Development

31. Develop mechanisms for identifying students' needs to improve the educational environment on that basis.
32. Strengthen the operation of career support services by introducing mechanisms to monitor graduates' professional career trajectories.

Development of Research Capacities

33. Introduce elements of applied research within academic programs and modules by assigning students tasks based on the observation of real professional processes, data collection, data analysis, and decision-making aimed at improvement.
34. Define unified requirements, structure, and assessment criteria for research assignments carried out by students to ensure their substantive and analytical nature.
35. Ensure the balanced integration of research- and analysis-oriented assignments across all academic programs, thereby contributing to the development of students' abilities to analyse and solve professional problems.
36. Encourage academic staff participation in applied research activities by establishing appropriate incentive mechanisms and organising professional development training on the application of applied research methodology.
37. Encourage lecturers to develop methodological materials and manuals, thereby promoting the integration of research-based approaches into the educational process.

Transparency and Accountability

38. Develop a unified reporting format that reflects not only implemented activities but also the results of implementing the goals defined in the strategic plan, achievements, identified challenges, and improvement actions.
39. Create the College's official website, where information on the College's activities, reports, descriptions of academic programs, and information necessary for applicants will be regularly published, thereby ensuring transparency in the institution's activities.
40. Develop formats for cooperation with society by organizing open classes, professional events, meetings, and other initiatives that will contribute to the dissemination of knowledge and professional values.

External Relations and Cooperation with Employers

41. Define clear directions for the development of external relations and internationalization by incorporating them into the College's strategic plan and establishing measurable goals and indicators for this area.
42. Clearly define responsibility for coordinating external relations and internationalization with the aim of promoting and developing cooperation initiatives.
43. Review and expand the range of partner organisations, conduct periodic labour market studies, and engage new partners to ensure a more diverse and professionally relevant environment for the organisation of student internships.
44. Develop mechanisms for the periodic evaluation and review of internship bases to ensure their alignment with the requirements of academic programs and to support the effective development of students' practical skills.
45. Strengthen cooperation with employers by involving them not only in organising internships but also in teaching, program review, and monitoring processes.

Language Competencies

46. Assess the level of foreign language proficiency among lecturers, administrative staff, and students, and based on the results, plan activities aimed at the development of language competencies.

Asya Simonyan, Chair of Expert Panel / 22.05.2026

DESCRIPTION OF EXTERNAL REVIEW

COMPOSITION OF EXPERT PANEL

The following expert panel conducted an external evaluation of Aragatsotn Regional State College's institutional capacities.

- **Asya Simonyan**, Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Lecturer at Shirak State University, Head of the Expert Panel.
- **Oleg Gevorgyan**, Candidate of Technical Sciences, Associate Professor, Deputy Director for Scientific, Technological Cooperation and External Relations at the Institute of Information and Communication Technologies and Electronics of the National Polytechnic University of Armenia, Member of the Expert Panel.
- **Gayane Hambardzumyan**, Deputy Director for Academic Affairs at the State College after Vardges Hamazaspyan of Ejmiatsin, Member of the Expert Panel.
- **Ani Shahbazyan**, Student at the Yerevan State College of Light Industry, Student Member of the Expert Panel.

The composition of the expert panel was agreed upon with the Institution.

The work of the Expert Panel was coordinated by Meri Barseghyan, Specialist at the Policy Development Division of the ANQA.

All the members of the expert panel and the coordinator have signed independence and confidentiality agreements.

PROCESS OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW

The College applied for state institutional accreditation by submitting an ANQA application that included the application form, copies of the license, and the relevant appendices.

The ANQA Secretariat checked the data presented in the application form and the appendices in the application package.

After deciding to accept the application, ANQA and the College signed an agreement. The timetable of activities was prepared and approved.

Self-evaluation

Given that the educational institution is undergoing its first accreditation process and is in the

initial stages of establishing a culture of quality assurance, ANQA has conducted online workshops with accredited VET institutions. The workshops aimed to prepare colleges for the organisational stages of the accreditation process. During the workshops, the interpretations of the institutional accreditation criteria and standards, the electronic questionnaire to be filled in for applying for institutional accreditation, and the features of self-evaluation and SWOT analysis were presented. The educational institution conducted a SWOT analysis, which was discussed with ANQA employees. During the implementation of the self-evaluation, current discussions were organized by the ANQA to clarify the issues.

The revised self-evaluation of the College's institutional capacities was submitted on November 24, 2025. The self-evaluation was carried out by the institution's staff, including the management team, administrative personnel, academic staff, and support staff.

Preparatory phase

The Expert Panel, having reviewed the VET's self-evaluation report and the accompanying package of documents, conducted a preliminary evaluation in accordance with the prescribed format. As part of this process, the Panel prepared a list of additional documents requiring further examination and identified key issues and questions, indicating the respective structural units or target groups to be addressed. Subsequently, the Expert Panel consolidated the results of the preliminary assessment and developed a detailed plan and schedule for the site visit.

Preparatory visit

Before the site visit, a preparatory online visit to the college was carried out on 12.12.2025. The ANQA coordinator, the head of the institutional program accreditation department and the head of the expert panel were present at the meeting. During the meeting, the site visit schedule was introduced and agreed upon with the college. Additionally, the meeting participants discussed and agreed on decisions regarding the technical, organisational, and informational aspects of the site visit, as well as the participants' behaviour and ethical norms.

Site visit

The expert panel site visit took place from December 22-24, 2025. During the week preceding the site visit, the expert panel members and the coordinator visited the college, observed its infrastructure and resources, conducted class observations, and observed exams. Then the experts and

the coordinator had a closed meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to identify the college's strengths and weaknesses against the standards, clarify the questions to be asked of the target groups, and discuss the meeting procedures and next steps.

The site visit began and ended with meetings with the College's director. All participants in the meetings were randomly selected from a pre-provided list. All scheduled meetings were held. During the visit, the expert panel reviewed documents.

At the end of each working day, the expert panel held closed meetings to discuss the interim expert assessment results, and at the end of the visit, the main results were summarised.

The expert panel reached its conclusion on the criteria through discussions and analyses by all members, always applying the principle of consensus.

Expert panel report

With the ANQA coordinator, the members of the expert panel prepared the preliminary version of the expert report, which the experts reviewed and agreed. The preliminary report was provided to the college on 06 May 2026. The college did not submit any comments or objections to the preliminary report. Upon receipt of the college's written confirmation, the expert panel prepared the final version of the report.

Meri Barseghyan

Coordinator of the Expert Panel

22.05.2026

EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

CRITERION	CONCLUSION
<i>I. Mission and Purposes</i>	Satisfactory
<i>II. Governance and Administration</i>	Unsatisfactory
<i>III. Academic Programmes</i>	Satisfactory
<i>IV. Students</i>	Satisfactory
<i>V. Faculty and Staff</i>	Satisfactory
<i>VI. Research and Development</i>	Unsatisfactory
<i>VII. Infrastructure and Resources</i>	Satisfactory
<i>VIII. Societal Responsibility</i>	Unsatisfactory
<i>IX. External Relations and Internationalization</i>	Unsatisfactory
<i>X. Internal Quality Assurance System</i>	Unsatisfactory