

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



National Center For Professional
Education Quality Assurance
Foundation

EXPERT PANEL REPORT

**ON INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION OF
ARMENIAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS**

Yerevan – 2014

INTRODUCTION

The institutional accreditation of Armenian State University of Economics (hereinafter ASUE) is implemented by the World Bank Grant Programme with the support of Education Programmes Office of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia. The accreditation process is organized and coordinated by the National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance, Foundation (hereinafter ANQA)

ANQA is guided by the regulation on “State Accreditation of RA Institutions and their Academic Programme” set by the RA Government on 30 June, 2011 N978 decree as well as by N959-Ն (30 June, 2011) decree on approving RA Standards for Professional Education Accreditation.

The institutional audit was carried out by the expert panel composed according to the requirements of ANQA Regulation on the Expert Panel Composition. The expert panel consists of 4 local and 1 international experts.

Institutional accreditation aims not only to the external evaluation of quality assurance but also to the continuous improvement of the institution’s management and quality of academic programme. Hence, there were two important issues for the expert panel members:

1. To carry out an audit of institutional capacities in line with the RA standards for state accreditation
2. To carry out an evaluation for the improvement of university’s quality and for its integration to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

This particular report covers the institutional review of ASUE on the basis of the ANQA framework and the peer review on the basis of international standards.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	2
SUMMARY OF EVALUATION	4
EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA	4
PEER-REVIEW FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF EDUCATION INSTITUTION'S INTEGRATION INTO EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA	9
DESCRIPTION OF EXTERNAL REVIEW	12
COMPOSITION OF EXPERT PANEL	12
PROCESS OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW.....	13
EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA	15
BRIEF INFORMATION ABOUT THE EDUCATION INSTITUTION	15
CRITERION I. MISSION AND PURPOSE.....	16
CRITERION II. GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION.....	18
CRITERION III. ACADEMIC PROGRAMME	21
CRITERION IV. STUDENTS.....	25
CRITERION V. FACULTY AND STAFF	29
CRITERION VI. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT	32
CRITERION VII. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES	35
CRITERION VIII. SOCIETAL RESPONSIBILITY	37
CRITERION IX. EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND INTERNATIONALIZATION	40
CRITERION X. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM.....	42
EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA	45
APPENDICIES	46
APPENDIX 1. CVS OF EXPERT PANEL MEMBERS	46
APPENDIX 2: SCHEDULE OF SITE VISIT	48
APPENDIX 3. LIST OF DOCUMENTS OBSERVED	50
APPENDIX 4. RESOURCES OBSERVED	52
APPENDIX 5. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATION INSTITUION	53
APPENDIX 6. LIST OF THE ABBREVIATIONS	54

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES ACCORDING TO ACREDITATION CRITERIA

The institutional accreditation process was carried out by the expert panel composed according to the requirements of ANQA Regulation on the Expert Panel Composition. The evaluation was carried out according to the 10 criteria set by the RA Government on 30 June, 2011 N 959-Ն decree.

During the institutional review process, the expert panel took into consideration that ASUE is specialized in economics and has rich experience in the field. ASUE strives to become “the most competitive economic higher education institution providing fundamental and, at the same time, practical skills and knowledge, and implementing extensive researches”. However, ASUE has ambitious mission statement where the academic freedom and autonomy, student-centered learning, education-labor market cooperation, transfer of practical knowledge and realization of scientific research by means of concentration of professional potential, creation of innovative teaching environment and implementation of progressive researches are considered the main values of the university. As the main outcome of its activities, the university, strives to educate competitive graduates and specialists with practical and general knowledge, skills and competencies.

During its entire functioning, ASUE has not undergone any accreditation process: the quality assurance was implemented with application of some mechanisms of quality control. The current institutional accreditation process is the first trial of ASUE. The university conducted self-evaluation for the purpose of evaluating the sufficiency of recourses, the effectiveness of academic programme, public accountability and the current work of internal quality assurance system, etc.

The University implies 73 academic programme in economics and management sciences, including 27 bachelors and 46 master's degree levels.

ASUE offers a vast array of studies' curricula in economics and management sciences at three levels of education (bachelor, master and Ph. D. degrees) defined in NQF as higher education. Some of the specialties and specialisations are offered only at the University. The length of education cycle varies from 2 to 5 years. Standards concerning fields of studies and specialisations are developed at the University, taking into account the requirements of the educational standards of the Ministry of Science and Education.

In 2007-2011, ECTS was implemented, issuing a number of regulatory documents and modifying the organisation of the education process. At the same time, studies' curricula, adapted to the needs of the labour market, are started. In 2012-2013, 8 pilot studies were commenced in cooperation with employers. New programmes started using the experience of the foreign partner universities (benchmarking) which cooperate with ASUE within the framework of the TEMPUS programme.

Applying the research results in University teaching process, the formation of the research groups and involving graduate students in research through “Amberd” Research Center illustrates the existence of a connection between them.

University's infrastructures and resources are currently sufficient for the provision of higher education. Financial resources from students' tuition fees are mostly spent on payment of salaries, as well as on educational and scientific departments for improving the building conditions, modern equipment, software packages and other support they need. A good example is that 3.2% of the University budget is spent on boosting research progress and its organization.

There isn't any financial support for international cooperation and in case of interruption of the external funding the stability and also the current staff insufficient mobility can be endangered.

The university is currently working with a professional and experienced teaching staff, which contributes to the realization of the objectives of academic programme. Teachers' average age is high. Student/teacher ratio is favorable. 14.3 in Yerevan, 14 in Gyumri branch and 11.3, in Yeghegnadzor branch. Relatively high salaries, to some extent, provide the necessary motivation, but the involvement of young and qualified professionals in the process of teaching is slow, and this factor is not far from the university to face some risk in future.

The faculty training opportunities are not fully used. The university academic staff is involved in research activities, but few of them published works on international level. The teaching staff has little experience in international organizations and programmes of the University.

According to students point of view the University is concerned with the students' education process and student-centered environment. Recruitment, selection and admission of students with currently operating mechanisms ensure a steady stream of applicants. Students mentioned several improvements in ASUE (young teachers with new teaching methods, infrastructure and library resources) in this field. Students value practical knowledge, support and guidance offered by the University but find that their needs are not always accommodated. The students consider insufficient their participation in the university governance, hours for internships, students' scientific research perspective and their further career development.

University management system serves its primary purpose, despite the fact that their separate structures and functions partially coincide. In the present the system is facing internal and external new challenges that require a well-founded, student-centered approaches, more accountable decision-making processes, additional resources and better information system.

University is in the process of the implementation of structural changes and the effectiveness of new system can be judged by the principles of quality management processes after the analysis of its results. In the different levels of ASUE education quality and quality assurance are mainly prioritized, although currently it is rather conditioned by external requirements. Human and financial resources were provided. Several basic documents are developed for the organization of the processes. Internal quality assurance system is in the process of development. Certain processes are arranged, but the participation of stakeholders is weak, and the basic mechanisms of quality assurance still need to be worked out.

STRENGTHS OF THE INSTITUTION

- 1) ASUE exact positioning in the higher education sector and the demand for services provided by the applicants.
- 2) A high level of awareness of the ASUE strategic priorities.
- 3) The opportunity of participation of the internal stakeholders in decision-making processes.
- 4) The experience of HEIs and employers strong cooperation in the process of preparation of the specialist according to the requirements of labour market only for some programmes.
- 5) Satisfactory level of academic staff professional qualities and leading practitioners participation in the teaching process.
- 6) Funding for the research processes from the university budget.
- 7) Continuous care of University resources and technical improvement.
- 8) The existence of quality assurance policies and procedures.
- 9) Membership in international organizations and the tendency of active participation in international programmes.
- 10) The existence of Marketing and Career Center.
- 11) Existence of the means of communication with public.

WEAKNESSES OF THE INSTITUTION

- 1) The University mission is ambitious and there is an absence of strategic plan.
- 2) The low level of involvement of external stakeholders in the University activities.
- 3) Insufficient amount of academic programme described and approved with the learning outcomes, the duplication of courses in bachelor's and master's degree academic programme, imperfection of assessment system.
- 4) The absence of identification of students' personal and educational needs and the low effectiveness of the students' internship implementation.
- 5) Poor link of interdisciplinary approaches and interchair cooperation in the field of education and research.
- 6) Insufficient cooperation between ASUE and its branches (Eghegnazor and Gyumri). Low rate of involvement of young teaching staff in educational process, absence of systematic training.
- 7) Lack of manuals, textbooks, material and technical database, low rate of implementation of new educational and teaching methods and technical support.
- 8) Lack of modern equipments, legal software, databases accessibility for academic staff and students, insufficient building conditions, small number of technically equipped and furnished classrooms.
- 9) The low involvement of students and academic staff in research activities, insufficient number of international researches.
- 10) Limited application of Plan Do Check Act cycle in management processes
- 11) Low level of the University student-centered educational system formation, processes of internationalization and mobility.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

Mission and Purpose

- 1) Review the ASUE's mission, giving a clear and measurable results and formulations obtained in terms of qualifications awarded, include quality assurance and internationalization issues.
- 2) Strengthen the mechanisms of revealing and assessing internal and external stakeholders' needs in the process of developing strategic plan and reviewing mission statement.
- 3) Develop a framework and a model adjusted to the goals and objectives of the evaluation of learning outcomes outlined in the strategic plan, determine expected results and define the progress orientation indicators.

Governance and Administration

- 4) Clarify hierarchical management structure both in ASUE Yerevan branch, as well as in Gyumri and Yeghegnadzor branches, set the ethical rules, clarify the documents kept in ASUE branches, fix all university staff functions,
- 5) Develop the procedures of the reliable data collection needed for a study of the factors influencing the university activity, also the procedures of administrative structures and mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of their activities.
- 6) Develop the schedule for the implementation of Strategic plan, mentioning the responsible persons. Develop short-term and mid-term action plans the implementation of which will result the fulfilment the schedule of Strategic plan, as well as develop mechanisms for implementation, monitoring and assessing of short term, mid-term and long term action plans.
- 7) Develop regulations and mechanisms for the implementation of quality management principles of university policies and procedures administration. Develop mechanisms sufficient for

university academic programme and efficiency of the process of information collection, analysis and use assessment tools,

- 8) Develop objective mechanisms of quantitative and qualitative information publications about an assessment of academic programme and quality of qualifications awarded.

Academic Programme

- 9) Review the academic programme according to the qualifications awarded by the intended learning outcomes, meanwhile making the output results of course descriptions/programme consistent with the learning outcomes.
- 10) Develop and apply the selection policy of teaching and learning methods appropriate to intended learning outcomes, which will contribute to the development of student-centered learning,
- 11) Develop mechanisms of students evaluation policy and providing academic honesty according to learning outcomes.
- 12) Carry out targeted benchmarking, to make the university academic programme, in terms of contents, in line with other similar academic programme, make steps to increase the mobility of students and teaching staff, taking into consideration the existing contracts.
- 13) Strengthen monitoring system of academic programme as well as the processes of assessing their effectiveness and improvement.

Students

- 14) Develop mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of applicants' activities professional development.
- 15) Organize actions to identify the students educational and personal needs that are aimed at improving the provided educational quality services and adapting to the university environment.
- 16) Improve the processes of providing additional training to promote the students effective learning and consultancy, to develop their evaluation/ assessment mechanisms.
- 17) Develop Rules of Procedure and Schedule for the purpose of providing the students assistance and guidance to the administrative staff. The regulation is necessary to implement addressed for each department and administrative staff: Dean's offices, departments, Vice-Rectors, Rector.
- 18) Expand the scope of Career Center activities, aimed to examine the needs of the labor market, employment of graduates and ensure with a constituent feedback.
- 19) Develop and implement a mechanism to involve students in research activities that allow students to expand enrollment in research, contributing to the students' knowledge, research and skills development.
- 20) Promote the Student Council's activities and realization of its autonomy, involvement and participation of more students (especially supporting the ASUE branches).
- 21) Regulating the University students educational, consultation and other services for evaluation and quality assurance processes.

Faculty and staff

- 22) Develop specific requirements for academic staff professional qualities according to each academic programme of the university.
- 23) Develop regular staff evaluation policy, set out the mechanisms and tools to accomplish them.

24) Develop internal and external evaluation system for faculty and academic staff needs, and its enforcement mechanisms and conduct periodic assessments of the professors and targeted improvement work based on that.

25) Take steps to increase the involvement of young professionals in the teaching process, through encouragement and the exchange of experiences to provide the sustainability of the academic staff, to develop specific mechanisms and tools for quality assurance activities of the administrative and supporting staff.

Research and development

26) Clarify the University interests, ambitions and activity specific directions in the research area. Develop a long-term strategic action plan modifying the interests and ambitions of the HEI in the research area. Develop ways to ensure a financial support and external sources for the university's research programmes.

27) Support the process of research internationalization and gradually increase the financial resources planned for that.

28) Review the results of qualitative research-oriented master's academic programme, curricula and syllabus.

Infrastructure and resources

29) Create distinct mechanisms for identifying the needs of adequate resources for effective implementation of defined mission and goals.

30) Develop such a financial policy that is aimed at the creation of investment environment, which in its turn will contribute to academic programme' objectives implementation and the provision of the university with necessary facilities and equipment.

31) Develop a policy to manage information and documentation processes.

32) Take steps to create a safe and secure environment for students with special needs.

33) Develop evaluation mechanisms of resources applicability, accessibility and effectiveness available for students and lecturers.

Social responsibility

34) Develop clear procedures and mechanisms for accountability of external stakeholders, defining evaluation indicators.

35) Develop feedback mechanisms that will contribute to the development of public relations, realization of the ASUE strategic action plan and ASUE internal activities. In order to provide a sufficient research and education quality and productive usage of resources it would be preferable to elaborate "zero tolerancy" comprehensive programme aimed at possible corruption, plagiarism, nepotism and other unacceptable cases of the academic world.

36) Lifelong and Further Education Center should regulate, plan and intensify its activities, formulating priorities, derived from society needs and university strategy.

37) Elaborate information uploading policy/strategy, provide ASUE official website with reports of different divisions and information about the activities carried out in the divisions.

38) Develop an action plan for lifelong education emanating from the concept. Partnering with employment centers, especially in the branches, in terms of the training of unemployed.

External relations and internationalization

39) Develop procedures and mechanisms providing an environment encouraging the further development of internationalization in ASUE.

- 40) Develop mechanisms of assessing the effectiveness of the functions of ASUE external relations and internationalisation division aimed at assessing the needs of division and the improvement of its activities.
- 41) Promote fruitful and effective collaboration with local and international stakeholders.
- 42) Ensure the appropriate level of a foreign language for internal stakeholders to raise the effectiveness of internationalization.

Internal quality assurance

- 43) Allocate human, material and financial resources to manage internal quality assurance processes.
- 44) Develop quality assurance mechanisms for assessing internal and external stakeholders' involvement.
- 45) Apply quality assurance mechanisms and processes of academic programme.
- 46) Develop mechanisms ensuring the effectiveness of quality assurance aimed at education quality and comprehensive structural reforms, conduct periodic evaluations based on that mechanisms.
- 47) Identify such a quantity of information and launch information collection mechanisms that form the basis for quality assurance of internal and external assessments.
- 48) Increase transparency of the university activities, from the point of view of quality assurance system, is worth directing at formation of the elements of the quality culture.

PEER-REVIEW FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF EDUCATION INSTITUTION'S INTEGRATION INTO EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

Observations

First, the most general impression is that the ASUE has a good academic potential, but do not take full advantage of it. It is therefore much room for improvement, and I believe it is an essential to work/task (of) the management of the university. We have met many stakeholders and we found a lot of devotion, commitment and enthusiasm, especially among the students in their work for the university. All groups of stakeholders have expressed high level of satisfaction, even if they identified some defects. This kind of social capital in our opinion is an important asset of the ASUE and should be fully exploit. Students and teaching staff is especially valuable asset for the university. Also, Panel appreciates all the efforts ASUE management put in making the ASUE modern, Research University with high prestige in Armenia and the region.

What needs improvement? One of the major challenges the ASUE Management is facing is an appropriate identification of the sources of challenges. There are many good intentions declarations, plans and tools, but their implementation is rather slow. In panel's opinion too much attention is paid to the external factors (demography, ministerial regulations, mentality and legacy of the previous political system etc.) while neglecting internal factors. It seems that academic community should spend more time for the reflections on the internal barriers of the slow progress in restructuring ASUE.

Creating an environment that stimulates a greater emphasis on university policies and stakeholders commitments is the main important tasks for the current Management. A better communication and cooperation with all stakeholders is a basic prerequisite for this postulate. It is important to find a way of identifying synergy emerged as outcomes of collaboration of different organizational units.

It is equally important to foster the progress in building modern teaching and learning system, increasing research intensity and deepening level of internationalization. It would be rather not possible to achieve

these objectives without pursuing more encouraging staff policy promoting teachers with modern techniques of teaching and conducting scientific research, while resigning from those without relevant skills and competencies.

One of the major challenges the university faces is managing balance between the current burdens of new internal quality assurance system and its long-term benefits. Teachers and students should know that efficient quality assurance system would allow for the international recognition of ASUE graduates diplomas. Various good practices and informal policies should be integrated into the overall quality strategy. A systemic coordination of the stakeholders' involvement in university quality system is needed. Information and better communication would strengthen the ability to gain more holistic view of the outcomes of QAS.

Recommendations

1. The HEI should revise its mission statement to make it inclusive of quality assurance and internationalisation related objectives. The strategy needs to be better structured, issues assigned to action areas in a more transparent manner. It has to follow a timeline and assign persons responsible for completing individual tasks.
2. It would seem that the issue of students' involvement in management of the University needs to be urgently addressed by university management and student organisations.
3. Developing a model for evaluating internal and external factors influencing current activities and long-term development of the University. Preparing the report on external conditions of the future ASUE development, as well as to prepare long-term University development strategy.
4. Developing system of information management, introducing modern electronic system of collecting, processing and analysing information on academic programme.
5. Review existing teaching methods from the perspective of student learning needs. Introduce new system of internship with deeper involvement both the university and business representatives.
6. Increasing the degree of flexibility of the curricula.
7. Dissemination of the modern designing system and the evaluation of curricula in all fields of studies. Involve practitioners from business sector in didactic committees work responsible for the programmes.
8. ASUE should re-consider the system of students' recruitment providing equal access to studies for all candidates.
9. In collaboration of students and their representatives, system of learning about the needs of students should be developed.
10. Re-consider the system of assistance to the students with the worst learning outcomes.
11. Formulation of a new system to motivate the best students to develop their own scientific creativity. Promote teachers who conduct research with the participation of students.
12. ASUE should develop a comprehensive system of the practical protection of the students' rights going beyond resolving matters by the case-by-case method. Student's Council should reconsider its role in assuring students' rights.
13. Re-consider the current priorities in personnel policy and introduce more rigorous mechanism of teachers' selection.
14. ASUE similarly to European universities could pursue a policy popularising good teaching practices across university, rewarding best teachers etc. Teachers from collaborating foreign universities could deliver methodical and pedagogical training.
15. Introduce survey of administration and maintenance staff quality of services.

16. Diversification of research funding. Introducing more efficient system of motivation to research activities.
17. Strategic action plans need to be revised to increase the number of research projects funded from national and foreign sources.
18. . Involvement in research process documented by grants and scientific publications should become a key criterion for researchers and departments appraisal and allocation of the research funds. Promote scientific cooperation with foreign universities and invest in young researchers' scientific internship abroad.
19. ASUE management should urgently issue recommendation or even a compulsory obligation to read original science papers, at least for senior years and on thesis seminars. Secondary task would be to improve methodology of master's theses.
20. Update research and educational infrastructure, is of urgent importance as well as buying legal software packages. Diversification of income streams and financial funds allocations should be aimed at reducing labor costs and increasing spending on research. Elaborate multi-option plan of financing programme.
21. Preparation efficient system of teaching and research infrastructure evaluation and revision of plan for improvement
22. Material resources need to be adopted to accommodate needs of students, especially with disability.
23. Involve the administration and technical staff in evaluation of infrastructure quality
Establish Committee for Ethics and elaborate a policy (and appropriate procedures) preventing unethical behaviour of students and ASUE employees.
24. ASUE should update and enrich its website, especially in foreign languages.
25. Identification of barriers impeding internationalization as well as fastest possible drafting and implementation of action plan of expanding ASUE activities to international markets.
26. Elaborate plan for adopting infrastructure to intended international collaboration.
27. In view of the ever increasing competition there is a need for a more aggressive and positive policy to develop greater cooperation, and more aggressive advertising of its policy.
28. Increase importance of foreign language knowledge in selection and promotion policy. It would be welcomed if some classes were offered in Armenian and English (or a different one) language, and delivered by teachers with advanced language competencies. Provide possibility to obtain internationally recognised certificates of foreign language proficiency.
29. The panel suggest that the university reflects upon what educational quality is and what indicators reflect good quality. A good step is the considerations on defining minimum requirements for quality work for the deans, heads of the chairs and programme studies holding each level accountable for quality assurance and enhancement.
30. In order to improve quality, certain investments into internal system need to be made. Costs of maintaining the traditional and rather ineffective quality assurance system need to be put into context of implementing a new system.
31. The outcomes of the new internal quality assurance system should be systematically and comprehensively evaluate. Developing comprehensive system of information about internal quality assurance system and its outcomes.

20.06.2014

The Chair of Expert Panel

Secretary to the panel

DESCRIPTION OF EXTERNAL REVIEW

COMPOSITION OF EXPERT PANEL

ASUE's institutional capacity external evaluation carried out by the expert panel:

- 1) Prof. Ara Amirian, Technical Sciences, Head of a Department, Armenian National Agricultural University of Armenia, graphics and CIF Chair , Armenia, the chair of the Panel
- 2) Prof. Mieczyslaw Socha, Doctor of Economics, professor at the University of Warsaw, the Polish Accreditation Committee of Higher Education, Poland, Member
- 3) Prof. Helena Manasyan, Doctor of Economics, Director of the Caucasus Research Resource Center, Armenia, Member
- 4) AnginMartirosyan, Candidate of Technical Sciences, Head of a Department, Yerevan State University of Architecture and Construction, Department of Educational Reform, Armenia, Member
- 5) SergeyKocharyan, Armenian National Agricultural University, Department of Agribusiness Management and Control, Armenia, Member

The composition of the Expert Panel was agreed with the University.

The work of the Expert Panel is coordinated by Anushavan Makaryan.

Translation performed by Marianna Simonyan.

The records made by Srбуhi Janjughazyan.

All members of the Expert Panel and the Secretary have signed declarations of independence and privacy.

PROCESS OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW

Application for the State Accreditation

ASUE applied for institutional accreditation by submitting to ANQA the application form, the copies of the license and respective appendices.

The ANQA Secretariat checked the application package, the data presented in the application form, the appendices and the ANQA electronic questionnaire completed by the university. According to the decision on accepting the application request a tripartite agreement was signed between ANQA, Centre for Education Projects and the university. The timetable of activities was prepared and approved.

Within the deadline set in the schedule, ASUE presented the Armenian and English versions of its self-evaluation report according to form set by ANQA and also the package of attached documents. The self-evaluation was carried out by a team composed according to the order of ASUE rector.

Preparatory Phase

The ANQA coordinator conducted a technical review against the ANQA requirements. Then ANQA Secretariat sent the report to the expert panel. The members of expert panel was agreed upon with the university and was confirmed by the director of ANQA.

Before the starting the desk-review process ANQA coordinator conducted several trainings for the panel for ensuring the effectiveness of the whole process.

Having observed the self-evaluation report and documents provided by the university the expert panel conducted the desk-review according to the format developed by ANQA and prepared the list of issues for different target groups and also list of additional documents needed for observation. Within the scheduled time the expert panel summarized the results of the desk-review and developed a time schedule of the site-visit¹. According to the ANQA accreditation manual, intended meetings with all the target groups, close and open meetings, document and resource review were included in the time schedule.

Preparatory Visit

The preparatory visit of the chairman of the expert panel, ANQA coordinator took place a week before the site visit. During the preparatory visit, the schedule of the site visit was agreed upon with the university, the list of additional needed documents were presented and organizational and technical issues concerning the site-visit were discussed. The rooms provided for the meetings were observed, their furnishing and technical resource allocation was clarified.

Site-visit

The site visit took place from the 5th to 8th of May 12th to 14th of May, 2014. According to the schedule, the works of the expert panel initiated with the close meeting the aim of which was to discuss the site-visit assessment framework, the issues to be studied during the site-visit. The whole staff of the expert panel including the coordinator and the translator participated in the site-visit.

The site-visit began and ended with the meetings with the rector and the founders. The teaching staff and the students for the focus group meetings were chosen randomly. All the meetings planned according to the schedule took place both in ASUE Vanadzor, Gyumri and Yerevan campuses. During the

¹ Appendix 2. Schedule of site visit at MGU

site-visit the expert panel studied the documents, observed the resources and had meetings with focus groups in different buildings of ASUE as well as in Yerevan branch.

At the end of each working day during the close meeting of the expert panel discussed the results of the evaluation and at the end of the site-visit the main results were summarized during the meeting at ANQA. The evaluation was carried out according to the State Accreditation Criteria and Standards and ANQA procedures which imply two-level evaluation scale: meets or does not meet the requirements of the criterion. The assessment of the university's self-evaluation was carried out according to the standards set for each criterion and expert panel report comprises assessment according to each criterion.

Expert panel report

After the visit the Expert Panel and the coordinator prepared a preliminary version of the accreditation report. All the members of the Expert Panel responded to the report's each standard facts, judgments and assessment. In the report summarizing process the experts' comments were taken into consideration. The foreign expert's report was translated and given to all the members of the Expert Panel. The inclusion of his opinion and approaches in the report was the responsibility of the team leader and the coordinator. The expert report presents the main findings, judgments and advice.

Preliminary report was submitted to the University on June 2014. The report includes both the University's accreditation process, and the results of peer assessment in accordance with international standards. Its findings and interpretations on the report ASUE were sent to ANQA on July 9, 2014. The report based on comments was correspondingly reviewed.

EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

BRIEF INFORMATION ABOUT THE EDUCATION INSTITUTION

HISTORY: Armenian State University of Economics operates as an independent institution from 1975. The foundation sources of Armenian State University of Economics arise from 1930, from Cooperative-Economics Institute.

The university was renamed Yerevan State Institute of Economics by Armenian Government in 1999 on November 30th decision and in 2006 on June 6 it received a University status and was renamed "Armenian State University of Economics" non-profit organization. The recent change was due to the fact that the 2006/2007 academic year, five-year education at ASUE, has been replaced by a two-level Bachelor's and MA degree programme.

In order to meet the needs of the regions in 1997 Yerevan Institute of National Economy was founded in Shirak (now the Armenian State University of Economics) branch, and in 2007, in Yeghegnadzor was founded the second branch of the Armenian State University of Economics.

In 2012 with the decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia in Armenian State University of Economics/ASUE was allowed to carry out preparatory and higher education courses at university for foreign applicants. At present time 15 foreigners study at ASUE.

In the 6 faculties of ASUE, in Gyumri and Yeghegnadzor branches 73 academic programme are implemented, 27 of which are Bachelor's (17 specialties and 10 specialization) and 46 MA (11 specialties and 36 specializations) in educational levels. Over 8000 students study at University both full-time and distance/part-time courses.

In the self-evaluation report and ASUE strategic documents a number of provisions are formulated, which indicate the different areas of the university's ambitions.

EDUCATION: "ASUE is making its way through reviewing teaching and learning experience and introducing innovative approaches, through academic staff enrichment and their professional qualifications and through creating in ASUE student-centered educational environment. ASUE tries to make its academic programme in line with the University's mission, strategic objectives and in line with the main activities of Armenian NQF standards and requirements."

RESEARCH: "At the present ASUE is in the initial stage of transition to higher level education system and introduction of new educational standards and is reviewing the organizational principles of the scientific research activities at the same time seeking to ensure the continuity of Economic Research, further development, commercialization and internationalization. Moreover, a priority is placed on education and high quality research activities through the way of integration and mutual enrichment."

INTERNATIONALIZATION: "ASUE strives to establish effective partnerships with international institutions and organizations, and to promote the internationalization of the university through agreements signed with different universities and organizations, academic mobility within European educational area and by ensuring work in the field of international cooperation."

QUALITY ASSURANCE: "Guided by the continuous quality improvement, quality assurance compliance with European standards, the need to preserve the principles of international and local level to ensure accountability and accreditation of professional education, ASUE endeavors to support the continuous quality improvement of all major areas of business, education, research and public engagement."

During the evaluation, the expert panel was guided by the principle "fitness for purpose" and viewed the above mentioned information as main ambitions and goals of the university.

CRITERION I. MISSION AND PURPOSE

Criterion: The policy of the higher educational institution (hereinafter HEI) and its exploited activity corresponds to the adopted mission of the institution, which acts in accordance with national scopes of educational qualifications of RA.

FINDINGS

1.1 The institution has a clear, well-articulated mission that represents the institution's purposes and goals and is in accordance with the Armenian National Qualifications Framework (hereafter ANQF).

ASUE began its Strategic Planning activities in 2006 which lasted up to 2011 with the "Strategy Development and Reform Priorities of Yerevan State Institute of Economics" document development. It included certain activities, in fact 7 areas with relevant time frames and responsible departments. It did not contain important components, such as the expected outcomes and performance indicators that would enable them to assess the institution achievements as the result of the plan implementation. For the specified period the university defined its mission as it is stated in the Charter of the University, "aimed at economic education, basic scientific research and the organization of learning in secondary, vocational, higher, postgraduate and additional education levels."

The new concept and mission of the HEI development was formulated in 2012-2016 strategic plan, according to which ASUE prepares "Competitive professionals, with professional and general knowledge, skills and abilities and ones who always follow democratic civil principles" ASUE emphasizes the importance of student-centered and innovative learning environment". Also it concentrates on the applied and topical content of the education, connection with labour market, professional and research potential of the teaching staff and the links between scientific research and the educational processes.

The visit made clear that the mission of ASUE is to "train leaders who implement changes in society and economy, for Armenian, as well as, international labor market" in the statement the term "leaders" the university authorities identify with the term "specialist of the area". They are also ambitious to consider the purpose of training specialists for international labor market and prioritize the research development activities as a guarantee of progress.

The fact that there is no published mission at the Gyumri branch, the managers explain that they are directed by the university's mission of the main branch, but ASUE Yeghegnadzor branch has a separate mission approved by administration session in 03.09.2013.

There is no clear reflection in the ASUE mission of "education qualifications and their general characteristics" document (NQF). Yerevan branch of the University conducts bachelor's and master's degree programmes, whose graduates qualifications are consistent with the 6th and 7th levels described in NQF. Gyumri branch carries out bachelor's and master's degree programmes (6th and 7th levels), and in Yeghegnadzor branch only bachelor's programmes (6th level).

1.2 The mission statement reflects the needs of the internal and external stakeholders.

ASUE has clarified its stakeholders groups and plans to take into account their needs while developing its mission, goals and objectives. Some of the mechanisms to expose the needs of external and internal stakeholders are still operating in the area of their management and government representatives, in various committees of university and faculty and through involvement in different panels.

The facts of the study needs and their target reflection are scarce, especially with regard to external stakeholders. Operating mechanisms are not clear, and action only indirectly touches upon the stakeholders needs. The surveys don't have systematic character, they are initiated and conducted in conjunction with other external factors. A number of participants' groups of the organized meetings were not familiar with the the surveys conducted by the University and with their results.

Nowadays, the current ASUE Strategic Plan largely reflects the pre-election programme provisions of the Rector. The HEI authorities argue that the stakeholders participated in the development of this document through inquiry. Only management board members participated in the programme approval from external stakeholders. They accept that the programme was designed without pre-evaluation. Meetings with different stakeholders groups noted that most of them are familiar with ASUE Strategic Plan provisions.

ASUE recognizes the importance of studying the needs of internal and external stakeholders and also the study of mechanisms imperfection in University. That's why in 2013 the "feedback mechanisms" document was developed, but the system is in the initial stage of implementation.

1.3 The institution has formal mechanisms and/or procedures to evaluate the achievement of its mission and purpose and to further improve them.

The main mechanism of evaluating completion of HEI's mission is the annual Rector's report submitted for approval of the University Council. It covers end-to-end all critical areas of ASUE. Similar reports are drafted by departments and chairs. Students and employees participating in university and faculty councils as their members play an important part in that evaluation process and thus they are able to exert control functions.

Institution accepts the fact that the general model of a strategic action plan assessment isn't developed, and there are drawbacks when it comes to students and faculty staff evaluation. There are processes at the university, which dynamic performance has undergone some analysis, but there is no clear and comprehensive policy evaluation. Mechanisms and procedures for improvements are not coordinated.

The basic analysis of 2006 - 2011 development and the results of the implementation of the reform strategy of Yerevan State Institute of Economics and ASUE's 2012-2016 systematic basis for the development of the strategic plan are almost lacking. There is also a lack of new SP's performance schedule, performance evaluation mechanisms and orientation indicators.

The university plans to develop a new strategic development plan (with the help of the contest announced by new research centre "AMBERD").

CONSIDERATIONS

The University pursues its vision, mission statement and 2012 - 2016 strategy. The way mission statement approaches objectives and tasks from different angles is its strength. Its drawback is their vague definitions and overlooking certain important objectives pursued by HEIs operating in EHEA. The HEI should revise its mission statement to make it inclusive of quality assurance and internationalisation related objectives. The strategy needs to be better structured, issues assigned to action areas in a more transparent manner.

Whilst the fact strategic stakeholders were identified is positive, it should not cloud over that it was not specified how the needs of stakeholders were recognised. Fast-paced higher education sector and its environment should throw the University into direction of probing ever-changing needs of stakeholders, especially students and employers. The expert panel would encourage the HEI to survey stakeholders and design appropriate tools for obtaining their opinions.

ASUE mission review, involving a wide range of stakeholders will enable the public to better orient the institution's activities expected concrete results, together with all stakeholders, attract additional resources and thereby contribute to competitiveness.

Clear and measurable mission will enable the university to define its progress clearly, to assess its achievements and to provide reliable information to all stakeholders, especially employers and will contribute to higher confidence level. The participation of stakeholders and mission approved by them will help to unite the potential of the university, its goals and problems, identify the competitive position

of educational services in the field of local and international area and also provide the confidence growth towards university.

CONCLUSION: The correspondence of ASUE institutional capacities to the requirements of criterion 1 is **satisfactory**.

CRITERION II. GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Criterion: The institution's system of governance ensures ethical decision-making and efficient provision of human, material and financial resources to effectively accomplish its mission, educational and other purposes.

FINDINGS

2.1 The institution's governance and administrative structures and practices promote effective and ethical leadership and decision making congruent with the mission and purpose of the institution.

Based on ASUE organisational chart, the Rector who runs the University is assisted by four Vice-Rectors and in the branches by Directors. The university governance is carried out according to the relevant laws and regulations, combined with the principles of collegiality and personal management. Councils that had to state about stakeholders' participation in governance processes both in Yerevan branch, as well as in Gyumri and Yeghegnadzor branches organizational management schemes are not available.

Structural changes in the university system rather gone to the redistribution of functions between different levels and relatively few ways to create new structures (enlargement of departments, divisions liquidation and reorganization, the Division of Quality Assurance, marketing, public relations departments, positions specification, etc.).

University departments are operating in accordance with their statutes and regulations of the regulatory processes. Although not in all units are available the staff functions fixing documents. ASUE operating individual structures and their functions are partially but logically interrelated.

Employees believe that the decisions are taken according to the university's ethics rules, but are not defined and fixed. There is a lack of the university's goals for the implementation of existing human, material and financial resources analysis of their adequacy. The effectiveness of the management is not being assessed in ASUE.

ASUE network management system, which was initiated till the end of 2013 and which should have given the opportunity to perform network management based on the information collected and allowed to make reasonable decisions, are not yet operational.

ASUE branches powers, rights and autonomy levels are significantly different. The link between ASUE Yerevan branch and other branches is rather passive, the branches' professors' direct connection with the relevant departments is also weak, course descriptions and professional literature is almost not available and so on. Low awareness of the other branches about the processes in Yerevan branch (for example, the two branches are not familiar with the ASUE Strategic Plan (SP) and quality assurance processes, were not involved in TEMPUS projects, etc.).

2.2 The institution's system of governance provides for student and teachers input in decision making in matters directly affecting them.

ASUE management system, existing statutes and regulations includes professors and students opportunity to directly participate in various levels of management and those charged with both university management process, discussions and decision-making. ASUE management, scientific and

faculty boards consist as much as 25% of available seats on those councils are intended for students. Apart from students, teachers, deans, doctoral students, university managers and labour union leaders the university council is also seated by representatives of external stakeholders.

In ASUE Yerevan branch students are also involved in the educational and methodological board of the University Council, as well as in the Appeals Committee. The students that are not included in the above mentioned boards and commissions are informed about decisions through the monitors of the courses, who regularly meet with deans of faculties to discuss various issues (eg, social issues, teaching methods related questions). The students find that they are sufficiently able to participate in the management, although a few cases have been able to substantiate. Moreover, during the visit, the group had the opportunity to listen to arguments from representatives of student organizations that have voiced their concerns about blocking of some of the projects submitted by students (eg, Moodle IT platform implementation rejection). On the other hand, university leaders and employees argue that different processes is active only 10% of students and about 70% of them is passive, and there is a need for signals. The professors believe that their voice is heard, they can participate in decision making related to their departments through meetings that take place once a month.

There are problems in ASUE Gyumri branch concerning the guarantee of the involvement of students in a collegial management. Only one of 13 members or 7.7% of the Council members number are student. In Yeghegnadzor branch students and professors have the opportunity to participate in decision making, having their representative in the administration.

2.3 The institution carries out short, medium, and long term planning consistent with its mission and purpose as well as appropriate monitoring tools ensuring implementation of the plans.

University has specific experience in long-term planning. Due to fast-paced nature of changes in higher education, viability of long-term plans is called into question. The developments were prepared mainly as concept papers and play no crucial role in planning process. What is still lacking in the university is a systematic approach to planning.

The University is guided by the "Armenia State University of Economics development strategic plan of 2012-2016" and "Armenian State University of Economics scientific, research and innovation development of the procedure of 2012-2017" as long-term plans. However, their implementation schedules and the separation medium and short-term action plans are absent.

As a mid-term plan triennial estimate of expenses of science is monitored in the University, and as to the short-term plan are developed annual working plans in all directions of the University. However, the chairs annual work plans, as was revealed during the study, that they are preliminary agenda for the chairs session. These chairs did not specified educational, methodological and research activities, lecturers training and other activities.

There is a lack of long-term, medium-term and short-term plans in ASUE, as a mechanisms of interconnected system, development, implementation and evaluation.

2.4 The institution conducts environmental scanning and draws on the findings to enhance its effectiveness.

Taken into account when designing University development plan are current HEI's experience, research and teaching potential, infrastructural resources, role in Armenian economic growth as well as requirements related to integration of University with European tertiary education model. A two cycle educational system was defined bachelor's degree and master's degree, ECTS system was also introduced.

ASUE through the discussions in the structural units tries to carry out the study and analysis of its activities on influencing key factors. Moreover, the university uses these factors to identify its research potential (eg, 2013 in the Republic of Armenian labor market economist for professionals demand and

the research of their requirements introduced by employers). At the same time, the university's leadership didn't adopt a long-term perspective the complete analysis of the influencing factors and their decision-making through their account.

University admits that external factors in the study and data collection process overwhelmingly is situational in nature and is not regulated by pre-procedure. The building information database is in the planning stage, which will be a basis for decisions.

2.5 The management of the processes draws on the quality management principle (plan-do-check-act).

The university believes that its various policies and procedures for the management of the plan, do, check, act (PDCA) principle, which was formulated to "ASUE internal quality assurance concept", "ASUE quality assurance policies and procedures," as well as in "ASUE activity feedback mechanisms" conceptual documents.

Studies have shown that mentioned principle is partly applied and not all levels are fully aware of PDCA cycle. In addition, feedback mechanisms are still under development, the surveys are not systematized.

2.6 There are mechanisms in place ensuring data collection on the effectiveness of the academic programme and other processes, analyses and application of the data in decision-making.

Although SER does not specify in this section what units collect and analyse information about academic programme, such practices are found at every educational institution.

At the same time ASUE is aiming to implement quality assurance processes, is trying to develop and implement effective processes of information collection, analysis and use of evaluation mechanisms. All processes at University are assessed at the end of the process with a report. The information about this or that results is collected by the division responsible from the bottom up direction. Based on the past results or expected data and final results the responsible are performing a comparative analysis in an attempt to assess the effectiveness of the process.

During the visit it became clear that the University does not assessed the effectiveness of academic programmes as the mechanisms of assessment are not available.

2.7 There are mechanisms in place providing up to date, objective and impartial quality (quantitative and qualitative) information on the academic programme offered and qualification awards.

The publicity of University activities is supported by the official website, where materials are placed in the structure, measures, research and international relations, as well as providing information to applicants in the form of academic programme and impartial information is provided purely through technical information (names, professions, and admission categories places that rent sizes, etc.), and the analyzes of their quality are not available.

To assess the awareness of stakeholders ASUE applies internal and alumni surveys. Another assessment method is considered ASUE website information, analysis or interpretation placed in an official Facebook page.

During the visit it became clear that there are no published studies evaluating the appropriate set of tools, public information dissemination policy and procedures. There are also no public access and objectivity of evaluative mechanisms. Publication of University as well as for internal use (confidentially) provided information is not regulated or banned.

CONSIDERATIONS

As the result of structural changes in ASUE some functions of the individual organizations and their leaders are logically interconnected, which in the case of the lack of ethical rules can lead to the conflicts of interest and stop the process of improving the management of the institution. It is not clear why

having two vice rectors, who are the education sector coordinators, why the administration of chairs is carried out by the rector.

Governance structure of the university is open to staff and for the students. The members of the various Management Boards of internal and external stakeholders can express their needs. This is one of the University's strengths.

The current system of the university provides the structural units management, but there are still problems to ensure the effective interaction (communications between chairs is weak, low awareness of the processes of the other units, etc.). Such isolation prevents the dissemination of good practices between the units. And the lack of the analysis human, material and financial resources, is impossible to evaluate the effectiveness of the management system (just reports are not enough) and the decision making reasons are very poor. Therefore, ASUE institutions and their process effectiveness, the study of factors influencing the processes and procedures data collection and evaluation mechanisms development will help to ensure that decisions based on reliable data.

ASUE strategic plan is the complex of short-term projects, not long-term goals and the allocation of resources necessary for the implementation of a programme. The long-term planning should be viewed as the close link of University mission and goals. On the one hand it is a tool to reduce the institution's risk, which may arise due to a radical demographic, technological, economic and social changes on the other hand, stakeholders look forward to a long-term career planning programme and want to see what expectations they may have from the University in the future and what is the degree of University goals being realistic.

For ASUE separate processes are used the planning of quality management cycle elements and implementation, and evaluation and improvement is not always carried out. The absence of the feedback mechanisms and regular evaluation is one of the weaknesses of ASUE. University policies and procedures for administration of quality management principles for (PDCA) implementation, the development of regulations and mechanisms will provide the further improvement and efficiency of ASUE governance system.

Academic programme and other processes are carried out at University on some of the information collection and analysis, but they are not regulated and are not sufficient for effective managerial decision-making. Unfortunately the efficiency and effectiveness of academic programme the process of information collection, the coordinator of analysis and usage as well as evaluation mechanisms will eventually increase the effectiveness of vocational education and ensuring public accountability.

ASUE has not yet touched upon the issue of publications impartiality. Posted on the website and the information provided to applicants follows marketing and advertisement purposes, more than just clear and transparent information about education quality, which is credible to all stakeholders. This especially refers to programmes intended learning outcomes. Such information could become the basis for self-evaluation and external assessment.

CONCLUSION: The correspondence of ASUE institutional capacities to the requirements of criterion 2 is **satisfactory**.

CRITERION III. ACADEMIC PROGRAMME

Criterion: The academic programme are in accordance with the institution's mission, form a constituent part of institutional planning and promote mobility and internalization.

FINDINGS

3.1. The academic programmes are thoroughly formulated, according to the intended learning outcomes, which correspond to an academic qualification and are in line with the state academic standards.

ASUE conducts academic programmes in 73 specialties of Economics and Management, including 27 in the BA (17 specialties and 10 specialization within the profession), and 46 MA (11 specialties and 36 specialization) academic degrees. Some programmes are only offered in ASUE.

All the operating educational state standards of BA and MA economic specialties and specializations of the Republic of Armenia were approved in the period of time from 2007 till 2008 and are based on elaborations of HEI professionals.

University educational process has been built on the basis of these standards and academic programme components, which include curricula and syllabi are made up based on these standards. Positive changes are only related to MA programmes. In the Chair of Marketing in 2012 Masters Education were published "marketing" specialization procedures and academic programme, where the output results, teaching methods are described by courses. "Education Management" academic programme has been changed according to the TEMPUS programme recommendations and formulated the expected learning outcomes, though the connection of which with NQF, however, is not represented. Improvements were made in another ten MA programmes as the result of cooperation with employers.

University administration admits that, unlike MA degree, BA degree programmes are outdated and do not meet the requirements of the market and there is a need to clarify and reduce professions. ASUE is preparing for the amendments, such as to form Academic Programme compilation and review group, academic programme for the preparation and processing procedure has been set up. Slow pace of changes the University explains with the fact that the new list of professional educational specialties has not been approved yet.

The heads of the Units state that education programmes based on learning outcomes are currently in the experimental phase, after that the experience should be extended also to ASUE other programmes. The chairs studies showed that a very small part of the course descriptions is formulated on learning outcomes, while the majority is not available.

3.2 The institution has a policy that promotes alignment between teaching and learning approaches and the intended learning outcomes and ensures effective learning.

In accordance with the priorities of the University, a number of measures aimed at modernizing teaching and learning methods are taken.

ASUE is constantly trying to change the old and introduce new ways of teaching, modernize classrooms. The majority of lecturers change the old paper form to a new one, such as information technology-based teaching methods, compulsory assignments for individual work, group research projects are less frequently used, business games, teaching based on the analysis of specific cases (case-study).

Electronic materials are formed for groups, which deliver actual teaching materials.

Teaching methods selection is carried out in professional chairs and the lecturer is free in his/her choice. Lecturers find that the Education of Bachelor degree should be directed to the provision of knowledge and in Master's degree education discussions, debates and other interactive methods are applicable. However, the maintenance of lectures is required. They also insist that the large number of students in the streams and groups (70-80 students during lectures, master groups, 20 min, and 35 min in bachelor groups) does not allow to change teaching methods. Self-evaluation group also notes that the teaching methods modernization is very slow.

During the visit it was confirmed that the expected results in the selection police of appropriate teaching and learning methods at the University is not fully implemented and the methods of choice based on individual teaching programmes do not output the results of learning outcomes, in accordance with the declaration of other lecturers, "the peculiarities of the course."

There are cases of students' participation in the choice of teaching and evaluation method, but this is not systematic.

During various meetings within the visit of experts the issue of the implementation of internship was raised. It is primarily organized with personal contacts. Students and employers are not considering that the internship are organized effectively.

3.3. The Higher Educational Institution has a policy for the assessment of students based on the results of study and ensures the academic impartiality.

University has a knowledge assessment and evaluation methodology, which is based on multifactor knowledge assessment system that has been developed by two-level education system transition period. During the 2007-2013 period principles were put into use for evaluation and assessment of the student's final components, as well as the knowledge assessment mechanism. Some of them are subjected to changes, with the aim of eliminating the shortcomings observed in the evaluation system. At all levels of the institution the objectivity of the evaluation system is prioritized and it is stated that operating system needs serious improvement. They also believe that external interference have a significant effect on the objectivity of the evaluation.

University leaders find that the the academic chairs are given sufficient freedom to choose their own method of students knowledge assessment, but lecturers consider that the chairs are not free in choice of assessment methods.

Interpreting assessment policy, the participants of the meeting in terms of methods choice were mentioning the peculiarities of the modules, which were later not clarified by them. In the University student guide is applied "assessed factor" term, the policy of students' assessment according to learning outcomes is not clarified.

Academic honesty maintenance requirements are not defined at University, but there are some elements available. According to Institution management, the information of Academic Honesty requirements is provided for the 1st year students during the organized mentored meetings. Plagiarism prevention is the responsibility of the teaching staff, for which they select simple mechanisms and are based primarily on their own professional experience. Comparisons are made, much attention is paid to literature links, the combination of writing and oral examinations are used, test exams and etc. Master's theses topics are updated each year, excluding the possible repetition of last year's topics.

For the plagiarism no punishment is assumed only the work will not be accepted and will be returned. There are different opinions about the the effectiveness of University mechanisms against plagiarism. Some think that copying occurs as a large-spread phenomenon and there is no sense struggling against it, the other part thinks that it doesn't have a mass appeal. But the fact is that, according to the University authorities the decreasing number of individual works is related to the struggle against the banning of copying, which makes no sense for theirs given assignments.

3.4. The academic programme of the higher educational institutions in terms of content are in concord with other similar well-known academic programme and promote the mobility and internalization of students and lecturers.

ASUE highlights that the content of its academic programme are consistent with other recognized professions academic programme that promote internationalization and mobility of students and lecturers. It was mentioned in 2006-2011 University development and reform directions, as a priority, as well as in 2011 in ASUE Development conceptual provisions.

Starting from 2007 the 2 cycle education leading experience of construction and organization, international standards and requirements were taken into account by ASUE while improving their own academic programme and the development of educational standards.

Recently "Education Management" academic programme has been reviewed in the framework of the TEMPUS project, from the point of view of content consistent of European universities and academic programme to ensure the mobility of students and graduates. Comparative analysis and benchmarking examples were not provided to expert panel.

European credit transfer system implemented in university and Diploma Supplement format promotes student mobility. Students are able to change the specialty (programme), if the difference between credits does not exceed 20 credits. Relatively low is the proportion of elective modules.

During the visit it became clear that the student and academic staff exchange process is carried out in the framework of international programmes and university's corresponding structures implement timely submission of required information concerning these programmes.

3.5. The HEI has a policy for monitoring, efficiency evaluation and Professional Academic programme (PEP) improvement.

Quality assurance function of academic programme in ASUE until the end of 2012 was mainly carried out by the faculty councils, which regularly discussed the content of the academic programme and individual training programmes related issues. On the bases of collaboration between the chairs curricula and syllabi content and discussions of the issuing chairs were also held and the results of these two directions was usually summarized by the Rector's annual report. Students and alumni satisfaction surveys are also applied as an additional assessment tool, which show the improvement directions of the results analyzes.

ASUE authorities highlight the employers opinion, and there are some changes in academic programme made by the requirements of employers. The university is trying to enter into contracts with Armenian private and public large employers, studying their needs in labor markets. Employers also participate in the organization and implementation of internship, in the state exam process and other processes.

However, partial changes are made only in master's programmes, and the profound changes are made in "education management" programme. Other programmes remained unchanged, even in the circumstances of the lack of learning outcomes. Course descriptions have different structures, there are no clear course descriptions, similar structural requirements.

The policy of regular monitoring, evaluation effectiveness and improvement of University academic programme is not regulated. "Educational technologies development" working group has set up a new guideline for programme development.

CONSIDERATIONS

University educational activities is consistent with its mission. According to awarded qualifications by the expected learning outcomes are defined for several academic programme that overall are in line with the NQF. The University course descriptions composed in accordance with academic programme are partially formulated according to NQF relevant descriptors (knowledge, skill and competences). Benchmarking of implemented projects will allow ASUE more clearly understand the strengths and weaknesses of the university, positively demonstrate its capabilities.

University administration admits that BA educational programmes are one of ASUE weaknesses, but at the same time there is a clear desire to improve and modernize programmes and adapt them to the needs of the labor market. A good experience, which should be extended to the university we consider

the fact that in the chair of marketing in 2012 published concepts of academic programme and academic programme of MA "marketing" specialty.

The choice of teaching and learning methods in ASUE is not coordinated, because the majority of academic programmes have not yet been reviewed in terms of expected learning outcomes. The achievement of learning outcomes and selected teaching methods are highly dependent on the number of students in groups, as, in the case of ASUE, a substantiation is needed. According to the policy of teaching methods selection of the learning outcomes, from the point of view of student-centered learning puts forward new requirements concerning the teaching staff competencies. These should be included in their election procedure and assessed by the students. Such teaching methods should be applied that will allow students to learn, develop such skills that will enable them to graduate successfully and later to study in their professional field (lifelong learning).

There is no clear and unified assessment policy according to the learning outcomes in ASUE and the academic honesty providing process is not yet fully implemented. Adoption of such a policy, clear definition of criteria, an elaboration of such an evaluation procedures, which will ensure transparency and exclude external interferences, will allow significantly to change the educational environment, will increase students' satisfaction with studies and increase their confidence in the professional competency.

The university has a very small part of the academic programmes that are reviewed by stakeholders. The main programmes are still in need of improvement from the professional development point of view and in terms of conformity with the requirements of the labor market. Periodic monitoring of academic programme, effective evaluation, the development of improvement policy and its implementation, targeted benchmarking will allow the University to have modern and flexible programmes, which will provide benefits for its services in the field of education.

CONCLUSION: The correspondence ASUE institutional capacities to the requirements of criterion 3 is **satisfactory**.

CRITERION IV. STUDENTS

Criterion: The HEI provides students with relevant assistance to ensure the efficiency of the educational environment.

FINDINGS

4.1 The institution has set mechanisms for promoting equitable recruitment, selection, and admission procedures.

ASUE is implementing a wide-ranging events aimed at potential applicants orientation. Marketing and Career Center prepare for ASUE separate faculties individual films and other materials, and their coverage is carried out by the Public Relations Department. On the university official website has the "admission" section, where information about ASUE all professions and specialties, admission procedure and other relevant issues is posted.

For the professional orientation of High school students and college graduates the university professors' organize open lectures in the scope of 7 secondary and high school students. In the "Open Door Days" are held pupils familiarization visits to University. The cooperative agreement signed with 14 colleges allows the best students to continue their studies in ASUE.

The impact of mechanisms applied for recruitment and its effectiveness on the university applicants professional guidance have not yet been assessed. The rules of admission for studies are regulated at the

state and University level. The list of the fields of studies and places in universities is approved by the RA government. The candidates, who achieved the best results in State General Exams, are accepted for undergraduate studies. The recruitment of students for popular programmes executed in the distance learning system is based on the results of the entrance exam organised by ASUE. A candidate may apply for admission to only one field of studies. Master studies have a more complex system of admission. At the first stage, this year's graduates of the ASUE's undergraduate studies are admitted, the second stage is intended to the graduates of state universities, but only to paid studies, and the third stage is for candidates after completing their compulsory military service.

4.2. The institution has policies and procedures for assessing student educational needs.

ASUE lacks the policy of identifying the needs of students and there is no clear designed procedures for revealing the students educational needs, but the work is being carried out. At university students used to identify the educational needs by the written requests, as well as through various meetings. There is a special questionnaire developed for assessing the effectiveness and quality of teaching methods. The meeting which are held every Friday with the faculty deans or their deputies, with groups of monitors and their supervisors are mainly targeted at identifying the needs of the students. There are meetings, which are held with no clear timetable with the Rector and administrative representatives of ASUE.

During the site-visit the students and deans who participated at the meetings highlighted the existence of these mechanisms, but very few were able to provide evidence to state their effectiveness.

4.3. The institution provides opportunities for extra-curricular activities aimed at supporting student learning.

The University provides students with information and consultation on the effective entry to the labour market by organising various kinds of meetings, seminars, individual consultations, etc. The quoted figures show a high percentage of students taking part in these projects (89%), and also a high level of satisfaction (80%).

Studies have shown that there are no extra training procedure, subjects and schedules. These are the mechanisms through which it is possible to evaluate the quality of educational services, counseling and additional training to improve productivity are not developed either.

4.4. There are special hours set for students to visit the faculty administrative staff for additional support and guidance.

Students can report their problems to the deans. Meetings with administration are regularly organized for students in ASUE (Rector, Vice-Rectors, etc.) Although the application process for the administrative staff is not regulated, and there are no schedules, but students find that they do not have problems with that. The percentage of students (75%) using the administrative services in this area of assistance is relatively high.

4.5. The institution has special student career support services that prepares graduates for employment.

A Career Centre operates at the University since 2011 and it is called Marketing and Career Centre. In addition to the previously mentioned initiatives of cooperation with employers, students and graduates of ASUE are periodically informed about job vacancies. The latter tries to ensure the mobility of university students and graduates, their internationalization, continuing education and career development opportunities.

The center designed the database of the last three years graduates, it is trying to expand it to include information about previous years' graduates to find jobs in order to support the latter.

The center organizes round-table discussions, practices not covered by the academic programme, internships, meetings with employers, also offers a curriculum designed practice with partner organizations and all these are mainly organized for University students. Students and graduates are regularly informed about the vacancies, but it is not clear what mechanisms are applied to promote employment for graduates and to form a sustainable feedback with them in order to increase the efficiency of these feedbacks.

ASUE prioritize university-employer close cooperation in the preparation process of specialists according to the requirements of the labor market. ASUE carries out in collaboration with employers the development of MA programmes and involves the employers in a teaching process. One of the positive results of this cooperation is the admission of the best graduates to the relevant state structures.

4.6. The students are actively involved in the research the university majors in.

From 2007 the Student Scientific Association has been operating (SSA) in ASUE, whose work is regulated by the SSA charter. A part of SSA's main activity is annual student conferences, which are carried out in stages such as chairs, faculty and university. Scientific works are published in the form of articles and theses.

Processes of the inclusion of students in research projects has started in ASUE. Masters students will have an opportunity to be included in "Amber" research projects, which has been established for about 2 years. This is mainly carried out by competition. What concerns new educational and scientific groups will be given an opportunity to involve post-graduate students, BA and MA 2nd year students. A part of theses in MA academic programme contains a research component and there is a requirement of compulsory research implementation. Some items of research are available in a variety of BA courses in personal activities.

The University prioritizes high quality of educational and research activities, through their integration and mutual enrichment, it still does not solve some problems designed in the procedure of "ASUE 2012-2017 Research and development of new activity", such as: "Improving the quality of specialist training, involving faculty staff and students starting from BA 1st year in research activities, undertake the students in the basic skills of scientific research and innovation ..." and so on.

Involving a large number of students in scientific research activities doesn't carry a systematic character in ASUE. Till now it is low and gradually declining the amount of students participating in the activities of SSA (2011 amounted to 1.7% of full-time students and 0.9% of all students and in 2012, these figures respectively were 1.2% and 0.7%,).

The evaluation and promotion system of students' participation in SSA sessions is in preparation phase. There are problems with informing and engaging students in branches concerning the SSA sessions. In the 2nd Grant programme launched in Gyumri branch from April 120143 university students are included.

4.7. The institution has established policies and procedures that promote student active involvement in the institution's governance.

For the solution of Students Rights and other problems currently in ASUE exists Student Council (SC), which is a self-regulated, elective representative body. It operates in accordance with its charter. "Economy +" student newspaper was established in 2001, which has contributed to the problems raised by the students.

Students can learn about their rights and obligations in their contracts with the university, as well as from "Student Guide" published and posted in 2013.

The main academic body representing the students' interests is the Students Council and its departmental branches. The students' statistics concerning the reported complaints is not run because they were solved by means of the oral agreements. The students' satisfaction of the Students' Council's work is rather low, it is appreciated by 44% of the surveyed students.

Students noted that in addition to the SC they receive support from deans, heads of departments what concerns their rights.

They are informed and are satisfied with the terms of the assessment appeal process, which is carried out by the fixed procedure.

4.8. Standard h: The institution has a special body that promotes students' rights protection.

In 2013 the "Graduate Examination. University experience and assessment of its prospectives" questionnaire was developed and approved, which is expected to be completed at the end of each academic year. Its questions are going to reveal the extent to which teaching and learning methods promote the knowledge, skills and abilities acquisition.

For the students educational, consulting and for the assessment of other services in University, there are plans to conduct a survey of graduates, in the framework of the programme: "Higher Education Network of the Armenian university graduates service improvement and human capital assessment".

University students are provided educational, consulting and other support services. Monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance mechanisms are still under the development process.

CONSIDERATIONS

The use of admissions' system based on the candidates' performance allows, as it seems, for their proper selection. The language exam and computer skills test may cast some doubts, unless it comes to specialised exams. The preference of own graduates for the master studies and directing the others to paid studies is in contradiction with the principle of equal opportunities and is not conducive to the graduates' mobility. In the Bologna process, graduates are encouraged to change the universities and fields of studies because it brings many benefits. It is also a method of defence against a declining number of students caused by demographic changes.

The measures that are taken in ASUE for identifying the educational needs of the students are not effective enough, which is confirmed with the performance of numerous needs by the students during the site-visit. The students' are given opportunities to present their common problems, and the system that must be aimed at each student is incomplete. The lack of a systematic approach to expose the students' needs should be considered as one of the weaknesses of ASUE, which prevents the formation of an effective academic, administrative and social support system for students. The system for the study of students needs to be developed in close cooperation with student organizations.

The students additional studies and consultation system existing in ASUE in this state is sufficient for internal stakeholders, but the question of the assessment of this processes effectiveness is still open. The University should emphasize the direct educational relationship between lecturer and student, including "additional classes" communication. The University should organize consultancy classes for those students who endeavor to earn higher scores and additional classes for weaker students.

University administrative staff shall provide support and guidance processes to students. The development of clear rules and timetables for applying to administrative staff will enable better coordination of students' needs and operational solutions.

University Marketing and Career Center operates in a traditional manner. It acts as a communication link between the students/graduates and employers. The center's research does not fulfill the needs of the labor market, and information about vacancies is not complete.

According to university authorities, the main reasons for the decrease in the number of participants engaged with the work of the SSA is the fact that some of the chairs are very passive and the other reason is the disappointment of students, who participated in the seminar sessions held during the period of former SSA. It is obvious that there is a need for significant changes in the current system. Organizing students' academic movement in the framework of SSA, as well as the opportunity to participate in "Amberd" activity is not the best solution of the given problem. The contribution of research component compulsory requirement in Master's theses, its more consistent application and promotion may be more promising for ASUE.

The regulations define the legal rights of ASUE students, but the more important thing is the experience of the application of these regulations. Students' rights and complaints are handled by the SC. It is not possible to claim that the University has a defined comprehensive system to protect individual rights of students at the university level. There is no specially designated proxy, in which students can apply with their complaints. The absence of clear solutions to protect the rights of foreign students can become an obstacle to further development of cooperation with foreign universities. Moreover, it can restrict the flow of foreign students and foreign income.

Although there are students educational, consulting and other services for evaluation and quality assurance elements in ASUE, their coordination and further development will allow an objective and reliable information on the basic needs of HEI stakeholders and their level of satisfaction.

CONCLUSION: The correspondence of ASUE institutional capacities to the requirements of criterion 4 is **satisfactory**.

CRITERION V. FACULTY AND STAFF

Criterion: The institution has the Faculty and Staff with the necessary professional qualifications in order to complete the HEI mission and fulfil the objectives of PEP.

FINDINGS

5.1. The institution has policies and procedures promoting recruitment of a highly qualified teaching and supporting staff capable of ensuring programme provisions.

The ASUE's Academic staff (AS) recruitment is carried out on the bases of Ministry of Education model of competitive recruitment and appointment of academic staff, where the criteria of scientific and educational staff formation, promotion, competition, recruitment, appointment and procedures are defined. The personnel policy uses traditional promotion criteria based on didactic, pedagogical, scientific and organisational achievements of teachers.

Supporting staff management selection is carried out by the head of the chair, taking into consideration the peculiarities of the academic programme of the given chair. The selection is made among the best graduates, who fulfilled BA or MA required programme.

The University currently employs 515 faculty members, 77% of which are core faculty members have academic degrees, 67%, and 52% have academic degrees. For approximately 33% of teaching staff have an academic degree or title. Only 52% of lecturers have scientific degree in Gyumri branch, which is also close to the border with the license requirements.

With the intention of the promotion of Scientific Qualification there is a difference in salary of the AS at the University depending on the degree and academic ranking. In recent years, the university has applied for additional payment procedures, which are approved by the Academic Council decision and is based on the account of the university.

5.2. The teaching staff qualifications for each programme are comprehensively stated.

The University didn't define any qualifications requirements and assessment mechanism of AS set for its academic programme.

As the result of the study of provided academic programme, chairs' curricula it was that only a master of "marketing" concepts of academic programme are available to faculty qualifications requirements, but which need further clarification.

The University authorities believe that the organization of the surveys among the students will somewhat give a certain picture of the academic staff professional qualifications, that their requirements are gradually increasing, and there is a rejuvenation of the University staff.

5.3. The institution has well established policies and procedures for the periodic evaluation of the teaching staff.

Despite some professional qualities of the academic staff, as well as the existence of mechanisms and tools developed at the University for the effectiveness of their work, the university lecturers' assessment is carried out only in certain processes.

To assess the quality of the academic staff activities mainly the survey conducted among the students is highlighted, as well as regular organization of lesson observations. During the meetings, the lecturers confirmed that 2 times in the last 5 years they have been assessed through student surveys, and the requirements and procedures of evaluation of the lesson observation effectiveness are not developed.

In 2008 a temporary procedure to ensure the quality of professional education was developed. However, ASUE does not apply this system, as, according to ASUE Rector, there are difficulties in its reliance and there was a need in distinguishing between the system of encouragement.

5.4. The institution promotes teacher professional development in accordance to the needs outlined during regular evaluations (both internal and external).

There is a lack of clear assessment mechanisms of the academic staff needs at University. In case of the existence of these mechanisms it would be more preferable to accomplish the process of their training, qualification improvement.

During the period of time from 2006 till 2011 ASUE education center organized continuous and supplementary teachers internal trainings on informatics and foreign language. The certificates were awarded. But it was not based on the teachers' needs analysis and the process efficiency was not evaluated. From 2011 Teachers Training has been left to individual initiative, and the center is no longer involved in that process. The lecturers solve the problem of their training individually, partly in abroad. The university budget funds are not available for the teachers training.

From 2012 "ASUE university internal scientific grant provision procedure" was put into action, which supports the academic staff scientific improvement and also "Amberd" research center that was founded in 2013 contributes to the realization of this goal.

During the meetings a part of the staff (mostly senior professors) showed a negative approach to teaching and learning innovations in the field of quality assurance and demonstrated lack of willingness to adapt to the changes.

5.5. *There is necessary permanent staff to provide for the coverage of qualifications adequately.*

ASUE academic staff procedure formation mostly promotes the necessary professional qualifications of academic staff selection and its maintenance. The present staff follow the required competitive position in the field of education. University prioritizes the main policy of ensuring stability of permanent working professors and those who fulfill a combined working process, which tends to carry out all these with the creation of corresponding working environment and conditions.

Currently that stability is based on the implementation of financial encouragement mechanisms. The salary rate is high and is dynamically increasing. The experienced professionals from the public administration institutions also teach in ASUE.

ASUE especially prioritizes the integration of young professionals to the educational process. The academic staff is regularly replenished by young professionals, although there is a problem with that in some departments. Gyumri branch during its activity has been able to include into the staff lecturers from among their own graduates, and Yeghegnadzor branch professors are mostly from Yerevan branch. From the point of view student/teacher ratio the situation is favorable. 14.3 in Yerevan, Gyumri Branch 14, , and 11.3 Yeghegnadzor branch.

6.6. *There are set policies and procedures for the staff promotion in general and the young ones in particular.*

ASUE seeks to provide the academic staff professional development through some encouragement procedures for ASUE academic staff developed at the University. The appointment and promotion criteria are defined in those procedures. Next to Scientific Council of ASUE operates the University competition commission which coordinates the academic staff professional development procedures.

Statistical data shows distinct increase in the number of associate professors and pronounced drop in the number of scholars awarded the title of professor. The University considers that academic staff encouragement mechanisms are not flexible and there is a need for their improvement.

6.7. *Standard g: There is necessary technical and administrative staff to achieve the strategic goals.*

ASUE administrative and supporting staff list formation and working responsibilities are regulated.

University considers that the administrative staff solve the set of basic tasks and provides an effective management, even though the results of an analysis were not available for the Expert panel. For administrative and supporting staff trainings and certification are carried out. From the other hand, the university admits that the quality assurance mechanisms and tools are not developed for administrative and supporting staff, there is no system to evaluate work of maintenance staff and even to define resources available to administrative employees.

CONSIDERATIONS

The bases of the academic and supporting staff selection are Academic programme and the qualifications necessary for the formation and renewal of the courses and its goals. The goal of becoming the best of Economic University in the region may be hindered by the fact that the university did not specify academic staff qualifications requirements, the competencies of those people, which should ensure that academic programme objectives and high quality of teaching.

Student assessment survey analysis of the academic staff activities and improvement measures fulfillment, in general, contribute to the quality and efficiency of the work of lecturers. But the character of the query and the facts from that survey are not adequate to reflect the professional and pedagogical skills of the lecturers. It would be more useful to carry out lesson observation professional analyses, but they are not regulated either. The evaluation forms used by the University of Surveys conducted among

students and lesson observations can be considered as separate processes, but there is no existing systematic problem solving approach.

Although there are some measures of professors improvement at the University, but they are not carried out in accordance with the needs of internal and external assessments. Therefore it is not possible to ascertain the effectiveness of these measures. It is not clear how to identify the improvement needs, in what mechanisms the teaching experience is transferred to younger staff. Besides the fact that the training abroad are not regular, as there are no defined mechanisms for trained people experience exchange.

ASUE current teaching staff provides satisfactory implementation of academic programme and advantageous position among the professional institutions. From that point of view the university is perceived by stakeholders as a more practical education providing institution, which is due to the partly involvement of employers in the educational processes. The struggle against "aging" of teaching and administrative staff and to promote the trends of make it younger, the university need to apply specific policies to stimulate young specialists, implement teaching staff effective evaluation system.

ASUE tries to shape administrative and supporting staff through the application of regulations for its strategic goals. Although the staff formation and development standards, clear mechanisms of the assessment of their activity and the absence of instruments would make it impossible for the university to analyze and evaluate the work efficiency.

CONCLUSION: The correspondence of ASUE institutional capacities to the requirements of criterion 5 is **satisfactory**.

CRITERION VI. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Criterion: The institution provides research implementation and its links to studies.

FINDINGS

6.1. The institution has a clear strategy promoting its research interests and developments.

The core problems of ASUE is to make the University a research HEI. The University Academic staff quality improvement is important for improving the quality of provided services, which to the ASUE management sees the expansion of research and increase of the number of teaching staff involved in them.

Its interests in the research area and ambitions ASUE published in "ASUE 2012-2017 research and innovation activities development concept" document. The strategy aims based on the latter to enhance research activities in ASUE, the implementation mechanisms of which are defined in 17 strategic directions.

Some steps have been taken at the University to increase the number of research works. The university budget allocated 100 million AMD on research for exactly that purpose. In 2013 90 lecturers were involved in research activities in different directions. A research topic is also financed by Gyumri branch. 3.2 percent (2.7 billion drams) of the university's budget was provided to the boosting and organization of the research. ASUE received some grants from the state budget but their number is small.

With the ASUE Council approval in 2013 the «Amberd» Research Center Mission is the development of scientific and research, educational and methodological activities in ASUE. In addition some scientific and research activities are carried out in the chairs.

In ASUE as well as in Gyumry and Yeghegnadzor branches annual scientific sessions are organized, as well as republican and international conferences, scientific seminars.

6.2. The institution has a medium and short term programmes which address its research interests in a due manner.

There is lack of long-term strategy of the interests and ambitions reflected in ASUE research area, and the medium-term and short-term projects are based on "ASUE research and innovation activities in 2012-2017 development concept."

The conducted research directions in ASUE are outlined for chairs mentioned in long-term research topics list. The short-term character imply individual, chair and group university internal 19 scientific grants projects, on the basis of ASUE creative initiative and fund, which was proved in 2013. From 2013 "Amberd" research center has been carrying out short-term research projects in 15 directions.

6.3. The institution promotes development and innovation through sound policies and strategies.

ASUE Rector Annual Reports and Scientific Council Reports offer guidelines for developing scientific activity.

According to ASUE Scientific Council 2012-May 31 No. 11 Decision, from 2012. September 1 was put into action university research grants order. The procedure, in particular, implies the competition for grants management process, the requirements for the applications of competition and projects, bid evaluation criteria etc.

To activate research and scientific projects and to make them demanded, ASUE prioritizes the importance of cooperation with the private sector for the commercialization of research results. In order to preserve 2012-2017 innovative, research and development activities in cooperation with the private sector will be the first step in creating business incubators.

As the results of scientific research carried out in ASUE so far there is not a single example of commercialization, and the business incubator mentioned in the concept was not realized.

6.4. The institution emphasizes internationalization of its research.

ASUE strategic goals are to promote the internationalization of research activities and processes to ensure the integration of ASUE in Europe, the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) and other research areas.

ASUE has bilateral cooperation treaties and agreements with the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Cyprus, Latvia, Russia, Ukraine, Georgia and other countries universities and scientific organizations. But there is no analysis on the topic what has been carried out as a result of this partnership, how many representatives of academic staff and student have been involved in that, how many joint scientific articles have been published, and so on. The University does not participate in foreign research consortia and does not have any strictly research grants.

A large part of ASUE's achievements is due to the University's research grant programmes and the works carried out in "Amberd" research centre. The few articles of ASUE employees published in low rating index international scientific journals. These are few magazines, which are not available even for specialists in Europe. Since 2009 no one from ASUE has published any article in internationally recognized journals of economics.

6.5. The institution has well established mechanisms for linking research with teaching.

"ASUE research and innovation activities development of the concept of 2012-2017 " in the research area as a priority sector is mentioned the provision of high quality education and research activities, in the way of their integration and mutual enrichment.

ASUE professors are trying to apply the results of their scientific work at the University's academic programme, especially research-oriented master's subject programmes. Especially in the university master's degree academic programme, the task is to carry out research work, which will empower students in research skills.

"Amberd" research center involves MA students in the University's educational processes, in academic research and communication of carried out research activities to ensure the involvement of students in research projects. Masters students in their scientific, research and pedagogical practices study the lecturers scientific works. ASUE PhD and research students' dissertation topics are mostly related to the topics of chairs scientific work.

Survey among University staff shows that nearly 60% of students and over 70% of professors gave positive feedback on transfer of knowledge into didactic processes.

Studies showed that the process of connecting ASUE research and educational activities carry sectoral character, are still not regulated, the amount of students involved in research processes is low. The research activities and the effectiveness of the educational process interconnection mechanisms are not analyzed in university.

CONSIDERATIONS

The creation of ASUE interests and ambitions identifying mechanisms in the research field will promote "ASUE 2012-2017 research and development of new activities " elaborated concepts concerning the involvement of the teaching staff in innovative research activities, internationalization, etc, but till now these mechanisms haven't presented any solution of the problems, such as global development trends in the country's development priorities and directions of research undertaking a significant portion.

The long-term strategic plan development which reflects the interests and ambitions of HEI in the field of research, will allow the development of short term and mid-term programme development and implementation, will enhance interdisciplinary research and department collaboration research degree, will pay attention to the customers interests of research and lead to commercialization of the research results. The mentioned commercialization and research degree will be contributed by the expansion and ensuring of research implementation and development.

The international level of research ambitions of ASUE are still not consistent and doesn't coincide with the amount of the articles published in international journals. The support of the internationalization of the science and the gradual increase of financial means devoted to it will promote the increase of the university research activity competitiveness and will solve the problem of integration into the internationalization area. Numerous agreements with international HEI can be observed as an initial step and very serious prerequisite to include ASUE academic staff and students into international research initiatives.

Sectoral activities of correlation with the research educational process still are not actual and well known to public and doesn't have a very profound impact on education sufficiency and even doesn't promote the research skills among the students. In MA academic programme, from the point of view of the integration of scientific and research works results with teaching in the process of the review of curriculum and academic programme will change the quality of programmes, making it more competitive and attractive for stakeholders.

CONCLUSION: The correspondence of ASUE institutional capacities to the requirements of criterion 6 is **unsatisfactory**.

CRITERION VII. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

Criterion: The TLI has its own property and resources, which effectively support the implementation of its stated mission and objectives and create a learning environment.

FINDINGS

7.1. The institution takes due care to create a learning environment appropriate to the academic programme offered

There is an educational environment in ASUE for academic programme implementation. There are 6 buildings the University utilises that comprise the main campus, Gyumry branch has 2 buildings and Yeghegnadzor branch one building, it also has classroom resources, laboratories, computer classrooms, library, official web page and etc.

In 2009 library resources in ASUE was about 230.477 piece literature, in Gyumry branch 2746, Yeghegnadzor branch about 1950. During the recent years in Yerevan branch the number of literature has significantly increased, but in other branches it faced a significant decrease. The electronic library is in the stage of development. The specialized data bases are not available for students, statistical analysis licensed software packages are not obtained. There is also a lack of manuals, textbooks and electronic literature.

During the recent years a set of innovations has taken place in ASUE. With the help of different grants 10 classrooms equipped with modern technologies and 3 conference halls were renovated. With the support of municipality the back yard was reconstructed, which is in a good condition now, the windows were changed and a new heating system was conducted again with the support of municipality and with the funds given by the World Bank. The employers carrying out the pilot MA projects make investments by realizing inner renovation work. The problem of the internet connection has been solved.

ASUE building areas are not sufficient for the amount of the current students. The renovating and rebuilding activities of university infrastructures are in the process, though now the majority of building areas need to be modernized. There is also a problem of adequate technical equipment of the classrooms. There is a lack of technically equipped and furnished classrooms, the current operating computer rooms are overloaded and what concerns the technical equipment, it definitely needs to be renewed.

There are no studies and analyses carried out at University for finding out whether the existing educational environment is enough sufficient or not for the implementation of the academic programme.

7.2. The institution endeavors to secure adequate financial resources and distribution of the latter to provide, maintain and operate the facilities and equipment as needed to achieve its mission and objectives.

The analysis of the university income of the last five years became clear that income of ASUE has the tendency of growth, moreover the income is increased in all lines of income. The main part of financial resources of the higher educational institution is generated by tuition fees of students and funds, allocated from state budget.

The financial development growth is mainly conditioned with the growing number of students and offered specialties. The main revenue stream is tuition fees and after comes the government budget contribution. At the current state ASUE with its specialties choice covers all the spheres of provided education in the field of economics. HEI considers that the tuition fees are quite low.

From the illustration of ASUE expenses it is visible that the expenses dynamics with years also has increased in correspondence with the incomes. Over 91% of costs are related to financing education-related needs, most probably teacher remuneration. It is worth mentioning as a positive aspect of the fact that in comparison with the research work of 2009 the research work of 2013 has had a significant growth, approximately 6 times more. Almost 2.5 times increased the amount of equipment and educational costs.

7.3. The institution has sound financial policies and capacity to sustain and ensure the integrity and continuity of the programme offered at the institution.

In this part of SER, self-assessment group focused on information and procedures as opposed to financial policy and funding didactic objectives required to ensure support for majors. These questions only have common relation with the implementation of aims and providing continuation and guarantee of the allocation policy of the funds. They don't analyze the approaches of ASUE in that field or the implemented processes.

The University management considers that faculties and separate academic programme funding is the matter of the future, but currently the bases of the financial means management and their allocation is the annual budget estimation. The financial management is fulfilled by the Rector according to the rights stated in ASUE charter.

The formation condition of the budget, the allocation of finances, the monitoring of the expanses and its implementation report are carried out according to the university field of activity and is not connected with the aims of academic programmes. The effectiveness of the financial policy is evaluated in scientific and governance councils with the means of Rector's report analyses.

7.4. The institution's resource base supports the institution's academic programme and its strategic plans for sustainability and continuous quality enhancement.

ASUE resources temporal allocation is planned and carried out on an annual basis. With the purpose to accommodate educational needs and to create education effective planning according to Rector's instruction, all structural departments, faculties, chairs and branches at the end of the academic year present the list of needed goods, work and services. Based on the latter the procurement plan of the coming year is formed and the goods and services included are represented financially in the budget relevant articles.

7.5. There is a sound policy and procedure to manage information and documentation

Information and documentation processes in ASUE is regulated by the Rector's 10.04.2012 No 73-L "ASUE State Non-profit organizations administrative procedure approval" law, which is defined by the ASUE document management and control procedures. Each year, the budget is expected to allocate resources on information management systems.

In the framework of TEMPUS programme steps are taken to establish the alumni base, which will provide graduates with systematic information on the formation and expansion of employment opportunities. The library digitization process has already started.

Up to the end of 2013, ASUE network system should be introduced, which would enable the implementation of network management and making informative and sound decisions.

However, during the site visit it was revealed that a network management system is not yet implemented.

7.6. The institution ensures the environment is safe and secure through health and safety mechanisms that also consider special needs of students.

The University assures health and safety for its employees and students by funding its own fire-fighter squad. Medical assistance is available. Health Security Committee was established. Civil defence organises trainings for both teachers and students. Health and safety funding has decreased, however, significantly over last few years. The University does not have solutions assisting students with special needs.

The students of Yerevan branch are quite satisfied with the quality of the food, medical and security services, but ASUE branches lack the health and care services. In Gyumry branch the centre for food doesn't exist, and in Yeghegnadzor branch it is in the stage of innovation.

In Yeghegnadzor branch it is possible to carry out education for the students with special needs but on the first floor.

7.7. There are special mechanisms in place that ensure quality of the resources, their effectiveness, applicability and availability.

The information provided in SER doesn't coincide with the requirements of the given criteria. The university doesn't have the mechanisms providing the application of resources for the students and lecturers, as well as available and productive evaluation mechanisms.

CONSIDERATIONS

Currently the University has enough resources for providing educational service and for achieving its aims and missions. The creation of definite mechanisms for revealing the needs will promote the implementation of academic programme and for adequate educational environment assessment. It will also reveal the current problems and will increase the further growth of its efficiency.

For the implementation of its mission and aims the university provides as much financial resources as its budget allows. In low fees payments circumstances the income growth has been supported by growing numbers of students and offered specializations. But the management tries to reduce students' amount until 5000 the clear financial policy is needed, which will enable investment environment creation and will provide Academic programme implementation. Due to the accurate distribution of funds the university can trace a real progress only through a clear planning.

Information and documentation procedures and implemented work allow us to conclude that in ASUE this sort of regular activity providing structures (the office and IT centre) have needed documents, on the basis of which can complete their activity. Information and documentation managing in University will coordinate the development of unified policies and procedures, exploration, analysis, and dissemination activities.

This system can shape compulsory information base for justification of the decisions made.

The absence of education safe environment creation for students with special needs limitates disabilities and other students with special needs the opportunity to express themselves and to get their education.

CONCLUSION: The correspondence of ASUE institutional capacities to the requirements of criterion 7 is **satisfactory**.

CRITERION VIII. SOCIETAL RESPONSIBILITY

Criterion: The institution is accountable to the government, employers and society at large for the education it offers and the resources it uses to meet these objectives.

FINDINGS

8.1. There is clear policy on institutional accountability.

The University is building its credibility based on annual Rector Reports (dean reports), ASUE Council reports (faculty council reports) and the financial report. External auditors perform an audit on the University.

ASUE accountability defined procedure (institution's charter 15.3 point increase) is mainly realized by all sectors and issues reflecting the rector's annual report submitted to the ASUE Council. The annual reports of the faculty deans is submitted to the faculties' councils.

The University is building its credibility based on annual Rector Reports (dean reports), ASUE Council reports (faculty council reports) and the financial report, where the results of Gyumry and Yeghegnadzor budget are also visible. External reports are taken into consideration only through ASUE council, as the HEI considers external stakeholders involved in ASUE governing council as the external report mechanism. The Rector's annual report is also available on ASUE official web page.

External Audits regularly carry out audit at University, the reports of which are used by the management of ASUE for the further improvement of the University working process.

Internal accountability system mostly operates from top to bottom and bottom to top directions. On the other hand there is a lack of annual reports procedures guidelines and clear requirements in the university chairs, also the lack of relevance of accountability and reliability checking mechanisms and tools. The decisions made by departments on their activities are not regulated, as well as the process of delivering the report on the implementation of the assignments to superior structures and their controlling mechanisms.

The university is also not clear about measures and procedures the staff and students need for their high ethical standards and for the provision of an atmosphere for effective governing. Traditional scientific values, which are honesty, accurate scientific criticism, impartiality and other analyses in reports are incomplete.

8.2. The institution ensures transparency of its procedures and processes and makes the results of the latter publicly available.

The only tools to provide the transparency and public availability of the process of procedures in ASUE can be published information abstracts, the materials posted on ASUE web page "Economist" and "Economy+" journals, "Messenger" scientific journal of ASUE and regularly organized job fairs. The visits illustrated that the HEI and its branches prioritize public awareness as a means to enhance the university's reputation and applicants' attraction. With that purpose the visit of the academic to schools and TV shows are organized.

However, the mechanisms of providing the ASUE transparency and accountability feedback are weak and the tools are imperfect. It seems that general public can only to a limited extent participate in some events organised by the University for example the public thesis defences (PhD and master). Information about TEMPUS programmes is available only in Armenian.

ASUE operating as a public, state-funded university should come up with a comprehensive plan to inform general public about its successes in achieving strategic goals, quality of education and research, efficiency in using its resources. A vital element in improving its accountability would be to design an ASUE employee ethical code, "zero tolerance" policy towards corruption, plagiarism, nepotism, cheating etc.

8.3. Standard c: There are strong links with the society and it is expressed through firm feedback mechanisms.

The development of the communication with the society as one of the ways of ASUE strategy was fixed in "ASUE 2012-2016 development strategy" as well as in the document approved by the quality council called "Feedback mechanism of ASUE activity". With the intention to provide the feedback with the society, to coordinate these relations and to make the university working process more transparent and open in 2011 November. Media and Public Relations Department was established in ASUE. University Career and Marketing Center for the university's alumni career, makes efforts to introduce mechanisms and structures for the information of getting a job, particularly through the formation of the alumni database. However, the public relations promoting feedback between the formation of a clear policy at the University is not developed at the University. There are no analyses concerning the above mentioned problem in HEI. During the visit it became obvious the way University touches upon any interpellation, complaints and problems that are addressed to ASUE.

Inspection of ASUE website shows that the popular and often featured on other websites section "frequently asked question" is missing.

8.4. The institution has mechanisms that takes care of knowledge transfer to the society and contributes to development of citizenship.

The University develops various forms of spreading knowledge and expert services to different external stakeholders. A Centre for Continuing Education was established, which organises classes for civil servants employed in the Ministries. Seminars and discussions with foreign representatives, UNDP, USAID and EURASIA are organised. Debate Club was established as part of Labour Bazaar. Panel discussions concerning various issues of Armenian economy are organised.

In any case still there is no procedure for transferring knowledge to the society in ASUE.

CONSIDERATIONS

The annual report development process is available in ASUE. The inner forms of reports are regulated in ASUE, but what concerns the external forms, there is a need for future regulation and for making it more target-oriented. The transparency and availability of the reports provided by ASUE to the wide range of stakeholders still needs to be improved.

ASUE is guided by charter and there is no existing procedure for accountability. The reports are composed according to their activity field, but not according to the direction of strategic plan. There is a lack of assessment indicators and schedules. There are no analyses on the issue to what extent HEI reports contribute the improvement of the governance and the strategic goals achievement.

The University provides the transparency of procedures, processes and makes it available for public through the information provided by the university web page, official newspaper and infrastructures. However there is a lack of information insertion policy in ASUE and there is no clear notion for what purpose and for the solution of what kind of problems is the role of provided information.

The transparency of the procedures is provided by ASUE official web page and the processes are illustrated in different mechanisms. Although the analyses of the efficiency of mechanisms providing the accountability to public is definitely missing.

The university doesn't have any definite policy to provide the feedback with the public. There are no stable mechanisms for implementing feedback with public, which will improve the professional quality growth and the effective organization of the educational process.

Though the University highlights the upbringing with the spirit of national, moral and human values conditioned with democratic and civil society, but the dissemination of knowledge among the

population, for communication with different social groups, the rooting of the modern cultural will promote the public importance minor excess.

Feedback mechanisms development and application, regulated response to complaints and issues of public inquiries, "frequently asked questions" section presentation in the website, including foreign languages, greatly contributes ASUE as the leading university in the region, the development of national economy and social values.

There isn't developed any procedures for lifelong learning or formal learning or any strategic document is not available as well. All these will help to organize the activities of ASUE in a more targeted and productive way.

CONCLUSION: The correspondence of ASUE institutional capacity to the requirements of criterion 8 is **satisfactory**.

CRITERION IX. EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND INTERNATIONALIZATION

Criterion: The institution promotes experience exchange and enhancement through its sound external relations practices, thus promoting internationalization of the institution.

FINDINGS

9.1. The institution promotes its external relations through sound policies and procedures aimed at creating an environment conducive to experience exchange and enhancement and internationalization.

University authorities emphasize the positive impact of internationalization processes on quality of education, vocational training, as well as faculty and student mobility. Internationalization of the University is the quality assurance process priority. It is noted that the steps are carried out in all aspects of internationalization, but they are still not satisfied with the achievements.

The establishment of relations with partner universities is based on the University goals and objectives of internationalization, as well as on available resources. Each year in ASUE continued previously started active cooperation between Armenian and foreign universities, as well as the cooperation with various international organizations. What concerns foreign affairs and Internationalisation University has had certain achievements. Nowadays it is involved in many international, scientific, training and exchange programmes. As a vivid examples can be considered the participation in TEPUS programmes, GlobEducation, as well as cooperation with Rostov State University of Economics.

ASUE makes a great effort to integrate international students in their education process, though the number of international students is not much, only some Indian students study in ASUE. Currently ASUE has different cooperation treaties, but they are less productive and the cooperation always ends with symposia.

9.2. The institution's external relations infrastructure ensures smooth flow of the process. ASUE foreign affairs was coordinated by the department of Education Improvement and International Relations from 2006 till 2011. In 2012 as a result of University structural change the department was dissolved and its functions were transferred to the new Foreign Affairs Department.

It strengthens and develops its relations between Armenian HEIs and foreign universities, prepares inter-university cooperation contracts, implements joined academic programme together with foreign HEIs. It also carries out academic staff exchange and trainings, participation in international grant projects contests and organizes the foreign citizens' reception and etc.

During the site visit it became clear that the existence of the infrastructure doesn't guarantee effective process of internationalization processes are not planned and the needs assessment of the infrastructure is not implemented.

9.3. The institution promotes fruitful and effective collaboration with local and international counterparts.

ASUE is integrated in different structures and social networks.

In international cooperation area ASUE tries to formulate cooperation with international organizations and structures and promote the internationalization of ASUE through the cooperation agreements signed with foreign universities and organizations and through provision of academic mobility in European Higher Education Area.

The SER mentions 34 international organisations with which the University collaborates. That collaboration is fostered by taking part in ERASMUS and TEMPUS programmes. Seven European Universities are involved in the former and 7 programmes were completed over 3 years the latter was running. Employees are competing for DAAD and Fulbright programme scholarships. ASUE also collaborates with national organisations.

What concerns Armenian organizations ASUE cooperates with G2iA (Armenian International Inter-professional Group) "Integrity Action" and with USAID and with 17 HEI. 14 Collages, 7 high Schools and 25 and more organizations, 18 bodies of Armenian state administration.

9.4. The institution ensures the appropriate level of a foreign language for internationalization purposes.

Only 67 teachers and administrative staff took part in language courses organised by the centre for continuous education. Hundred percent of teachers and 99% of administrative employees declares to know Russian. Among students, 80% declares to know foreign languages. Fifty seven percent of teachers speak English, 65% of undergraduate degree students and 91% of master degree students.

The University academic staff finds that the only problem for internationalization is the lack of the foreign language knowledge and the lack of financial support.

CONSIDERATIONS

The university has an ambitious goals with their future internationalization. There are some steps taken to implement the University internationalization and mobility. The development of the latter will help to clarify ASUE actions, will activate the practical cooperation with international organizations, educational institutions and with scientific centers providing the academic staff and students' mobility. ASUE didn't reveal its recourses and infrastructural needs in that sphere, the provision of which will allow to guarantee the internationalization regular process.

ASUE cooperations with foreign organizations are mainly realized in the frameworks of TEMPUS and other projects, some examples of local organizations are also available. A vivid example that could be mentioned is the establishment of the UK Business School in Armenia as a MA programme in the result of a joint project of ASUE with the University of Wales, Cardiff

There is a need to mention that the cooperation with TEMPUS, which is aimed at the improvement of the education process, is very productive. But in fact the level of international cooperation is rather limited and centered in the activity "Hot spots." In fact there is an insufficient command of foreign languages among ASUE professors. The University has been collaborating a bit more closely with domestic partners. There are no criteria which would serve to evaluate collaboration with external partners.

The University has the potential and opportunity to organize the relevant level of foreign languages for the internal stakeholders which will promote the further internationalization, meanwhile that opportunity doesn't serve its goal.

To sign in international information databases a modern library, technically advanced IT infrastructures are needed. With the absence of a licensed professional programmes ASUE has a long way to go to reach European Universities Standards.

CONCLUSION: The correspondence of ASUE institutional capacities to the requirements of criterion 9 is **unsatisfactory**.

CRITERION X. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

Criterion: The institution has a set infrastructure for internal quality assurance, which promotes establishment of a quality culture and continual development of the institution.

FINDINGS

10.1 The institution has internal quality assurance policies and procedures that are in line with the ESG standards.

ASUE has a quality assurance policy under which the University will ensure the quality of education, forming a properly trained and comprehensively developed citizen. In 2008 The Academic Council approved the "Statute on Assuring Internal Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education Institutions", where the main provisions, principles, the policy and procedures of internal quality assurance were presented. In 2013 the quality assurance board approved "The policy and procedures of quality assurance" document and in the same year "ASUE quality assurance manual" was published. These documents are the methodological bases for ASUE's internal quality assurance.

Additional regulations and guidelines are in the planning phase.

10.2. The institution allocates sufficient time, material, human and financial resources to manage internal quality assurance processes.

From 2008 till 2011 the quality assurance processes were under control of the department of Science and Quality management.

The quality assurance system consists of the Quality Assurance Council and Quality Assurance Department. Four (currently 8) working groups were established. They deal with graduates and employers, students, faculty executives, teaching staff. Quality assurance executives were appointed on faculty and chair level. Twenty employees were adequately trained. The quality assurance system is supported by a grant awarded by the World Bank, funding from which was used to employ 6 members of staff. An electronic database storing information about QA department's activity was created.

The organisation chart on University level seems transparent. Organisation of quality assurance on faculty level is unclear. On the grounds of quality working groups' names it may be concluded that entity approach dominates over process-based approach. Hence it is difficult to know which groups covers issues of learning outcomes. It is also obscure how this functional facet of the University was linked to its decision structures. Apart from the mentioned grant from World Bank, there is no indication as to the amount of funding spent on quality policy.

10.3. Internal and external stakeholders are involved in QA processes.

University has a variety of ways to engage both the internal stakeholders with the quality assurance process (students, faculty, and administrative staff) and external stakeholders (government agencies and the business sector, as well as University graduates). The University has procedures that enable key stakeholders to take part in quality assurance Council and the quality assurance department process. The students, faculty staff and administrative staff representatives participate in working groups, however, still exist in the quality assurance process does not specify the scope of participation of stakeholders.

In 2013 ASUE 20 employees participated in the training entitled "Development and improvement of external and internal quality assurance system". The trainings were organized by ANQA within the frames of World bank "Education Quality and Relevance second project". In addition, in 2012-2013, with the concern of ongoing University quality assurance processes to ensure the transparency and openness of internal and external stakeholders involvement, were organized 5 workshops within the frameworks of "The quality of the university system and its further improvement" programme.

During meetings the employers indicated that they participate in the process of the development of programmes, practice organization, and the approval of the diploma paper's topics and also in the State Examination Commission. They considered that they are participating in the quality assurance processes to ensure the quality of the teaching staff are more tied to curriculum consistent and its fair implementation.

ASUE leadership also plans to include working groups from the chairs into the Quality assurance system. Academic staff members will also be included in that groups and their workload will be sufficiently allocated.

10.4. The internal quality assurance system is periodically reviewed.

The educational reforms implemented in ASUE in order to increase efficiency, during the Scientific and Quality Council sessions are regularly discussed the issues related to the quality of the internal components of the system and the quality of governance. In 2008 Scientific Council approved a "temporary professional education quality assurance procedures" that apply to the 2008/2009 academic year second term. From 2011 in ASUE was established an internal quality assurance unit and a set of necessary documents were developed due to the Grant programme.

ASUE highlights benchmarking comparative analysis role in the quality assurance review process. It is based on local and foreign leading universities benchmarking results, which are carried out both in Armenia, as well as other countries, with the help of the representatives of the ASUE faculty and administrative staff.

The university still has not implemented internal evaluation of its quality assurance system. The absence of periodic review of ASUE internal quality assurance system is explained by ASUE's internal quality assurance system is under development.

10.5. The internal quality assurance system provides valid and sufficient background for the success of the external quality assurance processes.

To enter the external assessment phase the University carried out some activities. It started to collect some data and forming self-evaluation report with the coordination of Quality Assurance. Although the requirements submitted to data and the amount that can help the Quality assurance to analyze the effectiveness of the University process have not been developed yet. That's why there is no necessary and regularly updated data base for external evaluation.

10.6. The internal quality assurance system provides for the transparency of the processes unfolding in the institution through providing valid and up to date information on the quality of the latter. ASUE tries to the transparency of its operations with the help of separate steps, like the University official website, "The Economist" and the official "Economy +" magazine, giving full information about ASUE activity to internal and external stakeholders. The University published on its official website its activity, structural units, current professions, the academic programme, made decisions comprehensive and transparent information about news, but it is necessary to coordinate the provision of information, to evaluate the effectiveness of these mechanisms.

CONSIDERATIONS

ASUE has Quality Assurance system and procedures. But the mechanisms of evaluating the education quality in ASUE are not clarified. It should be noticed that the development of these mechanisms will give an opportunity to evaluate the continuous improvement and quality culture building process.

The University provides human and financial resources for the internal quality management processes of ASUE. At the same time it is not clear whether the recourses are sufficient or no. The presented system is clear: Quality Assurance council->Quality Assurance department -> faculty responsible for quality -> chair responsible for quality.

With the intention to provide the effectiveness of QA and to improve it the university tries to enlarge the involvement of external and internal stakeholders. Their participation will add more confidence in that sphere, but they need to be informed and eager to have a leading role in that process. ASUE can use the experience of a stakeholder who is engaged in the process of QA in his/her own institution.

Quality Assurance Council and Quality Assurance Department is formed in ASUE, which fulfills a set of processes, nevertheless it is too early to talk about ASUE internal Quality Assurance system and Quality Culture.

The system is in the initial stage of development, it means that new mechanisms and tools must be elaborate, which will provide the possibility to carry out internal analyses and Quality Assurance external assessment. As a basis can be considered the form of self-evaluation, which is proved by the government of the Republic of Armenia.

ASUE hasn't yet carried out internal Quality Assurance assessment, which would help to find the weaknesses of the mechanisms applied for Quality process and eventually to review them.

Quality Assurance internal system carries out some processes to provide ASUE activity transparency, but these processes are not clearly coordinated. The transparency of the University activities is not assessed.

CONCLUSION: The correspondence of ASUE institutional capacities to the requirements of criterion 10 is **satisfactory**.

EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

CRITERIA	CONCLUSION
<i>1. Mission and Purpose</i>	Satisfactory
<i>2. Governance and Administration</i>	Satisfactory
<i>3. Academic Programme</i>	Satisfactory
<i>4. Students</i>	Satisfactory
<i>5. Faculty and Staff</i>	Satisfactory
<i>6. Research and Development</i>	Unsatisfactory
<i>7. Infrastructure and Resources</i>	Satisfactory
<i>8. Social Responsibility</i>	Satisfactory
<i>9. External relations and Internationalization</i>	Unsatisfactory
<i>10. Internal Quality Assurance System</i>	Satisfactory

The Chair of Expert Panel

APPENDICIES

APPENDIX 1. CVS OF EXPERT PANEL MEMBERS

Ara Amiryan. In 1979 he graduated from Armenian Agricultural Institute Faculty of Mechanical. Mechanization Department receiving mechanical engineer qualification. 1982-1984, was a PhD student in Armenian Agricultural Institute, in the chair of agricultural and reclamation machinery. In 1987 in Rostov-on-Don Institute of Agricultural Machinery specialized council defended his dissertation and got his PhD as a Candidate of Technical Sciences. In 1991, he received an associate professor degree. In 1998 in the specialized council of Armenian Agricultural Academy (AAA) successfully defended his doctoral thesis, receiving the degree of Doctor of Technical Sciences. In 2000, he received the title of Professor of Armenian Agricultural Academy.

The main scientific interest is concerning the mechanical transmission (basically to Harmonic Drives) and to the Alternative Source of Energy. He has created a new type of Harmonic Drives called Chain-Wave Transmission. He has about 100 publications including 1 monograph, 75 papers and articles.

From 2011 is the Head of the Department of Educational Reforms, Strategic Planning, Quality Control and Self-evaluation. From 2006 till now is the Head of the Chair "Graphics and Basics of Machine Designing." From 2000 till 2003 worked as a professor at the Chair "Agricultural machines, vehicles and transport conveyance". From 1994 till 1996 was appointed as the Head of the Department of Agreements and Adoptions. From 1992 till 1993 was appointed as a Deputy of the Faculty of Agricultural Engineering. From 1985 till 1992 was a lecturer at the Chair of tractors and Vehicles. Is an elected member of 2 International organizations. In 2000 was elected as a member of WSES (World Scientific and Engineering Society) and in 1999 a member of SAE (Society of Automotive Engineers).

Participated in a set of local and international symposiums. Delivered Scientific reports in Germany, France, Switzerland, Denmark, Japan, USA, China, Greece, Canada, Italy and so on.

Has been involved in a number of grant programs.

Participated in training organized by ANQA, as a member of the Group of Experts on International accreditation process.

Mieczyslaw W. Socha – In 1969 graduated from Faculty of Economics and Sociology, Lodz University. In 1975 defended its PhD in Economics; Institute of Economic Sciences, Warsaw University. In 2000 *Doctor Hab.* in Economics, Faculty of Economic Sciences, Warsaw University. In 1969 – 1971, worked in "Zygmunt" Steel mill, Bytom, as an economist. In 1975 worked as an instructor in Assistant Professor, Associate Professor in Economics, Faculty of Economic Sciences, University of Warsaw. From 1991-1992 Associate Professor in Economics worked in School of Business, Northern State University, Aberdeen, USA. 1992 – 1993 was an Advisor, Vice-Prime Minister Office; part-time job 1998 – 2011 had the position of an Assistant Professor and Professor of Economics, Leon Kozminski Academy, Warsaw.

2005-2007, in cooperation with the Polish Science and Higher Education, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy Ministry with the Research as a Project Manager and Coordinator. From 2009 cooperating with the European Parliament. 2005-2011, he held the post of Secretary General of the Polish State Committee for Higher Education Accreditation. from 2012 the Vice President of Committee.

Is a Member of the American Economic Association. Is an author of numerous scientific articles. "Bologna Process, process from the point of view quality assurance," "the global financial crisis in Poland," "Poland's EU integration and the effects of financial transfers to the eastern border areas of economic Development," and so on.

Was granted a number of awards. In 2001 - The Polish Science Academy of Sciences Committee on Employment and Social Policy "Best Book Award" In 2001. - Secretary of the Polish Academy of Sciences Award. In 2007 and 2008, - Polish Minister of Science and Higher Education, Higher Education organizational achievement award.

Heghine Manasyan. In 1970 he graduated from Yerevan State University, Department of Economics, 1974, the Scientific Research Institute of the State Planning Committee received a degree of Doctor of Economics, 1995, the Moscow State Academy of Management, a Ph.D. degree in economics.

Heghine Manasyan has a Doctor in Economics with broad experience in research, teaching and policy analysis. Her primary areas of expertise include economic growth and development, political economies of transition, labor markets, poverty and education, privatization and underground economies. Dr. Manasyan is an author of over one hundred publications and articles.

Prior to joining CRRC-Armenia Dr. Manasyan was actively involved in projects funded by international organizations (UNDP, WB, TACIS), implemented in Armenia and aimed at strengthening domestic capacity for high quality economic research and education. Dr. Manasyan's educational background includes studies at the Yerevan State University, State Academy of Management (Moscow), Central European University (Budapest) and Columbia University (New York).

Angin Martirosyan. In 2006 graduated from Yerevan State University of Architecture and Construction (YSUAC) and received a construction engineer master then in Academician I. V. Eghiazarov of Hydraulic Engineering and Water Problems Institute was an researcher. In 2013 she defended the PhD thesis in engineering.

In 2005-2007 she was the YSUAC research sector researcher. In 2006-2009 lecturer at the University chair of "Theoretical Mechanics" . In 2007-2008, worked as the YSUAC Department of Educational Reform Specialist. 2008-2011. education quality evaluation and control specialist. In 2009 was the national Institute of Education Initial vocational education state standards working group member. In 2011-2013. occupied the YSUAC Department of Professional Education Quality Assurance Specialist position.

2012 was an expert in the ANQA, the World Bank, "Education Quality and Relevance" grant program quality consultant.

Sergey Kocharyan. 2014 - graduated from the Agribusiness Teaching Center (ATC) (Joint Program for Armenian National Agrarian University and Texas A and M Universities). In 2010-2012, he studied at Armenian National Agrarian University's Agribusiness and Marketing Department. He is the ATC's cafe founder and manager of Armenian National Association the head of Foreign student Affairs. In 2013, he took part in European Students' Union 64th management session in Bucharest as a delegate to the National Association of Armenia students. He has been ANQA expert student.

APPENDIX 2: SCHEDULE OF SITE VISIT

Yerevan 05.05.2014թ.-08.05.2014

Gyumri 12.05.2014 թ.-13.05.2014

Yeghegnadzor 14.05.2014

05.05.2014.		Launch	End	Duration
1	Meeting with the Rector	9:30	10:15	45 minutes
2	Meeting with the vice rectors	10:30	11:30	60 minutes
3	Meeting with the deans of the faculties	11:45	12:45	60 minutes
4	Lunch, internal discussions	13:00	13:45	45minutes
5	Meeting with the self-evaluation working group	14:00	15:15	75minutes
6	Meeting with the representatives of employers	15:30	16:30	60 minutes
7	Observation of the documents and recourses	16:30	17:30	60 minutes
8	Close meeting of the expert panel	17:30	18:30	60minutes
06.05.2014.		Launch	End	Duration
1	Meeting with the heads of the chairs	9:00	10:00	60 minutes
2	Meeting with the lecturers	10:15	11:30	75minutes
3	Meeting with the BA students	11:45	13:00	75minutes
4	Lunch, internal discussions	13:00	13:45	45minutes
5	Meeting with the MA students	14:00	15:15	75minutes
6	Meeting with the graduate students	15:30	16:30	60 minutes
7	Close meeting of the expert panel	16:30	18:00	90 minutes
07.05.2014.		Launch	End	Duration
1	Meeting with the administrative staff of the university	9:00	10:15	75minutes
2	Meeting with Students Council and Students Scientific Association	10:30	11:30	60 minutes
3	Observation of the documents and recourses	11:45	13:15	90 minutes
4	Lunch, internal discussions	13:30	14:30	60 minutes
5	Meeting with the staff members of Quality Assurance department	14:30	15:45	75 minutes
6	Open meeting (meeting with the university representatives who wants to meet with the panel)	16:00	16:30	30 minutes
7	Close meeting of the expert panel	16:30	18:00	90minutes
08.05.2014.		Launch	End	Duration
1	Meeting with organization council chosen by experts group	9:00	10:15	75 minutes
2	Observation of the documents and recourses	10:30	11:30	60 minutes
3	Meeting with the Scientific Council chosen by the experts group	11:45	12:45	60 minutes
4	Lunch, internal discussions	13:00	13:45	45minutes
5	Observation of the documents and recourses	14:00	14:30	30 minutes
6	Meeting with the responsible of science chosen by the experts group	14:30	15:15	45minutes
7	Meeting with the Rector	15:30	16:00	30 minutes
8	Close meeting of the expert panel	16:15	18:00	105minutes

12.05.2014		Launch	End	Duration
1	Departing and arriving at Gyumri branch	9:00	10:45	105 min
2	Meeting with the Branch Director and Deputy	11:00	11:30	30 min

3	Meeting with the self-evaluation Working Group	11:45	12:45	60 min
4	Meeting with the heads of departments	12:45	13:30	45 min
5	Lunch, internal discussions	13:30	14:15	45 min
6	Meeting with the academic staff	14:30	15:30	60 min
7	Observation of the documents and recourses	15:30	17:00	90 min
8	Close meeting of the expert panel	17:00	18:00	60 min
13.05.2014		Launch	End	Duration
1	Meeting with the students	9:30	10:30	60min
2	Meeting with the Alumni	10:45	11:45	60min
3	Open meeting with the expert panel	12:00	12:30	30min
4	Observation of the documents and recourses	12:30	13:30	60min
5	Lunch, internal discussions	13:30	14:15	45min
6	Meeting with the staff members of Quality Assurance department	14:30	15:30	60min
7	Close meeting of the expert panel	15:45	16:45	60min
8	Meeting with the Branch Director	17:00	17:30	30min
9	Return to Yerevan	17:30	19:30	120min

14.05.2014 թ.		Launch	End	Duration
1	Departing and arriving at Yeghegnadzor branch	9:00	11:00	120min
2	Meeting with the Branch Director and Deputy	11:00	11:30	30min
3	Meeting with the self-evaluation Working Group	11:45	12:30	45min
4	Meeting with the heads of departments	12:45	13:30	45min
5	Lunch, internal discussions	13:30	14:15	45min
6	Meeting with the academic staff	14:30	15:30	60min
7	Observation of the documents and recourses	15:30	16:45	75min
8	Close meeting of the expert panel	17:00	17:30	30min
9	Meeting with the Branch Director	17:30	18:00	30min
10	Return to Yerevan	18:00	20:00	120min

APPENDIX 3. LIST OF DOCUMENTS OBSERVED

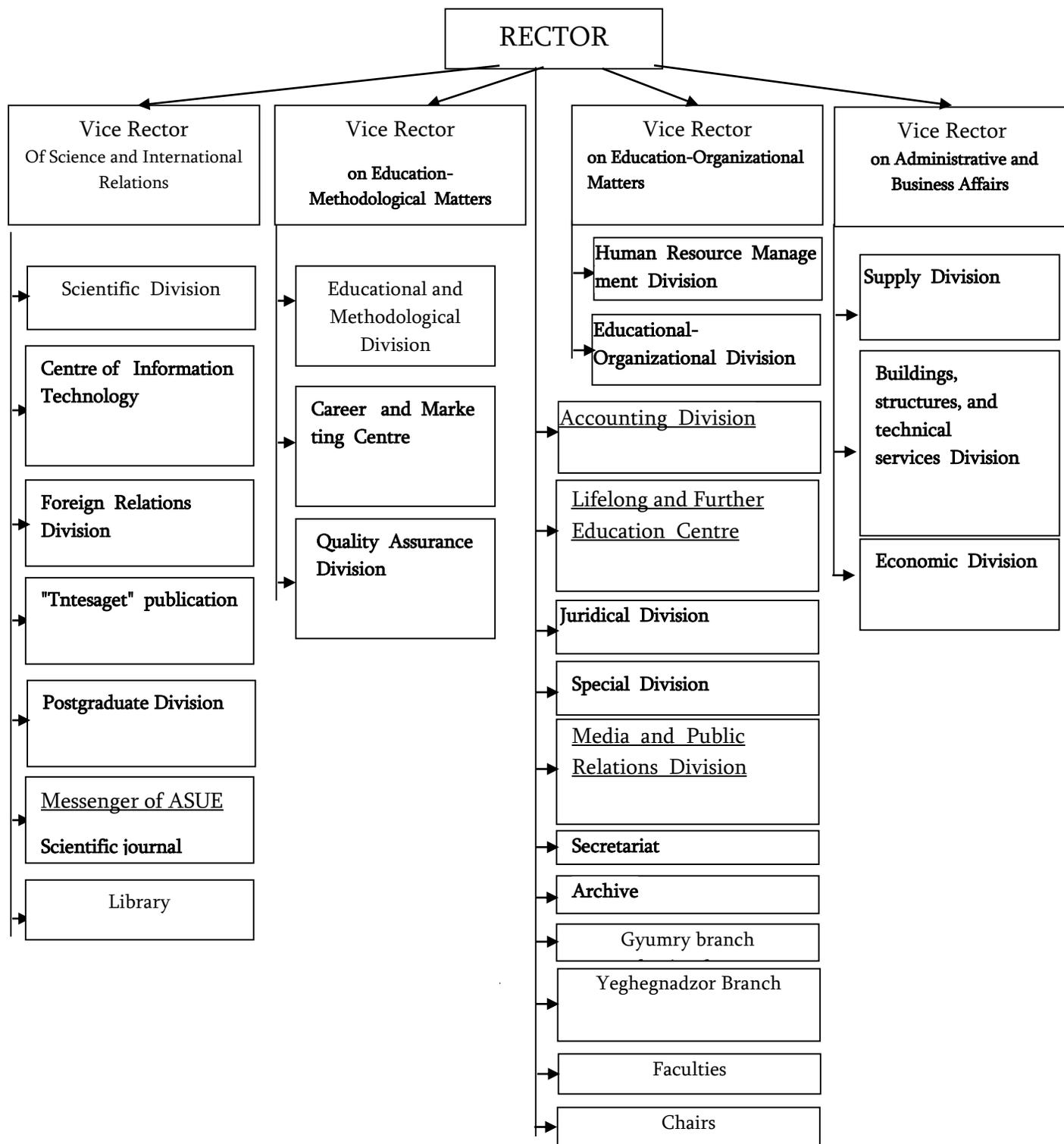
N	The names of the documents	Criterion
1.	ASUE 2006-2011. Development strategic plan	I, II
2.	ASUE mission reporting (2009-2013) for the period	I
3.	Strategic plan results analysis	I
4.	The bases of regularly conducted surveys and analyzes for identifying the needs of external and internal stakeholders	I
5.	The order of the working group composed for the review of educational standards the specialists of the corresponding sphere, factories managers are engaged.	I
6.	ASUE Financial Policy	II
7.	"University academic staff qualification examination" procedure	II
9.	Long-term planning schedules	II
10.	Short-term, medium-term planning documents examples	II
11.	ASUE study and analysis of key factors example	II
12.	"ASUE internal quality assurance concept."	II, X
13.	"ASUE Policy and procedures for quality assurance."	II, X
14.	"ASUE activity feedback mechanisms."	II
15.	Program compiling, approving and implementation procedures	II, III
16.	Program Evaluation Procedure	II, III
17.	Survey questionnaires and analysis	II
19.	AP in any specialty (one BA and one MA) full -time and part -time learning.	III
20.	"Educational programs and technology research and development" direction	III
21.	"Marketing Research" Academic Plan	III
22.	Pilot MA programs Resources	III
23.	A report of any chair on the selection of students' knowledge assessment forms	III
24.	The European Commission presented proposals for higher education reform program and the 7 projects	III
25.	Objective evaluation of the effectiveness of educational programs, carried out survey questionnaire and survey methodology, analyses	III
26.	Periodic evaluation of academic programs, policies, procedures	III
27.	The monitoring and review procedures of academic programs	III
29.	Directed to the reveal students' educational needs analysis surveys and studies carried out in the pilot program.	III
30.	Within the TEMPUS Project framework ongoing surveys developed format, conducted surveys and analyses	III
31.	Questionnaire to identify the educational needs of students	IV
32.	"Education Management" specialization curriculum	III
33.	Additional classes description, goals and schedule fixing document	IV
34.	The study of Consulting hours efficiency conduct	IV
35.	"Marketing and Career center" Regulations	IV
37.	"Marketing and Career center" activities satisfaction survey questionnaire, analysis	IV
38.	Student Council Charter	IV
39.	"Economy +" newspapers	IV, X
40.	Assessments appeal statistical data	IV
41.	The information about the students rights protection responsibility questionnaire and the analyses.	IV
42.	ASUE academic staff development regulations.	V
43.	Academic staff recruitment or dismissal procedure	V

44.	Academic staff position description (different chairs, if differentiated)	V
46.	Lecturer evaluation questionnaire, analysis	V
47.	Action plans for improvement, according to the guidance of lecturers , professional and structural reforms.	V
48.	Regulation activity of continuous and supplementary education centre, working plan	V
49.	Library Development program, library recruitment policy and filtering, library work schedule	VII
50.	Resources satisfaction survey analysis	VII
51.	Resource needs requests of the chairs	VII
52.	Regulation of Media and Public Relations Department	VIII
53.	ASUE policy of promoting foreign relations and internationalization, operating procedures	IX
54.	Department of External Affairs 2012-2013. Annual Action Plan (working plan) or the Department of Educational Reforms and International Relations Department reports	IX
55.	Any chair International program activity	IX
56.	ASUE Foreign Affairs Department Statute	IX
57.	Staff list and schedule for foreign language courses	IX
58.	Term papers, final papers and MA thesis topics for 3 years	III
59.	Term papers, final papers and MA thesis assessment criteria	III
60.	State qualification Commission findings, their discussion protocols	III
61.	Term papers, final papers and MA thesis samples for 3 years	III

APPENDIX 4. RESOURCES OBSERVED

	Yerevan	Gyumry	Yeghegnadzor
1.	Computer classrooms	Classrooms	Classrooms
2.	Quality Assurance Centre	Computer classrooms	Computer classrooms
3.	“AMBERD” research centre	Library – reading hall	Library – reading hall
4.	Dean office of the Faculty of Management	Canteen	Canteen
5.	Dean office of the Faculty of Financiers		
6.	Dean office of Marketing and Business Management		
7.	Chair of Commerce		
8.	Chair of Macroeconomics		
9.	Chair of Commodity Research and Technology		
10.	Students Council		
11.	Classrooms		
12.	Canteen		
13.	Labs		
14.	Medical Centre		
15.	Library		
16.	Gym		

APPENDIX 5. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATION INSTITUTION



APPENDIX 6. LIST OF THE ABBREVIATIONS

CIS – Commonwealth of Independent States
USAID – United States Agency for International Development
HEI – Higher Educational Institution
EHEA – European Higher Education Area
GAID – German Agency for International Development
YSU – Yerevan State University
YSUAC – Yerevan State University of Architecture and Construction.
MOES – Ministry of Education and Science
PIU – Project Implementation Unit
RA – Republic of Armenia
AAA – Armenian Agricultural Academy
AAI – Armenian Agricultural Institute
ASUE – Armenian State University of Economics
SAUA – State Agrarian University of Armenia
CRRC – The Caucasus Research Resource Center
ANUAC – Armenian National University of Architecture and Construction
UNDP – United Nations Development Programme
AP- Academic Program
GBMD – Graphics and Basic Machine Designing
HEI – Higher Educational Institution
ANQA - National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance
QA Centre – Quality Assurance Centre
NQF – National Qualification Framework
AS – Academic Staff
AC – Academic
PDCA – Plan – Do – Check - Act
SNCO – State and Non Commercial organization.
SP – Strategic Plan
IT – Information Technologies
SSC – Students Scientific Council
SC – Student Council