“NATIONAL CENTER FOR PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE” FOUNDATION

EXPERT PANEL REPORT
INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION OF
"BADEYAN" VARDENIS STATE COLLEGE (SNPO)

Yerevan – 2025

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

Context of the Evaluation of the VET Institution's Activities

Background and History of the Institution

The institution was established in 1989 under the name Vardenis Polytechnic Technical School. Over the years, it has undergone several name changes. By Order No. 447-M of the RA Minister of Education in 2002, the Vardenis Polytechnic Technical School was renamed Vardenis State College. In 2013, by Order of the RA Minister of Education dated September 25, Vardenis State College was renamed Vardenis "Badeyan" State College.

The college is registered in the town of Vardenis, Gegharkunik Region, Republic of Armenia. This is the first time the college is undergoing the institutional accreditation process.

Development Directions and Educational Programmes

Currently, 331 students are enrolled at the college, having completed general and upper secondary education. The faculty comprises 66 lecturers: 58 hold higher education degrees and 8 hold secondary professional qualifications. Instances have been recorded where the professional qualifications of certain lecturers do not fully correspond to the modules taught; however, these lecturers have more than 10 years of practical experience and continue to teach. Currently, the college is also supported by two employer-representative lecturers and two graduate lecturers.

Vardenis "Badeyan" State College implements eight middle vocational (post-secondary VET) programmes:

- Banking
- Computer-Aided Artistic Design
- Social Work
- Nursing
- Office Management with a Foreign Language
- Software Support of Computing Equipment and Automated Systems
- Pharmacy
- Medical Cosmetology

It also delivers nine preliminary (initial VET) programmes:

- Computer Operations
- Culinary Arts
- Organisation of Peasant (Farm) Holdings
- Sewing Production Technology
- Welding Technology
- Jewellery
- Technology of Oil, Cheese and Milk Production
- Hairdressing and Decorative Make-up
- Finishing and Construction Works Implementation

Out of 341 graduates, 118 continue their studies at higher education institutions, and 113 are employed,

66 of whom work in their field of specialization. Employment rates are particularly high in the Nursing and Hairdressing and Decorative Make-up programmes, where nine graduates from each programme are employed in their respective professional fields.

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

The expertise of the "Badeyan" Vardenis State College (SNPO)institutional capacities was carried out by the independent expert panel formed in accordance with the requirements of “Regulation on the Formation of the Expert Panel”, «National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance» Foundation. The evaluation was conducted according to 10 institutional accreditation criteria set by the RA Government Decree N 959-Ն, dated June 30, 2011.

While conducting the evaluation, the expert panel acknowledged that the College is a secondary vocational education provider operating within a clearly defined mission. The panel also noted that Vardenis “Badeyan” State College is undergoing institutional accreditation for the first time and is currently in a transitional phase, attributable primarily to the absence of an elected Director for several years and the appointment of a new Director in 2023. This situation has posed significant challenges for both governance structures and the organisation of educational processes, necessitating the development by senior management of a well-articulated transitional strategy addressing priority areas.

The period 2024–2025 is regarded by the College as a critical juncture, encompassing the enhancement of governance and administrative arrangements, the establishment of a comprehensive internal quality assurance system, the modernization of academic programmes, systematic labor-market needs analyses, and the promotion of students’ research and inquiry-based learning competences. The transitional phase is thus perceived not only as a challenge but also as an opportunity to review and redefine the quality assurance policy and to embed data-driven approaches conducive to the institution’s sustainable development.

The College has articulated its mission in the 2025–2030 Strategic Development Plan, which is explicitly aligned with the National Qualifications Framework and the regional labour market requirements. This strategic document identifies key development priorities, such as strengthening governance, modernising educational programmes, enhancing the learning environment, and systematic stakeholder engagement. Nonetheless, the financial substantiation of certain actions and the definition of measurable performance indicators for outcomes assessment remain incomplete.

Strategic management is currently exercised under transitional conditions. Consequently, the alignment between strategic objectives, unit-level operational plans and reporting mechanisms is not yet fully developed, and the monitoring and evaluation procedures are only partially implemented.

Over the past two years, Vardenis “Badeyan” State College has undertaken significant reforms of its governance system. The organizational structure has been approved; councils and committees have been established; job descriptions, as well as strategic and procedural documents, have been developed. The College has adopted the PDCA principle. Given the institution's transitional stage, the planning and implementation phases of the PDCA cycle are currently the most actively executed.

Despite the governance reforms implemented, certain administrative processes remain incomplete. Horizontal cooperation between structural units is limited, which constrains the exchange of information and the execution of coordinated actions. Actions in operational plans are often formulated in general terms, lacking clear objectives, measurable indicators, and end results, which complicates the evaluation of progress, assurance of accountability, and implementation of tangible improvements. Although some data are collected, their analysis and use in decision-making are not yet systematic, and as a result, the College is unable to fully exploit available information for evidence-based decision-making.

The introduction of the College’s internal quality system commenced in 2023, including the definition of the responsibilities of the QA responsible, the establishment of the Quality Assurance Committee, and the development of several relevant documents. Nevertheless, the system remains at an

initial stage of development, as it is conditioned by the College's ongoing transitional period. This is manifested in insufficient planning, limited application of QA tools and mechanisms, and partial stakeholder involvement. Consequently, the system does not yet fully ensure data-driven decision-making, thereby restricting opportunities for improving the effectiveness of current processes.

The educational programmes delivered at Vardenis "Badeian" State College are diverse and largely aligned with labour-market requirements. In recent years, new specialisations have been introduced on the basis of stakeholder input, and existing programmes have undergone a series of updates, including the enhancement of practical training, teaching methods, and the format of student assignments. The teaching process increasingly employs interactive and inquiry-based methods; a differentiated assessment system has been introduced; and students are offered creative, analytical, and research-oriented tasks.

The College has initiated the development of mechanisms for ongoing monitoring of academic programmes. It has conducted benchmarking of several programs by comparing them with similar programmes at other colleges and has obtained results that are applicable for improvement. However, it is important that programme monitoring is not yet implemented in practice, which may constrain the continuous improvement of programmes.

There is clear evidence of systemic changes in the management and development of academic staff. Regulatory documents have been adopted covering professional advancement, performance appraisal, mentoring, and staff retention. Mechanisms have been introduced to support and promote faculty, including mentoring, peer observations, methodological presentations, individual portfolios and multiple assessment tools. Needs-based training sessions are organised with the involvement of local and international experts.

Despite these positive trends, evaluation results are not yet consistently used for decision-making, professional development or training planning. At the same time, challenges persist in certain fields, including the limited number of qualified lecturers, high workloads, and the lack of a suitable candidate pool. These circumstances indicate the need not only to strengthen existing staff-management mechanisms but also to ensure greater predictability in workforce planning and human-resource development.

Over the past two years, the College has significantly upgraded its material and technical infrastructure, including the renovation of laboratories and classrooms, the acquisition of new equipment, and the introduction of an electronic library. For practical training, the College collaborates effectively with sectoral employers and has taken steps to ensure financial sustainability through the adoption of new policies and procedures. Through the efforts of the new leadership, accumulated financial obligations were settled in 2024, ensuring financial stability and creating favourable conditions for the consistent implementation of the College's strategic objectives.

The College actively supports students from career orientation through to career guidance, using information sessions, counselling and the involvement of the Student Council. It systematically identifies students' educational needs through surveys, discussions and Student Council input, and has already taken improvement actions in some areas. Despite progress, it remains necessary to strengthen additional student support, for example, by offering courses to deepen foreign-language and other skills, and to improve mechanisms for maintaining links with graduates.

Research activity is a strategic priority included in both strategic and short-term planning documents. Students are involved in various project-based, applied and analytical assignments within their professional modules. Regulations for the preparation and assessment of research work, as well as an incentive policy, have been developed; however, the latter is not yet fully operational, and academic staff engagement in research remains limited. It is necessary to expand the participation of both students and faculty and to institutionalise the research component across all programmes to strengthen research skills

and creative capacities.

The College has developed an internationalisation policy and cooperates with several local and international partners. Currently, new international programmes are being designed and proposals submitted; however, these are mainly still in the approval or planning stages and have not yet yielded visible outcomes. At the same time, the low level of foreign-language proficiency among both students and staff hinders active participation in international projects and the full application of international experience within the College.

Strengths of the Institution:

1. Substantial progress in structuring and documenting the governance system.
2. Development of a culture of stakeholder involvement- including students, staff and employers in managerial and decision-making processes.
3. Implementation of measures to introduce and enhance internal systems for the evaluation and monitoring of education quality.
4. Consistent modernisation of academic programmes and their alignment with labor-market needs.
5. Continuity in the introduction and implementation of professional development programmes for academic staff.
6. Visible results in the renovation and upgrading of the material and technical base.
7. Expansion of student counselling, support and feedback mechanisms.
8. Broader opportunities for cooperation and exchange of experience with external partners.
9. Establishing a stable policy for the encouragement of student creative and research projects.

Weaknesses of the Institution:

1. Insufficient development of financial planning and resource-allocation systems.
2. Absence of measurable and outcome-based indicators in strategic and operational plans.
3. Incomplete application of analytical and accountability functions.
4. Limited practical implementation of mechanisms for the ongoing monitoring and improvement of academic programmes.
5. Uneven participation of faculty in training and professional-development activities.
6. Lack of certain elements of the physical and social environment (e.g. canteen, sports hall, inclusive infrastructure).

7. Deficiencies in information disclosure, public accountability and the absence of an official website.
8. Limited scope of actions aimed at cooperation with the community and society and at exercising societal responsibility.
9. Restricted utilization of international experience and benchmarking results in academic programmes.
10. Insufficient regularity and systematization of internal quality assurance processes.

Main recommendations:

Data-Driven Management

1. Review the Academic Program Plan–Schedule by clearly specifying the funding sources for each action (state budget, partner programmes, internal revenues, etc.) and by revising implementation timelines based on available resources and operational capacities.
2. Develop Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the implementation of strategic goals so that each strategic direction has concrete, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound results (SMART criteria) serving as a basis for continuous monitoring.
3. Ensure the ongoing engagement of stakeholders in strategic processes by organising regular focus-group discussions, online surveys and thematic meetings, as well as producing summary reports and analyses of the collected recommendations.
4. Analyse and classify regulatory documents by compiling a functional and priority-based list to identify applicable, eliminable or consolidatable documents and by introducing a revision periodicity.
5. Revise the format of unit plans to provide a direct link to strategic objectives, concrete measurable indicators for each action and clearly defined expected outcomes, thus enabling results assessment.
6. Introduce practical data-collection and analysis mechanisms in management processes-for example, online surveys of graduates, joint analytical meetings with employers, continuous monitoring of sectoral trends, and preparation of data summaries to support decision-making.
7. Ensure full application of the PDCA cycle in management processes by embedding evaluation and improvement subsections into unit plans, establishing formats for periodic reporting and

setting clear review schedules.

8. Clarify the structure and functions of the QA system by presenting it as a core component of institutional governance, defining its place within the organisational structure, specifying roles at different levels and planning related activities.
9. Review the regulations of the Internal Quality Assurance Committee by introducing a regular meeting schedule (e.g. quarterly), mechanisms for recording and monitoring decisions, and open, structured forms of stakeholder participation.
10. Establish a stakeholder engagement action plan within the QA system providing for regular participation of employer and student representatives in Committee meetings, recording of recommendations, and follow-up on responsive actions.

Credible Awarding of Qualifications

11. Ensure the establishment and regular application of a programme monitoring system by developing appropriate tools and indicators that enable effective tracking of programme performance and the implementation of feedback mechanisms.
12. Develop and institutionalise a continuous benchmarking process, extending it across all academic programmes as a tool for programme modernisation.
13. Enhance the professional, pedagogical, and methodological competences of faculty through comprehensive analysis of peer-observation results and targeted elimination of identified shortcomings.
14. Improve mechanisms for identifying the needs of academic and support staff, ensuring their periodic and systematic application.
15. Engage employers and sectoral experts in the professional development and experience-sharing processes of faculty.
16. Define clear criteria for staff incentives and remuneration to foster motivation and support professional advancement.
17. Develop a database of potential teaching candidates to ensure the uninterrupted organisation of the learning process in the context of programme expansion or modification.
18. Intensify efforts to attract additional financial resources to ensure the continuous modernisation of the learning environment and academic programmes.
19. Develop a self-costing system for academic programmes, incorporating data on student

enrolment, per-student costs, salaries, and material/technical expenditures to support effective resource planning.

Long-Term Development

20. Develop digital tools for alumni engagement, ensuring comprehensive communication regarding employment opportunities and professional prospects.
21. Implement supplementary courses and learning initiatives aimed at enhancing students' professional competencies.
22. Embed a research component into every academic programme and establish a database of research assignments to ensure that all students are involved in research activities.
23. Promote the active involvement of faculty in research projects, contributing to their professional growth.
24. Introduce mechanisms to systematise accountability processes, transform reports from descriptive to analytical in format in order to evaluate effectiveness, identify challenges, and outline improvement areas.
25. Launch and further develop the institution's official website, ensuring open and transparent publication of legal, organisational documents and performance results to enhance public awareness.
26. Strengthen feedback mechanisms, enhancing stakeholder engagement and ensuring timely and detailed responses to received inquiries and recommendations.
27. Evaluate and strategically plan community engagement initiatives based on regional needs, developing effectiveness-assessment mechanisms and ensuring their regular and systematic implementation.
28. Expand and systematically strengthen international and local partnerships, ensuring the transition from programme-level planning to practical implementation with tangible outcomes.
29. Ensure continuous evaluation and enhancement of external relations and internationalisation processes, systematically analysing the impact of partnerships and international cooperation on institutional development.
30. Improve the foreign-language proficiency of students, faculty, and administrative staff through targeted programmes and initiatives, thereby supporting effective participation in international

projects and enhancing the institution's global visibility.

Gayane Avetisyan, Chair of Expert Panel

15.08.2025

DESCRIPTION OF EXTERNAL REVIEW

COMPOSITION OF EXPERT PANEL

External evaluation of the institutional capacities of Badeyan" Vardenis State College was carried out by the following expert panel.

1. **Gayane Avetisyan** - Shirak State University, Head of the Expert Panel.
2. **Marine Galubyan** - Chief Specialist, Department of Culture, Sports, and Education, Artashat Municipality, Panel Member.
3. **Marina Potikyan** - Educational Complex of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, Panel Member.
4. **Davit Harutyunyan** - European University of Armenia, Student Member of the Expert Panel.

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

The works of the expert panel were coordinated by Liana Alaverdyan, a specialist at the Institutional and Programme Accreditation department of the ANQA.

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

PROCESS OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW

The College applied for state institutional accreditation by submitting to ANQA (25.10.2024), filling the application form, presenting copies of the license, and the respective appendices.

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

After making the decision on accepting the application, an agreement was signed between ANQA and the College. The timetable of activities was prepared and approved.

Self-evaluation

Given that the educational institution is undergoing its first accreditation process and is in the initial stages of establishing a culture of quality assurance, ANQA has conducted online workshops with accredited VET institutions. The workshops aimed to prepare colleges for the organisational stages of the accreditation process. During the workshops, the interpretations of the institutional accreditation criteria and standards, the electronic questionnaire to be filled in for applying for institutional accreditation, and the features of self-evaluation and SWOT analysis were presented. The

educational institution carried out a SWOT analysis, which was discussed with the employees of the ANQA. During the implementation of the self-evaluation, current discussions were organized by the ANQA to clarify the issues.

Representatives of the institution's administrative and educational staff, lecturers, and students were involved in the process of self-evaluation.

Preparatory phase

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

Preparatory visit

Before the site visit, a preparatory visit to the college was carried out on 14.05.2025. The ANQA coordinator, the head of the institutional program accreditation department and the head of the expert panel were present at the meeting. During the meeting, the schedule of the site visit was introduced and agreed upon with the college. Additionally, the meeting participants discussed and mutually agreed on decisions regarding the technical, organisational, and information aspects of the site visit, as well as the behaviour and ethical norms of the participants.

Site visit

The expert panel site visit took place from May 25-28, 2025. During the week preceding the site visit, the members of the expert panel and the coordinator visited the college, observed the infrastructure and resources of the college, conducted class observations, and observed exams. Then the experts and the coordinator had a closed meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to bring out the strengths and weaknesses of the college according to the standards, clarify the questions to be asked to the target groups, and discuss the procedure of the meetings and the next steps.

The site visit started and ended with meetings with the director of the College. All participants in the meetings were randomly selected from a pre-provided list. All scheduled meetings were held. During the visit, the expert panel conducted a study of documents.

At the end of each working day, the expert panel held closed meetings to discuss the results of

the interim expert assessment, and at the end of the visit, the main results were summarised.

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

Expert panel report

The members of the Expert Panel, together with the ANQA Coordinator, prepared the preliminary version of the Expert Panel Report, which was reviewed and agreed upon by the experts. The draft report was provided to the College on July 28, 2025. The College did not submit any response regarding the preliminary version. The Expert Panel subsequently finalised the report, which was approved by the Panel on August 15, 2025.

Liana Alaverdyan
Coordinator of the Expert Panel
15.08.2025

EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

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