

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



**EXPERT PANEL REPORT
INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION OF
CHARENTSAVAN STATE COLLEGE (SNCO)**

Yerevan – 2025

INTRODUCTION

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

The expert examination was carried out by the independent expert panel formed in accordance with the requirements set by the “National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance” foundation in the regulation on “Formation of the Expert Panel”. The Panel 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 Charentsavan State College SNCO under the RA Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports is a non-profit institution providing secondary vocational and preliminary education. The College was established in 1964 as the legal successor of the Charentsavan Polytechnic Technical College, founded on the basis of the Charentsavan Machine-Building Plant. It currently operates an educational complex designed for approximately 450 students.

The mission of the College is to provide quality education by combining national foundations with universal human values. Its educational processes are aimed at developing students' independent thinking, ensuring continuity of education, and preparing specialists who meet the requirements of the labor market.

The College periodically reviews its list of specialisations in alignment with the region's economic needs and the demands of the labor market. It collaborates with the Charentsavan Unified Social Services, local large-scale manufacturing companies, and hotel complexes.

The College plays a significant role within the community by preparing specialists in demand in the fields of preliminary and secondary vocational education, thereby ensuring continuity of education. The learning process is based on national and universal values and contributes to students' holistic development.

Development Directions and Educational Programmes

The College plays an important role in the region by preparing qualified specialists, thereby contributing to community development.

In the 2024–2025 academic year, the College has been allocated a total of 205 licensed admission places. Currently, 311 students are enrolled at the institution.

The College implements the following academic programmes:

Vocational Educational Programmes

- Office Management (with advanced foreign language competence)-20 licensed admission places
- Software for Computing Equipment and Automated Systems, based on basic general education- 20 licensed admission places
- Software for Computing Equipment and Automated Systems, based on secondary general education-25 licensed admission places
- Service Management (in hotels and tourism complexes), full-time – 20 licensed admission places; part-time- 20 licensed admission places
- Accounting- 25 licensed admission places

Preliminary Vocational Education Programmes

- Operation and Maintenance of Transportation Vehicles - 25 licensed admission places
- Culinary Arts- 25 licensed admission places

- Painting and Construction- 25 licensed admission places (priority field)

Over the past five years, the College has had approximately 300 graduates. Among them, the employment rate of graduates from the following programmes —Culinary Arts, Office Management with advanced foreign language competence, and Service Management in hotels and tourism complexes- is around 50%, attesting to both the feasibility and the demand for these academic programmes.

Currently, the College employs 32 lecturers, of whom 29 are full-time, 3 are part-time, and 3 are employer-lecturers. Among the 32 lecturers, 30 hold higher education degrees, while 2 hold preliminary vocational education qualifications.

Additionally, five lecturers have passed professional attestation.

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

The expertise of the Charentsavan State College 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 in accordance with 10 institutional accreditation criteria set forth in the RA Government Decree N 959-Ն, dated June 30, 2011.

The Expert Panel has taken into consideration that Charentsavan State College is undergoing the institutional accreditation process for the first time, and its mission is: “To ensure a favorable educational environment and, through academic programs implemented on a national basis, to generate knowledge, develop, transfer, and disseminate abilities and skills within the framework of the state strategy for the development of education; as well as to prepare qualified specialists with vocational secondary and preliminary education, aligned with regional demands, National Qualifications Framework (NQF), and State Educational Standards, who will be able to secure a prosperous and dignified future through their acquired knowledge.”

Certain data collected by the College have served as a basis for management decision-making; however, these data are still not systematized and do not fully reflect the scope of the educational and strategic objectives. The College has developed several documents, including the Strategic Plan and the Monitoring Report of the Development Program, in which some actions are aligned with the strategic goals.

The College plays an essential role in the region by preparing specialists in vocational secondary and preliminary education, who are highly demanded in the current labor market.

The College delivers four vocational secondary education programs, specifically:

- 0415.01.5 Office Administration with Advanced Foreign Language Competence
- 0613.01.5 Software Support of Computer Hardware and Automated Systems
- 0413.05.5 Hospitality Service Management in Hotels and Tourism Complexes
- 0411.01.5 Accounting

In addition, the institution offers three preliminary vocational education programs, namely:

- 0141.02.4 Operation and Repair of Transport Vehicles
- 1013.03.4 Culinary Arts
- 0732.04.4 Implementation of Finishing Construction Works

There are certain structural foundations for strategic planning and governance, including the formulation of the mission and strategic goals, monitoring of institutional documents, and implementation of initiatives. In the field of Quality Assurance, initial steps have been taken, including the development of QA policies, conducting surveys, reviewing internal documents, and appointing a QA coordinator.

However, the strategic plans and implemented actions lack sufficient alignment, and the stated objectives do not consistently serve as a basis for managerial decisions, often yielding to responses to current operational issues. The governance model remains predominantly vertical, with limited

involvement and initiative from internal units. Data collection processes required for evidence-based decision making are fragmented and descriptive rather than analytical.

The institution's financial resources are primarily limited to student tuition fees, while external funding sources remain non-targeted and unstable. The QA system is still in its early stages, and full implementation of the PDCA cycle has not yet been ensured. Data collection methodologies are limited, and the outcomes rarely evolve into improvement actions.

It is especially crucial to ensure that QA data are linked to strategic planning, academic programs, and resource management, thereby fostering a culture of continuous enhancement. Broader stakeholder engagement is essential, including the systematic involvement of faculty and students in decision-making processes.

Overall, the College's strategic management and QA system requires institutional strengthening to establish clear mechanisms, develop a flexible, data-driven governance culture, and enhance the interrelation of processes to ensure effectiveness, accountability, and sustainable development.

The College has undertaken several effective measures to develop and assess students' professional competencies and ensure the credible awarding of qualifications. The introduction of modern specialties and programs responsive to labor market needs demonstrates the College's capacity to provide a flexible and timely educational offer aligned with employment demands. Student assignments are generally consistent with the content of the vocational educational programs; however, there is a need to clarify further and standardise the methodological approaches to learning tasks, particularly regarding the integration of analytical and research components.

The Expert Panel also notes that the assessment systems for modules and courses are comprehensive and include both theoretical and practical components, thereby supporting the valid verification of learning outcomes. The emerging practice of integrating elements of dual education, along with employer involvement in internship organization and skills assessment, provides students with opportunities to experience environments close to real workplace conditions. At the same time, the utilization of resources in professional settings or partner organizations remains constrained by certain organizational and material-technical challenges, specifically the need to upgrade and modernize specialized classrooms and training facilities.

The involvement of industry professionals in the teaching process is commendable, as it significantly contributes to preparing students for the labor market. However, in some specialties, the limited number of qualified teaching staff poses risks to the sustainable implementation of programs and underscores the need for a targeted policy to strengthen human resource capacity.

The College implements several initiatives aimed at fostering a student-centred learning environment and ensuring the credible awarding of qualifications; however, the enhancement and sustainability of these initiatives remain a priority and should be supported by systematic observations, data-driven analysis, and meaningful stakeholder engagement.

Certain mechanisms for identifying student needs are in place, providing opportunities to address urgent issues in the learning environment. The Student Council operates within the institution,

although its current activities are mainly focused on organizing cultural events. The limited involvement of students in educational processes and quality assurance mechanisms reduces the potential impact of their voice on institutional improvement. At the same time, the active and comprehensive participation of the Student Council in institutional processes could significantly contribute to protecting students' rights and strengthening student representation in decision-making.

The College undertakes several measures to respond to students academic progress and educational needs. Pre-examination consultations and individualized approaches applied by lecturers are positively evaluated; nevertheless, improving learning outcomes requires a comprehensive and systematic approach grounded in continuous needs assessment. While assignments such as term papers and independent work include research elements, they currently lack clear methodological guidance and structured requirements, which limit students' development of analytical and research skills. In this regard, it is essential to design clearly defined, sector-relevant learning tasks, along with the introduction of comprehensive assessment criteria, to enhance the quality of learning and foster student engagement in research-oriented activities.

The College does not have a clear policy or regulatory framework aimed at the development of research activities. The absence of such a strategy limits both the understanding of sectoral trends and the integration of international best practices. Establishing institutional mechanisms for research would contribute not only to the continuous professional development of academic staff but also to fostering students' research mindset and practical inquiry-based skills.

The College has a functioning Career Center that updates graduate data, disseminates information on labor market demands, and maintains cooperation with employers. However, the absence of mechanisms for outcome analysis and impact evaluation hinders the assessment of the Center's overall effectiveness. Graduate employability data could be effectively utilized for the improvement and periodic revision of academic programs.

In terms of accountability, the College has introduced an internal reporting system based on information sharing, which encourages communication between structural units and management. At the same time, given the importance of report quality, it is necessary to define minimum analytical requirements and provide methodological guidelines. The College is active on social media, particularly Facebook; however, the absence of an official website limits public access to information and restricts opportunities for broader stakeholder engagement. A website could serve not only as a tool for transparency and public awareness but also as a platform for feedback and public consultation.

The College's current demonstration of social responsibility is insufficient. It does not organize public open events that would contribute to the dissemination of professional, educational, and value-based information to society and stakeholders. To strengthen community engagement and reinforce the College's public role, it is advisable to organize educational, informational, and cultural events, involving both internal and external stakeholders.

In the area of internationalization, certain positive initiatives have been recorded, particularly the organization of events in foreign languages, the planning of selected inter-institutional collaborations, and the search for international partners. The College cooperates with the Charentsavan

Municipality and institutions in the production and service sectors, and it plans to take steps toward implementing a dual education system. However, the current international partnerships are still in their initial stages and have not yet been institutionalised. The absence of formal documentation and designated responsible units or personnel limits the development of internationalization activities. Consistent work in this direction, along with promoting student and academic staff participation in mobility and exchange programs, may significantly improve the quality and competitiveness of education.

Strengths of the Institution:

- Development and implementation of new VET programmes in recent years, based on labor market needs analysis.
- Availability of preliminary financial calculations for acquiring the material and technical resources necessary for programme implementation.
- Alignment of the VET programmes with the requirements of employers in the region.
- Involvement of employer-lecturers in the delivery of certain VET programmes.
- Effective organisation of practical training, ensuring the acquisition of students' practical skills.
- A stable increase in student enrolment.

Weaknesses of the Institution:

- Implementation of managerial activities by senior and mid-level managers based solely on personal experience, without clearly established performance indicators.
- Limited and passive involvement of internal stakeholders in governing bodies.
- Need to enhance data-driven analysis and evidence-based decision-making within quality assurance processes.
- Absence of systematic review and continuous improvement mechanisms for VET programmes.
- Irregular cooperation and communication with employers regarding the review and modernisation of VET programmes.
- Low employment rates of graduates in their field of study.
- Need for modernisation of the learning environment, including infrastructure and facilities.
- Insufficient provision of research-oriented tasks to students.
- Lack of coherence between identified students' needs and subsequent improvement

actions.

- Insufficient feedback mechanisms with the broader community.
- Absence of an official website and limited public information, resulting in insufficient awareness of the College among stakeholders.
- Weak mechanisms for studying and integrating international best practices.

Main recommendations:

Data-Driven Management

1. Diversify quality data collection methods by incorporating not only surveys, but also focus groups, observations, and other formats of feedback to ensure comprehensive analysis.
2. Promote active involvement of stakeholders, ensuring that students, academic staff, and administrative personnel participate meaningfully in data collection, analysis, and decision-making related to continuous improvement.
3. Apply the PDCA cycle fully and consistently across all core processes to ensure sustainability and development of the internal quality assurance system.
4. Integrate quality assurance mechanisms across all institutional domains (educational, administrative, financial, and strategic), ensuring system-wide quality governance.
5. Develop a financial diversification strategy, including the attraction of grants, programmes, and donations, to strengthen institutional financial sustainability.
6. Implement a flexible and data-driven management model, responsive to regional labor market needs and enhance the competitiveness of the College.
7. Improve resource management practices, ensuring effective and targeted use of technical, material, and human resources in alignment with strategic objectives.
8. Review and clarify the Key Performance Indicators to ensure measurability of outcomes and establish a foundation for continuous monitoring and evidence-based improvement.
9. Establish clear mechanisms linking strategic planning with implementation, including defined responsibilities, timelines, periodic performance evaluation, and financial alignment to ensure effective monitoring of strategic objectives.

Credible Awarding of Qualifications

10. Develop and implement a continuous monitoring mechanism for academic programmes, incorporating periodic data collection on student performance, faculty evaluation, and learning outcomes. Ensure the involvement of external stakeholders (employers and graduates) in programme review and improvement processes.
11. Develop a unified methodological guideline for teaching, integrating subject-specific pedagogical approaches, learning methods, and student-centred instructional practices.
12. Introduce a benchmarking policy to conduct comparative analyses with other colleges, identify best practices, and localize them for curriculum modernization and enhancement of programme competitiveness.
13. Implement a comprehensive faculty evaluation system that includes student feedback, class observations, and peer review. Use evaluation results for planning professional development, recognition, and evidence-based human resource management.
14. Establish a unified system and repository of assignments, including practical tasks, case analyses, and project-based learning activities to foster analytical, critical, and creative thinking skills among students.
15. Develop a faculty development policy, incorporating programmes for subject-specific, methodological, and digital skills enhancement, and define mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of professional development activities to ensure their relevance and impact.
16. Develop and implement a faculty retention and sustainability policy, based on analysis of age and professional structure, to build a human resources reserve and mitigate risks related to staffing shortages.
17. Establish mutually beneficial cooperation frameworks with employers, including joint training initiatives, access to industrial resources, and employer-instructor involvement in the educational process.

Long-Term Development

18. Ensure student participation in governance processes by introducing mechanisms through which students can present proposals and take part in decision-making (e.g., defined mandates for the Student Council, regular regulated meetings with the administration).
19. Develop a research activity strategy for the College, defining priority research topics and

directions for each speciality, thus strengthening the scientific component of the educational process.

20. Establish a unified approach for designing learning tasks, incorporating applied problems, case analyses, and mini-research projects aimed at developing students' analytical and critical thinking skills.
21. Encourage faculty involvement in research activities, both individually and in collaboration with students.
22. Promote faculty engagement in small-scale professional research projects, involving students in joint formats to foster a research culture and deepen students' professional interests.
23. Develop and implement a unified policy and format for reporting, ensuring the inclusion of an analytical component to support the identification and prevention of issues.
24. Develop and implement a standardised reporting policy and format, making analytical reporting mandatory to support problem identification, prevention, and evidence-based decision-making.
25. Develop and implement a knowledge dissemination policy for the public, promoting interaction between the College and the community through open lectures, public discussions with employers, etc.
26. Create and launch an official website for the College as the primary platform for communication, transparency, and public information, with dedicated sections and access interfaces for different internal and external stakeholders.
27. Develop and implement a strategy for external relations and internationalization, clarifying partnership directions, objectives, and assessment formats to ensure systematic and goal-oriented collaboration.
28. Improve foreign language communication skills through targeted programmes for faculty and students, promoting involvement in international initiatives.
29. Enhance cooperation with international partners by expanding the partnership network, establishing new agreements, and promoting student and faculty participation in international projects and programmes.

DESCRIPTION OF EXTERNAL REVIEW

COMPOSITION OF EXPERT PANEL

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

- **Hermine Grigoryan** – Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences at Vanadzor State University named after H. Tumanyan, Associate Professor at the Department of Mathematics and Informatics, PhD in Physical and Mathematical Sciences, Head of the Expert Panel.
- **Elene Harutyunyan** – Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Applied Mathematics and Physics at the National Polytechnic University of Armenia, Lecturer at the Department of General Mathematical Education, Expert Panel Member.
- **Esfira Khachatryan** – English Language Lecturer at Kotayk Regional State College, Expert Panel Member.
- **Lilit Sahakyan** – Student of Finance at European University of Armenia, Student Member of the Expert Panel.

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

The work of the Expert Panel was coordinated by Lilit Ghazaryan, Specialist at the Secretariat Department of 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 (06.12.2024) by submitting an ANQA application, including the application form, 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 deciding to accept the application(17.01.2025) , ANQA and the College signed an agreement. The timetable of activities was prepared and approved.

Self-evaluation

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

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

The revised self-evaluation of the institutional capacities of Charentsavan State College was submitted on 16 April 2025. Representatives of the institution's administrative and educational staff, lecturers, and students participated in the self-evaluation process.

Preparatory phase

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

Preparatory visit

Before the site visit, a preparatory visit to the college was carried out on 19.05.2025. 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 site visit schedule 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 26-28, 2025. During the week preceding the site visit, the expert panel members and the coordinator visited the college, observed its infrastructure and resources, conducted class observations, and observed exams. Then the experts and the coordinator

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

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

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

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

Expert panel report

The expert panel members and the ANQA coordinator prepared the preliminary version of the expert report, which, following the panel's approval on August 05, 2025, was provided to the College. On 18 August 2025, the ANQA received the College's consent regarding the preliminary report. Subsequently, the Expert Panel prepared the final version of the report, which was approved by the panel on 3 September 2025 and submitted to the College.

Lilit Ghazaryan

Coordinator of the Expert Panel

09.03.2025

EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

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