

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



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

Yerevan – 2025

INTRODUCTION

The institutional accreditation of Gavar State College of Arts (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

Gavar State Music College (currently Gavar State College of Arts, hereinafter referred to as GSCA) was established in 1989.

Since its establishment, the College's activities have been aimed at providing quality mid-level professional education, preparing competent specialists, enhancing graduates' competitiveness in the labor market, aligning educational programs with the socio-economic development needs of the country, ensuring the comparability of educational content with international standards, and promoting transparency, accessibility, and equity in the educational process.

The College is undergoing its first institutional accreditation.

Development Directions and Educational Programmes

Gavar State College of Arts delivers three mid-level professional educational programs aligned with Level 5 of the National Qualifications Framework, namely:

- Instrumental Performance Art (by instrument type: piano, shvi, duduk, dhol, qanun; qualification: Musical Instrument Performer and Instructor),
- Vocal Performance (qualification: Singer-Performer), and
- Painting (qualification: Artist-Instructor).

The College currently enrolls 107 students, with education delivered in a full-time (on-campus) mode. Most students study under the state-funded (tuition-free) system. Only five students are enrolled on a fee-paying basis. Tuition fees have remained unchanged in recent years despite the region's social and economic challenges.

Of the 80 graduates who completed their studies between 2021 and 2024, 60% are employed, of whom 37.5% work in their field of qualification. At the same time, 17.5% of graduates continue their education at higher education institutions, predominantly in the same field of specialization.

In the 2025–2026 academic year, the College employs 40 teaching staff members (including accompanists), of whom 30 hold higher education qualifications and 10 hold mid-level professional qualifications. There are 21 full-time (core) teaching staff members, with 19 lecturers employed part-time. Eight lecturers have relevant practical professional experience.

The College also actively promotes its graduates' involvement in teaching, viewing this practice as a means of staff recruitment and sustainability. Currently, 12 College graduates are employed as teaching staff.

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

The expertise of the Gavar State College of Arts' institutional capacities was assessed by the independent expert panel formed in accordance with the requirements of the “Regulation on the Formation of the Expert Panel” of the «National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance» Foundation. The evaluation was conducted in accordance with 10 institutional accreditation criteria outlined in the RA Government Decree N 959-Ն, dated June 30, 2011.

During the expert evaluation, the panel recognised the College's significant role and importance in the region's cultural and arts sector. At the same time, it was considered that the College is undergoing institutional accreditation for the first time and is currently at an early stage of developing a quality assurance culture.

In conducting the evaluation, the expert panel considered that the College is a mid-level professional education institution, whose mission is to: “carry out educational activities aimed at preparing graduates capable of applying acquired knowledge in practice within the fields of arts, through knowledge creation and skills development, transmission and dissemination, within the framework of the state strategy for the development of professional education; fostering learners’ national identity and aligning their professional conduct and decision-making with national interests; prioritizing education quality through the integration of national best traditions and international experience; and ensuring accessibility, transparency of educational organization, and the promotion of humanistic values.”

Gavar State College of Arts operates in accordance with its mission and delivers academic programs aligned with Level 5 of the National Qualifications Framework. The College has systematized its regulatory and documentary framework by establishing relevant internal regulations and planning documents, thereby ensuring the continuity and stability of institutional governance.

At the same time, according to the panel’s assessment, the College’s strategic planning and decision-making processes are not yet sufficiently data-driven. The information collected is predominantly descriptive, and its analysis remains incomplete and irregular. As a result, planning and reporting processes do not always adequately reflect actual outcomes and their impact. The College, therefore, requires a systematic mechanism for regular data collection and analysis to enable more evidence-based managerial decision-making and ensure a more targeted and efficient use of resources.

The College continues to develop three core academic programs: “Instrumental Performance Arts,” “Vocal Studies,” and “Painting.” The implementation of these programs contributes to the development of students’ professional knowledge and practical skills, enabling the College to prepare graduates who are competitive in the labor market. However, the absence of clearly defined assessment criteria and measurable learning outcomes limits the objective evaluation of students’ academic progress and achievement.

The academic staff comprises experienced professionals and early-career lecturers, whose engagement contributes to the diversification of teaching methodologies. The involvement of employer-practitioners provides students with exposure to real-world professional practice in the field.

However, the College does not yet have a structured and planned system for staff development and experience exchange. Implementing a continuous professional development policy would enhance teaching quality, promote the application of innovative pedagogical approaches, and modernize the teaching and learning process.

The integration of research activities into the teaching process is widely regarded as a positive development. Students undertake analytical and creative assignments that foster the development of their professional thinking. Nevertheless, the organization and assessment of research activities are not implemented through a unified approach. Clarifying research methodology and introducing clear assessment criteria would provide a more systematic framework, thereby improving students' analytical competencies and creative thinking skills.

The College demonstrates effective management of its limited financial resources, enabling the sustainable delivery of its educational programmes. At the same time, modernising facilities and technical resources remains a priority challenge. Developing and implementing a financial diversification strategy, including grant funding and partnership-based programs, would enable the ongoing development of the material and technical infrastructure.

Mechanisms for identifying and responding to students' needs have improved the learning environment, including classroom renovations and the procurement of necessary instructional materials. However, the Career Centre's activities currently have a limited impact on graduate employment outcomes. If the collection and analysis of graduate data are conducted regularly and systematically, the College will be better placed to align its educational programmes with labor market demands and to increase graduate employability.

The College demonstrates its public and social responsibility through cultural engagement with the community, including the organization of concerts, exhibitions, and other cultural events. These initiatives enhance community visibility and strengthen the institution's public reputation. The newly established official website offers opportunities to ensure transparency in information; however, comprehensive content development and regular updates are necessary to improve stakeholder awareness and engagement.

In international cooperation, the College is still at an initial stage of development. The provision of foreign language courses and participation in international programs could significantly expand opportunities for institutional development and staff capacity building. Consistent efforts in this direction would enhance the professional competencies of both academic staff and students, facilitate the exchange of international experience, and support the modernisation of educational programs.

The expert panel concludes that the College has a solid foundation for further development. The student-centred approaches currently in place may serve as a significant driver for institutional progress. To this end, the College needs to strengthen a data-informed decision-making culture, clarify and further develop the assessment system, enhance the research component, and expand international cooperation. These measures will enable the institution to achieve its strategic objectives by preparing competitive, creative, and labor market-relevant professionals in line with contemporary

requirements.

Strengths of the Institution:

- Continuous staffing of regional art and music schools with graduates of the College engaged as teaching staff.
- Predominance of the practical component within modules, aimed at the development of students' performance skills.
- Engagement of young lecturers and graduates to ensure the stability of the academic staff and the continuity of academic programs.
- Involvement of practitioners with relevant professional experience in the teaching and learning process, aimed at strengthening students' practical skills and performance competencies.
- Creative nature of student assignments, fostering artistic expression and professional development.
- Initiatives undertaken by the College to promote the transmission of cultural values within the region, contributing to cultural sustainability and community engagement.

Weaknesses of the Institution:

- Lack of clearly defined performance indicators for the evaluation of strategic objectives.
- Weak linkage between planning and accountability processes, with reports being predominantly descriptive and insufficiently analytical.
- Absence of alternative funding sources and revenue diversification mechanisms.
- Insufficiently defined assessment criteria for student assignments.
- Non-systematic approach to academic staff needs assessment and capacity development.
- Fragmented and unsystematic implementation of external relations and experience-sharing activities.
- Low level of foreign language proficiency among internal stakeholders, accompanied by a lack of institutional initiatives aimed at improving language competencies.
- Ineffective application of data collection mechanisms and limited reliance on reliable, evidence-based data in managerial decision-making.

Main recommendations:

Data-Driven Management

- Review the College's mission statement by clearly and explicitly defining the professional fields in which the College prepares specialists (e.g., music, visual arts) and the expected graduate outcomes, ensuring that the mission serves as a practical framework for institutional programmes, planning, and decision-making.
- Revisit the objectives of the Strategic Development Plan by defining measurable outcomes and expected impacts for each objective (e.g., increased graduate employability, expanded cooperation with employers), thereby transforming the document into an effective management and evaluation tool.
- Reconsider the format and role of the Governing Council, ensuring it goes beyond routine approvals and functions as a substantive platform for discussing long-term initiatives and new development directions, informed by data analysis and resource assessment.
- Review and optimise the College's organisational structure by clarifying functions and strengthening horizontal coordination among units, to enhance the coherence and effectiveness of the management system.
- Clarify the governance framework of academic programs by appointing a designated program coordinator for each program, whose responsibilities include periodic program review, data analysis, and the development of improvement action plans.
- Operationalise the quality assurance system in line with the PDCA cycle, ensuring all processes are systematically planned, implemented, evaluated, and improved, thereby positioning QA as a core mechanism for continuous improvement.
- Improve survey methodologies by clearly defining their objectives, periodicity, and questionnaire structure, ensuring that the collected data provide a reliable basis for evidence-based decision-making and targeted improvement actions.
- Review financial planning practices by aligning resource allocation with long-term development priorities, particularly in academic staff professional development, modernisation of the learning environment, and the introduction of new educational programmes.

Credible Awarding of Qualifications

- Map the learning outcomes by clearly aligning them with suitable teaching, learning, and assessment methods and tools.
- Conduct benchmarking of academic programs with comparable national and international institutions to identify strengths and weaknesses and localise good practices.
- Develop mechanisms to enhance students' communication and self-presentation skills by integrating mandatory components, including the interpretation of creative works, oral presentations, and structured discussions.
- Ensure the clarification of internship/practicum logbooks and assessment tools, differentiating between learning outcomes related to performance skills and teaching competencies, to provide a more comprehensive assessment of students' professional readiness.
- Establish clear criteria for formative and summative assessment, differentiating between the assessment of knowledge, skills, and competencies, and ensuring transparency of assessment requirements for students.
- Introduce explicit criteria for academic staff evaluation (including student progress, application of teaching methodologies, and active student engagement), to serve as a basis for incentive mechanisms and professional development programs.
- Carry out periodic analysis of class observation results, identifying individual issues, synthesizing overall trends, and developing evidence-based improvement actions accordingly
- Plan targeted professional development activities for academic staff, tailored to the specific characteristics of each academic program and encompassing methodological, pedagogical, and practical skill enhancement.
- Develop a planned policy for the acquisition and renewal of professional literature, musical instruments, and technical equipment, reducing dependence on donations and ensuring the regular updating of resources in line with program requirements.
- Initiate the attraction of grant-funded projects and partnership-based financing and expand the provision of short-term training courses to secure additional financial resources.

Long-Term Development

- Introduce a structured and periodic graduate tracer study system (6 months, 1 year, and 3 years after graduation), using the results to review academic programs in line with labor market needs, employer expectations, and graduate employment outcomes.
- Establish an academic staff incentive system that encourages engagement in research activities, the integration of research outcomes into the teaching–learning process, and joint academic or creative initiatives undertaken with students.
- Define a unified reporting framework that includes not only quantitative indicators but also analytical reflections on implemented processes, outlining strengths and weaknesses as well as planned improvement actions.
- Set clear timelines and assign responsibility for updating the college website and social media (Facebook) content, ensuring the availability of comprehensive, accurate, and up-to-date information on institutional activities.
- Clarify expectations for the internationalisation process by explicitly defining objectives, assigning responsible units or individuals, and establishing measurable performance indicators.
- Organise structured experience-sharing activities following academic staff and student participation in international competitions and programmes, with the aim of integrating acquired knowledge and skills into the academic programs.
- Develop systematic mechanisms for employer involvement, not only in teaching activities but also in the review and continuous monitoring of academic programs.
- Assess the level of foreign-language proficiency among internal stakeholders and, based on the results, plan targeted measures to enhance language competence.

Gayane Avetisyan, Chair of Expert Panel / 04.12.2025

DESCRIPTION OF EXTERNAL REVIEW

COMPOSITION OF EXPERT PANEL

The following expert panel conducted an external evaluation of Gavar State College of Arts' institutional capacities.

- **Gayane Avetisyan**, PhD in Geographical Sciences, Associate Professor, Head of the Quality Assurance Unit at Shirak State University, Chair of the Expert Panel.
- **Elena Movsesyan**, Deputy Director for Educational and Organizational Affairs at Yerevan State College of Fine Arts named after P. Terlemezyan, Member of the Expert Panel.
- **Anna Manaseryan**, Lecturer at Yerevan A. Babajanyan Music and Pedagogical College, Member of the Expert Panel.
- **Vova Arzumanyan**, first-year Master's student at the Yerevan State Institute of Theatre and Cinema, Student Member of the Expert Panel.

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

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

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

PROCESS OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW

The College applied for state institutional accreditation by submitting an ANQA application, 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, 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 self-evaluation of Gavar State College of Arts' institutional capacities was submitted on May 20, 2025. The self-assessment was conducted by the college's staff, including administrative, teaching, and support staff. A student was also included in the evaluation team.

Preparatory phase

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

Preparatory visit

Before the site visit, a preparatory online visit to the college was carried out on 11.09.2025. 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 September 22-24, 2025. During the week preceding the site visit, the expert panel members and the coordinator visited the college, observed its infrastructure and resources, conducted class observations, and observed exams. Then the experts and the coordinator had a closed meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to identify the college's strengths and weaknesses against the standards, clarify the questions to be asked of the target groups, and discuss

the meeting procedures and next steps.

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

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

With the ANQA coordinator, the members of the expert panel prepared the preliminary version of the expert report, which the experts reviewed and agreed. The preliminary report was provided to the college on 18 November 2025. The college did not submit any comments or objections to the preliminary report. Upon receipt of the college's written confirmation, the expert panel prepared the final version of the report.

Meri Barseghyan

Coordinator of the Expert Panel

04.12.2025

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>	Satisfactory
<i>VII. Infrastructure and Resources</i>	Satisfactory
<i>VIII. Societal Responsibility</i>	Satisfactory
<i>IX. External Relations and Internationalization</i>	Unsatisfactory
<i>X. Internal Quality Assurance System</i>	Unsatisfactory