

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



**EXPERT PANEL REPORT
INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION OF
MEDICAL COLLEGE AFTER MEHRABYAN**

Yerevan – 2025

INTRODUCTION

The institutional accreditation of the “Medical College after Mehrabyan” LLC (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 conducted by the independent expert panel established in accordance with the requirements set by the “National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance” foundation under the regulation on “Formation of the Expert Panel”. The Panel comprises 4 local experts.

The accreditation process was funded by the College.

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

The report hereby presents the results of the evaluation of the TLI's institutional capacities against 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 1996 as the Mehrabyan Medical College. In 2004, based on the College, a Medical Institute was founded, initially comprising a single faculty: the Faculty of Stomatology. In 2006, a second faculty, the Faculty of Pharmacy, was established within the Institute.

In the 2010/2011 academic year, the institution transitioned to a two-cycle degree system, offering Bachelor's and Master's programs. By Order of the RA Minister of Education and Science (No. 1081-A/Ք, dated 30 December 2015), the higher education institution, the Medical Institute of the Mehrabyan Medical Educational Complex, was closed, and the institution thereafter operated exclusively as a secondary vocational education institution, namely the Medical College.

The registered address of the College is: 21 Hr. Kochari Street, 51 Komitas Avenue, Yerevan, Republic of Armenia.

Development Directions and Academic Programs

The institution is currently undergoing the second cycle of institutional accreditation. Following the completion of the previous accreditation period, the institution developed a new Strategic Plan, the key priorities of which include enhancing and modernising the material and technical infrastructure, deepening international cooperation, expanding the partnership network, and improving the governance system.

The Mehrabyan Medical College (MMC) offers six secondary vocational medical programmes in the following specialities: Nursing, Midwifery, Dental Technology, Pharmacy, Medical Cosmetology, and one program in the service sector: Cosmetics and Make-up Art.

In the 2023–2024 academic year, the College had 351 students enrolled. Between the 2020–2021 and 2023–2024 academic years, the student population increased by 118. To deliver the educational programmes, the College employs 44 teaching staff, of whom 43 hold higher education qualifications, and one holds secondary vocational education qualifications.

The College had previously been advised to take measures to ensure staff substitutability. The expert panel notes that the quantitative composition of the teaching staff involved in the general and specialised professional cycles of the reviewed educational programmes is as follows:

1. In the Nursing and Midwifery programs, 9 faculty members, all with relevant professional qualifications.
2. In the Pharmacy and Medical Cosmetology programs, 7 faculty members, 5 of whom hold relevant professional qualifications, and 2 are also employers.

3. In the Dental Technology program, there are 3 specialists, 2 of whom are employers.

Tracer study results indicate that in 2021, 91% of graduates were employed, of whom 75% were employed in their field of specialisation.

In 2022, 75% of graduates secured employment, of whom 80% were employed in their field of study.

In 2023, 76% of graduates were employed, and 85% of those employed were engaged in professional activities aligned with their qualifications.

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

The expertise of the College of the “Medical College after Mehrabyan” LLC 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.

Following the first cycle of accreditation, the overall development and managerial decision-making at Mehrabyan Medical College were guided by the 2021–2025 Strategic Plan (hereinafter, SP), which largely incorporated the recommendations from the previous accreditation process. Based on the outcomes of the prior accreditation, the College has undertaken several improvement measures, including clarifying its strategic priorities, enhancing its professional academic programs, continuously improving its resources and infrastructure, engaging field specialists as invited lecturers, and creating opportunities for student research.

As a private educational institution, the Mehrabyan Medical College has a governance structure that, to some extent, differs due to its founder-led management model. The Director simultaneously serves as Chair of the Founders’ Council, the highest governing body, and of the Academic (Pedagogical) Council, thereby establishing a predominantly vertical governance approach.

Although senior management, particularly the Director, demonstrates some flexibility and initiates development-oriented measures, including campus improvements, resource acquisition, engagement of external partners, and diversification of financial sources. It should be noted that the existing governance model does not fully ensure balanced stakeholder participation across all levels of management. Furthermore, the absence of clearly defined, measurable performance indicators for evaluating governance effectiveness limits the comprehensive, evidence-based assessment of strategic goal implementation, institutional progress, and overall management performance.

Following the previous accreditation, the College introduced changes to its governance structure, creating new positions to ensure the effective implementation of its strategic objectives. However, the expert panel notes that in some cases there is a significant concentration of workload, with a single staff member coordinating multiple functional areas simultaneously. This limits the effective organisation of activities and may undermine the balanced and comprehensive implementation of the strategic goals. In addition, mechanisms for data collection and analysis have not yet become an integral part of the institutional management culture, and the Director’s annual reports, being largely descriptive, are not systematically aligned with the strategic objectives.

Regarding quality assurance processes and evidence-based decision-making, the expert panel notes that data are collected through surveys of students, graduates, academic staff, and, in some cases, employers. However, the data collection process lacks regularity, sufficient stakeholder coverage, and

methodological clarity. Most surveys have been conducted only once, the scope of respondents has been limited, and questionnaires frequently combine multiple themes within a single question without clear differentiation of components. As a result, the analyses remain largely superficial, are not grounded in in-depth cause-and-effect analysis and often do not lead to substantive managerial decisions.

In summary, the governance system at MMC has shown some development, largely driven by the initiatives and individual efforts of the leadership, particularly the Director, and a limited number of staff. Nevertheless, the decision-making process is not yet sufficiently grounded in systematic and analytical data, and therefore evidence-based management remains in a developmental stage.

The College has increased the involvement of teaching staff recruited from the professional field, who assign tasks derived from real-world professional settings, thereby contributing to the development of students' practical competencies. Practitioners have been engaged across all academic programs, which, to some extent, ensures the balanced development and implementation of these programs.

Regarding the credibility of the qualifications awarded to students, the expert panel notes that, following the previous accreditation, the College has strengthened its internal resource base and specialised cabinets, and expanded its network of employers. This has enabled students to spend more time in authentic professional environments and to undertake practical tasks in real workplace settings. The engagement of practitioner-lecturers in all APs further supports the balanced delivery of the programs.

Practical sessions are delivered in the College's simulation and specialised classrooms, as well as in the material and technical facilities of partner organisations. However, from the perspective of internal resource management, the expert panel notes that the College holds several instructional resources distributed across classrooms that are not always utilised in a targeted and systematic manner. The panel emphasises that these resources could be more effectively coordinated and consolidated through the establishment of well-equipped, discipline-specific classrooms and cabinets.

Furthermore, by supplementing existing resources with basic chemical reagents that require minimal financial investment, the College could establish its own teaching laboratories, thereby enabling the implementation of a range of fundamental experiments directly within the College.

Student assessment aims to ensure the achievement of intended learning outcomes; however, the absence of unified approaches may undermine the clarity and credibility of the process. The expert panel emphasises the importance of clearly defined assessment methodology and its consistent application by all teaching staff. Regarding internships, the panel notes the College's continued efforts to organise placements in leading clinics and healthcare institutions across the Republic of Armenia. Nevertheless, the panel notes that the supervision of internships by a single individual may limit the effectiveness of monitoring and quality-control mechanisms.

The College provides a supportive learning environment for students and offers opportunities for professional development. Students volunteer at medical institutions, which contributes to the development of their practical skills and professional identity. The high employment rates among graduates further attest to the credibility and labor market relevance of the qualifications awarded through the academic programs.

Research activities at MMC are becoming increasingly active, involving both academic staff and students. The College publishes a scientific bulletin that offers faculty members the opportunity to publish for free and assigns students tasks that occasionally include research components. At the same time, the panel underscores the importance of orienting faculty research more directly toward the development issues of vocational education, thereby strengthening the link between teaching and practical application.

External relations and internationalisation at MMC are regarded as priorities for strategic development. The consistent expansion of the partnership network supports the implementation of academic programs, enhances resources, and advances students' professional development.

In summary, the expert panel concludes that the College possesses the necessary preconditions for its further institutional development.

Strengths of the Institution:

- A clearly articulated mission and strategic objectives developed based on the outcomes of the previous accreditation and stakeholder feedback, which ensure the College's continuous development and the qualitative enhancement of the educational process.
- The flexibility of the executive governance body, which has contributed to the expansion of external relations, diversification of financial resources (including the engagement of charitable foundations), and improvement of infrastructure.
- The active application of interactive teaching methods and the organization of practical training both within the College and in partner organizations, fostering the development of students' professional competencies.
- The consistent involvement of employers and field practitioners in the educational process ensures the formation of students' practical skills and alignment with labor market needs.
- The systematic renovation of classrooms and technical upgrading, as well as the introduction of modern simulation equipment through charitable support, has strengthened the development of students' practical competencies.
- The stable and high graduate employment rates in recent years demonstrate the practical relevance of the academic programs, the credibility of the qualifications awarded, and their demand in the labor market.
- The availability of research opportunities within the College for both faculty members and students.

- The established and continuously expanding international and local partnership network, which contributes to the effective implementation of academic programs and the enhancement of material, technical, and professional resources.
- The diverse communication channels applied by the College, including social media platforms, informational booklets, and the initiation of public outreach programs, ensure transparency of institutional activities.

Weaknesses of the Institution:

- The absence of measurable indicators, responsible people, expected outcomes, and clear timelines in the Strategic Plan action schedule.
- The vertical structure of the governance system, within which most of the decision-making is centralized around the Director.
- The lack of clearly defined methodology, periodicity, and inclusiveness in the implementation of quality assurance processes, which limits their overall effectiveness.
- The supervision of internships being assigned to a single staff member, together with the absence of clearly defined assessment criteria for internships, creates risks in terms of effective oversight and the transparent evaluation of students' progress.
- The absence of a systematic policy for organizing professional development and training, which particularly endangers the continuous professional growth of faculty members not actively engaged in the practical field.
- The need for renovation and technical upgrading in certain areas of the College building, including issues related to fire safety, evacuation routes, and the provision of an inclusive environment, which limits student safety and the accessibility of the educational environment.
- The organization of student consultations and supplementary classes without a clearly defined schedule, which may hinder the systematic comprehension of course material, particularly for students with absences.
- The concentration of faculty research publications on higher education-level topics and their insufficient alignment with the specific challenges of vocational education, limiting their applicability to the College's academic process.
- The limited analytical content of annual reports prepared by structural units and the Director, and the lack of linkage between reported results and the objectives of the Strategic Plan, which reduces the effectiveness of evidence-based decision-making.

Main recommendations:

Data-Driven Management

- Revise the Strategic Plan action schedule by incorporating clearly defined responsible persons, allocated financial resources, and more precise timelines to achieve the intended outcomes.
- Conduct regular monitoring of the Strategic Plan to align with its goals and objectives.

- Establish measurable performance indicators to evaluate the College's effectiveness, derived from the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan, thereby enabling the founders and leadership to make more evidence-based, results-oriented decisions grounded in performance and progress.
- Establish a new collegial governance body with leadership independent of the Director, including representation from internal and external stakeholders, to ensure independent evaluation of the Director's performance and to foster a culture of transparent, results-based governance.
- Enhance the involvement of middle management structures (cycle committees) in governance processes by engaging their professional expertise in strategic planning, resource allocation, and decision-making on the organisation of the educational process.
- Organise regular orientation meetings for employer-practitioners involved in teaching, during which the College's regulatory and policy documents are presented, thereby supporting their full integration into the academic process.
- Ensure coherence between the long-term Strategic Plan and short-term unit-level action plans and establish a clear link between annual reports and strategic objectives, thereby supporting systematic, results-based assessment of strategic progress.
- Review and refine the scope of functions of the Quality Assurance Center, placing greater emphasis on core quality assurance processes to ensure focus and effectiveness.
- Ensure that surveys are conducted using a clearly defined methodology, with established periodicity and broad stakeholder participation, and deepen the analysis to move beyond satisfaction measurement towards the systematic identification of underlying issues.
- Diversify data collection methods within quality assurance processes to ensure the objectivity and reliability of evidence.
- Regularly publish the results and analyses of quality assurance processes on the College's official website to enhance transparency.

Credible Awarding of Qualifications

- Consider introducing elective and optional courses within the VET programs to enhance program flexibility and ensure alignment with students' professional interests and the evolving needs of the labor market.
- Establish a unified repository of student assignments, assessment sheets (checklists), and grading criteria to increase assessment transparency and ensure the continuous improvement of assigned tasks.
- Review the guidelines for monitoring and revising academic programs, or introduce a new regulation that defines the responsible structures, periodicity, tools, and procedures for program monitoring, thereby ensuring the systematic and continuous improvement of VET programs.

- Clarify the assessment criteria for internships in line with the professional profiles of host organisations and align them with the intended learning outcomes of the modular programs.
- Ensure the renovation of classrooms in the Komitas 51 building and introduce fire safety and evacuation systems to enhance the safety of the learning environment.
- Digitalise the library fund and enrich it with up-to-date professional literature, including Armenian and foreign language sources, to ensure access to relevant academic information and enhance the modernity of the learning environment.
- Review the adequacy of laboratory conditions within the “Pharmacy” academic program, systematise and centralise instructional and professional resources by establishing thematically equipped specialised classrooms (e.g., chemistry, physics), and gradually develop a sustainable and self-sufficient resource base to organise practical and laboratory sessions.

Long-Term Development

- Consider introducing a mandatory policy for compensating for missed coursework, including a clear timetable, responsible parties, and the methods to be applied, to ensure the continuity of the educational process and the consistent progression of students’ academic performance.
- Introduce clearly defined formal and content requirements for term papers and independent assignments, thereby fostering students’ ability to collect and analyse data independently and to formulate well-grounded conclusions.
- Expand the scope of research topics by incorporating applied and labor market–driven issues and linking them to students’ practical and internship activities, with the aim of strengthening their professional reasoning and research competencies.
- Assess the effectiveness of course papers in the “Nursing” VET program and, if outcomes are positive, disseminate the experience across other VET programs.
- Ensure the consistent application of a unified reporting format across all structural units, expanding the inclusion of analytical components and comparative analyses aligned with the objectives of the Strategic Plan.
- Revise the structure of the Director’s annual report to align it with the objectives and indicators of the Strategic Plan, ensuring a more analytical, strategically oriented approach that enhances the effectiveness of governance processes.
- Continue the periodic organisation of foreign-language training for the academic staff, while ensuring the ongoing evaluation of its effectiveness.
- Continue efforts to engage international partners and participate in Erasmus+ programs, with the objective of promoting experience exchange and capacity building among students and staff.

DESCRIPTION OF EXTERNAL REVIEW

COMPOSITION OF EXPERT PANEL

An external evaluation of the institutional capacities of the College of the “Medical College after Mehrabyan” LLC was carried out by the following expert panel.

- **Gagik Ktryan**- Lecturer at the European University of Armenia, PhD in Physical and Mathematical Sciences, Head of the Expert Panel.
- **Naira Arshakyan**- Lecturer at the Department of Pharmacognosy, Yerevan State Medical University, Member of the Expert Panel.
- **Asya Hakobyan**- Head of the Internship Department at the Base Medical College, Lecturer in Anatomy and Pathology, Member of the Expert Panel.
- **Areg Khalapyan**-Student at Yerevan Base Medical College, Student Member of the Expert Panel.

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

The expert panel's work was coordinated by Anahit Terteryan, a specialist in the Institutional and Program Accreditation 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 through ANQA, submitting the application form, copies of the license, and the required appendices.

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

Following the application's acceptance, an agreement was signed between ANQA and the College. The timetable of activities was prepared and approved.

Self-evaluation

Based on ANQA observations, the revised institutional self-evaluation of the College's institutional capacities was submitted to ANQA on 22 November 2024. The self-evaluation was conducted in collaboration with the institution's management, administrative staff, academic staff, academic support staff, and students.

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 preliminary assessment results 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 conducted on February 17, 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 March 12-14, 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 reviewed 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 relative to the standards, clarify the questions to be asked of the target groups, and discuss the meeting procedure and next steps.

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

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

The expert panel reached a conclusion on the criteria 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 May 23, 2025. The College submitted its response to the

preliminary version of the Report to ANQA on June 2, 2025. ANQA forwarded the College's comments to the experts. Based on the submitted observations, the Expert Panel prepared the final version of the Expert Report, which was approved by the Panel on June 13, 2025.

Anahit Terteryan

Coordinator of the Expert Panel/ 13.06.2025

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>	Satisfactory
<i>X. Internal Quality Assurance System</i>	Unsatisfactory