

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



**EXPERT PANEL REPORT
INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION OF
"MKHITAR SEBASTATSI" EDUCATIONAL COMPLEX SNCO (COLLEGE)**

Yerevan – 2025

INTRODUCTION

The institutional accreditation of the "Mkhitar Sebastatsi" Educational Complex SNCO(College) (hereinafter referred to as TLI or college) is carried out based on an application submitted by the College. The process of institutional accreditation is organized 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 an independent expert panel, comprising four local experts, as mandated by the National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation's regulations on "Formation of the Expert Panel."

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

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 and its impact on educational content.

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

Context of the Evaluation of the College's Activities

The activities and history of the TLI

The “Mkhitar Sebastatsi” Educational Complex was established in 1989 by a decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia and is in Yerevan. The College operates as a branch of the “Mkhitar Sebastatsi” Educational Complex and provides preliminary vocational (craft) and middle vocational education. The College has been authorized to conduct educational activities under vocational programs since 2004 for middle vocational education and since 2007 for preliminary (craft) education programs. Both programs were validated in 2017. This is the first time the College of the “Mkhitar Sebastatsi” Educational Complex is undergoing institutional accreditation.

Development Directions and Educational Programs of the College.

The College of the “Mkhitar Sebastatsi” Educational Complex offers 14 preliminary and middle vocational education programs, including: Preschool Education, Computer Graphic Design, Tourism Services Organization with Advanced Foreign Language Instruction, Library Science, Maintenance of Computing Equipment and Computer Networks, Tourism, Tourism Services Organization with Advanced Foreign Language Instruction, Fermentation Technology and Winemaking, Photography, Clothing Design, Marketing, Decorative Applied Arts and Folk Crafts, Winemaking and Juice Production, Bakery Production Technology, and Horticulture. In recent years, the Marketing speciality was introduced, and starting from the 2025–2026 academic year, the College plans to implement new VET programs in Computer Graphics, Beekeeping, and Robotics.

Currently, 419 students are enrolled at the College. Tracer studies conducted over the past five years show that out of 516 graduates, 54 have continued their education at universities, and 426 are employed, 261 of whom work in their field of specialization.

Currently, the College employs 48 lecturers, including 7 employers. As of September 1, 2023, 46 lecturers hold higher education degrees, 2 have middle vocational education, and 1 is a doctoral candidate at the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia. Of the teaching staff, 46 work full-time, and 2 are part-time lecturers.

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

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, carried out the expertise of "Mkhitar Sebastatsi" Educational Complex SNCO (College) institutional capacities. The evaluation was conducted according to 10 institutional accreditation criteria set by the RA Government Decree N 959-Ն, dated June 30, 2011.

During the evaluation process, the expert panel considered that the college is a VET institution with a clearly defined mission. The panel also considered that this is the first time the “Mkhitar Sebastatsi” Educational Complex College is undergoing institutional accreditation and acknowledged the college’s unique relationship with the educational complex.

The college has an articulated mission and objectives that align with quality assurance standards and aim to prepare competitive and modern professionals. It has established a student-centered and innovative educational environment that fosters creativity. However, the absence of a clear link between actions and goals in the development plan and the lack of designated responsibilities, budgeting, and evaluation mechanisms may limit the effectiveness of implemented programs.

The college operates through collegial and individual governance structures, with a degree of transparency and a collaborative culture. There are also examples of continuous improvement and the application of innovative approaches. Nevertheless, the lack of financial independence and shortcomings in planning, accountability systems, and analytical tools constrain the overall effectiveness of the management system.

The expert panel notes a distinctive educational environment within the college - one that is rooted in national cultural values and innovative approaches. At the same time, there is a noticeable emphasis on collaborative work principles, leadership, and a self-sustaining management model. The college has laid the foundations for developing a quality assurance system and cultivating a quality culture. However, the system is still in the early stages of establishment. While documentation and organizational structures exist for various processes, mechanisms, tools, and analytical systems remain underdeveloped, which limits the efficiency and objectivity of quality assurance activities.

As a result, the expert panel concludes that while the college's improvements are significant and contribute to the development of evidence-based management processes, further work remains to be done in this direction.

The “Mkhitar Sebastatsi” Educational Complex College offers academic programs that meet contemporary requirements, incorporating innovative methods and original and alternative approaches and focusing on the development of students' practical and research skills. The college operates in an environment that integrates creativity and national culture, ensuring the continuous improvement of the educational process. However, insufficient data analysis, a lack of emphasis on theoretical knowledge and research, and limited transparency and consistency in the assessment process create certain constraints on the advancement of academic programs.

It is important to note that the college has strategic plans for managing its faculty, including initiatives for qualification enhancement, innovative approaches, and continuous professional development. Faculty selection is done through a unique competitive process that facilitates the recruitment of qualified professionals and supports their development from the outset. Mechanisms for faculty evaluation, incentive programs, talent pool, and advancement pathways are in place, all promoting professional growth.

However, instances of misalignment between the subjects taught and instructors' qualifications and the low number of faculty members who have passed the internal certification stage require further attention. Ensuring continuous training and recruiting qualified academic staff are essential for improving the quality of academic programs.

The college provides various resources and infrastructure necessary for the learning process, which contribute to developing students' practical skills, independence, and creative thinking. The institution emphasizes a learning culture that values the potential for making mistakes as part of the learning process. The educational complex has laboratories, workshops, gyms, technical equipment, and an inclusive educational environment. It also features a digital library, an electronic document management system, and transparent financial management. Nevertheless, there is still a need for improvement in certain areas, such as the continuous development of educational laboratories and the utilization of resources from partner organizations.

Considering the above, the expert panel finds that the Mkhitar Sebastatsi Educational Complex College ensures the credible awarding of qualifications.

The college promotes student engagement in enrollment, applies mechanisms for assessing student needs, organises pre-exam consultations, and maintains a graduate database. Public awareness is supported through information campaigns on social media, and student council activities can potentially strengthen the protection of student rights. However, the absence of monitoring mechanisms for assessing student needs, limited opportunities for foreign language instruction, and the lack of systematic analysis of the career advisor's work present challenges that require improvement.

The Mkhitar Sebastatsi Educational Complex College views research and development as essential components of the educational process. The college operates research laboratories supporting the professional growth of students and faculty. Various research-based teaching models are applied, fostering student involvement in research activities, promoting teamwork skills, and strengthening interdisciplinary connections. In this context, collaborative work among faculty members is particularly significant. Students and faculty are actively involved in research, and their work is published on blogs and in the "Dpir" e-journal. College also places importance on preventing plagiarism. However, the quality of research would benefit further from including more theoretical studies and literature analysis.

The college ensures transparent accountability and accessibility of information for stakeholders by implementing a two-tier accountability system, utilizing digital platforms, and employing feedback mechanisms. It promotes public engagement, encourages student volunteerism, and supports cultural

and social initiatives. However, the analytical basis of the reports remains insufficient, and the official website requires clearer categorization of information to improve accessibility and usability for users. Additionally, the college has the potential to embrace a role of social responsibility by sharing and disseminating its best practices.

The college actively undertakes initiatives in external relations and internationalization, contributing to the development of both student and faculty competencies, participating in international academic programs, and developing original programs that attract interest from international partners. Nonetheless, further institutionalization of certain processes, strengthening of documentation, and engagement of new partners are necessary to ensure the continuity of collaborations and enhance the level of internationalization.

Based on the above, it can be concluded that the Mkhitar Sebastatsi Educational Complex College ensures the continuous development of various processes, while sustained efforts and progress in these directions remain essential.

Strengths of the Institution:

- A learning environment that combines national culture and innovation
- A reputation built on corporate credibility
- Collaborative and leadership-based governance
- Continuous professional development of the faculty, engagement in research activities, and effective selection mechanisms
- Ongoing modernization of academic programs and practical training
- Active student involvement in the educational and research processes
- Strong linkage between educational and research activities
- Establishment of a self-sustaining system and transparency of processes
- Modern laboratories, a digitized library, and educational resources
- International cooperation and students' global experience
- Implementation of original programs and interest from international partners
- Values offered to society and dissemination of knowledge

Weaknesses of the Institution:

- Absence of functions, responsibilities, budget, and evaluation indicators in long-term and short-term plans; lack of a mid-term and short-term plan for the SP, as well as absence of performance tracking for the SP action schedule
- Lack of certain departments and/or responsible persons in alignment with the goals of the Strategic Plan
- Lack of financial independence, limited capacity for strategic expenditures, and insufficient diversification of financial income sources
- Deficiencies in mechanisms for analyzing collected data and substantiating managerial decisions; underdeveloped mechanisms for comprehensive data collection and analysis; absence of improvement plans based on evidence-based data

- Inadequate development of tools for evaluating and improving processes; lack of clear mechanisms and structures for assessing outcomes and ensuring accountability
- Absence of a quality assurance policy and an underdeveloped quality assurance culture
- Incomplete application of the PDCA cycle and irregular implementation of related processes
- Insufficient theoretical knowledge
- Limited reflection of international best practices
- Limited scope of cooperation with employers and lack of institutionalized partnerships

Recommendations:

Database management

- Ensure the organization of continuous monitoring and evaluation processes for the Strategic Plan, including the development of planning documents and conducting analyses.
- Foster stakeholders' active engagement and initiative in governance processes relevant to them by enhancing their awareness and encouraging the expression of their viewpoints.
- Take steps to diversify financial income by utilizing existing opportunities and identifying new ones.
- Improve the college's organizational structure by clarifying vertical and horizontal relationships and articulating connections with the educational complex.
- Develop strategic management mechanisms and processes by ensuring alignment among long-term, mid-term, and short-term planning and evaluation, defining measurable outcomes and indicators, clearly defining responsibilities, and allocating resources.
- Establish a transparent accountability process based on performance evaluation and analytical assessment.
- Ensure comprehensive data collection, research, and evidence-based analysis concerning college processes, leading to informed managerial decisions and reforms.
- Review and clearly define the goals, functions, responsibilities of involved bodies, and operational framework of the College's Quality Assurance Center.
- Diversify assessment tools by incorporating surveys, benchmarking, roundtable discussions, analysis of final exam results, self-assessment, SWOT analysis, and more.
- Modernize stakeholders (students, alumni, parents, employers) needs assessment mechanisms using differentiated questionnaires and ensuring consistent feedback loops.
- Enhance the knowledge and skills of individuals responsible for quality assurance through training and continuous professional development.
- Make quality assurance data and analyses accessible to both internal and external stakeholders, ensuring transparency and accountability.
- Develop a quality assurance action plan aligned with the College's strategic development programs, ensuring effective control of PDCHA cycle.

Credible award of qualifications

- Apply clearer mechanisms and approaches to provide theoretical knowledge and analytical components.
- Develop and implement a monitoring and improvement procedure for APs, based on comprehensive data collection and multifaceted analysis (including comparative analysis and benchmarking), while ensuring broader engagement of employers (through institutionalized partnerships) and external stakeholders.
- Differentiate the pedagogical and professional qualification requirements for academic staff according to the specific features of each professional academic program.
- Ensure regular evaluation and analysis of the effectiveness of academic staff assessment mechanisms and tools.
- Align academic staff training with the priority teaching needs of the academic programs.
- Take proactive steps to attract lecturers in narrow or specialized fields.
- Increase access to international and foreign-language academic literature and consider expanding access to e-books and international scientific databases to create new opportunities for students' professional development.
- Analyze student-generated financial flows to ensure optimal allocation of resources.
- Develop alternative funding models, such as short-term training courses, collaborative programs, and employer contractual partnerships.

Long-term development

- Direct the activities of the Student Council toward protecting student rights.
- Improve career support services and implement a graduate follow-up monitoring system to track employment rates and develop new approaches aligned with labor market demands.
- Initiate cooperation with other colleges' Student Councils to exchange experiences, organize joint events, and enhance student life, thereby contributing to broader social networking and professional and cultural exchange opportunities for students.
- Develop a clear strategic plan for advancing research activities, introducing mechanisms for research result analysis, data collection, and monitoring tools to ensure continuous improvement of research processes.
- Strengthen the literature review culture and use of academic sources in research by providing students and faculty access to international scientific databases, library resources, and academic search tools.
- Create a platform (e.g., conferences, seminars, public discussions) for students and faculty to present their research projects and receive expert feedback.
- Review the College's internal accountability methodology to include analysis and evaluation of annual activities, and outline improvement directions in the reports.
- Systematize the information on the College's official website into relevant sections, eliminating duplicates and irrelevant publications, and ensure the accessibility of institutional reports.
- Implement documented mechanisms to encourage faculty and student involvement in internationalization and external relations processes.

- Ensure legal frameworks for partnerships and establish a coordinating body for managing international relations and formal documentation. This will strengthen the continuity of established collaborations and improve the efficiency of international activities while identifying new areas of cooperation.
- Expand employer partnerships at least in alignment with academic program outcomes, and establish closer cooperation for curriculum modernization, effective internship arrangements, and development of dual education models.
- Establish connections with local and international colleges to exchange best practices and implement joint programs.
- Expand local and international collaborations to achieve strategic objectives, including resource enhancement and development.
- Increase the College's international visibility through publications and expansion of its partner network.
- Based on analytical research, explore opportunities to attract international students (including from the Diaspora) and take steps in that direction.

Armenuhi Sargsyan, Chair of Expert Panel

10.04.2025

DESCRIPTION OF EXTERNAL REVIEW

COMPOSITION OF EXPERT PANEL

The following expert panel conducted an external evaluation of the institutional capacities of the "Mkhitar Sebastatsi" Educational Complex SNCO(College).

1. **Armenuhi Sargsyan**- Candidate of Physical and Mathematical Sciences, Lecturer at Shirak State University, head of the expert panel.
2. **Marina Potikyan**- Candidate of Economical Sciences, Lecturer at Yerevan State College of Informatics and the Crisis Management State Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, expert panel member.
3. **Kanakara Hayrapetyan**- Candidate of Historical Sciences, Head of the Quality Assurance Department at Gavar State University, expert panel member.
4. **Amalya Stepanyan**- Student at the European University of Armenia, Student-Expert.

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

Liana Alaverdyan, a Specialist in the Institutional and Program Accreditation Department at ANQA, coordinated the work of the expert panel.

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, filling out the application form, and presenting copies of the license and respective appendices (03.02.2024).

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

Considering that the educational institution is going through institutional accreditation for the first time and is in the initial stage of the formation of the culture of quality assurance in college, ANQA conducted four-day online workshops in February. The workshops aimed to prepare colleges for the organizational 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, the ANQA organized discussions to clarify the issues.

The self-evaluation of the college's institutional capacity was presented on 20.08.2024. Representatives of the institution's administrative and educational staff, lecturers, and students were involved in the self-evaluation process.

Preparatory phase

After the TLI submitted the self-evaluation report and the attached documents, the ANQA coordinator reviewed the package to ensure it met the ANQA's requirements. The self-evaluation and the attached documents were provided to the expert panel for the preliminary evaluation. The composition of the expert panel was agreed upon with the College and was confirmed by the order of the ANQA Director. Within the scheduled time, the expert panel summarized the preliminary evaluation results, and the Chair of the expert panel and the process coordinator set the site visit schedule.

Preparatory visit

Before the site visit, a preparatory visit to the college was conducted on 11.12.2024. 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 and discussed. Mutually agreed-upon decisions were made regarding the technical, organizational, and informational issues of the site visit, as well as the behaviour and ethical norms of the meeting participants.

Site visit

The expert panel site visit occurred from December 17-19, 2024. 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 identify the strengths and weaknesses of the college according to the standards, clarify the questions to be asked of the target groups, and discuss the procedures for the meetings and the next steps.

The site visit started and ended with meetings with the college director. All the meeting participants were randomly selected from a pre-provided list. All scheduled meetings were held. During the visit, the expert panel studied 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 summarized.

The expert panel reached its conclusion on the criteria after discussing and analyzing all members' work, always applying the principle of consensus.

Expert panel report

The expert panel members and the ANQA coordinator prepared a preliminary version of the expert report. After the expert panel members approved it, the preliminary report was provided to the college on 06.03.2025.

The ANQA provided the college's observations to the expert panel. Subsequently, ANQA organized a meeting between the college and the expert panel, during which the institution's observations on the preliminary expert report were discussed. The expert panel finalized the expert report, which was approved by the panel on April 8, 2025.

Liana Alaverdyan

Coordinator of the Expert Panel / 10.04.2025

EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

CRITERION	CONCLUSION
<i>I. Mission and Purposes</i>	Satisfactory
<i>II. Governance and Administration</i>	Satisfactory
<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