NATIONAL CENTRE FOR PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE, FOUNDATION

National Center For Professional
Education Quality Assurance
Foundation

**EXPERT PANEL REPORT
ON INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION OF
YEREVAN STATE ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS**

Yerevan – 2017

INTRODUCTION

The institutional accreditation of Yerevan State Academy of Fine Arts (hereinafter YSAFA) is carried out based on the application presented by the Academy. The process of institutional accreditation is organized and coordinated by the National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance, Foundation (ANQA).

Whilst carrying out its operations, ANQA is guided by the regulation on "State Accreditation of RA Institutions and their Educational Programs" set by the RA Government on 30 June, 2011 N978 decree as well as by N959-Ն (30 June, 2011) decree on approving RA Standards for Professional Education Accreditation.

The expertise was carried out by the expert panel formed according to the demands of ANQA Regulation on the Formation of the Expert Panel. The expert panel consisted of 3 local experts. At the same time the YSAFA was undergoing international accreditation carried out by German accreditation agency ASIIN. The international expert panel was comprised of 3 international experts from Germany and Austria. The accreditation process has been financed by the GOVERN program of TEMPUS project. The program has been coordinated by the YSAFA.

Institutional accreditation aims not only to the external evaluation of quality assurance but also to the continuous improvement of the institution's management and quality of educational programs. Hence, there were two important issues for local and international expert panel members:

1. To carry out an expertise of institutional capacities in line with the RA standards for state accreditation.

2. To carry out an evaluation for the improvement of institution's quality and for its integration to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

The report refers to the expertise of institutional capacities of the Yerevan State Academy of Fine Arts (hereinafter referred to as YSAFA) according to the state criteria and standards for accreditation as well as to the peer review from the perspective of integration into the EHEA.

Contents

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES ACCORDING TO ACREDITATION CRITERIA

The expertise of the YSAFA was carried out by an independent[1] expert panel formed according to the requirements of ANQA Regulation on the Formation of the Expert Panel. The evaluation was carried out according to 10 criteria set by the RA Government on 30 June, 2011 N 959–Ն decree.

While carrying out the expertise the expert panel took into consideration the fact that the YSAFA considers "providing higher education through bachelor, master and PhD academic programmes in the areas of art theory, painting, applied arts, design and architecture having academic and current approaches and aligning creative and educational processes with public needs, promoting the development of national culture and economy preparing competitive and highly qualified professionals at national and international levels, as well as citizens for lifelong learning, developing art research promoting scientific thinking and national culture, promoting uniting the society and increasing aesthetic value through establishing national values" as its mission.

The expert panel highlights that the policy of the YSAFA and its operations are generally in line with the mission it has adopted. The expert panel evaluates positively the fact that the drawbacks of the SP have been evaluated; in particular the new vision, mission, values, strategic directions, aims and objectives, approaches to implementation of objectives and the KIPs per aim, the operations foreseen for carrying out the objectives, possible challenges, people responsible, deadlines and KPIs of success of the Academy have been highlighted. At the same time that the planned values of performance indicators representing the objectives are not grounded.

The expert panel evaluates positively the fact that certain changes have been introduced in the organigram of the Academy (QAC, Research Centre, Career Centre), since the latter are aimed at improvement of quality of education. Yet, the system of governance still faces improvement. The system of governance is not linked with strategic aims and objectives. Notwithstanding the fact that all infrastructures typical to TLI function at the Academy, one can witness an inefficient allocation of organizational structures, which is risky for the implementation of Academy mission and main aims. In particular, it is not effective to have an infrastructure with insufficient amount of resources (Research Centre) or extra governing circles, which can be well united (Infrastructures of Academic Department) with the aim of making a more efficient use of resources. Internal and external stakeholder involvement in decision making is scarce.

8 undergraduate (BA) and graduate (MA) APs are carried out in 2 faculties of the YSAFA: Design, Computer Graphics, Fashion Design, Applied Arts, Graphics, Art History and Theory, Painting, Sculpture. There is also 1 postgraduate (PhD) AP (Painting, Design, Decorative and Applied Arts).

The APs of the YSAFA are generally in line with the mission; however, there are certain APs which need review. The TLI has initiated the review of 4 APs (Design, Fashion Design, Computer Graphics, Applied Arts) following labour market demands. . The remaining 4 (Graphics, History and Theory of Art, Painting and Sculpture), which are academic in nature and are the most important APs for an art TLI, are still in the cycle of initiation.

The expert panel evaluates positively the fact that the Academy has a policy and procedures aimed at selection and recruitment of teaching and non-teaching staff. The recruitment procedure foresees competitive selection, which is the token of the fact that the TLI will have competitive and experienced employees. The fact that the overwhelming majority of the YSAFA staff are full-time employees significantly raises the stability of the teaching staff and enhances the implementation of stable academic operations. Positive is the trend that the YSAFA alumni are recruited by the Academy. The Academy is carrying out a procedure of rejuvenation of the teaching staff.

Material-technical source efficiency and improvement of academic environment are strategic objectives of the YSAFA. The implementation of the Academy APs requires environment specific to

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[1] APPENDIX 1: CVs of Expert Panel Members

its peculiarities, which includes laboratories saturated with up-to-date technology, ateliers, art-rooms, library and else. The majority of the APs are applied in nature and require specific ateliers and laboratories, which, in the majority of cases, are existent. Based on survey outcomes, the Academy has re-saturated certain laboratories, yet, internal stakeholders are not yet contented with existing conditions. The surveys carried out in the Academy showcase that both teachers and students are not contented with current laboratory resources[2].

The expert panel evaluates positively the fact that the YSAFA has an elaborated mechanism of allocating financial resources. The annual budget foresees certain expenditures, which are directed towards the implementation of Academy purposes; however, the said expenditures are not detailed per strategic purposes and APs, which would otherwise make financial investment more targeted. The main source of financial means is education fees, which hinders the financial stability of the Academy given the decreasing number of students.

The lion share of budget allocation to salaries (89%) can hinder the possibility of making investment in other core spheres (e.g. research, resources, internationalization) and weaken the effectiveness of SP implementation.

The Academy has student recruitment, selection and admission mechanisms which correspond to the specificities of the YSAFA. The procedures of student recruitment functioning at the YSAFA are quite precise and are carried out in accordance with ratified regulations, based on the specificities of the YSAFA. The events organized by the Academy and aimed at prospective students-to-be encourage recruitment procedures.

The expert panel evaluates positively the existence of Student Community, which tries to examine academic needs of the students and voice the latter in higher cycles of management. The involvement of greater number of students into the Community will encourage voicing larger scope of issues and will boost their initiative.

The Academy has elaborated research directions, yet the latter do not reflect professional capacities of the Academy. Moreover, the lack of a holistic strategy of research field and interests weakens research operations. The resources of the Research Centre of the YSAFA are not satisfactory planned for carrying out of corresponding research operations. The research link of the Academy and other scientific establishments is quite loose, since the said link is mainly expressed by joint scientific projects. The insufficient amount of financial sources as far as science and research is concerned is the token of the fact that the YSAFA is quite vulnerable in this respect. Irrespective of the fact that certain works are being undertaken, research works at an undergraduate level (BA) do not form an inseparable part of academic process, which can have a negative impact on establishment of intended learning outcomes.

The expert panel evaluates positively the fact that the academy is involved in international projects which have their impact on an array of operations of the TLI /review of APs, elaboration of a student manual, creation of a Student Community and else/. As far as the enhancement of internationalization and cooperation is concerned, the Academy is well aware of current issues /enhancement of internal and external student and teacher mobility, enhancement of foreign language acquisition level and else/. The active involvement of the Academy in international programmes provides enough experience for the coming internationalization of the Academy.

The existence of the Department of External Relations, functioning in the organigram of the academy and aimed at targeted development, with its resources creates foundation for the further development of internationalization and external relations. At the same time, active operations of the Department of External Relations will enhance teacher and student involvement in myriad international projects, continuing education, and/or other operations abroad[3].

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[2] This portion of the text has been elaborated as an outcome of discussing objections and suggestions presented by the Academy.
[3] This portion of the text has been elaborated as an outcome of discussing objections and suggestions presented by the Academy.

The implementation and the development of QA system throughout the recent years have created favourable conditions for the establishment of quality culture, which, however, has not yet enveloped the Academy as a whole. The operation of the QA Centre and the existence of myriad regulations in generic terms allow for carrying out QA functions; however, there is a need of optimizing the elaborated documents and making them more targeted. The involvement of students and teachers in QA procedures is mainly ensured by means of their participation in surveys and a limited number of events. With the aim of ensuring a more targeted and effective operation, the level of their involvement must be activated.

STRENGTHS OF THE INSTITUTION:

1. The YSAFA SP has been improved as an outcome of analysis and currently includes objectives and performance indicators.
2. Within the framework of international projects the YSAFA has gained certain experience of AP review.
3. The YSAFA has a Student Community, which ensures that students' needs are revealed.
4. Celebrated artists of the republic are involved in the teaching staff of the Academy.
5. The Academy has necessary resources assisting its academic operations.
6. The YSAFA has an accountability system which ensures transparency. The Academy has certain experience participating in international projects which enhances the process of fostering its external relations.
7. The YSAFA has an internal QA system which enhances the establishment of quality culture.

WEAKNESSES OF THE INSTITUTION:

1. The SP of the YSAFA is not based on precise analyses of external environment. As far as performance indicators are concerned, they are not grounded.
2. The YSAFA organigram is not adapted to the implementation of strategic purposes. There is an issue of optimal allocation of administrative resources.
3. External stakeholders have not participated in the process of AP review and the core APs have not yet undergone reforms.
4. Professional training of the teaching staff are but scarce in number.
5. The YSAFA Research Centre does not have necessary human and material resources to enhance the development of research operations.
6. The YSAFA library resources are not enriched with modern literature and there is no electronic library.
7. The accountability reports elaborated at the Academy are more informative in nature and include but a few analyses.
8. The level of foreign language acquisition both among teachers and students is not high.
9. The majority of Academy operations is in *Plan* and *Do* cycles and hence the PDCA cycle is not yet closed.

Main recommendations:
Mission and Purpose
1. To make the YSAFA strategic objectives more precise by making the latter in line with the opportunities of the Academy. Moreover, to involve external stakeholders in the process of implementing strategic aims and ensure feedback.
2. It is necessary to determine grounded KPIs, with the implementation of which it will be possible to evaluate whether or not strategic aims have been carried out.
3. To improve regulations applied with the aim of implementing the strategic plan by making the latter more operational.
Governance and Administration
1. To improve the organigram of the TLI by making the latter more in line with strategic objectives.
2. To ensure a more active participation of internal and external stakeholders in governance.

3. To elaborate and implement precise mechanisms evaluating the effectiveness of the system of governance.
4. To increase the reliability level of surveys.

Academic Programmes
1. To elaborate and implement a timetable of AP review.
2. To increase the participation of alumni and employers in the procedures of AP elaboration, review and implementation.
3. To carry out benchmarking for all APs.
4. To reflect the specificities of teaching and learning methods and the link of assessment methods with the intended learning outcomes in the APs.
5. To elaborate and implement a policy of academic honesty and struggle against plagiarism specifically for the APs of the field of art.
6. To elaborate grounded approaches towards credit calculation.

Students
1. To improve the mechanisms used for revealing academic needs of students and examine the effectiveness of the said mechanisms.
2. To develop research operations of the students and strengthen the link of research and teaching.
3. To increase the level of awareness as far as the operations of the Career Centre are concerned among vast masses of students.

Teaching and Support Staff
1. To elaborate and implement a system of professional training of the teaching staff.
2. To involve professional requirements put forward to the teaching staff in AP packages.
3. To elaborate mechanisms via which the process of saturating the Academy with young specialists will be carried out.
4. To evaluate the effectiveness of the works carried out by the support staff.

Research and Development
1. To elaborate directions of research operations for all specializations taking into account the scientific experience accumulated in the chairs and current resources.
2. To improve the operations of the Research Centre by allocating corresponding human, material and financial resources.
3. To enhance research operations at an international scale by putting the accent on the implementation of joint projects.
4. To implement research element in undergraduate (BA) APs and to foster the latter in graduate (MA) APs.

Infrastructures and Resources
1. To carry out financial planning and resource allocation taking into account SP purposes and objectives, AP requirements.
2. To improve library fund by saturating the latter with new and up-to-date literature in line with the APs.
3. To create special conditions for people with special needs with the aim of turning academic environment accessible.
4. To ensure external sources of financing and expand the number of grant projects with the aim of reaching financial independence and stability.

Societal Responsibility
1. To improve the website of the YSAFA and make it more functional
2. To make feedback mechanisms with the society more precise and to develop the latter.
3. To elaborate and implement a stable system of services rendered.

External Relations and Internationalization
1. To enhance the level of foreign language acquisition among internal stakeholders with the aim of carrying out external cooperation and implementing APs taught in a foreign language.
2. To allocate corresponding resources to ensure outgoing mobility among teachers and students.
3. To involve invited/flying international professors via short-term projects.
4. To regularly organize events with the aim of involving foreign students.

Internal Quality Assurance

1. To ensure the continuity of professional development of the QA staff and involve internal stakeholders to activate QA operations at faculty and chair levels.
2. To implement a policy, procedures and mechanisms aimed at enhancing the participation of external stakeholders in QA operations.
3. To elaborate mechanisms of QA system monitoring, assessment and improvement.

PEER-REVIEW FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF EDUCATION INSTITUTION'S INTEGRATION INTO EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

OBSERVATIONS
Regarding the group of criteria "Definition of quality"

The basis for the peer's assessment of YSAFA's definition of quality is above all the Strategic Plan 2017 – 2021. It describes the six strategic goals and defines performance indicators for each specific objective. But YSAFA does not place any priorities on the strategic goals and the strategic plan does not include an explanation why specific performance indicators were chosen and what concrete measure will be implemented to reach the intended goals. Each Chair[4] has almost identical annual operational plans. There is no established process for fulfilling the plan and not all relevant stakeholders are involved in the processes.

The Quality Assurance Centre (QAC) regularly conducts surveys in order to evaluate the quality of the degree programmes. Student's feedback with respect to the physical facilities led to an improvement in the laboratories for fashion design, computer graphics, design and applied arts. The QAC is an important unit for ensuring the quality of the academic education at YSAFA but it lacks the unrestricted support from most of the relevant stakeholders. Establishing a culture of quality at YSAFA has been hindered by the traditional ways of teaching and learning at YSAFA.

YSAFA has the strategic goal to increase its research activities, but first of all YSAFA should define what kind of research an academy of fine arts can pursue and what artistic research implies in comparison with research at other higher education institutions.

The strategic goals and the associated key performance indicators as mentioned in the strategic plan do not always go hand in hand with each other. YSAFA should define key performance indicators that are suitable to assess whether the strategic goals are achieved or not, it should be explained how the current values and the goals were determined, and where the priorities of YSAFA lie. The strategic goals as mentioned in the Strategic Plan 2017 – 2021 are too unspecific and do not result in a practicable working plan for the administrative units, each Chair, and YSAFA in general.

Regarding the group of criteria "Educational programmes / courses / trainings"

The degree programmes at YSAFA are well established and the students as well as the alumni and the employers are satisfied with the quality of the academic education and the qualification profile of YSAFA's graduates. Three degree programmes have already been reviewed externally by local experts and experts from Europe, but a comprehensive timetable for reviewing the remaining degree programmes does not exist and the results of the reviews are not made transparent.

The relevant input for programme development comes from internal stakeholders, but the alumni and employers could be better involved in the relevant processes.

With respect to fostering internationalisation and cooperation, YSAFA is well aware of the existing deficits. The English proficiency of teachers and students is low and most students cannot financially afford to study in a foreign country. YSAFA has taken first steps to overcome these deficits, but there is still a lot of room for improvement.

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[4] The Chair is the professorship that is responsible for the specific degree programme.

The peers appreciate the examination system in general and the established appeals system in particular. However, the presentation of graduation papers is not always conducted in accordance with YSAFA's regulations.

YSAFA has sufficient resources to provide assistance and support to its students. There is also a general atmosphere of cooperation and openness between the students and the teaching staff.

Regarding the group of criteria "Management of resources"

With regard to the management of resources, the peers judge that there is still room for improvement. They appreciate that YSAFA has significantly improved several workrooms and that the students are very satisfied with the opportunities they have, the working conditions, and the general atmosphere of openness and cooperation. YSAFA tries to follow the demands of the labour market and wants to introduce the students to modern techniques and methods, but so far only a few teachers have adopted a modern approach towards teaching arts. In general, the motivation of the teaching staff for further developing their teaching skills is low.

In order to achieve its above mentioned strategic goal of improving the research activities YSAFA should first define what research means for an academy of arts and should then develop a plan how to foster the research activities of the teachers and how to involve students. In addition, the financial and human resources available to the Research Center will likely have to be increased.

Achieving the strategic goal of "expanding external relations and promoting mobility" is hindered by a lack of financial funds for scholarships and the insufficient English proficiency. There is not yet a comprehensive plan concerning the internationalization of YSAFA.

A transparent list of priorities with respect to the distribution of the limited financial funds and a comprehensible policy how do deal with conflicting interests are missing. Nevertheless, the infrastructure used for teaching in general and the equipment of student workplaces in particular are sufficient in number and quality to achieve the intended learning outcomes of each course on offer.

With respect to the development of the human resources there is a lot of room for improvement at YSAFA. Although YSAFA attaches importance to the development and application of quality assurance mechanisms and tools for human resources development, the relevant measures have not been put into practise and only a few members of the teaching staff have been trained in these areas so far.

YSAFA has updated several workrooms already, but the technical infrastructure and the equipment need further improvement; the same applies to the library. As a result, the upgrading of the infrastructure and the renewal of the teaching staff are currently two of the most important issues for YSAFA. Introducing modern techniques and methods especially in the traditional areas of fine arts is also an issue that should be tackled.

Regarding the group of criteria "Transparency and documentation"

The peers appreciate the transparent approach of YSAFA towards the management of documents and the underlying attitude of openness and cooperation. The students are well informed about the existing regulations. The relevant documents are published on YSAFA's homepage so that all stakeholders have access to them and are informed about the structure and content of the specific degree programmes and the intended learning outcomes. All relevant rules and regulations are placed on YSAFA's official website and thus available to all stakeholders. As a result, students and teaching staff are adequately informed about the relevant rules and regulations; the documents are clear and understandable for all stakeholders.

Although there are electronic data management systems in the different departments, such as systems for accounting processes, student learning progress and staff data, the current systems are not connected with one another.

YSAFA's homepage is functional and the relevant stakeholders can find all necessary documents and information there.

Recommendations

1. YSAFA should define what kind of research an academy of fine arts can pursue and what artistic research implies.

2. It would be necessary to define key performance indicators that are suitable to assess whether the strategic goals are reached or not and to explain why the specific indicators were chosen.

3. The annual operational plans should take the specific needs and goals of the different Chairs and degree programmes into account.

4. YSAFA needs to fully establish and guarantee the effectiveness of general standards of quality assurance and needs to involve all relevant stakeholders in the quality management system.

5. The Quality Assurance Center needs more support from YSAFA's management and the acceptance of quality assurance tools should be increased.

6. A plan when the remaining degree programmes are going to be reviewed should be developed.

7. All external and internal stakeholders should be systematically involved in further developing the degree programmes.

8. The alumni and the employers should get more involved with the implementation of the degree programmes; the students should have the opportunity to spend some time abroad, and should get acquainted with modern approaches, materials, and techniques in the area of fine arts.

9. YSAFA should address the well known reasons for the limited academic mobility of the teachers and the students. The English proficiency is not sufficient and needs to be improved; the scholarships for students taking part at exchange programmes should be better endowed.

10. The range of examination forms should be larger and the conduct of the final assessment needs to be in accordance with YSAFA's regulations.

11. The rules for the recognition of achievements should be based on learning outcomes rather than acquired credit points in order to take into account a student-centered, outcome-oriented approach to recognition.

12. YSAFA should inform its students better about the possibilities to receive scholarships for spending some time abroad and should try to establish international cooperations that are in demand by the students.

13. YSAFA should try to acquire additional external funds and should continue with improving the workrooms; the library needs to be digitalised and the students need access to modern literature and to international databases.

14. The priorities with respect to updating technical equipment should be defined and made transparent, as well as the procedure to balance possible conflicting interests.

15. Hiring new qualified staff members should be a primary focus and YSAFA needs to develop an action plan as how to achieve this goal.

16. YSAFA needs to motivate all of its members to make use of development opportunities and should develop a plan as how to involve all stakeholders in trainings and courses.

17. YSAFA should define what research means for an academy of arts and what kind of research is possible. The budget for research activities must be made transparent and must be sufficient for adequately fostering the research activities. A concept how to combine research and teaching needs to be developed.

18. YSAFA should try to identify future challenges for the effective organisation and operation of the administration in teaching and learning.

19. The teaching staff and students should be asked about if there is any need for further developing the existing documents.

20. YSAFA should redesign its homepage and update its electronic presentation.

17 November, 2017

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Vardan Sargsyan
Signature of Expert Panel Chair

DESCRIPTION OF EXTERNAL REVIEW
COMPOSITION OF EXPERT PANEL

The external expertise of the SER and QA operations of Yerevan State Academy of Fine Arts was carried out by the expert panel having the following composition[5]

— **Vardan Sargsyan:** Armenian State University of Economics, Head of the Chair of Economic Computer Science and Information Systems, professor.
— **Lilit Fljyan:** Assistant, Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Chair of Design and Decorative Applied Arts of the Armenian State Pedagogical University after Kh. Abovyan.
— **Jorg Longmus:** ASIIN – an organization in charge of carrying out accreditation procedures in the fields of engineering, computer and natural sciences and mathematics, director of Sustainum - Institute for Sustainable Management and lecturer at Beuth Technical University for Applied Sciences.
— **Herbert Johann Lorenz Gruner**: Course director for study programs offered to managers of small- and medium-sized enterprises at the University of St. Gallen, professor at the University.
— **Hans-Christian Brauweiler:** Professor at University of Applied Sciences.
— **Erik Vardanyan:** student of the Department of Architecture and Engineering, National University of Architecture and Construction of Armenia.

The works of the expert panel were coordinated by Varduhi Gyulazyan – senior specialist of ANQA Institutional and Program Accreditation Division.

From the German side the process was coordinated by Arnold Rainer - ASIIN project manager.

The translation was provided by Zaruhi Soghomonyan – Head of the Chair of Foreign Languages at French University of Armenia.

The composition of expert panel was agreed upon with the Academy and was appointed by ANQA director.

All the members of expert panel including the coordinators and the translator have signed impartiality and confidentiality agreements.

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[5] APPENDIX 1: resumes of expert panel members

PROCESS OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW
Application for State Accreditation

The YSAFA applied for institutional accreditation by submitting to ANQA the application form and the appendices.

The ANQA Secretariat checked the application package, the data presented in the application form, the appendixes and the ANQA electronic questionnaire completed by the Academy.

According to the decision on accepting the application request, a bipartite agreement was signed. The timetable of activities was prepared and approved.

Within the deadline set in the schedule, the YSAFA presented the Armenian and English versions of its self-evaluation report according to the form set by ANQA and also the package of attached documents.

The self-evaluation was carried out by a team formed on the order of the YSAFA rector.

Preparatory Phase
ANQA coordinator observed the report with the aim of revealing its correspondence to the technical requirements of ANQA. Armenian and English versions of the SER and adjacent documents were accepted by the ANQA after the consent of the process coordinator.

Then ANQA secretariat sent the self-evaluation report to the expert panel (for preliminary assessment) the members of which were agreed upon with the Academy and were confirmed by the director of ANQA.

Five training on the following topics were organized for the expert panel members with the aim of preparing the latter and ensuring the effectiveness of the activities:

1. RA Accreditation regulation, Criteria and Standards.

2. Main functions of expert panel.

3. Preliminary evaluation as preparatory phase of developing expert panel report, the main requirements of writing the report.

4. Methodology of observation of documents and resources.

5. Techniques and ethics of meetings and questions to be posed.

Having observed the self-evaluation and documents of the Academy, the expert panel conducted the initial evaluation. According to the format, the list of questions for different target groups and also the list of additional documents needed for observation have been prepared.

Within the scheduled time the expert panel summarized the results of the initial evaluation and formed a time schedule of the site-visit[6]. According to the ANQA manual on the expertise the intended meetings with all the target groups, close and open meetings, document and resource review, visits to different infrastructures and else were included in the time schedule.

Preliminary Visit
The preliminary visit was paid a week prior to the site-visit by the coordinator, expert panel head, and the Head of the Department of Institutional and Programme Accreditation.

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[6] Appendix 2. Schedule of site visit at ASPU

The plan-schedule of the site-visit was agreed upon, the list of additional documents was presented, discussions and mutual decisions were reached referring to organizational, technical, informative questions of the site visit. Questions related to the conduct and the norms of ethics of meeting participants were also touched upon. The rooms prepared for focus groups and expert panel discussions were also discussed, the issues related to the equipment and facilities were clarified.

Site-visit

The day prior to the site visit all the members of the expert panel (international expert including) and the coordinator met at the ANQA. Throughout the said meeting the expert panel agreed upon the framework of assessment, the scale of criteria for assessment, which following the ANQA procedures has two levels: 1. satisfactory (is in line with criteria requirements) 2. unsatisfactory (does not comply with the requirements of the criteria). The strengths and weaknesses of the Academy per criteria, the procedure of focus group meetings, the norms of ethics of conducting meetings have been finalized and further steps have been determined.

The site visit of the expert panel took place from May 29th till June 1st, 2017. In line with the timetable, the operations of the expert panel initiated with a close meeting the aim of which was to discuss and agree the assessment framework with external panel members, the issues to be clarified, strengths and weaknesses of the Academy per criteria, the procedure of focus groups, and to make further steps more precise.
All expert panel members, including the ANQA coordinator and translator assisted all the meetings.

The site visit initiated and culminated with the meeting with the Rector. Representatives from the teaching staff, students, deans, heads of chairs, employers and alumni were selected randomly from the list provided beforehand. All the meetings foreseen by the schedule, have been carried out. Throughout the site visit the expert panel had document review[7], resource observation[8] and focus group meetings in different infrastructures of the Academy.

During the close meetings of the panel at the end of each working day the interim results of peer review were discussed and at the end of the site visit the main outcomes of the site visit were summarized. The expert panel discussed the main outcomes and reached an agreement first on accreditation standards and criteria.

The final conclusion referring to criteria was reached through open discussions of all expert panel members via consensus.

The assessment has been carried out within the framework of State Criteria and Standards of Accreditation and ANQA procedures. Following the ANQA procedures the assessment has two levels: 1. satisfactory (is in line with criteria requirements) 2. unsatisfactory (does not comply with the requirements of the criteria). It's noteworthy that the assessment of the Academy SER was carried out following the standards set for each criterion, whereas the expert report is compiled per criterion.

Expert Panel Report
The expert panel has conducted preliminary evaluation according to the self-evaluation report of the Academy, the documents attached to it and the observations during the site-visit as a result of regularly organized discussions. Based on the observations after the discussions the head of the panel and ANQA coordinator prepared the draft of expert panel report which was agreed upon with the panel members. The expert panel has summarized the report based on comments received from the YSAFA. International experts have given their consent to the expert report. The peer review has been holistically included into the report.

The preliminary report has been handed over to the Academy in 21.07.2017.

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[7] APPENDIX 3: Site-visit timetable
[8] APPENDIX 4: List of reviewed documents

The Academy sent its observations and recommendations to the ANQA on 08.08.2017. The Academy has presented its observations and recommendations in Armenian. They have been handed over to local experts. On October 23, the ANQA settled a meeting of the Academy with expert panel representatives, during which the expert panel presented its observations. Taking into account the observations of the Academy, the expert panel elaborated the final version of the report, which was ratified on 16.11.2017.

17 November, 2017

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Varduhi Gyulazaryan

EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA
BRIEF INFORMATION ABOUT THE EDUCATION INSTITUTION

HISTORY: Yerevan state Academy of fine Arts was founded in 1945 and back then had two specializations: painting and sculpture with as many as 22 students. In 1953 due to the merger of the Institutes of Theatre and that of Fine Arts, the Institute of Fine Arts was created. Afterwards, back in1944 the said institute was divided into two distinct entities again. In 2000 according to the RA Government decision the TLI was renamed into Yerevan State Academy of Fine Arts (YSAFA).

At present the YSAFA, with its branches in Gyumri and Dilijan, has nearly 90 students. The YSAFA offers 17 academic programs in three cycles (. The leading specialists in the domain of arts teach at YSAFA. The latter also have international acclaim: honorary figures of art and culture, laureates of international contests, laureates of state nominations, 3 correspondent members, 37 professors, 25 associate professors, 35 senior teachers, 36 teachers.

EDUCATON: 8 undergraduate (BA) and graduate (MA) APs are carried out in 2 faculties of the YSAFA: Design, Computer Graphics, Fashion Design, Applied Arts, Graphics, Art History and Theory, Painting, Sculpture. There is also 1 postgraduate (PhD) AP (Painting, Design, Decorative and Applied Arts). Since 2013 4 BA and 4 MA APs (Design, Computer Graphics, Fashion design, Applied Arts) have been reviewed. Moreover, corresponding laboratories have been equipped. The AP of the YSAFA emerge from and are in line with the mission of the Academy and are compiled in line with the intended learning outcomes. 4 APs (Ba and MA) are in line with NQF and serve as a basis for further review and alignment of other APs.

RESEARCH: YSAFA mainly has a creative direction and in contrast to different classical universities, the research carried out at the YSAFA is often not scientific in nature. YSAFA research is chiefly creative and has its field peculiarities. The specificities of YSAFA research field are as following:

- **Practical-applied research:** this type of research refers to creative directions: painting, sculpture, graphics, design and decorative applied arts. In these domains the main aim of research is to deepen recognition of materials and tools, perfection of professional skills, digestion and development of the means of fine art, enhancement of creative imagination and the study of the aforesaid fields within the context of fine arts.
- **Scientific-theoretical research**: this type of research mainly refers to the Chairs of Theory of Arts and Humanities and involves studies into history of arts and theory of arts.

INTERNATIONALIZATION: YSAFA has elaborated a strategy of internationalization, which reflects the most important fields of Academy operations, in particular: improvement of operations of International Relations Department, development of external relations, enhancement of internationalization of student and teacher mobility and APs.

With the aim of reaching intended aims, YSAFA implements myriad means: applies to grant projects, organizes training for developing capacities of the staff, carries our elaboration and development of different regulations and procedures enhancing internationalization, plans, monitors and improves annual operations of infrastructures in line with strategic aims, organizes cultural events with the involvement of internal and external stakeholders.

QUALITY ASSURANCE: Quality policy of YSAFA is reflected in a number of documents which quite successfully systematize ongoing operations:

- Regulation on Annual Planning, Monitoring and Improvement of Infrastructure Operations
- QA Manual
- Manual on AP Elaboration and Review
- YSAFA Code of Conduct and etc.

YSAFA has QA policy reflected in the QA manual and SP. There is an elaborated QA toolkit, which allows for assessing the effectiveness of operations. YSAFA QA policy and toolkit are regularly being reviewed and re-elaborated.

While carrying out the expertise, the expert panel was led by the principle "fitness to purpose" and has regarded the above-given information as ambitions and aims of the Academy.

CRITERION I. MISSION AND PURPOSE

CRITERION: The policies and procedures of the institution are in accordance with the institution's mission which is in line with ANQF.

FINDINGS

1.1 The institution has a clear, well-articulated mission that represents the Institution's purposes and goals and is in accordance with National Qualifications Framework (hereafter NQF).

The YSAFA operations are in line with the Charter of the Academy and its strategic plan (hereinafter SP). Its mission, aims and objectives are determined in the 5-year SP of the academy. The mission of the academy includes:

- providing higher education through bachelor, master and PhD academic programmes in the areas of art theory, painting, applied arts, design and architecture having academic and current approaches and aligning creative and educational processes with public needs,
- promoting the development of national culture and economy preparing competitive and highly qualified professionals at national and international levels, as well as citizens for lifelong learning,
- developing art research promoting scientific thinking and national culture,
- promoting uniting the society and increasing aesthetic value through establishing national values" as its mission.

YSAFA has determined the below-given three strategic direction:

- Teaching and learning
- Research and development
- Service to society

The drawbacks of 2012-2016 SP have been elaborated and the vision, mission, values, strategic directions, aims, objectives, approaches to the implementation of objectives, KPIs per aim, as well as operations aimed at implementing objectives, their possible challenges, people responsible, deadlines and success indicators have been involved in 2017-2021 SP.

From the perspective of ensuring the alignment of the mission of the Academy and NQF, the "Guideline Ensuring the Alignment Between APs and RA NQF" has been elaborated.

1.2 The mission statement, goals and objectives of the Institution reflects the needs of the internal and external stakeholders.

An array of surveys are conducted aimed at revealing the needs of internal and external stakeholders. A guide on "Drafting and Review of YSAFA SP" has been elaborated. The principles and approaches of the YSAFA SP are reflected in the said guidelines. Moreover, the said document reflects the procedure and methods of stakeholder involvement. The document highlights methods of stakeholder involvement; however, observations throughout the site visit revealed that external stakeholders have not been involved in the process of elaborating the TLI mission, aims and objectives.

Throughout site visits it became apparent that external stakeholders are interested in bringing about their participation to the operations of the academy.

1.3 The Institution has set mechanisms and procedures to evaluate the achievement of its mission and goals and further improve them.

With the aim of evaluating implementation process of its mission and purpose, YSAFA implements the system of accountability of its infrastructures (academic-methodical, faculties, chairs and etc). Of interest is the experience of assessing and improving the SP, which has been carried out based on the

outcomes of the survey. Annual operational plans of infrastructures are drawn in line with the timetable of the SP, in accordance with the set format. Operational accountability is carried out through trimestral and annual accountability.

The SP includes performance indicators of each strategic objective. Yet, it's worth mentioning that the said indicators and their values are not analyzed and grounded. Accountability reports mainly reflect the works undertaken, objectives and facts. These reports lack mechanisms and tools by means of which revealed objectives are ameliorated.

"Regulation on Planning, Monitoring, Assessment and Improvement of Annual Operational Plans of YSAFA Infrastructures" has been elaborated. The said document is aimed at measuring and assessing the outcomes of strategic goals.

CONSIDERATIONS

In generic terms, the policy and the operations of the TLI correspond to the mission of the academy the expert panel evaluates positively the fact that the Academy SP has been reviewed based on analyses.

At the same time the indicators of SP goal implementation are not grounded; moreover, key performance indicators are not linked with SP purposes, which, in its turn, renders the procedure of objective assessment of TLI development risky. Precisely elaborated guidelines aimed at SP implementation, with an indication of precise steps to be undertaken, as well as measurable aims will help the TLI to render its operations more targeted. However, based solely on the SP, it is quite difficult to reveal the framework of resources which the Academy foresees allocating for the implementation of strategic purposes.

To a certain extent, the participation of internal stakeholders in the SP elaboration procedure is highlighted, yet, the participation of external stakeholders is not yet effective. In the scenario when no due heed is paid to the issue highlighted above, the TLI can face issues as far as raising the awareness of its academic programmes and ensuring cooperation with regional labour market are concerned. The expert panel evaluates positively the fact that certain cooperation with the employers of the field has already been launched. Myriad surveys have been elaborated as core mechanisms of revealing the needs of stakeholders, yet they need elaboration. It must be highlighted that it is not efficient to have separate 2-page-long regulations for every single group of surveys (11 regulations in total), since some portion of the latter is being repeated. Notwithstanding the fact that an array of regulations, guidelines have been elaborated, the expert panel underlines the fact that the lack of precise and targeted regulations on assessing and improving the outcomes of mission and purpose implementation can hinder the process of ensuring the efficient strategic development of the TLI.

SUMMARY: Taking into consideration the fact that the TLI has a a reviewed SP, with an indication of mission, purposes and objectives, as well as key performance indicators per purpose, the fact that the operations undertaken by the Academy are mainly in line with the mission of the YSAFA, internal stakeholders have participation in the phrases of SP elaboration and implementation, the expert panel concludes that the TLI **meets the requirements of Criterion 1**.

CONCLUSION*:* The correspondence of YSAFA's institutional capacities to the requirements of criterion 1 is ***satisfactory.***

CRITERION II. GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

CRITERION: The institution's system of governance, administrative structures and their activities are efficient and are aimed at the accomplishment of mission and goals of the institution preserving ethical norms of governance.

FINDINGS

2.1. The Institution's system of governance ensures structured decision-making process, in accordance with defined ethical rules and has efficient provision of human, material and financial resources to accomplish its educational and other purposes.

The governance of YSAFA is carried out based on the RA Constitution, sub-constitutional acts and YSAFA Charter, on the principles of autonomy, one-person governance and collegiality.

The Rector is the sole governor of the Academy. The collegial bodies of governance are YSAFA Governing Board and Scientific Board. The Rectorate functions as a consultative body. Internal stakeholders of the Academy (teachers, students and else) are represented in the system of governance.

There are necessary infrastructures and bodies, faculties, chairs, students council and else which function based on corresponding regulations.

The Academy has a Research Centre in its organizational structure, which tries to systematize research operations not having sufficient amount of material and human resources. The Centre was created back in 2014, within the framework of TEMPUS Veritas project. On of the aims of the Centre is to carry out reforms of the third cycle of education in accordance with Salzburg Principles. By the SER it is foreseen that the Centre will also be in charge of elaborating research directions, organization and systemization of research works of both teachers and students, and else. The Head of the Centre is considered to be a non-permanent staff. Except for the head, the Centre does not have any employees.

The previous administrative structure of YSAFA was improved in 2013.Expert analyses revealed that new system of governance does not ensure corresponding hierarchy of the governance: faculties and chairs are only in the field of cooperation with superior infrastructures and are not subject to implementing their decisions.

2.2. The Institution's system of governance gives an opportunity to students and the teaching staff to take part in decision making procedures.

In accordance with internal and external legal documents, teachers and students have the right to participate in decision-making directed at them.

In different collegial administrative bodies of the Academy 25% of student participation is ensured. There is a 25% representation of students and teaching staff in the Governing Board of the Academy. Teaching staff representation in the Scientific Council of YSAFA is ensured by the participation of Chair Heads and a small number of teachers. Throughout site-visits it became clear that almost no questions are voice in Scientific Councils by students and rare are cases when decisions are being made based on suggestions on the part of teaching staff and/or students. There are no examples of teaching staff participation in administrative operations except for chair heads.

2.3. The Institution formulates and carries out short-term, mid-term and long term planning consistent with its mission and goals as well as has appropriate mechanisms for the implementation and monitoring of those plans.

The Academy has 5-year and annual planning and accountability operations ratified within the framework of AP and timetable. Financial planning of the Academy is carried out on the level of the Academy and not faculties or the APs. Each year a budget is drafted where financial flows and expenditures are reflected in separate articles. Financial planning of lower cycles is integrated in the articles of the holistic budget.

There is a functioning system of accountability. The issues revealed from the accountability reports of lower cycles are being discussed throughout Scientific Council meetings, corresponding decisions, aimed at solving the aforesaid issues, are being reached.

The expert panel is of the opinion that there are monitoring approaches to implementing the plans, yet, there are no facts and analyses as far as feedback and monitoring outcomes are concerned. Likewise, there are no impact analyses.

2.4. The Institution carried out examination of facts affecting its activities and draws on reliable findings during the decision-making process.

The Academy carries out examinations of factors impacting its operations mainly by means of surveys. Some part of surveys is being undertaken within the framework of international projects. Certain issues have been revealed as an outcome of these surveys (state of services rendered,

resources and etc.). Though there are surveys, they are not regular in nature and and no analyses of progress based on the said surveys have been presented to the expert panel. The Academy does not have any precise procedures of planning and carrying out corresponding studies of factors impacting its operations. No other methods aimed at studying the factors impacting Academy operations are carried out at YSAFA which would be aimed at grounding the trustworthiness of surveys. In particular, there are no multifaceted analyses of situation, reported open discussions and etc. The issues revealed as an outcome of surveys do not reflect the holistic system of factors affecting the operations of the Academy. Notwithstanding the fact that there are mechanisms of acquiring and utilizing data, there are no grounds of their trustworthy nature.

Environmental scanning is but rare. For instance, the Academy lacks systematic analyses of labour market aimed at decision-making and planning of further operations.

2.5. The management of the policies and the processes is based on the quality management principle (plan-do-check-act /PDCA/).

The Academy has adopted the principle of PDCA of QA /QA manual/; however, there are still some separate instances of carrying this principle out. In particular, the mission of the Academy has been re-formulated based on the said principle. Moreover, the system of student assessment has been reviewed the same way. In general terms the PDCA cycle is not yet closed and there are no analyses of undertaken assessment. In governing procedures the main accent is put on *plan, do* and partially *check* cycles.

2.6. The Institution has evaluation mechanisms in place ensuring data collection, analyses and application of the data on the effectiveness of the academic programs and other processes.

Data, statistic in nature, is being assembled as far as APs are concerned. The said data mostly concerned student numbers, flow and attainment. This information is being discussed in the Scientific Council of the Academy. Moreover, following the set format, this information is being handed over to external statistical establishment.

Information of the Academy and APs is present in different accountability reports.

According to the SER there are no mechanisms aimed at data collection, analyses and implementation of information about the effectiveness of Academy operations.

2.7. There are objective mechanisms in place evaluating the quality of quantitative and qualitative information on the academic programs and qualification awarded.

The Academy has a policy and procedures on disseminating public information on APs and qualifications awarded. There are established environment of publishing information and opportunities (website, open defence of graduation papers, exhibitions). Published information has been assessed by means of certain surveys.

With the aim of carrying out qualitative and quantitative data on qualifications awarded, the Academy implements accountability system and accountability reports of presidents of final attestation committees. However, the Academy lacks precise and objective mechanisms aimed at assessing publications of quantitative and qualitative information on APs and qualifications awarded.

CONSIDERATIONS

The Expert panel evaluates it positively that that certain reforms have been undertaken in the organigram of the Academy (QA Centre, Research Centre, Career Centre), which are aimed at enhancing the system of governance,, yet the said system still faces further need for improvement. Management system is not linked with strategic objectives and purposes. In the scenario when the Academy faces the objective of developing research in arts (this is highlighted in the strategy of the Academy), a shortage of corresponding human and financial resources can be traced in the management system of the Academy.

Notwithstanding the fact that all infrastructures characteristic to TLIs are operating at the Academy, there is a non-effective allocation of organizational establishments, which is risky for the implementation of TLI mission and core purposes. In particular, it is not effective to have an infrastructure operating with insufficient amount of resources (Research Centre) or extra

management cycles (infrastructures of Academic Department) which can be united with the aim of making a more efficient use of resources. The expert panel holds the view that for a small TLI like the Academy it is not efficient to have two separate infrastructures for the Academic Department, since as an outcome there is a post of a department chief, two heads of units and only two posts of employees and management resource is not optimally allocated.

The loose involvement of external stakeholders in decision-making units can limit the awareness of external requirements and developments. The insufficient amount of environmental scanning will ultimately result in incorrect planning of Academy operations and further risks of strategic development. Limited activity of the teaching staff, and especially that of students in decision-making processes of the Academy per se decreases the chances of revealing objectives and offering solutions on their part, which will ultimately impact motivation.

The expert panel evaluates positively an array of surveys that have been conducted at the Academy and especially the fact that certain objectives have been revealed due to the latter. However, except for surveys, the lack of other trustworthy methods and analyses of factors impacting the operations of the Academy considerably diminishes the level of reliability of the surveys undertaken.

Taking into account the SP and purposes, the TLI needs to improve its management system and optimize its organizational structure by making the latter more efficient and more in line with its strategy and operations.

The lack of analyses of data collected is risky from the prospective of AP improvement.

SUMMERY: The expert panel concludes that the YSAFA **does not meet the requirements of Criterion N 2** taking into consideration the fact that the organigram is not in line with the implementation of strategic objectives, the TLI faces the objective of optimal allocation of administrative resources, there are no effective analyses of management system, the involvement of external stakeholders in management operations is weak, feedback mechanisms in management system are loose and there is a need to review the documents with the aim ensuing that they function more effectively.

CONCLUSION: The correspondence of YSAFA's institutional capacities to the requirements of criterion 2 is ***unsatisfactory.***

CRITERION III. ADACEMIC PROGRAMS

CRITERION: The programmes are in concord with the Institution's mission, form part of institutional planning and promote mobility and internationalization.

FINDINGS

3.1 The academic programs are in line with Institution's mission, they correspond to the state academic standards and are thoroughly described according to the intended learning outcomes of the qualification awarded.

8 undergraduate (BA) and graduate (MA) APs are carried out in 2 faculties of the YSAFA: Design, Computer Graphics, Fashion Design, Applied Arts, Graphics, Art History and Theory, Painting, Sculpture. There is also 1 postgraduate (PhD) AP (Painting, Design, Decorative and Applied Arts).

The APs of the Academy are generally in line with the mission; *"providing higher education through bachelor, master and PhD academic programmes in the areas of art theory, painting, applied arts, design and architecture having academic and current approaches and aligning creative and educational processes with public needs."*

The APs of the YSAFA are generally in line with the mission; however, there are certain APs, which are not yet sufficiently elaborated. Only 4 APs (Design, Fashion Design, Computer Graphics, Applied Arts), which can safeguard the link of the YSAFA and the labour market are under the heed of the Academy. The remaining 4 (Graphics, History and Theory of Art, Painting and Sculpture), which are academic in nature and are the most important APs for an art TLI, are currently being out of the scope of academic reforms thus endangering the alignment of APs with the TLI mission, especially given

the fact that these APs, as academic per se, are included in the mission and are fundamental for the development of the TLI.

In 2013 an examination of current state of affairs of the APs was undertaken and within the scope grant project of Competitive Funds for University Innovations of the World Bank 4 BA and MA APs (Design, Fashion Design, Computer Graphics, Applied Arts) were reviewed. According to the YSAFA SER the APs of Design, Fashion Design and Computer Graphics are especially popular among the applicants since they most closely respond to the current trends and tendencies of the labour market. However, the employers have not been involved in the procedures of evaluating the intended learning outcomes, course descriptions and curricula.

The Academy has initiated a review of its 4 APs (Design, Fashion Design, Computer Graphics, Applied Arts) which can ensure Academy-labour market link. The remaining 4 (Graphics, History and Theory of Art, Painting and Sculpture) which are academic in nature and important for a TLI of arts are still in the process of initiation.

A "Manual on Elaboration and Review of APs" has been elaborated which does not reflect specificities of an arts TLI.

The Academy has analysed the alignment of 4 BA and 4 MA APs with the NQF. The mapping of RA NQA descriptors and AP ILO of MA programmes "Design" and "Computer Graphics" is thoroughly the same and do not reflect the specificities of the APs.

The APs lack generic ILOs per qualifications awarded.

Participating in the TEMPUS ALIGN (Achieving and Checking the Alignment Between Academic Programmes and Qualification Frameworks) grant project, YSAFA has harvested experience in implementing alignment guidelines with NQF. The said guidelines are in the stage of implementation. An array of issues have been traced in the APs.

The mapping of the APs lack sequence of content and interrelation of disciplines.

The BA curricula have elective courses, however, neither syllabi nor other components of APs enumerate the names of the said disciplines. The expert panel states that neither AP packages nor curricula have the list of selective disciplines.

BA curricula foresee internships with a total of 12 credits allocated, however, the APs lack requirements to internships, objectives, requirements to tasks and their volume.

The BA and MA APs of the same specialization have disciplines that are being repeated. YSAFA students have expressed their negative attitude about this.

3.2 The Institution has a policy that promotes alignment between teaching and learning approaches and the intended learning outcomes of academic programs, which ensures student-centred learning.

Teaching and learning methods which are in line with ILOs of APs are mainly presented in the "Manual on AP Elaboration and Review". In more generic terms they are also described in APs; however, teaching and learning methods are not described in AP course descriptions.

Hence, the expert panel states that specificities of learning methods in line with the core aims of the programme are not involved in APs.

Course descriptions do not reveal the essence of individual works, their volume, number of tasks, assessment types, deadlines.

In 2016, YSAFA carried out student a survey, aimed at assessing the effectiveness of teaching and learning methods after which certain improvements have been introduced in teaching methods. Throughout the site visit it became apparent that students are generally contented with teaching methods.

At the same time it became apparent that these surveys are rare, and irrespective of the timetable presented, no facts have been revealed as to the regular nature of the said surveys. Mechanisms of factual analyses of revealed issues, as well as those ensuring the feedback are not functioning.

No training is organized for the teaching staff as far as teaching and learning methods are concerned.

3.3 The Institution has policy on students' assessment according to the learning outcomes and promotes academic integrity.

Started from 2013 "Students Assessment System" has been elaborated and implemented. The said document states that in YSAFA assessment is carried out in accordance with ILOs of APs. There are

also assessment criteria and components of assessment. Assessment system has undergone changes and review based on surveys conducted by the QA Centre, discussions and suggestions.

Certain objectives of the assessment system have been revealed and certain amelioration operations have been undertaken. In particular, the number of assessment components has been changed.

Assessment methods are described in course descriptions. They also include assessment criteria of graduation works and MA theses.

Final attestation also follows and is carried out with the determined procedure. Degrees are awarded by a special committee, with teaching staff representatives and external specialists of the field. For writing their gradation papers and preparing MA theses the students are given "Guidelines on preparing Graduation Papers and MA Theses", where students can find information on requirements. However, the requirements to graduation papers and MA theses per se are the same.

"The Document of Assessment System" includes articles on academic honesty, however, the policy on academic honesty is not implemented. The Academy has not elaborated precise mechanisms of ensuring academic honesty.

3.4 The programmes of the Institution are contextually coherent with other relevant programs and promote mobility of students and staff.

Within the scope of ALIGN project an experience exchange has been carried out and formats of course descriptions of the YSAFA (Design and Computer Graphics) and the toolkit to ensure their alignment have been elaborated. A Regulation of Student Mobility has been elaborated. Moreover, a Guideline on ECTS implementation has been developed.

The Academy has carried out a benchmarking, yet only for 5 APs. The said benchmarking has not enhanced teacher and student mobility. No teacher mobility has been registered within the scope of corresponding APs. The lack of APs and courses taught in a foreign language are considered by the Academy as the main obstacle hindering student and teacher mobility.

3.5 The Institution adopts policies in place ensuring academic programme monitoring, evaluation of effectiveness and enhancement.

YSAFA, having adopted the PDCA principle in all its operations, has initiated the implementation ofthe same approach as far as AP implementation and improvement are concerned, yet, the PDCA cycle is not yet closed. AP monitoring and effectiveness assessment operations are meticulously described in the QA Manual, which was elaborated in 2016.

Based on the outcomes of the survey "Assessment of effectiveness of current resources and services rendered", "Fashion design", "Decorative Applied Art", "Design", "Computer Graphics" laboratories and ateliers have been equipped.

Mostly internal stakeholders participate in operations aimed at AP monitoring and assessment of effectiveness. The participation of external stakeholders is not yet active. In the majority of cases external stakeholders can assess the AP outcomes through attestation committee conclusions, where they have 50% participation. Surveys are an important mechanism of AP monitoring (especially among the alumni), since they provide opportunities to reveal issues and to present the latter to the chairs.

With the aim of assessing the effectiveness of certain courses (8 in number), a survey was conducted among the students back in 2016. However, the last survey on the effectiveness of APs was conducted by the QA Centre back in 2014 (among the alumni) and only 18 alumni took part in the survey.

With the aim of revealing the effectiveness of AP, the QA Centre organized a survey also among the employers. Based on the information the expert panel could get, a total of 10 employers participated in the survey, out of who 6 were aware of APs and their qualifications, whereas 4 were not aware of it.

YSAFA has a limited number of examples of AP monitoring, effectiveness assessment and improvement. Surveys are but rare both among internal and external stakeholders and they do not bear systematic nature. These operations are not carried out along all APs and no systematic review of AP content is carried out.

CONSIDERATIONS

The APs of the Academy are generally in line with the mission; however, there are still certain APs which have not yet undergone improvement. 4 APs (Design, Fashion Design, Computer Graphics,

Applied Arts), which can safeguard the link of the YSAFA and the labour market are under the heed of the Academy. The remaining 4 (Graphics, History and Theory of Art, Painting and Sculpture), which are academic in nature and are the most important APs for an art TLI, are currently at a starting point thus endangering the alignment of APs with the TLI mission, especially given the fact that these spheres are included in the mission and are fundamental for the development of the TLI.

From another perspective the expert panel evaluates positively the fact that the Academy also puts accent on such specializations (non-academic) which have greater demand in the labour market.

Worrisome is the fact that described methods do not reflect the peculiarities/specificities of the APs, the selection of methods is not conditioned by learning outcomes. Except for that, the link of learning and teaching methods with the outcomes is not precisely expressed in the APs. This can hinder the establishment of student-oriented environment, as well as the acquisition of intended learning outcomes.

Positive is the fact that the Academy has reviewed the system of student assessment; however, , in the majority of cases the link between the assessed outcomes and assessment methods is not demonstrated, which can result in non-efficient assessment of intended outcomes. Assessment system is not interrelated with the outcomes in the sense that the assessment of skills mentioned in the outcomes is not precisely highlighted in the functioning system.

Involvement of external stakeholders is limited to the involvement of the latter in attestation committees which does not ensure sufficient involvement of external stakeholders in assessment and improvement of APs.

Praiseworthy is the fact that certain separate improvements of APs have taken place; however, the Academy lacks workable mechanisms and procedures of AP monitoring, assessment and periodic review. It's worth mentioning that the Academy has guidelines on elaborating such procedures. Strategies on solving revealed objectives referring to APs are not yet precisely systematized in corresponding chairs. This will endanger modernization of APs and disciplines in line with labour market demands and the involvement of new teaching and learning methods in APs.

SUMMERY: Stating that the Academy has undertaken certain improvement steps as far as certain APs are concerned, the expert panel still highlights the fact that the YSAFA **does not meet with the requirements of Criterion N 3**, taking into consideration the fact that the core and important APs (of more academic nature) are still at the initiation stage of reforms , there aren't yet holistic principles and approaches of selection and improvement of teaching methods in line with student-centred principles, academic honesty and struggle against plagiarism are not yet set on firm basis, the participation of external stakeholders in AP elaboration is not yet tangible, and mechanisms of AP monitoring are not thoroughly implemented.

CONCLUSION: The correspondence of YSAFA's institutional capacities to the requirements of criterion 3 is *unsatisfactory.*

CRITERION IV. STUDENTS
CRITERION: The Institution provides support services to students ensuring productive learning environment

FINDINGS
4.1. The Institution has set mechanisms for promoting students' recruitment, selection and admission procedures.
The Academy has both traditional mechanisms of student selection and recruitment (regulations implemented in RA TLIs) and mechanisms emerging from the specificities of the Academy (Regulation on having internal exams for BA admission, YSAFA entrance exam tasks and assessment criteria, Regulation on Entrance Exam to MA, regulation of Admission of Foreigners). The admission to BA is carried out in accordance with the list of specializations, requirements and criteria ratified by the RA Government.

The Academy also carried out meetings in high schools, art schools, VETs. Throughout the said meetings the YSAFA staff presents the APs of the Academy, the requirements and opportunities of studying there, as well as provides precise information to prospective students by means of questions

and answers. MA admission is carried out by admission and professional committees, in line with "Regulation on Admission to MA". With the aim of checking the effectiveness of student recruitment, back in 2016 a survey was conducted with the participation of 97 applicants. The majority of applicants evaluated the operations of the Academy as satisfactory. With the aim of assessing the quality of admission mechanisms, at the very start of each academic year surveys among freshmen are carried out.

4.2. The Institution has policies and procedures for assessing student educational needs.
A couple of mechanisms aimed at studying academic needs of students function at YSAFA. The involvement of students in different ggoverning bodies of the Academy is a mechanism of revealing their needs. In particular, following YSAFA Charter, 25% of Governing Board must be comprised of students. Another mechanism of revealing the needs of students is the surveys conducted by the QA Centre. Student Councils also enhances the process of revealing the needs, since they carry out surveys and an array of events. They are also involved in works undertaken among students as far as the process of revealing their needs is concerned.
Within the framework of TEMPUS ESPAQ grant project a Student Community has been created at YSAFA. The said body participates in QA operations of the Academy. However, in the meanwhile, throughout site-visits it became apparent that students are not that much interested in revealing their own needs or participating in YSAFA operations.

4.3. The Institution provides opportunities for extra-curricular activities and advising services aimed at supporting student effective learning.
Students get consultations from their teachers, head teachers, chairs and deans offices; however, core consultations are being provided by their own teachers, since the link between teachers and students is very intensive given the fact that the format of lessons foresees more individual work and cconsultations with students. This is true for the majority of disciplines (except for theoretical disciplines). Master classes, seminars, exhibitions; with the participation of both local specialists and guests from abroad can also be considered as a form of extra-curricular activities. The Academy offers extra-curricular courses of English, Italian, French, Russian and Armenia, which is praiseworthy, however, in the meanwhile it must be noted that APs lack languages either as compulsory or selective disciplines. This in not in line with Academy aims.

4.4. There are precise regulation and schedule set for students to turn to the administrative staff for additional support and guidance.
Students are given assistance by different infrastructures (Deans' offices, chairs, Academic Affairs Department, Department of External relations). Notwithstanding the fact that the Academy lacks precise regulation and timetable for addressing administrative staff in order to get guidance and assistance, the principle of open doors functions at the Academy and the students can apply to any infrastructure with any question they are concerned with and get assistance. The Academy values the assessment of the effectiveness of mechanisms of rendering assistance and guidance and hence, continuously carries out surveys.

4.5. The Institution has student career support services.
With the aim of enhancing the career of students, YSAFA continuously enriches its teaching staff with specialists working in the field, ensuring their immediate contacts and cooperation with students. The Career Centre functions at USAFA since 2013. The said Centre is aimed at assisting YSAFA students and alumni. Student surveys and site visit clearly indicated that notwithstanding undertaken steps, only some portion of students is aware of services rendered by Career Centre. Only 48% of students is aware of Career Centre and only a small number makes use of its services.

4.6. The Institution promotes student involvement in research activities.
The Research Centre was created at YSAFA, the aim of which is to regulate research activities of the Academy, elaborate and implement research projects involving not only teaching staff but also MA and PhD students. The Academy has a scientific journal, where students have an opportunity to publish articles. Notwithstanding the steps undertaken and the creation of Research Centre, the expert panel analyses revealed that student involvement in research works is still quite low. The Academy participates in European VERITAS project. Notwithstanding the fact that the foundation of

the Centre is a huge step per se, undertaken events and mechanisms do not yet enhance student involvement in scientific-research works.

4.7. The Institution has a special body, which is responsible for the protection of students' rights.

Different mechanisms of students' rights protection function at YSAFA. Student rights are determined by the Academy Charter and internal regulations. The rights of students and the Academy are also set in the contract signed between the two. The Student Council, functioning in YSAFA, represents the interest of the students and protects their rights in governing bodies. Certain members of Student Council are elected to be representatives of those bodies. Student council voices the concerns, issues and suggestions of students and if necessary offers solutions. Meetings with students have proved that Student Council undertakes active participation both in protecting the rights of students and in the process of rendering the academic process more qualified.

4.8. The Institution has set mechanisms for the evaluating and ensuring the quality of educational, consultancy and other services provided to students.

Surveys are made use of quite often when assessing academic, consultation and other services rendered to students. The said surveys are carried out both by the QA Centre and Chairs among students of different years. Based on the outcomes, the Academy has undertaken certain improvements (e.g. improvement of assessment system).Throughout ESPAQ project a student group has been formed, which renders its assistance to the QA Centre when carrying out surveys. Except for surveys, the Academy lacks any other mechanism of assessing and monitoring academic, consultation and other services rendered.

CONSIDERATIONS

Student recruitment procedures functioning at the Academy are precise and are carried out in line with ratified regulations, having the peculiarities of the Academy in mind. The events organized by the Academy and targeted at prospective students-to-be enhance recruitment procedures.

The expert panel evaluates positively the existence of Student Community, which tries to study academic needs of the students and voice the latter in higher cycles of management. The involvement of a greater number of students into the Community will encourage voicing their concerns and will raise their initiative.

Due to the peculiarities of the Academy, each student gets corresponding assistance and individual approach from the perspective of ameliorating the quality of his/her work. Students are also endowed with the opportunity to participate in extra-curricular lessons which propel the motivation of students and enhance the improvement of academic environment.

The expert panel evaluates positively the operations of Career Centre. The Academy still has steps to undertake as far as raising the awareness about the Centre is concerned, since the majority of the students is not aware of the operations of the said Centre and scarcely makes use of its services. Raising the awareness about the Centre and its activities will enhance student-employer cooperation and can have an impact as far as solving the issues related to alumni employability are concerned.

Notwithstanding the fact that the expert panel evaluates positively the existence of the Student Council and Student Community, they still find it worrisome that the majority of students are indifferent towards the operations of the said bodies which does not promote the procedure of revealing the needs of the students and protecting their interests.

SUMMERY: Taking into consideration the fact that the Academy has a precise procedure of students recruitment and admission, certain mechanisms aimed at revealing academic needs of the students, students have an opportunity to participate in extra-curricular lessons and receive consultations, there are certain bodies operating in the Academy who render their assistance to the student and enhance the process of revealing their academic needs and solving the latter, the expert panel finds that the YSAFA ensures an effective academic environment for students.

CONCLUSION: The correspondence of YSAFA's institutional capacities to the requirements of criterion 4 is ***satisfactory.***

CRITERION V. TEACHING AND SUPPORT STAFF

CRITERION: The Institution has a highly qualified teaching and support staffs to achieve the set goals for academic programs and institution's mission.

FINDINGS

5.1. The Institution has policies and procedures promoting recruitment of a highly qualified teaching and supporting staff for the provision of academic programs.

The RA Labour Code, the YSAFA Charter, the Regulation on Categories and the YSAFA Code of Conduct are at the base of operations on recruitment of human resources and management procedures.

The YSAFA Regulation on Categories functions in the process of formulating the teaching and support staff and their selection. The said Regulation was ratified back in 2016. The Regulation establishes both the functioning categories (teacher, assistant, associate professor, professor and etc.), the requirements and descriptions presented to the said categories. The Regulation includes procedures of establishing teaching and support staff, competitive procedure of recruitment and etc.

The "YSAFA Code of Conduct" regulates the policy of employee promotion, penalization and laying off. The said Regulation, along with other information, includes data on working rules, general rights and responsibilities of employees, articles on maintaining the rules of ethics, discipline, employment fines, promoting the employees and etc.

3 correspondent-members of the RA National Academy of Sciences, 5 doctors of science, 37 professors, 23 candidates of science, 5 associate professors currently teach at the YSAFA. The teaching staff of the Academy involves celebrated artists of the field who have necessary professional skills.

5.2 The requirements for qualifications of teaching staff per academic program are comprehensively stated.

Notwithstanding the fact that the YSAFA Regulation on Categories includes generic requirements to teaching staff qualifications, the APs still lack requirements to teaching staff qualifications.

5.3 The Institution has well established policies and procedures for the periodic evaluation of the teaching staff.

With the aim of regular assessment of the teaching staff, the Regulation on the Survey aimed at Assessing the Effectiveness of Methodology of Courses was elaborated in 2015. The said Regulation states that "The assessment of YSAFA teaching staff is carried out with the following components":

- Surveys among students
- Evaluation of the works carried out by the heads of the chairs
- Peer-evaluation carried out throughout lesson-observations as far as the work carried out with the students is concerned
- Exhibitions of artistic works of the teachers.

In the SER of the Academy it is stated that the QA Centre has been carrying out surveys started from 2013; however, solely those initiated back in 2016 have been presented to the expert panel. The said surveys have not been carried out at a pan-academy scale and mostly within the framework of core disciplines. Surveys conducted within the scope of other disciplines are also planned.

Mid-term and summative lesson-observations are also viewed as an important mechanism aimed at guiding the operations of the teaching staff and carrying out peer-evaluation. The said observations are carried out by an observation group comprised of teachers. The said group then carries out discussions as to how much in line the works, carried out by the students, are with the intended outcomes and the said group renders guidance and/or consultations to the head teacher as far as rectification of revealed inconsistences are concerned.

Exhibitions of creative works and publications of scientific-research works in the manual "Taregirq" of the Academy, as well as other local and international manuals are also viewed as indicators of assessing the operations of the teaching staff.

However, it is worth mentioning that the YSAFA still lacks a policy on monitoring the works of the teaching staff.

5.4 The Institution promotes professional development for the teaching staff in accordance to the needs outlined during regular evaluations (both internal and external).

The Academy foresees elaborating a policy on teacher training and professional development. The Academy has already elaborated the topics of the said training which are aimed at enhancing professional skills and abilities of the teaching staff.

The Academy has not yet revealed and made the needs of teacher training precise and hence, there are only free of charge courses of foreign language, which are aimed at raising the level of foreign language acquisition among the teaching staff.

5.5 The Institution ensures that there is a permanent staff for the stable provision of the academic programs.

The Academy highlights the fact that the average age of the teaching staff is quite high, and this is the core reason why the YSAFA has adopted the policy on teaching staff rejuvenation. With this aim the Academy has recruited young specialists on hourly and part-time basis. This, in the meantime, also gives the young professionals the opportunity to realize their full potential.

5.6 There are set policies and procedures for the staff promotion.

From the perspective of staff promotion the Academy does not yet implement a policy; however, YSAFA gives an opportunity to applied specialists in the field of arts and design to organize free of charge group and individual exhibitions in YSAFA exhibition hall; moreover, assist in the process of organizing exhibitions in other venues. As far as the specialists from the theory of art are concerned, with the aim of promoting their professional development YSAFA gives them an opportunity to publish their scientific articles free of charge in the journal "Taregirq".

With the aim of promoting research operations, the Academy has a set a system of monetary promotions.

The expert panel ascertains that from the perspective of teaching staff professional development, the Academy still lacks systematic mechanisms and procedures.

5.7 The Institution has necessary administrative and support staffs to achieve the strategic goals.

Academic process is being organized and systematized by YSAFA Academic Affairs Department, Deans Offices and Chairs. HR and General Department, QA Centre, Financial Department, the Department of External Relations and etc. assist and encourage the implementation of teaching and learning. All structures operate based on regulating documents, and when administering teaching and learning processes they underline the importance of the norms of ethics.

CONSIDERATIONS

The expert panel considers that the Academy has a policy and procedures aimed at selection and recruitment of teaching and non-teaching staff. The recruitment procedure foresees competitive selection, which is the token of the fact that the TLI will have competitive and experienced employees. The fact that the overwhelming majority of the YSAFA staff are full-time employees significantly raises the stability of the teaching staff and enhances the implementation of stable academic operations. Positive is the trend that the YSAFA alumni are recruited by the Academy.

The lack of precise criteria to professional qualities of teaching staff of corresponding APs turns the requirements to the teaching staff more generic and renders the process of recruiting corresponding specialists more difficult. This, in its turn, is a hindrance from the prospective of ensuring the quality of education.

The expert panel evaluates positively the fact that assessment operations of the teaching staff are carried out at the Academy; however, the latter are not periodic in nature, which can hinder the improvement of the quality of teaching.

From the prospective of teaching staff training, foreign language lessons organized at the academy can be considered as a positive trend. However, no professional training have been organized hence far. This fact is worrisome, since professional training are the main path of increasing professional qualifications of the teaching staff.

There is a process of teaching staff rejuvenation, which is a positive trend as far as generation change is concerned.

On the other hand, praiseworthy is the fact that celebrated artists of Armenia carry out their operations in the Academy.

Notwithstanding certain mechanisms, currently the Academy does not have precise mechanisms and procedures enhancing the progression of teachers, which can weaken the stability of the teaching staff.

Though the Academy possesses corresponding administrative and support staff, the lack of the mechanisms to ensure quality assurance of their operations hinders the procedure of evaluating their works.

SUMMERY: **Taking into consideration the fact** that the Academy has a policy and procedures of recruiting teaching and support staff, assessment of teaching staff, and courses of foreign language acquisition aimed at training the staff, the fact that leading specialists of the field teach at the YSAFA, the expert panel finds that the Academy has sufficient teaching and support staff with corresponding qualifications to implement the APs.

CONCLUSION: The correspondence of YSAFA's institutional capacities to the requirements of criterion 5 is *satisfactory.*

CRITERION VI. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
CRITERION: The Institution ensures the implementation of research activity and the link of the research with teaching and learning.

FINDINGS
6.1 The Institution has a clear strategy promoting its research interests and ambitions.

The strategy of research field of YSAFA is presented in their 2012-2016 and 2017-2021 SP. In the meanwhile, the Academy states in its SER that YSAFA mainly has a creative direction and in contrast to different classical universities and other TLIs having scientific-research inclination, the research carried out at the YSAFA is often not scientific in nature.
In 2014 the Centre of Research in Arts and Humanities was established in YSAFA, documents on "YSAFA Research Centre Aims, Functions and Structure", "YSAFA Research Centre Strategy, Research Directions and Programmes" have been elaborated. Research directions and interests are mentioned in the said documents:
Enhancement of interdisciplinary research of history of arts and theory within the framework of philology of history, archaeology, fine arts and philosophy.
- Study of the history of Armenian medieval art within the framework of study of culture of Caucasus, Byzantine and Eastern Christianity revealing generics and specificities which will provide grounds to value Armenian art.
- Study of history of Armenia Art which is mainly an open field.
- Study of Armenian contemporary art.

- Enhancement of research around history, theoretical objectives and modern requirements of the fields of fine arts, design and applied arts.

Notwithstanding the fact that directions are quite inclusive per se, throughout the site visit it became apparent that research activities do not include professional directions and mainly touch upon objectives of history of art.

The Academy has applied for research fields in Fine Arts, design and Applied Arts for the third cycle of education.

"Taregirq" scientific journal, which is included in the list of journals accepted by the Supreme Certifying Committee, is published in YSAFA. The said journal is intended for publishing PhD outcomes and concepts.

6.2 The Institution has a long-term strategy and med term and short-term programs that address its research interests and ambitions.

Long-term strategy, aims and objectives of YSAFA research fields are reflected in its SP. Research activities are being systemized by the Research Centre, which has also elaborated its own strategy.

The strategy of the Research Centre also states short, mid and long-term programmes. Yet, the said programmes per se represent more enumerations of theoretical issues, rather than a sequence of targeted steps. Moreover, they do not reflect a precise strategy of research operations.

6.3 The Institution ensures the implementation of research and its development through sound policies and procedures.

The policy on research implementation is reflected in the SP and the document on "Strategy, Research Directions and Programmes of YSAFA Research Centre".

Research within the individual scope of teachers and students is not documented and according to the SER is being guided by consultations provided by the Research Centre, research discussions and other undertakings.

The Expert panel highlights the fact that certain operations aimed at research activities can be traces at YSAFA; however, hence far there is no precise policy on research implementation and development and there are no corresponding procedures. The SP has aims and objectives, yet, there are no mechanisms of their implementation, which would ensure the development of the Academy. Moreover, people responsible are not indicated as well.

The Research Centre does not have sufficient resources (human and financial) for carrying out corresponding operations foreseen. In particular, the Head of the Chair works part-time and there are no other employees.

Notwithstanding the fact that throughout recent years certain activities aimed at developing the research component of the Academy are being undertaken and certain financial allocations are being made (according to 2017-2021 SP the amount is 6.780.000 AMD), no research programmes have been carried out at YSAFA to date.

6.4 The Institution emphasizes internationalization of its research.

26 credits are allocated for research activities and preparation of graduation works at a BA level. As far as MA APs are concerned 60 credits are allocated here. In the said APs only graduation papers are concerned. There is no component of ongoing research. Except for the specialization "Theory of Art", all BA theses and graduation papers are practical-applied in nature and lack research direction.

Requirements to thematic formulations and selection are not presented as afar as MA theses, as core component of graduate APs, are concerned.

Both in BA and MA APs research components are not described. As far as the curricula of MA APs are concerned, out of 120 credit, 60 are allocated to research component (research activities 32 credits, preparation of an MA project and theses 28 credits). Teaching/learning methods aimed at formulating research capacities of MA student are not yet made precise in APs.

CONSIDERATIONS
The Academy has elaborated research directions, yet theydo not reflect all professional capacities of the Academy. The lack of an all-embracing strategy of research field and interests weakens research activities. Having a 70-year history and certain scientific potential, the Academy was already to have implemented projects aimed at carrying out certain research programmes.
The insufficient amount of resources of the Research Centre hinder the process of the implementing the aims foreseen by the statute and undertaking corresponding research operations.
The link of the Academy with scientific establishments is loose as far as research is concerned. This, in other terms, could have been expressed in joint scientific projects.
The small number of articles and theses published by YSAFA staff is to be worrisome for the Academy, since it directly demonstrates the low activity of research works undertaken by the teaching staff to be involved in research.
It's praiseworthy that YSAFA has participated in grant project TEMPUS VERITAS. This will enhance internationalization of research conducted in the future and international acclaim of outcomes gained. Yet the Academy still has certain works to be undertaken as far as internationalization of research is concerned, since de facto no internationally celebrated research activity is carried out. This decreases the mobility of teaching staff, and makes the scope of cooperation with foreign TLIs narrow.
Notwithstanding certain works undertaken hence far, student research activities at BA and MA levels do not yet form part of learning components, which can have a negative impact on formation of ILOs.

SUMMERY: **Taking into consideration the fact** that currently the Academy lacks an all-embracing strategy expressing its interests and ambitions in the field of research, the resources of the Academy are not sufficient to carry out corresponding research activities, internationalization of research operations is loose, the links between research and learning are not precise, the expert panel finds that the Academy does not ensure the implementation of research operations and the link with teaching.

CONCLUSION: The correspondence of YSAFA's institutional capacities to the requirements of criterion 6 is **unsatisfactory.**

CRITERION VII. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RECOURSES
CRITERION: The Institution has necessary resources to create learning environment and to effectively support the implementation of its stated mission and goals.

FINDINGS
7.1 The Institution has an appropriate learning environment for the implementation of current academic programmes.
The YSAFA carries out its operations in two branches situated in Yerevan with 3511,1 and 2996,8 m^2, in its Gyumri (1618,9 m^2) and Dilijan (1297,2 m^2) branches. The TLI has necessary auditoria, ateliers saturated with appropriate equipment, modern laboratories with special equipment. The Academy has auditoriums for rendering information services and computer labs.

The saturation of material-technical base as well as the improvement of learning environment make up strategic objectives of the YSAFA. These objectives are can be traced in the 7th objective of the first purpose of 2012-2016 SP, as well as 2nd objective of 2nd purpose of 2017-2021 SP. The implementation of the APs of the Academy requires an environment corresponding to their specificities which will include laboratories saturated with modern and up-to-date equipment, workrooms, ateliers, library and else. The majority of APs are applied in nature and, hence, require saturation with special workrooms and laboratories, which, in generic terms, is there. The resources that are necessary for the APs are not described.

The Academy has a library which is only partially saturated with necessary literature. The library has shortage of books, especially the ones for recently launched specializations. The TLI lacks an electronic library. The web-site of the TLI does not provide enough information about the library. Only 5% of students, out of those surveyed, are satisfied with library funds. Only a small number of teachers make use of the library.

With the aim of assessing learning environment, the TLI has carried out a survey and based on the outcomes certain conditions have been ameliorated. Based on survey outcomes certain laboratories have been re-saturated Approximately 70% of students and teachers satisfied with current resources.

The expert panel welcomes the fact that the Academy has an exhibition hall where both students and teachers have an opportunity to exhibit their works.

7.2 The Institution provides appropriate financial resources with necessary equipment and facilities as needed to achieve its mission and goals.

The budget estimate of the YSAFA, with financial allocations, is published on the website of the TLI in line with the ratified regulation.

35.7% financial resources of the Academy are made up of education fees (), approximately 40.4% from state allocations and 23.9% from other sources.

Financial means of the TLI are allocated based on the needs of different infrastructures. From the perspective of the policy of financial resource allocation the TLI has an annual financial planning and accountability.

The expenditures of the Academy mainly cover the following fields: salary; approximately 82%, scholarships; approximately 3.3%, business trips; appr. 0.7% and else. The TLI representatives are of the opinion that financial resources allocated to research-scientific works are insufficient. Allocations per strategic aims mainly are not presented.

One can trace no mechanisms aimed at monitoring, assessing the effectiveness and improving the implementation of financial resources.

Considerable external financial sources from grant projects are involved in financial resources of the TLI. The YSAFA makes considerable investment aimed at saturating laboratories with new equipment. For carrying out the said operations, the YSAFA quite often makes use of financial flows coming from external international sources.

7.3 The Institution has policy on financial distribution and capacity to sustain and ensure the integrity and continuity of the programmes offered at the Institution.

Generally speaking there is no functioning system of financial resource allocation ensuring the implementation and continuity of aims of separate APs. However, there are certain positive examples. In particular, mainly by means of international projects certain laboratories have been equipped.

The YSAFA has a procedure on financial resource allocation, which is carried out in accordance with priorities and needs. The budget is being drafted having at its base factual performance of previous years, taking into account the steps leading to the development of the TLI, in advance calculated incomes, general expenditure, as well as the needs of infrastructures.

The draft of the budget is first and foremost being discussed in the Scientific Council of the TLI and in the scenario when it receives approval it is being presented to the ratification of the Governing Board.

The YSAFA has a Regulation on Annual Planning, Monitoring and Improvement of Infrastructure Operations, which does not serve as a document regulating the policy on financial allocation aimed at ensuring and guaranteeing the implementation and continuity of AP aims.

7.4 The Institution's resource base supports the implementation of Institution's academic programmes and strategic plan, which promotes sustainability and continuous improvement of quality.

It can be stated that the resource base of the TLI allows for the implementation of APs. As a positive observation it can be singled out that certain workrooms have undergone equipment modernization; however, there are still certain undertaking as far as enrichment of resource base is concerned. In particular, the library and workrooms need saturation with new equipment. The students are in charge of getting the materials they need, and rare are cases when the TLI renders its assistance. Certain objective issues have been voiced both by students and teachers as far as models are concerned.

Very limited resources are allocated to research.

7.5 The Institution has a sound policy and procedure to manage information and documentation.

The YSAFA has an elaborated scheme of document flow, which regulates the flow of incoming, outgoing and internal document flows of the YSAFA. The YSAFA has elaborated a "Regulation of YSAFA Archive", based on which archiving of documents is carried out. The TLI implements an electronic system of data maintenance and management related to personal and academic procedures of the students. However, the said system is still in the cycle of improvement.

In line with the SER, various systems of documentation are not linked, i.e. they do not function within one and the same system.

The YSAFA website ensures information accessibility to a certain extent, especially as far as accountability documents, regulations and APs are concerned.

7.6 The Institution creates safe and secure environment through health and safety mechanisms taking into account the students with special needs.

The YSAFA has a medical unit aimed at rendering first aid services. The said unit is also provided with necessary medicine which is regularly refreshed. Mandatory medical checks are being organized, also by means of external resources.

From security perspective the YSAFA has a security infrastructure and a checkpoint.

With the aim of ensuring a more efficient education for students with special needs and involving the latter in different operations, the TLI has initiated INCLUSION project of ERASMUS PLUS. However, the premises are not yet adapted for students having locomotor problems, which hinders the possibility of getting education.

7.7 The Institution has special mechanisms in place for the evaluation of the effectiveness, applicability and availability of resources given to the teaching staff and learners.

With the aim of assessing the applicability, accessibility and effectiveness of resources, the QA Centre has conducted a survey among students and teachers, who have revealed the issues related to resource applicability and accessibility. As an outcome of the said surveys certain workroom have been equipped.

It is worth mentioning that the survey in question do not embrace holistic assessment of accessibility, applicability and effectiveness of resources.

No other analytical mechanisms are applied except for the surveys. For instance, there is no regular monitoring and else. The expert panel had not revealed any other surveys conducted among other internal stakeholders of the academy (administrative and support staff) as far as resources are concerned.

CONSIDERATIONS

The expert panel finds, that generally the resources ensure stable operation of APs and other operations of the Academy.

Yet, notwithstanding current academic resources, ateliers and laboratories are in need of being equipped with technical means, which was witnessed also by the participants of the meetings with expert panel.

The surveys conducted demonstrate that students and teachers are not yet contented with library resources, which is worrisome form the prospective of AP implementation.

The existence of an exhibition hall enhances the implementation of APs, since this endows the students with the opportunity to exhibit ILOs. At the same time, the expert panel evaluates positively the fact, that grant projects support financial means of the Academy. Further steps to diversify sources of financial flows and enrich the quota of external sources will foster financial stability of the Academy.

The expert panel evaluates positively the fact that YSAFA has an established mechanism of allocating financial means. The annual budget of YSAFA foresees certain expenditure, aimed at implementation of Academy purposes; however, the said expenditures are not detailed per strategic aims and APs, which, otherwise, would make financial investments more targeted. The Academy does not yet have mechanisms of assessing the effectiveness of the current policy on planning and allocation of financial means, which can decrease the effectiveness of financial resource allocation.

Since 2017, the YSAFA has foreseen the implementation of an electronic system of document flow, since the current systems are not oinked with one another. The implementation of a new system will enhance a more efficient organization of the process of document flow.

The Academy has a mechanism of surveys for assessing academic environment. This can be enhancing from the perspective of revealing the needs and further improvement of academic environment. However, the operations aimed at assessing current resources is still unsatisfactory, since surveys are but episodic in nature and non-systematic.

Huge portion of salaries (82%) in the budget can limit the opportunities of making investments in other core fields (e.g. research, library, internationalization) and weaken the effectiveness of SP implementation.

SUMMERY: Taking into consideration the fact that throughout recent years the Academy exercises efforts aimed at resource improvement and enrichment by attracting external sources, certain laboratories have been re-saturated, necessary conditions for implementing APs are there, there is a safe and sound environment for the organization of academic process, with the aim of effective improvement of the system of document flow the implementation of an electronic system is planned to be carried out, the expert panel finds that the Academy has resources to create an environment conductive to academic process and aimed at implementing determined mission and aims.

CONCLUSION: The correspondence of YSAFA's institutional capacities to the requirements of criterion 7 is ***satisfactory.***

CRITERION VIII. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
CRITERION: The Institution is accountable to the government and society for the education it offers and the resources it uses as well as for the research it conducts.

FINDINGS
8.1. The Institution has clear policy on accountability.
The Academy has an internal system of accountability and in line with the said system the questions on the agenda pass through chairs, faculty councils, vice-rector, Scientific Council, Rector, Governing Board.

The Rector presents his annual accountability report to the Governing Board of the Academy. Also, to the RA Ministry of Education and Science as far as academic and scientific operations of the Academy are concerned. The said reports are also published on the website of the Academy. This is a positive mechanism from the perspective of ensuring accountability and transparency.

Information about certain events and undertakings that have already been organized or else are in the process of organization by certain infrastructures of the Academy can also be found of the website of the Academy and the facebook page.

A system of publicity and information dissemination has been elaborated by the Academy, yet the latter does not include detailed description of functions.

8.2. The Institution ensures transparency of its procedures and processes and makes them publicly available.

Information about the Academy, regulations, procedures, manuals and other regulatory documents are published on the official website of the Academy. The Academy considers myriad exhibitions by students and teachers as a means of accountability as well. The latter are being organized in the exhibition hall of the YSAFA and that of the Painters' House of the RA. Open defense of undergraduate (BA) and graduate (MA) graduation papers is another way of accountability, since a great number of spectators are assisting the defense, employers are being invited. Materials on defense are being posted on the website and the facebook page of the Academy.

The YSAFA has published a manual which includes operations of the Academy and specializations with their succinct descriptions.

Throughout the site visit the expert panel discovered, that YSAFA, together with two other TLIs (Yerevan State Institute of Theatre and Cinematography, Komitas State Conservatory of Yerevan) has organized an array of events with a participation of a great number of students. The said events have been aimed at presenting and propagating the development of art in Armenia. The Academy has actively participated in myriad other national and public events which have won acclaim; however, no information about the latter have been included into the SER.

8.3. The Institution has sustainable feedback mechanisms for establishing contacts with society.

The feedback on the part of the society as far as YSAFA operations are concerned is mainly ensured through the website and facebook page. The feedback of the society is assembled by the person in charge of public relations and is handed down to the heads of infrastructures concerned.

Throughout the site visit the expert panel revealed that visitors take leave notes in corresponding registers and express their ideas about personal and collective exhibitions of both teachers and students. Except for that, with the aim of involving foreign students, continuous link with Embassies of foreign countries in Armenia is being ensured.

8.4. The Institution has mechanisms that ensure knowledge /value/ transfer to the society.

YSAFA renders additional paid academic services to the society by means of conducting preparatory and other classes.

Throughout the site visit the expert panel revealed that YSAFA students regularly participate in archeological excavations conducted in Armenia and hence have their investment in the process of protecting cultural values. Moreover, YSAFA students participate in the process of decorating the building of Yerevan, in particular with mosaic. The students have also expressed their positive attitude towards these works.

CONSIDERATIONS

The precise mechanism of accountability of the Academy enhances the quality of accountability process and renders Academy operations transparent.

The Academy has certain mechanisms by means of which it ensures the transparency of its procedures and operations (website, Facebook page, manuals and etc.). From this perspective, the Academy must maximally enhance information dissemination among internal and external stakeholders. One weakness to highlight is the fact that the website does not yet ensure detailed information (notwithstanding the fact that the Academy has necessary specialists of the field). This fact has repeatedly been voiced by the academic staff and student representatives throughout meetings with the expert panel. Society does not make use of the opportunity to pose their questions and get replies through the website.

Positively evaluating the fact that the Academy has services rendered to the society (works undertaken with the applicants, exhibitions of teachers' and students' works, archeological excavations, participations in the decorating the building of Yerevan, societal events), it still must be stated that the Academy needs to elaborate precise mechanisms which would allow for evaluating and systematizing services rendered.

SUMMERY: Taking into consideration the fact that the Academy has an accountability system, which mainly reveals the issues of the YSAFA, the information to society is generally accessible, and there

are mechanisms of knowledge transfer to society, the expert panel finds that the YSAFA is sufficiently accountable to the society.

CONCLUSION: The correspondence of YSAFA's institutional capacities to the requirements of criterion 8 is ***satisfactory.***

CRITERION IX. EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND INTERNATIONALIZATION

CRITERION: The Institution promotes experience exchange and enhancement through its sound external relations practices, thus promoting internationalization of the Institution.

FINDINGS
9.1 The Institution promotes its external relations through sound policies and procedures aimed at creating an environment conducive to experience exchange and enhancement and internationalization.

2012-2016 and 2017-2021 SP states the aims and objectives of internationalization, which reflect the core fields of Academy operations. The "Internationalization Strategy" was elaborated in 2016 which reflects the improvement of operations of YSAFA Department of External Affairs, development of external links, mobility of teachers and students and enhancement of internationalization of academic programmes. Throughout the last three years the Academy has undertaken an array of operations targeted at internationalization:Elaboration of a manual on AP Elaboration and Review within the scope of TEMPUS Align grant project. The said manual ensures the alignment of the YSAFA Policy on AP Elaboration with national and international requirements.

- Review of 4 BA and MA APs in line with the new policy.

- Improvement of student assessment system by examining the experience of foreign establishments and thus ensuring the alignment of the system with international approaches.

- Review of functions of the Department of External Relations, elaboration of the strategy of internationalization and precision of the QA policy of the latter and else taking into account the best practice of foreign establishments. The said operations have been conducted within the scope of TEMPUS PICASA project[9].

In accordance with the SER of the Academy, YSAFA has organized an array of international, cultural operations.

9.2 The Institution's external relations infrastructure ensures regulated process.

The Department of External Affairs functions at YSAFA with the aim of ensuring external relations and internationalization. Different infrastructure of the Academy, within the scope of their operations, participate in the implementation of international projects.

The operations of the said department are in line with SP aims. The Department of External Affairs carries out coordination of an array of international projects. The Department has two employees except for the head. The operations of the unit are organized based on the regulation ratified in 2016. According to the SER, throughout the last three years the YSAFA has carried out the said operations:

- The agreements with foreign TLIs have been reviewed. New agreement have also been reached.

- The Regulation on Student Mobility has been elaborated thus becoming more precise and ensuring there is a regulated procedure of recognizing the outcomes.

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[9] This portion of the text has been elaborated as an outcome of discussing objections and suggestions presented by the Academy.

- The tripartite agreement of student mobility has been improved, involving the main requirements and responsibilities of the YSAFA, the student, admitting establishment.

- More than 30 events have been organized with the participation of external participants.

- The Regulation of Foreign Students admission has been made more precise[10].

Throughout the expert panel meeting it became evident that that the YSAFA Chairs, though involved in international projects do not carry out an active international operation.

YSAFA international operation is mainly anchored on grant projects and other separate initiatives.

9.3 The Institution effectively collaborates with local and international counterparts.

Cooperation with local establishments is chiefly carried out with the aim of organizing student internships. With the said aim, the Academy has signed 26 contracts. The Academy is a member of GOVERN, ALIGN, VERITAS, PICASA, ESPAQ, HEN-GEAR projects of TEMPUS and inclusion, C3QA of ERASMUS PLUS grant projects. YSAFA is a member of consortium comprised of 9 universities.

YSAFA has 20 bilateral agreements of cooperation with foreign TLIs; however, not all of the latter function. The Academy considers that the main reason is shortage of financial resources and insufficient level of foreign language acquisition. Within the framework of 6 contracts of cooperation, only data on outgoing student flow is presented as far as students exchange is concerned, which is the token of a unilaterality of the contract. The SER involves information about 31 outgoing students and 1 incoming student per Moscow National Institute on Design and the Saint Petersburg Stieglitz State Academy of Art and Design, who have arrived to the YSAFA via exchange programmes[11].

No teacher mobility is carried out by the YSAFA.

At a local scale, there are active links with local universities within the scope of TEMPUS projects.

9.4 The Institution ensures internal stakeholders' appropriate level of a foreign language to enhance efficiency of internationalization.

Foreign languages are not included as an obligatory discipline in BA APs. As far as MA APs are concerned, foreign languages are but a selective discipline. However, the Academy organizes free of charge facultative courses of English, French, Italian and Russian. A contract is signed with a foreign language specialist and a timetable is set.

Courses of Armenian are organized for those foreign students who do not speak Armenian.

The number of taught disciplines in a foreign language (for foreign students) is scarce. There are no APs and separate disciplines in a foreign language.

CONSIDERATIONS

The expert panel evaluates positively the facts that throughout the recent years the YSAFA has been involved in an array of international projects, which have certain influence on the improvement of the quality of academic process. As far as internationalization and enhancement of cooperation are concerned, YSAFA is well-aware of current issues:lack of teacher mobility, low level of mobility among students which is accounted for by the lack of financial resources and low level of foreign language acquisition among them.

The Department of External Relations, functioning in the organigram of the Academy, with its resources creates basis for further activation of internationalization and external relations. At the same time, the more active operation of the said Department, will enhance the involvement of both

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[10] This portion of the text has been elaborated as an outcome of discussing objections and suggestions presented by the Academy.

[11] This portion of the text has been elaborated as an outcome of discussing objections and suggestions presented by the Academy.

teachers and students in different international projects: with the aim of pursuing their education abroad, carrying out research and/or undertaking other operations.

The expert panel finds that the thorough implementation of the policy and procedures enhancing the establishment of external relations will boost the effectiveness of international operations of the Academy and will active teacher and students' mobility.

The fact that certain teachers and students have some level of foreign language acquisition, ensures perspectives of activating external links, however, the Academy, realizing that the current level of foreign language acquisition can still be insufficient for conducting professional disciplines and student mobility within the framework of APs, conducts additional courses of foreign languages, which, according to expert panel, can be an enhancing factor for internationalization of the Academy. Mandatory involvement of foreign languages in APs will also enhance the level of foreign language acquisition among the students.

SUMMERY: Taking into consideration the fact that there is a Department of External Relations functioning at the YSAFA, which carries out operations aimed at internationalization, there are elaborated policies and regulations enhancing the establishment of external links, the Academy is involved in an array of international projects, within the scope of which the documentation base of the Academy has been elaborated, the Academy is undertaking steps aimed at activating incoming and outgoing mobility of both teachers and students, as well as to increase foreign language acquisition level both among teachers and students, the expert panel finds that the Academy complies with the requirements of Criterion N 9.

CONCLUSION: The correspondence of YSAFA's institutional capacities to the requirements of criterion 9 is ***satisfactory.***

CRITERION X. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE
CRITERION: The Institution has an internal quality assurance system, which promotes establishment of a quality culture and continuous improvement of all the processes of the Institution.

FINDINGS
10.1 The Institution has quality assurance policies and procedures.

The overall QA policy of the Academy is determined in an array of documents, as for instance, Regulation on Annual Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Improvement of the Activities of YSAFA Structural Units, Manual on the Development and Revision of Academic Programmes and etc.

The quality management system of the YSAFA is the basis for QA procedures of the Academy.

After the foundation of the QA Centre myriad mechanisms and documents, evaluating different fields of operation of the academy have been elaborated (Regulation on Annual Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Improvement of the Activities of YSAFA Structural Units, Manual on the Development and Revision of Academic Programmes).

10.2 The Institution allocates sufficient material, human and financial resources to manage internal quality assurance processes.
In 2011 a Department of Quality Assurance and Self-Assessment (in the SER it is called "Centre") was created. The latter is aimed at rendering assistance in all QA operations of the TLI. The operations of the centre are framed by the regulation ratified by the rector. The said document highlights the functions of the Centre. The YSAFA QA Centre is an independent infrastructure and is directly accountable to the Rector. The Centre has a director and a specialist-analyst. The QA Centre has an equipped office and premises meant for workshops. The list of material and financial resources necessary for QA operations are also attached to the annual operational plan of the Centre. After the ratification of the annual plan, based on the attached list of materials and financial resources, the budget allocated to the QA operations is calculated. Within the framework TEMPUS DIUSAS

"Development and Investment of Self-evaluation Systems of Institutions" and "Education Quality and Relevance" World Bank grant projects technical saturation of the Centre has been ensured to a certain extent. Annual planning of material and financial resources of QA Centre is regulated by the Regulation on Annual Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Improvement of the Activities of YSAFA Structural Units.

Human, material-technical and financial resources allocated both by the academy itself and within the scope of different international programmes are implemented in the system of internal quality assurance.

Neither the faculties nor the chairs have people responsible for quality.

Throughout the site visit one could trace lack of information and experience among the employees as far as QA functions are concerned.

10.3 The internal and external stakeholders are involved in quality assurance processes.

In line with the Guide on IQA System, both internal and external stakeholders must participate in QA operations. Internal stakeholders participate in all surveys organized by the QA Department. As far as the assessment of the effectiveness of APs is concerned, this is carried out by a survey conducted among the alumni and the employers.

The TLI underlies the importance of the awareness and involvement of internal and external stakeholders in QA procedures.

Except for surveys, no other instances of internal and external stakeholder involvement have been revealed.

With the aim of ensuring internal stakeholder involvement in QA operations of the YSAFA, the Academy created a "Student Community" (December, 2013). The Students Community has carried out certain surveys in QA procedures.

Students have also had participation in self-evaluation procedure. The president of the Student Council has been involved in the working group in charge of SER.

10.4 The internal quality assurance system is periodically reviewed.

Within the framework of TEMPUS DIUSAS project an excellent opportunity has been granted to get acquainted with the best European experience. "Education Quality and Relevance" World Bank grant project has also enhanced the improvement of QA operations and that of management system.

Currently the operations of the QA Department are targeted at planning and implementing the QA operations. The PDCA cycles is not yet closed in the core operations of the YSAFA; in particular those of AP implementation, research operations, professional training of the teaching staff and else.

Certain amendments have been carried out in the IQA system throughout the recent years, yet, the policy on periodic review of the system is not yet implemented. In particular, there seems to be no need to review the system, planned amendments and how much the said amendments will enhance AP improvement, raising student satisfaction levels, their involvement in research works and else.

10.5 The internal quality assurance system provides valid and sufficient grounds for the external quality assurance processes.

An array of regulations and documents have been elaborated aimed at regulating the QA system of the Academy. Some of the latter include but are not limited to Guidelines on Drafting and Elaborating YSAFA SP, Regulation on Annual Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Improvement of the Activities of YSAFA Structural Units, Manual on the Development and Revision of Academic Programmes and etc.

With the aim of organizing the procedure of external assessment, certain works have been undertaken (surveys, self-evaluation). Certain steps aimed at external assessment of institutional capacities have been undertaken through grant projects.

10.6. The internal quality assurance system ensures the transparency of the processes at the Institution providing valid and up to date information on their quality to the internal and external stakeholders.

The main environment ensuring the transparency of Academy operations is the website which is in need of improvement since it does not contain detailed information about APs and QA operations and the quality of the outcomes of said operations.

The events carried out at the YSAFA also enhance the transparency of Academy operations (exhibitions, discussions, seminars, master classes and etc.).

CONSIDERATIONS
Throughout the recent years, the implementation and development of QA system have created certain favorable conditions for the establishment of quality culture. However, quality culture has not yet spread in the whole academy.

The operations of the QA Centre and myriad documents elaborated by the Centre per se provide a base for the implementation of QA operations; however, there is still a necessity of optimizing and implementing the said documents.

The participation of teachers and students in QA procedures is mainly ensured by means of surveys and a small number of events. With the aim of ensuring a more targeted and efficient operation, the level of their activity must be boosted.

With the aim of accumulating certain effective and useful experience, the expert panel evaluates positively the participation of the Academy in an array of international projects aimed at implementation and development of QA operations. Human, financial and material-technical resources involved in QA operations, generally speaking ensure the implementation of corresponding operations.

The current involvement scarcity of external stakeholders (one can trace certain interest on their part to participate in operations of the Academy) in QA system can diminish the effectiveness of QA system and the academy still has certain undertakings in this respect.

The website and exhibition hall of the Academy are the environments which are directed at ensuring transparency of information about quality operations.

SUMMERY: The expert panel finds that YSAFA **complies with the requirements of Criterion 10**, taking into consideration the fact that the Academy has a system of IQA, which is still in its development, which creates necessary environment for continuous improvement of Academy operations, establishment of quality culture and its dissemination. There is a necessary document package regulating QA operations, resources are allocated for the implementation of QA operations.

CONCLUSION: The correspondence of YSAFA's institutional capacities to the requirements of criterion 10 is ***satisfactory.***

EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

CRITERION	CONCLUSION
I. Mission and Goals	**Satisfactory**
II. Governance and Administration	**Unsatisfactory**
III. Academic Programs	**Unsatisfactory**
IV. Students	**Satisfactory**
V. Teaching and Support Staffs	**Satisfactory**
VI.Research and Development	**Unsatisfactory**
VII. Infrastructure and Resources	**Satisfactory**
VIII. Social Responsibility	**Satisfactory**
IX. External Relations and Internationalization	**Satisfactory**
X. Internl Quality Assurane System	**Satisfactory**

17 November 2017

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Vardan Sargsyan

The chair of the panel

APPENDICES
APPENDIX 1.CVS OF EXPERT PANEL MEMBERS

Vardan Sargsyan: graduated from Yerevan Economic Institute in 1984 (at present State University of Economic of Armenia) being awarded a diploma of an engineer-economist. In 1989 was awarded the degree of a candidate and in 2009 the degree of a doctor in economics. In 1993 was awarded the degree of an associate professor. Currently he is the Head of the Chair of Economic Computer Science and Information Systems Armenian State University of Economics, professor. He has participated in an array of exchange programmes and conferences. He is an author of approximately 60 articles, books, manual, including 16 articles published in Europe and the USA, 4 manuals and 6 course books.

Lilit Hnerik Fljyan: graduated from Armenian State Pedagogical University after Kh. Abovyan in 1992. Throughout 2003-2001 worked in Yerevan State College of Humanities as a Head of the Chair of Applied Fine Arts. Throughout 2009-2013 worked as an assistant to the dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts of Armenian State Pedagogical University after Kh. Abovyan. From 2015sShe is a candidate of pedagogical sciences, Assistant in the Chair of Design and Decorative Applied Arts of the Armenian State Pedagogical University after Kh. Abovyan.

Longmus Jorg: in 1996 graduated from Berlin Technical University, the Department of Academic Sciences and was awarded a graduate (MA) degree. In 1998, graduated from the third cycle of education (PhD) of the same university. At present he is a member of "Reallocation: Fund of Solidary Word" and ASIIN – an organization in charge of carrying out accreditation procedures in the fields of engineering, computer and natural sciences and mathematics. From 2000 has been teaching at Beuth Technical University for Applied Sciences of Berlin. From 2002 has been working at Sustainum - Institute for Sustainable Management.

Herbert Johann Lorenz Gruner: was awarded the degree in education business from **Friedrich-Alexander University**. The main directions are: Business of Education, Leadership, Marketing, Psychology, and English. The topic of dissertation was "The Figure of a Merchant in German Literature of the 30s of the 20th Century". Currently, a course director for study programs offered to managers of small- and medium-sized enterprises at the University of St. Gallen. Associate professor at the same University. Renders his professional operations in an array of governing boards of myriad German companies. Also works as a rector of New Design University of Austria.

Hans-Christian Brauweiler: from 2000 has been carrying out doctoral studies at Freiberg Technical University, in the sphere of economics. In 2001 has carried out research operations in the Department of Business Management and Economy of the same University. Throughout 2004-2013 used to work in AKAD university of Applied Sciences as a professor and rector. From 2013 has been working at West Saxon University of Applied Sciences Zwickau as a professor.

Erik Vardanyan: student of the Department of Architecture and Engineering, National University of Architecture and Construction of Armenia. Has graduated

APPENDIX 2. SCHEDULE OF SITE VISIT

29.05.2017-02.05.2017

	29.05.2017	*Start*	*End*	*Duration*	*ASIIN topics*	*ANQA topics*
1.	Participation in the defense of graduation works	12:00	13:00	60 minutes		
2.	Lunch	13:15	14:00	45 minutes		
3.	Closed panel meeting	14:00	18:00	240 minutes	Introduction round, assessment of Self-Assessment Report, Development of Questionnaire for different interview rounds	

	30.05.2017	*Start*	*End*	*Duration*	*ASIIN topics*	*ANQA topics*
1.	Meeting with vice-rectors	9:00	10:30	90 minutes	**Section I: Understanding of Quality** (Definition, responsibilities)	**Criteria I:** Mission and Purposes **Criteria II:** Governance and Administration **Criteria VI:** Research and development **Criteria: IX** External relations
2.	**Break**	**10:30**	**10:45**	**15 minutes**		
3.	Meeting with heads of departments /Human resource department, external relations department, public relations department, career center, research Centre/ /Management/	10:45	12:15	90 minutes	**Section III: Management of resources** (Material and human resources, Human resources development, Interaction with research, Interaction with administration)	**Criteria VII:** Resource and infrastructure **Criteria V:** Facility and Staff (recruitment of faculty and staff) **Criteria VI:** Research and development **Criteria: IX** External relations **Criteria VIII:** Societal responsibility
4.	**Lunch and closed panel meeting**	**12:15**	**13:15**	**60 minutes**		
5.	Meeting with staff members of administration	13:15	14:15	60 minutes	**Section III: Management of resources** (Material and human resources, Human resources development,	**Criteria VII:** Recourses and infrastructure **Criteria V:** Facility and Staff (recruitment of faculty and staff)

					Interaction with research, Interaction with administration)	**Criteria VI:** Research and development **Criteria: IX** External relations **Criteria VIII:** Societal responsibility
6.	Meeting with the alumni (8-10 people)	14:15	15:00	45 minutes	**Section II:** Educational Programmes / Courses / Trainings (Cooperation)	**Criteria II** Management and administration **Criteria III** Academic programmes
7.	**Coffee Break**	**15:00**	**15:15**	**15 minutes**		
8.	Meeting with employers (8-10 people)	15:15	16:00	45 minutes	**Section II:** Educational Programmes / Courses / Trainings (Cooperation)	**Criteria II** Management and administration **Criteria III** Academic programmes
9.	Meeting with representatives of Education and educational methodological department as well as representatives of registrar office	16:00	17:00	60 minutes	**Section IV:** Transparency and documentation (Rules and regulations for programmes / courses / trainings, Documentation)	**Criteria III** Academic programmes
10.	Documentation review	17:00	17:30	30 minutes	**Section I:** Understanding of Quality **Section III:** Management of resources **Section IV:** Transparency and documentation	**Criteria I:** Mission and Purposes **Criteria II:** Governance and Administration
11.	Closed panel meeting	17:30	18:00	30 minutes	Summary of information gathered during the day **Section I:** Understanding of Quality **Section III:** Management of resources Preliminary assessment of maturity levels	Summary of information gathered during the day **Criteria I:** Mission and Purposes **Criteria II:** Governance and Administration Preliminary assessment of standards and criteria

	31.05.2017	Start	End	Duration	ASIIN topics	ANQA topics
1.	Meeting with faculty deans	8:30	9:15	45 minutes	**Section II:** Educational Programmes / Courses / Trainings (Cooperation, Examination systems and organization of exams, Recognition of achievements, Assistance and support)	**Criteria III** Academic programmes
2.	Meeting with the heads of Chair	9:20	10:30	70 minutes	**Section II:** Educational Programmes/ Courses / Trainings (Cooperation, Examination systems and organization of exams, Recognition of achievements, Assistance and support)	**Criteria III** Academic programmes
3.	**Break**	**10:30**	**10:45**	**15 minutes**		
4.	Meeting with teaching staff (including 3 AP) (10-12 people)	10:45	11:45	60 minutes	**Section I:** Understanding of **Quality Section II:** Educational Programmes / Courses / Trainings **Section III:** Management of resources **Section IV:** Transparency and documentation	**Criteria II:** Governance and Administration Preliminary assessment of standards and criteria **Criteria III:** Academic programmes **Criteria V:** Faculty and staff
5.	Meeting with rector	11:50	12:20	30 minutes	Welcome note, short presentation of the institution by management, general questions	Questions related to the strategy and further development of the HEI: Criteria 1 and 2
6.	Meeting with BA and MA student representatives from	12:25	13:25	60 minutes	**Section I:** Understanding of Quality Section II: Educational	**Criteria II:** Governance and Administration

		Start	End	Duration	ASIIN topics	ANQA topics
	the presented three AP (10-12 people)				Programmes / Courses / Trainings **Section III:** Management of resources **Section IV:** Transparency and documentation	Preliminary assessment of standards and criteria **Criteria III:** Academic programmes **Criteria IV:** Students
7.	**Lunch and closed panel meeting**	**13:30**	**14:30**	**60 minutes**		
8.	Resources review (Deans' offices, documentation)	14:30	15:15	45 minutes	**Section II:** Educational Programmes / Courses / Trainings **Section IV:** Transparency and documentation	**Criteria III:** Academic programmes **Criteria VII:** Infrastructure and resources
9.	Resources review (Chairs, documentation)	15:15	16:00	45 minutes	**Section II:** Educational Programmes / Courses / Trainings **Section IV:** Transparency and documentation	**Criteria III:** Academic programmes **Criteria VII:** Infrastructure and resources
10.	Resources review (auditoriums, laboratories, cabinets, library, sport club, medical service...)	16:00	16:45	45 minutes	**Section III:** Management of resources	**Criteria VII:** Infrastructure and resources
11.	Documentation review	16:45	17:00	15 minutes	**Section II:** Educational Programmes / Courses / Trainings	**Criteria III:** Academic programmes
12.	Closed panel meeting	17:00	18:00	60 minutes	Summary of information gathered during the day **Section II:** Educational Programmes / Courses / Trainings **Section III:** Management of resources Preliminary assessment of maturity levels	Summary of information gathered during the day **Criteria III:** Academic programmes **Criteria IV:** Students **Criteria V:** Faculty and staff Preliminary assessment criteria

01.06.2017	*Start*	*End*	*Duration*	*ASIIN topics*	*ANQA topics*

1.	Meeting with representatives of Quality Assurance Centre	8:30	9:30	60 minutes	**Section I: Understanding of Quality** (Definition, responsibilities)	**Criteria X:** Internal quality assurance
2.	Meeting with BA and MA student representatives (10-12 people)	09:30	10:30	60 minutes		**Criteria III:** Academic programmes **Criteria V:** Faculty and staff
3.	**Break**	**10:30**	**10:45**	**15 minutes**		
4.	Open meeting with expert panel	10:45	11:15	30 minutes		
5.	Closed panel meeting	11:15	12:00	45 minutes	Summary of information gathered Preliminary assessment of maturity levels	Evaluation of criteria and standards
6.	**Lunch and closed panel meeting**	**12:00**	**13:00**	**60 minutes**		
7.	Closed panel meeting	13:15	15:00	120 minutes	Assessment of maturity levels	Evaluation of criteria and standards
8.	**Break**	**15:00**	**15:30**	**30 minutes**		
9.	Final meeting with management /outline feedback, strong and weak points/	15:30	16:00	30 minutes		

APPENDIX 3. LIST OF DOCUMENTS OBSERVED

N	Document	C/S
1	YSAFA Charter	1
2	YSAFA SP 2012-2016.	1
3	YSAFA SP 2017-2021.	1
4	List of YSAFA Specializations	3
5	YSAFA Manual on AP Elaboration and Implementation	3
6	Guide Ensuring Alignment Between the YSAFA APs and RA NQF	3
7	Guide on YSAFA SP Drafting and Elaboration	3
8	Regulation on applicant survey as far as the effectiveness and accessibility of information provided by the YSAFA is concerned.	2
9	Regulation of freshmen survey as far as the effectiveness of admission procedure is concerned.	2
10	Regulation on surveys on the effectiveness of lesson methodology.	2
11	Regulation on surveys conducted among teachers and students as far as the effectiveness of assessment system of the YSAFA is concerned.	2
12	Regulation on surveys as far as the effectiveness of YSAFA resources and services are concerned.	2
13	Regulation on teacher and student survey as far as the effectiveness of research operations is concerned.	2
14	Regulation on teacher surveys as far as the effectiveness of management is concerned.	2
15	Regulation of student survey as far as the effectiveness of operations of the Department on External Relations is concerned.	2
16	Regulation on surveys as far as the level of foreign language acquisition among the administrative, teaching and support staff is concerned.	2
17	Regulation on survey among the alumni as far as the level of their satisfaction with the education received is concerned.	2
18	Regulation on surveys conducted among the employers as far as the effectiveness of YSAFA APs are concerned.	2
19	Regulation on planning, monitoring, assessment and improvement of annual operations of YSAFA infrastructures are concerned.	2
20	Format and samples of annual planning of infrastructures.	2
21	Format and samples of trimester accountability reports of infrastructures.	2
22	Timetable of surveys conducted by the YSAFA.	2
23	Annual reports of the YSAFA rector.	2
24	YSAFA organigram.	2
25	QA system of the YSAFA.	2
26	Format of regulations of the YSAFA infrastructures.	2
27	Internal disciplinary regulation of the YSAFA.	2
28	List of grant projects carried out at the YSAFA.	9
29	Grounds to alter YSAFA from non-profit organization to foundation.	2
30	YSAFA QA Manual.	10
31	Analyses of surveys conducted among the applicants as far as the effectiveness and availability of information provided by the YSAFA is concerned.	10
32	Analyses conducted among the freshmen as far as the effectiveness of admission procedure is concerned.	10
33	Analyses of surveys on the effectiveness of lesson methodology.	10
34	Analyses of surveys conducted among teachers and students as far as the effectiveness of assessment system of the YSAFA is concerned.	10

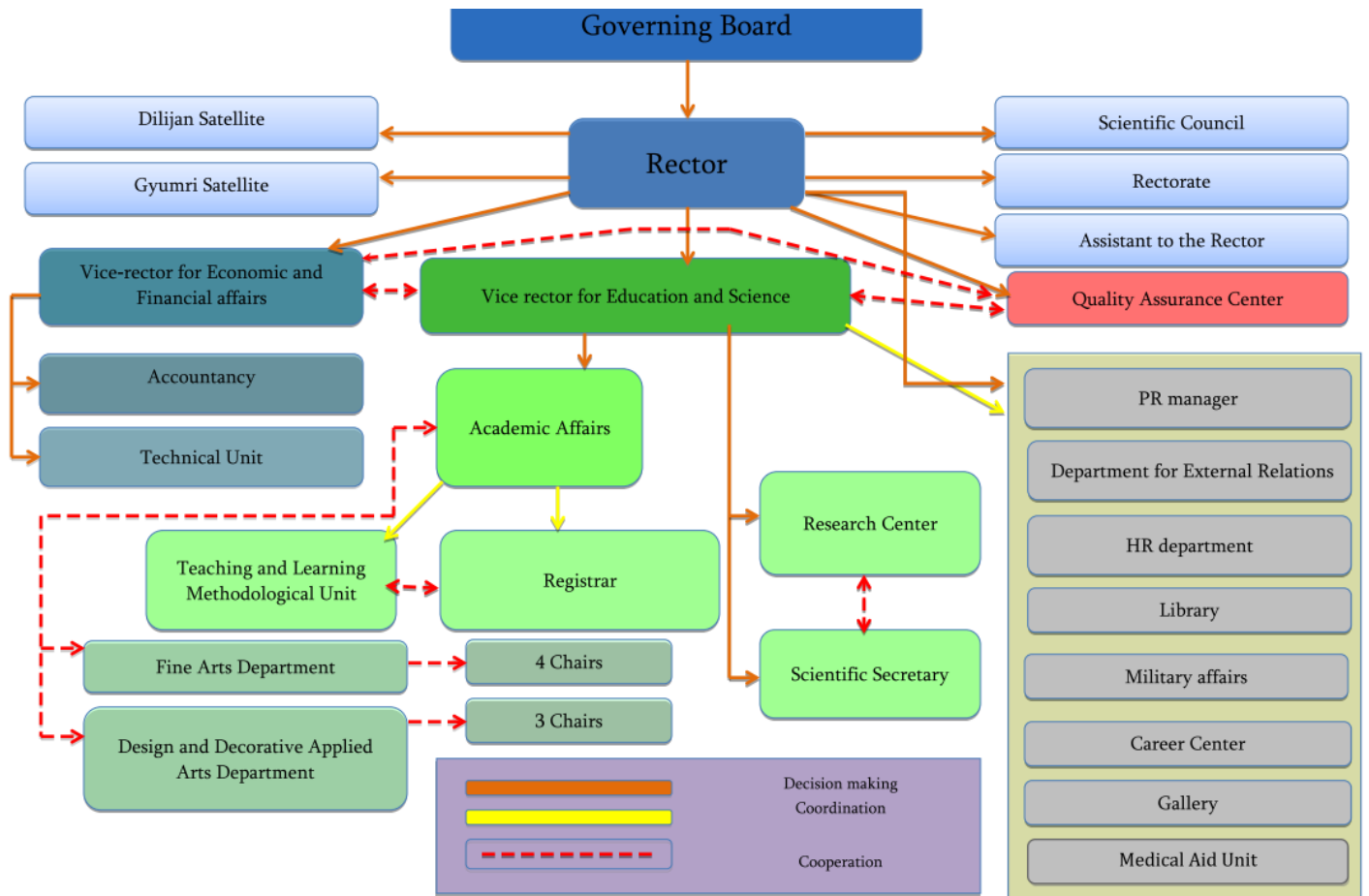| 35	Analyses of surveys as far as the effectiveness of YSAFA resources and services are concerned.	10
36	Analyses of teacher surveys as far as the effectiveness of management is concerned.	10
37	Analyses of student survey as far as the effectiveness of operations of the Department on External Relations is concerned.	10
38	Survey and analyses conducted by the student community.	10
39	Expert evaluation report on the YSAFA *Computer Graphics* (BA AP) and Design (MA AP)	3
40	Double system of QA of the YSAFA.	10
41	Regulation on YSAFA infrastructures. Archive.	2
42	Evaluation of AP effectiveness by employers.	3
43	Evaluation of AP effectiveness by alumni.	3
44	Procedure of data collection of the YSAFA Centre of Professional Orientation and Information Management.	10
45	Analyses of surveys on YSAFA student employability.	3
46	Analyses of surveys on YSAFA alumni employability.	3
47	Policy and procedure of disseminating publicly available information about the YSAFA.	8
48	Student Manual of the YSAFA.	4
49	Description of Computer Graphics AP.	3
50	Description of the Design AP.	3
51	AP self-evaluation (Computer Graphics; BA, Design; MA).	3
52	Description of the Modelling AP.	3
53	Comparative analyses for 4 APs.	3
54	Ensuring the alignment of AP and NQF and guidelines to monitor this.	3
55	Format of a course description	3
56	Course descriptions of the Computer Graphics AP (2)	3
57	Course descriptions of the Modelling AP (2)	3
58	Course descriptions of the Design AP (2)	3
59	System of student assessment. Conceptual articles.	3
60	Decision on reviewing the concept of assessment system. Minutes of the rectorate.	3
61	Regulation on conducting final attestation	3
62	Guide on preparing BA and MA theses	3
63	YSAFA regulation on student mobility	3
64	Guide on ECTS.	3
65	Analyses of QA operations on AP monitoring, review and improvement.	3
66	Regulation on internal exams to be admitted to BA studies.	3
67	Tasks and assessment rubric for YSAFA admission exams.	3
68	Regulation of entrance exams to be conducted for MA admission.	3
69	Procedure of admission to the third cycle of education.	3
70	Admission regulation for YSAFA foreign students.	3
71	Contracts signed with VETs.	3
72	List of establishments.	3
73	Regulation of student dismissal and readmission.	3
74	Regulation on tuition fee reduction	3
75	Statute of YSAFA Student Council and list of events.	4
76	List of participants participating in facultative courses.	3
77	Analyses of focus groups carried out among the students.	3
78	List of establishments foreseen for internships.	3
79	List of events to be carried out by the Career Centre.	3
80	Contracts signed with students.	4

81	The list of full and part-time teachers per chair (scientific degrees and awards). Regulation on YSAFA infrastructures and categories.	4
82	Questionnaires evaluating the effectiveness of classes.	4
83	Brief analysis and format of effectiveness evaluations of chair staff.	5
84	Topics of teacher training sessions.	5
85	Age distribution of teaching staff.	5
86	Procedure on operations enhancing professional development of teaching staff.	5
87	The list of administrative staff in line with structural subdivisions of the Academy.	5
88	The Strategy and Strategic Directions of the YSAFA Research Centre.	6
89	Operations and the structure of the YSADA Research Centre.	6
90	A draft guide on how to write PhD theses for Fine Arts, Graphics, Design and Applied Arts.	6
91	YSAFA new pilot PhD project.	6
92	SER of the new pilot PhD project.	6
93	Requirements to articles published in the yearbooks.	6
94	Year Book № 1, 2 և 3	6
95	List of participations in research events.	6
96	List of Articles published throughout 2014-2017.	6
97	List of teachers who participated in international conferences throughout 2014-2017.	6
98	List of equipment for the laboratory of Modelling.	7
99	List of equipment for the laboratory of Applied Arts.	7
100	List of equipment for the laboratory of miniature of the Chair of Design.	7
101	List of computer laboratory equipment for the Chair of Design	7
102	List of equipment for the atelier of metal	7
103	List of equipment for the laboratory of computers projecting	7
104	List of lab equipment of the Faculty of Graphics	7
105	List of computer labs of the Faculty of Arts	7
106	List of laboratory equipment of Gyumri branch	7
107	List of laboratory equipment of Dilijan branch	7
108	Scheme of YSAFA document flow	7
109	Booklets	8
110	Brochures/leaflets	8
111	Books	8
112	YSAFA strategy on internationalization.	9
113	List of agreements of YSAFA and other establishments.	9
114	Regulation of QA and Self-Evaluation Department.	9
115	Evaluation of effectiveness of the Department of External Relations. Tools and description.	9
116	Evaluation of assessment system by teaching system. Tools and description.	9
117	Evaluation of assessment system by students. Tools and description.	9
118	Assessment of lesson effectiveness. Tools and description.	10
119	Performance assessment of employees. Tools and description.	10
120	Assessment of effectiveness of admission procedures carried out among the freshmen. Tools and descriptions.	10
121	Assessment of research operations. Tools and description.	10
122	AP assessment by employers. Tools and description.	10
123	AP assessment by alumni. Tools and description.	10
124	Resource and service assessment by students. Tools and descriptions.	10
125	Resource and service assessment by teachers. Tools and descriptions.	10
126	Assessment of Effectiveness of Management. Tools and descriptions.	10

127	Information on YSAFA, and assessment of the effectiveness of information dissemination amount the applicants. Tools and Descriptions.	10
128	Surveys on foreign language acquisition among administrative, teaching and support staff. Tools and Descriptions.	10
129	YSAFA Rector's order on establish the QA Department and ratifying its statute	10
130	MA theses	3
131	Year Books	8
132	MEMO with Yerevan State Institute of Theatre and Cinematography, Komitas State Conservatory of Yerevan State Institute of Theatre and Cinematography, Komitas State Conservatory of Yerevan	8
133	AP packages	3
134	Benchmark outcomes	3
135	Analyses of surveys with employers	3

APPENDIX 4. RESOURCES OBSERVED

1. Auditoriums
2. Studios
3. Deans' offices
4. Chairs
5. Laboratories-auditoriums (Ալբերտ և Թովէ Բոյաջյան լուցասրահ)
6. Laboratories
7. Conference Hall
8. Computer Labs
9. Library
10. Reading Hall

APPENDIX 5. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATION INSTITUTION

Governing Board

Rector

Dilijan Satellite

Gyumri Satellite

Scientific Council

Rectorate

Assistant to the Rector

Quality Assurance Center

Vice-rector for Economic and Financial affairs

Vice rector for Education and Science

Accountancy

Technical Unit

Academic Affairs

PR manager

Department for External Relations

HR department

Library

Military affairs

Career Center

Gallery

Medical Aid Unit

Research Center

Teaching and Learning Methodological Unit

Registrar

Scientific Secretary

Fine Arts Department

4 Chairs

3 Chairs

Design and Decorative Applied Arts Department

Decision making
Coordination

Cooperation

APPENDIX 6. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1. **EHEA** – European Higher Education Area
2. **YSAFA –** Yerevan State Academy of Fine Arts
3. **ECTS –** European Credit Transfer System
4. **RA –** Republic of Armenia
5. **AP** – Academic Programmes
6. **TLI –** Tertiary Level Institution
7. **QA** – Quality Assurance
8. **ANQA** – National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance
9. **ESG** - European Standards and Guidelines
10. **NQF** – National Qualification Framework
11. **TS –** Teaching Staff
12. **PDCA** – plan, do, check, act
13. **SP** – Strategic Plan
14. **SC –** Student Council