

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



**EXPERT PANEL REPORT  
INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION OF  
"YEREVAN STATE MUSIC COLLEGE NAMED AFTER ROMANOS MELIKYAN" SNCO**

**Yerevan – 2025**

## INTRODUCTION

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

The expert examination was carried out by the independent expert panel, which is made up of four local experts and was formed by the requirements set by the National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation in regulation on “Formation of the Expert Panel.”

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

The institutional accreditation is aimed not only at external evaluation of quality assurance but also at continuous improvement of the quality of management and academic programmes at the institution. Special emphasis was paid to the cooperation between the institution and employers and its impact on education content.

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

## Context of the Evaluation of the College's Activities

### **The activities and history of the TLI**

The history of the Yerevan State Music College named after Romanos Melikyan began in 1921 when a music studio was established under the leadership of Romanos Melikyan to train professional musicians. In 1923, it was renamed the "Conservatory," consisting of three interconnected levels: a music school, a college (technical school), and a higher education division. In 1939, the institution separated from the conservatory, and in 1954, it was named after R. Melikyan. In 1997, the institution was reorganized and became a college.

### **Development Directions and Educational Programs of the College.**

Yerevan State Music College named after Romanos Melikyan implements 4 secondary vocational academic programs:

- Music Theory
- Performing Arts of Musical Instruments (including string, wind, and folk instrument divisions)
- Choral Conducting
- Singing (with academic, folk, and jazz-estrada divisions)

In the 2024-2025 academic year, 150 lecturers taught at the college, 144 of whom have higher education and 6 have secondary vocational education. Additionally, 45 lecturers work part-time. The faculty includes 4 professors, 7 lecturers with a Candidate of Sciences degree, and 4 employers who also teach.

Among the college's graduates, 50 are employed as lecturers, and 13 work as accompanists.

Studies on graduate career paths indicate that:

- 25 out of 73 graduates from the 2019-2020 academic year,
- 31 out of 83 graduates from 2020-2021,
- 28 out of 110 graduates from 2021-2022,
- 31 out of 97 graduates from 2022-2023

continued their education at universities in their respective fields or other disciplines.

Between 2020 and 2023, 44 graduates found employment in their field, while 115 were employed in other professions.

Regarding employment opportunities, the "Folk Instruments" and "Singing" programs have shown the highest success rates in securing jobs for graduates.

## SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

The independent expert panel formed in accordance with the requirements of “Regulation on the Formation of the Expert Panel”, National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation, carried out the expertise of the Yerevan State Music College Named After Romanos Melikyan institutional capacities. The evaluation was conducted according to 10 institutional accreditation criteria set by the RA Government Decree N 959-Ն, dated June 30, 2011.

When conducting the evaluation, the expert group considered the college's role and significance in musical education, the professional traditions established over the years, and its involvement in secondary professional musical education. The expert panel also considered that the College is undergoing institutional accreditation for the first time and is at the initial stage of forming a quality assurance culture. The expert panel noted that the College has a clearly defined mission: "To train competitive specialists in the field of secondary professional education who uphold Armenian and global cultural values, possess creative abilities, and ensure the continuity of musical heritage." Although the institution's Strategic Plan and its implementation schedule raise concerns and numerous questions, as stakeholders were not involved in their development, the mission is acceptable to internal and external stakeholders. At the same time, the expert panel notes that the institution's policies and activities align with the College's adopted mission.

The college's quality assurance system is still in the implementation phase, and the importance of a quality culture has not yet been fully realized. The college cannot yet collect and analyze the necessary and reliable data, affecting institutional management's effectiveness. Additionally, the college needs to coordinate its planning and accountability processes. The expert panel emphasizes that stakeholders are not actively involved in the decision-making process, there are no mechanisms for evaluating and improving process efficiency, and horizontal connections between departments and the scope of responsibilities are not clearly defined. These factors impact the effectiveness of management. Data-driven decision-making and identifying stakeholders' needs will enable informed decisions regarding academic programs and management processes. Establishing a quality assurance system at the College is crucial for developing a data-based management culture. This, in turn, will contribute to the institution's sustainable development and the formation of a quality culture.

In accordance with the 5th level of the RA National Qualifications Framework, the College implements secondary professional education programs in musical education. The programs- Choral Conducting, Music Theory, Instrumental Performance, and Vocal Performance- fully align with the College's mission. The College's academic programs are developed based on state educational standards. Faculty members have the freedom to apply both traditional and innovative teaching and learning methods. Student assignments are designed to foster and refine performance mastery, while assessments are conducted through auditions, closed evaluations, and concerts. This approach allows students to present the musical material they have studied and helps them develop professional skills by performing in front of an audience in a stage environment.

The college employs lecturers with high professional qualifications and pedagogical experience and young lecturers. The faculty comprises active musician-performers, industry professionals, and employers. Most of the college's faculty are full-time employees, which is important for stability.

It is positive that college graduates continue their professional careers at the college after completing their higher education. According to the expert panel's assessment, the college needs to implement mechanisms for assessing faculty needs, supporting the development of professional, pedagogical, and other essential skills, and encouraging faculty members. Planning professional development activities based on faculty evaluation results will contribute to the enhancement of their competencies and the improvement of teaching effectiveness.

The expert panel believes that by expanding collaboration with state and community institutions and employer organizations and conducting systematic labor market monitoring and analysis, it will be possible to determine how to modernize existing programs and what new academic programs are needed to support the development of the field. A comparative analysis of academic programs with similar ones is also important for adopting or localizing best practices in music education. Establishing precise mechanisms for evaluating and monitoring the effectiveness of academic programs will improve the quality of education.

The expert panel notes that, based on the characteristics of the observed academic programs, a special professional approach is taken to each student, based on the person's abilities and skills. It is noteworthy that consultations are also carried out during professional individual courses. The faculty is willing to provide students with additional guidance.

The most vulnerable link in the educational process is the ineffective arrangement of internships. The expert panel believes that the institution faces challenges in organizing internships, and by addressing these issues, it would be possible to create optimal conditions and opportunities for students to benefit from partner organizations' resources effectively.

By applying appropriate teaching and learning methods, the college can prepare graduates who are in demand in the labor market with professional knowledge and skills that are generally acceptable to employers. Implementing the college's academic programs requires an environment that aligns with their specific features, including classrooms equipped with musical instruments, concert halls, technical equipment, and more, which are generally available at the college. The college has sufficient infrastructure, material-technical resources, and facilities for delivering academic programs requiring continuous improvement and development.

Despite having limited financial resources, the college implements its academic programs. However, no additional funds are allocated for resource enhancement. From this perspective, the expert panel emphasizes the need to implement processes to diversify financial resources to ensure the continuous execution of academic programs.

Considering that the college has a qualified faculty for implementing academic programs and that the necessary material-technical resources mainly support the educational processes, the expert panel concludes that the college succeeds in ensuring the credibility of the awarded qualifications.

The college has implemented specific student recruitment mechanisms tailored to its institutional characteristics. Events organized for potential applicants contribute to the effectiveness of the recruitment process.

The expert panel has considered that research has specific characteristics in music education, particularly in performing arts. In this context, the expert panel observes that the creative academic work conducted at the college includes a research component. A truly unique musical performance, an outcome of the student's creative effort, is developed through the assimilation of theoretical knowledge and a degree of research. Recognizing this feature, the expert panel suggests that this approach should be clarified, integrated, and firmly embedded in academic programs. This methodology fosters the development of students' creative-research thinking and underscores the importance of faculty participation in educational-methodological and research activities. However, there are no established mechanisms or incentives to support the research activities of faculty and students.

The expert panel acknowledges the presence of concert halls at the college but believes their utilization can be optimized. Enhancing the effectiveness of these resources would contribute to organizing the educational process more efficiently and expanding opportunities for sharing artistic values and knowledge with the public.

There are opportunities for development in the college's external relations and internationalization. While the college prioritizes establishing and expanding international collaborations to diversify creative-research activities, it faces challenges in managing these partnerships effectively and institutionalizing existing connections. According to the expert panel, the college's international cooperation and external relations remain limited. However, the college has the potential to expand its collaboration with both national and international educational and cultural institutions. Such expansion would enhance the college's reputation, support the professional growth of students and faculty, and increase its engagement within the international educational community.

The college must review and refine its mechanisms to ensure accountability and transparency in its processes. Currently, these mechanisms do not provide stakeholders with a comprehensive understanding of the institution's effectiveness nor contribute to raising public awareness and the college's ranking. A strong online presence is essential for any institution, as it enables visibility, provides stakeholders with relevant information, facilitates accessibility to international partners, and strengthens external relations. Additionally, an official online presence ensures proper accountability and transparency. The expert panel particularly emphasizes the need for the college to establish an official website, allowing it to present itself entirely to the public, facilitate communication with internal and external stakeholders, raise awareness about the institution, and increase public and governmental trust in its graduates.

**Strengths of the Institution:**

1. The significant role and involvement of the college in the field of secondary professional music education.
2. A professional and individualized approach to each student, contributing to their continuous growth.
3. The faculty is staffed with active musicians-performers, including laureates of national and international competitions.
4. Effective collaboration with partner organizations through the joint use of resources.
5. Student participation in national and international music competitions and festivals.
6. The involvement of graduates in events organized by the college and in the teaching processes.
7. Assignments develop creative and research-oriented thinking.
8. The implementation of concert activities with student participation, contributing to their professional development and societal responsibility.

#### **Weaknesses of the Institution:**

1. Lack of data-based analysis and study of factors necessary for strategic decision-making, absence of evaluation indicators.
2. Absence of a quality assurance plan and non-periodic and systematic application of data and needs identification mechanisms.
3. Insufficient involvement of internal and external stakeholders in the improvement of academic programs, strategic planning, and quality assurance processes.
4. Lack of planned processes for faculty professional development and training.
5. Inadequate use of feedback mechanisms and stakeholder opinions in improvement actions.
6. Limited opportunities for ensuring accountability and transparency, along with the absence of an official website.
7. Unclear mechanisms for organizing and evaluating student internships.
8. Lack of mechanisms for attracting alternative funding sources to modernize resources and improve the educational environment.

#### **Recommendations:**

##### **Database management**

- Review the College's strategic plan by setting clear strategic goals that reflect the institution's unique characteristics, promote sustainable development, and align with a schedule-plan, clarifying the sequence of actions, deadlines, responsibilities, resources, outcomes, and evaluation indicators.
- Conduct an in-depth study of factors influencing the College's operations, including an analysis of academic program effectiveness and the establishment of data-driven decision-making foundations.
- Implement unified data collection approaches to ensure the analysis and application of feedback from students, graduates, employers, and stakeholders for the improvement of academic programs.

- Develop a periodic accountability mechanism that includes analytical reports presented to internal and external stakeholders based on qualitative and quantitative evaluations, ensuring sustainability and effective improvements.
- Clarify the methodology of conducted surveys and review their frequency, summarization, and analysis principles to ensure reliable data collection and its use for quality improvement.
- Review and define the quality assurance officer's functions and responsibilities by establishing planned and regular actions to foster a quality culture.
- Engage external stakeholders (employers, graduates, industry professionals) in improving academic programs and strategic planning processes.
- Clarify horizontal and vertical connections between departments and responsible parties and the mission and objectives of the councils operating within the College to enhance governance and decision-making efficiency.

### **Credible award of qualifications**

- Review and effectively implement the monitoring mechanisms of academic programs, ensuring their regularity, data-driven analyses, and result-based improvements.
- Reassess the mapping of modules and learning outcomes to ensure a clear logic for achieving learning results and the alignment of teaching methods and assessment forms.
- Develop a comprehensive system for assessing students' competencies, considering the specifics of professions and educational modules, and ensuring measurable and transparent final evaluations.
- Conduct a comparative analysis (benchmarking) of similar academic programs in Armenian and foreign vocational educational institutions to ensure the continuous improvement of academic programs and promote faculty and student mobility.
- Review the procedures for organizing internships by setting clear assessment requirements and mechanisms, particularly for pedagogical internships, ensuring their systematic implementation, student accountability, and result analysis.
- Diversify student internship platforms by expanding collaboration with employers and ensuring the development of students' professional skills in real work environments.
- Implement regular professional training for faculty by introducing mechanisms for planning and ensuring professional advancement, utilizing connections with collaborating employers, including master classes and experience exchange programs.
- Develop mechanisms for encouraging and ensuring the professional advancement of faculty based on clear evaluation criteria, which will contribute to faculty motivation and professional development.
- Diversify financial sources by engaging in new collaborative and grant programs to improve the educational environment and modernize resources.

### **Long-term development**

- Analyze the effectiveness of existing student recruitment mechanisms based on admission statistics from previous years, applicants' preferences, and studies on the attractiveness of academic programs.
- Enhance the Student Council's activities by establishing a collaboration platform with youth and cultural organizations, fostering student engagement in a creative professional environment.
- Organize additional foreign language courses to facilitate students' and faculty members' participation in international educational and cultural programs, promote mobility, and strengthen the internationalization process.
- Define the research directions conducted at the college, emphasizing the characteristics of the studies in the field of musical arts.
- Assess the needs of external stakeholders and develop programs for transferring cultural values to the public (concerts, short-term courses, training), which will contribute to raising the college's reputation, increasing graduates' demand, and attracting additional financial resources.
- Develop an effective public relations strategy to initiate the creation of an official website and enhance the institution's presence on social media, ensuring increased visibility, accountability, transparency, and the establishment of feedback mechanisms.

---

**Armen Harutyunyan, Chair of Expert Panel**

**21.02.2025**

## DESCRIPTION OF EXTERNAL REVIEW

### COMPOSITION OF EXPERT PANEL

The following expert panel conducted an external evaluation of the institutional capacities of the Yerevan State Music College Named After Romanos Melikyan.

1. **Armen Harutyunyan**- Candidate of Art Studies, Associate Professor, Vice-Rector for Development at Yerevan State Institute of Theatre and Cinema, head of the expert panel.
2. **Gayane Avetisyan**- Candidate of Geographical Sciences, Associate Professor, Head of the Quality Assurance Department at Shirak State University, member of the expert panel.
3. **Mariam Hovhannisyan**- Head of the "Music" Department at the Charles Aznavour State College of Culture and Arts in Yerevan, member of the expert panel.
4. **Vova Arzumanyan**- 4th-year student at the Faculty of History, Theory, and Management of Art at Yerevan State Institute of Theatre and Cinema, Student-Expert of the expert panel.

Lilit Ghazaryan, a specialist in ANQA's "Secretariat" department, coordinated the expert panel's work.

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

### PROCESS OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW

The College applied for state institutional accreditation by submitting to ANQA, filling out the application form, and presenting copies of the license and respective appendices (12.02.2024).

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

After deciding to accept the application, ANQA and the College signed an agreement. The timetable of activities was prepared and approved.

#### Self-evaluation

Considering that the educational institution is going through institutional accreditation for the first time and is in the initial stage of the formation of the culture of quality assurance in college, ANQA conducted four-day online workshops in February. The workshops aimed to prepare colleges for the organizational stages of the accreditation process. During the workshops, the interpretations of the institutional accreditation criteria and standards, the electronic questionnaire to be filled in for applying for institutional accreditation, and the features of self-evaluation and SWOT analysis were presented. The educational institution carried out a SWOT analysis, which was discussed with the

employees of the ANQA. During the implementation of the self-evaluation, the ANQA organized discussions to clarify the issues.

The revised self-evaluation of the college's institutional capacity was presented on 02.07.2024. Representatives of the institution's administrative and educational staff, lecturers, and students were involved in the self-evaluation process.

### **Preparatory phase**

After the submission of the self-evaluation report and the attached documents by the TLI, the ANQA coordinator observed the package to reveal its correspondence to the requirements of the ANQA. The self-evaluation and the attached documents were provided to the expert panel for the preliminary evaluation. The composition of the expert panel was agreed upon with the College and was confirmed by the order of the ANQA Director. Within the scheduled time, the expert panel summarized the preliminary evaluation results, and the Chair of the expert panel and the process coordinator set the site visit schedule.

### **Preparatory visit**

Before the site visit, a preparatory visit to the college was carried out on 21.10.2024. A meeting was organized with the institution's management team and the expert panel, during which class observations were conducted, resources were reviewed across the college's three buildings, and a visit was made to the internship base (Armavir Medical Center). During the meeting, the schedule of the site visit was introduced and agreed upon with the college and discussed, and mutually agreed decisions were made regarding the technical, organizational, and information issues of the site visit, the behaviour, and ethical norms of the meeting participants.

### **Site visit**

The expert panel site visit occurred from October 28-30, 2024. During the week preceding the site visit, the members of the expert panel and the coordinator visited the college, observed the infrastructure and resources of the college, conducted class observations, and observed exams. Then, the experts and the coordinator had a closed meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the college according to the standards, clarify the questions to be asked of the target groups, and discuss the procedures for the meetings and the next steps.

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

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

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

**Expert panel report**

The expert panel members and the ANQA coordinator prepared a preliminary version of the expert report. After the expert panel members approved it, the preliminary report was provided to the college on 17.02.2025. The college submitted its feedback on the preliminary report version to ANQA on December 12, 2024.

The College submitted its approval of the preliminary version of the expert report on February 20, 2025.

**Lilit Ghazaryan**

**Coordinator of the Expert Panel / 21.02.2025**

## EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

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