

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



**EXPERT PANEL REPORT
INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION OF
"YEREVAN STATE COLLEGE OF CULTURE AND ART NAMED AFTER CHARLES
AZNAVOUR " (SNPO)**

Yerevan – 2025

INTRODUCTION

The institutional accreditation of the Yerevan State College of Culture and Art Named After Charles Aznavour (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 “Yerevan State College of Culture and Arts” SNCO was established on September 9, 2020, as a result of the merger between the “Yerevan State College of Culture” and the “Yerevan State College of Estrada and Jazz Art.” In 2022, the college was named after Charles Aznavour. The college is currently undergoing its first cycle of institutional accreditation.

Development Directions and Educational Programs of the College

The college provides vocational secondary education aligned with Level 5 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). It specializes primarily in training professionals in the fields of arts and culture. Its mission is to prepare specialists with professional knowledge, skills, and practical competencies who can respond to current challenges and contribute through their actions to the development and strengthening of Armenian and global culture.

Based on its licenses to conduct educational activities, the college offers 11 vocational education programs, including:

- Vocal Performance
- Directing
- Acting
- Restoration, Conservation, and Preservation of Artworks
- Accounting
- Photography
- Fashion Design and Modelling
- Cosmetology and Makeup Art
- Estrada Art
- Dance Art
- Instrumental Performance (by instrument type)

Currently, the college has an enrollment of 636 students.

The teaching staff comprises 119 lecturers, of whom 112 hold relevant higher education qualifications and 7 hold vocational secondary qualifications. Three lecturers are also employers in their respective fields, and 7 lecturers are college graduates.

Since 2020, the Career Center has maintained a graduate database, which is regularly updated. According to data provided by the college (for the 2022–2023 academic year), 28.5% of graduates are employed in their field of study, while 25.1% have continued their education at other institutions.

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 Yerevan State College of Culture and Art Named After Charles Aznavour 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.

While conducting the evaluation, the expert panel considered that the institution is currently in the first phase of institutional accreditation. The expert panel also considered that the college’s mission is to train specialists in the fields of culture and arts who, with their professional knowledge, abilities, and practical skills, will respond to existing challenges and contribute to the development and establishment of both Armenian and global culture through appropriate actions. The college’s 2021-2026 strategic plan includes objectives focused on improving academic programs, promoting the professional development of students, and strengthening the quality assurance system. The expert panel believes that clarifying the allocation of resources and identifying those responsible for achieving the objectives will enhance the practical applicability of the strategic plan and enable the assessment of the program’s effectiveness.

The college has a flexible management system incorporating collegial and individual management elements. According to the expert panel’s evaluation, this structure has improved the learning environment, particularly through continuous improvements facilitated by collaboration with the Aznavour Foundation. However, introducing financial strategic planning and mechanisms for involving alternative resources could further support the institution's sustainable development. Additionally, the college must focus on ensuring consistency in planning and reporting formats, enhancing the management system's effectiveness.

The internal quality assurance system is currently in its initial phase of implementation. Although certain steps have been taken, such as establishing a quality assurance responsible position and administering several surveys, the absence of a unified data collection and analysis system prevents the provision of reliable data to inform management decision-making. The expert panel believes there is a need to enhance feedback mechanisms with stakeholders, continuously collect data on various areas of the college’s activities and conduct regular analyses. This will increase the impact of the quality assurance system on the college’s institutional governance and development.

The academic programs presented by the college align with its mission and meet the requirements of the culture and arts sector. Based on national standards, the programs contribute to developing students' creative and practical skills. However, clear mechanisms for benchmarking and ongoing monitoring have not yet been integrated into the program development and improvement processes. Some successful initiatives, including elective courses and practical components, have fostered deeper development of students' professional skills and analytical thinking. Nevertheless, the system for regular curricula reviews and timely response to labor market changes remains underdeveloped. Establishing such mechanisms would help maintain the relevance of programs.

The faculty is one of the institution's most valuable resources. Personalized teaching approaches, particularly for students with special educational needs, reflects a growing commitment to inclusivity. The expert panel believes that the college should focus on providing faculty members professional development and training opportunities, which would promote the adoption of new teaching methods and the integration of international best practices into academic programs. The expert panel also highlights the importance of establishing mechanisms for sharing the best internal practices and organizing experience exchange events with employers and employer-lecturers to support the professional growth of the faculty.

Infrastructure and resources play a vital role in the implementation of academic programs. Significant improvements have been made in upgrading the college's resources and physical conditions in recent years, largely thanks to cooperation with the Aznavour Foundation. This has created a higher-quality educational environment and expanded opportunities for organizing creative activities. However, continuous resource investment remains necessary to ensure the material and technical base for specialized and unique programs. The limitation of financial resources may affect the maintenance and modernization of infrastructure. The expert panel highlights the importance of increasing the college's funding through alternative financial sources, which would allow the allocation of appropriate financial flows toward infrastructure development and faculty training, thereby ensuring the institution's balanced development.

The college has fostered a student-centered environment that encourages active student participation and creative initiatives. Students are provided with practical assignments during their coursework, which support the development of their analytical thinking and hands-on skills. However, mechanisms for providing students with feedback require clarification and systematization. Additionally, regular assessments of student needs are needed to continuously improve the educational environment.

Research activities at the college are in a developmental stage. Research components have been integrated into the educational process through student assignments and final projects. Establishing a comprehensive database of all research-related assignments is important for organizing research activities systematically and shaping students' professional pathways. The expert panel also emphasizes the need to introduce mechanisms encouraging faculty engagement in research activities to help utilize their full research potential. Incorporating the research results into academic programs would contribute to the continuous improvement of curricula to enhance students' capabilities.

Regarding societal responsibility, the college plays a key role in preserving and promoting Armenia's cultural heritage. The college organizes various public events, including performances, exhibitions, and creative projects, which help disseminate culture and foster public engagement. These initiatives contribute to enhancing the institution's visibility and strengthening community involvement. However, the college's policy on societal responsibility and the mechanisms for evaluating the outcomes of such initiatives are not yet fully developed, which limits the scale of the institution's societal impact.

Regarding external relations and internationalization, the college has engaged in several partnerships that have contributed to resource enhancement and the professional development of both students and faculty. Nevertheless, participation in international mobility programs remains limited, with low engagement from both students and staff in international exchanges. The college must develop a clear policy to leverage international partnerships to improve academic programs. Doing so would allow for the adoption of innovative practices and promote the modernization of curricula.

Strengths of the Institution:

- The presence of a mission that is clearly understood by both internal and external stakeholders.
- A management system aimed at the development of the college through flexibility and effective utilization of external partnerships.
- Effective horizontal collaboration between departments.
- A student-centered environment that employs diverse teaching approaches based on student needs.
- Student engagement in creative processes and encouragement of student initiative.
- Joint use of resources and organization of internships through collaboration with employers.
- Exchange of experience through participation in local and international festivals.

Weaknesses of the Institution:

- Lack of clarity in the indicators used for strategic evaluation.
- Absence of a unified data collection system.
- Lack of mechanisms for comparative analysis of academic programs.
- Failure to utilize experience gained through external partnerships to improve academic programs.
- Insufficient professional development opportunities for faculty.
- Limited avenues for alternative funding sources.
- Absence of activities aimed at improving foreign language proficiency.
- Unclear directions, mechanisms, and methodologies used by the internal quality assurance system for identifying institutional needs.

Recommendations:

Database management

- Develop a clear action plan and timeline for implementing strategic goals, defining responsible parties and required resources for each activity.
- Consider presenting the director's report in a comprehensive, standalone format.
- Diversify the mechanisms for identifying stakeholders' needs to understand their expectations better and integrate them into the strategic plan.
- Establish clear data collection and analysis mechanisms and ensure that reliable data is used for managerial decision-making.
- Clarify the role of the quality assurance system by defining its objectives and responsibilities.
- Conduct a comparative analysis of the quality assurance system to study and adapt best practices.
- Define a standardized format for reporting and planning to ensure process coherence and consistency.
- Implement mechanisms for evaluating ongoing processes and the performance of strategic programs to enhance the effectiveness of planning.
- Ensure financial planning aligns with strategic objectives, including mechanisms for diversifying financial resources.

- Ensure accessibility of academic program documentation and meeting minutes to internal and external stakeholders.

Credible award of qualifications

- Develop a repository of student assignments for each academic program.
- Clarify assessment criteria to ensure the evaluation of all student learning outcomes and support their progressive development.
- Strengthen interdisciplinary connections to promote students' teamwork skills and enhance the practical component of the learning process.
- Implement clear mechanisms for benchmarking and ongoing monitoring of academic programs and consider the results of regular application in program reviews.
- Establish mechanisms for sharing best teaching practices among faculty members.
- Regulate work with novice lecturers by defining frequency and incorporating evaluation mechanisms.
- Introduce professional development opportunities by also engaging external stakeholders in the process.
- Develop plans for supplementing alternative resources, considering the challenges of initiating major renovations.
- Implement an electronic document management system to enhance the efficiency of management processes and internal communication.

Long-term development

- Organize supplementary courses tailored to students' educational needs to support professional skills development.
- Define the college's research directions clearly, aligning them with the focus areas of the academic programs.
- Fully integrate research assignments into academic programs and develop corresponding assessment criteria.
- Assess the foreign language proficiency of internal stakeholders and provide targeted training to enhance language skills and promote participation in international programs.
- Utilize external and international partnerships to study and localize best practices in academic programs.

Hermine Grigoryan, Chair of Expert Panel

17.03.2025

DESCRIPTION OF EXTERNAL REVIEW

COMPOSITION OF EXPERT PANEL

The following expert panel conducted an external evaluation of the institutional capacities of the Aviation Training Center.

1. **Hermine Grigoryan**- PhD in Physics and Mathematics, Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences at Vanadzor State University named after Hovhannes Tumanyan, Associate Professor at the Department of Mathematics and Informatics, head of the expert panel.
2. **Lilit Abelyan**- Quality Assurance specialist at Kotayk Regional State College, member of the expert panel.
3. **Olya Avetisyan**- Lecturer at the Department of Specialised Subjects at Yerevan State College of Light Industry, member of the expert panel.
4. **Meri Hovsepyan**- Student at Yerevan Regional State College No. 1, Student member of the expert panel.

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

Meri Barseghyan, an ANQA Policy Development and Implementation Division specialist, 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.

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

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

Self-evaluation

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

workshops, the interpretations of the institutional accreditation criteria and standards, the electronic questionnaire to be filled in for applying for institutional accreditation, and the features of self-evaluation and SWOT analysis were presented. The educational institution carried out a SWOT analysis, which was discussed with the employees of the ANQA. During the implementation of the self-evaluation, the ANQA organized discussions to clarify the issues.

The self-evaluation of the college's institutional capacity was presented on 26.07.2024. 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 19.11.2024. The ANQA coordinator, the head of the institutional program accreditation department and the head of the expert panel were present at the meeting. During the meeting, the 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 November 25-27. 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 22.01.2025.

The institution submitted its observations on the preliminary expert report on February 27, 2025.

On March 5, a meeting was held at ANQA with the participation of ANQA representatives, the college director, the internal quality assurance responsible, the expert panel, and the coordinator to discuss the institution's observations.

Based on the discussion results, the expert panel prepared the final version of the report, which, after approval by all experts, was provided to the college on March 17, 2025.

Meri Barsegyan

Coordinator of the Expert Panel / 17.03.2025

EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

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