

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



**EXPERT PANEL REPORT
INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION OF
YEREVAN STATE COLLEGE OF LIGHT INDUSTRY (SNCO)**

Yerevan – 2025

INTRODUCTION

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

The expert examination was carried out by the independent expert panel formed in accordance with the requirements set by the “National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance” foundation in the regulation on “Formation of the Expert Panel”. The Panel is composed of 4 local experts.

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

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

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

Context of the Evaluation of the VET Institution's Activities

Background and History of the Institution

The Yerevan State College of Light Industry was established in 1929 in Leninakan (now Gyumri) to train specialists for the local textile factory. In 1951, the institution was relocated to its current premises at 2 Glinka Street. Over its operation, the technical school has produced approximately 25,000 graduates.

The College is currently undergoing its second cycle of institutional accreditation. In 2022, the institution completed the first cycle of accreditation, after which it was granted conditional institutional accreditation for a two-year period.

Development Directions and Educational Programmes

The Yerevan State College of Light Industry delivers academic programs aligned with Levels 4 and 5 of the Armenian National Qualifications Framework (NQF), offered in both full-time and part-time (distance) modes of study. The College currently implements seven vocational education programs, of which three are in the field of light industry, while the remaining programs are delivered in the economics and information technology domains.

At present, the College has 593 enrolled students. Instruction is provided by 59 teaching staff members, including 43 full-time and 16 part-time lecturers. Among them, 54 hold higher education degrees, while 5 possess vocational secondary qualifications. Seven faculty members are alumni of the College, five of whom have continued their studies at higher education institutions. Currently, three faculty members hold a PhD degree, and eight lecturers are also employed in their respective professional fields.

The percentage of graduates employed in their field of specialisation over the past four years has fluctuated between 48.8% and 63.6%, reaching 56.7% in the 2023–2024 academic year. Meanwhile, the unemployment rate among graduates has ranged from 42.5% to 69%, amounting to 58.2% in 2023–2024. At the same time, the proportion of graduates continuing their education immediately after graduation has shown steady growth—from 27.3% in 2020–2021 to 34.5% in 2023–2024.

The institution has not yet established systematic mechanisms or a policy for collecting and analysing data on graduates' professional development and career progression.

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

The expertise of the Yerevan State College of Light Industry (SNPO) institutional capacities was carried out by the independent expert panel formed in accordance with the requirements of “Regulation on the Formation of the Expert Panel”, «National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance» Foundation. The evaluation was conducted in accordance with 10 institutional accreditation criteria set forth in the RA Government Decree N 959-Ն, dated June 30, 2011.

During the evaluation process, the expert panel considered the College’s role and significance in preparing specialists for the Republic of Armenia's light industry sector. It was also noted that in 2022, the VET institution underwent an institutional accreditation process, as a result of which the College was granted conditional institutional accreditation for 2 years.

The expert panel also emphasised that the College continues to operate as a sector-specific vocational education institution, delivering middle vocational education programmes in light industry, economics, and information technology. Although internal and external stakeholders value the College’s role and mission, the College's mission is not yet clearly articulated in its strategic plan. The panel highlights the importance of revising the mission to ensure alignment with labour market needs and sectoral developments, thereby enhancing the institution’s sectoral visibility and competitive positioning. Furthermore, establishing measurable indicators to evaluate performance would enhance the effectiveness of strategic management processes and improve the measurement of planned actions.

Following the previous accreditation cycle and based on expert consultancy, certain positive developments have been observed within the College, including the creation of a student-centred environment, the involvement of young teaching staff, and the implementation of individual partnership initiatives with employers. However, the expert panel has documented that several recommendations from the previous accreditation process have not been implemented or remain in their initial stages, despite the 2-year timeframe allotted to address them. This issue is particularly apparent in governance and quality assurance, where a quality culture has not yet been established and systematic data collection, analysis, and evidence-based decision-making processes remain underdeveloped.

The College’s governance system operates through a combination of individual and collegial decision-making principles; however, strategic planning and accountability remain insufficiently systematized. The link between annual plans, reports, and strategic objectives is weak, and stakeholder involvement in decision-making processes is limited. The expert panel considers that defining qualitative and quantitative performance indicators, as well as strengthening the analytical component of reporting, will contribute to evidence-based governance and enable the institution to systematise its development processes.

Although certain documents- such as policies and regulations have been developed, the quality assurance system is still in its early stages of development. Actions aimed at enhancing the quality of education are not consolidated in an annual QA plan; periodic analyses are not conducted; and mechanisms for identifying stakeholder needs and gathering feedback are applied irregularly and

inconsistently. The panel emphasises the importance of collecting data that covers all institutional processes, clearly planning quality assurance activities, ensuring alignment with strategic objectives, and defining appropriate evaluation indicators.

Following the previous accreditation, the academic programmes were revised in response to employers' recommendations, and new modules were introduced. However, the learning outcomes in many cases are not formulated in measurable terms, the set of assignments is not yet comprehensive, and the assessment methodology- including rubrics and threshold criteria- has not been fully developed across all programmes. The expert panel highlights that strengthening formative assessment and clarifying the formulation of learning outcomes will contribute to students' progress and the development of their professional competencies.

The faculty has been supplemented with specialists from the professional field, and there is a positive trend toward rejuvenation; however, a planned system for identifying instructors' needs, organizing trainings, and facilitating experience exchange is not yet in place. The expert panel highlights the importance of establishing a continuous policy for the professional development of teaching staff, which will support the introduction of methodological and professional innovations and the modernization of the learning process. In the panel's view, the institution can also make greater use of the expertise of practice-oriented instructors to promote internal exchange of good practices and professional development.

The College possesses adequate infrastructure, material and technical resources, and facilities to ensure the delivery of its academic programmes; nevertheless, there is an ongoing need for enhancement and modernization. Despite being included in the state renovation program, the institution must still identify resources for continuous improvement of the learning environment and make greater use of employers' resources through collaborative initiatives. The panel considers that developing a strategy to diversify financial inflows and identify alternative funding opportunities can contribute to the sustainable development of institutional resources.

Considering the changes implemented after the previous accreditation- such as revisions to academic programmes based on employers' recommendations, updates to modular programmes, positive trends in staff rejuvenation and retention, and certain initiatives involving shared use of resources with employers- the expert panel concludes that the institution is able to ensure the credibility of the awarded qualifications.

Following the previous accreditation, the institution has also taken steps to improve the learning environment and respond to student needs; however, mechanisms for periodic needs assessment, clear response procedures, and actions that ensure measurable improvements have not yet been fully developed. The College has initiated certain activities to support students' and graduates' career development, but data collection on graduates' professional trajectories, continued education, and career progression is not carried out regularly, and employment data are not analyzed by individual educational programmes. The expert panel emphasizes the need to conduct periodic studies of graduates' pathways and analyses of professional growth dynamics, which would support the identification of program-level issues and provide a basis for further improvements.

There are certain positive preconditions in place to ensure transparency and accountability, such as the active use of the College's website and social media platforms. However, the irregular updating of information and the absence of comprehensive data on academic programmes prevent stakeholders from obtaining a complete and accurate understanding of the College's activities. The panel finds it necessary for the College to develop a clear public communication strategy, emphasizing activities aimed at transferring knowledge and values to society in alignment with the College's educational programmes.

Following the previous accreditation, the College has taken steps toward integrating creative and research-oriented assignments into its academic programmes. Students' engagement in project-based tasks provides opportunities for exploration and study, fostering creative thinking and ensuring the uniqueness of students' work.

The expert panel also notes that the College maintains effective cooperation with employers, enabling the organisation of student internships and practical training. Initial steps have been taken to establish connections with similar educational institutions and to conduct comparative analyses of academic programmes; however, these efforts have not yet been used as a basis for programme improvement. The College has not defined the expected outcomes of such collaborations, nor has it planned its external relations and international cooperation directions, expected results, or evaluation indicators. No visible progress has been recorded in internationalisation and international cooperation since the previous accreditation. The limited proficiency in foreign languages among internal stakeholders continues to hinder their participation in international projects. The panel emphasizes the importance of developing language competencies and clarifying the directions of international cooperation to foster experience exchange and support the institution's long-term development.

Strengths of the Institution:

- The College's significant role in the field of light industry and the relevance of its academic programs in preparing specialists with vocational qualifications to meet the needs of the sector.
- The alignment and adjustment of academic program orientations and content based on employers' feedback and recommendations, ensuring continuous responsiveness to labor market needs.
- The exposure of students to practical work environments through lecturers actively engaged in the professional field contributes to the development of students' hands-on competencies.
- The individualised academic advising and feedback mechanisms provided by faculty members support students' effective learning and academic progression.
- The stability of student enrollment rates, ensured through targeted outreach and applicant recruitment activities.

- The existence of aimed at organising professional internships and sharing resources to strengthen the practical component of education.

Weaknesses of the Institution:

- The absence of qualitative and quantitative indicators for evaluating the effectiveness of the college's performance assessment processes.
- A weak correlation between planning and reporting, with institutional reports demonstrating a limited analytical dimension.
- The lack of reliable and comprehensive data across all institutional domains hinders evidence-based decision-making.
- The insufficient and irregular application of mechanisms for identifying the needs of internal and external stakeholders within the internal quality assurance system.
- The incomplete implementation of the PDCA cycle in the college's management and administrative processes.
- The absence of clearly defined criteria and requirements for the assessment of student assignments and performance.
- The lack of diversified funding sources limits an institution's financial sustainability.
- The restricted opportunities for professional development and capacity building of the academic staff.
- The insufficient foreign language proficiency of internal stakeholders, constraining international cooperation and participation in global academic initiatives.

Main recommendations:

Data-Driven Management

1. Refine the college's mission statement by emphasising its distinct role in preparing specialists for the light industry sector, recognised as a strategic national priority.
2. Establish measurable and realistic indicators for strategic objectives to ensure the evaluability and traceability of institutional development processes.
3. Review and optimise the college's governance structure to clearly define vertical and horizontal

lines of authority, as well as communication and collaboration pathways among structural units.

4. Define measurable indicators for the assessment of annual plan implementation, ensuring alignment with strategic objectives and planned institutional actions.
5. Develop a unified analytical reporting format that includes performance evaluation, issue identification, and developmental conclusions, while ensuring consistency and periodic submission between planning and reporting documents.
6. Align financial resource allocation with strategic priorities, dedicating specific funding for professional development, modernization of material and technical infrastructure, and enhancement of the learning environment.
7. Implement the full PDCA cycle by basing monitoring and management decisions on data-driven analyses and verified evidence.
8. Clarify the objectives and functions of the internal quality assurance system, explicitly linking them to the institution's strategic directions and goals.
9. Develop an annual quality assurance plan with clearly defined timelines, responsible persons, resource calculations, and expected outcomes, ensuring feasibility and effective implementation.
10. Establish systematic mechanisms for data collection and analysis across all cores institutional processes, ensuring regularity, consistency, and continuous improvement based on the analysis of results.
11. Ensure the regular and purposeful application of needs assessment mechanisms, engaging students, faculty, alumni, and employers through surveys, focus groups, and consultative meetings, and integrating the findings into evidence-based decision-making.
12. Enhance transparency within the quality assurance processes by regularly informing stakeholders about survey outcomes, analytical findings, and the improvements implemented based on those results.

Credible Awarding of Qualifications

13. Distribute the framework of final learning outcomes by academic years, ensuring a clear set of tasks and competencies for each educational program to facilitate consistent achievement of

learning goals.

14. Develop quantitative and qualitative requirements for assignments within professional modules to ensure measurable outcomes in the formation of students' practical skills and competencies.
15. Conduct a comparative analysis of educational programs to ensure the alignment and compatibility of program learning outcomes with national and international standards.
16. Perform a comprehensive analysis of class observation results to monitor year-to-year progress, identify recurring issues, and evaluate the effectiveness of corrective actions undertaken.
17. Allocate financial resources and plan faculty training programs based on identified needs, incorporating both professional and methodological development components.
18. Design and implement knowledge- and experience-sharing initiatives with the active involvement of professionals from the practical field to strengthen the connection between education and industry.
19. Establish clear and transparent criteria for faculty motivation and differentiated remuneration, promoting performance-based recognition and professional excellence.
20. Explore and utilize alternative funding sources, including participation in grant programs, provision of short-term training services, and implementation of joint projects with partner organizations, aimed at updating college resources, enhancing educational programs, and improving institutional infrastructure.

Long-Term Development

21. Develop a comprehensive toolkit for collecting data on graduates' employability and establish a clear procedure for the regular updating of the database, incorporating accurate and disaggregated data on employment, continuing education, and unemployment, along with year-by-year dynamic analysis.
22. Utilize the collected and analysed data on graduates' employment to evaluate the effectiveness of academic programs, define areas for improvement, and highlight the college's competitive advantages in the labor market.
23. Define research activity directions aligned with Level 5 of the NQF, considering the specifics of vocational education, students' capacities, and the institution's available resources.
24. Establish clear criteria for the assessment of research and project-based works, emphasizing

- students' independence, analytical thinking, and ability to draw evidence-based conclusions.
25. Introduce clear mechanisms for promoting and incentivizing research activities among faculty and students, ensuring their alignment with the professional orientations of the academic programs.
 26. Develop a comprehensive public relations strategy and define the scope of responsibility for communication with the public, specifying formats and timelines for providing feedback to ensure transparency and stakeholder engagement.
 27. Leverage the professional potential of the college's teaching staff to organize thematic educational public events, exhibitions, and masterclasses for various social groups - particularly in the fields of fashion, applied design, technological innovation, and creative solutions.
 28. Define clear objectives, expected outcomes, and accountability mechanisms for external relations and internationalization, incorporating practical steps aimed at enhancing academic programs, promoting exchange of best practices, and expanding international cooperation opportunities.
 29. Assess the level of foreign language proficiency among faculty, students, and administrative staff and develop regular programs and courses aimed at strengthening language competencies to support academic mobility and international collaboration.

Gayane Avetisyan, Chair of Expert Panel

23.06.2025

DESCRIPTION OF EXTERNAL REVIEW

COMPOSITION OF EXPERT PANEL

An external evaluation of the institutional capacities of Yerevan State College of Light Industry was conducted by the following expert panel.

1. **Gayane Avetisyan** – PhD in Geographical Sciences, Associate Professor, Head of the Quality Assurance Department at Shirak State University, Chair of the Expert Panel.
2. **Narine Sirakanyan** – PhD in Pedagogical Sciences, Head of the Teacher Professional Development Division at the National Center for Education Development and Innovation, Member of the Expert Panel.
3. **Hripsime Maronyan** – Lecturer at the Department of Fine Arts, Faculty of Art Education, Armenian State Pedagogical University after Khachatur Abovyan, Member of the Expert Panel.
4. **Robert Manasyan** – Second-year student at Yerevan State College of Informatics, Student Member of the Expert Panel.

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

The expert panel's work was coordinated by Meri Barseghyan, a specialist at the Policy Development Department of the National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation.

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 an application to ANQA, including the application form, copies of the license, and the 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, an agreement was signed between ANQA and the College. The timetable of activities was prepared and approved.

Self-evaluation

Given that the educational institution is undergoing its first accreditation process and is in the initial stages of establishing a culture of quality assurance, ANQA has conducted online workshops

with accredited VET institutions. The workshops aimed to prepare colleges for the organisational 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 conducted a SWOT analysis, which was discussed with ANQA employees. During the implementation of the self-evaluation, current discussions were organized by the ANQA to clarify the issues.

Representatives of the institution's administrative and educational staff, lecturers, and students participated in the self-evaluation process.

Preparatory phase

The Expert Panel, having reviewed the VET's self-evaluation report and the accompanying package of documents, conducted a preliminary evaluation in accordance with the prescribed format. As part of this process, the Panel prepared a list of additional documents requiring further examination and identified key issues and questions, indicating the respective structural units or target groups to be addressed. Subsequently, the Expert Panel consolidated the results of the preliminary assessment and developed a detailed plan and schedule for the site visit.

Preparatory visit

Before the site visit, a preparatory visit to the college was carried out on 08.04.2025. The ANQA coordinator, the head of the institutional program accreditation department and the head of the expert panel were present at the meeting. During the meeting, the site visit schedule was introduced and agreed upon with the college. Additionally, the meeting participants discussed and mutually agreed on decisions regarding the technical, organisational, and information aspects of the site visit, as well as the behaviour and ethical norms of the participants.

Site visit

The expert panel site visit took place from April 16-18, 2025. During the week preceding the site visit, the expert panel members and the coordinator visited the college, observed its infrastructure and resources, conducted class observations, and observed exams. Then the experts and the coordinator had a closed meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to identify the college's strengths and weaknesses against the standards, clarify the questions to be asked of the target groups, and discuss the meeting

procedures and next steps.

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

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

The expert panel reached its conclusion on the criteria through discussions and analyses by all members, always applying the principle of consensus.

Expert panel report

The expert panel members and the ANQA coordinator prepared the preliminary version of the expert report, which, following the panel's approval on May 23, 2025, was provided to the College.

The College submitted its comments and observations on the preliminary version of the report on June 6, 2025. Subsequently, on June 12, 2025, a meeting was held with the expert panel members, representatives of the College, and ANQA to discuss the institution's remarks.

Based on the discussion outcomes, the expert panel prepared the final version of the report, which, upon approval by all panel members, was submitted to the College.

Meri Barseghyan

Coordinator of the Expert Panel

23.06.2025

EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

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