

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



**EXPERT PANEL REPORT
INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION OF
"YEREVAN STATE TECHNOLOGICAL COLLEGE" (SNCO)**

Yerevan – 2025

INTRODUCTION

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

The expert examination was conducted by an independent expert panel, comprising four local experts, as mandated by the National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation's regulations on “Formation of the Expert Panel.”

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

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

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

Context of the Evaluation of the College's Activities

The activities and history of the TLI

Yerevan State Technological College was established in 1932, based on the Chemical Department of the Yerevan Industrial Technical School. It is in Yerevan, Armenia. Over the years, the college has undergone several name changes: in 1985, it was renamed Yerevan Polytechnic Technical School, and in 2000, it became Yerevan State Technological College. The college is undergoing institutional accreditation for the first time.

Development Directions and Educational Programs of the College.

The college plays a significant role in providing primary and secondary vocational education programs that are highly demanded in the labor market. It is the only educational institution in the Republic that trains laboratory technicians in the specialty of "Laboratory Research in Production," which is strategically important for the industrial sector.

Currently, the college offers four primary VET programs:

- Welding Technology
- Culinary Arts
- Laboratory Research and Measurements in Production
- Jewelry Making

Additionally, it offers nine secondary VET programs:

- Pharmacy
- Dental Technology
- Cosmetology and Makeup Art
- Product Standardization and Conformity Certification
- Service Management
- Accounting
- Software Development for Computer and Automated Systems
- Environmental Protection and Efficient Use of Natural Resources
- Tourism

At present, the college has 659 enrolled students. According to graduate tracking data, 16 out of 138 graduates are continuing their education at higher education institutions in their respective fields, and 360 graduates from the past five years are currently employed.

The college has 66 faculty members, 60 of whom hold higher education degrees, while 6 have completed secondary vocational education. There are 15 part-time (adjunct) lecturers. During the site visit, it was noted that 2 current lecturers are also employers, and 3 are college graduates who have returned as teaching staff.

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 Technological College institutional capacities. The evaluation was conducted according to 10 institutional accreditation criteria set by the RA Government Decree N 959-Ն, dated June 30, 2011.

During the evaluation process, the expert panel considered that the college is a VET institution with a clearly defined mission.

The panel also acknowledged that this is the first time Yerevan State Technological College is undergoing institutional accreditation. The expert panel emphasizes the college’s role in delivering initial and middle-level vocational education programs in high demand in the labor market. It is important to highlight that internal and external stakeholders support the college’s mission, particularly evident in its graduates' recognition and value.

From this perspective, it is worth noting that the college is the only educational institution in the country that trains laboratory technicians in the specialty of "Laboratory Research in Production," which is undoubtedly of strategic importance for the industrial sector.

A key advancement in the college’s strategic planning process is the development of its Strategic Plan, which serves as a foundation for institutional operations. However, the mechanisms of strategic planning have not yet been fully implemented. The college did not have a formal strategic plan for the seven years preceding the current Strategic Plan, resulting in a discontinuity of institutional processes. This gap also prevents a comprehensive assessment of the college’s progress during that period. It is important to note that in the current 2022–2027 SP, the college has identified and addressed key institutional challenges through consultations with internal stakeholders. This creates favorable conditions for developing mechanisms that foster stakeholder engagement in institutional processes.

On the other hand, the Strategic Plan requires further refinement. At this stage, the document does not function effectively as a tool or mechanism for process management. It is necessary to clearly define and distinguish strategic directions, corresponding goals, and objectives. A strong linkage between the strategic plan and its implementation timeline is also essential to avoid developing planning documents that are not practically applicable. A concern currently observed in the college’s planning practices. Specifically, the Strategic Plan’s objectives and the associated timeline are not reflected in other planning documents or institutional reports.

At the same time, the college director monitors the implementation of the SP, and members of the Governing Board are well-informed about its key principles. However, these processes are not formally documented. The expert panel also notes that although specific steps have been taken toward addressing certain challenges outlined in the SP, the overall approach tends to be situational rather than systematic. There is a lack of structured managerial decision-making, and the PDCA cycle is not consistently applied across processes.

The college's strategic directions and objectives must also be reflected in the operational plans of its structural units. The SP implementation timeline also requires revision. The steps necessary to achieve each objective, the expected outcomes, responsible parties, and financial calculations should be clearly articulated to ensure the objectives' feasibility and alignment with financial planning. These improvements will help interlink planning documents at various levels, clarify management processes, and facilitate achieving the strategic goals outlined in the SP.

The college fosters a student-centered environment that contributes to the effectiveness of the educational process. It needs to continue attracting applicants, including for currently inactive programs. While the college considers student needs, it is essential to identify those needs through institutionally stable mechanisms. Doing so will support the implementation of targeted interventions, such as organizing supplementary classes.

Regarding the link between research and learning, the expert panel highlights the importance of setting realistic goals and establishing clear mechanisms that document the research-learning connection by demonstrating measurable student achievements. It is also important to introduce mechanisms for incentivizing faculty and students to engage in research activities while distinguishing academic research from student research activities in the context of vocational education.

Looking toward future development, it is crucial to implement a clear policy for external relations, define responsibilities among staff involved in this area, and differentiate between various types of external engagement. Mechanisms for external accountability require continuous improvement. In this regard, the college's website- created for this purpose- can raise public awareness. Additionally, the use of modern advertising tools and campaigns is important. For example, having a regular schedule and publishing announcements for short-term programs can stimulate participant engagement. The college can also continue to expand its capacity to transfer knowledge and values to the broader community.

Strengths of the Institution:

- Involvement of academic staff with practical and research experience
- Integration of practical components into internship programs
- Teamwork among departments aimed at solving systemic issues
- Established cooperation with educational institutions
- Active collaboration with employers and research centers
- Close partnership with the labor market
- A student-centered learning environment
- Research- and analysis-based assignments given to students.

Weaknesses of the Institution:

- Insufficient implementation of strategic planning tools and weak application of stakeholder engagement mechanisms in decision-making processes

- Lack of systematic information mechanisms for data-driven decision-making and reports being primarily descriptive with limited analytical content
- The quality assurance system is not institutionalized, and mechanisms for comprehensive analysis of internal and external factors in quality assurance processes are lacking
- Absence of benchmarking mechanisms and unsystematic application of monitoring tools for VET programs
- Inconsistent approach to the revision of academic programs and internships
- Unclear mechanisms for promoting students' research activities
- Inefficient allocation of resources (financial, material, and technical)
- Absence or non-targeted nature of the faculty incentive system
- Lack of a clear strategy for internationalization and development of external relations

Recommendations:

Database management

- Establish clear mechanisms for developing, implementing, and evaluating the strategic plan to ensure oversight of goal achievement and continuous improvement.
- Revise the strategic plan timeline by defining clear goals, actions, implementation deadlines, and responsible parties based on identified challenges. Align all planning documents with the strategic plan's overall objectives.
- Develop measurable indicators that reflect the strategic plan's actual outcomes and serve as objective evaluation tools to ensure effective monitoring.
- Improve and refine the organizational structure to ensure vertical and horizontal connections are articulated.
- Review job descriptions to ensure alignment with actual functions and distribution of responsibilities.
- Introduce mechanisms for analyzing internal and external factors influencing institutional activities and conducting relevant studies.
- Establish an internal quality assurance system by developing the necessary policies and procedures, defining an operational plan, and delineating responsibilities based on those policies and procedures.
- Develop and implement quality assurance mechanisms, including tools for data collection, needs assessment, and process effectiveness evaluation, to support evidence-based decision-making.
- Review the questionnaires used for surveys to ensure the collection and analysis of objective data and expand the involvement of internal and external stakeholders to enhance process transparency.

Credible award of qualifications

- Develop AP specifications, ensuring alignment with the specific characteristics of each VET program and sectoral requirements.

- Develop and implement a unified approach to selecting teaching and learning methods, considering the professional specifics derived from each academic program.
- Develop and apply systematic approaches to assessment criteria (rubrics), clarifying the connection between student assignments and intended learning outcomes to enhance the transparency and consistency of the assessment process.
- Ensure effective implementation of benchmarking and continuous monitoring of academic programs to compare them with national and international best practices and define strategic directions for improvement.
- Create a personnel reserve to ensure the stability of the faculty.
- Develop mechanisms to support faculty professional development, including expanded opportunities for professional training and diversified tools for evaluating teaching effectiveness.
- Clearly define the qualification requirements for faculty for each academic program.
- Upgrade laboratories and workshops, ensuring safety standards and creating an environment conducive to safe and effective practical work.
- Attract alternative financial sources to ensure the stability of the educational process and the continuous development of resources.
- Establish an effective internal documentation and circulation system to facilitate and streamline management processes.
- Ensure access to electronic libraries and online scientific databases to enhance the effectiveness of educational and research activities and broaden access to information resources.

Long-term development

- Conduct graduate tracking analysis by field of specialization.
- Assess students' needs and organize counseling and supplementary educational sessions based on the results.
- Coordinate the integration of research activities across all academic programs, ensuring a clearly defined list of individual practical tasks and assignments.
- Develop clear evaluation criteria for research work to ensure fairness and transparency in assessment.
- Identify the needs for promoting research activities and establish incentive mechanisms to increase faculty and student engagement.
- Ensure bottom-up accountability with regular reporting from departments, comprehensive process monitoring, and transparency of top-down accountability mechanisms.
- Develop and implement standardized reporting formats to provide tools for in-depth assessment and analysis of actual data aligned with the strategic plan's performance indicators.
- Ensure the continuity of short-term academic programs and strengthen educational and social initiatives aimed at knowledge and value transfer to society by promoting the participation of students, employers, and stakeholders in professional development and community initiatives.

- Develop and implement a clear strategy and action plan for external relations and internationalization, considering the college's potential. Clarify responsibilities, timelines, and financial resources.
- Undertake initiatives to improve language proficiency and create opportunities for student and faculty mobility, contributing to knowledge exchange, development, and the study of international practices.
- Expand feedback mechanisms with the public and ensure the accessibility of the college's official website in three languages to foster international cooperation and engage a broader audience.

Asya Simonyan, Chair of Expert Panel

10.04.2025

DESCRIPTION OF EXTERNAL REVIEW

COMPOSITION OF EXPERT PANEL

The following expert panel conducted an external evaluation of the institutional capacities of the Yerevan State Technological College.

1. **Asya Simonyan**- Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Lecturer at Shirak State University, head of the expert panel.
2. **Naira Hunanyan**- Candidate of Biological Sciences, Senior Researcher at the Institute of Physiology of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia, Lecturer at Mkhitar Gosh Armenian Russian International University, expert panel member.
3. **Yasaman Avagyan**- Chief Specialist at the Armenian State University of Economics Quality Assurance Department, expert panel member.
4. **Arevik Hovhannisyan** - Student at the Ararat Regional State College, Student-Expert.

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

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

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

PROCESS OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW

The College applied for state institutional accreditation by submitting to ANQA, filling out the application form, and presenting copies of the license and respective appendices (02.02.2024).

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 04.10.2024. Representatives of the institution's administrative and educational staff, lecturers, and students were involved in the self-evaluation process.

Preparatory phase

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

Preparatory visit

Before the site visit, a preparatory visit to the college was conducted on 03.12.2024. The ANQA coordinator, the head of the institutional program accreditation department and the head of the expert panel were present at the meeting. During the meeting, the site visit schedule was introduced and agreed upon with the college and discussed. Mutually agreed-upon decisions were made regarding the technical, organizational, and informational issues of the site visit, as well as the behaviour and ethical norms of the meeting participants.

Site visit

The expert panel site visit occurred from December 10-12, 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 20.03.2025.

The college did not provide feedback on the preliminary version of the report. The expert panel prepared the final version of the expert report, which was approved by the group on 10.04.2025.

Liana Alaverdyan

Coordinator of the Expert Panel / 10.04.2025

EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

CRITERION	CONCLUSION
<i>I. Mission and Purposes</i>	Satisfactory
<i>II. Governance and Administration</i>	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>	Unsatisfactory
<i>IX. External Relations and Internationalization</i>	Satisfactory
<i>X. Internal Quality Assurance System</i>	Unsatisfactory

