

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



**EXPERT PANEL REPORT
ON THE PROGRAM ACCREDITATION OF THE “NURSING” ACADEMIC PROGRAM OF THE
ARARAT STATE MEDICAL COLLEGE SNCO**

Yerevan – 2026

INTRODUCTION

The program accreditation of the “Nursing” Academic Program at Ararat State Medical College SNCO was conducted based on the application submitted by the institution. The program accreditation process is coordinated and implemented by the National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation (ANQA).

In carrying out its activities, ANQA was guided by the Procedure for the State Accreditation of Educational Institutions Implementing Professional Educational Programs and Their Specialities, approved by the Government of the Republic of Armenia under Decision No. 978-N of June 30, 2011, as well as by Government Decision No. 959-N of June 30, 2011, On the Approval of Accreditation Criteria for Professional Education in the Republic of Armenia. The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the 7 criteria for program accreditation established in the Republic of Armenia.

The review was conducted by an independent expert panel formed in accordance with the requirements of the Procedure for the Formation of Expert Panels of the National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation. The panel comprised five local experts. The accreditation process was funded by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of the Republic of Armenia.

The accreditation process placed particular emphasis on the effectiveness of the academic program in terms of specialist preparation, the development of learner competencies, and the continuous improvement of the program, ensuring alignment with labor market requirements and the National Qualifications Framework.

This report presents the results of the expert evaluation of the College’s academic program in accordance with the program accreditation criteria for professional education in the Republic of Armenia.

CONTEXT OF PROGRAM EVALUATION

The mission of Ararat State Medical College is to foster the personal and professional development of each student by equipping them with the knowledge, competencies, and practical skills required for successful professional practice. The College places particular emphasis on preparing healthcare professionals to meet the evolving demands of the healthcare sector, thereby supporting students' professional development and enhancing their competitiveness in the labor market.

The Nursing Academic Program (AP) is designed in accordance with the relevant State Educational Standard. The program aims to develop students' theoretical knowledge, practical competencies, and professional values, ensuring their preparedness for professional practice.

The Academic Program is supported by 33 academic staff members, including 24 full-time and 9 part-time lecturers. Of these, 16 are involved in delivering general professional and specialised professional modules.

The College does not maintain systematic data on the employment outcomes of its graduates.

Ararat State Medical College was granted institutional accreditation for four years on 4 June 2024. The accreditation is valid until 4 June 2028.

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

The Nursing Academic Program is structurally aligned with the requirements of the State Educational Standard and provides the necessary framework for the organisation and delivery of the educational process. The curriculum maintains an appropriate balance between theoretical instruction and practical training. In addition, several curriculum revisions have been introduced following benchmarking activities and employer collaboration, including the incorporation of new modules. Nevertheless, systemic challenges remain regarding the effective implementation of the program-particularly in teaching and learning, student assessment, the achievement of the Intended Learning Outcomes, and quality assurance processes-thereby constraining the overall effectiveness of the Academic Program.

The academic staff is generally adequate to support the program's implementation, including the involvement of practising healthcare professionals, thereby strengthening the link between the educational process and labor market needs. At the same time, the Expert Panel identified instances in which the academic qualifications and professional expertise of individual lecturers are not fully aligned with the modules they teach. This affects the depth and quality of instruction in those modules. Furthermore, academic staff professional development activities are predominantly focused on general pedagogical and methodological issues and are not sufficiently tailored to the specific disciplinary content and learning outcomes of the modules taught¹. Consequently, not all lecturers can ensure the delivery of up-to-date, in-depth, and practice-oriented instruction, which may limit the effective achievement of the program's Intended Learning Outcomes.

Although program documentation reflects student-centred and interactive approaches to teaching and learning, their implementation in classroom practice remains limited. The teaching process continues to rely predominantly on knowledge transmission and reproduction, rather than on approaches that promote critical thinking, clinical reasoning, and the practical application of knowledge in authentic professional contexts. As a result, the intended learning outcomes related to higher-order cognitive skills are not consistently achieved. This has also led to a discrepancy between student assessment results and students' actual level of competence. During the site visit, the Expert Panel observed that even high-achieving students frequently demonstrated insufficient mastery of fundamental professional knowledge, limited clinical reasoning skills, and inadequate practical competence.

The student assessment system does not adequately ensure that students receive regular, timely, constructive, and individualised feedback from academic staff. As a result, opportunities for early identification and correction of learning gaps, systematic monitoring of student progress, and the consistent development of professional competencies are limited².

¹ Edited following discussions with the institution.

² Edited following discussions with the institution.

The learning environment provides the minimum conditions required to deliver the Academic Program. Some teaching aids, mannequins, and clinical training facilities are available through cooperation with healthcare institutions. However, the College lacks specialised teaching facilities, laboratories, and simulation-based learning environments essential for the effective development and assessment of practical competencies. Furthermore, the existing material and technical resources are limited and do not adequately support repeated practice or the systematic acquisition of clinical skills.

The quality assurance system does not yet effectively support the comprehensive evaluation of the Academic Program's performance. Information collected through classroom observations and stakeholder surveys is neither subjected to integrated, in-depth analysis nor systematically used to inform program enhancement. Consequently, the quality assurance system does not function as a continuous quality enhancement mechanism grounded in evidence-informed decision-making. Under these circumstances, the effectiveness of the Academic Program and the achievement of its Intended Learning Outcomes are constrained, which may ultimately affect graduates' professional preparedness and the credibility of the qualification awarded.

Strengths of the Program:

- The Academic Program is aligned with the requirements of the State Educational Standard and ensures an appropriate balance between theoretical instruction and practical training.
- The academic staff includes practising healthcare professionals, thereby strengthening the connection between the educational process and contemporary professional practice.
- The Academic Program has been enhanced based on employers' recommendations and benchmarking activities, contributing to its continued relevance and responsiveness to labour market needs.
- The availability of clinical training opportunities within a healthcare institution provides students with early exposure to authentic professional settings and helps develop practice-oriented competencies.

Weaknesses of the Program:

- The teaching and learning process remains largely focused on knowledge transmission and reproduction, limiting the development of students' clinical reasoning, critical thinking, and professional competencies.
- The student assessment system neither effectively incorporates formative assessment practices nor fully reflects students' actual level of professional competence.
- Although student-centred teaching methods and program mapping have been formally established, they are not implemented systematically and purposefully across the educational process.

- Misalignment exists between the Intended Learning Outcomes, teaching and learning methods, and assessment strategies, resulting in incomplete assessment and the achievement of the program's intended learning outcomes.
- The development of students' practical competencies is insufficient to ensure confident, independent, and safe professional practice in clinical settings.
- Professional development opportunities for academic staff are limited and insufficiently aligned with the disciplinary content and specific requirements of the modules delivered.
- The material and technical resources, including simulation-based learning facilities, are insufficient to support the systematic development and assessment of practical competencies.
- The quality assurance mechanisms do not provide integrated, evidence-based analysis of program performance, thereby limiting data-informed decision-making and continuous program improvement.

Recommendations:

1. Ensure alignment between the mapping of the Intended Learning Outcomes and the teaching, learning, and assessment methods used in practice, thereby strengthening constructive alignment and the practical implementation of the Academic Program.
2. Establish a unified system for collecting, maintaining, and analysing graduate employment data to improve the reliability of evidence and support data-informed program enhancement.
3. Ensure the systematic and purposeful application of benchmarking by using it as a continuous quality improvement tool for the Academic Program.
4. Ensure that specialised professional modules are delivered by academic staff with relevant disciplinary qualifications and current professional experience.
5. Organise targeted professional development activities for academic staff that align with the content of the modules taught and with their identified professional development needs.
6. Deliver methodological training for academic staff on the use of assessment checklists, the design of competency-based assessment tasks, and the assessment of Intended Learning Outcomes.
7. Involve external subject-matter experts in peer observation of teaching, professional exchange, and other quality-enhancement activities to improve teaching effectiveness.
8. Review teaching and learning approaches to shift the educational process from an emphasis on knowledge reproduction towards the development of deep understanding, clinical reasoning, analytical thinking, cause-and-effect analysis, and the effective application of knowledge in professional contexts.
9. Strengthen the development of students' practical competencies by organising small-group practical training, ensuring repeated practice of clinical procedures, timely analysis of errors, and the provision of individualised feedback.

10. Develop more structured mechanisms for evaluating teaching effectiveness, focusing not only on the implementation of teaching methods but also on their impact on students' learning outcomes, clinical reasoning, and practical competence.
11. Ensure the systematic and continuous implementation of formative assessment, making it an effective instrument for supporting student learning and monitoring learning progress.
12. Shift from assessment approaches primarily focused on knowledge reproduction towards competency-based assessment that evaluates analytical thinking, clinical reasoning, problem-solving, and the practical application of knowledge.
13. Introduce a station-based assessment system that incorporates the principles of the Objective Structured Clinical Examination to ensure a structured, comprehensive, and objective evaluation of students' clinical reasoning and practical competencies.
14. Clearly define the model of research activity by adopting an applied research approach, ensuring that each research project includes a clearly formulated research question, systematic data collection using appropriate methodologies, data analysis to identify patterns and trends, and evidence-based conclusions.
15. Strengthen the link between research activities and professional practice by promoting the use of research findings in evidence-informed nursing decision-making.
16. Ensure the availability of the necessary material, technical, and educational resources to support the implementation of competency-based teaching and assessment.
17. Organise targeted training for academic staff on contemporary assessment methodologies, including the design, validation, and effective use of assessment tools.
18. Establish specialised learning environments, including laboratories and discipline-specific teaching facilities, to enable the systematic, repeated, and safe development of students' practical competencies and to facilitate the effective achievement of the Intended Learning Outcomes.
19. Strengthen material and technical resources, particularly in areas where practical training is currently limited, by acquiring comprehensive anatomical models, gynaecological and paediatric simulators, and additional therapeutic training mannequins, thereby promoting active student engagement and sustainable skills development.
20. Establish and further develop microbiology and chemistry laboratory facilities to support the implementation of essential laboratory experiments, enabling students to integrate theoretical knowledge with practical application and to develop fundamental professional competencies.
21. Modernise learning resources, including professional literature and practice-oriented educational materials, while enhancing students' access to international scientific literature and evidence-based information sources to support the acquisition of up-to-date professional knowledge.
22. Establish a dedicated Academic Program Quality Assurance Working Group or Committee responsible for regularly analysing program performance data, including classroom

observations, student achievement, and assessment results, and for developing evidence-based recommendations to enhance the program.

23. Define clear stages and procedures for quality assurance processes, including data collection, analysis, decision-making, implementation of improvement actions, and continuous monitoring, to ensure systematic and consistent application.
24. Further strengthen the existing quality assurance mechanisms by ensuring their coherent and systematic implementation, reinforcing their analytical capacity, and promoting the effective use of quality assurance evidence to support the continuous enhancement of the Academic Program.

Expert Panel

1. Naira Hunanyan
2. Ishkhan Sokhakyen
3. Araks Aghajanyan
4. Tereza Ghazaryan
5. Alen Stepanyan

June 26, 2026

DESCRIPTION OF EXTERNAL REVIEW

COMPOSITION OF EXPERT PANEL

The external evaluation of the Nursing academic program at Ararat State Medical College, conducted as part of program accreditation, was conducted by the following expert panel.

- **Naira Hunanyan** – Candidate of Biological Sciences, Lecturer in Histology, Embryology and Cytology at the Mkhitar Gosh Armenian-Russian International University and the University of Traditional Medicine; Senior Researcher at the L. A. Orbeli Institute of Physiology, member of the expert panel.
- **Ishkhan Sokhakyan** –Anesthesiologist-Reanimatologist, Candidate of Medical Sciences, Professor at the Department of Medicine and Fundamental Medicine of the International Academy of Medicine and Fundamental Medicine, member of the expert panel.
- **Araks Aghajanyan** – Deputy Director for Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance Coordinator at Stepanavan State Agricultural College, member of the expert panel.
- **Tereza Ghazaryan** – Obstetrician-Gynaecologist, Lecturer at the Mehrabyan Medical College, member of the expert panel.
- **Alen Stepanyan** – Student at the Kotayk State Regional College, student expert and member of the expert panel.

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

The work of the Expert Panel was coordinated by Anahit Terteryan and Liana Alaverdyan, specialists at the Institutional and Program Accreditation Department of the ANQA.

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

PROCESS OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW

Ararat State Medical College applied for program accreditation of its Nursing Academic Program on April 10, 2025, in the prescribed format, accompanied by copies of its license and relevant official orders.

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 activity timetable was prepared and approved.

Self-evaluation

Considering that this was the first experience of colleges conducting a program self-evaluation, ANQA organized both in-person and online workshops for representatives of the institutions undergoing accreditation.

During the workshops, colleges were introduced to:

- the interpretation of the program accreditation standards and criteria for VET (Vocational Education and Training) institutions;
- the program accreditation questionnaire and the self-evaluation report format;
- the principles and methodology of conducting a SWOT analysis.

During the preparation of the self-evaluation report, the colleges were also provided with ongoing advisory support. At ANQA's initiative, interim meetings and consultation sessions were organized to assist institutions in improving the quality of their self-evaluation reports and addressing issues arising during the process.

The self-evaluation report of the Nursing Academic Program of Ararat State Medical College was submitted on October 10, 2025. The self-evaluation was carried out by the institution's staff, including members of the management team, administrative personnel, academic staff, and support staff.

Preparatory phase

The Expert Panel, having reviewed the VET's self-evaluation report and the accompanying documentation, 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 preliminary assessment results and developed a detailed plan and schedule for the site visit.

Preparatory visit

On November 11, 2025, a meeting was held with the management team of Ararat State Medical College. The ANQA coordinator, the head of the institutional program accreditation department, 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 agreed on decisions regarding the technical, organisational, and informational aspects of the site visit, as well as the participants' behaviour and ethical norms.

Site visit

The expert panel site visit took place from December 8-10, 2025. 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.

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 members of the Expert Panel and the ANQA coordinator prepared the preliminary version of the Expert Report. After approval by all members of the Expert Panel, the preliminary report was submitted to the College on 12 May 2026.

The College submitted its feedback on the preliminary version of the report to ANQA on 27 May 2026. ANQA forwarded the College's comments and observations to the Expert Panel for consideration. Subsequently, ANQA organised an online meeting with representatives of the College and the Expert Panel to discuss the institution's observations on the preliminary Expert Report.

Considering the feedback received, the Expert Panel prepared the final version of the Expert Report, which was approved by the Panel members on 26 June 2026.

Anahit Terteryan

Liana Alaverdyan

Coordinators of the Expert Panel

26.06.2026

EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

CRITERION	CONCLUSION
<i>I. Academic Program</i>	Satisfactory
<i>II. Teaching Staff</i>	Satisfactory
<i>III. Teaching and Learning</i>	Unsatisfactory
<i>IV. Student Assessment</i>	Unsatisfactory
<i>V. Research and Creative Activities</i>	Unsatisfactory
<i>VI. Educational Environment</i>	Satisfactory
<i>VII. Quality Assurance</i>	Unsatisfactory