

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



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

Yerevan – 2026

INTRODUCTION

The program accreditation of the “Nursing” Academic Program at Gyumri 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

Gyumri State Medical College, a secondary vocational education institution, implements the Nursing Academic Program (AP), fully aligned with the College's mission and strategic objectives.

The College's mission is to generate, disseminate, and transfer knowledge, to promote the quality and reputation of vocational education, and to prepare nurses, midwives, pharmacists, and dental technicians who meet the evolving requirements of the labor market. Through its educational activities, the College places particular emphasis on developing students' professional competencies, ensuring that graduates are well prepared to meet the needs of society and the healthcare sector, and educating specialists whose qualifications align with national priorities and international professional standards.

The Nursing Academic Program (AP) is delivered through modular and subject-based curricula that align with the requirements of the State Educational Standard. The program's aims and objectives derive directly from the institutional mission and focus on addressing society's healthcare needs, enhancing the quality and effectiveness of vocational education, and contributing to the provision of high-quality nursing services.

The implementation of the Nursing AP is supported by 63 academic staff members, including lecturers delivering general education, general professional, and specialised professional modules. The academic staff comprises 31 practising physicians and 11 practising nurses, ensuring strong integration of theoretical instruction with contemporary clinical practice.

Graduate employment outcomes have shown a positive trend in recent years. The graduate employment rate was 50% in the 2022–2023 academic year, 63.5% in 2023–2024, and 55.9% in 2024–2025.

Gyumri State Medical College was granted institutional accreditation for four years on 29 April 2024. The accreditation is valid until 29 April 2028.

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

The objectives of the Nursing Academic Program (AP) align with the College's mission and are directed towards preparing competitive nursing professionals who meet the evolving needs of the labor market. In recent years, the program has undergone several revisions, with particular emphasis on strengthening its practical component and developing applied professional competencies. In addition, the program places considerable emphasis on patient care, an essential component of nursing education and professional competence development. Nevertheless, the Expert Panel considers that a more balanced curricular approach is required, with greater emphasis on fostering students' analytical thinking, clinical reasoning, and independent professional decision-making.

The academic staff is generally stable and comprises experienced practitioners whose expertise contributes to the development of students' professional identity and clinical competence. At the same time, continuous attention should be devoted to the professional development of academic staff by providing specialised training that strengthens discipline-specific expertise and promotes the application of contemporary teaching, learning, and assessment methodologies. Such measures are essential for ensuring the continuous professional development of academic staff and for maintaining the relevance and currency of program content. Furthermore, the College should continue to implement a systematic staff renewal policy to facilitate a smooth generational transition within the academic workforce.

Regarding teaching and learning, the Expert Panel observed a variety of instructional methods, with several lecturers demonstrating effective integration of theoretical instruction and practical training. However, teaching approaches vary considerably across lecturers, resulting in inconsistencies in the delivery of learning. In some cases, the alignment between teaching methods and the Intended Learning Outcomes is insufficiently articulated, limiting the effective development of students' practical competencies, particularly their clinical reasoning skills. In this context, greater emphasis should be placed on the systematic and purposeful application of teaching methods that are explicitly aligned with the program's Intended Learning Outcomes. In addition, the learning process should be organised to provide students with repeated opportunities to practise and refine practical skills, thereby ensuring the consistent and sustainable development of their competence.

The assessment methods are primarily designed to measure students' achievement of the learning outcomes, and in recent years, there have been initial efforts to introduce competency-based assessment approaches. Nevertheless, the assessment system requires further development, particularly in the comprehensive and objective evaluation of students' practical competencies, clinical reasoning, and professional behaviour.¹ The Expert Panel therefore recommends further strengthening structured and competency-based assessment practices through the systematic use of diverse assessment tools, such as simulation-based tasks, structured assessment checklists, and case-based scenarios. These

¹ The sentence was revised following the discussion of the institution's comments and recommendations.

approaches would enable a more comprehensive evaluation of students' professional competencies while enhancing the reliability, validity, and objectivity of the assessment process.

From the perspective of strengthening the assessment of practical competencies, the introduction of the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) approach is particularly important. The assessment mechanisms do not fully ensure objective, reliable, and comparable evaluation of students' practical competencies, highlighting the need for more standardised and performance-based assessment formats. The OSCE assesses students in structured, simulation-based clinical scenarios, in which they are required to perform specific professional tasks within defined time limits and according to standardised assessment criteria.

The implementation of this approach would enable the evaluation not only of students' theoretical knowledge but also of their ability to apply knowledge in practice, demonstrate clinical reasoning, and demonstrate professional skills in authentic clinical contexts. Considering the College's existing resources and the characteristics of the Academic Program, the Expert Panel considers it appropriate to introduce the OSCE methodology through a phased implementation, beginning with a limited number of simulation-based assessment stations and gradually expanding the scope of assessment. Such an approach would enhance the objectivity, reliability, and validity of student assessment while enabling more effective use of assessment evidence for the continuous enhancement of the Academic Program.

The learning environment is generally supported by the material and technical resources required to implement the program. Nevertheless, these resources require further modernisation and more systematic use to maximise their contribution to teaching, learning, and assessment.

Overall, the Expert Panel concludes that the College is at a stage of institutional development and has a solid foundation for delivering a practice-oriented Nursing Academic Program. However, further systematic enhancement of program content, continued development of assessment methodologies, and strengthening of quality assurance processes are required to ensure consistent achievement of the Intended Learning Outcomes and continuous enhancement of program quality.

Strengths of the Program:

- Review and partial enhancement of the Academic Program, considering labor market requirements and the needs of the professional field.²
- Expansion of the practical component within the Academic Program.
- Involvement of practising professionals in the academic staff, as well as the engagement of multiple lecturers in specialised professional modules, ensuring diversity of expertise and perspectives in the teaching process.

² The sentence was revised following the discussion of the institution's comments and recommendations.

- Availability of effective teaching practices that integrate theoretical instruction with practical training, supported by continuous student feedback.
- Availability of the material, technical, and educational-methodological resources required for the implementation of the Academic Program.
- Involvement of employer resources and clinical training facilities in teaching and learning.

Weaknesses of the Program:

- Limited integration of clinical reasoning development across the content of the Academic Program, teaching approaches, and assessment practices.
- Limited availability of specialised professional development opportunities for academic staff.
- Variability in teaching approaches, resulting in insufficient methodological consistency in delivering the same modules.
- The assessment process does not fully support the comprehensive development and evaluation of students' practical competencies.
- Limited integration of research-oriented assignments and activities into the Academic Program.
- Insufficient systematic and comprehensive analysis of the extent to which students achieve all Intended Learning Outcomes within the Academic Program's quality assurance framework.

Recommendations:

1. Continue the systematic enhancement of the Academic Program content by aligning it with developments in contemporary medicine, current professional requirements, and relevant international guidelines.
2. Conduct more comprehensive benchmarking activities, including the analysis of teaching and, particularly, assessment methodologies, with due consideration of the principles and approaches of the Objective Structured Clinical Examination.
3. Incorporate the assessment of students' professional progress and competency development as a key component of the lecturer's evaluation and quality-assurance system.
4. Establish a system of professional peer observations of teaching, ensuring that classes are also reviewed by specialists in the relevant professional field to evaluate the relevance of the taught content, the effectiveness of the practical component, and the achievement of Intended Learning Outcomes.
5. Ensure the systematic organisation of research activities by developing a clear institutional policy, methodology, and an implementation framework.
6. Direct research activities towards the investigation of professional and clinical issues, ensuring their alignment with Intended Learning Outcomes and the development of students' analytical thinking skills.

7. Organise specialised professional development opportunities for academic staff to strengthen disciplinary expertise and ensure alignment between lecturers' competencies and the content of the modules they teach.
8. Continue implementing the academic staff renewal policy by maintaining an appropriate balance between experienced professionals and emerging specialists.
9. Ensure clearer, more systematic alignment between teaching methods and Intended Learning Outcomes by linking the methodologies used in each module to the achievement of specific learning outcomes.
10. Further develop the teaching and learning process to support practical skills acquisition by ensuring repeated practice opportunities for all students and by applying simulation-based learning approaches, particularly for complex competencies requiring a high level of professional responsibility.
11. Establish mechanisms to ensure methodological consistency in teaching, promote coherence among lecturers delivering the same modules, and support the consistent achievement of Intended Learning Outcomes.
12. Review the assessment system to ensure clear alignment between Intended Learning Outcomes and assessment methods by defining specific assessment tools for each outcome (e.g., simulation-based assessment, checklists, structured oral examinations).
13. Introduce competency-based and structured assessment mechanisms that ensure repeated practice of practical skills, monitor student progress, and ensure full acquisition of essential professional procedures by all students.
14. Develop assessment approaches grounded in clinical reasoning by incorporating authentic, practice-oriented tasks (case-based learning, OSCE) that enable the evaluation of students' analytical abilities, understanding of cause-and-effect relationships, and capacity for independent professional decision-making.
15. Ensure the systematic management and further development of the learning environment and educational resources, including the establishment of dedicated simulation rooms.
16. Enhance and update professional literature resources, including exploring opportunities to access electronic academic and professional databases.
17. Clarify the role and responsibilities of the Academic Program Coordinator by ensuring comprehensive, continuous monitoring of the program structure, Intended Learning Outcomes, teaching processes, and assessment practices.
18. Introduce a periodic and comprehensive internal audit system for the Academic Program as a key quality assurance instrument to evaluate the alignment of the program structure, implementation processes, and outcomes.
19. Establish regular professional discussion platforms where student assignments, their alignment with Intended Learning Outcomes, and the effectiveness of teaching approaches are systematically analysed.

20. Strengthen feedback mechanisms by conducting in-depth focus group discussions with employers and integrating the findings into graduate employment data analysis, particularly to identify the reasons for graduate unemployment. The collected evidence should serve as a basis for targeted, data-informed enhancement of the Academic Program.

Expert Panel

1. Naira Hunanyan
2. Ishkhan Sokhakyen
3. Gohar Mkrtchyan
4. Tereza Ghazaryan
5. Zvart Babayan

June 26, 2026

DESCRIPTION OF EXTERNAL REVIEW

COMPOSITION OF EXPERT PANEL

The external evaluation of the Nursing academic program at Gyumri 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.
- **Gohar Mkrtchyan** – Candidate of Philological Sciences, Head of the Quality Assurance Center at the Armenian Medical Institute, member of the expert panel.
- **Tereza Ghazaryan** – Obstetrician-Gynaecologist, Lecturer at the Mehrabyan Medical College, member of the expert panel.
- **Zvart Babayan** – Student at the Ararat 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

Gyumri State Medical College applied for program accreditation of its Nursing Academic Program on April 01, 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 Gyumri State Medical College was submitted on October 09, 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 November 10-11, 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 Expert Panel members, the preliminary report was submitted to the College on 08 May 2026.

The College submitted its feedback on the preliminary version of the report to ANQA on 22 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>	Satisfactory
<i>IV. Student Assessment</i>	Satisfactory
<i>V. Research and Creative Activities</i>	Unsatisfactory
<i>VI. Educational Environment</i>	Satisfactory
<i>VII. Quality Assurance</i>	Unsatisfactory