

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



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

Yerevan – 2026

INTRODUCTION

The program accreditation of the “Nursing” Academic Program at Martuni 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 Nursing Academic Program (AP) was introduced at Martuni State Medical College in the 2021–2022 academic year, in accordance with the State Educational Standard approved by Order No. 02-N of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of the Republic of Armenia on 11 January 2021.

The Nursing AP is one of the College's priority academic programs and shows consistently growing demand, as reflected in the steady increase in applicants. The program holds strategic significance for the institution, as it helps address the region's healthcare workforce needs and is one of the core components of the College's educational portfolio.

The College operates in a border region, which further underscores the importance of both the institution and the Nursing AP in ensuring the availability of qualified healthcare professionals. The Martuni community comprises 17 settlements served by a network of healthcare institutions, including outpatient clinics and a multidisciplinary medical centre. These providers generate sustained demand for nursing professionals, thereby enhancing the program's relevance and labour market orientation. Consequently, implementing the Nursing AP carries not only educational but also considerable social and economic significance for the region.

Martuni State Medical College operates in close partnership with the Martuni Medical Centre, which serves as the program's primary clinical training base. This partnership enables students to complete their clinical placements in an authentic healthcare environment, thereby developing profession-specific competencies and practical skills aligned with the program's intended learning outcomes. As a result, graduates are well prepared for a smooth transition into the labor market.

The Martuni Medical Centre is the principal employer of the program's graduates. Furthermore, the region's 17 outpatient clinics employ Nursing AP graduates as key healthcare professionals, thereby contributing to the continuity, accessibility and quality of healthcare services throughout the community.

The implementation of the Nursing AP is supported by a teaching staff of 29, including 14 lecturers who deliver specialised and general professional modules, while the remaining academic staff teach general education and socio-economic courses. The professional teaching staff primarily comprises practising healthcare professionals, including nine physicians and two nursing specialists from the Martuni Medical Centre, as well as two lecturers representing the Vardenis Medical Centre and the Geghahovit Outpatient Clinic. The active involvement of experienced practitioners ensures close integration of theoretical instruction with contemporary clinical practice.

Student enrolment has shown a positive trend since the program's introduction. The College admitted 37 students in 2023, 47 in 2024, and 50 in 2025. The data also indicates a gradual increase in the proportion of students admitted based on basic general education.

Graduate employment outcomes demonstrate the program's relevance to regional labor market needs. In recent years, approximately 47–50% of graduates have secured employment in nursing, while 11–13% are employed outside their field of qualification. The remaining graduates are currently unemployed, with family circumstances identified as a primary factor affecting their employment.

Martuni State Medical College was granted institutional accreditation for four years on 6 June 2023. The accreditation is valid until 6 June 2027 and provides the institutional framework for implementing and continuously enhancing the Nursing Academic Program.

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

The Nursing Academic Program (AP) at Martuni State Medical College has been undergoing continuous development and gradual enhancement in recent years. The College has undertaken targeted measures to modernize the program, improve teaching and learning methodologies, and strengthen its practical component, with the aim of ensuring closer alignment with the evolving requirements of the healthcare sector and labor market needs.

As part of the program enhancement process, the College has introduced several curriculum revisions. In particular, the content of several modules has been reviewed and updated, and new topics and elective modules have been incorporated into the curriculum, considering employers' recommendations, developments in the healthcare sector, and emerging professional requirements.

A key area of program enhancement has been the modernisation of teaching and learning approaches. The College has progressively expanded the use of student-centred and practice-oriented instructional methods, including simulation-based learning, case-based discussions, and the analysis of authentic clinical cases. These approaches help develop students' clinical reasoning, decision-making abilities, and professional competence, thereby enhancing their readiness to perform effectively in real clinical settings.

In parallel, the College has taken measures to improve the learning environment. New classrooms have been established, renovations have been completed, and a substantial portion of practical training is delivered at the Martuni Medical Centre. This collaboration enables students to develop practical skills in an authentic clinical environment while gaining hands-on experience with contemporary medical equipment and healthcare technologies.

At the same time, the Expert Panel notes that further enhancement of the learning environment remains necessary. Priority areas include expanding simulation-based learning facilities, acquiring additional mannequins and simulation equipment, and modernising the chemistry and biology laboratories to further strengthen the program's practical component.

Another strategic direction for program development is the continuous improvement of the student assessment system. In recent years, the College has reviewed the best international practice, particularly the methodology of the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) and has taken steps to strengthen the assessment of students' practical competencies. Consequently, simulation-based assessment tasks have been incorporated into the final attestation process, enabling students to demonstrate their practical knowledge, clinical skills, and professional decision-making across a range of simulated clinical scenarios.

Nevertheless, full implementation of the OSCE methodology requires further development of the simulation-based teaching and assessment environment. This includes establishing structured examination stations with clearly defined clinical scenarios and time allocations, and developing

standardised assessment rubrics to ensure the validity, reliability, and objectivity of assessment outcomes. In addition, successful implementation will require continuous professional development for academic staff and further strengthening of material and technical resources. The phased introduction of the OSCE methodology, coupled with the systematic use of assessment findings to drive continuous program improvement, would further enhance the quality and effectiveness of the Nursing Academic Program.

Strengths of the Program:

- Mapping the Academic Program Intended Learning Outcomes and their alignment with module learning outcomes, teaching and learning methods, and assessment strategies.
- A balanced mix of theoretical instruction and practical training, supporting the development of students' professional competencies and clinical skills.
- Regular review and enhancement of the Academic Program, with active participation from key stakeholders, including academic staff and employers.
- Active engagement of employers in program enhancement and in the teaching and learning process.
- Delivery of clinical practice in the authentic healthcare environment of the Martuni Medical Centre, providing students with extensive hands-on experience.
- Systematic application of student-centred and active learning approaches, including simulation-based learning, case-based learning, and clinical case discussions.
- Active involvement of students in research activities, community outreach, and health awareness initiatives.
- A multi-level quality assurance system that supports the implementation and continuous enhancement of the Academic Program, complemented by effective stakeholder feedback mechanisms.

Weaknesses of the Program:

- Large student group sizes during practical training sessions may limit opportunities for individualised supervision and hands-on skills development.
- Limited availability of simulation-based learning resources, including mannequins and other simulation equipment required for effective practical skills training.
- The absence of unified, standardised assessment checklists for evaluating practical competencies, together with variations in assessment approaches used by different lecturers, may affect the consistency and objectivity of assessment outcomes.
- The need for further modernisation and upgrading of chemistry and biology laboratory facilities to better support the implementation of the Academic Program.

- Limited library resources and the lack of access to electronic information and academic databases restrict students' and academic staff's opportunities for independent learning and professional development.

Recommendations

1. Continue the institution's positive policy of systematic monitoring and review of the Academic Program, as well as benchmarking against other academic programs, including those implemented by foreign higher education institutions, to facilitate the adoption of good practice.
2. Review the approaches to organising practical training by ensuring that students are divided into smaller groups during practical sessions to promote the effective acquisition and mastery of practical procedures and skills.
3. Ensure the development of transferable skills within the Academic Program, particularly foreign-language competencies, to enable students to access and study professional literature in foreign languages and to expand graduates' opportunities for international professional development.
4. Enhance students' ability to independently access reliable professional information sources and to remain informed about current developments and innovations in the healthcare sector.
5. Develop and implement standardised assessment checklists to evaluate practical skills, thereby enhancing the objectivity, consistency, and reliability of the assessment process.
6. Promote the systematic use of formative assessment approaches among all academic staff, ensuring that students receive continuous, constructive, and timely feedback on their learning progress.
7. Encourage greater student engagement in research activities, including the implementation of short-term individual research projects to develop students' research and analytical skills.
8. Introduce elements of the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) format to assess practical competencies, ensuring a structured, transparent, and objective evaluation of students' clinical skills.
9. Strengthen simulation-based learning opportunities by expanding the range of mannequins and simulation equipment and by developing the simulation environment required for effective practical skills training.
10. Ensure the modernisation of chemistry and biology laboratories and their alignment with relevant biosafety and chemical safety requirements.
11. Modernise library resources and expand access to electronic information resources and academic databases to support students' and academic staff's learning, teaching, and professional development.

Expert Panel

1. Naira Hunanyan
2. Ishkhan Sokhakyen
3. Gohar Mkrtchyan
4. Tereza Ghazaryan
5. Anna Stepanyan

June 25, 2026

DESCRIPTION OF EXTERNAL REVIEW

COMPOSITION OF EXPERT PANEL

The external evaluation of the Nursing academic program at Martuni 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 Sokhakyen** – 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.
- **Anna Stepanyan** – Student at the Kotayk Regional State 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

Martuni 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 Martuni State Medical College was submitted on October 29, 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 Martuni 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 17-18, 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 8 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 25 June 2026.

Anahit Terteryan

Liana Alaverdyan

Coordinators of the Expert Panel

25.06.2026

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>	Satisfactory