National Center For Professional
Education Quality Assurance
Foundation

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

ANQA-2021/59

DECISION N 59
22 October 2021

ON ACCREDITATION OF INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES OF
GORIS STATE UNIVERSITY

General Information about the Institution

Full name of the Institution:	"Goris State University" state non-profit organization (GSU)
Official Address:	Avangard str. 2, Goris, Syunik region, Republic of Armenia
Previous Accreditation Decision and Date:	**Conditional institutional accreditation for 2 years: 12.04.2018 - 12.04.2020**

Guided by the regulation on "State Accreditation of RA Education Institutions and their Educational Programs" approved by the RA Government Decree N 978-N as of 30 June 2011; by the RA Government Decree N 959-N on "Approval of RA Standards for Professional Education Accreditation" as of 30 June 2011; by the Procedure on "Formation and Functioning of Accreditation Committee of "National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance" foundation (ANQA)" as well as by the ANQA Regulation on "Formation of the Expert Panel", the ANQA Accreditation Committee (hereinafter referred to as the Committee) discussed the issue of state institutional accreditation of Goris State University (hereinafter: GSU or the University) in the open session held on 22 October 2021.

The main phases of the accreditation process involved the following periods:

Submission of application	18 September 2019
Submission of revised self-evaluation report	6 April 2020
Site-visit	26-29 April 2021
Submission of expert panel report	23 July 2021
Submission of action plan on the elimination of shortcomings	3 September 2021

GSU expertise was carried out by the independent expert panel formed in compliance with the requirements set by the ANQA "Regulation on the Formation of Expert Panel". The evaluation was carried out according to the 10 criteria of institutional accreditation approved by the RA Government Decree N 959-N as of 30 June 2011.

Among the 10 criteria, "**Research and Development**", "**External Relations and Internationalization**" and "**Internal Quality Assurance System**" were evaluated as unsatisfactory.

While examining the self-evaluation report (SER) of GSU, the expert panel report, the action plan on the elimination of shortcomings, as well as hearing the conclusions on the expertise which were made by three members selected by the Chairman of the Committee, based on the results of meetings with the expert panel members and

GSU representatives, as well as taking into consideration the observations and proposals made by the Committee members, the Committee stipulated as follows:

In 2018 GSU received conditional institutional accreditation for 2 years and taking into consideration the recommendations provided within the framework of the accreditation process, the University compiled an improvement plan. GSU has made changes towards improvement of a number of fields.

1. *The University mainly ensures the awarding of reliable qualifications.*

The academic programs of GSU are mainly in compliance with the mission, and after the previous accreditation there is a detailed description in the revised academic programs, according to awarded qualifications and anticipated learning outcomes. The teaching and learning methods have been improved, and respective steps have been taken to ensure proper selection of teaching and knowledge assessment methods in accordance with the anticipated learning outcomes. The institute of QA staff responsible for academic programs has been established. Some mechanisms of revision and improvement of academic programs have been invested, and bases for ensuring academic integrity have been created.

The University functions mechanisms of formation of teaching and support staff, and there is respective policy in accordance with requirements set for academic programs. GSU has also developed some mechanisms to evaluate the activities of the mentioned staff, and there are opportunities for practice exchange. In addition, there are some mechanisms for ensuring professional development and advancement of teaching staff. The University mainly has respective administrative and support staff and it also involves specialists who have practical experience.

The University has managed to create respective educational environment, has a clearly set policy of financial management, ensures efficient financial distribution and management within the scope of limited budget. After the previous accreditation GSU has made investment towards improving its educational environment (some activities of improvement were implemented within the framework of international projects). In order to ensure the attainment of goals of academic programs, GSU has also enhanced the resource base and it regularly takes steps to ensure safe environment. The documentation circulation process is ensured, and some mechanisms of information management are being functioned. Some mechanisms for the evaluation of efficiency of applied resources have been invested. Although the resource base of the University is not rich, it is sufficient for the implementation of academic programs. In addition, GSU continuously carries out activities to enhance its building facilities.

The University mainly ensures reliable qualification award; there are some shortcomings which can be eliminated through the implementation of improvement plan.

2. *The management and quality assurance systems mainly support the improvement of awarding of reliable qualifications.*

The University has a clearly established management system which is mainly equipped with necessary human and material resources, and it continuously takes steps towards their enhancement. GSU gives importance to the strategic management and some activities carried out in this direction are visible, however, the long-term, mid-term and short-term plannings and respective accountability system are not clearly interlinked yet.

GSU gives importance to the quality assurance (QA) processes, and there is a respective structural unit. Besides, the University has taken activities to create some QA-related documentation base, and it also conducts surveys. However, the internal QA system is not clearly formulated yet, and its impact on decision making and activities of improvement is poorly reflected. The role of internal and external stakeholders is not clarified in the mentioned system, and their involvement in QA processes is still at poor level.

The management and QA systems are in the phase of formation but there are development tendencies, and the management is aimed at quality enhancement and reliable qualification award.

3. *The internationalization and research/creative activity have development tendencies.*

GSU has defined priorities and ambitions in the field of research, has established a Scientific Center, however, the gap between those and ensured outcomes is big. The strategic management of the aforementioned field is not clear, the indicators of research outcomes are low, the policy of research internationalization is missing, and there are no tangible results conditioned by cooperation either. The efficiency of mechanisms interlinking learning and research is at poor level, and the research, applied and analytical components are almost missing in graduation papers and MA theses.

Although the University has defined concrete ambitions, the strategy directed to internationalization does not derive from GSU's capacities. In the scope of external relations the establishment of relations with local organizations is prioritized which is efficiently implemented and it fosters the awarding of reliable qualifications.

There is clearly defined policy of accountability, and there are mechanisms ensuring the accountability of the University to its internal and external stakeholders, a respective procedure. After the previous accreditation GSU has taken steps towards improvement of mechanisms which ensure transparency and accountability as well as stable feedback. The University also functions some mechanisms for transferring knowledge to the society.

4. There are shortcomings which do not have any significant impact from the perspective of awarding of reliable qualifications, and respective bases are created for the improvement.

5. The action plan on the elimination of shortcomings mentioned in the expert panel report is mainly realistic and it reflects the proper apprehension of problems, which will lead to quality changes.

Taking into consideration the above mentioned, based on the open voting results, the Committee:
DECIDED

1. To award institutional accreditation to **"Goris State University" state non-profit organization for 4 /four/ years.**
2. After the publication of the decision on accreditation award, to submit an action plan on the elimination of shortcomings mentioned in the expert panel report and respective time-schedule within two months, taking into account the necessity to give urgent solutions to the problems existing in the fields of "**Research and Development**", **"External Relations and Internationalization"** and **"Internal Quality Assurance System".**
3. To pay special attention to:
   - ➢ the necessity to have clear and measurable qualitative and quantitative indictors for evaluating the efficiency of carried out processes,
   - ➢ the decision making and reporting, based on analyses, clear quantitative and qualitative data,
   - ➢ the improvement of outcome-based management system and the involvement of external stakeholders in improvement activities,
   - ➢ the involvement of internal and external stakeholders in the processes of QA, development and revision of academic programs,
   - ➢ the peculiarities of distance education and the application of its QA mechanisms;
   - ➢ the application of the PDCA cycle in all processes,
   - ➢ identification of research priorities and the development of a research strategy reflecting those priorities,
   - ➢ the reinforcement of the learning-research link,
   - ➢ the increase of impact of QA processes on the University's activity.
4. To organize internal audit of academic programs implemented at GSU by involving external experts.
5. In accordance with the Clause 12 of the Regulation on "State Accreditation of RA Education Institutions and their Educational Programs", to submit a written report on the results of carried out activities to ANQA once every 2 /two/ years by evaluating the progress of the University's activities, innovation and achievements.
6. To assign ANQA to make a mandatory monitoring of effectiveness of GSU's activity according to Key Performance Indicators.
7. The decision enters into force upon registration in the state accreditation registrar.

Chairman of the Accreditation Committee   **A. Saghyan**
        22 October 2021, Yerevan