

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



**EXPERT PANEL REPORT
ON INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION OF
ARMENIAN NATIONAL AGRARIAN UNIVERSITY**

Yerevan – 2020

INTRODUCTION

The institutional accreditation of Armenian National Agrarian University (hereinafter referred to as ANAU or the University) is carried out based on the application submitted by ANAU.

The process of institutional accreditation is organized and coordinated by “National Center 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 carried out by the independent expert panel formed in accordance with the requirements set by “National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance” foundation in regulation on “Formation of the Expert Panel”. The Panel is formed of 4 local experts and 1 international expert.

Institutional accreditation is aimed not only at external evaluation of quality assurance but also at continuous improvement of the quality of management and academic programs at the institution. Hence, two issues were put forward to the local and international experts:

- 1) to conduct an expert examination of institutional capacity in accordance with the RA standards for state accreditation;
- 2) to carry out an expert evaluation aimed at quality improvement from the perspective of compliance with international developments and integration into the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

This report comprises the observations of the expert evaluation of ANAU institutional capacity in accordance with the RA accreditation criteria for higher education and the peer-review observations of the international expert from the perspective of ANAU's integration into the EHEA.

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SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

The expert examination of Armenian National Agrarian University was carried out by the independent expert panel¹ formed in accordance with the requirements of “Regulation on the Formation of the Expert Panel”, «National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance» Foundation. The evaluation was conducted according to 10 institutional accreditation criteria set by the RA Government Decree N 959-Ն, dated June 30, 2011.

While carrying out the evaluation, the expert panel considered that in compliance with the mission adopted on December 25, 2018, ANAU strives for:

- training specialists in agrotechnology who are capable of developing agriculture in the country due to their professional competencies and cooperation with industry stakeholders;
- enhancing the University's scientific potential by offering the best solutions for progress;
- introducing smart technologies using and demonstrating the benefits of a knowledge-based economy.

ANAU passed the accreditation process in 2015 according to 10 institutional accreditation criteria set by the RA Government Decree N 959-Ն, dated June 30, 2011. As a result, the University received institutional accreditation for a term of 4 years.

The university has been undergoing intensive reforms and transition since 2018, which is why the University is guided by the “Armenian National Agrarian University Reform and Development Program”. ANAU has developed a yearly transitional action plan and a strategic plan for 2020-2024, in which the University attaches great importance to the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals through its activities.

The expert panel emphasizes that during this transitional period the University should regularly conduct analyses and adhere to a clear plan.

The expert panel notes that ANAU policies and activities are consistent with the institution's mission. The Panel welcomes the engagement of stakeholders in the strategic planning process, in particular the members of ANAU Board of Trustees, who are actively represented in agrarian sector, the government, the faculty and among students. The expert panel considers that internal stakeholders need to be more actively involved in the planning and resolution of strategic objectives.

The expert panel notes that key performance indicators (KPIs) for the evaluation of the strategic plan are still in the process of development, and after their final implementation the progress at university will be more visible.

The expert panel positively estimates that some improvements have been made to the management system over the past year in the form of optimization, efficiency enhancement, and the new strategic plan for 2020-2024 envisages a new governance culture, human resources relevant to the University's strategic goals, efficient and transparent governance system.

ANAU provides 44 Bachelor's degree programmes, 37 Master's degree programmes and 9 PhD degree programmes (full-time and part-time) at five faculties. The 3 Bachelor's and Master's degree academic programmes presented in the self-analysis of the University are partially in line with the

¹APPENDIX 1: CVs of Expert Panel Members

existing SP (operating until 2020), but they are not in line with the recommended SP 2020-2024, as in 2019/20 academic year curricula were changed without elaborating academic programmes. The research component of the master's degree program presented by the University is weak and the mission and vision of the University to become a research center for excellence are not reflected in the research component and its relevant evaluation in the academic programmes. Assessment of skills in the academic programmes is not yet fully implemented; knowledge testing is currently emphasized. The expert panel notes that there is no relevant qualified or trained teaching staff at the chairs for developing academic programmes, which impedes the consistent development of the academic programmes. The University has carried out benchmarking of the academic programmes with some foreign HEIs, however, ANAU does not have a clearly developed benchmarking policy and methodology, and there are only a few examples of implementing benchmarking results.

The expert panel appreciates that ANAU has taken steps to preserve academic integrity, in particular related to preventing plagiarism by creating a single electronic database of graduation papers to prevent copying and duplication.

The expert panel notes that although there are documents at the University setting out the process of monitoring academic programmes, there has been no regulated and comprehensive monitoring of academic programmes at ANAU since previous accreditation.

The ANAU student admission policy for 2020-2021 academic year has been amended by a government decision, and admission will be based on the results of the unified exams, and prior to that admission at the University was mainly for students with intermediate or lower background knowledge. As a result, the number of students has increased, but on the other hand, the lack of basic knowledge has had an impact on the quality of education. Changing such an approach will lead to the introduction of a qualitatively new approach, and the preparatory courses for the applicants offered by the University will attract a large number of applicants.

The expert panel positively evaluates that ANAU staff is constantly providing student support in educational and social issues and strives to provide relevant solutions to all student-related issues, but the activities of the Student Council are not aimed at identifying relevant issues and protecting student rights.

The expert panel notes that ANAU highlights the need for highly qualified lecturers, and the University has a policy and various procedures for recruiting teaching staff, and ensuring their professional development. However, as a result of some changes in 2018, there have been no new recruitments for the teaching staff as a result of optimization. The University has a highly qualified staff, while at the same time a smooth transition of generations for some specialties is at risk, as there are not many specialists for several specialized courses. The University organises regular retrainings and activities for professional development of the lecturers, as well as retrainings in the frame of international programs. The expert panel attaches importance to the clear planning of the activities aimed at professional development of the teaching staff, which is not carried out on a systematic basis at the University.

The expert panel notes that research is highlighted in the previous and current SPs, but ANAU does not have plans for short-term and long-term research priorities. Despite the fact that ANAU is making efforts to replenish the necessary material and technical resources, the existing logistics does not meet the requirements of modern research, and does not ensure providing relevant knowledge, skills and competences. As a result, the University activities do not contribute to the full implementation of international cooperation in the field of research. ANAU also lacks an analysis of research and development activities to determine the sequence of steps in the professional field. It is crucial to

implement clear mechanisms for linking research activities and teaching processes to develop analytical and research skills and competences among students.

The expert panel finds that currently ANAU is making efforts to develop infrastructure and resources. Since 2018-2019 academic year, with the change of leadership at ANAU, an evaluation of the existing infrastructure and resources has been carried out at the University, which implies planning and implementing ways of their rational use and modernization. Yet specialized auditoriums and laboratories need to be replenished with technical resources and equipment to ensure the learning outcomes. The University funds are limited, and the resources are mainly replenished in the frame of international grant programs².

The expert panel positively evaluates the fact that ANAU has implemented a system of liability, characterized by bottom-up periodic accountability, summarized in the annual rector's report; still this process is mainly limited to reporting quantitative data in the faculties, chairs, laboratories. Qualitative analysis of strategic objectives, the needs for academic programmes, and suggestions for steps to address the identified shortcomings are missing. The introduction of a new internal accountability system at the University is planned, which assumes annual self-analysis, planning, implementation, monitoring, and improvement of activities based on the KPIs.

The university's efforts to establish mechanisms for sustained public feedback are appreciated. ANAU also increases its visibility on various social networks, which contributes to the enhancement of the University's reputation and providing feedback.

The expert panel positively evaluates the fact that ANAU has paid due attention to the recommendations on external relations and internationalization provided in the previous accreditation expert report and has significantly improved the external relations and internationalization process. The unit coordinating internationalization process at ANAU, the International Relations Department, is a well-established, well-functioning unit that employs quality assurance tools, conducts self-analysis, reports regularly, but the Department has yet to initiate activities ensuring ANAU participation in international research projects and strengthening its external relations.

The expert panel highlights the effective efforts of ANAU lecturers to improve their English language competencies and the results achieved in a short period of time, while remaining extremely concerned with the low level of foreign language proficiency among students.

The panel positively evaluates ANAU's efforts to introduce an internal quality assurance system, to continually improve it and to form quality culture. The new Quality Assessment and Assurance Center has a great deal of freedom to carry out its activities, which has enabled the unit to undertake extensive work in a short period of time. The Center is made up of two divisions of Quality Assurance and Educational Reforms, which facilitates being more detailed and consistent in the organization of quality assurance processes. The quality culture at the University is still in the process of establishment, a number of ANAU quality assurance processes are at different levels of the PDCA cycle, but the expert panel appreciates the fact that the staff responsible for quality assurance is motivated and well-aware of the University's issues, which will contribute to ongoing improvement processes, and solving the identified problems.

Strengths of the University:

²This section was reformulated considering the University's observations and discussions.

1. Compliance of ANAU mission, strategic goals and objectives with the national priorities in agriculture and the UN Development Goals.
2. Active involvement of external stakeholders in the management system and participation in decision making.
3. Implementation of a clear ANAU governance and administration policy.
4. Active introduction of a student-centered learning culture.
5. Creation and implementation of dual education prerequisites.
6. Introducing retraining practices for lecturers at relevant plants.
7. Engaging the required teaching and support staff.
8. Involvement of ANAU staff in international programs, regular expansion of external relations.
9. High motivation among the University staff at QAAC division to formulate and develop a quality culture.

Weaknesses of the University:

1. Low level of applicants threshold knowledge.
2. Learning outcomes are not clearly defined in the academic programmes, and are not self-analyzed.
3. Lack of quantitative and qualitative data collection, and reporting and analysis methodology based on them.
4. Lack of long-term and short-term scientific and research programs and their priorities in developing the agrarian sector.
5. Weak link between research and teaching processes, lack of student involvement in science and research.
6. Infrastructures, resources and training laboratories do not meet modern education requirements.
7. Absence of conditions for students with disabilities.
8. Lack of participation of internal stakeholders in initiatives and relevant decision-making.
9. Low level of English proficiency among students and teachers.
10. Lack of a clear policy for the professional development of teachers.

Recommendations:

Mission and Purposes

1. Periodically analyze the results of the mission and the goals by introducing a comprehensive system of quantitative and qualitative indicators.
2. Engage internal stakeholders more actively in the strategic planning and its implementation at ANAU.
3. Develop and implement KPIs that cover all areas of ANAU, making the University's activities and progress transparent.

Governance and Administration

4. Clarify the short-term and mid-term planning.
5. Introduce the implementation of the PDCA cycle in management and administration with clear qualitative and quantitative indicators.
6. Encourage the active involvement of internal stakeholders in decision-making in various areas at ANAU, as well as provide feedback to ensure transparency of decisions.
7. Clarify regulations and procedures for management and divisions at the University, making them practical.
8. Clarify the functions of different divisions by developing job descriptions.

Academic Programmes

9. Clearly plan for radical reform in the academic programmes, involving external and internal stakeholders, as well as ensuring the capacity building of the internal stakeholders to implement the improvements of the academic programmes.
10. Improve the policy of choosing the teaching and assessment methods that are relevant to the learning outcomes by ensuring the introduction of a research component and the implementation of practical education.
11. Improve the multi-component grading system by focusing on testing practical skills in both mid-term and final exams.
12. Develop and implement a clear and planned benchmarking policy that promotes mobility of the teaching staff and students.
13. Develop and implement clear and sustainable mechanisms for monitoring the academic programmes, based on the principles of the PDCA cycle.
14. Use success cases in ANAU to improve the academic programmes by promoting the launch of competitive academic programmes.

Students

15. Establish a comprehensive mechanism for assessing and identifying students' needs by involving the SC in this process.
16. Activate the practice of systematic implementation of extracurricular classes and consultations with a set schedule for students with poor attendance, or those studying at distance learning department, to ensure the progress of students.
17. Link research and practical research components in the teaching process, as well as contact farmers to conduct research.
18. Activate the role of the SSS, provide relevant incentives to conduct research.

Faculty and Staff

19. Review the recruitment and selection policies and procedures for the teaching staff in accordance with the set strategic goals.
20. Clearly plan and implement measures for the development of teachers' professional and pedagogical capacities with relevant qualitative and quantitative indicators.
21. Regularly evaluate the performance of the teaching and support staff by diversifying assessment forms.
22. Develop and implement a clear plan to ensure recruiting young specialists and sustainability among the teaching staff.
23. Make use of the potential of ANAU Board of Trustees in recruiting administrative, scientific and pedagogical professional staff into the University through the contacts of the stakeholders among RA Government and agriculture sector.

Research and Development

24. Clearly plan and implement policies and procedures for the development of research at ANAU.
25. Clarify the interests and ambitions of ANAU in science and research by engaging external and internal stakeholders and ensuring public awareness.
26. Identify and implement clearly planned mechanisms to encourage the involvement of the teaching staff and students in research, and periodically analyze their effectiveness.

27. Plan and implement activities for encouraging international research, as well as intensify the implementation of applied research at the University.
28. Develop clear mechanisms for linking research activities and teaching process, as well as ensure implementing a research component into the academic programmes and developing analytical capacities.
29. Allocate funds for contemporary and applied research.

Infrastructure and Resources

30. Combine short-term and mid-term planning processes at the level of scientific and educational divisions (faculty, department) based on budget planning in the divisions.
31. Develop and deploy interfaces for students in the University's internal e-bu management system to reduce direct contact between students, the dean's offices and the administrative staff, and to decrease the workload of the administrative staff.
32. Conduct assessments of the required resources by addressing education and research issues.
33. Regularly replenish the resources through clearly planned activities.
34. Provide financial resources to obtain up-to-date professional literature.

Societal Responsibility

35. Develop and implement effective mechanisms for analysing the opinions and identifying needs of external stakeholders, providing feedback to the public.
36. Provide analytical reporting at the University based on the results of implementing strategic goals.
37. Develop and implement a clear policy for enhancing public relations, thereby promoting the University's reputation and transparency.
38. Continuously upgrade the University's website, thereby enhancing accountability.
39. Post the specifications of academic programmes with relevant outcomes on the University website.

External Relations and Internationalization

40. Consult the University's SP for 2020-2024 while reviewing and reformulating conceptual and strategic documents referring ANAU priority fields; incorporate the external relations development and internationalization objectives into the planning of the issues relevant to the developing field (education, research, resources, etc.).
41. Encourage the involvement of specialists from different agrarian sectors into the division of International Relations.
42. Strengthen the policy of exchanging experience gained through mobility programs.
43. Enhance collaboration with local HEIs and organizations to strengthen external relations.
44. Build relationships with alumni working or studying at foreign universities.
45. Enhance English language teaching opportunities for the teaching staff and students.

Internal Quality Assurance System

46. Appoint faculty members responsible for quality assurance processes ensuring dissemination of quality culture.
47. Regularly collaborate with HEI's leading specialists in performing quality assurance activities to reflect sector issues.

48. Ensure active involvement of external stakeholders in quality assurance processes.
49. Clarify the methodology of survey analysis, and periodically analyze the effectiveness of quality assurance tools and mechanisms.

PEER-REVIEW FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF EDUCATION INSTITUTION'S INTEGRATION INTO EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

1. ANAU is part of the Armenian reality.

The context in which, for example, infrastructure and human resources are managed is fundamentally different from the (western) European universities. The resources made available by the Armenian Government and the students' contributions together with the lack of culture within an Armenian University to provide additional income, ensure in general a globally insufficient infrastructure park and an insufficient decent fee for professors and academic staff.

ANAU also appeared in the recent past to opt for a maximum number of employees, so that the amount available for wage is distributed among too many employees. This implies a low wage per person.

However, it's noted that ANAU can be run with significantly fewer employees and while maintaining effectiveness and even increasing efficiency.

This could mean a significant wage increase for every staff member.

Every organization has a life cycle, including universities.

Most European universities exist for a few hundred years and have therefore made adjustments to their governance over the years and are therefore in a stable phase. The younger European universities have developed the same stability fairly quickly through the law of the delayed lead.

Many Armenian universities have not (yet) completed this process and are not yet in the development of the differentiation phase.

The Board of Trustees of ANAU recently decided to resolutely opt for a new rectorate. It can, however, be observed that since a good year all key positions have been taken by new managers. Of course, today not in all positions, the results are visible to staff, students and the professional field and for the time being they usually do not meet European standards, but in terms of engagement, goodwill and vision, ANAU can be considered «on the right track».

The third difficulty in making an overall evaluation relates to **the wide range of differences in ANAU**. This is evident not only in terms of quality differences in infrastructure but also in terms of quality of education and, of course, research quality.

A third difficulty in making a global assessment concerns **the very wide range of differences within the ANAU University**. This is not only clear in the quality differences in infrastructure, but also in the differences in educational quality and certainly in research quality.

An additional difficulty appears to be the limited influence of good practices on other sections. The Rectorate will have to find an approach to ensure that a conscious, intentional transfer takes place from the good practices (I Care, wine making center, Vanadzor branch) to the less evolved entities. In this context, branches outside Yerevan can function as well as good practices.

For the time being, therefore, ANAU does not appear to be a learning organization.

Findings

The position of Research in the university.

Research in ANAU does not approach European standards. Apart from one or two exceptions, research is not part of the university's priority activities. It's advised to urgently develop a research policy in the very near future and to provide the necessary resources and incentives for research on the one hand and the implementation of research methods and research results in university education on the other.

In this research approach one can distinguish 4 domains:

- An evaluation of the intrinsic quality of the research work.
- A study into the extent to which students participate in research at the university and the extent to which research methods and research results are shared in the training of Bachelor's, Master's and PhD students.
- A study into the extent to which the academic program generally starts from research questions and is based on research methods and research results in general (including, of course, research that does not take place at the University).
- A study into the extent to which the University, in consultation with secondary schools, draws up a research learning line and consistently rolls it out in its Bachelor's, Master's and PhD study programmes.

Mission and purposes

The ANAU mission, values, vision and international ambitions are well designed, and clearly outlined in the appropriate actions and PDCA cycle. A unique selection was made in favour of 9 sustainable development goals out of the list of UN SDGs.

It's recommended to periodically update the mission and purposes at the Board of Trustees level, with bottom-up influence. Every Chair should play a role in this. The Chairs with external relations would best create a reflection group with external stakeholders for this, as a system to ensure quality.

Governance and administration

The PDCA cycle is followed in stabilized organizations.

In ANAU they recently started from C (control). The first A's (acts) concerned the exceptionally profound change in the management framework from high to lower in the hierarchy. In this way the Board hopes via C and A to introduce PDCA.

It seems likely that not all new managers have the necessary competencies, experience, resources and commitment to meet the high expectations.

The Rector still has a tough task as the person ultimately responsible.

A system of performance reviews and evaluation interviews seems also indispensable.

The guaranteed presence of students, staff and external experts in the Board of Trustees is a strong point that certainly meets the European Standard.

Yet, there appears to be certain distrust between the student delegation and the larger group of students. Conversations show that this may also have been caused by the political ties of some of the members of the student delegation.

Academic Programs

The academic programmes at ANAU undergo changes, primarily aiming at transferring knowledge from teacher to student. The frequent use of power point is an illustration of this.

It should be emphasized that ANAU has initiated to shift the emphasis from content-oriented to student-oriented programmes and from teaching-oriented to learning-oriented programmes, whereby the accent lies in solving job-specific and research problems, and where knowledge is imparted functionally.

In addition, a greater and more focused emphasis may be placed on job-specific and research attitudes.

It should be noted that the chairs can play a pioneering role in this.

Students

It is a right decision that the study duration for Bachelor's degree has been drastically shortened. This greatly increases the chance of democratization.

The mandatory introduction of internships is also a positive step.

The unified entrance exams raise some questions. For example, the predictive validity of these entrance exams has not yet been investigated.

It would be preferable to have a system of elective courses. There is lack of activities in student guidance to prepare them for their future careers.

The number of students, who opt for the part-time programmes, is particularly disquieting.

ANAU can invest much more in the part-time programme to substantially increase the chances of success.

Faculty and Staff

ANAU regularly uses its uniqueness as its strength. However, this also has a downside: for its core activities ANAU has to recruit lecturers out of a very limited number of professionals, given the fact that Armenian is the official language of instruction.

The concept of cross-pollination and its benefits are generally well known in agriculture.

Fortunately, ANAU is mostly open to international contacts.

As stated above: an emphasis on research competencies and the ability to introduce the research methods and research results in the courses is a priority in professional development.

Regarding wage regulation, a first adjustment has recently been made, and a further adjustment is expected for early 2020.

The restructuring of the workforce can also contribute to this.

Infrastructure and resources

As already indicated, ANAU has a number of good facilities, mostly in branches outside Yerevan, but also on Yerevan campus.

These infrastructures have been largely complemented by involvement in international programmes and personal connections.

Other departments at ANAU have a very inadequate infrastructure, often due to a lack of initiative.

Working with partial budgets does not seem established.

The current rector is actively engaged in catching up, but will also have to work on the responsabilization of chairs, deans and vice-rectors in order to actively look for external (including international) money flows. This can be achieved through targeted research and services to society.

Societal responsibility

ANAU is in a complex position at the macro-economic level.

ANAU indicates in the SER that there is lack of relevant jobs in the country and that no targeted jobs are secured for agricultural specialties in rural settlements.

The Board of Trustees will have to communicate with the Armenian Government and other stakeholders in order to redirect a further brain drain to Yerevan and the diaspora.

Wine making and agricultural analysis are beneficial domains, but classical agricultural expertise combined with ecology also deserves full attention in a country like Armenia.

On a micro-economic level, the Board of Trustees acts as a representative of the Armenian community. In the recent past, the Board of Trustees has taken a delicate responsibility to completely replace the ANAU management. There is financial transparency.

External Relations and Internationalization

ANAU is very active internationally with contacts in many countries. This is clearly a strength of the University. Its unique position in Armenia invites it to be internationally active.

Even a system of double certification has been worked out.

Many lecturers and students speak Russian and an important segment also speaks English.

The language center does a good job, but can make much more use of current technology.

More intensive collaboration with the professional field can be made at local level.

A reflection group per occupational chair would certainly be an added value.

Internal Quality Assurance

Those involved in quality assurance work very hard, do the right things and know what to do in the near future.

As with the other departments, there is also a new responsible person here, who already has good contacts abroad with Agricultural Universities.

I hope that the new testing center to be installed, can be used intensively for satisfaction measurements among students and staff.

It is recommended that a separate measuring instrument be made for Bachelor's, Master's and Ph.D. students.

Hereby it is necessary to inform all respondents about the survey results and the actions taken for optimization.

....

It is normally intended that an accreditation is based solely on the current state of a university.

In the case of ANAU this would be unfair with regard to the recent fundamental efforts of the Board of Trustees, the Rector and the new management on all key positions.

The expert panel hopes that ANAU will succeed in achieving all its objectives and complying with European standards within a reasonable period of time.

There are three important conditions for this:

1. A culture change among all staff members to take the initiative in the search for resources, updating programmes, a focus on research and intense contacts with the professional world.
2. A tenacious management that manages in a determinate way, and transfers good practices to other sections.
3. Intensive contacts with the Armenian Government to valorize agricultural expertise and to promote high quality research and education in agriculture in Armenia.

14 April, 2020

Hermine Grigoryan, Signature of the Expert Panel Chair

DESCRIPTION OF EXTERNAL REVIEW

COMPOSITION OF EXPERT PANEL

1. **Hermine Grigoryan** - Vanadzor State University after H. Tumanyan, Dean of the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics, Associate Professor at the Chair of Mathematics;
2. **Romain Hulpia** – Doctor of Philosophy and Pedagogy, expert at Belgian Quality Assurance VLHORA and VLHUR, as well as at Netherlands NVAO organizations, Belgium, member;
3. **Menua Sghomonyan** - Associate Professor at the Chair of Political Institutions and Processes, Yerevan State University, Candidate of Historical Sciences (PhD);
4. **Karen Trchunyan** - Deputy Director at the Research Institute of Biology, Department of Biology, Yerevan State University; Scientific Researcher at the Microbiology, Bioenergy and Biotechnology Laboratory, Research Institute of Biology; Associate Professor at the Chair of Biochemistry, Microbiology and Biotechnology; Doctor of Biological Sciences;
5. **Gayane Kosakyan** - Yerevan State Medical University, student at the Faculty of General Medicine.

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

The works of the expert panel were coordinated by Varduhi Gyulazyan, senior specialist at ANQA Institutional and Program Accreditation Division.

The translation was provided by Vardanush Baghdasaryan, lecturer at the Chair of English Communication and Translation, YSULS.

All members of the expert panel, the coordinator and the translator have signed confidentiality and impartiality agreements.

PROCESS OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW

Application for state accreditation

ANAU applied for state institutional accreditation by submitting to ANQA the application form, copies of the license and respective appendices.

The ANQA Secretariat checked the data presented in the application form and the appendices in the application package.

According to the decision on accepting the application request, a bilateral agreement was signed between ANQA and ANAU. The timetable of activities was drawn up and approved.

Self-evaluation

Within the deadline set in the schedule, the University presented the Armenian and English versions of its self-evaluation report according to the form set by ANQA, and the package of attached documents.

The ANAU self-evaluation was carried out by a team formed by the order of ANAU Rector.

Preparatory phase

ANQA coordinator observed the report with the aim of revealing its correspondence to the technical and substantive requirements of ANQA. Then ANQA coordinator sent the self-evaluation report to the expert panel, the members of which were agreed upon with ANAU.

Four trainings on the following topics were organized for the expert panel members by ANQA, with the aim of preparing the latter and ensuring the effectiveness of the activities:

1. Accreditation process, the features of the expertise, expert ethics and rules of conduct.
2. Preliminary assessment of the institutional self-evaluation through the examples from the practice.
3. An site visit through role-plays.
4. Preparation of the expert report.

During the trainings, the standards for quality assurance and certain aspects of the field were addressed.

Having observed the self-evaluation and the package of accompanying documents of the TLI, the expert panel conducted the initial evaluation. According to the format, the list of the issues and questions for different target groups or units and the list of additional documents needed for observation have been prepared.

During the preliminary assessment, the expert panel undertook training and examination observations. The expert panel observed classes at the Faculty of Agronomy (2nd year), and the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Husbandry (1st and 4th year). The expert panel visited «Voskehat» Wine Making Educational and Production Center and « BEER OF YEREVAN » CJSC, where students carry out laboratory work.

The expert panel has also visited the following laboratories and research centers:

- Research Center for Pesticides and Plant Protection
- Research Center for Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Sanitary Expertise
- Biological Research Laboratory
- Scientific Research Institute of Food Science and Biotechnology

- Division of Animal Origin Raw Material and Product Processing Technology
- Division of Food Safety and Biotechnology
- Division of Plant Origin Food and Raw Material Processing Technology

The expert panel summarized the results of the preliminary assessment within the timeframe and made a timetable for the site visit³. Guided by the ANQA Expert Manual, the Schedule included meetings with all expert panels, open and closed meetings, review of documents and resources, visits to facility units, etc.

Preliminary visit

On November 29, 2019, a preliminary visit was paid to ANAU. The plan-schedule of the site-visit was agreed upon, the list of additional documents to be investigated was presented, discussions and mutual decisions were reached referring to organizational, technical, informative questions of the site visit, and questions related to the conduct and the norms of ethics of meeting participants. The rooms prepared for focus groups and expert panel discussions were observed, the issues related to the equipment and facilities were clarified.

Site-visit

The site visit of the expert panel took place from December 9 to 13, 2019. In line with the timetable, the operations of the expert panel initiated with a close meeting, the aim of which was to discuss and agree with the external expert upon the assessment framework, the issues to be clarified during the site visit, strengths and weaknesses of ANAU per standard, the procedure of focus groups, and clarifying further steps.

All the expert panel members, including the ANQA coordinator, the translator and the record keeper assisted the meetings.

The site visit initiated and culminated with meetings with the ANAU Rector. All the meetings foreseen by the schedule have been carried out, excluding the open meeting. Throughout the site visit, the expert panel observed the documents⁴, the resources⁵ and conducted focus group meetings in different infrastructures of the University.

During close meetings of the panel at the end of each working day, the interim results of peer review were discussed and at the end of the site visit, the main outcomes of the site visit were summarized.

The assessment has been carried out within the framework of State Criteria and Standards of Accreditation and ANQA procedures, following which the assessment has two levels: **satisfactory** and **unsatisfactory**.

Expert panel report

The expert panel and ANQA coordinator prepared the draft of expert panel report. The international expert prepared an independent peer review, which was included into the report. The preliminary report was handed over to ANAU on 24.01.2020.

³ Appendix 2. Schedule of site visit

⁴ Appendix 3. List of documents observed

⁵ Appendix 4. Resources observed

ANAU sent its feedback on the draft report to ANQA on 12 February, 2020. The University presented its observations in Armenian, which were provided to the local experts and discussed with the international expert. On 30 March, 2020 ANQA organized a meeting for the representatives of the University and the expert panel, during which the expert panel's response was discussed. Taking into account the state of emergency in the RA for the given period, the meeting was rescheduled for a later date on an online platform.

Taking into consideration the University's observations, the expert panel prepared the final report, which was approved by the panel on 13 April, 2020.

14 April, 2020

Varduhi Gyulazyan, Signature of the coordinator

EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

BRIEF INFORMATION ABOUT THE EDUCATION INSTITUTION

History.

The National Agrarian University of Armenia is one of the largest universities in the country and the only HEI in the agrarian field. It was established in 1994 as Armenian Agricultural Academy, as a result of the merger of Armenian Agricultural Institute and Yerevan Zootechnical Veterinary Institute, which since the day of its foundation (in 1930) have played an exceptional role in developing the agrarian sector in the country, as well as in training highly qualified specialists and carrying out various scientific researches for the member countries of the former Soviet Union.

By the decree of the Government of the Republic of Armenia (dated 7 July, 1994), the Armenian Agricultural Academy was formed on the basis of Armenian Agricultural Institute and Yerevan Zootechnical Veterinary Institute. By the Government decree №1597 (dated 15 September, 2005), the Academy was renamed into State Agrarian University of Armenia. By the Government decree №872 (dated 14 July, 2012), the University was renamed into Armenian National Agrarian University.

Given the need to address the specific issues that the country's agrifood sector faces nowadays, the University has entered an active period of reform since 2018. Specifically, setting the agriculture as a priority for economic development by the Government's 2018 program, structural changes in the Government of the Republic of Armenia (currently there is no Ministry of Agriculture) have significantly changed the role of ANAU in the field of agriculture, which necessitated a new mission and new goals that would be consistent with the new agrarian policy and strategy of the Government. The University is currently undergoing an intensive phase of evolution: in compliance with the new mission, academic programmes and the required resources are undergoing radical changes, making them in line with current agricultural and educational requirements.

Education.

Agrarian University provides higher education in 80 academic programmes within a three-level education system, which enables integration into the international education system.

The goal of the University is to have in-demand and accredited academic programmes in international and local labor market, taught in Armenian and a foreign language. It also aims to implement new joint long-term and short-term academic programmes with internationally renowned universities by awarding dual or joint diplomas, certificates. The University wants to ensure the growth of student and teaching staff mobility and a significant increase in the number of foreign students.

Research.

ANAU intends to contribute to achieving and implementing scientific and research results in modern agrifood sector by research excellence and developing innovation system, and to the internationalization of agrifood science, export of innovative solutions in science, and active participation in international scientific programmes.

Internationalization.

ANAU aims to actively sustain and expand international cooperation, develop and introduce new dual degree programmes with the recognition of double diplomas, to make the University a

regional center for students studying in agribusiness, annually promote and enhance international mobility (ANAU-abroad, abroad-ANAU) of students and the staff, as well as substantially enhance the opportunities for students and the staff to participate in international programmes and conferences.

Quality Assurance.

ANAU intends to have a well-established internal quality assurance system, involving every University stakeholder, including students, as a representative of the quality culture and quality assurance process from the development of the operation methodology of the system to implementation, conceptualization, and improvement.

***Source:** sources for the identification of facts in the above mentioned fields are the documents provided by the TLI (e.g. self-evaluation report, strategic plan, action plan, plans of the departments, concept papers, etc.)*

I. MISSION AND PURPOSES

CRITERION: The Tertiary Level Institutions' (TLIs) policy and practices are in accordance with its mission, which is in accordance with the Armenian National Qualifications Framework (hereafter ANQF).

Findings

1.1 The TLI has a clear, well-articulated mission that represents the institution's purposes and goals and is in accordance with the Armenian National Qualifications Framework (hereafter ANQF).

The mission of ANAU is displayed in 2018-2020 strategic plan of the university, according to which the mission of the university is defined as follows:

Armenian National Agrarian University has a goal to concentrate the educational and scientific, human resources and material potential, to ensure quality education and fundamental scientific researches and to prepare specialists and science officers meeting the current demands of Agrarian labour market, who take into consideration its dynamic changes.

According to the self-evaluation, ANAU builds its educational activities based on the full set of necessary knowledge, competencies and skills defined in the 6-8 levels of National Qualifications Framework.

Within the context of reforms emerged in 2018 the university has defined its new mission by the ANAU Board of Trustees as follows:

- to prepare specialists in the field of agrotechnology capable of developing the agricultural sector of the country by their professional skills and cooperation with stakeholders of the field,
- to foster scientific potential of the university offering the best solutions for progress,
- to introduce smart technologies utilizing and demonstrating merits of knowledge-based economy.

The vision of the university is to “become an agrotechnological educational-scientific excellence center, led by researches and innovations, which fosters seamless cooperation between education, science and production.”

According to self-evaluation, the University has developed ANAU 2020-2024 strategic plan with the aim to systematize the implementation of its reforms, new mission, goals and objectives, as well as make it visible and measurable. While developing the draft of SP, ANAU highlighted its own aspiration to foster achievement of UN sustainable development goals.

As of last year the main objectives of ANAU have been assessed, academic programs were expanded, teaching staff and educational-administrative staff were optimized, academic programmes for full time and part time BA study programs were introduced for 4years and 4.5 years respectively. It should be highlighted that ANAU is now in transitional period.

One of the important aims of ANAU is to restore the reputation of university and distinguish its mission in agrarian field.

1.2 The TLI's mission, goals and objectives reflect the needs of the internal and external stakeholders.

According to self-evaluation, ANAU considers students, teaching staff, administrative staff and scientists as its internal stakeholders. While external stakeholders are applicants, alumni, employers, state bodies responsible for the field, civil society organizations, and international partners.

According to self-evaluation, in 2018 the Board of Trustees was fully restructured, and experienced representatives of the field became involved: current and previous officials of state circle, leading representatives of civil society, as well as representatives of ANAU students and staff, who, acting in the Board of Trustees as stakeholders, present their requirements and expectations from the activities of the university.

The expert analyses found that SWOT analysis is conducted among deans, head of chairs, lecturers and students, which allows them to uncover strong and weak points of the university, its external opportunities and risks. Various discussions have been conducted for the development of a strategic plan among internal and external stakeholders of the university. As a result of communication with internal stakeholders, overall trainings with lecturers, resource replenishment and change of curricula were undertaken. Policy of close cooperation with farmers has also been conducted.

Nevertheless, it should be highlighted that internal stakeholders tend to concentrate on problems rather than see external opportunities.

1.3 The institution has approved mechanisms and procedures to evaluate the achievement of its mission and purpose and to further improve them.

According to self-evaluation, the main mechanisms of assessing results of the university strategic plan implementation have been the annual reports of ANAU rector, decisions of ANAU scientific council and scientific councils of faculties, reports of need assessments of chairs and university stakeholders.

According to results of self-evaluation and meetings, currently the whole package of KPIs is in the stage of development, which will be generated based on the data collected by indexes. Quantitative and qualitative methods of research will be largely used, the use of monitoring aimed at learning and tools of assessment will be highlighted, i.e. every ANAU stakeholder will assess the internal and external procedures, infrastructures and own satisfaction of university during its activities.

The system of quality assurance is being newly introduced for the assessment of results of implementing ANAU mission and goals, the circle of planning-implementing-evaluating-improving is not closed yet.

Considerations: The expert panel notes that during assessment the ANAU strategic plans of both 2018-2022 and 2020-2024 have been considered, taking into account the fact that currently the university is in the stage of complete reforms and in transitional period. It should be highlighted that the works conducted in the transitional period served as a basis for revealing the problems in the university and creating premises for competitive education, which is considered as something positive by the expert panel.

The expert panel considers it positive that the measures taken in the reform stage for the implementation of ANAU 2020-2024 strategic plan, i.e. the first stage of resource assessment, expansion and optimization of specialties, review of academic programmes, and trainings of teaching staff are aimed at implementing the main points of the new mission of university. The university is in transitional period and this period is of utmost importance for conducting activities of the strategic plan, and the fundamental pillars set will foster the implementation of goals of the adopted mission.

Educational culture is changing in the ANAU in the form of a new value system, which is aligned with the mission soon to be defined and which will foster the active involvement of external and internal stakeholders in implementing the mission and goals. There is a successful model of

development in ANAU by the example of “Agrobusiness and Economics Faculty”, where the newest experience of teaching and learning can serve as a basis and a good example in the process of university reforms and can be borrowed in other faculties.

It is positive that most members of ANAU Board of Trustees are specialists in the agrarian field and have active participation in the development of university strategic plans, although the involvement of larger group of internal stakeholders will foster the creation of reform and improvement team in the university.

The key indicators of quality assessment activities for achievement of ANAU strategic goals should be noted, by means of which the progress of university will be more visible, and which will lead to revealing problems during achievement of strategic goals and continual enhancement of the quality of various procedures.

Summary: Taking into account the fact that the activities of ANAU since 2018 have been aimed at the implementation of strategic goals and mission as a result of complete changes, and the university clearly understands the priority problems related to the implementation of its mission and external stakeholders are actively involved in the implementation of mission and goals, the expert panel finds that the university meets the requirements of Criterion 1. Meanwhile the expert panel notes that there is a necessity for fast development and introduction of key indicators of quality assessment activities, as well as active participation of internal stakeholders in the process of clarifying ANAU strategic goals.

Conclusion: The expert panel assesses the conformity of ANAU institutional competences with the requirements of CRITERION 1 satisfactory.

II. GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

CRITERION: The TLIs' system of governance, administrative structures and their practices are effective and intend to the accomplishment of its mission and purposes by keeping the governance code of ethics.

Findings

2.1 The TLI's system of governance ensures regulated decision-making process in accordance with defined code of ethics and has efficient provision of human, material and financial resources to accomplish its educational and other purposes.

The ANAU management is implemented based on autonomy in conformity with RA legislation, ANAU charter, ANAU development strategic plan, ANAU policy of management and administration, ANAU Ethics Code, regulations defined for different levels of university management and other normative documents, by the implementation of functions of the Board of Trustees, Scientific Council and Rector. One of the primary goals of 2018-2022 strategic plan is to improve university management system and ensure effectiveness and transparency of its management system.

In 2018 and 2019 ANAU went through optimization, after which the University undertook constructive reforms, aimed at boosting effectiveness of management system, constructive optimization of scientific departments and research centers, unification and renaming some chairs. To

achieve the goals set, optimization was undertaken twice, as well as human resources were replenished. According to the managerial staff of the university optimization will be continual, targeted at raising salaries and productiveness in all departments. It should be highlighted that all departments of ANAU made recruitments, competitions for head of chairs were announced and changes were made. It is intended to start developing passports for all positions in ANAU. The target is to involve the best specialists of the field in the teaching and administrative activities of the university.

From the perspective of material resources the university undertook improvements both by external and internal financial means of the university. There is a goal to fully equip the existing laboratories and create a veterinary educational-scientific simulation center. There are already arrangements with different international organizations related to providing financial support.

ANAU undertook fundraising with the aim to diversify financial resources.

The President of ANAU Board of Trustees has active participation in procedures in the university by organizing meetings with administrative staff several times a week; besides, meetings of Board of Trustees are often summoned related to discussion of important matters of the university. Vice-rectors of the university also take part in such meetings. It should be noted that meetings of the university Scientific Council also take place very frequently.

2.2 The TLI's system of governance provides student and teachers opportunity to participate in decision-making processes directed to them.

According to self-evaluation the current pattern of forming ANAU Board of Trustees, formed by the funder in 25%, representatives of authoritative body in 25%, as well as representatives of teaching staff and students in 25% each, ensures participation of internal and external stakeholders in decision-making related to them. The university scientific council, which is a collegial body planning, systematizing and coordinating the educational-methodological, scientific and scientific-technical activities of the university, also involves lecturers and students. Faculty councils are also formed by the same principles of ensuring participation. Lecturers and students have the opportunity to raise PEI problems by queries.

In spite of the lecturers' and students' formal involvement in various governing circles of ANAU, the problems raised by lecturers and students in various governing circles are still few, there is no culture of active participation in decision-making by internal stakeholders, besides, there are no feedback mechanisms after decision-making.

2.3 The TLI's develops and implements short, mid, and long- term planning consistent with its mission and purposes and has clear monitoring and implementation mechanisms.

The self-evaluation reveals that the plannings in university were implemented for a 5-year term. Although clear terms are defined in the plan-timetable of the 2018-2019 strategic plan actions, there are no short-term and mid-term plan-timetables of actions in the form of a single document, which comes to prove that short-term and mid-term planning was not implemented in the university. Only those points were singled out from the action plan which were planned to be implemented in the calendar year.

According to self-evaluation the key performance indicators (KPIs) were mentioned in the strategic plan (2020-2024), and it is intended to create quantitative and qualitative indicators for PEI measurement in the plan-timetable of actions, which will give an opportunity to make the expected

results measurable. Considering 5-year planning a long-term one is substantiated by the fact that the university is in a transitional period, the labor market and RA agriculture develop rapidly and the directions also change quickly, as a result of which long-term planning may not be realistic.

According to the management staff of the University, it is necessary to conduct intermediate evaluation of plannings.

2.4 The TLI conducts environmental scanning and draws on reliable data during the decision - making process

According to self-evaluation, the study of external factors is implemented by different methods and by different bodies of the university. Evaluating university activities of the last few years within the context of external factors, it can be supposed that taking into account the influence of external factors played a great role in all important procedures. The results of factors influencing university activities are directly expressed in the new 2020-2024 strategic plan of the University. Particularly, there are activities mentioned in the strategic plan encompassing small and clear indicators fostering achievement of UN sustainable development goals, national priorities in the field of agriculture are also depicted in the strategic plan.

A Marketing Department has been formed in ANAU, which helps the university to have valid information about its activities for decision-making, as well as tries to implement evaluations about its effectiveness.

It should also be mentioned that evaluation of labor market has been implemented, specialties with only economic direction were contracted in the university.

2.5 The management of the policies and the processes draws on the quality management principle (plan-do-check-act).

According to self-evaluation, elements of quality management were put in university procedures sine 2012, during participation in first institutional accreditation, which had a positive influence from the perspective of introducing policies, methodologies and mechanisms of quality assurance in the university.

The procedure improvement occurred also due to the fact that the university is included in GOVERN international donation programme. In the framework of this programme, several documents were developed with the aim to improve the management system.

However, there are only a few cases in the university, for which all the stages of quality assurance are completed /for example in the international department/. Mostly on the management level evaluation and improvement stages were implemented, which may be right for the transitional period, but further the starting point should be planning. It is necessary to input the principle of quality management in all departments.

2.6 There are mechanisms in place ensuring data collection on the effectiveness of the academic programmes and other processes, analyses and application of the data in decision-making.

There are several documents in ANAU which coordinate the mechanisms assessing the collection of data on productivity, evaluation and application of academic programs and other procedures.

This academic year based on some evaluations of labor market, academic programmes of full time BA academic program have been changed and one working semester is added.

Questionnaires among students and lecturers are also being conducted about the productivity of academic programmes and other spheres of the university with the aim to collect data. Questionnaires are not conducted among external stakeholders.

It should be noted that no measures were taken assessing the effectiveness of existing tools, as this process is still in the stage of planning and implementation.

2.7 There are impartial mechanisms evaluating the quality of quantitative and qualitative information on the academic programmes and qualification awards.

According to self-evaluation, ANAU values publication of qualitative and quantitative information concerning its academic programmes and awarded qualifications, information availability and objectivity.

ANAU used the official website as a way to provide information, where all the documents coordinating the university activities, main reports about university activities and university strategic plans can be found. Besides, social media are actively used to spread information. Currently the alumni success stories are also being published about the quality of qualifications awarded by the University.

However, lack of mechanisms assessing efficiency of the published information does not allow proving the productivity of implemented procedure.

Besides, academic programme specifications are not available on the website.

Considerations: The expert panel evaluates positively the fact that since 2018 ANAU has made constructive changes aimed at boosting efficiency of management system, which resulted in constructive optimization of scientific departments and research centers, unification of a couple of university chairs, which will lead to achievement of strategic goals and availability of management system aligned with the strategic goals. Meanwhile, implementation of constant evaluations of management system will lead to creation of system based on current requirements.

The expert panel evaluates positively the efforts of university to adopt a policy of human resources replenishment, where involvement of practical specialists of the field is valued, as well as measures taken by the university, policy of replenishment of material resources, diversification of financial resources and ways of creating sustainable financial funds. All this will foster competitive staff recruitment in the educational process, financial stability and raise of ANAU reputation.

The university Board of Trustees and Scientific Council have active participation in decision-making, which leads to external factors being taken into account in the university development; besides, fostering participation of internal stakeholders in the matters related to them will lead to revealing the current problems in the University, and increasing motivation among internal stakeholders.

Long-term strategic plan is available in ANAU, while there are no mid-term plans. Mid-term planning in the university will be productive and will lead to more precise long-term planning and constant improvement.

The full implementation of PIEI (planning, implementation, evaluation and improvement) cycle within the system of management and administration is not introduced yet, which can jeopardize the process of further improvement.

The expert panel evaluates positively the extensive assessment of factors influencing its activities in ANAU, which will ensure discovery of current issues, as well as will foster fundamental changes in the academic programmes.

Summary: Taking into account the fact that for the last few years ANAU made fundamental changes in management system, implemented replenishments of human and material resources and diversification of financial flows, periodically implements evaluations of external factors, actively involves external stakeholders in the improvement and management processes of the university, has a mission, a management system and human potential necessary for the achievement of strategic goals, decision-making is based on the ethics code of the university, the expert panel finds that the university meets the requirements of criterion 2.

Conclusion: The expert panel assesses the conformity of ANAU institutional capacities to the requirements of CRITERION 2 satisfactory.

III. ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

CRITERION: The programmes are in concord with the institution's mission, form part of institutional planning and promote mobility and internationalization.

Findings

3.1 The academic programs are thoroughly formulated according to the intended learning outcomes, which correspond to an academic qualification and are in line with the TLI's mission and the state academic standards

The mission of ANAU is “to prepare specialists in the agrotechnological field capable of developing country's agriculture by means of cooperation with stakeholders of the field, fostering scientific potential of the university, by suggesting the best solutions for progress, introducing smart technologies, by using and demonstrating merits of knowledge-based economy”. Moreover, the PEI is going to become an agrotechnological excellence center by 2024, for which researches are going to become the focal points, by which the PEI is going to achieve the strategic goal set ahead of it.

After the previous accreditation the PEI drafted an improvement plan, where most intended changes on the part of academic programs were already made. During the accreditation the changes were already evaluated and in 2016 new or amended academic programmes commenced to be used with corresponding curricula.

It should be noted that after the optimization of 2018 the PEI implements 44 Bachelor's, 37 Master's and 9 PhD academic programs in 5 faculties. After the optimization there are 26 chairs in the PEI, which are both serving and issuing. The academic programs available in ANAU were created based on the NQF requirements. The framework of field qualifications developed within the scope of TEMPUS ARMENQA program were taken into consideration. It is worthwhile to highlight that the 3 presented academic programs of BA and MA are mainly aligned with the current SP, which functions till 2020. It should be noted that the university undertook changes in academic programmes with the aim to conform them with ANAU 2020-2024 SP, as curricula were changed in the 2019/20 academic year without aligning them with the APs.

The BA program with the duration of 4 years and 8 months turned into a program of 4 years, with 240 total credits. During the visit it was found that a working semester is intended for the last 4th year by the new curricula, due to which students can gain professional and practical knowledge. AP

specifications were formed in the corresponding sample, however in the presented APs of both BA and MA the goals are repeated. Besides, it was soon made clear that many subjects have the same content in Master's program: this fact was confirmed during various meetings.

Master's education is mainly research-based, although studies showed that the research-based component is feeble⁶ in the academic programmes presented by the PEI. The study of different graduation papers revealed that many students lack analytical competencies.

The mission and vision adopted by the PEI of becoming a research excellence center are not expressed in the academic programmes by the availability of research-based component and its corresponding assessment.

The evaluations showed that the learning outcomes of the program are in many cases incomprehensible and do not correspond to the content or subject-related outcomes.

The APs of ANAU were compared to those of other universities. However, it was not clear what changes specifically were made in which program, based on the comparison. The visit revealed that by the grant of Austrian Development Agency and support of BOKU University a new academic program was developed, which is still being discussed.

Starting from 2019-2020 academic year, ANAU closes the academic programmes which do not correspond to agricultural sector. Previously, in fact, more students entered university by financial-economic academic programs (Accounting, Finances, Management, etc.) than by actual agricultural programs. Now only those economic academic programs remain, which are related to agricultural field, i.e. Agroeconomics and Agrobusiness.

It should be noted that some professional needs of production field are becoming reflected in academic programs, as a result of sending lecturers to short-term production related business trips.

During formation of new curricula in ANAU, employers' opinions were taken into consideration, DUAL system of education was introduced: a whole semester is allocated to active internships, as a result of which students will gain more practical skills.

3.2 The Institution has a policy that promotes alignment between teaching and learning approaches and the intended learning outcomes of academic programs, which ensures student-centred learning.

According to self-evaluation, unity of teaching-learning-assessment systems is an important indicator of efficiency measurement, for the implementation of which a corresponding policy and procedure are developed in the University.

The university aspires to fully exclude the tradition of dictating lectures, using more interactive methods, like discussions, case studies, etc.

Based on the expected learning outcomes in APs, ANAU lecturers select teaching methods and corresponding assessment patterns. For the selection of teaching and learning methods policies and procedures were developed.

However, it should be noted that there are no elective courses in the presented academic programmes⁷, which is an important precondition for student-centered learning. Besides, selected teaching methods in different academic programs are mainly the same, although the learning outcomes in APs are different. The PEI has started to use MOODLE platform, due to which they are trying to reduce lecturing, but now it serves as a stock to keep materials and lectures.

⁶ This section was reformulated considering the University's observations and discussions.

⁷ This section was reformulated considering the University's observations.

The connection between proclaimed objectives of the course and learning outcomes, as well as connection between proclaimed methods of teaching and learning are not mostly demonstrated in the presented specifications of academic programs.

The visit revealed that in case of small number of students, use of interactive methods is not encouraged. Besides, to fill the lack of practical skills, centers will be created by the co-financing of the World Bank, by means of which use of various practical methods will be expanded during the learning process. Moreover, a new smart greenhouse is being constructed by a grant from the government of Japan.

3.3 The Institution has policy on students' assessment according to the learning outcomes and promotes academic integrity.

According to self-evaluation, there is a student assessment policy in the PEI based on learning outcomes. In different APs student is graded depending on professional specifications. The assessment system is multi-component and encompasses attendance of students, degree of activity in practical and laboratory works and seminars, as well as results of mid-course and final exams. The assessment policy allows each chair to set the limits of its own multi-component assessment units based on its specifications. The visit revealed that in different chairs issuing different academic programs the attendance and other factors were assessed differently based on their specifications. However, that multi-component system lacked research component, assessment of various skills of students, as well as learning outcome-based assessment.

The renovation and equipment processes of the testing center have commenced in ANAU, which will allow some chairs to implement their assessment by this system. However, the visit revealed that the PEI has currently adopted a policy of improving the student assessment system. All in all, the average grade of students graduating from the PEI during the last few years was 3.6.

There is an anti-plagiarism policy in the PEI. By the order of the Rector in 2019, an ad-hoc committee was formed for raising the level of academic honesty, which studied the graduation papers of the last 2 years and presented the results in the scientific council. Employers as external stakeholders are also being involved in the final attestation committees of the PEI.

The visit revealed that some courses are conducted in different entrepreneurial production offices, but their assessment system was not clear.

3.4 The programmes of the Institution are contextually coherent with other relevant programs and promote mobility of students and staff.

Benchmarking of different academic programmes is being implemented in the PEI. Particularly, Geisenheim university in Germany and Agricultural university in Georgia were selected for the profession of "Winemaking and Fermentation Technology". As a result of benchmarking starting from 2019/20 academic year the changes made by the benchmarking came into effect: particularly, the number of subjects was reduced, some subjects were added, etc. Besides, a benchmarking was also made for the profession of "Veterinary Medicine", but the results have not been used yet. Contracts were signed with different partnering universities, which will support the University for the Implementation of benchmarking. It should be noted that outer teaching mobility exceeds inner one. Over the last few years student inflow is nearly non-existent. The main source of the mobility was grants.

It is evaluated positively, that ANAU intends to have a "window semester" in the curriculum, i.e. a semester out of a student's workload, during which a student can learn in a partnering foreign

university without having problems and additional responsibilities with course compliance. From the perspective of implementing benchmarking of academic programmes and localizing the results, both the programmes of the Agrobusiness School and MA program of “Organic Agriculture” present a good experience.

3.5 The Institution adopts policies in place ensuring academic programme monitoring, evaluation of effectiveness and enhancement.

According to self-evaluation with the aim of monitoring, assessing and reviewing programmes in ANAU “Quality Assessment Policy of Academic Programmes”, “Procedures of Quality Assessment of Academic Programmes” and “Order of Education Quality Complex” were developed.

Based on the requirements of Bologna Process of 2016, RA Ministry of Education and Science, as well as RA agrofood system, all the academic programmes in ANAU were studied, discussed and reviewed. Then it became clear during the visit that those reviews were only formal, without being based on studies of development tendencies of agrarian field, labor market requirements and national priorities. The review of academic programs revealed that the learning outcomes of academic programmes were reviewed and reformulated according to NQF descriptors, however it did not lead to corresponding change in the structure and contents of the programmes, i.e. the quantity and contents of the courses, ways and methods of teaching, learning and assessment did not undergo learning outcome-based changes.

The real changes commenced in 2018-2019 academic year: preserving the names of academic programmes, the curricula were fundamentally changed. Transition to four-year bachelor’s program implies quite fundamental change in approaches. The main innovation is dual system of education by introducing one working or practical (experience-learning) semester.

Analysis of documents and expert site visits revealed that although there are documents defining the monitoring process of academic programs in the university, after previous accreditation coordinated and complex monitoring of academic programmes was not implemented in ANAU; instead, discussions on employers’ approaches and requirements were spontaneously organized, which became more frequent during the last year. The participation of employers in the general amendments of academic programmes is implemented in the following patterns:

- participation in the processes of final attestation,
- growth in involvement in teaching process, organization of open classes,
- discussion of programs of separate courses of some academic programmes (by the example of a course in “Agrarian Economy”).

The impact of improvement is particularly displayed by reinforcing the practical aspect of the programmes (introduction of a practical course in “Wine Chemistry” can serve as an example); however, this process is not regular and widespread. There are also few cases of employers supervising graduation papers.

Considerations: The expert panel welcomes ANAU's efforts to improve academic programmes. At the same time, the expert panel notes that there is a need to bring the academic programmes in line with the mission and objectives of ANAU. The goals set by ANAU imply the availability of competitive, research-based and practical training programmes. At present, these qualities are missing in existing curricula for professions, which impede the achievement of the set goals.

Although the curricula have been changed and new curricula have been introduced since the new academic year, allowing students to study for a semester with an employer, there is still a need to develop curriculum specifications according to curricula that will contribute to the outcome-based education. It is important to note that there is also a need to provide current undergraduates with practical and job-related education, which the university implements providing the lecturers with the opportunity to undergo trainings at various workshops. The continuity of this approach will contribute to the implementation of education appropriate for labor market.

It is positive that the university, by excluding the dictation method, has adopted the use of interactive teaching methods, however, considering the announced outcomes of ANAU curricula, it becomes obvious that such outcomes can be achieved through the organization of research-based education. However, not only did the teaching and assessment methods described in the training programmes not prove to be a link between education and research, but the concept of linking itself was often incomprehensible to the stakeholders. Teaching and learning methods are not selected in conformity with the outcomes of the APs, which impedes students to acquire practical skills. The introduction of elective courses will contribute to the creation of prerequisites for student-centered learning.

The teaching-learning-assessment chain is not clearly reflected in the APs, particularly the skills assessment was not reflected in both the mid-course and final grades, which may hamper the implementation of the goals set out in the strategic plan.

It is positive that the university makes improvements in the APs, signs contracts to implement benchmarking on the international level, but the expert panel points out that the steps being taken need to be more coordinated and pre-planned, which will lead to more targeted implementation of reforms, involvement of all stakeholders in the process of reforms, as well as preparation of a more competitive staff.

Summary: Given the fact that in ANAU outcome-teaching-evaluation chain is still in the process of being introduced, the academic programmes lack the research component and the teaching and evaluation of forming analytical skills, which are essential prerequisites for the implementation of the goals set out in the strategic plan. The assessment system does not consider testing the practical skills, the application of benchmarking results is not widespread, there is lack of mobility of lecturers and students, the reforms being implemented need more precise planning and coordination, the expert panel believes that ANAU does not meet the requirements of Criterion 3.

Conclusion: The expert panel assesses the institutional capacity of ANAU in compliance with the requirements of CRITERION 3 unsatisfactory.

IV. STUDENTS

CRITERION: The TLI provides relevant student support services ensuring the effectiveness of the learning environment.

Findings

4.1 The TLI has set mechanisms for promoting equitable recruitment, selection, and admission procedures.

According to self-evaluation, the improvement of recruitment, selection and admission mechanisms has always been in the center of attention of the University.

ANAU students are mainly from rural communities, where pupils are not able to have trainings with tutors due to various social-economic problems, which makes them not “competitive” in unified examinations. According to the government's decision, during the recent 6 years there have been established privileged conditions for admissions to the Agrarian University in various specialties.

For many years the university has had to lower the passing threshold for admission, as a result of which the university has mainly accepted students having average or lower than average academic performance at schools. As a result, the number of students has increased, but on the other hand, the lack of basic knowledge has had an impact on the quality of education. But now the admission policy has changed and the admission will be based on the results of unified examinations. The main reason for the changes is that the mechanisms up to now have been clear but not effective. Since the beginning of 2020, ANAU has been organizing free preparatory courses for applicants in the Armenian language, Mathematics, Foreign language, Physics, Chemistry and Biology. It is noteworthy that the courses are intended to be implemented both at the headquarters of the Agrarian University and at the branches of Vanadzor, Sisian and Shirak.

During the visit it became clear that there are a number of student recruitment mechanisms in the University. The University organizes visits to the high schools of the RA regions, where certain cognitive and informational work is done with the pupils, helping them with their professional orientation. The Internet platform will also be used in the future, where videos about the University will be presented. Participation in the RA fairs, where the University presents its peculiarities, is also one of the methods used by the University to attract students. However, using these student recruitment mechanisms, the University has not yet developed effectiveness evaluation indicators that could measure the effectiveness of student recruitment mechanisms.

4.2 The TLI has policies and procedures for revealing student educational needs.

Based on the results of previous accreditation and within the framework of ANAU Improvement Program, the Policy for Identifying Students' Educational Needs was developed and implemented in 2013, according to which “The purpose of the University is to provide a quality educational environment, where the student can identify his/her educational needs, acquire professional knowledge, skills and abilities”.

There are several mechanisms in ANAU to identify the needs:

- regular student meetings with the Rector and Deans,
- providing consultation to the student by the academic staff,
- pointing out the social and educational needs of students in the Rectorate by the Deans and Student Council representative based on student feedback.

In 2018-2019 academic year, the lecturers' evaluation questionnaire, methodology and purpose were reviewed. Questionnaires now have open-ended questions that allow students to assess their needs, and they are free to express their perceptions, and the logic behind calculating the quantitative method of lecturers and courses is aimed at identifying their shortcomings rather than punishing them and giving them the opportunity to work on their own to overcome the shortcomings. ANAU attempts to provide solutions to the questions raised by students, such as changing places for internships, choosing and changing thesis paper topics, and so on.

During the meetings it became clear that although the students do participate in the surveys, they are not informed about the analysis of the survey results. There are no surveys conducted among distance learning students.

4.3 The TLI provides advising services, opportunities for extra-curricular activities supporting students' effective learning.

Pursuant to the self-evaluation, a policy of additional educational and consulting services was developed in 2016 by ANAU and was published on the website of ANAU in accordance with which extra classes and consultations are provided to the students.

Surveys are constantly conducted in ANAU to evaluate the effectiveness of organizing the process of providing additional consulting courses, academic assistance, and instruction. Surveys have been organized by the Rule of Evaluating Stakeholders' Needs and through the set mechanisms and instruments. According to the surveys of 2018, 84% of the BA full-time students have noted that they are conversant with the consulting services conducted by the chairs, 48% have answered that they are involved in the additional consulting courses, and 45.1% are satisfied with the consulting services.

As a result of the site visit it came to knowledge that additional courses are organized, due to which students fill in the missed lessons. Additional courses of the English language are also conducted. Students mainly make use of the consulting services during an exam session.

4.4 The TLI has set regulation and schedule for students to receive additional support and guidance from the administrative staff of the faculty.

Based on the results of the previous accreditation, rules of providing additional assistance and instruction to the students have been developed and enacted by the administrative staff which is aimed at regulating the process of applying to ANAU administrative staff, and these rules define the purpose of providing additional assistance and instruction by the administrative staff, and areas of the actions they are aimed at by the type of assistance.

The schedule of rector's meetings with students, workers and other stakeholders is set in ANAU which is placed on the official website of ANAU.

After the site visit it came to light that ANAU staff is always ready to provide assistance to students and find solutions to all their problems. Students are entitled to take part in the meetings with ANAU rector and prorector, and discuss the issues they are interested in with them. And the dean's offices and chairs are always open for the discussion of students' problems.

Pursuant to the results of surveys in 2018 stated in the self-evaluation, 85% of BA full-time students have mentioned that they are aware of the administrative services concerning them, 44% of them make use of them, and 41% are satisfied with the services.

4.5 The TLI has student career support services.

For improving the services contributing to the students' career, as well as for reinforcing the link with the labor market and area representatives and for other purposes the Department of Finding Workplace and Consultation was renamed Department of Career Development and Continuing Education. The department takes an aggressive series of actions for creating a base of graduates, for keeping the students aware of the vacancies and organizing job fairs and various seminars.

Though the Department of Career Development and Continuing Education performs the relevant functions prescribed by the protocol, the level of student employment with their professions still remains low.

Under the self-evaluation surveys are constantly conducted in ANAU aimed at assessing the performance of educational services, including the evaluation of the Department of Career Development and Continuing Education's performance.

Following the results of surveys conducted in 2018, 35% of the BA full-time students have mentioned that they are conversant with the services contributing to the career, 10% of them make use of them, and 8% is satisfied with the offered services.

4.6 The TLI promotes student involvement in its research activities.

ANAU makes every effort to get students engaged in researches done by various scientific centers, thereby encouraging them to do joint researches with their lecturers.

SSS operates in ANAU where students plan and publish their research papers on their own initiatives. In this respect students gain the relevant support from the teaching staff of the HEI, but the number of published papers is rather small, and the papers of SSS need systematization in terms of selecting seminar topics and involving a large number of students.

The small number of research papers perhaps derives from the fact that the research component is virtually not available in PAPs.

4.7 The TLI has a responsible body for the students' rights protection.

Pursuant to the self-evaluation student rights of ANAU are prescribed by RA legislation, ANAU protocol and other internal regulatory documents. The authority responsible for protecting the rights of students in ANAU is the Student Council (SC) which performs its functions by RA legislation, ANAU protocol, ANAU Student Council's protocol. ANAU SC has 25% participation in all management bodies, i.e. board of trustees, scientific council, and scientific councils of faculties.

The members of ANAU Scientific Council keep students aware of their rights and responsibilities, protect students' educational interests and rights, take part in the university's management by bringing to the surface the issues concerning students, and organize events together with various structural units.

The HEI has also developed a guidebook for freshmen which includes all the information regarding student responsibilities and rights.

As a result of the site visit it came to knowledge that the students are mainly conversant with SC activity. Students get the main information from SC official website. But observations of the expert panel come to prove that the Student Council is not so active in revealing various problems of students.

4.8 The TLI has evaluation and quality assurance mechanisms of student educational, advisory and other services.

According to the self-evaluation, the policy of quality assurance and evaluation of educational services was developed and enacted as far back as in the 2012-2017 improvement program of ANAU, in accordance with which evaluation of students' educational, consulting and other services is accomplished in the university.

For regulating the process of revealing and evaluating students' educational needs in ANAU rules of evaluating stakeholders' needs were developed and enacted in 2015 which included mechanisms and instruments of evaluation and quality assurance of students' educational, consulting and other services.

ANAU students:

- have participated in quality assurance processes as representatives of self-management bodies (student councils, student scientific society);
- are engaged in the process of teaching quality evaluation.

As a result of the site visit it came to light that students evaluate the quality of educational services through surveys and various meetings. It also came to light that the results of meetings and surveys are not discussed with stakeholders.

Considerations: The expert panel welcomes the fact that the policy of student admission has undergone any changes in the HEI, and presently the admission is conducted based on the results of unified state exams which can result in the decrease of student number in ANAU, but contribute to the admission of competent applicants. Preparation classes for applicants are also positively evaluated which will enhance the admission of a larger number of applicants. The process of enrolling applicants enhances the prestige and visibility of the HEI.

The fact that precise hours are set for the consultation offered to students, besides the teaching staff is always ready to provide consultation to students, students are allowed to fill in missed classes as well which enhances the progress of students, is also welcomed.

The expert panel welcomes the availability of SC and SSS in the HEI; in the meantime it is necessary to activate the performance of both SC, and SSS which will contribute to the revelation of students' educational needs and their engagement in researches.

The fact that Career Centre operates in the HEI which helps students to establish ties with the labor market, is also positively assessed. But it is necessary to submit already available mechanisms to changes since the surveys conducted among students come to witness that the majority of students does not set themselves in their profession. The implementation of such analyses and regular updates of graduate base will lead to the reinforcement of the link between HEI and labor market, and will reinforce the link with graduates.

The fact that the stakeholders, including students, take part in the issues of HEI's quality assurance is also positively assessed. In the meantime, it is still necessary to improve the mechanisms of feedback after the surveys.

Summary: Taking into consideration the fact that the procedure of student enrollment and admission, policy of revealing students' educational needs, are available in HEI, in addition students are allowed to take part in additional courses and get relevant consultations, and the opinion of immediate stakeholders is taken into account in terms of quality management, the expert panel considers that HEI ensures effective education environment in general and meets the requirements of criterion 4. But it also notes that the engagement of students in scientific and research activity should be made more operative.

Conclusion: The expert panel assesses the relevance of ANAU institutional competencies to the requirements of CRITERION 4 satisfactory.

V. FACULTY AND STAFF

CRITERION: The TLI has a highly qualified teaching and supporting staff to accomplish the institution's mission and to implement the goals set for academic programmes.

Findings

5.1 The institution has policies and procedures promoting recruitment of a highly qualified teaching and supporting staff capable of ensuring programme provisions.

A certain policy and various procedures for selecting the teaching staff are available in the VEI. In terms of Erasmus+ GOVERN program a policy and procedures of assuring professional growth of the PF, a guidebook for the PF, ANAU staff policy have been developed. But some procedures are not exactly used in practice yet. As a result of the visit it comes to knowledge that because of the optimization the competitions of professors and associate professors are not in motion and have been postponed. No competitions are held for study-related staff; or rather they are selected upon PAP peculiarities and requirements and are endorsed upon the decree of the rector. The responsibilities of study-related staff by their rank are established in the internal disciplinary rules which were confirmed by ANAU Scientific Council in 2016. Only in 2018 the certification of study-related and service staff was conducted. The regulation of PF certification is on the stage of development. In the coming 2020-2024 SP VEI plans to review the rules of selecting, perfecting, as well as improving the activity of academic staff.

ANAU strives to engage the efficient specialists of the sphere in the teaching process.

5.2 The teaching staff qualifications for each programme are comprehensively stated.

Qualification, work experience, academic titles and degrees serve as a basis for selecting the academic staff. Yet the information on the capabilities and competencies of the academic staff deriving from the PAP requirements are not set in PAPs which could serve as a basis for selection. Newly-endorsed curricula are already available but their creation and endorsement have been conducted without new PAPs and requirements set for lecturers based on the PAPs.

Similar requirements for PF are planned to develop and enact afterwards by the designed 2020-2024 SP.

5.3 The TLI has well established policies and procedures for the periodic evaluation of the teaching staff.

In 2019-2020 it is envisaged to use a new program of enhancing qualifications of the academic staff by credit system, and for completing the assessment system of lecturers it is envisaged to enact a ranking system of ANAU academic staff.

For evaluating the academic staff, surveys are conducted among the students in the HEI. Relevant outcomes are analyzed until the start of the next academic year. But it is not mentioned what kind of influence given outcomes have on the qualitative characteristics of the academic staff.

As a result of the site visit it comes to light that the lecturers conduct class observations in turn which the heads of chairs also take part in, and the results of the observations are discussed at chair sittings. But the site visit also comes to witness that the class observations are not ubiquitous.

5.4 The TLI implements teacher professional development in accordance to the needs outlined during regular evaluations (both internal and external).

Rules of evaluating the needs of stakeholders are available in the PEI, and the needs were brought to the surface in 2016-2018 based on the rules, a report was made. The majority of academic staff takes courses of improving foreign languages, in particular English, in the Language Centre. The PEI covers the expenses of lecturers' trainings, apart from the improvement of a foreign language; trainings are held for improving computer knowledge and skills of using programs thanks to resources in the IT center. Apart from their own resources and thanks to various international programs 161 lecturers have taken trainings in abroad in 2015-2018. 4 lecturers in 2017 and 3 in 2019 have

participated in the summer school program named “How to become an excellent lecturer” on a competitive basis, and in 2019 similar trainings are planned to hold in the university.

As a result of the site visit it came to light that not all the lecturers have the same problems and needs. The identification, evaluation and conclusion of the lecturers’ needs are set by the Quality Assessment and Assurance Centre, and they do not include the chairs and faculties where the lecturers teach. The main trainings in abroad are conducted through Erasmus+ and other international programs. After the visit it came to knowledge that chances are that the lecturers can take trainings in abroad at the expense of the university’s resources.

Over the previous year trainings were held for the lecturers in various workshops which will continue in the future too.

5.5 The TLI ensures the sustainability of the teaching staff according to academic programs.

The policy and procedures of assuring the stability of main PF are available in the VEI. According to the 2018/19 data, the VEI has 600 lecturers 93% of which are primary lecturers. Professors make 8% of the whole staff, and the associate professors - roughly 40%. Approximately 65% of the academici staff have an academic degree. The recruitment of the current academic staff has mainly been conducted at the expense of its own base, i.e. 60%, the rest was replenished from adjacent universities. The site visit comes to witness that invited lecturers are either very few, or are not available at all in different chairs and faculties. The median age is quite high, and optimization was implemented twice in 2018, and the lecturers above 75 were dismissed. As a result of that optimization some subjects have been joined together. Besides, after the visit it became clear that there are some major subjects which are taught by the same lecturer, and there are no substitute lecturers due to the lack or absence of specialists. The flow of young specialists is rather low since salary is low, and MA students do not continue their education in the VEI after graduation. In 2018 young lecturers were mainly on external secondment and made up the 14% of the staff. The main problem connected with the low influx of young lecturers is the low salary, that’s why the university is intended to increase salaries at about 25%. As a result of the visits it came to light that optimization is envisaged in the university again which will lead to salary increase and will enhance inflow of young lecturers decreasing the outflow of the qualified academic staff. It is worthwhile to mention that the lecturers with biological, medical and other adjacent majors are few in the university which is striving for the Agriculture Center of Excellence.

5.6 There are set policies and procedures for the staff promotion.

The assurance and development of the professional growth of the university’s academic staff is considered one of the strategic problems of the university’s development.

A policy and procedures of ensuring professional growth of the academic staff have been developed in the VEI, but after the visit it came to knowledge that very many procedures are not virtually applied.

It also appears that the HEI has adopted the policy of boosting the lecturers’ participation in international trainings, and there were cases when financial expenses had been partially reimbursed.

5.7 There is necessary technical and administrative staff to achieve the strategic goals.

After the structural optimization of 2018, ANAU has specified the functions of its administrative and study-related staff. But the job portfolios and mechanisms of evaluating the quality of activity have not been developed yet.

As a result of the visit it came to light that the heads of almost all administrative and study-related bodies have changed in the university who will be able to accomplish the strategic objectives of the PAP in 2024, i.e. to become Agriculture Center of Excellence.

Considerations. The fact that a certain policy and various procedures are available for selecting the academic staff in the VEI is positively assessed. Moreover, a policy and procedures for ensuring professional growth have been developed which can contribute to the engagement of competitive and qualified specialists.

There are no requirements set for the PF deriving from the PAP available, but some changes are envisaged by the new SP. The requirements set for the teaching staff in PAPs will contribute to the engagement of teaching staff with relevant competencies deriving from the PAP outcomes and to the increase of their competitiveness.

Procedures of evaluating lecturers are available in the VEI, but the afore-mentioned procedures should be reviewed after changes made in 2018. Moreover, external stakeholders are not engaged in the process of evaluation, and the information is not available for both external and internal stakeholders. After the new changes of the VEI's management staff some evaluations of lecturers have been conducted by new forms which have contributed to the performance of measures for relevant professional growth in the future. A pilot project of lecturers' training has been undertaken in the VEI which has enabled lecturers to acquire pragmatic skills and has facilitated the realization of education in line with the requirements of the labor market through taking trainings in various workshops. Within the framework of international programs lecturer trainings are held which will enhance the competitiveness. Clear planning of professional development activities for the teaching staff will contribute to the integration of practical experience in the field into the educational process.

ANAU takes up steps aimed at the rejuvenation of teaching staff by gradually setting competitive salary. It is worthwhile to mention that the process of rejuvenation is not presently assured in some subjects of the PAP, and in case of some subjects there is a lack of specialists which endangers the stability.

Based on the outcomes of previous accreditation a series of procedures has been developed but these procedures and policy do not actually operate and contribute to the regulation of the sphere. Moreover, it is necessary to completely review these procedures and conform them to current requirements and strategic objectives.

The VEI has relevant administrative staff, highly-qualified PF and study-related staff for accomplishing the SP objectives. After the changes made in 2018 structural changes and optimization have been made which can contribute to the continuous implementation of large-scale reforms in the HEI.

Summary. Taking into account the fact that a policy and various procedures of selecting the PF and study-related staff are available in the VEI which serve as a sufficient basis for regulating the sphere, evaluation of the teaching staff is constantly conducted using both previous and revised forms; the VEI attaches importance to the rejuvenation of the teaching staff and the professional trainings, the expert panel considers that the HEI answers the requirements of Criterion 5. In the meantime, they note that the current policy and the procedures should be reviewed; besides, the development of the sphere should be specifically planned for the replenishment of teaching staff and study-related staff in line with the objectives set.

Conclusion. The expert panel assesses the relevance of ANAU's institutional competencies to the requirements of CRITERION 5 satisfactory.

VI. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

CRITERION: The TLI ensures the implementation of research activity and the link of the research with teaching and learning.

Findings

6.1 The TLI has a clear strategy promoting its research interests and ambitions.

Based on the consultations of the previous accreditation, the PEI has developed a plan of improving activities endorsed by the scientific council of ANAU on June 25, 2015. The improvement plan envisages the following. 1) development and endorsement of mechanisms aimed at revealing the university's interests and pretensions in the field of researches, 2) development and endorsement of a policy assuring performance and development of researches. The visit comes to witness that there are numerous developed and endorsed procedures which do not operate in many instances.

The main problems and the mechanisms of their solution in the field of researches, as well as the pretension and interests are not precisely reflected in 2018-2022 strategy. As a result of the visit it came to knowledge that by its 2020-2024 strategy ANAU tries to become a Research Center of Excellence, i.e. to contribute to the acquisition and input of scientific and research outcomes in the field of modern agro-food. In this context ANAU stresses the role of scientific and research centers and the researches done there.

As a result of the site visit it came to light that the actions envisaged by the new SP are on the stage of development, and it stipulates optimization of the structure of scientific and research units, development of human competencies, and the like. The PEI sets as an aim to improve and develop the link between education, science and production, and it is envisaged to define research priorities in accordance with the objectives of sustainable development and national priorities of UN.

No funds are planned to assign for the scientific researches in the PEI's budget. After the site visit it came to light that the PEI defines no scientific priorities, based on labor market, state funds, or other factors.

6.2 The TLI has a long-term strategy as well as mid and short -term programmes that address its research interests and ambitions.

ANAU has, in general, set its long-term pretensions in the field of researches in its 2020-2024 SP. But taking into account the fact that the strategy is not yet endorsed, the PEI has not defined or endorsed its short- and medium-term strategic plans in the field of researches which will be in compliance with 2020-2024 strategic priorities.

Basic and thematic programs funded from the state budget are available in ANAU, but they are not reflected as short- and medium-term priorities.

The PEI defined merit bonuses for publishing research papers in 2019. It is planned to develop the core indices of evaluating research activity performed by the PEI.

6.3 The TLI ensures the implementation of research and development through sound policies and procedures.

According to the self-evaluation, the considerable number of bodies performing scientific and research activity in the field of the country's agro-food is considered a structural unit of the university.

Since the new management of the university attaches paramount importance to the sustainable development in the field of researches, considers its strategic issue to review the areas of scientific and research activity and research priorities in line with challenges and intentions in the field of agro-food,

as well as to conduct scientific programs of applied and input importance for assuring the financial stability and independence of the sphere.

Presently, the policy aimed at the development of researches and innovations is not yet developed in line with 2020-2024 SP priorities.

There are no such research papers in the PEI which have been commercialized and can boost its development. Scientific infrastructures are very old and worn-out; they do not meet modern requirements and do not ensure the VEI's development yet.

6.4 The TLI emphasizes internationalization of its research.

Over the last 5 years articles have been published in various international peer-reviewed journals, 55 of which in co-authorship with foreign colleagues. The representatives of teaching staff were seconded to take part in various international scientific conferences and festivals. Since September 2019, the University has introduced a procedure for calculating and paying of bonuses that encourage the scientific activity of the teaching staff, which also encourages international cooperation. As a result of the application of the procedure, an additional payment of 1,233,000 AMD was paid to the teaching staff in December 2019⁸.

But the lack of foreign language competence in the VEI encumbers its international partnership, cooperation mechanisms and relevant measures in the field of research are not available. Internationalization of the research activity is of importance in the new SP of the PEI, it is planned to have the KPIs for evaluating the efficiency of its performance. International Research Programme Coordinating Unit has been established at ANAU. During its activity, the Unit has organized a number of works to promote the development of science at the University; in particular, it has conducted trainings, seeking to support the implementation of scientific activities and its internationalization. Expert analysis has shown that the effectiveness of the Unit can be assessed once the full cycle of work is completed⁹.

There are no cases when the PEI finances the students, as well as the mobility of the representatives of teaching staff, but the site visit comes to prove that there was mobility to a certain extent in 2019 with the partial help of the PEI.

The base of necessary equipment required for modern scientific research is not available for the international cooperation which also encumbers the extension of international cooperation or the creation of new one.

6.5 The TLI has well established mechanisms for linking research with teaching.

There is a policy and procedure of interconnecting the research activity and educational process in the VEI. In the introduced PAPs there is a multi-factor and multi-complicated assessment system, but there are no evaluation mechanisms for the research performance.

As a result of the site visit it came to light that the assessment system of the research component and the mechanisms in PAPs are still on the stage of discussion, and they can be enacted only in the new academic year. Some students have done researches which have no prior planning, and they have been assessed as participation. In the light of the PAP studies the assignments aimed at the formation of analytical and research competencies of students are very few, and in many cases they are not available at all. Graduation papers are mainly descriptive, and the analytical and research parts are omitted.

⁸ This section was reformulated considering the University's observations and discussions.

⁹ This section was reformulated considering the University's observations and discussions.

Considerations. The expert panel welcomes the fact that after the previous accreditation the VEI has developed an improvement plan and a relevant schedule for correcting the available drawbacks in the field of researches, based on the introduced consultations. The expert panel appreciates the efforts made by the HEI aimed at the development of the field of researches which, in turn, is reflected in 2020-2024 strategic plan. The fact that the HEI attempts to study the problems of farmers, and develop topics of graduation papers of students based on the above-mentioned problems, which will enhance the performance of applied researches. ANAU International Research Programme Coordinating Unit endeavors to promote the development and internationalization of science at University¹⁰.

But, in the meantime, after the site visit it becomes clear that the development of research is still on the stage of planning or implementation (in some cases). Research areas and pretensions are not precisely defined for the coming several years, besides, there are no short- and medium-term programs which would entitle to specify the long-term strategic areas. The HEI plans to develop a certain policy of developing the field and a set of instruments of outcome evaluation which will contribute to the accomplishment of strategic objectives and comprehensive development in the field of researches. It should be noted that the evaluation of the current scientific potential and infrastructure will contribute to the rapid and balanced development of the field¹¹.

The expert panel also attaches importance to the update of material and technical base, and the study of replenishment problem since currently the base does not mainly meet the requirements of modern researches, and is not meant for preparing specialists with contemporary knowledge, competencies and capabilities. Similar scientific infrastructure does not contribute to the complete implementation of international cooperation and internationalization of researches.

It is also worthwhile to study the development of encouraging mechanisms for getting engaged in the research performance of the teaching staff since many lecturers are not motivated to do research and to input its outcomes in the educational process. The input of precise plans and mechanisms of encouraging lecturers and students will contribute to the development in the field of researches.

Despite the fact that there are certain cases, when students at ANAU conducted applied research¹², the students here mainly cram rather than analyse, compare and juxtapose. The component of research is feeble in APs, and the majority of assignments given to the students are not analytical. In this field ANAU has a lot of things to do, and the availability of specific mechanisms and a plan of interconnection of research and educational processes will enhance the students' motivation, formation of analytical and research skills among students.

Summary. Taking into account the fact that the development in the field of researches is on the stage of planning in ANAU, there is no well-developed policy and indices of evaluating the effectiveness of the field, the interests and pretensions of the VEI's scientific and research fields are not precise (this view is shared by all stakeholders of the HEI), there are no long- and short-term programs, lecturers and students are rarely engaged in both scientific and applied researches, mechanisms of interconnecting research performance and educational process are very poor, the expert panel considers that ANAU does not answer the requirements of criterion 6.

Conclusion. The expert panel assesses the relevance of ANAU institutional competencies to the requirements of CRITERION 6 insufficient.

¹⁰ This section was reformulated considering the University's observations and discussions.

¹¹ This section was reformulated considering the University's observations and discussions.

¹² This section was reformulated considering the University's observations and discussions.

VII. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

CRITERION: The TLI has well established mechanisms for linking research with teaching.

Findings

7.1 The TLI has an appropriate learning environment for the implementation of academic programmes.

The improvement and development of the university's infrastructure are proclaimed as a strategic objective in the 2018-2022 strategic plan of ANAU's development. The project of 2020-2024 strategic plan of ANAU's development prescribes that the supply of resources in line with the university's mission, vision and objectives is also considered its strategic objective; in addition, the improvement of classroom and laboratory conditions, modernization of infrastructures and material-technical base, repair of campus buildings, assurance of smart learning environment, assurance of human resources in compliance with the needs of the university. It is also worthwhile to mention that ANAU has committed itself to persistently improve the saturation of learning material and laboratories of the university based on the consultations of the expert panel of the previous accreditation.

For some professions there is an exemplary resource base in the university. ANAU Winemaking Training and Production Center can serve as a good example of it. In terms of the development of the infrastructure and resource procurement Agribusiness School stands out.

The university has 6 buildings in campus and one "Arabkir" dormitory in Yerevan, holiday home for students and workers in Aghavnadzor, teaching-experimental farms "Balahovit", "Spitak", and "Voskehat", branch of "Scientific Center of Viticulture and Enology", branch of "Scientific Center of Soil Science, Agrochemistry, and Melioration after H. Petrosyan" operate under its authority. A Machine Tractor Station and greenhouse farm are also under the authority of the university.

ANAU has a library which is equipped with specialized literature, computers meant for making use of electronic resources, and reading room. Steps are undertaken to digitize specialized literature, to computerize and automatize the process of ordering and supplying literature as well. However, expert study comes to prove that library replenishment with professional literature in Armenian is still scarce¹³.

After observing the literature involved in the courses of APs and the bibliography of BA and MA graduation papers, it came to knowledge that modern specialized literature references are not sufficient in the University.

ANAU has learning laboratories, teaching-experimental infrastructures which allow students to apply the theoretical knowledge in practice, to teach students practical skills. As a result of the study of infrastructures and resources by the expert panel it came to light that the infrastructure, in general (apart from some exceptions), is old; in a number of cases the condition of ventilation, lighting and heating are limited, sanitary-hygienic norms and safety rules are not preserved.

After the observation of some theoretical classes by the experts, it became clear that the classroom infrastructure needs improvement. In this respect the setting of Agribusiness School is considered as a success case.

In terms of the objectives set the infrastructure and resources of Vanadzor Branch of ANAU have been improved. The branch has heated, well-furnished classrooms, a building of learning laboratories armed with necessary equipment and means.

¹³ This section was reformulated considering the University's observations and discussions.

7.2 The TLI provides appropriate financial resources with necessary equipment and facilities as needed to achieve its mission and objectives.

According to the self-evaluation and attached documents, the majority of financial entries of ANAU comes from the tuition fees of students and the reimbursement of state-funded students' expenses. Since the university attaches importance to the diversification, its management bodies take up steps to find alternative financial resources.

By 2018-2022 strategic plan, the university sets as a goal to ensure the stability of the HEI's financial system through increasing the effectiveness of managing flows of finances and involving flows of finances from external sources.

As a result of the study of self-evaluation and expert meetings it came to light that ANAU has resources at the expense of which it can initiate investment programs, involve public and private resources, create endowment funds, and the like. The university's management tends to diversify the HEI's income by both developing the available base and creating endowment funds.

In the face of scarcity of finances, decrease of students' number, the university has increased the salary of the teaching staff. The main part of ANAU budget is made up of the salaries, therefore the resources of HEI are fewer for other expenses required for accomplishing the objectives of academic programs. For filling the gap ANAU plans to develop cooperation with state and private bodies. Over the last one year cooperation programs of HEI have encompassed the Government of the RA, UN Development Programme, World Bank, German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ), ICARE Foundation, Embassy of Japan in Armenia, CRONIMET Charity Foundation, "Shen" Charity NGO, and by the cooperation programs with them 570 million AMD has been invested (this sum continues to grow) for developing ANAU infrastructure and resources.

After the self-evaluation and site visit it came to knowledge that ANAU budget planning is presently conducted in a centralized way; scientific and research centers of the HEI do not have a separate budget.

7.3 The TLI has sound financial distribution policy and capacity to sustain and ensure the integrity and continuity of the academic programmes offered at the institution..

RA laws on "Accounting", "RA Budget System Law", HEI Statute, the documents concerning management and allocation of financial resources provide the legal basis for the financial activity of ANAU.

As a result of the expert analyses it came to light that the policy of allocating financial resources meant for assuring and securing the accomplishment of PAP objectives and their continuity is not available in ANAU. The HEI considers the procurement of relevant human, material and technical resources as the indicator of implementing academic programs. The main part of ANAU expenses are directed at paying salaries.

The allocation of ANAU financial resources by the expense articles is conducted in compliance with a financial estimate which is endorsed by the board of trustees.

7.4 The TLI's resource base supports the implementation of institution's academic programmes and TLI strategic plan, which promotes for sustainability and continuous quality enhancement.

As a result of the study of the new strategic plan of Agrarian University's development and site visit it came to knowledge that the planning of required resources have already started to be implemented in ANAU based on the problems, actions set in the strategic plan, and indicators of their evaluation.

After the study of self-evaluation and the site visit it came to light that ANAU has adopted a policy of reducing the ineffective allocation of resources and directing them at strategic objectives of

paramount importance. ANAU infrastructure and resource base, which were formed during the Soviet Union, have never been exposed to “Smart Agriculture”, updates and improvements in line with the contemporary requirements.

Though ANAU could not gain huge financial resources over one and a half years and invest them in the development of infrastructure and resources, however, the positive influence of these improvements on the academic programs of these professions is not yet evident. The resources, envisaged by the cooperation and development programs, are not mainly available, and their influence is not accessible for students.

Presently the development programs are on the initial stage of implementation, for instance, the hothouse, Agrarian Engineering Center of Excellence for which huge sums have been invested, are still on the stage of major repair, and from the actions, envisaged by “Smart Building” program, only the competition for dismantling the buildings in disrepair has been announced in Balahovit teaching-experimental farm.

As a result of the analysis of ANAU financial documents and site visit it came to light that among the most urgent problems emerged for the HEI the increase of workers’ salary is the most serious one which eighty percent of the HEI’s expenses are aimed at (in 2018 the salary made up 75%, and the scientific expenses the main part of which is the salary paid in scientific contingent, and it makes up 5.4% which has been financed exclusively by Science Committee). Though the salaries of lecturers have increased by ¼ over the last one year, from January, 2020 on it is expected to have 10% more increase, however the salaries are still low.

7.5 The TLI has a sound policy and procedure to manage information and documentation.

The regulation of managing information and document circulation provides the legal basis of information and documentation processes in ANAU, and for organizing these processes there is a separate administrative unit, i.e. IT Center of ANAU. The latter performs various functions for the automatization of HEI’s information and document circulation, installation of new systems. IT Center of ANAU takes actions to automatize and computerize the information and documentation aimed at studying local and international practice.

For conducting electronic circulation of documents Mulberry 2 electronic document migration system is used which ensures the migration of 80% of documents electronically. For installing Mulberry 235 workers of the university have taken learning courses/ trainings.

After the site visit it came to light that ANAU utilizes MOODLE electronic management tool of learning. However, the use of that tool is planned for preventing the practice of dictated lectures. During the examination it came to knowledge MOODLE tool served as storage of lectures in ANAU. And the assignments, communication and other functions of lecturers are addressed in case of very few classes (it does not concern Agribusiness School where MOODLE is used together with its full functional toolbar).

ANAU has also an electronic service system of readers and library automatization (koha.anau.am).

It has been inserted the system of ebuh and it effectively operates which automatizes and computerizes some directions of organizing HEI’s education (curricula, schedules, timetables of exam session, and the like). In the meantime, ANAU students do not make use of this system and are not involved in this system.

7.6 The TLI creates safe and secure environment through health and safety mechanisms that also consider special needs of students.

According to the self-evaluation, ANAU regularly implements activities to properly organize health and safety processes. The university has structural and planning documents for civil protection,

first aid and evacuation units are established, and their functional responsibilities are described. The university works on increasing the effectiveness of fire-fighting system. There is an aid station at the university with necessary first aid medicine.

It became clear from the self-evaluation and the site visit that the university campuses do not fully comply with modern security requirements and problems of people with special needs. There are no wheelchair ramps at the university campuses to facilitate the movement of people with motor disabilities. Some campuses lacked building layout and evacuation plan during the site visit. Security level is low especially during laboratory training; working with chemicals is not particularly safe for students. ANAU staff members do not regularly take preventive medical examinations.

7.7 The TLI has mechanisms in place for the evaluation of the effectiveness, applicability and availability of recourses given to the teaching staff and learners.

According to the self-evaluation, mechanisms for evaluating applicability, availability and effectiveness of resources and services provided to students include surveys among alumni, faculty and students, SWOT analyses with individual group representatives, free discussions, and individual qualitative interviews.

In order to assess resource availability and identify needs, Quality Assessment and Assurance (QAA) center takes measures to create automated assessment system, direct contact. However, according to the self-evaluation survey results /2018/ half of the alumni assessed the library resource availability as excellent. On the other hand, the university library is not regarded as strength in the self-evaluation. In addition, the ANAU infrastructure and resources, including the library and laboratories were identified by all stakeholders as the weakest point during the site visit.

The documents observed and the expert meetings revealed that resource provision at ANAU has not yet been based on an in-depth study of educational and research needs. Judging from the outcomes of ANAU academic programs or the methodological part of course guides, it should be assumed that a lot of courses are based on active teaching approaches, discussions (or so stated). It is evident that active teaching requires non-traditional, student-centered classroom furnishing (e.g., for roundtables) while appropriate classrooms lacked during the site visit. It should be stated that the existing property has been updated from time to time, although it does not actually reflect the need for active teaching (which was presented in AP outcomes)¹⁴.

It is worthwhile to mention that there is no ground for informing stakeholders about the results of ANAU stakeholder surveys. The internal stakeholders are not informed about the planned steps of the University on solving the problems and meeting the needs identified by them in the questionnaires.

Considerations: The expert panel positively evaluates the idea of ANAU infrastructure and resource improvement and development in unified connection with strategic priorities and planning in line with modern agricultural requirements. This will allow for a more realistic approach to providing the logistics bases of academic programs and research activities. The experience of Agribusiness Teaching Center is positive in terms of having developed infrastructure and resources in accordance with the requirements of the academic programmes, which may serve as a guideline for infrastructure and resource development for other ANAU educational units.

However, the large number of the academic programmes being implemented, and the inadequacy of infrastructure and resources provided in accordance with those programmes jeopardizes the effective implementation of the strategic priorities and APs of the University.

¹⁴ This section was reformulated considering the University's observations and discussions.

The expert panel also attaches importance to assessing the needs in infrastructure and clear development planning, which will contribute to comprehensive development of the sector¹⁵.

The efforts to develop the university library are positively evaluated, which is an important precondition for the development of education. The scarcity of professional literature in Armenian, and low level of English language proficiency among the teaching staff and students slows down and impedes the quality improvement of education¹⁶.

The expert panel highlights the recent implementation of individual programs for infrastructure and resource development. However, the available resources are mostly out-of-date. Very often the university lacks essential laboratory, classroom and internship conditions, which currently impedes the implementation of ANAU strategic goals.

The expert panel values the search for alternative sources of financing for infrastructure development. However, there is a substantial gap in disseminating and establishing this practice in ANAU units. ANAU needs to do substantive work in developing relevant culture, approaches and skills for its human resources.

ANAU focus on staff salaries, continuous efforts to increase them, as well as some positive results are encouraging, which motivates the faculty and researchers.

ANAU adopted short-term and mid-term planning processes at the level of scientific-educational units. The effective implementation of these processes requires budget planning according to subdivisions whereas ANAU budget planning is currently centralized, which impedes the balanced development of the departments.

The expert panel highlights ANAU achievements in developing, automating and digitizing information dissemination and documentation processes, which can enhance the university capacities to improve the quality of management and organization of academic programs. However, there is still considerable work to do in order to significantly develop these processes and to fully invest in the university.

Measures towards health, safety and security of the educational environment are visible, but still some actions are needed to maintain safety rules and ensure sanitary and hygienic conditions aimed at logistical and explanatory work, which may enhance the overall effectiveness of the University's activities. Activities aimed at improving conditions for students, staff, and visitors with special needs, particularly motor disabilities, may increase the social recognition and trust in ANAU¹⁷.

Summary¹⁸: Taking into account that at present resource evaluation according to the academic programmes and clear planning of further development is partially implemented at the University; the existing resources and infrastructure mainly do not meet the goals set by the APs, there is a lack of professional literature in Armenian, and a large number of students and the teaching staff can not use literature in a foreign language. The stakeholders consider resource availability a key issue, financial management is still centralized, there is an urgent need to equip laboratories in terms of security and resource replenishment. The expert panel considers that the institutional capacities of ANAU do not meet the requirements of Criterion 7.

Conclusion: Correspondence of the university's institutional capacities to the requirements of Criterion 7 is assessed as **unsatisfactory**.

¹⁵ This section was reformulated considering the University's observations and discussions.

¹⁶ This section was reformulated considering the University's observations and discussions.

¹⁷ This section was reformulated considering the University's observations and discussions.

¹⁸ This section was reformulated considering the University's observations and discussions.

VIII. SOCIETAL RESPONSIBILITY

CRITERION: The TLI is accountable to the government and society for the education it offers and the resources it uses as well as for the research it conducts.

Findings

8.1 The TLI has a clear policy on institutional accountability.

ANAU development strategic plan of 2018-2022 seeks to ensure accountability and transparency of the university activities by improving and enhancing information providing processes at all levels of management and ensuring information transparency for all stakeholders. The university is tasked with involving stakeholders in quality management processes. Accountability and transparency are stipulated as fundamental values in new ANAU development strategic plan draft. One of the university goals is to provide efficient mechanisms for accountability and transparency.

In order to encourage and regulate accountability processes, ANAU has developed documents: “Accountability Enforcement Policy for ANAU stakeholders”, “Accountability Enforcement Procedure for ANAU stakeholders”, “Procedure for Self-evaluation Implementation and Activity Planning, Monitoring, Assessment and Improvement of ANAU Units”

Traditionally, the down-top accountability of the university comprised mainly quantitative indexes and indicators. Reports by chairs, research laboratories and faculties, which have so far lacked qualitative indicator analysis, are submitted annually to university leadership and are discussed at university's academic council and board of trustees. Reports include, e.g., the number of programs the faculty implements, of students studying in programs, of lecturers teaching, of works that lecturers published, of conferences they participated in. However, these and other data are not analyzed in the context of the strategic plan or quality indicators.

Since 2019-2020 academic year ANAU has launched a new system of internal accountability, which envisages annual self-evaluation of units, planning, implementation, monitoring, and improvement of their activities. The accountability of the aforementioned annual activities is intended to be implemented through quarterly and annual reports, based on key performance evaluation indicators. However, the system has just been introduced, so implementation of reports in this format is not yet clear.

The main accountability mechanism for external stakeholders is sessions of the board of trustees, half of which consists of external stakeholders. External accountability mechanisms include reports submitted to the authorized administration body for education (including State Committee of Science) on various aspects of educational and research activities, as well as reports to other partner institutions (National Erasmus+ Office in Armenia, agencies providing grants and support to ANAU in accordance with cooperation agreements. The main means of providing information to society on various aspects of the university's activities is the website, which has recently updated content and design. Other important means include traditional annual exhibitions, presenting ANAU success in different fields of activities.

8.2 The TLI ensures transparency of its procedures and processes and makes them publicly available.

Accountability and transparency of ANAU activities is one of the core values stipulated in the university's strategic plan soon to be implemented; both here and in ANAU development strategic plan for 2018-2022 effective transparency mechanism is formulated as an important management-related goal. The university developed a special policy in order to provide all ANAU stakeholders with information on the university's activities, achievements and quality of processes, and to ensure communication with stakeholders through feedback mechanisms.

According to the self-evaluation, the official website of the university (<https://anau.am/>) is especially important in terms of transparency and availability of university processes. In order to increase the effectiveness of the website activity, a new version of the official website was developed and introduced with Wordpress Content Management System in 2018-2019 academic year. The website is operated by the ANAU Media and Public Relations Department, which functions under the coordination of the Head of the Staff and strives for social availability and transparency of the university's procedures and processes. The division also runs the university's Facebook page, which has been a leader in terms of views and likes over the past year. The site visit revealed that although the department is relatively new and has strictly limited professional and material resources, it clearly realizes its role and function in the context of ANAU overall objectives and activities. The scarcity of resources does not in fact allow ANAU to implement media rating monitoring in order to determine ANAU position on websites in terms of particularly positive references.

Notable work was directed at developing the website. Protocols and decisions of the Academic Council, Board of Trustees and the Rectorate are published on the university website. However, it should be noted that the website lacks protocols of faculty sessions of the academic council, while the protocols and decisions of sessions of the academic council, board of trustees and the rectorate are not fully reflected. Protocols of academic council sessions refer solely to 2019-2020 academic year.

The website contains links to online with brief information.

ANAU official website does not yet provide information on key university processes. One of the most important factors in this regard is that the website lacks the academic programs of the university with their formulated goals, outcomes, structure and content. In this respect, Agribusiness Teaching Center is an exception, since the important features of the academic programs it implements are summarized on ANAU teaching center website.

The website contains brief information on ANAU professions in English and Russian. However, in terms of attracting foreign students information on academic programs is important, which is still not available.

8.3 The TLI has sustainable feedback mechanisms for establishing relations with society

The self-evaluation highlights the sustainability of feedback that helps to establish public relations at ANAU and invokes three regulatory documents related to this issue, which mostly overlap with one another while defining roles and responsibilities, and the provisions contained therein are largely declarative.

The site visit revealed that ANAU receives some impetus from state and international agencies coordinating the agricultural sector while taking steps to improve its academic programs and research. ANAU is always in active communication with public authorities coordinating the agricultural sector. Filed regulating legal acts often undergo expert examination at ANAU, which in turn is aware of the developments in the field. Some of the specialized agencies and programs of

UNO introduced in Armenia, which implement activities related to the agricultural sector, maintain regular contacts with ANAU.

Feedback with external stakeholders is provided through ANAU Board of Trustees, with a significant number of external members engaged in active professional, business and public activities in the agricultural sector and ensuring the university's contact with economy, public sector and labor market.

ANAU official website is another public feedback mechanism; announcements on university application, various competitions and other processes posted on the website, materials on ANAU educational and research achievements are viewed and focus public attention on the university. Contacts of various ANAU units and officials are available on the website; however, it lacks discussion and commentary space on published materials, as well as academic program specifications. Several attempts have shown that ANAU does not respond to website questions.

ANAU is on Facebook, LinkedIn, Youtube, Instagram, which facilitates public feedback (posts, videos, comments, etc.). ANAU is also trying to provide public feedback through media by publishing posts.

8.4 The TLI has mechanisms that ensure knowledge transfer to the society.

In order to regulate the process of knowledge transfer to society, ANAU developed document on policy and procedure for delivering additional educational and consultancy services to society, which aims at providing society with additional quality services, promoting professional capacity building, supporting society and ANAU students in vocational training system.

ANAU has mechanisms which provide professional support and consultancy services in the agricultural sector and transfer knowledge to society. It is worthwhile to mention a large number of seminars and consultations for farms which have been regularly conducted in recent years. ANAU implements qualification programs for agricultural specialists and farmers within the scope of state funding, as well as training courses for relevant stakeholders in veterinary medicine, animal husbandry, etc.

ANAU directs its potential at state programs seeking practical solutions to certain agricultural issues. For example, ANAU directed the action plan against South American tomato moth in Ararat and Armavir provinces of the RA. The program has shown up to 100% productivity in target areas, guides on fighting pests were published for farmers.

Another mechanism is delivering lectures by ANAU lecturers at public schools in recent years, which helps students to learn about the country's agricultural problem, solutions and new technologies.

According to the self-evaluation, ANAU organizes additional free classes for students who need it. However, the expert panel did not receive precise and comprehensive information on the frequency and effectiveness of these classes.

Considerations: The expert panel positively evaluates the fact that ANAU has accountability system, which is characterized by down-top accountability and regularity, summarized in the annual report by the Rector, which makes accountability a comprehensive, regulated and coordinated process. Meanwhile, this process, especially at middle and lower levels (departments, faculties, chairs, laboratories) is mainly limited to submitting quantitative data, lack of analysis in the context of the university's strategic goals and academic program needs, which may impede identification of problems, as well as planning and implementation of further improvement activities.

The introduction of new system of internal accountability at the university is encouraging, which envisages annual self-evaluation of units, planning, implementation, monitoring and

improvement of their activities, based on key performance evaluation indicators; this can introduce a new culture of accountability and quality assurance at the university and help to improve key processes.

It is encouraging, on behalf of media and PR department changes and the university's website relaunch through Wordpress CMS, coordinated and remarkable work is being done to make the university's procedures and processes transparent and available to internal and external stakeholders and the general public which makes ANAU more visible and attractive and promotes cooperation with stakeholders. It is obvious that ANAU website primarily shows important data, events and processes. In this respect, however, it is problematic that the university's main business card, namely academic programs (particularly translated into English and Russian) are not posted on the website, which may be conditioned by imperfection of most of these programs; this condition may impede international mobility and engagement of applicants.

The expert panel welcomes the university's efforts to develop mechanisms for ensuring sustainable public feedback, including raising awareness on ANAU on social network, meetings of mobile groups of ANAU specialists in regional administrations, increase and intensification of contacts with employer representatives, studies of internal stakeholders opinions organized in a new way which increases university ratings and ensures feedback.

However, ANAU has not yet succeeded in implementing effective and regulated mechanisms for studying external stakeholder opinions, which may impede the continuous quality improvement of various processes.

The expert panel welcomes and highlights the intensive and effective cooperation with enterprises of RA agricultural field, national and international field-related sectors, which makes sense in terms of ensuring progress in all areas of ANAU activities. It is encouraging that the university's leadership has a clear vision on quantitative and qualitative growth of knowledge transfer areas and mechanisms to society, which can increase the regularity of these processes. Seminar-consultations for RA farms, qualification courses for farmers and agricultural sector specialists, tendencies to direct the university's professional potential at solving business problems in agricultural sector (such as action plan against South American tomato moth), free training courses with applicants, lectures delivered at schools are a significant opportunity to enhance ANAU reputation, boost social demand and value of agricultural specialties which in turn develops the culture of public commitment at university.

Summary: Taking into consideration the fact that ANAU accountability system is substantially developing and improving, the university's functions and processes are becoming more socially available and visible, stable public relations mechanisms are becoming diversified and more reliable, the university realizes its commitment to the state, society and environment and has capacities and models for transferring knowledge and support to society, the expert panel considers that ANAU meets the requirements of Criterion 8.

Conclusion: Correspondence of the university's institutional capacities to the requirements of Criterion 8 is assessed as **satisfactory**.

IX. EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND INTERNATIONALIZATION

CRITERION: The TLI promotes experience exchange and enhancement through its sound external relations practices, thus promoting internationalization of the institution.

Findings

9.1 The TLI promotes its external relations through sound policies and procedures aimed at creating an environment conducive to experience exchange and enhancement as well as internationalization.

A review of the two ANAU strategies (ANAU Development Strategy Plan for 2018-2022, Strategic Plan Draft for 2020-2024) and related documents shows that development and internationalization of external relations are among the university's primary goals. In ANAU Development Strategic Plan Draft for 2020-2024, the goals of the development and internationalization of external relations are formulated in line with the goals of other priority areas of the university's activities. The internationalization objectives and activities of ANAU education include internationalization of academic programs, training of specialists for both local and international markets, expansion of the range of foreign applicants by introducing academic programs in foreign languages, introduction of dual education, and accreditation of academic programs by international agencies, introduction of Joint and Double degree programs.

The internationalization objectives and actions of scientific activities include promoting the visibility and internationalization of research activities, implementing local and international research and innovation programs, identifying trends in international scientific programs, submitting grants for programs of strategic importance to ANAU, etc. The priority of internationalization is also formulated in the context of resource development goals, such as issues related to covering costs and developing dormitories and resorts, ensuring the university's image in internationalization events.

The ambitious internationalization goals stipulated both in this draft and in the current strategic plan are not properly reflected in the sector-related documents (External Relations and Internationalization Strategy, Policy and procedure on external relations and internationalization), which are virtually legal acts.

The effectiveness of policies and procedures promoting external relations and internationalization are not analyzed and evaluated in the self-evaluation. After reviewing some documents and specifically as a result of the site visit, it became clear that the framework document promoting ANAU internationalization is mainly the annual program-timetables of the activities of the International Relations Department, the reports discussed at ANAU academic council and board of trustees.

External relations and internationalization mechanisms include participation in international programs (Erasmus + KA1, Erasmus + KA2, Erasmus Mundus, Tempus, etc.), organization and implementation of international conferences, participation in conferences abroad, establishment and implementation of cooperation with local and foreign universities, etc.

It became clear from the site visit, that ANAU promotes international mobility both within the scope of ERASMUS + program and beyond international programs, on individual initiatives. The increase in ANAU involvement is evident in both Erasmus+ KA1 and Erasmus+ KA2 programs. ANAU participation in ERASMUS+ International week, exchange programs for non-teaching staff, is also welcomed, which contributes generating ideas and introducing them at university. Due to lack of funding, ANAU is still unable to fully fund individual, non-international mobility programs, but in many cases partially reimburses the costs.

The data presented in the self-evaluation and in the documents attached, as well as the site visit revealed that unlike outbound mobility, inbound mobility is not available; the university does not yet attract foreign students, lecturers and researchers.

9.2 The institution's external relations infrastructure ensures regulated process.

ANAU external relations development and internationalization activities are organized by the Department of International Relations, whose functions (mentioned in the Charter of the Department, activity programs and reports) include establishing links with foreign universities, preparing cooperation agreements, organizing and regulating mobility, implementing grant projects, submitting applications for new projects, coordinating the existing projects, analyzing activities within the scope of grant projects, submitting proposals for increasing their effectiveness, etc.

The Department operates under the coordination of ANAU Rector. According to the self-evaluation, the documents submitted and the site visit the department's activities are characterized by applying PDCA cycle, as well as other quality assurance principles. IRD activities are organized by annual work plan based on the university's strategic plan, existing and planned international programs, internationalization vision for the coming year, and the results of last year performance review. The activities implemented are summarized in IRD two annual reports, which are submitted to the superior bodies of the university and discussed at the Academic Council and Board of Trustees in order to assess their effectiveness, relevance to ANAU strategic plan and goals, and then ways to improve them are submitted in the form of decisions and recommendations.

IRD has started to implement self-evaluation of its annual activities, which is based on surveys, discussions with staff and external stakeholders, and aims at identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the department and evaluating the effectiveness of its activities.

It became clear during the expert panel meetings that the department ensures dissemination and transparency of information on international exchange programs. In particular, announcements on ERASMUS + mobility programs are effectively disseminated at the university, consultancy is provided when appropriate. Due to IRD active work, interest in international mobility and exchange programs has increased significantly among university students and faculty. Current programs are implemented effectively (Topas, Abionet, etc.).

As a result of ANAU's international activity references, self-evaluation studies and visit to the university, the expert panel revealed that IRD staff members clearly realize their functions, work in coordinated way, have proficiency in foreign languages, but the department still has much work to do in regulating and streamlining exchange of experience of academic, administrative staff members and students who participated in exchange and mobility programs.

9.3 The TLI promotes fruitful and effective collaboration with local and international counterparts.

The self-evaluation provides quantitative data on ANAU international partnership; ANAU has signed more than 100 agreements and memorandums with various local and foreign HEIs and organizations. Over the last 3 years, the number of agreements has increased (or renewed) up to 60, involving 25 countries, 42 universities and 13 organizations, including cooperation in education, science, mobility and other sectors. Meanwhile, ANAU did not implement a proper analysis to clarify and complete the university's achievements in these agreements, to identify the reasons for the inaction of some agreements.

ANAU has poor links with CIS and Asian HEIs, which is justified by the lack of financial basis for joint projects in the self-evaluation. However, the university does not adequately study grant opportunities provided by EAEU management structures, as well as opportunities for cooperation within the scope of CIS Network University.

According to the self-evaluation, the website, the submitted documents and the expert panel visit, ANAU has been actively involved in TEMPUS, ERASMUS MUNDUS and ERASMUS +

programs of EU for the past four years, as a result of which the university's e-governance, documentary circulation processes have improved significantly, some key prerequisites for developing outcome-based academic programs were elaborated through the development of a framework of agricultural professional qualifications, several modern training modules were introduced, etc. Within the framework of ERASMUS+ KA1 project, ANAU has shown high growth rates in recent years, namely the index of outgoing mobility reached 37 in 2018 compared with 7 in 2015. Ingoing mobility is still on a low level.

In terms of international cooperation, ANAU has made achievements in the following areas:

- Implementation of joint academic programs (including dual degrees) with leading European HEIs (Weihenstephan-Triesdorf University of Applied Sciences in Germany, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU) in Austria),
- Organization of ANAU individual students' internships in Germany (Logo, JD East, GeTech, Praxx organizations),
- Organization of ANAU individual students' research work in Norway (The Arctic University of Tromsø in Norway, Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research), studies in Italy (University of Foggia),
- Participation in training programs for agricultural specialists, lecturers and researchers in Germany (Wageningen University & Research, the Netherlands) and China.

It became clear during the site visit that the aforementioned processes have shown steady growth trends in recent years and at present. It is noteworthy that the ANAU leadership plans to introduce “mobility window” in curricula in order to address problems related to curriculum differences during student mobility, thus allowing students to have a semester free of classes.

It became clear from the site visit that ANAU has weak cooperation with RA universities. In this respect, cooperation is mainly implemented within the framework of TEMPUS, ERASMUS + KA2 projects. ANAU has a closer cooperation with the National Polytechnic University of Armenia.

9.4 The TLI ensures internal stakeholders' appropriate level of a foreign language to enhance productivity of internationalization.

ANAU recognizes the importance of administrative, academic staff, researchers and students with a high level of foreign language proficiency in achieving its strategic goals. ANAU also recognizes that the overall picture of foreign language proficiency of the staff and students is far from satisfactory. The problem has always been acknowledged, which is why in 2002 ANAU established Language Learning Center, which provides foreign language training for university students and staff. However, it became clear from the site visit that, due to various circumstances, clear objectives were not defined for the university's internal stakeholders in order to increase their level of foreign language proficiency, first of all in English. Only since 2018-2019 academic year, in the context of the university's reform process, ANAU has organized intensive English language courses in a coordinated and targeted way according to proficiency levels.

200 lecturers attended the courses. However, it should be noted that these intensive trainings relate to general English proficiency; ANAU does not yet organize these foreign language courses for special purposes, as it seeks to address basic language proficiency problems at this stage.

ANAU has not analysed the percentage of students with foreign language proficiency and the level of proficiency. The site visit failed to reveal what activities the university planned in terms of ensuring students' proper foreign language proficiency.

Considerations: The expert panel positively evaluates the fact that ANAU has given due consideration to the consultancy received on this criterion in the expert panel report of previous accreditation and has significantly improved the external relations and internationalization process, which will have a tangible impact on achieving the university vision. ANAU considers the development of external relations and internationalization as a strategic priority and intertwines the strategic direction of internationalization with other priorities, which may enable the university to receive permanent signals from the outside world in priority areas of its activities and to implement benchmarking.

The expert panel welcomes the fact that the coordinating unit for ANAU internationalization processes, namely the Department of International Relations, is a well-established, well-functioning subdivision that applies important quality assurance tools in its activities, namely, is guided by the cycle of planning, doing, checking and acting, conducts self-evaluation, submits reports regularly. This fact contributes to creating quality culture in the development of external relations and internationalization, which is of crucial importance to ANAU, and makes the department viable and capable of undertaking new tasks. While highlighting the visible results of the department's activities, namely increase in outgoing mobility, increase trends in ANAU participation in international educational and research projects, the expert panel concludes that the department is not sufficiently aware of the university's research priorities, which may impede to identify the potential of ANAU participation in international research projects. The expert panel also considers that the department still has a lot of work to do in disseminating the experience and knowledge of staff and students from international mobility programs at the university, analyzing and evaluating mobility outcomes, which may accelerate the development rates of external relations and internationalization.

The expert panel positively evaluates both the great number and the increasing rates of ANAU international relations, especially in recent years, which makes ANAU visible and recognizable in the international scientific and educational space. However, the lack of analyses of cooperation volume and quality resulting from these relations may reduce targeted allocation of resources for developing the university's external relations. ANAU has recorded increase in participation in EU support programs, which improved certain intra-university processes significantly (in particular electronic governance and documentary circulation processes). While being concerned about ANAU poor links with Asian and CIS HEIs, which virtually implies lack of links with a lot of educational institutions with partnership potential, the expert panel highlights the university's awareness of this fact and decisiveness to take steps in this direction. ANAU plans to create mobility windows in the curricula and to reduce the number of courses are also encouraging, which will significantly relieve many students traveling abroad from difficulties and can increase mobility rates.

The expert panel highlights the efforts to improve ANAU lecturers' proficiency in English and appreciates the results achieved in a short time, considering all this as an important prerequisite for organizing high quality research-based education, particularly for implementing academic programs in foreign languages. Meanwhile, the very low level of foreign language proficiency among students is worrisome, which may lead to disproportion between faculty and students (in terms of foreign language proficiency).

Summary: Taking into consideration the fact that while prioritizing the development of external relations and internationalization, ANAU has substantially improved the legal-procedural grounds of these processes, that there is a well-functioning unit with experienced and committed specialists properly performing their duties, which applies quality assurance tools, disseminates quality

culture and is ready to address complex issues, that ANAU cooperates closely with international partners both at the level of individual partnership and international development programs, mainly to direct cooperation results at improving inter-university processes and shows continuous progress in this respect, that ANAU strives to train its academic staff for internationalization challenges on behalf of intensive foreign language trainings, the expert panel considers that ANAU meets the requirements of Criterion 9.

Conclusion: Correspondence of the university's institutional capacities to the requirements of Criterion 9 is assessed as **satisfactory**.

X. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

CRITERION:

The Institution has an internal quality assurance system, which promotes establishment of a quality culture and continuous improvement of all the processes of the Institution.

Findings

10.1 The TLI has internal quality assurance policies and procedures.

ANAU Quality Assurance (QA) system was established in 2011. ANAU Quality Assurance System has infrastructure which ensures interconnected quality assurance processes at the level of university and other structural units. According to the self-evaluation ANAU internal quality assurance processes are regulated and organized according to ANAU Quality Assurance Concept and Policy and ANAU Quality Assurance Manual.

The university's reform and development program identifies the primary and fundamental issues (reviewing policies and procedures for gathering information in all quality assurance directions, analyzing and formulating them according to the results for implementing internal and external quality assurance) that QAACenter should try to address. The new QAA Center performed remarkable work, SWOT analyses and extensive discussions with stakeholders in a short period of time.

QAA Center team considers that a lot of work is done in reviewing and coordinating various regulations and procedures adopted in recent years. ANAU prioritizes the establishment of quality assurance system in education.

10.2 The TLI allocates sufficient time, material, human and financial resources to manage internal quality assurance processes.

According to the self-evaluation ANAU quality assurance processes are organized and implemented in accordance with ANAU quality assurance structural scheme and regulatory framework for internal quality assurance.

The new QAA center, which is directly subject to the Rector, has more freedom and scope of activity. The activities at the center are managed by the director, while the smooth operation of

processes is ensured by two departments, namely Quality Assurance and Educational Reforms: there are 4 and 9 vacancies at each department and the whole QAA center, respectively. The center has 3 offices, which have the necessary logistics resources to ensure the smooth operation of processes.

However, it is worthwhile to mention that there are no responsible persons for quality assurance processes at faculty level to implement more directed work in specific professional field.

10.3 The internal and external stakeholders are involved in quality assurance processes.

ANAU ensured internal and external stakeholder involvement in quality assurance processes in accordance with the “Procedure for ensuring internal and external stakeholder involvement in quality assurance and management processes”, developed within the scope of improvement program.

According to the self-analysis, ANAU internal (students, faculty) and external (alumni, applicants, employers, etc.) stakeholders are involved in quality assurance processes, namely:

- self-assessment processes,
- stakeholder needs assessment (questionnaires),
- internal university audits,
- external assessment process, etc.

ANAU students are involved in quality assurance processes primarily through their engagement in various management bodies.

ANAU academic staff is involved in:

- Quality supervising committee attached to the academic council
- PAP reviewing and developing process

External stakeholders (employers, labor market representatives, public sector representatives, alumni) are involved as official participants in the management council (with the right to vote).

The expert panel visit revealed that the involvement of external stakeholders in quality assurance process is at the level of individual initiative and is not coordinated. Besides, PAP monitoring process at the university lacks official opinions of external stakeholders.

10.4 The internal quality assurance system is periodically reviewed.

Analyzing ANAU activities within the scope of the newly adopted mission and goals, state and social requirements from the university, current labor market needs in agricultural sector, it is difficult to argue that the university's internal quality assurance processes were aimed to ensure the correspondence of the university's activities with the requirements stated. The main issue was not the lack or incompleteness of policies or regulations, but the lack of quality culture in management, as well as university system in general. Implementation of quality assurance processes has so far been

considered as an external requirement (ANQA, Ministry of Education, etc.) rather than as need to disseminate quality assurance culture at university.

The following projects conducted within the framework of various international programs and grants are aimed at reviewing Internal Quality Assurance System of ANAU: Fulda University of Applied Sciences and the University of Kassel of the Federal Republic of Germany – acquisition of experience in the field of Quality Assurance and Management within the framework of the project “Quality and Relevance in Education”; training in Linköping University in Sweden within the framework of “ARMENQA” project; trainings within the framework of “GOVERN” project.

But it is worthwhile to mention that the methodology of questionnaires of the surveys and interviews conducted among stakeholders needs to be revised since the previous ones do not fully bring to the surface the major problems. Quality Assessment and Assurance Center (QAAC) of ANAU has attempted to fully update the content of surveys and interviews, as well as the methodology of their analyses since this academic year.

10.5 The internal quality assurance system provides valid and sufficient background for the success of the external quality assurance processes.

Pursuant to the self-evaluation, new management of the University has new approaches and requirements for internal quality assurance system which is envisaged by the development program of the university’s reforms.

It is worth noting the university has introduced the most objective analysis possible, though SWOT analyses do not illuminate the precise picture.

10.6 The internal quality assurance system ensures the transparency of the processes unfolding in the TLI through providing information on the quality of the processes to the internal and external stakeholders.

According to the self-evaluation, the transparency of the University’s performance is directly connected with the university’s accountability. Attaching importance to the assurance of the continuous improvement, the availability of transparent management system is presented as performance indicator by 2020-2024 strategic plan of the university.

But after the site visit it came to knowledge that the analyses of surveys are not provided to stakeholders, as a result of which the stakeholders do not precisely imagine what changes have been made in the university based on their opinion.

Considerations: The expert panel welcomes the efforts of ANAU aimed at application of internal quality assurance system, continuous improvement and the formation of quality culture. New Quality Assessment and Assurance Center has a large range of freedom for performing its activity which has empowered that body to perform large-scale activity in a short span.

The fact that ANAU provides human and material resources for managing the quality assurance processes by distinguishing two departments within QAAC, i.e. Department of Quality Assurance and Department of Educational Reforms, is also positive assessed.

Though the quality culture is still on the stage of formation in ANAU, and the cycle Plan-Implement-Evaluate-Improve is not yet completed, the expert panel notices that a series of quality assurance processes are on various stages of Plan-Implement-Evaluate-Improve cycle which will contribute to the continuous perfection of the quality, revelation of problems and their solutions.

For spreading the quality assurance the expert panel finds it important to engage external, especially internal stakeholders in the process of finding out the main problems of the sphere and the continuous development of the HEI's various spheres.

It is also worth mentioning that the review and systematization of various invalid documents are on the stage of planning.

Summary: Taking into account the fact that for regulating internal quality assurance system a conception and a manual are developed, internal quality assurance policy and procedures are available; for the performance of QAAC ANAU provides material and human resources, the workers of QAAC are motivated, quality assurance processes are on various stages of Plan-Implement-Evaluate-Improve cycle, transparent reports on the performance of QAAC are submitted, the expert panel considers that ANAU meets the requirements of Criterion 10.

Conclusion: The expert panel evaluates the relevance of ANAU's institutional competencies to the requirements of CRITERION 10 **satisfactory**.

EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

<u>CRITERION</u>	<u>CONCLUSION</u>
1. Mission and Purposes	Satisfactory
2. Governance and Administration	Satisfactory
3. Academic Programs	Unsatisfactory
4. Students	Satisfactory
5. Faculty and Staff	Satisfactory
6. Research and Development	Unsatisfactory
7. Infrastructure and Resources	Unsatisfactory
8. Societal Responsibility	Satisfactory
9. External relations and Internationalization	Satisfactory
10. Internal Quality Assurance System	Satisfactory

14 April, 2020

Hermine Grigoryan, Signature of the Expert Panel Chair

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. CVS OF EXPERT PANEL MEMBERS

Hermine Grigoryan - in 1992 graduated from the Department of Physics and Mathematics, Vanadzor State Pedagogical Institute. She is a Candidate of Sciences in Physics and Mathematics (2008), an Associate Professor (2011). Since 1992 she has been teaching at Vanadzor State University (VSU). Since 2014 she has been the Dean of the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics, VSU. She teaches "Mathematical equations", "Differential equations", "Complex analysis", "Differential and integral calculus for functions of a single variable", "Differential and integral calculus for functions of multiple variables". Her scientific interests cover the questions of boundary value of anisotropic plates of variable thickness.

Menua Soghomonyan – in 2004 graduated from the Department of International Relations, YSU. He was a PhD student at YSU in 2004-2007. In 2015 he received the academic title of Associate Professor. In 2011-2019 he worked as a Scientific Secretary at YSU. He has been teaching at the Chair of Political Institutions and Processes, YSU, since 2008.

Karen Trchunyan - graduated from the Department of Biology, Yerevan State University, in 2011. In 2011-2014 he studied at YSU Postgraduate Programme. In 2013 he received his PhD in Biological Sciences, and in 2017 he received an academic title of a Doctor in Biological Sciences. Since 2015 he has been Deputy Director at the Research Institute of Biology, Department of Biology, Yerevan State University; Scientific Researcher at the Microbiology, Bioenergy and Biotechnology Laboratory, Research Institute of Biology. He has published more than 70 scientific works.

Romain Hulpia – Holds an MA degree in Psychology and Pedagogy; Doctor of Philosophy and Pedagogy (granted based on scientific articles), Ghent University. During his career, he has been employed for a number of positions: (a) Consultant at «MedicalSocial» Center, (b) Infantry Officer (Banking), (c) Management Trainer, «General Motors» Antwerp, 1970. He was responsible for "Education Policy" and "Educational Experience" courses at the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Ghent University, for nearly 21 years; Head of the Information and Communication Technology Programme for Flemish Education; member of the team implementing «Quality Assurance System» at Universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina; the head of two site visits in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Head of accreditation of 20 new academic programmes by the Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Association, Belgian Quality Assurance VLHORA and VLHUR; NVAO Expert, as well as the President of «Janusz Korczak» society.

Gayane Kosakyan is a 3rd year student at the Faculty of General Medicine, Yerevan State Medical University after M. Heratsi. Participated in the training of student experts – «Student Voice» project – at ANQA.

APPENDIX 2. SCHEDULE OF SITE VISIT

09–13.12.2019

	09.12.2019	<i>Start</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Duration</i>
1.	Meeting with ANAU Rector	09:30	10:15	40 mins
2.	Meeting with ANAU Vice-rectors	10:25	11:25	60 mins
3.	Meeting with the work group in charge of SER	11:35	12:20	45 mins
4.	Meeting with the deans	12:35	13:20	45 mins
5.	Lunch, Expert panel discussions	13:30	14:30	60 mins
6.	Meeting with the representatives of ANAU employers (10-12 people)	14:40	15:40	60 mins
7.	Meeting with ANAU graduates (10-12 people)	15:50	16:50	60 mins
8.	Closed discussions of the expert panel and review of the documents	17:00	18:30	90 mins

	10.12.2019	<i>Start</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Duration</i>
1.	Meeting with the representatives of the Board of Trustees	09:30	10:15	45 mins
2.	Meeting with academic process management department, academic process coordination division, academic and methodology department, career development and lifelong learning division, language teaching centre staff	10:25	11:35	70 mins
3.	Meeting with faculty chairs (10-12 people)	11:45	12:45	60 mins
4.	Lunch. Expert panel discussions	12:50	13:50	60 mins
5.	Meeting with the academic staff (10-12 people)	14:00	15:00	60 mins
6.	Visits to deans' offices and chairs /document review/	15:10	16:10	60 mins
7.	Visits to chairs /document review/	16:20	17:20	90 mins
8.	Closed discussions of the expert panel and review of documents	16:10	18:00	90 mins

	11.12.2019	<i>Start</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Duration</i>
1.	Meeting with the representatives of the Student Council and Student Scientific Society	9:30	10:10	40 mins
2.	Meeting with students of bachelor's degree (10-15 people)	10:20	11:20	60 mins
3.	Meeting with students of master's degree(10-15 people)	11:30	12:30	60 mins
4.	Lunch. Expert panel discussions	12:40	13:40	60 mins
5.	Visits to chairs /document review/	13:50	15:30	100 mins

6.	Meetings in different subdivisions(Division of Human Resource Management, Information and Public Relations Division, Financial Department, Division of Marketing and Development, Division for Scientific Activities Coordination, Center of Information Technologies)	15:40	17:00	80 mins
7.	Closed discussions of the expert panel and review of documents	17:10	19:30	140 mins

	12.12.2019	<i>Start</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Duration</i>
1.	Study of Resources (auditoriums, offices, library, gym, first-aid room, cafeteria, visits to scientific centers)	09:30	12:00	150 mins
2.	Meeting with the director of Vanadzor branch	12:10	12:50	40 mins
3.	Lunch. Expert panel discussions	13:00	14:00	60 mins
4.	Meeting with the heads of administrative and educational units of the branch	14:10	14:50	40 mins
5.	Meeting with the academic staff (10-12 people)	15:00	15:40	40 mins
6.	Meeting with the representatives of students(10-12 people)	15:50	16:30	40 mins
7.	Closed discussions of the expert panel and review of documents	16:40	19:00	140 mins

	13.12.2019	<i>Start</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Duration</i>
1.	Meeting with the staff of the Center for Education Quality Evaluation and Assurance	09:30	10:30	60 mins
2.	Meetings in different subdivisions(Department of International Relations, Foreign Relations Division Grant Projects Division, International Research Programme Coordinating Unit)	10:40	11:40	60 mins
3.	“Open meeting” with the expert panel	11:50	12:30	40 mins
4.	Meeting with the staff selected by the panel	12:40	13:40	60 mins
5.	Lunch. Expert panel discussions	13:40	14:40	60 mins
6.	Closed discussion of the expert panel and document review	14:40	17:40	180 mins
7.	Final meeting with the ANAU leadership	17:50	18:20	30 mins

APPENDIX 3. LIST OF DOCUMENTS OBSERVED

N	Name of Document	Criterion
1.	Minutes of focus group meetings for the last 2 years, benchmarking results (AP packages)	3
2.	Quantitative and qualitative analysis of student surveys	3
3.	Reports of the Final attestation commissions for the last three years for 3 Academic programmes	3
4.	Curricula for DUAL and extended academic programmes	3
5.	Norms for determining the workload of the lecturers	5
6.	Student counseling schedules	4
7.	Minutes of the SC and SSS sittings	4
8.	Students' individual papers for 3 Academic programmes	4
9.	Graduate Papers (Part-time, Full-time, Bachelor, Master)	4
10.	Minutes on the results received by the Evaluation Committee of the teaching staff and the Quality Assurance Department	5
11.	Number and outcome of postgraduate (researcher) mobility ERASMUS+ programs that are partially carried out at partner Universities	6
12.	Minutes of the sittings of the Board of Trustees and the Scientific Board for the last 3 years	2
13.	Annual reports of the departments and chairs for the last 3 years	2
14.	What improvements have been made as a result of the reports over the last 3 years? (relevant documents)	9
15.	Double diploma (sample)	9
16.	Budget 2019	7
17.	Staff list	5
18.	Survey results for the last 2 years	10
19.	Minutes of the focus group meetings	10

20.	Articles (from SER) presented in a systematic way	10
21.	Market research (milk, agribusiness for 2013-2016)	2
22.	Internship programme 2011	3
23.	Annual report regarding the Library	7
24.	Publications of scientific works of the Chair of Biology and Biotechnology	6
25.	Report on Improvement plan	2
26.	List of institutions available for retrainings per faculty	5
27.	Validated average age of the teaching staff	5
28.	Diploma theses for the specialties of "Selection and genetics of agricultural crops"	3
29.	Diploma theses for the specialties of "Fermentation production technology and winemaking"	3
30.	Document of the student conference of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Husbandry	3
31.	Procedure for conducting Final attestation of graduates	2
32.	Curricula for Veterinary Medicine, Agronomy, and Food Technology	3
33.	Financial Report of the Faculty of Agribusiness and Economics. Guide for conducting the production internship of the Chair	7
34.	Report on International Programmes	9
35.	Decree on Veterinary Academic Programme	3
36.	License for providing education in Bachelor's degree program	3
37.	Website report	7
38.	Representatives and articles of Scientific Centers	6
39.	Student Conference Program (April 10,11,12) of the Student Scientific Society of the Faculty of Agronomy	6
40.	Announcements related to vacancies on the Website	7
41.	Report on the results of the monitoring regarding the level of satisfaction among ANAU stakeholders (for 2016)	4

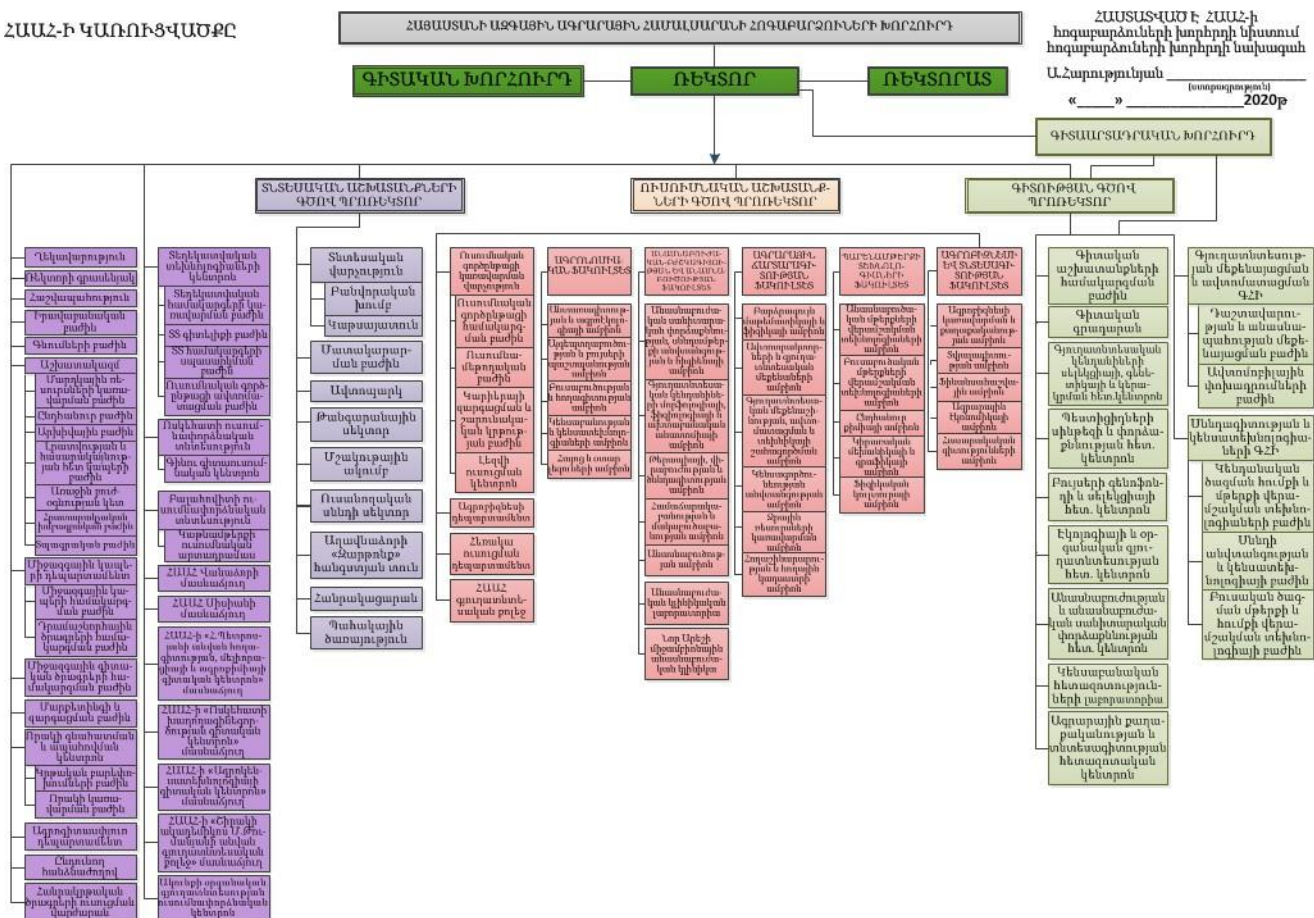
42.	Report on the results of the social survey (assessment of the needs among freshmen and alumni for 2017)	10
43.	Report on the results of the monitoring regarding the level of satisfaction among ANAU stakeholders (for 2018)	10
44.	Recruiting the teaching staff at the National Agrarian University of Armenia (announcement)	5
45.	SWOT analysis conducted by the Heads of the Chairs	10
46.	Student opinion on the courses taught by the lecturers per chair	10
47.	Transcripts related to the SP	10

APPENDIX 4. RESOURCES OBSERVED

1. Auditoriums
2. Deans' offices (Faculty of Food Technologies; Faculty of Agronomy)
3. Chairs
4. Structural Units (Division of Human Resources Management; Division of Media and Public Relations; Economic Department, Division of Marketing and Development; Research Programme Coordinating Unit)
5. Laboratories
6. Specialized auditoriums
7. Library
8. Reading hall

APPENDIX 5. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATION INSTITUTION

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APPENDIX 6. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1. **RA** – the Republic of Armenia
2. **ANAU** – Armenian National Agrarian University
3. **AP** – Academic Programme
4. **TLI** – Tertiary Level Institution
5. **QA** – Quality Assurance
6. **ANQA** - “National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance” Foundation
7. **TS** – Teaching staff
8. **SP** – Strategic Plan
9. **SPr** – Strategic Programme
10. **SC** – Student Council
11. **SSC** – Student Scientific Council