

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



**EXPERT PANEL REPORT
INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION OF
YEREVAN STATE COLLEGE OF INFORMATICS (SNCO)**

Yerevan – 2025

INTRODUCTION

The institutional accreditation of Yerevan State College of Informatics (SNCO) (hereinafter referred TLI or College) is carried out based on the application submitted by the College. The process of institutional accreditation is organised and coordinated by “National Centre 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 the “National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance” foundation in the regulation on “Formation of the Expert Panel”. The Panel is composed of 4 local experts.

The accreditation process was funded by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of the Republic of Armenia.

The institutional accreditation is aimed not only at external evaluation of quality assurance but also at continuous improvement of the quality of management and academic programmes at the institution. Special emphasis was placed on the cooperation between the institution and employers, as well as its impact on the content of education.

The report hereby comprises the results of the evaluation of the institutional capacities of the TLI by the State Accreditation Criteria and Standards.

Context of the Evaluation of the VET Institution's Activities

Background and History of the Institution

The secondary vocational education institution was established in 1960 under the name “Yerevan Technical School of Electronic Computing Machines.” Over the years, it underwent several reorganisations and, in 1999, was renamed the “Yerevan State College of Informatics” (State Non-Commercial Organisation). The College’s registered legal address is 521 Mamikonyants Street, Yerevan, Republic of Armenia.

In 2021, the College underwent institutional accreditation and was granted accreditation for 4 years.

Development Directions and Educational Programmes

In the 2023–2024 academic year, the College has an enrollment of 982 students, of whom 980 are full-time, and two are part-time. The faculty consists of 67 specialists, including 66 with higher education qualifications and 1 with a secondary vocational qualification. Fourteen lecturers are employed on a part-time basis. Five members of the academic staff hold academic degrees, two of whom have the academic title of Associate Professor. At present, the College also employs two alumni as teaching staff. Educational activities at the College are organised across the following six specialisations: “Software Engineering of Computing Equipment and Automated Systems,” “Computing Machines, Complexes, Systems and Networks,” “Computer-Aided Artistic Design,” “Mechatronics,” “Computer Graphics,” and “Robotics.”

Graduate tracer studies indicate that, of the 332 graduates of the 2023–2024 academic year, 117 have continued their studies in higher education institutions in fields aligned with their specialisation, while 97 are employed, including 59 working in their field of qualification. The specialisation “Software Engineering of Computing Equipment and Automated Systems” demonstrates the highest employment rates among the programs offered.

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

The expertise of the Yerevan State College of Informatics' institutional capacities was carried out by the independent expert panel formed in accordance with the requirements of “Regulation on the Formation of the Expert Panel”, «National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance» Foundation. The evaluation was conducted in accordance with 10 institutional accreditation criteria outlined in the RA Government Decree N 959-Ն, dated June 30, 2011.

When conducting the evaluation, the Expert Panel considered that the College is a secondary vocational education institution with a clearly defined mission and that it is undergoing its second institutional accreditation.

The mission and strategic objectives of Yerevan State College of Informatics (YSCI) are articulated in the 2023–2027 Strategic Development Plan (SDP). The mission reflects a commitment to knowledge transfer, the formation of national values, and the preparation of qualified specialists. A SWOT analysis has been conducted, and the implementation of the SDP is supported by planning and reporting mechanisms.

The College’s mission is well communicated and recognized among stakeholders. To ensure the achievement of strategic objectives, an action timetable has been developed, and structural units prepare annual operational plans accompanied by activity reports.

At the same time, several shortcomings have been identified. Strategic documents predominantly emphasise analytical and documentary outputs, while the practical impact and measurability of results remain limited. Monitoring tools are still in development, and evaluation outcomes lack sufficient measurement to serve as a basis for evidence-based improvement actions.

At Yerevan State College of Informatics, a functional governance system with a clear structural model has been established, which is particularly valued for its vertical–collaborative linkages, the active involvement of internal academic units, and the engagement of stakeholders in selected processes. The current governance model has contributed to the formulation of strategic objectives and to the introduction of planning and selected operational mechanisms.

The Expert Panel notes that the established interconnection between strategic management and quality assurance processes at the College has supported their alignment and complementarity, thereby fostering continuous institutional development.

Positive progress is observed in the implementation of processes in line with the PDCA cycle at all stages. However, the check and act phases remain largely under development. Evaluations are often not conducted systematically, a significant portion of results are analysed informally or verbally, and improvement actions are frequently not grounded in measurable indicators.

While the College demonstrates strategic stability, certain shortcomings persist. In this context, priority should be given to deepening a participatory, data-informed evaluation culture and strengthening mechanisms for internal and external environmental analysis, thereby enhancing the precision, inclusiveness, and accountability of the governance system.

At the College, the internal quality assurance system has been established at the structural level.

A regulatory and documentary framework is in place, and the Quality Assurance Unit and the Quality Assurance Committee have been established, comprising representatives of various staff groups and students. Mechanisms regulating key processes, including planning, monitoring, and selected analytical procedures, have been defined.

The Quality Assurance Committee plays a significant role in fostering a culture of quality and supporting institutional improvement initiatives. Certain survey and feedback mechanisms have been introduced, and processes aimed at identifying stakeholder needs, assessing satisfaction, and conducting limited analyses have been implemented.

Nevertheless, the full implementation of internal quality assurance mechanisms remains incomplete. The methodology of questionnaires, the analysis of results, and the planning of follow-up actions are often not systematised and lack measurable outcomes. In addition, a mechanism for evaluating the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance system has not yet been established.

As a result, the Expert Panel concludes that the improvements implemented at the College are relevant and contribute to the development of the strategic management system, the quality assurance culture, and research-informed governance processes. At the same time, further actions are required to ensure the maturity and effectiveness of these processes.

The College's academic programmes are designed in compliance with state educational standards, demonstrating structural and content coherence. The programmes incorporate up-to-date, labor market-relevant components, as well as innovative elements, ensuring a student-centred approach and the integration of technology-enhanced learning.

The College demonstrates a strategic approach to developing its educational offer, involving academic staff in reviewing state standards and engaging external stakeholders at the stages of designing new programmes and introducing content-related reforms. The applied teaching, assessment, and research skills development methods contribute to the students' comprehensive professional and social development. Effective practice-employer-student linkage models have been established, while the multi-level assessment framework ensures transparency and fairness.

At the same time, the management of academic programmes requires a more systematic and data-driven improvement model, including regular labor market needs analysis tools and clearly defined benchmarking mechanisms to enhance programme competitiveness.

The College has undertaken measures to ensure the quality, development, and sustainability of the academic and learning support staff, in line with the objectives set out in the Strategic Plan. Certain processes related to the selection, recruitment, evaluation, and incentivisation of teaching staff are regulated, and a range of mechanisms supports both internal evaluation and professional development. Positive developments are also observed in financing professional development activities, employer involvement, and the engagement of young professionals.

However, the tools for evaluating teaching staff performance and analysing staff competencies require further systematisation and strengthening of outcome-oriented approaches. In addition, clearly defined procedures for supporting novice teachers and for regulating classroom observations have not yet been established.

The College has ensured the availability of essential infrastructural and material-technical resources required for the organisation of the educational process. It possesses adequate classroom, laboratory, and information resources, which have been largely renovated and modernised in recent years. The facilities include computer-equipped classrooms, renovated laboratories, a library and reading room, safety and security systems (fire safety systems, video surveillance, evacuation plans), and a medical unit. The College also utilises certain digital tools for document management, in particular the Mulberry and Classroom platforms.

At the same time, several challenges have been identified, notably the absence of systematic financial planning, limited diversification of income sources, a lack of a unified electronic document management system, and low user satisfaction with resource utilisation.

Taking the above into account, the expert panel concludes that the College ensures the credible award of qualifications.

The College has developed a systematic approach to student recruitment, identification of educational needs, and the provision of advisory and career support services. It implements targeted career guidance and applicant outreach activities through promotional teams in schools, as well as within the framework of Open Days and Career Awareness Days. Alongside the educational process, consultative sessions, supplementary courses, and master classes are organised, contributing to students' academic progress.

A Student Council operates within the College as a representative body that voices student interests, and a Career Centre provides support for student employability, continued education, and engagement with employers. However, several areas of vulnerability have been identified, including low student feedback, the absence of effective mechanisms for evaluating advisory and support services, and limited transparency and insufficient planning for Student Council activities.

Within its 2023–2027 Strategic Plan, Yerevan State College of Informatics has identified research activities as a strategic priority, aiming to stimulate the creative and innovative potential of both students and academic staff. The College has developed relevant policies and procedures, regulated the mechanisms for the implementation of course papers and graduation projects, and elaborated methodological guidelines and assessment criteria by specialisation.

To promote student engagement in research, a range of mechanisms is used, including mandatory course papers, annual revision of graduation project topics, employer collaboration, and the integration of applied outcomes into the educational process. In terms of content, research activities encompass theoretical, analytical, and applied components, emphasising independent work and practical relevance. Graduation projects are also externally reviewed by employers, thereby strengthening their applicability in the labour market.

At the same time, it has been observed that needs assessment mechanisms are not applied in the formulation of research topics, and that a dedicated research funding policy and procedures for incentivising academic staff research activities are lacking.

The College has established a bottom-up accountability framework that ensures transparency in the activities of structural units through annual reporting. The Director's report aligns with

institutional accreditation criteria and is discussed by the Governing Board, demonstrating a public and participatory approach to governance. Feedback from society is ensured through the official website, the Facebook platform, and an approved communication policy. The College organises activities aimed at knowledge transfer and engagement with the broader community; however, the scope and intensity of educational services, particularly short-term training programmes, have declined in recent years.

The College has undertaken several systematic steps in external relations and internationalisation, defining relevant strategic objectives and involving professional structural units in collaborative processes. The expansion of cooperation with employer organisations, particularly in strengthening the practical component of practice-oriented educational programmes, constitutes a significant achievement. These developments indicate the presence of organisational capacity and favourable preconditions for the development of partnership relations.

Nevertheless, the College has not yet achieved full compliance with the standard's requirements. Certain inconsistencies have been identified between strategic planning and the implementation of activities. The College is not actively involved in international mobility programmes, does not implement regional cooperation initiatives, and lacks institutionally defined programmes aimed at developing foreign language proficiency and staff capacities. Furthermore, the limited availability of information in foreign languages hinders international visibility and the expansion of partnership potential, constraining the College's recognisability, cooperation capacity, and competitiveness within the global education landscape. To date, the systematic development of external relations and internationalisation has not been fully leveraged as a strategic enabler for progress in other institutional development areas.

Based on the above, it can be concluded that the processes implemented by Yerevan State College of Informatics are consistently oriented towards continuous development across multiple domains. At the same time, particular emphasis should be placed on the systematic deepening of external relations and internationalisation, considering them not only as a standalone strategic priority but also as a key driver for institutional advancement, the creation of new opportunities, and the expansion of development horizons.

Strengths of the Institution:

- A clearly articulated mission and objectives with a specific emphasis on the development of students' soft skills, including communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and self-directed learning competencies.
- A vertical and collaborative governance system supported by institutionally established and continuously developing mechanisms, with an enhanced role of academic departments in educational and managerial processes.
- Implemented and evolved strategic management mechanisms, ensuring the integrated and

coherent development of quality assurance and governance systems.

- A multi-layered internal quality assurance structure supported by a solid documentary framework, accompanied by a high level of staff involvement and a strong sense of responsibility.
- Compliance with academic programmes with current labor market and sectoral requirements, incorporating innovative and technological components, as well as flexible and content-oriented practical training structures.
- Diversity of teaching and learning methods and the application of a student-centred approach, emphasising the development of theoretical knowledge, practical competencies, and analytical-research skills, supported by a transparent and criteria-based assessment system.
- Availability of qualified academic staff aligned with the requirements of the academic programmes, along with employer involvement in the implementation of educational processes.
- Availability of a basic material and technical infrastructure necessary for the effective delivery of educational programmes.
- Active implementation of career guidance activities and the provision of academic and advisory support to students.
- Availability of a clear documentary basis, procedures, methodological guidelines, and templates for the organisation and implementation of research activities.
- Integration of research activities across all academic programmes, with employer involvement in the supervision and peer review of research work.
- Availability of methodological and teaching materials developed by academic staff and applied within the educational process.
- An operational accountability and reporting system between structural units and the Director, incorporating selected analytical components.
- Expansion of cooperation with employer organisations, particularly in the organisation and implementation of practical training.
- Recognition of the importance of internationalisation through the definition of strategic objectives and the establishment of a dedicated position responsible for coordinating international cooperation.

Weaknesses of the Institution:

- Insufficient methodology for analysing the results of strategic plan monitoring, including the absence of a documented and analytical evidence base underpinning the SWOT analysis.
- Lack of clarity in improvement measures linked to tangible outcomes within the strategic plan, along with shortcomings in the measurability of expected results and the analysis of achieved outcomes.
- Limited diversification of financial income sources (including the absence of grants, short-term training programmes, and alternative funding mechanisms), as well as insufficient alignment between financial planning, strategic objectives, and long-term development priorities.
- Underdeveloped tools for analysing the internal and external environment, coupled with methodological shortcomings in process-based research and analytical practices.
- Lack of a data-driven and proportionate approach to the planning and implementation of educational reforms.
- Insufficient comprehensiveness and outcome-orientation in the analysis of classroom observation and student survey results, as well as limited systematisation of methodological tools for assessing teaching quality.
- Incomplete planning of Student Council activities and the absence of structured accountability and reporting mechanisms.
- Absence of institutional mechanisms to stimulate and incentivise academic staff engagement in research activities and the study of the best international practices.
- Lack of international mobility through Erasmus+ and other mobility schemes, as well as the discontinuation of short-term dual and mobility-based programmes.
- Absence of a clearly defined policy for the development of foreign language competencies among academic and administrative staff, along with the lack of foreign language content on the institutional website.
- A significant gap between internationalisation strategy and its implementation, reflecting an unclear vision and insufficient coherence between strategic intentions and operational actions.

Main recommendations:

Data-Driven Management

- Define strategic objectives and expected outcomes measurably, ensuring effective oversight of implementation processes and clear, continuous monitoring of progress.
- Ensure the establishment of a systematic, analysis-based monitoring and evaluation process for the implementation of the strategic plan.
- Promote the continuous improvement of strategic management processes, with particular emphasis on the application of data-driven analyses and evidence-based decision-making.
- Enhance the effectiveness of operational management processes by introducing participatory planning mechanisms, a structured feedback system, and clearly defined formats for coordination and synchronisation of actions among structural units.
- Ensure the assessment and analysis of the impact of implemented actions, thereby enabling the effective re-planning of processes that have not yielded the intended outcomes.
- Develop a strategy for the diversification of financial resources by expanding funding sources through local and international partnerships, programme-based grants, and alternative financial instruments, ensuring the predictability and sustainability of financial support for strategic plans.
- Strengthen the toolkit for analysing the internal and external environment to improve the accuracy of planning and enhance strategic flexibility.
- Foster stakeholder engagement by ensuring the systematic dissemination of meeting outcomes and decisions, and by developing motivational mechanisms that encourage the articulation of challenges and the submission of proposals.
- Apply the PDCA cycle across all institutional processes, including a structured system for document review and monitoring, to ensure continuous quality improvement.
- Establish a clear methodology for the design, implementation, and continuous improvement of research instruments (e.g. questionnaires, focus group discussions), ensuring their effective and purpose-driven use, with particular emphasis on systematic data collection.
- Develop mechanisms to evaluate quality assurance processes and the overall quality assurance system, ensuring continuous improvement grounded in analytical evidence, including benchmarking practices.
- Promote active stakeholder involvement in quality assurance processes by broadening the

scope and depth of engagement.

Credible Awarding of Qualifications

- Develop and implement a benchmarking policy and related mechanisms, including the analysis of academic programmes offered by comparable national and international institutions.
- Ensure the application of established institutional mechanisms for the introduction and improvement of academic programmes, based on multi-source data and comprehensive analyses, including comparative analysis.
- Ensure the systematic identification of academic staff development needs and the continuous improvement of related mechanisms and implement targeted professional development activities in line with identified needs.
- Develop and implement class observation procedures, a mentoring policy for early-career academic staff, and other necessary mechanisms aimed at establishing an effective process for the continuous enhancement of teaching quality.
- Develop and implement a unified policy for academic staff incentives and professional advancement aimed at increasing motivation, including public recognition, financial incentives, career progression opportunities, and involvement in international programmes.
- Conduct analyses of resource efficiency and the cost-effectiveness (self-sustainability) of educational programmes, ensuring data-driven planning and allocation of resources.
- Introduce a unified electronic document management system to enhance process transparency, traceability, and operational efficiency.

Long-Term Development

- Develop and implement clear planning and accountability mechanisms for the activities of the Student Council, ensuring the effectiveness, transparency, and traceability of its operations.
- Introduce mechanisms for evaluating the quality of educational, advisory, and support services, publishing outcomes, and providing feedback to enhance student awareness and engagement.
- Establish a policy for funding research activities and ensuring the applicability of research outputs, based on systematic assessment of institutional and regional needs.

- Develop and implement policies and procedures to promote and incentivise academic staff engagement in research activities and the study of the best international practices.
- Strengthen community engagement and developing diverse communication platforms to enhance institutional visibility and societal interaction.
- Initiate the relaunch of dual education programmes, analyze the reasons for previous interruptions, develop new partnerships, particularly with employers, and integrate international best practices into the design of new programme models.
- Consider the systematic development of external relations and internationalisation as a strategic lever for institutional advancement and develop a clear implementation plan that prioritizes participation in national and international mobility programmes and grant-funded projects.
- Clarify the “Policy on Internationalisation and External Relations Development” by linking it to a concrete, measurable action plan, including expansion of international partnerships, participation in mobility programmes, identification of new partners, activation of existing collaborations, resource planning, partner evaluation mechanisms, and performance monitoring.
- Implement professional development processes for academic and administrative staff, particularly in foreign language proficiency, management of international programmes, and intercultural communication, to ensure effective implementation of strategic internationalisation objectives.
- Ensure multilingual functionality of the institutional website to increase international visibility and accessibility.
- Develop and strengthen connections with regional colleges, considering opportunities for experience exchange and joint project implementation at the regional level

DESCRIPTION OF EXTERNAL REVIEW

COMPOSITION OF EXPERT PANEL

The following expert panel conducted an external evaluation of Yerevan State College of Informatics' institutional capacities.

- **Armenuhi Sargsyan** – Associate Professor at the Chair of Mathematics, Physics and Information Technologies, Shirak State University; Head of the Expert Panel.
- **Araks Aghajanyan** – Quality Assurance Officer and Lecturer of Physics, Stepanavan State Agricultural College; Member of the Expert Panel.
- **Gayane Hambardzumyan** – Deputy Director for Academic Affairs, Vagharshapat Vardges Hamazaspyan State College; Member of the Expert Panel.
- **Maria Kirakosyan** – Student, Armenian European University; Student Member of the Expert Panel.

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

The work of the Expert Panel was coordinated by Liana Alaverdyan, Assistant to the Director of the National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance (ANQA).

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

PROCESS OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW

The College applied for state institutional accreditation by submitting an ANQA application, including the application form, copies of the license, and the respective appendices.

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

After deciding to accept the application, ANQA and the College signed an agreement. The timetable of activities was prepared and approved.

Self-evaluation

Given that the educational institution is undergoing its first accreditation process and is in the initial stages of establishing a culture of quality assurance, ANQA has conducted online workshops with accredited VET institutions. The workshops aimed to prepare colleges for the organisational stages

of the accreditation process. During the workshops, the interpretations of the institutional accreditation criteria and standards, the electronic questionnaire to be filled in for applying for institutional accreditation, and the features of self-evaluation and SWOT analysis were presented. The educational institution conducted a SWOT analysis, which was discussed with ANQA employees. During the implementation of the self-evaluation, current discussions were organized by the ANQA to clarify the issues.

The revised self-evaluation of Ararat State College's institutional capacities was submitted. Representatives of the institution's administrative and educational staff, lecturers, and students participated in the self-evaluation process.

Preparatory phase

The Expert Panel, having reviewed the VET's self-evaluation report and the accompanying package of documents, conducted a preliminary evaluation in accordance with the prescribed format. As part of this process, the Panel prepared a list of additional documents requiring further examination and identified key issues and questions, indicating the respective structural units or target groups to be addressed. Subsequently, the Expert Panel consolidated the results of the preliminary assessment and developed a detailed plan and schedule for the site visit.

Preparatory visit

Before the site visit, a preparatory visit to the college was carried out on 19.04.2025. The ANQA coordinator, the head of the institutional program accreditation department and the head of the expert panel were present at the meeting. During the meeting, the site visit schedule was introduced and agreed upon with the college. Additionally, the meeting participants discussed and mutually agreed on decisions regarding the technical, organisational, and information aspects of the site visit, as well as the behaviour and ethical norms of the participants.

Site visit

The expert panel site visit took place from April 16-18, 2025. During the week preceding the site visit, the expert panel members and the coordinator visited the college, observed its infrastructure and resources, conducted class observations, and observed exams. Then the experts and the coordinator had a closed meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to identify the college's strengths and weaknesses against the standards, clarify the questions to be asked of the target groups, and discuss the meeting

procedures and next steps.

The site visit began and ended with meetings with the College's director. All participants in the meetings were randomly selected from a pre-provided list. All scheduled meetings were held. During the visit, the expert panel reviewed documents.

At the end of each working day, the expert panel held closed meetings to discuss the results of the interim expert assessment, and at the end of the visit, the main results were summarised.

The expert panel reached its conclusion on the criteria through discussions and analyses by all members, always applying the principle of consensus.

Expert panel report

The members of the expert panel, in cooperation with the ANQA coordinator, prepared the preliminary version of the expert report, which was reviewed and agreed upon by the experts. Subsequently, the expert panel finalised the expert report, which was approved by the panel on 11 July 2025.

Liana Alaverdyan

Coordinator of the Expert Panel

11.07.2025

EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

CRITERION	CONCLUSION
<i>I. Mission and Purposes</i>	Satisfactory
<i>II. Governance and Administration</i>	Satisfactory
<i>III. Academic Programmes</i>	Satisfactory
<i>IV. Students</i>	Satisfactory
<i>V. Faculty and Staff</i>	Satisfactory
<i>VI. Research and Development</i>	Satisfactory
<i>VII. Infrastructure and Resources</i>	Satisfactory
<i>VIII. Societal Responsibility</i>	Satisfactory
<i>IX. External Relations and Internationalization</i>	Unsatisfactory
<i>X. Internal Quality Assurance System</i>	Satisfactory