

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



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

Yerevan – 2025

INTRODUCTION

The institutional accreditation of Noyemberyan State College (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 presents the results of the evaluation of the TLI's institutional capacities against the State Accreditation Criteria and Standards.

Context of the Evaluation of the VET Institution's Activities

Background and History of the Institution

The VET institution was established in 2004 under the name “Noyemberyan State College” and is the legal successor of Noyemberyan Vocational Technical School No. 82. The College's registered address is Shiraz Street 17, Noyemberyan, Tavush Region, Republic of Armenia.

Development Directions and Academic Programmes of the VET Institution
Noyemberyan State College is a vocational education and training institution providing initial and middle-level professional education programmes in the Tavush Region. In the 2024–2025 academic year, approximately 236 students were enrolled at the VET institution.

According to the “Development Strategy of Tavush Region of the Republic of Armenia for 2017–2025”, the key development priorities of the region are as follows:

1. Development of industry, based on the utilization of natural resources and the processing of agricultural products;
2. Development of sustainable tourism;
3. Development of modern agriculture and improvement of rural areas.

The following academic programs are implemented at the VET institution:

Middle-Level Vocational Educational Programs

- Accounting (by specialisation) – based on general secondary and basic education
- Computer Graphic Design – based on general secondary and basic education
- Tourism (by specialisation) – based on general secondary and basic education
- Organisation of Peasant (Farm) Economy – based on general secondary education
- Veterinary Medicine – based on general secondary and basic education
- Preschool Education – based on general secondary and basic education

Initial Vocational Educational Programs

- Operation and Maintenance of Vehicles (by type) – based on basic education
- Technical Support of Agricultural Activities – based on basic education
- Installation, Maintenance, and Repair of Renewable Energy Power Facilities – based on basic education
- Culinary Arts – based on general secondary and basic education
- Garment Production Technologies – based on general secondary and basic education

A total of 29 faculty members are involved in delivering the College's academic programs.

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

The expertise of the Noyemberyan State College 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.

During the evaluation, the expert panel considered several key contextual factors that have significantly influenced the development of the VET institution.

1. Geographical and socio-economic context:

The College is in the town of Noyemberyan, Tavush Region, where large employers and industrial enterprises are absent, while small and medium-sized businesses are predominantly at an early stage of establishment and development.

2. Institutional development dynamics:

Systematic and visible institutional development has mainly been observed since 2021, following the appointment of a new director and the introduction of revised management approaches. Prior to this period, several institutional indicators reflected stagnation or decline, including a significant decrease in student enrolment, the failure to form professional groups, and limited material-technical and human resources, which constrained the effective organisation of the educational process.

3. Regional role and significance:

The College is the only vocational education institution serving the town of Noyemberyan and the surrounding communities and therefore constitutes a key educational resource for the local labor market.

4. Accreditation cycle and quality assurance maturity:

The Noyemberyan State College is undergoing institutional accreditation for the first time, and its internal quality assurance system is currently in a formative stage.

The mission of Noyemberyan State College is to ensure graduates’ preparedness for independent living by acquiring, transmitting, and disseminating knowledge, within the framework of the state strategy for the development of education, in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Armenia and the College’s Charter.

As the only vocational education institution in the region, the College provides education that supports regional development and meets local labour market needs by preparing qualified specialists. In line with contemporary criteria for shaping an autonomous individual, a responsible citizen, and a nationally relevant professional, the College seeks to ensure learners’ readiness for independent life by providing access to education and professional training that align with learners’ inclinations, abilities, capacities, and interests.

The governance of the College is implemented within the framework of the 2021–2026

Strategic Plan, which generally reflects the institution's key challenges and has enabled progress across both educational and managerial processes. Nevertheless, several shortcomings are identified in the Strategic Plan, including the absence of clearly defined KPIs, designated implementation personnel, and specified timelines.

In the absence of systematic monitoring mechanisms, the implementation and oversight of the Strategic Plan are largely centralised with the Director. Furthermore, departmental planning and reporting are not derived from the Strategic Plan, so the document is perceived in practice more as the Director's operational plan than as an institutional framework guiding and coordinating the activities of the entire College.

The College's operational management is carried out by the Director, who has held the position since 2021. In recent years, positive trends have been observed in governance and management processes, including substantial efforts to introduce new vocational education programs, donor organisations' engagement, the modernisation of resources, an increase in student enrolment, and the diversification of financial sources.

Nevertheless, the institution continues to face several challenges, some of which have been influenced by a financial crisis, the mitigation of which has required significant institutional efforts. In response to the financial constraints, the College has adopted a cost-saving policy, resulting in the reduction or non-replacement of certain staff positions. Consequently, several staff members currently perform multiple functions, which has negatively affected the effectiveness of specific management processes. In particular, the absence of a designated Quality Assurance officer has hindered the systematic development and effective functioning of the internal quality assurance system.

The College's internal quality assurance system has not yet been fully established. Over the past two years, several surveys have been conducted among internal and external stakeholders; however, these have not been implemented regularly, and some of the collected data have not yet been fully analysed. This limits the institution's capacity to support evidence-based decision-making.

The College requires a designated Quality Assurance officer to develop and implement the internal quality assurance system and to promote the establishment of a data-informed management culture grounded in evidence.

In this regard, the expert panel concludes that decision-making at the College is not consistently grounded in objective and systematically analysed data.

Over the past four years, the College has been undergoing a period of change and development. Several new vocational education programs have been introduced and are currently being implemented, some of which directly respond to regional labor market needs, while others have been launched as a result of resource enhancement through international programs. These include, inter alia, programmes in photovoltaic systems installation and maintenance, information technologies, tourism, and related fields.

In recent years, the College has also expanded its communication and cooperation with local employers to introduce new VET programs aligned with regional needs, as well as partially review and improve existing programmes. Nevertheless, the College continues to face systemic challenges, the

most significant of which is the limited number of employers in the region, and, in some sectors, their absence. As a result, practical training is predominantly conducted within the College's internal laboratories.

While student assignments in certain programmes (e.g. Computer Graphic Design) demonstrate a practical and creative orientation, in other programs they remain largely theoretical and insufficiently reflective of authentic professional contexts. This negatively affects student motivation and interest in their chosen field of study.

Over the past year, the College has introduced student portfolios in its secondary vocational education programs. The expert panel considers that the systematic use of student portfolios can contribute not only to a more structured analysis of student progress but also to the strengthening of the practical component of student assignments.

Regarding the academic staff, it should be noted that, compared to previous years, the teaching staff has become younger and been reinforced by the recruitment of new specialists. However, due to the limited availability of qualified professionals in the region, the College continues to face persistent challenges with staff stability. Moreover, the College is experiencing academic staff turnover, particularly among instructors responsible for professional modules.

The recruitment of lecturers for specialised modules remains problematic, and in some cases, the College faces a shortage of specialists required to deliver specific VET programmes. As a result, newly appointed lecturers are occasionally assigned responsibility for teaching the entire set of professional modules within a program. It should also be noted that VET programs are generally delivered by only one or two specialised lecturers.

The shortage of qualified specialists is partially addressed through the re-profiling and retraining of existing staff. Nevertheless, one of the most critical challenges remains the lack of a clearly articulated strategy for academic staff recruitment and professional development. Such a strategy is necessary to ensure the planned, systematic development of teaching staff over time and to secure the long-term sustainability and stability of the academic workforce.

In recent years, the College has consistently modernised its resource base by establishing contemporary laboratories, acquiring essential technical equipment, and diversifying its financial sources. However, certain limitations persist, most notably the absence of library infrastructure and the lack of chemistry and physics laboratories, which constrain the full and effective implementation of some educational programmes.

Regarding financial management, the institution demonstrates effective stewardship of its financial resources. The gradual rise in revenues has enabled the College to move incrementally towards greater financial stability.

In summary, the Expert Panel notes that the College strives to provide credible qualifications; however, several challenges in this area remain.

The College has established certain mechanisms for student recruitment, needs identification, and student support, which have contributed to the steady growth of the student population. Nevertheless, the data collected on graduates remains incomplete. The available information is largely

limited to the year of graduation and contact details, while comprehensive data on graduates' employment status, workplaces, positions held, and career progression is lacking. As a result, it is not possible to conduct an objective, evidence-based assessment of the relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability of the VET programmes.

Noyemberyan State College has developed an internal accountability system structured across hierarchical levels, ensuring reporting lines from academic staff to the Director. However, planning and reporting processes are not sufficiently aligned with the strategic development plan, limiting their effectiveness to functional and operational reporting rather than strategic performance management. The Director's annual reports primarily present quantitative data without comparative or cause-and-effect analysis, thereby reducing their usefulness for future planning and evidence-based decision-making.

The institution primarily relies on its actively updated Facebook page as its main communication platform with stakeholders.

The College demonstrates social responsibility by organising short-term educational programs for the community and by actively participating in cultural and socio-civic initiatives. These activities not only provide additional learning opportunities for the local population but also strengthen the institution's role and visibility within the community.

In the area of external relations and internationalisation, the College cooperates with local employers, donor organisations, and international partners. In recent years, communication and collaboration with these stakeholders have intensified. As a result of these partnerships, the institution's material and technical infrastructure has been significantly enhanced, and new prospects for sustainable cooperation have been established.

In conclusion, the Expert Panel notes that there is clear potential for the College's further development.

Strengths of the Institution:

- A high level of staff cohesion and a shared vision oriented towards the College's development.
- Introduction of new vocational education programs based on an analysis of regional needs and labor market demands.
- Implementation of student portfolios within middle-level vocational education programs.
- An increase in the number of enrolled students.
- Modernisation of the educational environment and enrichment of the teaching and learning process through contemporary resources.
- Diversification of financial resources and securing alternative funding streams.
- Active implementation of short-term programs as an additional educational offer and an

alternative source of income.

- Cooperation with donor organisations and regional employers aimed at the development of educational programs and resources.

Weaknesses of the Institution:

- Lack of coherence between strategic planning, operational planning, and accountability processes.
- Absence of employer involvement in vocational educational programs due to the limited number of employers in the region and the insufficient development of certain labor market sectors.
- Uneven development of vocational educational programs and the limited alignment of student assignments in certain programmes with real workplace contexts.
- Overload of administrative and academic support staff caused by a broad scope of responsibilities.
- Instability of the faculty, along with the absence of a clearly articulated strategy and action plan aimed at gradual staff stabilisation.
- Inadequate physical infrastructure, including insufficient classroom conditions and the absence of a reading room and library (including electronic library resources).
- Excessive workload of administrative and academic support staff resulting from multifunctional duties.
- Lack of reliable and systematised data on graduate employment and educational–professional career pathways.
- Underdeveloped internal quality assurance system, including the absence of regular evaluation and monitoring processes.
- Absence of institutional mechanisms for the implementation of research and methodological activities, as well as low engagement of teaching staff and students in research activities.
- Absence of an official institutional website of the VET institution.

Main recommendations:

Data-Driven Management

- Review and clarify the College’s mission, explicitly indicating the professional education levels (initial and secondary vocational education) for which the institution prepares specialists, and clearly articulating its role in regional development and alignment with labor market needs.

- Refine the strategic planning framework by defining specific timelines, responsible units/persons, performance indicators (KPIs), and funding sources.
- Review the formats of unit-level plans and reports, aligning them with the key priorities of the Strategic Development Plan, ensuring unit-level accountability, and improving the planning and evaluation processes.
- Introduce data-driven and inclusive governance, based on systematic data collection and analysis mechanisms (including KPI-based analytical reports at the unit level), and ensure the participation of students and teaching staff in decision-making processes.
- Review the organisational governance structure, based on an analysis of the functional units and positions required for the effective operation of the management system, clarify vertical and horizontal functional linkages between governance levels and identify priority positions for staffing.
- Develop a resource optimisation and responsibility allocation plan, clearly define responsible persons for the implementation of SDP actions and processes, reducing staff overload by balancing workloads, and strengthening accountability across all management levels.
- Define clear performance indicators for assessing the effectiveness of structural units, ensuring objective evaluation and accountability.
- Review and improve planning documents, ensuring coherence between long-term institutional plans and short-term unit-level plans.
- Conduct systematic and periodic analyses of internal and external factors affecting the College's activities, ensuring data-informed management and using the collected data for subsequent planning and improvement processes.
- Develop and implement the internal Quality Assurance policy and procedures, and integrate QA processes as an integral component of strategic planning.
- Establish and staff the position of QA officer, supported by a clearly defined job description.
- Develop and diversify QA mechanisms and tools, including surveys, focus group discussions, data and report analyses, and other relevant instruments.
- Ensure regular data collection and analysis on the effectiveness of unit activities, with the aim of timely identification of challenges and the development of appropriate corrective actions.
- Introduce an integrated data management and governance system to centralize and consolidate

information related to teaching quality, effectiveness of student assignments, resource utilisation, employer requirements, and graduate career trajectories.

Credible Awarding of Qualifications

- Develop and implement a policy and procedures for the design, monitoring, and review of VET programs, defining unified approaches to process organisation, responsible units/persons, timelines, and the scope and content of monitoring activities.
- Develop and implement unified approaches to the selection of teaching, learning, and assessment methods, ensuring their alignment with the content-specific characteristics of professional modules within VTPs.
- Integrate assignments and tasks linked to real professional situations across all VTPs, ensuring the development of student competences in line with labor market requirements.
- Enhance teaching and learning methodologies by ensuring the active engagement of all students and the consistent application of learning tools and instructional approaches.
- Develop clear assessment criteria (rubrics) differentiated by assessment types (formative and summative assessments, practical training, and State Final Attestation), aligned with intended learning outcomes, and ensuring the use of objective tools and assignments for the assessment of theoretical knowledge and practical skills and competences.
- Develop and implement a clear, long-term strategy for recruiting and retaining teaching staff, including mechanisms for recruitment, re-profiling, and rejuvenation, as well as establishing a mentoring system between experienced and early-career lecturers.
- Develop and implement regulations and procedures for evaluating teaching and learning support staff, introduce a continuous teaching effectiveness evaluation system, and organize targeted, individualised professional development activities based on evaluation outcomes.
- Diversify methods and mechanisms for evaluating teaching effectiveness, establishing a comprehensive and systematic model of staff performance evaluation that includes, in addition to classroom observations, analysis of student survey results, triangulation with data on students' academic and professional progress, and other relevant indicators.
- Introduce differentiated incentives and reward mechanisms for teaching staff, based on the outcomes of staff performance evaluations, including research and methodological activities, classroom observation results, and student feedback.

- Initiate the establishment of a digital library, incorporating up-to-date Armenian- and foreign-language professional literature, and explore opportunities to establish cooperation agreements with other educational institutions and libraries to ensure access to shared digital library platforms.
- Conduct regular assessments of resource utilization and satisfaction among students, teaching staff, and administrative personnel, and use the results for targeted resource planning and improvement.
- Continue identifying donor organisations and deepen cooperation, with the aim of ensuring the continuous improvement of the educational environment and the material and technical resources.
- Prioritise the establishment and upgrading of physics and biology laboratories within the resource development and modernisation process.

Long-Term Development

- Develop and implement a clear methodology for graduate tracking studies, and improve the graduate database by incorporating comprehensive data on professional employment and ensuring regular updates.
- Organise regular meetings (including online formats) with successful employers and alumni in the field to increase student motivation and strengthen interest in their chosen profession.
- Revitalise the activities of the Student Council, based on the results of systematic needs assessments, while encouraging student initiative and active participation through involvement in thematic clubs and educational, social, and cultural projects.
- Integrate research activities into strategic planning by developing targeted actions for faculty capacity building, embedding research components in student assignments, creating methodological guidelines, and ensuring the purposeful use of existing laboratory resources.
- Organise professional development training and experience-sharing meetings for teaching staff with other VET institutions, aimed at strengthening students' research competencies and ensuring their integration into the learning process, including the use of online collaboration formats.
- Develop and implement clear requirements and assessment criteria for student research,

including methodological guidelines that define structural requirements and unified formats for the submission and presentation of research outputs.

- Promote faculty engagement in research activities, ensuring the study and application of best practice within the professional field and linking research outcomes to teaching and learning processes.
- Cooperate with regional employers and community organisations to formulate applied research topics aligned with regional and labor market needs.
- Plan and implement at least three community outreach or awareness-raising events or publications annually, with active student participation and systematic collection of community feedback.
- Establish an official institutional website, ensuring the publication of essential information and key institutional documents.
- Create public communication platforms for knowledge transfer, focusing on agriculture, technological innovations, and other topical areas relevant to regional development.
- Strengthen cooperation with secondary and higher professional education institutions, as well as sectoral organisations, to facilitate the exchange of experience and create new opportunities for human resource development.
- Enhance engagement in Erasmus+ and other capacity-building programmes, creating opportunities for international mobility and experience exchange for both teaching staff and students.
- Ensure the enhancement of foreign language proficiency, particularly English, among students, teaching staff, and administrative personnel, to expand international cooperation and institutional visibility.

Asya Simonyan , Chair of Expert Panel / 10.11.2025

DESCRIPTION OF EXTERNAL REVIEW

COMPOSITION OF EXPERT PANEL

The following expert panel conducted an external evaluation of Noyemberyan State College's institutional capacities.

- **Asya Simonyan** – Assistant Lecturer at the Department of Sport and Arts, Shirak M. Nalbandyan State University, PhD (Pedagogical Sciences), Coach-Instructor in Rhythmic Gymnastics at the Gyumri Higher School of Sports Excellence, Head of the Expert Panel.
- **Suzanna Hovsepyan** – Lecturer at Ejmiatsin V. Hamazaspian State College, Member of the Expert Panel.
- **Tatevik Petrosyan** – Lecturer at Yerevan State Humanitarian and Technical College, Member of the Expert Panel.
- **Eva Mirzoyan** – Student at Ararat Regional State College, Student Expert, Member of the Expert Panel.

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

The work of the Expert Panel was coordinated by Anahit Terteryan, Specialist of the Institutional and Programme Accreditation Division of 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 (23.11.2024) 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(27.12.2024), 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 on 19.11.2025. 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 25.06.2025. 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 June 30- July 02, 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 and the ANQA coordinator prepared the preliminary version of the expert report, which was agreed upon by the experts. The preliminary report was submitted to the College on 29 September 2025. The VET institution did not submit any comments on the preliminary report. Subsequently, the Expert Panel finalised the report and submitted it to the ANQA on 10 November 2025.

Anahit Terteyan

Coordinator of the Expert Panel

10.11.2025

EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

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