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GAVAR STATE UNIVERSITY

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TUSCIA

QUALITY ASSURANCE PRINCIPLES AND FRAMEWORK

The Armenian Quality Assurance Framework of Higher Education is based on the following four principles of EHEA:

➢ TLIs carry responsibility for the quality assurance of the education they provide,

➢ quality assurance responds to the diversity of higher education systems, institutions, programmes, and students,

➢ quality assurance fosters the creation of quality culture,

➢ quality assurance considers the needs and expectations of students including all other stakeholders and society.

The Armenian Quality Assurance Framework of Higher Education includes four different processes:

- ➤ external quality assurance,

- ➤ internal quality assurance,

- ➤ recognition of quality assurance agency by international organizations,

- ➤ information provision.

PLAN-DO-CHECK-ACT

The policy is based on the principle of continuous quality enhancement, which includes four main operations thus formulating the driving principle of continuous quality enhancement: plan-do-check-act.

➤ Plan - establishing feasible priorities and developing a realistic course of action to achieve identified objectives;

➤ Do - executing the action plan;

➤ Check- evaluating the realization of educational objectives on an ongoing basis;

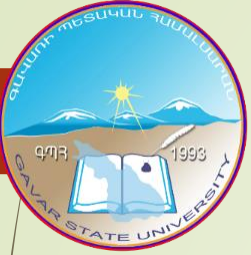➤ Act – reviewing the results achieved and reconsidering further steps and actions.
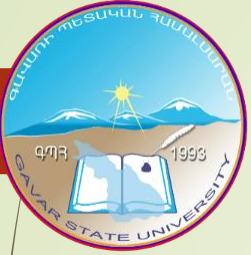
EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE'S AIMS

External quality assurance processes have three essential aims:

- Accountability and transparency: Quality assurance processes ensure that in case of adherence to accreditation criteria and state academic standards, public interest is met and local, national and international publicity of TLIs' academic services and quality is guaranteed.

- Control: The institution not only controls the expenditure of its resources, but also demonstrates how it accomplishes the advancement of education quality by making an efficient use of resources.

- Quality enhancement: The institution conducts discussions and analyses with a view to promoting the effectiveness of quality assurance processes, the creation and sustainable development of quality culture.

External quality assurance attempts to ensure that the TLI's operations answer the following questions:

❑ Does the TLI have procedures promoting "quality culture creation" and are they operating throughout the institution and for all academic programmes?

❑ Does the TLI periodically evaluate the achievement of its mission with regard to quality assurance and further development of academic programmes?

❑ Are the findings from quality assurance procedures used to improve the quality of academic performance, training services and strive to meet the needs of the learners?

❑ Does the TLI monitor the effectiveness of the services rendered to the learners?

❑ Is the TLI concerned with imperfections, drawbacks identified in the QA procedures, and does it take immediate action toward their elimination and improvement?

❑ Does the TLI provide its stakeholders with relevant and trustworthy information about the institutional effectiveness and quality of academic programmes?

EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS. ACCREDITATION

Various mechanisms of external quality assessment and assurance are being applied in EHEA; these being external audit, certification, assessment, accreditation, etc.

- ✓ **Audit:** the audit is carried out on the initiative of the institution with the involvement of external experts. The audit is intended to evaluate the procedures, processes, and mechanisms of the TLI. In case of audit, the subject of assessment is not the correspondence with the aims but rather quality assurance procedures, mechanisms, and processes that are directed to the fulfillment of the mission and defined objectives.

- ✓ **Certification**: This is a process by which the auditing body officially recognizes the TLI's adherence to predetermined quality requirements and usually grants some privileges to the target body. This process is mainly voluntary in nature.

EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS. ACCREDITATION

✓ **Assessment:** This process is generally applied at programme level. It is a process, which helps to verify that the TLI's functioning or new developed academic programme is commensurate with the quality required, meets the stated requirements, and can either continue or start its implementation.

✓ **Accreditation:** Accreditation is carried out by a state authorized body. It is a process by which an external body assesses the quality of an institutional or specific academic programme with a view to officially recognize its compliance with minimum predetermined criteria and standards.

ACCREDITATION TYPES

The Armenian external quality assurance entails two types of accreditation:

➢ institutional,

➢ programme.

INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION

Institutional Accreditation is the state recognition of academic and QA procedures of the TLI, the requirements set forward towards academic programmes as ascribed to the TLI by the law, correspondence with state academic standards and institutional accreditation criteria.

Institutional accreditation is a regular mandatory process both for private and public institutions operating in the territory of the RA. Institutional Accreditation allows to evaluate the effectiveness of TLI operations, as well as to find out whether the TLI is in compliance with its mission, whether it follows the policy of continuous improvement and enhances the development of implemented academic programmes.

Institutional accreditation is a prerequisite for Programme Accreditation.

PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION

Programme Accreditation is the recognition of academic programmes and the correspondence of quality with state accreditation standards and programme accreditation criteria. Programme Accreditation is targeted at separate academic programmes. This procedure allow to periodically evaluate the effectiveness of academic programmes as well as to monitor whether it thoroughly ensures the acquisition of intended learning outcomes. The Programme Accreditation is carried out on the initiative of the TLI, based on voluntary basis, with the exception of medical academic programmes, the accreditation of which is compulsory.

ACCREDITATION PROCESS'S STEPS

There are three general phases or steps in the accreditation process:

1. Self-evaluation is an evaluation procedure of the institution or its academic programme, which is followed by a written report based on the standards adopted by RA Government.

2. External Review is a process whereby an expert panel carries out deskreview, which involves examining the self-evaluation report and all other important documents submitted by the institution. This is followed by a site visit, during which the expert panel members meet with institutional representatives in person: administrative and academic staff, students, graduates, employers and as an outcome, the panel prepares a written report, which includes recommendations on the areas to be improved.

3. Decision-making is a process of fact reviewing, decision-making and indication of areas in need of urgent solutions.
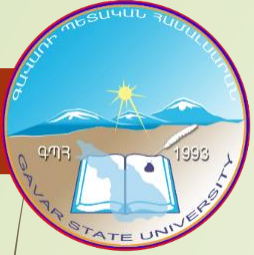
ACCREDITATION CRITERIA AND STANDARDS

Criteria are distinct and discrete statements, which identify or define in verifiable terms, the attributes of institutions or programmes.

Standards are statements that identify the conditions necessary for an objective evaluation of the extent to which an institution meets each criterion.

The criteria, standards and performance indicators promulgated by the RA Government are reviewed and modified periodically to ensure they are up-todate, valid, relevant and consistent with the emerging trends and recent developments in the field of quality assurance and accreditation.

INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION CRITERIA AND STANDARDS

Institutional criteria and standards are:

I. MISSION AND PURPOSE

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).

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.

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.

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

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

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

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

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.

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

III. ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES CRITERION

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

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 institution's mission and the state academic standards.

3.2 The TLI has a policy that ensures alignment between teaching and learning approaches and the intended learning outcomes of academic programs promoting student-centered learning.

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

3.4 The academic programmes of the TLI are contextually coherent with other relevant programmes and promote internationalization and mobility of students and staff.

3.5 The TLI has policy ensuring academic programme monitoring, effectiveness assessment and improvement.

IV. STUDENTS CRITERION

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

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

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

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

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

4.5 The TLI has student career support services.

4.6 The TLI promotes student involvement in its research activities.

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

4.8 The TLI has evaluation and quality assurance mechanisms of student educational, advisory and other services.
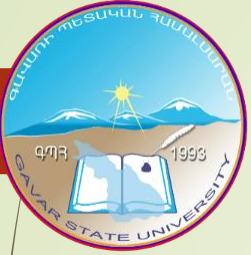
V. FACULTY AND STAFF CRITERION

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

VI. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CRITERION

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

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

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

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

6.4 The TLI emphasizes the internationalization of its research.

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

VII.INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES CRITERION

The TLI has necessary resources to create learning environment and to effectively support the implementation of its stated mission and objectives.

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

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

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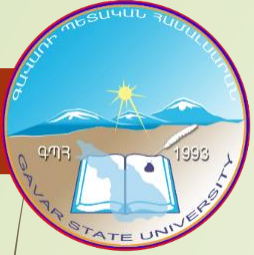
7.4 The TLI's resource base supports the implementation of institution's academic programmes and TLI strategic plan, which promotes for sustainability and continuous quality enhancement.

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

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

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

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.

8.1 The TLI has clear policy on institutional accountability.

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

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

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

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.

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.

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

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

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

X. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE CRITERION

The TLI has an internal quality assurance system for promoting establishment of a quality culture and continuous improvement of all the processes of TLI.

10.1 The TLI has internal quality assurance policies and procedures.

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

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

10.4 The internal quality assurance system is periodically reviewed.

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

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.

GSU ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2017 Gavar State University has been accredited and received the institutional accreditation for 4 year.