FINAL REPORT

INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION

ARMENIAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS

October 2025

Content

DECISION OF THE AQAS STANDING COMMISSION

ON THE INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION

OF THE ARMENIAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS, ARMENIA

Based on the report of the expert panel and the discussions of the AQAS Standing Commission in its 26th meeting on 8 September 2025, the AQAS Standing Commission decides:

1. The **Armenian State University of Economics, Armenia** is accredited according to the AQAS Criteria for Institutional Accreditation.

   The accreditation is conditional.

   The university essentially complies with the requirements defined by the criteria and thus the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) in their current version. The required adjustments can be implemented within a time period of twelve months.

2. The condition has to be fulfilled. The fulfilment of the condition has to be documented and reported to AQAS no later than **30 September 2026**.

3. The accreditation is given for the period of **six years** and is valid until **30 September 2031**, provided that the conditions listed below are fully met. Otherwise, the accreditation may be withdrawn.

Condition:

1. The university must adjust its approach to the formulation of learning outcomes to ensure consistency and compatibility with international standards and facilitate student mobility and employability.

The following **recommendations** are given for further improvement of the institution:

1. To ensure that stakeholders can easily comprehend responsibilities, workflows, and their inter-connections, it is recommended to systematically present major quality assurance processes in a visual format.

2. It is recommended that a separation of responsibilities within the quality assurance department be considered in order to evaluate the implementation of the strategic plan's objectives using key indicators and to coordinate the evaluation and analysis of ASUE's institutional capacities by establishing a separate unit responsible for monitoring the implementation of the development strategy.

3. It is recommended that long term, mid-term and short-term planning be separated with clear KPIs for clarity of necessary activities to be conducted to fulfil the vision, mission, and strategic objectives of the university.

4. To increase the effectiveness of annual reports, an analysis should be developed to achieve the goals for mid-term and annual periods based on SMART principles so that the level of achievement can be assessed.

5. While stakeholder involvement is evident at various stages and by various means, a methodological refinement of stakeholder mapping would further enhance the systematic inclusion of internal and external voices, especially from employers and alumni.

6. A standalone document or inclusion of the termination process in the regulation on programme development and monitoring is recommended to increase procedural clarity and long-term planning capacity.

7. Measures should be taken to maintain and increase student participation in quality assurance processes, particularly surveys.

8. Clear guidelines should be developed for interpreting and contextualising survey results with lower participation rates to ensure that valid insights can be drawn.

9. A formalised and anonymised method to gather student feedback on actual workload, i.e. as part of course evaluations, should be implemented.

10. It is recommended that the infrastructure for accessing a wide range of national and international literature (textbooks, monographs, and internationally relevant journals) be improved at the university level.

11. The UMS should be actively used by students and staff for academic task management and performance monitoring, while Moodle should be further integrated.

12. The university should establish procedures for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

13. A clearer structure for evaluating teaching and research quality in terms of standard setting should be considered.

14. It is recommended that available scientific journals be included in the list of literature for study courses to facilitate linking research and teaching and learning.

15. The elaboration of a research policy and an AI policy at the institutional level as a broad guideline, including key principles and governance structures for conducting research and applying AI in teaching and learning, as well research and administrative activities should be considered to ensure transparency and consistency across different units of the university.

16. The internationalisation of research should be promoted and integrated into the annual evaluation of academic staff.

17. The university should ensure that all publicly available information and key materials are also provided in English.

18. The university should introduce routine checks and systematic version control to ensure that only the most recent and validated versions of documents are publicly accessible.

19. The introduction of clear, accessible policies on data protection and IT risk management is strongly encouraged.

With regard to the reasons for this decision the Standing Commission refers to the attached experts' report.

EXPERTS' REPORT
ON THE INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION
OF THE ARMENIAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS (ARMENIA)

Visit to the university: 26-30 May 2025

Panel of experts:

Dr. **Anne-Dörte Balks**	Centre for Quality Assurance (ZQS), Leibniz University of Hannover, Germany
Arpine Hakobyan	Student at Vanadzor State University
Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. **André W. Heinemann**	Professor for Federal and Regional Financial Relations, Dean of Studies, University of Bremen, Germany
Prof. Dr. **Nonna Khachatryan**	Chair of Business Administration, Yerevan State University
Prof. Dr. **Tatjana Volkova**	Professor of Strategic Management and Innovation Management, BA School of Business and Finance, Riga, Latvia
Dr. **Naira Derdzyan**	Partner – Advisory Services, Grant Thornton Armenia, Yerevan, Armenia

Coordinators:

Varduhi Gyulazyan	ANQA consultant
Ronny Heintze	AQAS consultant

I.   Preamble

AQAS – Agency for Quality Assurance through Accreditation of Study Programmes – is an independent non-profit organisation supported by nearly 90 universities, universities of applied sciences, and academic associations. Since 2002, the agency has been recognised by the German Accreditation Council (GAC). It is, therefore, a notified body for the accreditation of higher education institutions and programmes in Germany.

AQAS is an institution founded by and working for higher education institutions and academic associations. The agency is devoted to quality assurance and quality development of academic studies and higher education institutions' teaching. In line with AQAS' mission statement, the official bodies in Germany and Europe (GAC and EQAR) approved that the activities of AQAS in accreditation are neither limited to specific academic disciplines or degrees nor a particular type of higher education institution.

ANQA – National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation – is an independent organisation established in 2008 as the external quality assurance agency in the Republic of Armenia. Its mission is to promote continuous quality enhancement in the Higher and VET education systems while contributing to institutional autonomy and accountability. Since its establishment, ANQA has been the national body responsible for external quality assurance through institutional and programme accreditation of higher education institutions (HEIs) and vocational education institutions (VETs) in Armenia.

AQAS and ANQA are the full members of ENQA and also listed in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) which confirms that the procedures comply with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), on which all Bologna countries agreed as a basis for internal and external quality assurance.

II.   Accreditation procedure

This report results from the external institutional review of the Armenian State University of Economics (Armenia).

1.   Approach and methodology

Within the joint institutional accreditation procedure conducted by AQAS and ANQA, the quality assurance system of a university, faculty is assessed against the institutional accreditation criteria. The synopsis outlines the accreditation criteria applied by both agencies. These criteria are aligned with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG, version 2015). The ESG are a set of standards and guidelines for internal and external quality assurance in higher education. The ESG are non-prescriptive while providing guidance and covering the vital areas for the successful quality provision and learning environments in higher education.

In line with the ESG the criteria for institutional accreditation are based on the following four principles for quality assurance:

- Higher education institutions have primary responsibility for the quality of their provision and its assurance,
- Quality assurance responds to the diversity of higher education systems, institutions, programmes and students,
- Quality assurance supports the development of a quality culture,
- Quality assurance considers the needs and expectations of students and all other stakeholders and society.

AQAS and ANQA developed a set of criteria and indicators relevant for institutional accreditations. Based on these accreditation criteria, AQAS and ANQA also provided the university with guidelines for writing a self-evaluation report (SER). AQAS and ANQA follow the core idea that it should be assessed if the mechanisms

the institution chose to secure the quality of its study programmes are appropriate within an external assessment. Therefore, AQAS and ANQA focused on the overarching mechanisms to secure an adequate level of the learning process of Higher Education Institutions. Beyond this, the aims formulated by the university in the SER have an impact on the assessment of the panel of experts as applications need to be seen in the light of the strategic goals of the institution. In the accreditation procedures, AQAS and ANQA follow the peer-review principle. Based on the long-lasting experience with external quality assurance procedures and the involvement in international networks when working with experts, AQAS and ANQA act according to the ECA Principles for the Selection of Experts.

Internal phase/Basis for the assessment of the panel of experts

The Armenian State University of Economics delivered a SER describing the main characteristics of the institution. The SER explained how the quality management system works and how learning and teaching are organized. Additionally, the University sent appendices to provide more detailed material, give evidence to the self-report statements, and demonstrate how procedures are organized and put into practice.

The appendix included documents such as student retention rates, educational offers, undergraduate teaching and undergraduate admission regulations, quality assurance policies and mechanisms, information on graduate profiles, or procedures for drafting and updating study plans.

AQAS scrutinized the SER originally received in February 2025 regarding completeness, comprehensibility, and transparency. The accreditation procedure was officially initialized by a decision of the AQAS Standing Commission on 24 February 2025 as well as in the circulation procedure of 28 February 2025. The final version of the SER was handed in April 2025. The self-evaluation report and the accompanying package of documents were reviewed by ANQA in accordance with the conditions stipulated in Point 37 of the State Accreditation Procedure of the Republic of Armenia, which regulates the grounds for returning a self-evaluation report, and the self-evaluation was accepted by ANQA.

External phase/panel of experts

For the joint institutional accreditation procedure, the expert panel was composed in line with the principles of AQAS and ANQA. The panel included one professor with expertise in quality management of universities, one professor from an academic discipline, one practitioner in the field of quality assurance, one representative from the labour market, and one student. In accordance with the joint principles, three panel members had professional experience in the region, ensuring contextual understanding of the higher education environment.

The Standing Commission nominated the expert panel in April 2025. AQAS informed the University about the expert panel members, and the University had no objections.

Within the institutional accreditation procedure, the study programmes "Economics" (Bachelor), "Finance (by sector)" (Bachelor and "Management (by sector)" (Bachelor) were chosen to be reviewed and serve as a programme sample for the institutional review. An additional SER and additional documents provided the necessary information on the sample program following the guidelines for AQAS programme reviews.

The experts reviewed the application and submitted a short preliminary statement, including open questions and potential needs for additional information.

During the site visit, discussions were held with the university management, the QA unit, the Deans of the faculties, teaching staff, labor market representatives and students. At the end of the site visit, the experts presented short feedback on the main findings to representatives of the University.

The expert panel drafted the assessment report, including a recommendation to the Standing Commission of AQAS. AQAS and ANQA forwarded the report to the University in August 2025, providing the opportunity to comment on the report.

Based upon the expert panel's report and the University's statement, the AQAS Commission decided in its meeting on 8 September 2025 about the institutional accreditation. AQAS forwarded the decision to the University. The University had the right to appeal the decision.

In October 2025, AQAS published the report, the result of the accreditation as well as the names of the panel members.

III.   National context

The education system of the Republic of Armenia consists of a 12-year general secondary education (primary, basic and high school), vocational education, higher and postgraduate education. Higher and postgraduate education is regulated by the Law on Education (1999) and the Law on Higher and Postgraduate Education (2004) of the Republic of Armenia which align with the main objectives of the Bologna Process and the Lisbon Recognition Convention. The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports implements the policies in the education and science sector on behalf of the Armenian Government. The Armenian higher education system comprises 25 state, 25 non-state (private) HEIs, 3 foreign education institutions, and 1 foreign non-state (private) HEI as well as 4 HEIs with State participation.

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is adopted by HEIs in Armenia as a national credit system and used to design educational programmes and knowledge assessment. Credits represent learning based on defined learning outcomes and their associated workload. One academic year is equivalent to 60 credits and corresponds to 1,800 hours of student workload. The academic year starts on the 1 September and consists of 2 semesters (terms) with a duration of 20 and 22 weeks. Higher education is conducted on three levels. On the bachelor's level, students acquire basic knowledge, skills, and to continue their studies or work. For bachelor's degree qualifications (corresponding to level 6 of ANQF and EQF), a credit range of 180 to 240 with a duration of 3-4 years of full-time studies is set. Necessary condition for admission to bachelor's programmes is a Certificate of Secondary Education (full) or a vocational education diploma. At master's level, ongoing and integrated education programmes are implemented which aim at providing in-depth knowledge, skills, and competences to work independently and pursue studies at doctoral level. Qualifications awarded upon successful completion of a master's programme correspond to level 7 of the ANQF and are comparable to EQF level 7. For master's degree qualifications, a credit range of 60 to 120 with a duration of 1-2 years of full-time studies is set. Necessary condition for admission to master's degree programmes is a bachelor's degree qualification. Ongoing and integrated education programmes are implemented for medical specialties. 300 credits are set for ˝Doctor of Stomatology" (5 years) and 360 credits for "M. D. Physician'' (6 years) qualifications. A necessary condition for admission to ongoing and integrated education programmes is a Certificate of Secondary Education (full) or a vocational education diploma. For further medical education, students are offered a clinical residency programme (residency medical training) with the duration of 1-4 years depending on the specialization. The aim of the third level of higher education, i.e., doctoral degree programmes, is to provide students with advanced theoretical and practical knowledge for further independent research and professional creative work. Necessary condition for admission to doctoral degree programmes is a master's degree or an equal qualification as well as a M. D. Physician qualification for clinically oriented medical specialties. The credits set for doctoral degrees are 180 with at least 3 years of full-time studies. Upon successful completion of doctoral studies and the defense of a thesis, the Doctoral Degree (usually referred to as Doctor of Philosophy) is awarded. Doctor of Sciences is an advanced scientific degree which is awarded to an individual holding a Doctoral Degree (usually referred to as Doctor of Philosophy) as an acknowledgement of his further scientific achievements.

IV. General Information on the University

The Armenian State University of Economics (ASUE) is a non-profit, legal entity with the status of a non-commercial organization. ASUE's system of governance is said to be based on the principles that promote the realization of its mission and goals, ensuring the maintenance of governance ethics standards. ASUE's system of governance operates based on the laws of the Republic of Armenia on Education, Higher and Postgraduate Professional Education, and State Non-Commercial Organizations, as well as ASUE's Charter and the Charters of its branches. The effectiveness of management is based on the principle of collegiality which is implemented through the functions of the University Council, the Scientific Council, and the Rector. The effectiveness of the system of governance is assessed through surveys conducted with students, faculty, and partners, as well as the evaluation of the performance of strategic goals. Lecturers and students are represented in ASUE's University Council with a 25% weight each. Students also have a 25% representation in the Scientific Council. The SER further states that ASUE regularly publishes reports on its activities and includes the opinions of stakeholders (students, faculty, and partners) in its decision-making process. The mechanisms in place at the ASUE (committees, sessions, discussions, hearings) ensure participatory decision-making. The University implements a code of conduct, which includes the principles of transparency, fairness, and accountability.

According to the SER, ASUE's budget is consistently balanced. Between 2020 and 2024, the University's revenue grew by 40%, driven by sustained demand for educational services and an increase in student numbers in both undergraduate and graduate programmes, while expenditures increased by 75%. During this period, revenue from paid educational services rose by 57%, while personnel-related expenses increased by 70%. This growth has enabled ASUE to not only maintain financial stability, but also to improve its infrastructure. The total number of students at the ASUE has increased by 11% compared to 2019, reaching 8,000 students in 2023, up from 7,200.

The main objectives and tasks set by ASUE's mission are implemented through planned actions in various directions and forms. Long-term, medium-term, and short-term planning at ASUE covers the main areas of general strategic planning, financial planning, planning of educational and academic activities, and planning of scientific activities. Based on the curricula of educational programmes, the chairs annually plan courses, lecturer positions, and academic workloads. According to the SER, ASUE conducts and considers analyses of both the internal and external settings using various factors and methods in its strategic planning process.

The SER states that ASUE has implemented an Open science strategy, which aims to promote the transparency and accessibility of scientific research. This includes the publication of open research data and cooperation with local and international scientific organizations to promote the dissemination and application of research results. In addition, ASUE plans and implements its internationalization strategy, aiming to raise its reputation on international platforms. The internationalization policy includes the expansion of academic mobility programmes, deepening cooperation with foreign partner universities, and implementing joint programmes.

ASUE has two branches in Gyumri and Yeghegnadzor. For the latter, the Scientific Council decided in the 2022-2023 academic year to suspend admissions, although the branch will continue to operate as long as the students admitted before 2022 have completed their studies. ASUE also comprises the Yerevan State College of Finance and Economics, which was incorporated into ASUE in 2015.

V.   Assessment of the Armenian State University of Economics

1. Policy and Procedures for Quality Assurance

> *The institution has a policy for quality assurance that is publicly available and [forms part of their strategic management]. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders. [ESG, 1.1]*

Description

The SER states that ASUE's quality assurance framework is shaped by the ASUE Charter, the ASUE 2023-2027 Development Strategy (ASUE 2023-2027 DS), and the ASUE Quality Assurance Manual (2023). The operational mechanisms of the QA framework are defined in several other legal and regulatory documents approved by the ASUE's governing bodies.

ASUE's Quality Assurance Manual is the basis for the internal QA system and its Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle. It is stated that ASUE's QA policies and procedures comply with both the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) as well as with ASUE's statutory and strategic goals, mission, and vision.

The SER describes that the operational model of ASUE's QA policy is based on two main approaches.

1. Establish the necessary legal and regulatory framework for QA and ensure its accessibility to all stakeholders. To achieve this, ASUE is committed to embedding targeted QA requirements and objectives in various documents (including job descriptions) and to promoting awareness among internal stakeholders of the need for QA.
2. Transform the legal and regulatory framework described in the QA policy into concrete actions and tools, involving internal stakeholders in the process of consistently implementing these measures. ASUE is said to plan and direct processes and activities derived from the QA policy while aiming to contribute to the establishment of a quality culture within the institution.

Following the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle, ASUE conducts periodic self-assessments to identify issues and improve process efficiency at various levels. The process is continuous, iterative, and verified based on quantitative and qualitative results obtained. Two QA review cycles are implemented at ASUE; the annual cycle and 5-year strategic planning. Responsible for developing and implementing QA policies and procedures are ASUE's Board, Scientific Council, Rector, Vice Rectors and Department Directors, the QA Division, the Division of Education, Faculty Councils, Chairs/Programme Coordinators, as well as internal stakeholders. Their functions are outlined in the Quality Assurance Manual.

ASUE's 2023-2027 Development Strategy includes objectives and sub-objectives related to quality assurance, improvement, and control. The action plan outlines the necessary measures for achieving these objectives. The measures specified in the Action Plan are included in the annual work plans of the responsible departments, and the results of their implementation are part of the annual accountability process which is two-tiered: First, the annual performance reports of the departments are presented at the Scientific Council, and after their approval, they are systematically included in the University's annual activity report, which is submitted to the Governing Board for final approval. ASUE's QA tools are thus said to be closely aligned with the achievement of strategic objectives, integrated into the planning and management of various processes within the University, and contribute to communication with stakeholders and the identification of needs through feedback mechanisms.

As for monitoring the quality of the study programmes, ASUE is said to implement the "Regulation on the Development, Evaluation, and Continuous Monitoring of Educational Programmes" which contains guidelines on the requirements for curriculum design, defining learning outcomes, assessment and review criteria,

benchmarking standards, resource evaluation, and needs analyses for the study programmes as well as criteria for labour market analysis. External and internal stakeholder feedback (students, staff, employers, alumni) is mainly collected through surveys. ASUE maintains digitized databases related to these groups. Monitoring, surveys, in-depth research, and data collection from all stakeholders are regularly conducted in a standardized process. The gathered data and the analyses are used in decision-making processes at ASUE. For analyses of stakeholder feedback, ASUE mainly employs the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis tool while the PEST tool is used when examining the selected factors to understand the scale of their impact, as the SER states.

To ensure respect for the diversity of all stakeholders and to implement changes in an atmosphere of mutual respect and tolerance, ASUE's Scientific Council implemented the Ethics and Code of Conduct for the University's staff and the Internal Disciplinary Regulations at ASUE's SNCO. These documents are supposed to guarantee academic integrity and create an environment that fosters the preservation of the values outlined in the University's strategic development plan and statute.

The SER states that actions taken in terms of QA are summarized annually in the Quality Assurance Division's report, which is also included in the Rector's annual report. The reports are accessible to both internal and external stakeholders.

ASUE's mission is embedded in its development strategies and policies which aim at implementing the institution's statutory goals and objectives. The quality division, the external relations division, and the relevant chairs plan international accreditations. The quality assurance division, the career center, and the IT division implement annual surveys of internal and external stakeholders as well as analyze and publish their results. The continuing education division coordinates the teaching staff's professional development alongside the academic chairs. The "Amberd" research center adjusts its annual research plan based on thematic requests from interested stakeholders.

Expert evaluation

ASUE employs a robust quality assurance (QA) framework characterized by strategies and procedures detailed in the ASUE Charter, the 2023-2027 Development Strategy and Action Plan, and the ASUE Quality Assurance Manual (2023). The internal policies on Quality Assurance, the Quality Assurance System Review Policy as well as Ethics and Integrity form part of this manual. Procedures, instruments, and responsibilities for maintaining academic quality are clearly delineated and further specified in the QA manual as well as many process-specific regulations (i.e. on the evaluation of the effectiveness of change processes; on the development, approval and implementation of educational programmes; on conducting surveys).

These documents provide insight into a comprehensive QA structure. They are publicly accessible to both internal and external stakeholders and thus underpin the institution's commitment to transparency. However, the integration of policies within the QA manual as well as the number of comprehensive and detailed regulations might hinder a quick overview and comprehension of responsibilities, proceedings, and their interconnectedness. To ensure that stakeholders can easily comprehend responsibilities, workflows, and their interconnections, it is advisable to present major quality assurance processes in a visual format (**Finding 1**).

Responsibilities within the QA framework are allocated to and shared by various governance and operational bodies on university, faculty and chair level, ensuring coherence and clarity across all institutional levels – as well as development and maintaining of quality culture. To foster this culture, internal stakeholders – faculty, administrative staff, and students – and external stakeholders – employers, alumni, and partners – are systematically involved in the design, development and running of educational programmes as well as QA processes. This collaborative approach successfully promotes shared responsibility for learning and teaching quality and provides direct stakeholder feedback on the effectiveness of QA processes. All stakeholders expressed satisfaction with their involvement, the university's reactivity to their feedback and with the quality of cooperation among themselves during the site visit.

Data-driven decision-making informs strategic planning as well as the QA processes at ASUE, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data. To that end, the university systematically collects, analyses, and uses data from a variety of sources and institutional levels, including student progression metrics, success and dropout rates, employment numbers of graduates, stakeholder satisfaction surveys (on course, programme and university level), and expert discussion groups. Collected feedback includes satisfaction with programme and teaching quality, learning environments and support services, or employability of graduates. Information on results and stakeholder feedback is also on both top-down (from central level) and bottom-up (from course or chair level), as demonstrated by workload adjustment in certain types of courses based on direct student feedback to the lecturers (on workload assessment, see chapter 4). The employment of analytical tools like SWOT and PEST facilitates objective and informed institutional decision-making, while integration of QA results into the institution's strategic planning, change processes and programme development allows for continuous enhancement.

The university's QA processes form a Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle: Periodic self-assessments, review processes and stakeholder feedback lead to concrete actions for improving processes and outcomes, thus demonstrating closed feedback loops – as demonstrated by programme development processes described in the accreditation of the economics cluster or the development of an internship policy based on student feedback. Students also gave evidence of workload adjustment in courses.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

2. Governance and Administration

The Institutions 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.

Description

According to the SER, the system of governance at ASUE is structured to effectively support the university's mission and strategic goals, while upholding the principles of transparency, fairness, and accountability, as outlined in its code of ethics. The governance framework operates in accordance with national legislation and the university Charter, and its effectiveness is assessed through stakeholder surveys and performance reviews. As stated in the SER, the university adheres to the principle of collegiality through the functions of the University Council, the Scientific Council, and the Rector. Students and faculty are formally integrated into decision-making bodies, holding 25% representation in both the University Council and the Scientific Council. The SER emphasizes that participatory mechanisms—such as hearings, sessions, and committee structures—ensure that decision-making processes are not only regulated and inclusive, but also consistent with ethical standards. The university's Code of Conduct and internal disciplinary regulations are intended to create an environment that fosters mutual respect and academic integrity.

The SER further indicates that ASUE's governance model ensures the effective and efficient management of human, material, and financial resources. Between 2020 and 2024, the university reported a 40% growth in revenue and a 75% increase in expenditures, which supported infrastructural improvements and staff development. Financial planning is aligned with the institution's broader development strategy, which encompasses short, medium, and long-term objectives. These objectives are operationalized through annual and strategic planning documents, monitored by the university's Quality Assurance Division and evaluated through a two-tiered accountability process involving departmental reports and their subsequent integration into the rector's annual report. According to the SER, decision-making is supported by systematic environmental scanning and the use of both internal and external data sources, including surveys, labor market analyses, benchmarking

studies, and national statistics. The use of quality assurance tools, particularly the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle, is described as central to managing academic and administrative processes. This cyclical model is applied not only to programme and policy development but also to broader institutional operations, ensuring continuous improvement and alignment with national and European standards in higher education governance.

Expert evaluation

The ASUE system of governance, administrative structures and their practices are intended to accomplish its mission and purposes by keeping the governance Code of Conduct. However, to increase effectiveness, the scope of responsibilities of the Quality assurance department should be revisited. It is recommended that a separation of responsibilities within the quality assurance department be considered in order to evaluate the implementation of the strategic plan's objectives using key indicators and to coordinate the evaluation and analysis of ASUE's institutional capacities by establishing a separate unit responsible for monitoring the implementation of the development strategy (**Finding 2**). For this purpose, it is also recommended that long term, mid-term and short-term planning be separated with clear KPIs for clarity of necessary activities to be conducted to fulfil the vision, mission, and strategic objectives of the university (**Finding 3**).

The ASUE system of governance ensures a regulated decision-making process in accordance with the defined Code of Conduct and provision of necessary human, material, and financial resources to accomplish its educational and other purposes. The Council of Ethics is a part of governance bodies which includes both academic and students' representatives.

The ASUE system of governance provides students and teachers with the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process. Students and faculty are formally integrated into decision-making bodies. The right of employees and students to participate in the work of the relevant University governance bodies is specified by the University Charter. The collegial governing body of the university is the Governing Board consisting of representatives of academic staff, students, the founder, and members of authorized state bodies. Students, including the Chairperson of the Student Council, and academic staff each hold 25% representation in the University Scientific Council (Charter ASUE). The academic staff is included as a member of the University Council. The composition of the Scientific Council is approved by the Rector (Charter ASUE, p. 4-5). The governing body of the faculty is the Faculty Council which is formed by heads of Chairs (2- 3 members) and 25% of student representatives elected through the students' council of the faculty. Chair is a structural subdivision of the faculty responsible for organizing the study process, operating on the basis of the Charter of ASUE and the Faculty regulations. The Chair includes academic staff. During the meetings with staff and students the experts verified the involvement of staff and students in governance bodies and overall satisfaction with selection, appointment and participation processes.

The institution develops and implements a long-term planning consistent with its mission and purposes and has clear monitoring and implementation mechanisms. The ASUE development strategy and action plan for 2018 – 2022 includes vision, mission, values and strategic objectives for 2018 – 2022. There is an ASUE 2023 – 2027 development strategy in place. There are annual reports prepared, e.g. ASUE 2023 annual report. To increase the effectiveness of such reports, an analysis has to be developed to achieve the goals for mid-term and annual periods based on SMART principles so that the level of achievement can be assessed (**Finding 4**). The Annual report could be more analytical with critical reflection on planned outcomes and the level of its achievement. For example, in the ASUE 2023 annual report it is mentioned that the academic staff published 33 monographs, 18 textbooks, 9 abstracts and 368 articles (ASUE 2023 Annual Report, p.13). The report could provide conclusions on whether it is a good achievement or not. The same applies to other cases.

The ASUE conducts environmental analysis, e.g. SWOT analysis and PESTEL analysis based on the primary and secondary data collection related to its profile, with sources including national and international publications.

The ASUE management policies and the processes draw on the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) model presented in the ASUE Quality assurance manual (p.20).

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

3. Design, approval and termination of programmes

> *The Institution has processes for the design, approval and termination of its programmes. The Institution ensures the involvement of stakeholders in these processes. The programmes are designed to meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme is clearly specified and communicated and refers to the correct level of the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (EQF), and, consequently, when aligned, to the national qualifications framework for higher education.*
>
> *[ESG, 1.2]*

Description

ASUE follows several external and internal regulations when designing new programmes. Among them are the National Qualifications Framework for Education of Armenia and ASUE's Regulation on the Design, Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation of Professional Educational Programmes. The departments are free to develop academic programmes within their specialty areas or in collaboration with other chairs to create interdisciplinary programmes. The process of developing academic programmes involves a series of steps that comply with the regulations, including aspects such as the laws regulating the field, legal acts, licensing requirements, the relevant level competencies of general education and higher education standards as well as programme accreditation criteria. This includes conducting necessary analyses for educational programme design, creating a comprehensive educational programme package, presenting the programme draft for discussion with stakeholders, and submitting the final version for expert review. All newly designed programmes have to be aligned with ASUE's Development Strategy 2023-2027. ASUE implements educational programmes at the 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th level of the NQF, focusing on developing professional competencies in economics, business administration, social and behavioral sciences, and other related fields.

The functions and responsibilities of the bodies responsible for ongoing monitoring, all other involved stakeholders, as well as the final approving body (ASUE's Scientific Council) are defined in the ASUE academic programme design procedure. Ongoing monitoring activities are organised and coordinated by the Division of Education under the leadership of the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs. The preliminary audit, expert review, and evaluation of the results of the academic programmes are organised and coordinated by the Quality Assurance Division. The Quality Assurance Division also provides the interpretation of the procedure for the design of new educational programmes and conducts periodic meetings with the working groups developing the programmes to clarify current issues and provide support.

Since 2014, all newly developed programmes at ASUE follow the outcome-based approach according to which the curriculum is developed based on the intended learning outcomes (ILOs). The ILOs follow the descriptors of both the EQF and the NQF and include knowledge, skills, and competence. Interdisciplinary ILOs are considered as well, covering areas such as mathematical modelling, computer science, and law and thus contribute to the practical application of economic knowledge. Workload which represents the time (in hours) required to achieve the ILOs is considered when designing new programmes. The total annual workload for a full-time undergraduate student is 60 ECTS (+/-10% variation). For part-time students, the annual workload is 48 ECTS

(+/-10% variation). Each course is assigned between 2 to 6 ECTS, corresponding to a workload of 60 to 180 hours. Curricula follow a clear sequence in which courses build on each other as prerequisites.

The procedure for approving new programmes and the responsibilities at each step are clearly outlined in ASUE's academic programme design regulations. According to the SER, the approval process is transparent and involves all members of ASUE's Scientific Council and the Academic and Methodological Committee.

As for the termination of programmes, ASUE reports that does not have a specific regulation in place. To date, no bachelor's programmes have been discontinued. The license of several master's programmes has been suspended due to the loss of the programmes' relevance and the lack of demand for specialists in the labour market. Final decisions on license suspensions are based on various analyses that involve both internal and external stakeholders. The findings are discussed in meetings, and if deemed justified, the appropriate decision is made. Any decisions of the suspension of programmes do not affect the progression of students already enrolled in the affected programmes as suspensions only apply to new admissions. ASUE ensures that all enrolled students at the time of suspension can complete their studies and obtain their respective qualifications. In cases of force majeure or other exceptional circumstances leading to an involuntary interruption of an academic programme, legal and other responsibilities are regulated in coordination with the authorised governing body.

Expert evaluation

During the site visit, all stakeholder groups confirmed their active involvement in the educational programmes' implementation at ASUE and expressed a high level of satisfaction with their engagement. The curriculum design at ASUE reflects a considered approach to workload distribution, ensuring alignment with the ECTS credit system and an appropriate balance between compulsory courses, electives, and other programme components.

ASUE applies a structured and participatory approach to the development, evaluation, and monitoring of educational programmes, guided by the Regulation on Development, Evaluation and Monitoring of Educational Programmes, approved on 18 December 2019. This Regulation is aligned with the institutional mission and vision as set out in the ASUE Development Strategy 2023–2027, and provides a clear framework outlining procedures, responsibilities, and involved actors across all relevant stages. The regulation is publicly accessible via the university's website, contributing to transparency and accountability.

Programme development follows a comprehensive and well-defined sequence, beginning with the identification of labour market needs, followed by programme initiation at the departmental level, the establishment of working groups, stakeholder consultation, internal review, expert evaluation, and multi-stage institutional approval. This process is well-documented and includes multiple layers of review and feedback, ensuring alignment with institutional goals and relevance to external demands. Responsibilities are clearly distributed among academic units, the Quality Assurance Department, the Department of Educational Process Management, and governance bodies such as the Educational and Methodological Committee and the Academic Council.

The panel acknowledges ASUE's commitment to benchmarking as a quality enhancement tool. Programme development incorporates comparative analyses of curricula from leading institutions in Europe, the United States, and Russia. Stakeholder engagement is another integral element, and while stakeholder involvement is evident at various stages and by various means, the university recognises that methodological refinement in stakeholder mapping would further enhance the systematic inclusion of internal and external voices, especially from employers and alumni (**Finding 5**).

All educational programmes are aligned with both the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the Armenian National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Learning outcomes in most cases are defined in terms of knowledge, skills, and competences, with clear links to graduate profiles and career trajectories. In some cases, the learning outcomes are not grouped around knowledge, skills and competencies for the study

courses, e.g. Economics of Enterprises, Fundamentals of management, Strategic management, Organisational management, Public administration, etc. for the Management programme. The ASUE must adjust the formulation of learning outcomes to ensure consistency, compatibility with international standards and facilitate student mobility and employability **(Finding 6**).

Since 2023, ASUE has introduced five interdisciplinary master's programmes in fields such as healthcare, data science, IT, and public administration. And the "Green Economy Management" master's degree programme is currently being submitted for licensing. These programmes have been well-received by labour market representatives and are seen as examples of good practice, showcasing responsiveness to emerging labour market needs and the potential of cross-disciplinary education. Employers consider the joint design of programmes and the inclusion of interdisciplinary components in curricula to be important for fostering innovation and increasing relevance. The expert panel supports this view and recommends scaling up these initiatives to ensure broader impact.

The curriculum structure promotes student choice and progression, incorporating general, professional, and elective courses. Elective courses are offered consistently across six semesters starting from the second year, allowing students to pursue tailored academic pathways. This supports student-centred learning and responds to both individual aspirations and sectoral demands.

While no separate regulation is currently in place for programme termination, termination decisions are based on labour market analysis, and ASUE ensures that affected students are supported until programme completion. This approach demonstrates student-focused institutional responsibility, while a standalone document or inclusion of the termination process in the regulation on programme development and monitoring is recommended to increase procedural clarity and long-term planning capacity (**Finding 7**).

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

4. Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes

> *Institutions monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that the programmes achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews lead to continuous improvement of the programmes. Any action planned or taken as a result are communicated to all those concerned. [ESG, 1.9]*

Description

Several units are directly involved in the ongoing monitoring and quality assurance processes of study programmes at ASUE. This includes vice rectors, heads of chairs, programme coordinators, and the Division of Education.

ASUE's monitoring of study programmes includes policies and processes that are based on both internal and external regulations. Key principles include:

- o Benchmarking at national and international levels and continuous improvement
- o Self-assessment and centralised regulations
- o Active participation of internal and external stakeholders in quality assurance processes
- o Outcome-based education programme design and implementation
- o Enhancement of the learning environment

The SER states that all academic programmes at ASUE are subject to continuous monitoring through the following procedures:

1. Student Satisfaction Surveys which assess the quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in relation to the intended learning outcomes conducted anonymously twice a year at the end of each semester.
2. Academic Performance Analyses that assess the accumulation of credits in individual components of the academic programmes, student academic progress, and the comparative analyses of grading results.
3. Final Certification Committee Reports based on the report of the Final Certification Committee Chair, which must include feedback from committee members and external reviewers.

In addition, programme monitoring is carried out by analysing labour market demands and required competencies and comparing them with the intended learning outcomes. Regular meetings and focus group discussions with stakeholders as well as surveys among external stakeholders are also conducted.

A key component of ongoing monitoring of study programmes and the identification of potential issues is the 25% student representation in faculty councils, where students actively participate in quality assurance and programme review processes. According to the SER, ASUE continuously updates the curricula of its study programmes based on the outcomes of assessment and monitoring measures, including both internal and external stakeholders.

As ASUE is said to strive to ensure the transparency of quality assurance processes and the awareness of all stakeholders regarding the improvements that are implemented, it includes its annual reports on QA activities in the annual performance reports which are available on ASUE's website. In addition, the results of the various surveys are presented and discussed in meetings of ASUE's Scientific Council which includes representatives of all internal stakeholder groups.

Expert evaluation

Programme monitoring is based on a comparative analysis of institutional capacity, labour market demands, and programme outcomes. This analytical approach supports the institution's commitment to continuous improvement. In 2023, ASUE revised four bachelor's and five master's programmes—a significant achievement that demonstrates the practical implementation of internal review mechanisms and a proactive stance towards programme relevance and responsiveness.

ASUE has implemented a multi-dimensional feedback system to gather data from students, faculty, alumni, and employers. This includes standardised surveys, periodic focus group discussions, and consultations with industry professionals involved in teaching. The Student Council plays an active role by initiating its own feedback mechanisms, which, according to site visit findings, have achieved broader participation than centrally administered surveys.

During the site visit, the panel learned that although student participation in institutional surveys remains at a satisfactory to high level, a declining trend has been observed. This may limit the reliability and representativeness of the data in the future. The expert panel therefore recommends taking measures to maintain and increase participation in quality assurance processes, particularly surveys (**Finding 8**).

Suggested measures include the use of incentives (e.g., visualising participation levels relative to targets, offering material incentives), extending the feedback cycle (not necessarily conducting surveys annually), and diversifying feedback formats by incorporating more qualitative and formative approaches. Additionally, the panel recommends developing clear guidelines for interpreting and contextualising survey results with lower participation rates to ensure that valid insights can be drawn (**Finding 9**).

ASUE's internal QA system also incorporates a structured approach to monitoring student workload, academic progress, and graduation rates. Data analysis as well as direct feedback from students leads to adjustments in course content, contact hours, and credit distribution where necessary. However, since there is no formalised anonymous process for this, it is thus recommended to implement a formalised method to gather anonymous student feedback on actual workload, i.e. as part of course evaluations (**Finding 10**). Curricula are designed based on international benchmarks and labour market needs, ensuring that learning outcomes are achievable and aligned with graduate profile expectations. Individual consultations with lecturers, balanced distribution between lectures and seminars, and the integration of independent research work all contribute to a supportive and academically rigorous environment.

The structure of academic programmes is well-balanced, combining core, professional, and elective components with practical learning opportunities such as internships and graduation projects. The elective course system allows for specialization and acquisition of targeted competencies, thus promoting student-centred learning and progression.

Programme descriptions are published on the official ASUE website, and more detailed curricular information is made available to students through the Moodle platform, updated each semester. Orientation meetings with department heads, programme coordinators, and instructors further support student understanding of curriculum structure and workload expectations.

The outcomes of QA activities are systematically documented in annual quality assurance reports, which are integrated into the university's broader annual reporting framework. These reports are published on the institutional website, reinforcing ASUE's commitment to transparency. Academic programme survey results are presented and discussed in Academic Council meetings, where representatives of all internal stakeholder groups – faculty, students, and administrative staff – are present. This inclusive practice ensures a collaborative approach to programme improvement and helps maintain a data-informed quality culture.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

5.   Learning, Teaching and Assessment of Students

> *Institutions ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach. [ESG, 1.3]*

Description

ASUE is said to have adopted a student-centred learning policy which is supposed to be reflected in the diversity of teaching methods, assessment approaches, and active involvement of students in improving learning processes. The SER states that learning processes are dynamic and include various teaching methods, such as Blended Learning, Problem-Based Learning (PBL), practice-oriented learning that includes employer participation, internships, and applied projects. The selection of teaching methods is based on the type of intended learning outcomes, considering principles that develop knowledge, practical skills, intellectual abilities, transformative capabilities, and social competencies. The selection is further supposed to be aligned with the regulations for Bachelor's and master's level education, knowledge assessment, and administration. The alignment of teaching and learning methods is reflected in the study programmes, where the thematic content clearly defines general and subject-specific learning outcomes, along with corresponding teaching, learning, and assessment methods. To keep up with modern technology in teaching, ASUE uses the Moodle platform and other digital tools and information platforms.

Q

Interdisciplinary learning is accounted for in the design stage of the curriculum as courses are divided into general, professional, specialised, and elective courses. In addition, lecturers include interdisciplinary knowledge in class through the presentation of assignments, analyses of situational problems and case studies as well as independent work, final theses, and industrial, research, and pedagogical internships. To support students in developing academic skills, the study programmes include courses such as the "Scientific Research Methodology" course and the "Research Internship". This process is further supported by seminars, workshops, scientific discussions, and access to online resources, enabling students to strengthen their research skills, conduct analytical work, and engage in the academic setting, as the SER outlines.

As for assessments at ASUE, they follow ASUE's "Regulations on Knowledge Assessment and Administration". Assessment criteria, along with the forms and methods of evaluation aligned with learning outcomes, are included in student guides, relevant regulations on knowledge assessment and academic administration, course syllabi, and course descriptions. The student guide covers the credit accumulation and transfer system, as well as the multi-factor assessment methodology of academic progress. It also details the procedures for excused absences and the application of other mitigating circumstances. Each assessment method is based on predefined assessment criteria and standards which are said to be transparently communicated to both the assessor and the assessed. These criteria characterise the extent to which intended learning outcomes have been achieved and align with the selected assessment methods. Assessment methods are selected according to the intended learning outcomes and include oral exams, written tests, computer-based testing, and research work defence. Academic staff are free to choose the assessment methods, criteria, and standards for their courses. To support the teaching staff in developing and implementing assessment strategies, ASUE implements a unified system of planning and implementing teaching, learning, and assessment that is in alignment with the final outcomes in compliance with the "Teaching, Learning, and Assessment in Accordance with Final Outcomes" regulation.

Expert evaluation

The university pursues a clearly defined and institutionally anchored strategy to promote student-centred learning for example interactive lectures and workshops, problem-based learning sessions, case-study, group and individual projects, peer-learning activities, digital and blended learning tools. This strategy is systematically implemented in the development of study programmes. Examples include different teaching and learning formats and the use of diverse didactic approaches. Formats that combine classroom teaching with practical units (referred to here as seminars) are particularly noteworthy.

Student feedback is systematically collected and integrated into the curriculum adjustment processes. The documented application of various teaching methods demonstrates the practical implementation of the student-centred approach.

The university conducts regular evaluations, e.g. teaching staff formation, annual evaluation and ranking of teaching staff through student satisfaction surveys. These evaluations are conducted twice a year, at the end of each semester, through anonymous student surveys to ensure that the teaching and learning methods used correspond to the intended learning outcomes.

The university conducts regular evaluations to ensure that the teaching and learning methods used correspond to the intended learning outcomes. During the site visit it has been shown that the review procedures are structurally anchored and implemented on an ongoing basis. The results are incorporated into the quality assurance and further development of the programmes. Compliance with the standard is confirmed.

The university ensures that teaching and learning methods consider the diversity of students and meet their different learning needs. This includes the provision of individual support services and flexible learning formats that enable independent learning paths. Support services are transparently accessible and institutionally guaranteed. However, it has also been noted that access to all relevant scientific literature is still limited, which hinders both research-oriented teaching and science-based learning for students. It is therefore recommended

that the infrastructure for accessing a wide range of national and international literature (textbooks, mono-graphs, and internationally relevant journals) be improved at the university level (**Finding 11**).

The institutional framework promotes student responsibility and at the same time ensures appropriate support from teaching staff. Interaction between teaching staff and students is based on mutual respect and is strengthened by targeted measures (e.g., workshops, training courses to promote autonomy and respectful communication). These measures actively contribute to the implementation of the principles of student-centred learning.

The university specifically promotes cross-programme learning opportunities. Corresponding offerings – such as cross-programme modules or collaborative formats – are anchored in the curriculum and enable students to acquire advanced cross-programme skills.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

6. Student Admission, Progression, Recognition, and Certification

> *Institutions consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle", e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification. [ESG, 1.4]*

Description

Admission

ASUE's Continuing Education Division develops the ASUE's applicant engagement policy and organises various activities for high school graduates and college students, including open days, summer schools, autumn camps, national competitions for economic essays, and visits to schools. Each year, informational materials and videos are prepared to introduce ASUE to prospective students. A special section for applicants is available on ASUE's website.

Admissions to the ASUE's full-time and part-time bachelor's degree programmes are conducted in accordance with the respective Regulations on Admission to State and Non-State Higher Education Institutions of the Republic of Armenia and is based on the list of specialties approved by the government for the respective academic year. The admission exams for full-time and part-time bachelor's degree programmes fully comply with the content and organisational requirements of the unified state exams. The admission of international students is carried out in accordance with the "Regulations on the Admission of Foreign Citizens to Higher Education Institutions of the Republic of Armenia". ASUE's Admissions Committee, comprising the Rector (Chairperson), Vice-Rector (Deputy Chairperson), Responsible Secretary, Deputy Secretaries, and other members, organises and implements the admission process. Admission is conducted through the unified national examinations**.** Applicants take their entrance exams at designated examination centres, which are organised and administered by the "Assessment and Testing Centre" SNCO, operating under the Government of Armenia. The final admission competition results are approved by the National Admissions Committee. In the admission process, based on the University's decision, three main components are implemented:

1. The determination of tuition fees according to the respective mode of study.
2. Entrance examinations, which stem from the requirements and specifics of the given educational programme.
3. The allocation of educational spots by specialties and academic programmes.

The SER states that ASUE organises orientation programmes that cover academic, social, and administrative aspects to facilitate the integration of new students. There is further a curatorship system in place in which faculty members are assigned as curators for each course from the first year. These curators provide students

with various types of guidance, including detailed information about the University and faculty activities. In higher years, they offer support as needed and act as a bridge between students and faculties. To ensure that students are well-informed about their rights and responsibilities, academic processes, disciplinary regulations, grievance procedures, and exam appeal processes, the Student Council's official page provides informational videos covering these topics. In addition, the "Student Guide" provides information on all academic aspects, from attendance to examinations, including the location of different faculties and access to various University units.

Progression

ASUE implements an automated system for the electronic management of educational processes, document circulation, and information accessibility. It consists of several sections, including "Class Schedule," "Student," "Science," "Employee," "Records," "Progress," "Graduation," and others. Additionally, it provides fields for regulating student status, reports, certificates, and course distributions, ensuring that all educational process-related information is available in one unified platform. The system includes students and instructors from all academic programmes in both full-time and part-time study formats. The platform further allows for the management and generation of statistical reports related to educational processes, students' academic performance, attendance, final attestation, average quality assessment (actual, semester, annual, and cumulative), and mobility. This is supposed to facilitate real-time statistical tracking of the University's educational processes and the adoption of data-driven decisions.

Personalised feedback on student progress is ensured through the course advisor system, faculty student councils, and faculty leadership. These entities are said to regularly organise meetings with students to help them address challenges they encounter during their studies. Special attention is reported to be given to students with low academic performance and those who struggle to attend classes and keep up with coursework. Lecturers and course advisors closely monitor student participation and attendance, offering support within the framework of university regulations.

Before final assessments in both Bachelor's and master's programmes, consultations and pre-defence sessions are organised, which are also reflected in each instructor's individual workload. In addition, the Student Council conducts informational meetings and training sessions during the pre-exam period, ensuring students are well-informed about exam procedures and the appeals process.

ASUE's regulations and policies regarding education and assessment are said to be designed to ensure equal opportunities, regardless of status, learning mode, chosen department, specialty, or social standing.

Recognition

The SER states that student mobility and admission from another level or university to ASUE are carried out in accordance with the regulations of "Academic Mobility of Students in Higher Education Institutions" and the "Regulations for Continuing Education of Graduates with High Academic Achievement from Vocational Educational Institutions in Higher Education Institutions". These regulations con only be reviewed and updated by the competent body or the Government. Besides subject-specific exams and participation in competitions, the only limitation for accepting students to ASUE is the availability of licensed spots when transferring students from other universities or continuing education. According to the SER, this is due to the large number of students already enrolled at ASUE.

In terms of internationalization, ASUE actively works to expand student mobility within the Erasmus+ programme and to involve a greater number of students in student projects through collaboration with various international and local organisations. So far, international collaborations exist with HEIs from Germany, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and China. Over the last few years, outgoing student mobility has continuously increased at ASUE.

Certification

The SER states that the acquisition of knowledge and skills corresponding to the intended learning outcomes of Bachelor's and master's programmes is confirmed by the completion and defence of the final thesis and the master's thesis. This process is carried out in accordance with the "Regulations for the Completion, Submission, and Public Defence of the Final Thesis at the Armenian State University of Economics" and "Regulations for the Completion, Submission, and Public Defence of the master's Thesis at the Armenian State University of Economics". The final grades and their publication are determined according to the "Procedure for Forming and Operating the Final Certification Commission at the Armenian State University of Economics". The review and appeal of the final certification committee's grades are conducted in accordance with the "Procedure for the Discussion and Appeal of Grades at the Armenian State University of Economics". Bachelor's and master's degrees are awarded upon the full achievement of the total number of required credits, i.e., 240 ECTS for bachelor's degrees and 60, 90, or 120 ECTS for master's degrees, depending on the programme.

The process of determining deadlines, procedures for selecting the topics of final theses and master's theses, and the final certification are regulated according to the "Regulations for Final Certification of Graduates from Higher Professional Education Institutions in the Republic of Armenia". Graduates who have completed the final certification process are awarded diplomas and diploma supplements. The diploma supplement is considered an integral part of the diploma and is not valid without the diploma.

The requirements for obtaining qualifications and final documents are said to be made available to students and all stakeholders from the beginning of their studies.

Expert evaluation

ASUE's admission procedures follow national regulations and are administered by the institution's Admissions Committee and supported by Continuing Education Divisions. ASUE ensures transparent and accessible processes of admission which are in line with national regulations. The information about admission requirements, processes and study programmes is accessible to applicants and students on ASUE website. A separate part is allocated to international students, as well, which includes detailed information on application procedures, required documents and entrance examination formats. During the site visit, students and staff noted that ASUE, in particular the Continuing Education Division, regularly organises various events to engage with high school students including open days, summer camps, essay competitions, and school visits. Thus, the institution's outreach and digital platforms are considered effective as was confirmed by staff and students during the site visit.

The institution ensures that admission criteria are applied consistently, with regular reviews and validations to maintain relevance and fairness. As is indicated in the SER and confirmed during site visit discussions, admission threshold at the ASUE has been increased in recent years. Orientation programmes and curated resources support the integration of first-year students. The students on site visit meetings evaluated the ASUE's integration support positively.

Student progression is effectively monitored through UMS. Students have access to digital tools such as Moodle and UMS which serve their purpose for academic tracking transparency. Students get personalised support through faculty structures, as well. The system includes class schedules, attendance, grades, graduation tracking, and statistical reports. The UMS provides real-time academic progress tracking and enables data-based decision support. The UMS is actively used by students and staff for academic task management and performance monitoring, although Moodle should be further integrated (**Finding 12**).

The institution implements mechanisms to identify and support students at risk of academic failure, offering tailored interventions and support services such as exam preparation sessions, pre-defence consultations. The institution has detailed policies and action plans to support equal opportunities, with specific strategies, measurable outcomes, and regular evaluations. Students found the course advisor system and regular communication with faculty coordinators to be both accessible and useful. The institution provides specific support to students who are at risk of academic failure and pre-defence consultations are included in staff workloads

which indicates institutional prioritization of student retention. Recognition and student mobility are regulated by national policies and institutions internal procedures in accordance with "Academic Mobility" and "Continuing Education" regulations. The institution supports student mobility on different levels. External mobility is strongly promoted through Erasmus+ and bilateral agreements with a number of partner universities. During the site visit, students expressed enthusiasm for expanding mobility opportunities and demonstrated high levels of English proficiency and eligibility for international programmes. The SER states that the number of students taking part in exchange programmes has been continuously increasing in the last three years. Internal mobility is prompted by joint programmes including the ACCA-accredited Accounting and Taxation Master's programme.

The university ensures that the assessment of prior learning and recognition of external qualifications is fair, transparent, and consistently applied.

The university regularly reviews and updates policies and procedures for the recognition of prior learning and external qualifications to ensure they remain current and effective. External stakeholders including labour market representatives take an active part in curriculum development processes ensuring correspondence with evolving labour-market requirements.

While the institution systematically recognises prior formal learning through national and institutional frameworks, there are currently no established procedures for the recognition of non-formal or informal learning. Nonetheless, this has been identified as an area for future development by the quality assurance unit (**Finding 13**).

ASUE degree awarding processes work in accordance with institutional and national regulations of "Regulations for the Completion, Submission, and Public Defence of the Final Thesis/Master's Thesis" and the "Procedure for Forming and Operating the Final Certification Commission." The institution ensures students receive verifiable documentation explaining the qualification gained, including detailed descriptions of intended learning outcomes, competencies, and the context of studies. Documentation meets current standards of digitalisation. The SER outlines that students get their qualifications upon successful accumulation of the required number of credits and public defence of a final thesis for both bachelor's and master's degree.

The university awards diplomas and supplements that follow Bologna standards to its graduates. The documents are bilingual and issued in a timely and verifiable manner.

To sum up, the site visit verified that ASUE maintains student life cycle processes which are both formally established and actively tracked through stakeholder feedback for improvement. The university demonstrates a maturing quality culture through its willingness to receive feedback and its implementation of student-led changes.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

7. Teaching Staff

Institutions ensure themselves of the competence of their academic staff. They should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff. [ESG, 1.5]

Description

The development of ASUE's teaching staff is anchored in the Development Strategy 2023-2027. In this context, mechanisms for promoting research activities, incentivising, and assessing quality are supposed to be gradually implemented to ensure the internationalisation of research at ASUE. ASUE's Quality Assurance Manual

(2023) outlines the policy for the recruitment, selection, and professional development of academic staff. The policy is based on the provisions of the RA Labor Code, the RA Law on Education, the RA Law on Higher and Postgraduate Professional Education, and the University's Charter.

As for the qualification of already existing teaching staff, the SER states that nearly the entire core teaching staff has undergone professional retraining and participated in the certification cycle with the involvement of external stakeholders. This has provided opportunities for long-term contract renewals based on competitive selection or annual performance evaluations. In addition, the University's teaching staff is said to have almost entirely completed training in teaching methodologies and research skills development. The process of training and certification at ASUE is said to be mandatory and continuous, with each lecturer being required to undergo training at least once every five years. To identify and address professional development needs, the Continuing Education Department conducts surveys at the beginning of each academic year, which inform the planning of both general and specialised training sessions throughout the year. To further develop academic staff competencies, ASUE's International Relations Department collaborates with international partners, providing opportunities for the teaching staff to participate in exchange programmes and international training projects. To enhance the quality of the academic output, ASUE offers incentives for publications that are included in the SCOPUS database. The integration of research results into the teaching process at ASUE follows a structured procedure. Before each academic year, department meetings are held to discuss academic staff publications, and the most valuable results are incorporated into the relevant course syllabi.

To support the internationalisation of the teaching staff, ASUE's 2023-2027 Strategic Plan aims to increase the number of teaching staff participating in mobility programmes by 5% annually, setting a target of 20% of core academic staff having participated in at least one mobility programme over the last five years by 2027. ASUE also encourages internal collaboration. To share and discuss teaching and learning experiences of faculty members participating in international exchange programmes, special meetings and discussions with their departmental colleagues are organised.

The assessment of teaching staff performance is based on the "Annual Performance Assessment and Rating System for Teaching Staff at the ASUE". The assessment of the teaching performance is carried out by the head of the chair through annual student surveys, continuous monitoring of activities in the UMS and Moodle systems as well as ongoing control over class schedules. Teaching performance is rated as follows: 40% by the department chair's assessment, 40% by student assessment, and 20% by evaluations of the activities in the platforms. To gather feedback on teaching and learning satisfaction from students, teaching staff, and external stakeholders (employers and alumni), ASUE conducts at least once a year to evaluate outcomes, resource availability, and stakeholder needs. Surveys regarding course content and teaching satisfaction are conducted twice a year. Student satisfaction is assessed: a) during each semester through a "Satisfaction Survey," and b) at the end of the educational programme through a "Graduation Survey" conducted among alumni. The surveys are anonymous and organised through the Moodle platform. To organise surveys for external stakeholders, ASUE uses databases provided by the Career Centre which include information from alumni and employers as well as surveys conducted in focus groups.

The competition for vacant positions across all faculties follows a unified structure. The criteria for academic staff positions, the procedures for their appointment, training, certification, and the organization of competitions are outlined in the "ASUE Academic Staff Formation Regulation and the "ASUE Academic Staff Training and Certification Regulation". In 2021, ASUE introduced position passports which define the characteristics, requirements, and responsibilities for the positions of professor, associate professor, senior lecturer, lecturer, and assistant. For new lecturers, ASUE has a mentoring system in place through which new lecturers receive continuous support from experienced faculty members within their departments. The promotion and dismissal of employees at ASUE follows the "ASUE Employee Promotion Procedure", the "ASUE Ethics Regulation", and the "ASUE Internal Disciplinary Regulation".

Expert evaluation

In general, the university takes measures to ensure that its teaching staff – especially in the area of instruction, and increasingly in research – are suitably qualified to advance the goals of the individual study programmes, which are still largely cantered on teaching and career preparation.

The academic staff's qualifications match the courses offered. Many teachers have private sector experience, which helps students not only to find internships. With the experience gained in the professional fields and thanks to cooperation at various levels (at university level, at the level of faculties and departments, and on a personal level), students benefit from practical teaching and gain an insight into the requirements and challenges of their future careers.

Language courses are offered regularly for teachers, partly to improve their research activities with respect to international English-language publications. As already mentioned, infrastructure poses an obstacle to accessing the breadth of internationally relevant scientific literature, and this obstacle should be removed. It is recommended again that the infrastructure for accessing a wide range of national and international literature (textbooks, monographs, and internationally relevant journals) be improved at the university level (**Finding 11**). In addition, the expert panel acknowledges that a structure for evaluating teaching and research performance exists. The expert panel acknowledges that the university has established a structured regulation governing the evaluation and rating of academic staff. This framework covers key performance areas, namely:

- Teaching
- Research
- Public and organisational activities

Despite the strengths, the panel notes that the regulation could benefit from a clearer structure or scale in relation to teaching and research quality evaluation. In particular, the experts suggest developing a standardised evaluation scale for teaching and research quality (e.g., multi-level rating scales, descriptors, or weighted criteria), aligning the evaluation system with European Standards and Guidelines (ESG 2015) to ensure international comparability, providing capacity-building workshops for academic staff to familiarise them with the evaluation criteria and expectations (**Finding 14**).

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

8. Research and Development

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

Description

ASUE places strong emphasis on integrating research into education at all levels. Bachelor's students conduct individual research papers each semester, master's programs include course-based research and final theses aligned with the IMRaD format, and postgraduate students engage in scientific publications and gain experience at the Amberd Research Center. A mandatory Research Methodology course is included in both master's and PhD programs.

The University has revised its regulations on final papers and theses, introduced plagiarism detection systems, and strengthened supervisor responsibilities. Students and staff actively participate in research competitions and Amberd's grant projects, with over 150 faculty, 108 PhD students, and 39 students involved between 2020–2024.

Strategically, ASUE's plans (2018–2022, 2023–2027) emphasize becoming a leading research-driven institution, enhancing scientific quality, and expanding international cooperation. Research policies include the Research Development Strategy 2020–2024, Open Science Strategy 2021–2026, and Open Access Policy.

Incentives are strong: SCOPUS-indexed publications receive honoraria (400,000 AMD per article), leading to sharp growth in international publications (53% increase in 2023, further 30% by Oct. 2024). Scientific expenditures grew from 147m AMD in 2022 to 235m AMD in 2024, reaching nearly 5% of the University's budget.

ASUE also promotes internationalization: it holds over 170 cooperation agreements, organizes international conferences, and publishes journals (Messenger of ASUE, Economy and Society, Amberd newsletter). It was awarded the HR Excellence in Research by the European Commission in 2021 and joined EURAXESS.

Expert evaluation

The ASUE ensures the implementation of research activity and the link of the research with teaching and learning. Students are involved in research activities through Students Research Council and study courses requiring carry out research to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes. For that purpose, the experts recommend the inclusion of available scientific journals in the list of literature for study courses to facilitate linking research and teaching and learning (**Finding 15**).

The regulations "On the performance, presentation and public defence of a graduate thesis at ASUE" and "On the performance, presentation and public defence of a master's thesis at ASUE" have been put into effect at the university since May 27, 2022, according to which the structural and content requirements for components containing individual work in bachelor's educational programmes and scientific research work in master's educational programmes, as well as for graduate theses and master's theses, have been changed. As a result, new structural requirements for master's theses and graduate theses have been established, they have been brought into line with the internationally acceptable Introduction-Method-Results-and-Discussion (IMRaD) format for research.

The use of the anti-plagiarism system and the definition of the threshold of originality in the ASUE stimulate the analytical and creative approach of students during the completion of graduation works.

Academic staff are active as researchers aiming that in 2027 forty percent of full-time academic staff is involved in research process. The number of publications is steadily growing in recent years aiming at increase of publications in English in international scientific databases by 10% annually among other evaluation indicators (ASUE Development strategy 2023-2027).

The vision of ASUE emphasises the aim to become a centre of excellence that creates and imparts theoretical and applied knowledge, although. The mission stresses the development of individuals competitive in both national and labour markets, as well of making impactful contributions to the economic, social, cultural, and scientific-technological development of the Republic of Armenia, through quality education and applied research. The emphasis on creation knowledge (research) and its commercialisation is forming a good basis for linking the research with teaching and learning at ASUE.

The promotion of research interests and ambitions is a part of university level development strategy 2023 - 2027 (Strategy goal 2 Enhancement of University Leadership and Science Quality) with objectives and indicators associated. The experts noticed that knowledge creation function of ASUE and latest research findings

have to be better utilised to avoid 'labour market fatigue' driving the education offer, as well integrating latest research findings in educational offer. The ASUE is putting some efforts to ensure employability (ability to establish a company, to move from one job to another, ability to make a career and find a job) of graduates. The Change lab operating at ASUE regularly conducts entrepreneurship trainings. This is evidenced by the enthusiasm shared by the students participating for these events. It has to be commended and further strengthened.

There was a programme for development of research activities for 2020-2024. The ASUE 2023-2027 DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY ACTION PLAN presents the action plan for the implementation of 4 main strategic goals. The second STRATEGIC GOAL in the mentioned programme is the INCREASE OF THE QUALITY OF SCIENCE AND RESEARCH AUTHORITY OF THE UNIVERSITY. There, key activities and responsible persons are highlighted by years.

The ASUE ensures the implementation of research and development through sound policies and procedures such as an Open science strategy for 2021- 2026. The connection between the university's development strategy and research directions is clearly reflected in the work of the Amberd Research Center operating as a part of ASUE, where there are clearly defined processes for the formation of research topics and groups, as well as the involvement of postgraduate and undergraduate students. Research topics are formed in the departments, corresponding to the area of expertise of each department, while reflecting current trends in economics and management research.

The elaboration of a research policy and an AI policy at the institutional level as a broad guideline, including key principles and governance structures for conducting research and applying AI in teaching and learning, as well research and administrative activities should be considered to ensure transparency and consistency across different units of the university (**Finding 16**).

In the regulation on the annual evaluation and rating of the academic staff at ASUE regarding the evaluation of publications the number of points awarded does not indicate encouragement for publications with international peers. The internationalisation of research should thus be promoted and integrated into the annual evaluation of academic staff (**Finding 17**).

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

9. Learning Resources and Student Support

> *Institutions have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided. [ESG, 1.6]*

Description

Learning resources

According to the SER, ASUE's strategic plan 2024-2027 defines five major groups of indicators for the effectiveness of infrastructure development, which include modernisation of physical infrastructure, updating and integrating digital infrastructure into a unified system, improvement of the scientific-educational infrastructure, modernisation of intellectual and sensory infrastructure aimed at human resource development, and the development of collaborative network infrastructure. The modernisation of the physical infrastructure is expected to be completed by 80% by 2025.

The SER further states that ASUE's management is conducted in accordance with strategic goals, for each of which efficiency and progress indicators are set, and corresponding financial resources are allocated for the

achievement of each objective. ASUE's financial resource management is carried out through the preparation of the annual budget forecast and the analysis of the actual budget execution at the end of each fiscal year. ASUE's income and expenses are planned and used according to the approved annual budget. The majority of ASUE's income is generated from tuition services and the state budget for the financing of students enrolled on a free-of-charge basis. In recent years, ASUE's overall budget has continued to increase due to rising student numbers. A significant part of this budget is allocated to improving the quality of education with the costs of basic salaries for professors and teaching staff in 2024 amounting to 36.85 % of the total expenses. When allocating financial resources, ASUE actively involves both internal and external stakeholders to ensure that the diverse needs are met.

The SER identifies ASUE's resources and infrastructure as human resources, buildings and structures, fixed assets, property, technical equipment, software, and information systems, as well as other material and non-material resources. The University consists of 6 buildings, of which 5 are located at Nalbandyan 128, and 1 at the Faculty of Informatics and Statistics, located at P. Sevak 77. ASUE facilities include an electronic library, QR library, "smart walls," 4 sports halls, a shooting range, and an international programme centre (meeting and discussion rooms, lounges). The library includes a book collection and two reading rooms. One of these rooms is a scientific reading room. Another reading room is located at the Faculty of Informatics and Statistics. Reading rooms are equipped with internet access and can accommodate up to 120 students. The library's book collection is said to be regularly updated with approximately 1,100 new units each year based on requests from library staff and programme coordinators. The QR library contains 200 resources and allows students to download electronic versions of books without visiting the physical library. The main collection includes text-books, educational manuals, conference materials, journals, dictionaries, atlases, as well as dissertations, and electronic publications. The KOHA library system supports the digitisation of the main library collection, the creation of an electronic library and catalogue, and provides online services for readers. A total of 125 class-rooms is available the majority of which is equipped with modern technical tools (interactive displays, projectors). ASUE is said to continuously renovate its facilities (classrooms, halls, gymnasiums). Undergraduate courses are conducted in two shifts, while master's courses are conducted in an additional third shift. The number of students per class should not exceed 50.

To accommodate students with special needs, special provisions have been made to ensure full inclusion both in terms of facilities and education. As part of the development of inclusive education at ASUE, the "Social Inclusion of Students with Disabilities at the ASUE" regulation has been put in place. ASUE has a procedure in place for the allocation of buildings and classrooms which is supposed to ensure the efficient organisation of the educational process while considering the needs of students with special requirements. At the beginning of each academic year, the allocation of classroom space is carried out among the faculties. Usually, each faculty occupies a specific building.

Since 2020, ASUE has implemented the "Moodle" system, which is supposed to facilitate online collaboration between faculty members and students. The system allows students to access necessary materials, participate in forums and video conferences, take exams, and submit assignments. The platform hosts course syllabi, quizzes, assignments, reading lists, electronic books, and methodical materials. The Moodle platform also provides continuous monitoring, so that areas of improvement can be identified. In 2022, ASUE established the ASUE Repository, an open, cumulative electronic archive managed by the University library which aims to be a system for archiving ASUE's research outcomes that is accessible for the public.

Student support

The SER states that ASUE provides a wide range of support to students for their educational and professional development, including informational, advisory, career orientation, and practical experience mechanisms. Students receive support in understanding their rights, responsibilities, and the regulations related to the educational process. Course advisors provide counselling to help students overcome difficulties they encounter during their studies. In September and October of each year, the Student Council organises an orientation

programme for first-year students to inform them about the University's educational and administrative processes and to identify their needs. All study programmes include both individual and group consultations organised by the faculty. ASUE's Career Centre supports students with preparing for and undertaking internships and helps with the career planning process.

ASUE implements a concept for the advancement of inclusive education which outlines its strategy for inclusive education development in the short, medium, and long terms. This includes developing teaching methods, learning forms, and assessment techniques in curricula that address the elimination of prior knowledge disparities, the integration of diverse prior experiences, and overcoming stereotypes related to inclusivity.

Expert evaluation

The ASUE has a clear commitment to aligning its educational infrastructure and resource development with strategic goals. The university's structural approach to financial planning and learning environment improvement has been noted and appreciated during the site visit. The site visit discussions further confirmed the effective usage of digital tools particularly Moodle platform by both staff and students which contributes to teaching and learning process positively.

The digital and physical learning spaces as well as the academic resource availability have been evaluated as satisfactory by students. The integration of digital platforms further improved resource availability and digitalisation of library resources has been noted particularly useful for independent study. Students also make an active use of QR-based tools and the electronic library catalogue.

Learning spaces are functional and equipped accordingly. The ongoing renovation efforts the institution takes are on the right track and their continued implementation will further enhance the learning environment across faculties.

Inclusive education initiatives are actively implemented at the ASUE. The institution demonstrates its understanding of diverse student needs through its adoption of relevant internal regulations and its partnership with specialist organisations.

The institution has a wide and responsive student support system which is delivered through the combination of institutional structures and student-led initiatives. Students highlighted the accessibility of academic advisors and the helpfulness of the support they received especially during their first year.

The Student Council has been also confirmed to have an active role in providing support to students concerning various student life aspects. Students also reported receiving regular updates on academic and professional development opportunities through internal communication channels. Moreover, the Career Centre was also described as supportive in facilitating internship processes for and offering career guidance to students.

The institution conducts systematic evaluations of its support services through feedback mechanisms that involve students and teaching staff.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

10. Public Information

Institutions ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities. [ESG, 1.7]

Institutions publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible. [ESG, 1.8]

Description

The SER states that ASUE's public relations policy includes providing information about its study programmes and qualifications, including details about the specialties, structure, functions, tuition fees as well as information on the university's international activities. The regulatory documents governing ASUE'S activities (rules, regulations, procedures, etc.), as well as the minutes and decisions of ASUE's Council and Scientific Council meetings and accreditation status are available to stakeholders on ASUE 's official website. The SER further states that ASUE's website contains a "Prospective Students" and "International Students" section providing information on admission, study programmes, contact information, and other key information for the respective groups. ASUE's International Relations Department conducts online consultations for international stakeholders that allow international students and other interested parties to get answers to their questions by directly engaging in online communication with the university. ASUE's website provides information in three languages (Armenian, English, and Russian) that are said to be regularly updated by ASUE's Marketing and Public Relations Department.

The SER outlines that ASUE has an active social media presence on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube where they regularly post about their study programmes, qualifications, the admission procedure, and other information. ASUE's Admissions Committee also holds regular online and one-on-one consultations to inform about the programmes and qualifications and answer questions from stakeholders. According to the SER, printed informational brochures about ASUE and the study programmes are available as well, detailing both the admission process and the knowledge and skills acquired by students.

The SER further states that ASUE regularly participates in international online education fairs to showcase the educational programmes on the international stage and attract the attention of interested parties from various countries. ASUE is also said to collaborate with intermediary organisations that present its educational services to stakeholders in their countries.

Expert evaluation

ASUE has established a visible public information framework aimed at ensuring transparency and accessibility regarding its academic offerings, institutional operations, and quality assurance status. The university's website serves as the primary platform for disseminating programme-related information to a wide range of stakeholders, including prospective students, parents, employers, academic partners, and regulatory bodies.

The information presented on the website covers essential aspects of each programme, including learning outcomes, curricula, credit structure, qualifications awarded, and admission criteria. These are generally provided in a clear and structured format. Nonetheless, the review panel notes that the availability and completeness of English-language content remain inconsistent across departments and programmes, limiting the institution's effectiveness in reaching international stakeholders. In some cases, key materials such as programme descriptions, course syllabi, or strategic documents are only partially translated or missing in English, which may limit mobility and collaboration efforts. The institution should ensure that all information and key materials are also available in English (**Finding 18**).

Furthermore, the user-friendliness and ease of navigation of the website are mixed. While the site includes dedicated sections for applicants, students, staff, and international partners, some information is fragmented or difficult to locate without prior knowledge of internal structures. Improvements in digital architecture – such as enhanced search functions, document categorisation, and unified portals – would significantly contribute to accessibility and usability. University representatives indicated that the institutional website is scheduled for a comprehensive update, with a full redesign of the platform planned to improve structure, accessibility, and user experience.

An observation concerns the actual data and consistency of publicly available documents. For example, certain key documents – such as the Student Manual and some faculty-level guides – were found to be outdated or

inconsistent with recent programme reforms. The institution should introduce routine checks and systematic version control to ensure that only the most recent and validated versions of documents are publicly accessible (**Finding 19**).

The university provides general information on available student support services, including academic advising, counselling, IT services, and career development. A more centralised and digitally integrated student support portal could enhance clarity for both prospective and enrolled students. Additionally, the provision of support information in English may enhance the effectiveness of services for international students and visitors.

The experts also identified areas for improvement in data governance and cybersecurity. While the university has adopted general IT infrastructure to support educational and administrative functions, there is limited publicly available information about its data protection policies, cybersecurity protocols, and IT audit mechanisms. In an increasingly digitalised higher education environment, publicly articulated policies and procedures in these areas represents a notable requirement. Ensuring data privacy, particularly concerning students' personal information and academic records, is a fundamental component of institutional accountability. The introduction of clear, accessible policies on data protection and IT risk management is therefore strongly encouraged (**Finding 20**).

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

VI.   Recommendation of the panel of experts

The panel of experts recommends accrediting the university with conditions.

Commendation:

ASUE employs a robust quality assurance framework and demonstrates a strong commitment to aligning its educational infrastructure and resource development with the university's strategic goals. Its structured approach to financial planning and the continuous improvement of the learning environment is recognised as a solid foundation for sustainable institutional development. With a clear focus on an inclusive and student-centred learning environment, ASUE provides systematic and continuous feedback mechanisms and structures to maintain and enhance the quality of the institutions and the programme.

Findings:

1. To ensure that stakeholders can easily comprehend responsibilities, workflows, and their inter-connections, it is recommended to systematically present major quality assurance processes in a visual format.

2. It is recommended that a separation of responsibilities within the quality assurance department be considered in order to evaluate the implementation of the strategic plan's objectives using key indicators and to coordinate the evaluation and analysis of ASUE's institutional capacities by establishing a separate unit responsible for monitoring the implementation of the development strategy.

3. It is recommended that long term, mid-term and short-term planning be separated with clear KPIs for clarity of necessary activities to be conducted to fulfil the vision, mission, and strategic objectives of the university.

4. To increase the effectiveness of annual reports, an analysis has to be developed to achieve the goals for mid-term and annual periods based on SMART principles so that the level of achievement can be assessed.

5. While stakeholder involvement is evident at various stages and by various means, a methodological refinement of stakeholder mapping would further enhance the systematic inclusion of internal and external voices, especially from employers and alumni.

6. The ASUE must adjust the formulation of learning outcomes to ensure consistency, compatibility with international standards and facilitate student mobility and employability.

7. A standalone document or inclusion of the termination process in the regulation on programme development and monitoring is recommended to increase procedural clarity and long-term planning capacity.

8. Measures should be taken to maintain and increase participation in quality assurance processes, particularly surveys.

9. Clear guidelines should be developed for interpreting and contextualising survey results with lower participation rates to ensure that valid insights can be drawn.

10. A formalised anonymised method to gather student feedback on actual workload, i.e. as part of course evaluations, should be implemented.

11. It is recommended that the infrastructure for accessing a wide range of national and international literature (textbooks, monographs, and internationally relevant journals) be improved at the university level.

12. The UMS is actively used by students and staff for academic task management and performance monitoring, although Moodle should be further integrated.

13. The institution should establish procedures for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

14. A clearer structure for evaluating teaching and research quality in terms of standard setting should be considered.

15. It is recommended that available scientific journals be included in the list of literature for study courses to facilitate linking research and teaching and learning.

16. The elaboration of a research policy and an AI policy at the institutional level as a broad guideline, including key principles and governance structures for conducting research and applying AI in teaching and learning, as well research and administrative activities should be considered to ensure transparency and consistency across different units of the university.

17. The internationalisation of research should be promoted and integrated into the annual evaluation of academic staff.

18. The institution should ensure that all publicly available information and key materials are also provided in English.

19. The institution should introduce routine checks and systematic version control to ensure that only the most recent and validated versions of documents are publicly accessible.

20. The introduction of clear, accessible policies on data protection and IT risk management is strongly encouraged.

Q