



ASIIN Institutional Accreditation Report

European University of Armenia

Version: 24.09.2024

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A About the Institutional Accreditation Process

Higher Education Institution	European University of Armenia	
Timeline	Date	Milestone
	14.09.2023	Date of the contract
	29.04.2024	Submission of final version of self-assessment report
	05.–06.06.2024	Date of the on-site visit
Expert Panel	Prof. Dr. Christian Brauweiler, University of Applied Sciences Zwickau Prof. Dr. Mariam Momjyan, Armenian-Russian University Prof. Dr. Elena Wilhelm, Zurich University of Applied Sciences Dr.-Ing. Matthias Wunderlich, VP Manufacturing Quality, Groupe Renault Arthur Davtyan, student at Yerevan State University	
Representative of ASIIN Headquarter	Dr. Andrea Kern	
Relevant Criteria and Sources	Criteria for the Accreditation of Quality Managements in Teaching and Learning – ASIIN Institutional Accreditation Seal (Version: 21.09.2023) Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (Version: 2015)	

B Characteristics of the European University of Armenia

The European University of Armenia (EUA) is a relatively new institution with state participation, founded in 2001, with a vision to provide high-quality European-style education in Armenia. Its founding agreements ensure the collaboration with the Government of the Republic of Armenia and organizations in France, Germany and Italy. The university has been renamed twice by the Decisions of the EUA Board of Trustees reflecting the diversification and expansion of the provided services by the university.

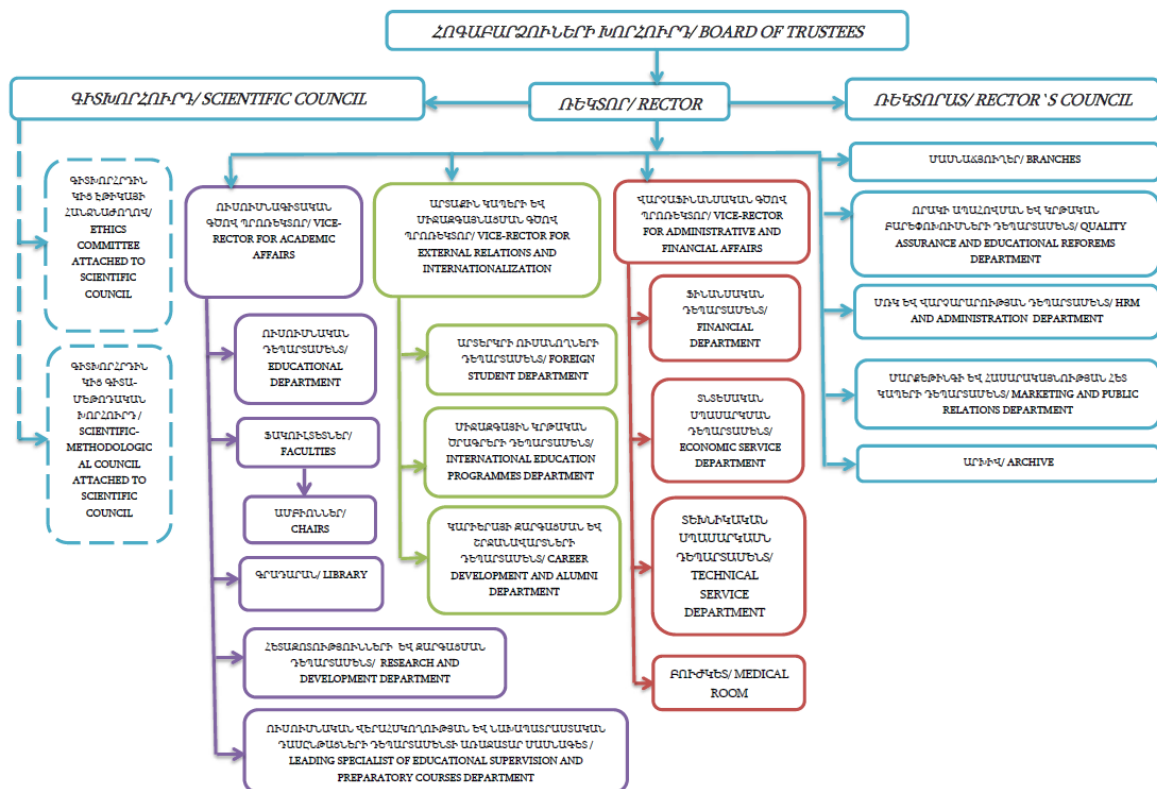


Figure 1. Overview of the organizational structure of EUA (Appendix 5 of the self-assessment report).

The Board of Trustees is the main governing body of EUA with representatives from Armenia, Italy and France. It is the highest body of university management and supervises the main strategy and development of EUA. The Board of Trustees is involved in the decision-making processes to determine EUA's main activities and approves the annual budget plans and proposals by the Scientific Council. It is also responsible for appointing the rector of EUA.

The Scientific Council of EUA coordinates and regulates the educational, scientific, and technical activities. It is chaired by the rector of EUA. Its responsibilities include the approval of university regulations including admission. The Scientific Council appoints the Head of Chairs, Deans of each faculty and new academic staff members. In addition, it conducts curricula reviews and gives advices regarding new developments in education and research. To support the Scientific Council, EUA has established committees.

The university main campus is based in Yerevan (80% of all activity) and three additional locations in Kapan, Gyumri, and Vanadzor. EUA comprises four faculties, including Economics and Management, Law and International Relations, Information Technology and Design, and Tourism, Linguistics and Psychology. A range of undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate programs is offered and designed to align with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), facilitating international mobility and recognition. These include 17 bachelor program, 15 master programs and three postgraduate programs. Since 2018, EUA has been a full member of the European Association of Higher Education Institutions, demonstrating its dedication of European Standards and education. EUA has established partnerships with numerous European universities, enabling student and faculty exchanges, joint research projects, and collaborative academic programs. Presented data shows a total number of 3,051 students in January 2024 (148 international students) and 259 academic staff members. The university is expanding its programs and facilities to accommodate a growing number of students and to enhance its educational offerings. Future plans include further internationalization, increasing research output, and enhancing its role in shaping the educational landscape in Armenia and beyond.

EUA received accreditation in 2021, thus ensuring that its degrees are recognized worldwide. In addition, it has applied for receiving institutional accreditation by ASIIN e. V.; the summary of the expert panel is presented in the following accreditation report.

C Analysis and Findings of the Experts

1. Understanding of Quality

Criterion 1.1 Quality Objectives

Preliminary Assessment and Analysis of the Experts:

EUA emphasizes in its self-assessment report that the first objective of the university is defined in its charter as “to prepare and train highly qualified specialists in accordance with modern international criteria for the public, social, communal, local, territorial, and all sectors of the market economy with the direction of the specialties defined by the University.” Guided by this principle, EUA has developed its Strategic Development Plan for 2023–2027, which defines the university's vision, mission, core values, and priority goals. The Board of Trustees reviews and approves EUA’s strategic plan. In addition, it defines the key performance indicators.

EUA has defined the following vision and mission in its Strategic Development Plan:

“The vision of the European University of Armenia is to become a provider of educational programs in Armenia in accordance with national and European standards and guidelines, to be student-centered, to train specialists according to the labor market requirements, to be guided by innovation, new educational technologies and science developments, to be efficiently and flexibly managed, to be a regionally recognized, leading university.

The mission of the European University of Armenia is to prepare humanitarian, social science and technology-oriented professionals with professional, modern knowledge, research and innovation skills and abilities, who can communicate freely in English, and are competitive and qualified in accordance with the requirements of the Armenian and international labor markets by contributing to the formation of human capital and the socio-economic development of the state at the national and international levels.”

EUA lists its core values as (1) trust, (2) creativity and innovation, (3) accountability and transparency, (4) Social responsibility, (5) Excellence, (6) Cooperation, and (7) Mutual respect, courtesy and ethics.

In its strategic plan, EUA has defined these primary goals for the next years:

1. Improving education quality and ensuring the reliability of awarded qualification
2. Development of scientific research capacity

3. Expanding foreign relations and international cooperation
4. Upgrading the university's rank
5. Strengthening the labor market-university connections.

The experts approve that EUA has identified various key issues regarding each of the listed goals for improvement in its strategic plan. Each issue contains a number of actions, which define a key performance indicator (KPI), responsible person, and deadline. The experts observe that the strategic plan contains clearly defined tasks to be completed within a reasonable period. The progress and results of each process can be monitored and measured. The experts appreciate that responsibilities are defined clearly.

EUA explains to the experts that it has issued a "Regulation on improvement, approval, evaluation and review of the EUA strategic development plan." This regulation defines all processes of developing and approving EUA's strategic plan, its structure and its responsible parties. Main responsible party includes the rector, academic and financial vice-rectors, head of the departments, deans of the faculties, head of chairs, representatives from the academic staff and students. The regulation defines that EUA's Department of Quality Assurance and Educational Reforms Department (QAERD) provides data and information to the development of the strategic plan by contributing the feedback from external and internal stakeholders. EUA's accountability assurance policy defines its external stakeholders as (1) applicants and their parents, (2) alumni, (3) employer, (4) national and international partner universities, organizations, associations and union, (5) state structures regulating the sphere of higher education and (6) the public. EUA considers internal stakeholders as the (1) rector, director of financial administrative divisions and vice-rectors, (2) students, (3) support and academic staff and (5) employees of structural and separate subdivision.

In the discussion with EUA's management, the experts learn that the process to establish the latest strategic plan involved various surveys conducted online including, among others, students, employers, and alumni. In their opinion, all individual parties strongly and positively contributed to the current strategic plan. Considering the previous strategic plan, EUA's management explains to the experts that the majority of the defined goals could be reached; however, the situation in Armenia did not permit them to achieve all objectives. As one unachieved goal, the management cites the targeted increase of international students by 10%. The percentage of students from abroad mainly remained lower than planned, largely due to limitations caused by the political and military situation of the country. The university states that for one, students from Türkiye do not apply due to the strained relationship of both countries, which may give students from Türkiye the impression that they are not welcome at EUA. In addition, the university reports that,

for example, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports rejected over 30 applications from Syria and Iran, which has affected EUA's ability to meet the KPI related to increasing the number of international students. The experts receive a copy of the report on the Strategic Development Plan 2018–2022 during the review process. The experts acknowledge that the report documents each topic and their KPIs of the strategic plan and give explanations on the achievement and potentials new goals for the strategic plan of 2023–2027. Although the experts appreciate the explanations given in the report, they comment the report could show the actual status of each KPI (green (on track); orange (not met but actions in place); red (not met, no suitable actions found)).

The university management further informs the experts that a review of the KPIs takes place annually at the end of the year. EUA operates using the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle in the process of reviewing the previous year and developing the action plan for the next year. In addition, certain processes are continuously monitored. According to the university management, all departments are involved in the review processes, especially regarding the revision and improvement of academic programs. According to the “Accountability Procedure of the EUA”, all annual plans of the departments, faculties and chairs require approval from the Scientific Council. The Board of Trustees is responsible for approving the Annual Budget Plan, the Strategic Plan of the European University of Armenia, the organizational structure, and other key institutional documents.

Moreover, the university managers highlight to the experts that the Vice-Rector of Administrative and Financial Affairs and the Head of the Financial Department develop financial plans annually and presents the plan to the Board of Trustees for approval. Demands from all stakeholders are considered in the development of the budget plan including lecturers and students. This covers also costs for professional development, student development, research, and improvement of facilities. The university management describes to the experts that EUA is currently developing a new financial policy, which shall regulate the distribution of funds within EUA. The experts welcome this development.

Next to the Board of Trustees, responsibilities lie with the Scientific Council, which is chaired by the rector. In the discussion with the university management, the experts are informed that the members of the Scientific Council change every five years. Students are represented in the Scientific Council. The selection of student representatives in the Scientific Council is carried out by members of the Student Council. The selection of lecturers takes place within the faculties, who usually nominate experienced staff members as their candidates. The terms of students and heads of the departments might be shorter when their status changes. In addition, faculties can nominate external members from other Armenian higher education institutions to join the Scientific Council. The experts

confirm that the composition and responsibilities of the Scientific Council are clearly defined in the “Regulation on Scientific Council of European University of Armenia.”

The experts further raise the importance of student representation on various decision-making bodies of the university. The university management summarizes that students are primarily organized in the Student Scientific Society and the Student Council. EUA has regulated that students comprise 25% of the faculty boards and 25% of the Scientific Council. Moreover, EUA aims to include students in various university-wide projects. As examples, the university management describes the student involvement to design logos and stickers of the university and students’ involvement at events presenting the university (e.g. International Expo in Armenia). In addition, students can contribute and raise their voices for suggestions and complaints through various communication tools and events. According to the university management, students are also active to form clubs and organize activities, including trainings, workshops and scientific events. EUA supports all club activities financially. The experts gain a very positive impression on the student involvement at EUA. They receive feedback from all parties supporting the high student involvement and contribution across various levels of the university.

After reviewing the submitted documents and the interesting discussions during the on-site visit, the experts conclude that EUA has a clearly defined strategy summarized in its Strategic Development Plan 2023–2027. The experts observe positively that members of all units and departments are aware of EUA’s strategic plan and its goals. They approve especially that all units also have a strong connection to the European values and characteristics of EUA. Thus, the experts are convinced that the European values and standards are acknowledged by everyone at EUA. In addition, the experts positively observe that various internal and external stakeholders are involved in the development of the university’s strategic plan, its mission and vision. Stakeholder involvement and responsibilities are clearly defined and binding based on regulations presented to the experts.

The experts observe that the achievement of the KPIs is checked annually, followed by an annual achievement report; however, in their opinion, an annual check might not be suitable for all KPIs of the strategic plan. The experts note that some KPIs might require quarterly reviews to identify risks and to develop and direct future initiatives. Therefore, the experts suggest rethinking EUA’s monitoring strategy for achieving the KPIs in favor of more flexible approaches. In addition, the achievement reports should contain a clear analysis following the PDCA cycle. Although EUA describes that it follows this tool, the experts note that the presented reports mainly contained analysis of the issues and collected data, but not strategies, plans, and actions. The experts comment that the step of self-analysis and improvement is crucial and should be emphasized in their report according to the progress and status of reaching each KPI.

Criterion 1.2 (Quality) Management Systems / Governance
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Preliminary Assessment and Analysis of the Experts:

At EUA, QAERD is the main unit coordinating and evaluating the quality assurance processes. Its responsibilities are defined in the work regulations “On quality assurance and educational reforms department of the European University of Armenia.” EUA has issues its “EUA quality assurance policy” and an accompanying “Quality assurance manual of European University of Armenia” in 2023 to redefine its understanding of quality assurance and responsibility of the various units. This shift in responsibilities was further highlighted by a change of the QAERD, which was previously named Quality Assurance Department.

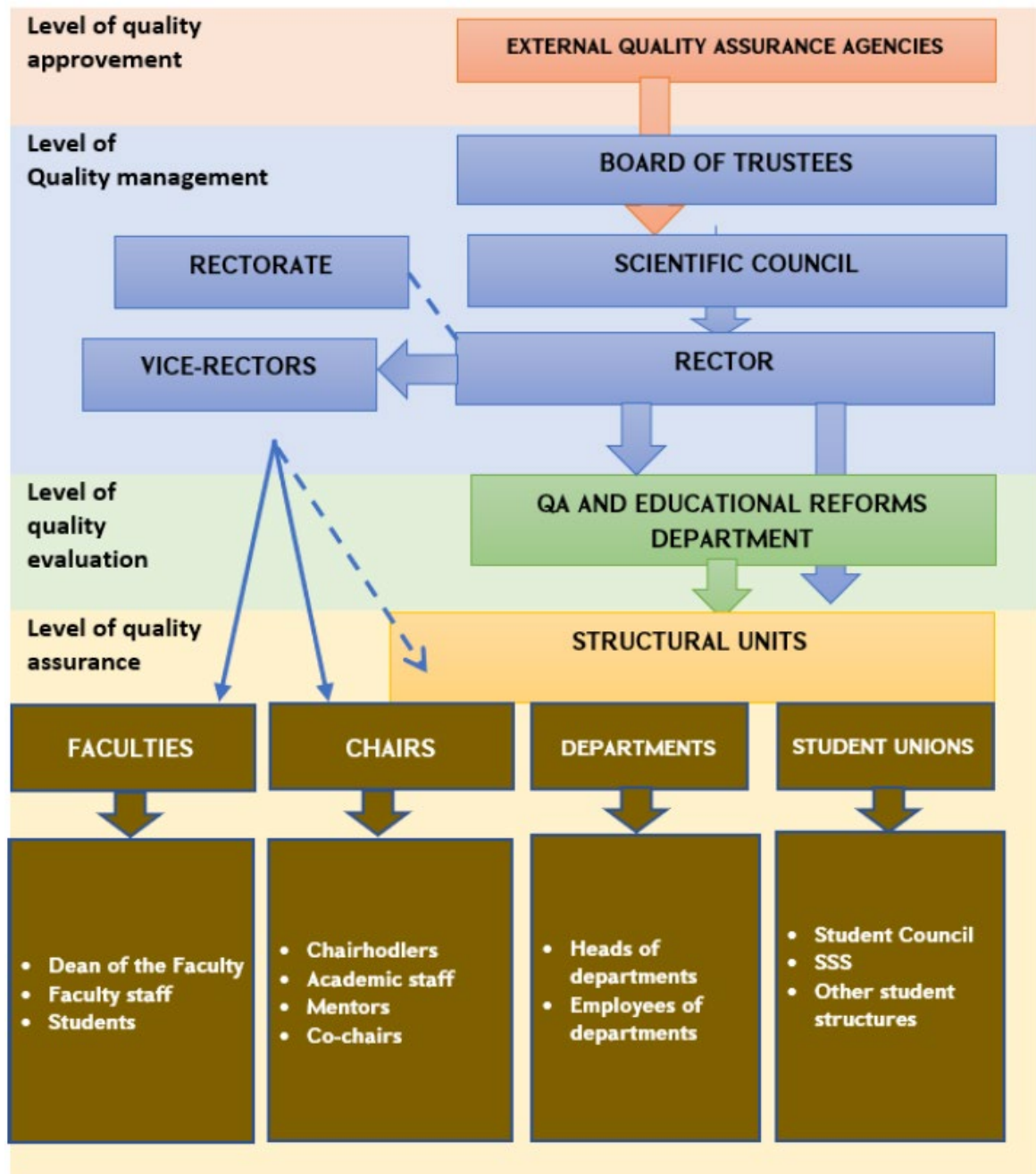


Figure 2. The structure of EUA's quality assurance system (source: Quality assurance manual).

The university managers describe in the discussion with the experts that EUA has updated its quality assurance policy in 2023 to revise its main goals and give new directions. This includes the introduction of new KPIs for improving the quality culture at EUA. They explain that these improvements were necessary due to misunderstandings of the responsibilities of the QAERD, which is currently composed of two employees. In the updating process, EUA informed all units on their definition of quality and the individual responsibility to ensure quality in their own work environment. As a result, all departments and chairs have to

provide at self-assessment report annually. According to the university managers, the decentralized approach distributed the QAERD's workload and further created awareness of quality management processes in the units. The departments' and chairs' reports also contain a SWOT (Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats) analysis, which requires interaction with stakeholders. Thus, the heads of the departments and chairs are active and proactive partners in the quality management process supported by QAERD. Moreover, the university management states that this is an ongoing process to improve the quality management on each level of EUA.

The experts acknowledge that the submitted quality assurance policy defines the goals and objectives as well as the principles of the implementation of processes. The quality assurance toolkit applied at EUA includes (1) surveys, (2) focus group discussions, (3) round-table discussion, (4) interviews, (5) observations, (6) case studies, (7) self-assessment and self-analysis (including SWOT analysis and other analysis), (8) peer evaluations, (9) successful experience studies, and (10) provision of expert opinion. The quality management policy lists PDCA analysis as the main tool to evaluate the progress of the strategic development plan. In addition, the quality assurance manual discusses the most recent developments in higher education quality assurance in Europe such as Bologna Process and the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance. In the opinion of the experts, the quality assurance manual gives a comprehensive overview of the most important tools and tasks of the quality assurance at EUA for its members. It clarifies the involvement and responsibilities of each unit, including students, staff and external stakeholders.

In addition, the expert learned that EUA conducts benchmarking as formalized in its "Benchmarking policy of the European University" and "EU benchmarking implementation procedure." The policy defines the goals and objectives of the benchmarking procedure as well as the applied types of benchmarking. All structural units are involved in the benchmarking. EUA focuses on operational benchmarks and performance benchmarks. The university management adds in the discussion with the experts that they consider the main aspect of their benchmarking procedures to demonstrate them best practice scenarios. EUA usually compares its study programs to universities in Europe, the USA and other national universities. Benchmarking at EUA also includes various departments such as QAERD, whose members also engage in trips to discuss their structure and development with European partners. The university management confirms to the experts that each benchmarking process results are documented in a report.

The university management and representatives of QAERD further state surveys and focus group discussions as their main tool for engaging with internal stakeholders. The procedures are described in the policies of "Procedure of conducting surveys" and "Regulations of EU focus group discussion implementation." Examples of various surveys at EUA are

shared with the experts during the review. These include satisfaction surveys for course evaluations, satisfaction surveys of students, newly admitted students and graduates, and academic and non-academic staff evaluation surveys. According to the university managers, such decentralized approaches in quality assurance and the number and variety of surveys distinguish EUA from other universities in Armenia. They highlight that their annual reviews follow a SWOT analysis. This process supports them becoming aware of their own competences and shortcomings, which allows them to improve. Furthermore, their quality management policy identifies the unit/person responsible to take actions if one unit/person does not perform adequately. Reports of the QAERD are discussed within the Scientific Council, which needs to approve reports and annual work plans of all structural units.

Moreover, the experts see evidence that EUA has defined the involvement of stakeholders as a central process of its quality assurance in its “European University policy of quality assurance in the process of engagement internal and external stakeholders” as well as the “EUA feedback policy.” The university management adds in the discussion with the experts that EUA implements feedback from all stakeholder groups to improve the quality of the educational programs, organization and campus facilities. For example, the two-diploma programs are introduced based on feedback from alumni and employers to offer collaborative education at EUA with their partner institutes abroad. Students’ feedback further resulted in a revision of the assessment criteria and rubrics to increase transparency. Additionally, serious investments are ongoing to improve the campus gym and move the cafeteria to a suitable location (previously on the fifth floor with no elevator access) due to various student complaints. Furthermore, the share of practical components was increased in relevant study programs based on suggestions of employers. EUA has additionally initiated the building of incubators in four disciplines in 2024 (two in Psychology, and one in International Relations and one in Design). Each incubator is managed by one person from EUA and one person from the private sector. The university management clarifies that these incubators are designed to involve students from bachelor and master level in joint projects. The lecturers add as an example for an incubator project that students developed virtual reality glasses for children, who are afraid to go to the dentist (Chair of Psychology collaborating with medicine). The experts appreciate the strong involvement of industry partners in the quality measurement and educational processes at EUA.

The experts discuss the involvement of various units with the quality management processes. During the discussions during the on-site visit, the experts perceive a high level of interactions between QAERD and the different units, which they consider positive. In the discussion with the experts, the university managers admit that EUA has difficulties to remain in contact with alumni. The main challenge is that many alumni pursue a career or

further education abroad. This is one aspects EUA and the experts agree on, which should be targeted for further improvement.

The representatives of the administrative staff, academic staff and heads of the units confirm that they take parts in surveys conducted by QAERD. The heads of the units add that they are in discussion with QAERD and therefore receive feedback on their surveys. They describe that they discuss the results and contribute to the development of strategies to improve the situation. They mention that they conduct surveys among students at the end of each semester to evaluate the modules and lecturers. Additionally, students and staff have the opportunity to express their concerns and complaints in “open books” on campus, where everyone can write anonymous messages. The students describe that they regularly are invited to take part in surveys. This include surveys on their courses at the end of every semester to express their opinion on the quality of the classes, their lecturers, the classroom and other resources. The students confirm that they are very honest in their surveys since these are anonymous. They mention that next to the surveys, the deans of the faculty hold events, where students are open to discuss their concerns and opinions on the study programs. The students admit that they are open to raise their concerns on these meetings and that their complaints resulted in actions. As examples, they describe that a lecturer was not competent in their subject; after they raised this concern in a meeting with the dean, the lecturer’s contract was not prolonged for the following semester. In addition, they had a lecturer, who was competent in their field but not good at teaching. In this case, they received another instructor as well. According to the students, they are not informed on the results of the survey; however, they are aware that the lecturers receive the results in a report. Nevertheless, if they raise a topic in their survey, they notice that the university makes changes. Additionally, the students mention that the Student Council conducts its own survey to observe the student satisfaction with EUA and its work. Their most recent surveys did not reveal any issues with the Student Council but highlighted the lack of sports facilities, the problem with a cafeteria on fifth floor as well as their request for more oral exams, and that all these issues have been successfully addressed by the university in the meantime. The experts consider it as very positive that the surveys from the Student Council matches mainly with the survey results of QAERD.

The experts gain a positive impression on the quality assurance at EUA after the fruitful discussion during the on-site visit. The experts see evidence for a comprehensive quality management system as well as established governance structures capable for managing its implementation. Within various documents and policies, the experts observe that EUA has defined procedures, processes, competences and responsibilities at EUA, which are transparently communicated to the relevant stakeholders. The experts conclude that quality

management is implemented into the culture at EUA. With QAERD as its main unit, all procedures are defined and effective. The experts further see the latest developments concerning the QAERD at EUA as positive, in particular the close collaboration between QAERD, the university management and the rector. The experts especially emphasize the positive impact of the rector in this regard, which is approachable and open to discuss complaints from all units and students. In addition, they note that EUA confirm that it considers the feedback of all internal units and stakeholders (students, academic staff, administrative and management staff) for the further development of EUA and its study programs. The experts suggest striving for further improvements regarding surveys among external partners, including alumni surveys in general and tracer studies in particular (e.g. one-year after graduation survey). Furthermore, surveys among international partners could provide additional insights for further improvements, particularly regarding research and education. They mention that the questionnaire should further contain questions regarding the students' workload (in class and self-study) in order to verify if the workload matches the awarded amount of credit points in each module. Following the student surveys, students should also be informed of the results and consequences of the surveys they participate in. Although the experts notice that this takes place informally, the experts miss that closing the feedback loop is ensured by regulations.

Overall, the experts consider that EUA has developed a well-working quality assurance system, which effectively takes the comments of internal and external stakeholders into account. The experts observe that negative feedback results in consequences (such as terminating teaching contracts), which points out that the opinion of stakeholders are seriously implemented in further improvement and development.

Final Assessment of the Experts after the Comment of the Higher Education Institution regarding Criterion 1:

Regarding Criterion 1.1 – PDCA Cycle and KPIs

EUA acknowledges that evaluating and monitoring KPIs on a quarterly basis, as the experts have suggested, is a valuable suggestion and the university will begin working towards mid-term monitoring tools for their KPIs. With regards to the experts recommendation to presenting a clear PDCA cycle in the annual reports of the strategic plans, EUA points out that, as outlined in their self-assessment report and during the on-site visit, their PDCA cycle begins with the annual plan and concludes with the self-analysis report. In these annual reports, a SWOT matrix is included, where EUA identifies strengths and obstacles recognized in the previous year. Based on this analysis, key areas for improvement are then

defined for the following year, with corresponding actions detailed in the next year's annual plan.

Regarding Criterion 1.2 – Feedback to Student Surveys

The EUA states that it publishes summarized versions of the survey report on its website (<https://eua.am/page/56>), which the auditors can confirm. The Department of Quality Assurance and Educational Reforms reviews the results with the heads of the respective chairs and discusses them directly with the lecturers involved. For issues related to administrative staff, these concerns are addressed personally with the participation of the HRM Department. Thus, the main problems and obstacles identified through the surveys are communicated via their website to the stakeholders, while specific details are discussed with the responsible staff directly.

Currently, there are two reports published on the website EUA provided, namely the analysis of the results of student surveys on the performance of EUA academic staff and the quality of the courses in the part-time as well as the full-time Bachelor's and Master's degree. Both reports, although quite short, do entail a summary of the surveys' results. However, as these reports deal with the feedback from all degree programmes together, it is not possible for outsiders to see exactly how students rated individual degree programmes or what feedback was given on individual modules. The surveys are a good way for outsiders, for example industry representatives, to get a rough overview of the study situation at the EUA, but it must at least be ensured for students that they receive detailed information about the results of their programme evaluations and the measures derived from them. This can best be done in a discussion between lecturers and students; however, the results can also be made available to students in another form.

In summary, the experts regard this criterion as partially fulfilled.

2. Offered Study Programs

Criterion 2.1 Establishment or Further Development of Study Programs

Preliminary Assessment and Analysis of the Experts:

The experts acknowledge that EUA has established policies on "Regulation on degree program development, approval, monitoring, evaluation and review" and "Regulation on the development and approval of the syllabus of the course" which apply for all study programs. According to the presented policies, new study programmes are approved by the

Scientific Council. The Rector, in their capacity as the head of the Scientific Council, signs off on these programs to validate the decision made by the council, which is followed by establishing a working group. The head of units describes to the experts that the idea for new study programs either originate from a chair(s) or is based on labor market analysis. Additionally, EUA conducts regular surveys of the labor market in Armenia. The most recent market analysis survey, conducted in 2021-2022 prior to the review of degree programmes, was carried out by the Scientific Laboratory of the Chair of Management, in collaboration with the EUA Career Development and alumni Department and other partner organizations. This survey included participation from Bachelor's, Master's, and PhD students. Furthermore, EUA chairs annually collect feedback from the labor market through employer evaluations of students after their internships, which highlight both strengths and areas for improvement in knowledge, skills, and abilities. When the survey identifies the need for new study programs, the rector orders the responsible department and chair to design new suitable study programs. The university management mentions that all steps in developing a new study program follow the PDCA cycle.

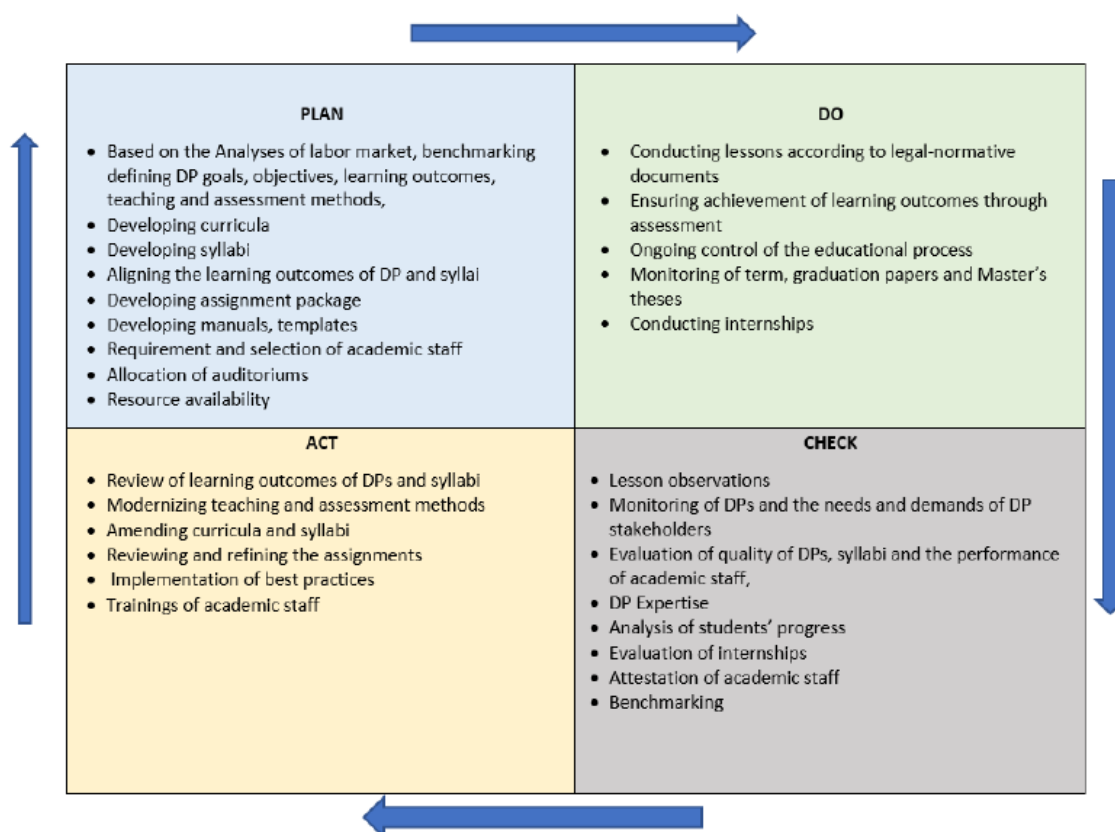


Figure 3. PDCA cycle regarding the planning and improvement of study programs (source: Self-assessment report).

The university managers inform the experts that the last labor market analysis was done in 2021. The process was designed on three levels. First, they conducted survey and interviews among 130 employers to identify their demands for graduates and skills. Second, they engage with alumni to compare if their competences and skills from their studies match their tasks in their new jobs. Third, they researched around 1,300 job announcements and vacancies to identify the skills needed in the different job sectors. Overall, it took them one and a half-year to complete this survey, which revealed that EUA's study programs are generally in line with the Armenian labor market. All results were summarized and EUA presented them in workshops to the different stakeholders. Based on the survey and workshop discussions, EUA concluded that they need to improve their teaching methods and provide more practical training to students. They furthermore appointed a new chair and reviewed several of their study programs. For example, EUA has added courses to the study program on Applied Linguistics, such as legal, business translations and medical translations. In the study program in "Computer Science", EUA added a track for artificial intelligence and new courses on deep learning, image processes, big data and machine learning.

One special case is the bachelor and master program on "Information Technologies and Security" which were developed in close collaboration with Synopsis Armenia. This is a local branch of an American company, which operates an educational department inside their offices. Since they had problems to recruit qualified specialists, they reached out to EUA to develop a joint study program, where students receive training in technology and software provided by their company. The experts learn that, as a result, over 90% of graduates start their employment at Synopsis Armenia. A representative of Synopsis Armenia is further present in the discussion and expresses their satisfaction regarding their involvement in the design and development of the study programs to the experts. In addition, representatives of other companies and governmental offices confirm that they are also involved in the improvement of the study programs at EUA. They describe to the experts that they are closely work with the responsible chairs and give feedback on the curricula. The experts perceive a strong involvement of various external stakeholders in the development of the study programs. Several industry representatives confirm also their involvement on the design of new courses, including a selection of suitable targeted competences and involved tools. They describe to the experts that they have additionally participated in focus group discussions and student training at EUA. Overall, the representatives from industry and the governmental sector demonstrate a high satisfaction with the competences of the students at graduation.

The university management highlights in the discussion with the experts that previous stakeholder feedback was considered in the improvement of EUA's study programs resulting in the introduction of internships or a practical phase within the curricula. Previously, students were able to participate in internships in the off-semester period at companies, which they organized themselves. These internships were not part of the curriculum and therefore students did not receive any credits. The students describe that their curricula now contain a practical phase off-campus, for which they receive credit points. For example, students from the bachelor program "Computer Science" mention that they have two practical phases, one in the third year and one in the fourth. According to the students, EUA has agreements with various companies and agencies, which offer them opportunities for their practical phase. The students agree that their practical phase/internship has a positive impact on their professional development. They appreciate that the internship/practical phase allowed them to be exposed to modern topics and projects, where they can apply their skills. The students explain that some companies also offer longer internships up to six months, where they first have to pass an entrance test. The experts support EUA's decision to implement internships. They consider that practical experience and experience off-campus benefit the personal and professional development of students.

Upon the question of the experts, the heads of the units describe that development of their study programs also considers demands from academia. Because of their interaction with their international domestic partners, EUA has strengthened the content of the curricula fostering writing and communication skills. Moreover, the heads of the different units state that EUA strongly considered new developments in research in their study programs. Recently they saw the need for more research components to their study programs, which caused them to add suitable content in the study programs. Already in the bachelor programs, students learn the basics in the course "Research Methods" in the first year, which is designed individually for each study program. Additionally, several courses contain research components, for example project management, business management or strategic management within the Chair of Management. Several study programs have integrated a second course on how to write a research publication during the third or fourth year. They highlight that most of the research projects in relation to the students' final projects are conducted in collaboration with industry partners.

The experts note that EUA has defined the structure of its study programs in the "Order on the application of accumulation and transfer of academic credits of the European University of Armenia." Bachelor study programs have the following components as defined in § 5.1.4:

- a) “general educational block (40-45 ECTS credits), which includes mandatory and optional courses,
- b) professional block (155-165 ECTS credits), which includes mandatory and optional courses,
- c) other educational block (35-40 ECTS credits), including coursework, internships and final certification.”

The credit distribution for master courses is outlined in § 5.1.5:

- a) “professional block (80 ECTS credits), which includes mandatory and optional courses,
- b) Research block (22 ECTS credits),
- c) Final Attestation (18 ECTS credits).”

After discussion and reviewing several study programs, the experts noticed the number of elective courses offered at EUA is small in comparison to other higher education institutions. The university managers admit that they are aware of this situation, which has already resulted into a plan to increase the number of offered electives in all their study programs. Students must choose any course or courses from the elective courses offered by the Professional Chair that should include courses with the same schedule and time structure. The experts appreciate the universities explanation and emphasize that elective courses give the students opportunities to create their personal profile, which is important on the modern job market. They add that additional electives further allow students to learn subjects outside their main areas, which broadens their expertise and supports them to learn to think interdisciplinary.

In the discussion, the experts further raise the topic of teaching methods. In the different discussion rounds, the experts learn that EUA is proud to have implemented student-centered learning in all its study programs. It aims to combine various teaching methods to allow students to achieve competences and skills needed for their future occupations. The heads of the units describe that EUA monitors to which degree students have acquired the program learning outcomes at graduation. If certain aspects were not reached, EUA undertakes analysis to identify strategies for improvement. Teaching methods in the different study programs include project-based learning and case studies. In courses in higher semesters, research-based learning is introduced to the students. EUA also monitors peer learning and uses interactive formats such as rotated classroom. In most of the study courses, practical phases outside the campus are included to allow the students to receive practical experience. The head of the units confirm that they received training in these teaching methods before they have implemented them in their study programs.

The experts are especially interested in the Two-Diploma programs. The head of the units describe that they have initiated the Two-Diploma programs two years ago as a pilot program. The Two-Diploma programs were developed in collaboration with the vice-rectors, QAERD, the heads of chairs and the international partners. At graduation, students will receive one certificate from EUA and one professional diploma from the international partner institution. The students take part in two types of courses: one set in the classes at EUA for one regular study program (together with other students) while in addition the second set of courses will be taught by their international partners in the afternoon and evening (courses for Two-Diploma students only) starting from the second year. The head of the units describe that students have to complete all courses in the standard period of four years. In addition to the 240 ECTS credit points the students need to complete for receiving their bachelor degree at EUA, they participate in courses with the workload of 120 ECTS credits from the international partners. The international partners additionally recognize 60 ECTS credits from EUA (basic courses from the first year), resulting in 180 credits, which qualify the students to receive a professional certificate (but not a second bachelor degree). The students in the discussion appreciate the opportunity to participate in classes outside of Armenia. Several students mention that the international education of the Two-Diploma program was their main motivation to study at EUA. The students describe that the Two-Diploma programs were initiated only two years ago. While the first year does not contain any courses from their international partners, they started to participate in online classes during their second year. The students describe that they are comfortable with their additional classes in the evening and that they are able to manage the workload. Although that currently, most courses are online, they receive the information at several classes by their international partners will be conducted in person. In addition, they will have an opportunity to participate in an internship abroad, which they would appreciate.

The experts consider that the EUA-specific Two-Diploma programs are a great benefit to students and are overall an appropriate concept for a European university. Although the experts acknowledge the name, they highlight that it might be confused in the international community. In their opinion, the name closely resembles a joint or double diploma as used in the European higher education area. EUA explains that in academic affairs, they use the terms “Double-Diploma Programs” to describe programmes in which graduates receive diplomas from both participating institutions, with each diploma being recognized at the corresponding degree level. To differentiate from this construct, EUA specifically chose the term “Two-Diploma Programs” as their European partner provides a certificate labeled “Diploma” and the term “Two-Diploma” has not been defined by any international higher education organization. EUA thus agrees that it is essential to be transparent about the out-

come of these programs in order to avoid any negative consequences and students' disappointments. This also includes the involvement of international instructors and opportunities to spend time abroad in internships and students exchange programs. The experts further emphasize that a transparent presentation of the workload is also important to the students. The experts agree that all students need to be aware of the high workload of these programs (courses with a total workload of 360 ECTS credit points in eight semester). Furthermore, EUA needs to transparently present to which degree the diploma from EUA as well as the certificate from their European partner institutions will be recognized in an international context. The experts are thus glad to hear that at the beginning of each academic year, the Rector of EUA holds a meeting with all students and their parents participating in the Two-Diploma Programs to provide comprehensive information about these programs, including details on workload, recognition, and procedures. Additionally, the Head of the International Educational Programs Department conducts regular meetings and group chats with students to share ongoing information about their education. While the experts appreciate that the Rector takes the time to meet and inform students and their parents about the two-diploma programme, they are nonetheless of the opinion that all information about this programme should be written down and anchored bindingly, especially its workload and its outcome (degree), so that all stakeholders can refer to them.

During the on-site visit, the experts receive several reports documenting all stages of the development and improvement of study programs at EUA. The experts confirm that EUA monitors the achievement of the learning outcomes at graduation. They receive documentation that all procedures for establishing, modifying and discontinuing study programs are regulated and are therefore binding. Responsibilities are defined and include various internal and external stakeholders. As described in criterion 1.2, the experts conclude that quality assurance measures are in place to continue the improvement of study programs. Compliance with and effectiveness of the procedure for establishing, modifying and discontinuing study programs are reviewed on a regular basis. Suggestions for improvement are taken up and incorporated into the quality development process. The experts further note that various units are involved in the process and are aware of each step to design and improve (new) study programs.

Criterion 2.2 Implementation of Study Programs

Preliminary Assessment and Analysis of the Experts:

EUA describes in its self-assessment report that the implementation of new study programs requires the confirmation of the Armenian government. To establish a new study program, EUA needs to submit required documents to receive a license for each study program. Thus,

the need to submit (1) regulations for developing, implementing, evaluating, and improving study programs and syllabi; (2) a labor market analysis documenting the need to a study program; (3) approval of the Board of Trustees; (4) draft of the learning outcomes; (5) curriculum and syllabi; and (6) mandatory forms form the government.

The curricula and syllabi of each study program at EUA follow the same template. The curricula contain a defined study plan presenting modules for each semester with their number of credit points, associated workload and lecturer. EUA uses the European Credit Points Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) as defined in the “Order on application of accumulation and transfer of academic credits of the European University of Armenia.” EUA defines in the document that a full academic year contains 60 ECTS credit points in each study program (full time students) and 48 ECTS credit points (part-time students). The regulation clarifies that the total workload at EUA consider the time students spend on curricular work, extracurricular work and independent study. According to the presented order, the students’ weekly workload in the classroom can be between 23 and 30 hours in the bachelor programs and between 15 and 22 hours in the master programs. In addition, the maximum workload of all students is not allowed to exceed 45 academic hours. Curricula and syllabi are approved by the Scientific Council before they are implemented.

EUA has presented regulations outlining each step to implement new programs. These consider a thorough analysis of the needs of the labor market and the higher education landscape of Armenia as well as the resources of EUA (human and material). The responsibilities among the different units are defined clearly. The experts observe in the different discussion rounds that the responsible units are aware of the regulations and their contribution to establishing and implementing new study programs. They notice that the units collaborate with each other and receive support by the university management and rectorate. The experts are informed that even in situation of conflict and crisis, the university supports the various units to guarantee successful procedures within EUA and the regulating units in the Armenian government. The experts confirm that the regulations for implementing and improving study programs are transparent and comprehensible for all stakeholders. The experts approve that these regulations appear on the webpage [accessed 19.07.2024].

Criterion 2.3 Cooperation

Preliminary Assessment and Analysis of the Experts:

During the on-site visit, the experts learn about the various collaborations EUA has established in the academic, governmental and private sector. The experts approve the strong collaboration with various industry partners to enhance the practical aspects of the study

programs. The experts learn that around 40% of all academic staff also hold positions in organizations and companies. In the various discussion rounds, the experts learn about the framework of collaboration between Synopsis Armenia, who strongly contribute to the design and development in the field of “Information Systems.” The experts appreciate such collaborations not only regarding the share of technical expertise from the field but also the contribution of the company to the education of students concerning equipment and software. Well-established collaborations in education exist for example also between “Backbone Branding” and the study program of “Graphic Design” and “Instigate” as well as “EPAM Armenia” and the study program of “Computer Science.” In addition, the experts acknowledge close cooperation with the Investigative Committee of the Republic of Armenia and the study program of “Law” as well as collaborations with non-governmental organizations and agencies. Students also engage in activities in professional clinics (e.g. study programs “Psychology” and “Law”). The experts confirm that these collaborations are based on contracts or Memorandums of Understanding. The experts are informed in the discussion with the representatives of the industry, organizations and agencies that EUA engages with its external stakeholders in various workshops, focus group discussions and surveys to collect feedback on how to improve its study programs matching the needs of the job market.

The university managers explain to the experts that their location poses a challenge for collaborations. Recently, several of their guest lecturers involved in their Two-Diploma programs were denied to travel and teach in Yerevan as their institutions had Armenia labelled as “conflict zone” preventing them from their trip. This poses an additional challenge for providing international education at EUA. However, the experts appreciate that EUA shows efforts to develop new ideas and motivations to overcome such threshold to increase the number of visiting lecturers at EUA.

Based on the submitted documentation, the experts note that EUA participates in Erasmus+ program for student mobility, where EUA currently aims to expand its list of partner universities in accordance with its internalization strategy. Additionally, it lists national and international collaboration partners offering internships. The experts discuss the collaboration concerning student exchange programs with the students. They learn that EUA supports students exchange program with other universities, although they are very competitive. The selection is merit-based and requires the recommendation of a dean and an interview. The students confirm that EUA provides the necessary information including the requirements to take part in the exchange programs. All opportunities are further shared on the webpage and via social media. According to the students, the deans further mention opportunities directly to students, who qualify for the program (usually via email).

The experts review the cooperation at EUA. Concerning industry collaborations, EUA is well connected with various partners in all disciplines offered. The collaboration includes several national and international companies from the private sector as well as important connections to the governmental and non-governmental sector. The experts conclude that EUA has regulated their collaboration in adequate legal frameworks. However, cooperations with other universities and research institutes are limited in the opinion of the experts. In addition, these cooperations often include mainly teaching (with a majority of offers online), whereas research is less considered. The experts form the opinion that EUA needs to strongly improve in this regard. It should be one of the main strategies to strengthen research at EUA and research collaboration with national and international institutions. Moreover, EUA should seek to develop new collaboration with established European partners, which could provide opportunities for exchange for students and academic personnel (incoming and outgoing). The experts acknowledge that EUA is part of various mobility programs, but that students are reluctant to participate. As reasons the students mention potential problems with the recognition of externally achieved credit points and potential longer study periods since they might need to repeat courses. The experts highlight the benefits of students studying abroad for one semester, fostering their professional and personal development. Thus, EUA needs to ensure that frameworks are in place offering student exchange without the risk of prolonging one's study. In addition, students need to be informed on their opportunities. The recognition of externally achieved credit points needs to be clearly explained to students, who are interested in participating in student mobility program.

Criterion 2.4 Examination System and Organization
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Preliminary Assessment and Analysis of the Experts:

EUA has regulated the examination system in its "Order on Application of Accumulation and Transfer of Academic Credits of the European University of Armenia" in § 6 "Multifunctional assessment system." All assessment is rated in a 100-point system. Most courses are assessed considering continuous assessment as well as mid-term and final exams to observe the achievement of the learning outcomes, each representing weights in the final grade. The calculation of the Grade Point Average (GPA) is further defined in the same regulation and considers a cumulative GPA. The regulations allows for written, oral, and electronic examinations. EUA has further issues policies regarding "Midterm exam organization, conduct and appeal at the EUA" and on "Final exams organization, conduct and appeal at the EUA". In addition, regulations are defined in a policy for "Organizing and Conducting

Re-exam of students studying through the EU Academic Credit Collection and Transfer System.” The experts confirm that the presented syllabi contain information on the assessment methods, which state the weights of each assessment component. The experts are further presented with the “Order on preparation, defense, assessment and appeal of individual papers, research projects and individual assignment papers at EUA” regulating project/research based assessments.

The head of different units confirm that EUA is concerned with updating their teaching and assessment methods. They aim to combine various assessment methods. Each written exam is composed of questions requiring knowledge and competences. In several courses, students engage in research-based learning. In study programs, for example in the bachelor program of “Law”, students often work on case study as part of their assessment. Especially in the study programs of the Faculty of Tourism, Linguistics and Psychology, oral exams are common. The heads of the units describe to the experts that EUA involves external supervisors for monitoring the exams. Students’ appeals will be forwarded to these external partners for revision and potential correction of grades. If mismatches are detected, these are discussed between the lecturer, the external supervisor and the responsible chair. If substantial problems are detected, the lecturer has to participate in further training.

According to the heads of the units, one assessment component of internships or other practical training outside EUA is the evaluation of their supervisor outside EUA. The final grade usually combines 30% from the supervisor at the company, who grades the students’ performance. The remaining 70% of the final grade are based on the lecturer at EUA, evaluating the students schedule, report, and presentation of their internship. They confirm that students receive credit points for their internships at the industry. Representatives from the Chair of Information Technologies and Applied Mathematics add that students in their programs spend four weeks outside campus during the off-semester period. The students receive grades and credit points for their activities while also gaining practical experience. The partners from the industry add that the students have a practice diary during their internship, where they describe each task they perform during the day. This practice diary is the basis to describe the achieved competences to the supervisor at EUA.

The experts observe that the students are generally satisfied with the organization of the exams. The students mention in the discussion that they have sufficient time to prepare for their mid-term and final exams since they are informed on the academic schedule at the beginning of the semester. All final exams take place within one month at the end of the semester. The students mention that they registered for around five courses each semester on average; however, the number of exams in one semester is decreasing as they advance in their studies. The students describe that if they fail one exam, they can retake it at the end of examination period. They confirm that they are allowed to retake the exams twice

(three attempts in total). The students describe to the experts a variety of examination methods. This includes written exams, oral exams, and research projects (term papers; 3-month projects requiring a report and presentation). For study programs within the Faculty of the Information Technologies and Design, practical exams as well as electronic exams are included. This includes for examples exams to test the students' competences on certain software or programming competences and practical projects to observe the students' skills. The students further demonstrate that they are aware of the possibility of appealing grades to the experts. The students state that appeals need to be submitted in a written form. The students describe no problems with the submission of appeals for written exams; however, for oral exams, the situation is more complex. The students state pressure, since the appeal should be submitted within one hour after the exam (students are given the grade immediately after the oral exam).

After reviewing the submitted documents and talking to the various partners during the on-site visit, the experts acknowledge that EUA has implemented a high number of written exams (one mid-term and one final exam). Although the number of assessments appears high, the experts do not see or hear any evidence of complaint. Based on the presented exams during the on-site visit, the experts contemplate that EUA should encourage its instructors to give detailed feedback to students to support them in their learning process. In addition, they recommend that EUA should review the format of exams to ensure that various examination types are integrated in all study programs. This should include oral exams, as well as project works and practical exams/assignments. Moreover, EUA should ensure that all examinations are competency-oriented.

During the on-site visit, the experts remain uncertain concerning the documentation of oral exams, especially regarding the appeal processes. The experts point out that EUA needs to ensure that oral examinations are always held in front of two examiners to ensure fairness and transparency. The exams need to be documented, e.g. using a protocol, which allows the students to appeal their grades during a defined period of time following the exams.

The experts confirm that all study program at EUA require the students to work on a graduation paper (bachelor thesis) and master thesis in order to graduate. The experts review EUA's regulations in the "Order on summative certification, preparation, defense, assessment and appeal of the graduation paper of the EU bachelor's degree graduates" and "Order on summative certification, preparation, defense, assessment and appeal of the master's thesis of the EU master's degree graduates". The graduation thesis is defined in § 1.4: "The graduation paper is an independent work of research, which has applied nature. It should reflect the student's acquisition of professional knowledge and abilities corresponding to the learning outcomes of the Bachelor's education program." The experts

acknowledge that the regulations for the graduation paper and master's thesis specify the duties and responsibilities of the student and their supervisor. It defines the level or originality and terminates the structure and volume of the work. Both, bachelor students and master students have to defend their work in the presence of a certification committee in an open session. The defense consists of a 15-minute presentation of the work followed by questions of the committee. Assessment includes various components, where the public presentation accounts for 50% (graduation paper) and 40% (master thesis).

In discussion, the experts are informed that EUA has established a strategy to deal with plagiarism. Primarily, they introduce the students to academic integrity, including academic honesty. Further, EUA has defined levels of originality with the following levels: graduation papers are required to have at least 75% original content, master theses' uniqueness needs to exceed 90% while doctoral theses are required to exceed 95% originality. Overall, the quality and content needs to be verified by the head of the chair of each study program.

During the on-site visit, the experts view several examples of graduation papers, master theses and doctoral theses. The experts observe that they encountered several theses, which did not align with EUA's regulations. The experts therefore suggest closely evaluating the graduation papers and theses against EUA's regulations to ensure a representable quality of the students' competences at graduation.

Criterion 2.5 Recognition of Achievements
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Preliminary Assessment and Analysis of the Experts:

EUA describe in its self-assessment report that recognition or prior learning in Armenia, and likewise at EUA, aligns with the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Thus, EUA is guided by state regulations. The heads of the units confirm to the experts that EUA recognizes externally awarded credit points from other domestic and international universities. It acknowledges ECTS credit points awarded by other universities within the European Higher Education Area. EUA describes in its self-assessment report that before students participate in mobility programs, the head of the chair compares the curriculum of the partner university to define, which courses match EUA's curriculum of the study program. Students need to complete at least 20 ECTS credits abroad or risk to be expelled from EUA. The university management agrees that inconsistency between curricula might cause problems in the recognition of credit points collected outside EUA. Consequently, the majority of student exchange takes place with their academic partner universities, with whom they have learning agreements.

The students confirm that EUA recognized the credits they collected at other universities. However, they describe to the experts that EUA should show a higher flexibility to recognize achieved competences. This supports the experts' impression that EUA needs to develop strategies to recognize externally awarded credits from universities. Although the experts acknowledge the complexity of recognition considering the different content of comparable modules internationally, the experts highlight the importance of gaining experience internationally. Thus, EUA should develop flexible approaches concerning completed modules with different workload and slightly variations in content. Furthermore, they point out that a higher contribution of elective courses in the curricula would give the students more opportunities to take modules abroad to broaden their expertise. Thus, although EUA supports student mobility with a framework, the procedure for the recognition of achievements still constraints students in taking modules at foreign institutions. The experts point out that EUA should intensify the collaboration with external partners to collect feedback to overcome these issues.

Moreover, the experts conclude that EUA has not issued clear regulations regarding the recognition of achievements, especially regarding prior learning and non-formal education. The experts require EUA to review its policy for the recognition of achievements outside EUA and the higher education framework.

Criterion 2.6 Advice and Support

Preliminary Assessment and Analysis of the Experts:

The experts learn in the various discussions during the on-site visit that EUA is characterized as student-centered; therefore, students have opportunities to contribute to the development of the university and its study programs. The experts see evidence that EUA offers support and advice in different forms, formally and informally.

At EUA, the students are organized in a Student Council and a Student Scientific Society. The experts are informed that the Student Council provides support and guidance to all students at EUA as the main body of student representation. In the discussion with the experts, members of the Student Scientific Society and the Student Council are present. The members of the Student Scientific Society describe that they hold monthly meetings. The dean of each faculty nominates the students to become members based on their academic performance (GPA above 75% is required), while the head is selected by the Scientific Council. In contrast, the members of the Student Council are selected by themselves. Students can apply at the beginning of each semester to become a member. Each applicant needs to share their personal information and motivate to contribute to the work of the

council. The vote takes place offline, at the university. Representatives of the Student Scientific Society and the Student Council describe to the experts that they receive support by the university. They can request funds for equipment and events (including workshops, trainings, etc.), which is often answered positively.

The administrative staff gives the experts an overview of the financial support for students from the state and from the university. While EUA has no influence on state fellowships, it additionally offers three types of discounts to students. One is based on their academic performances, which results in the reimbursement of 75% or 100% of their fees. The second one considers students with a high GPA (higher than 85 on a 100 scale) whereas the third discount considers students with financial issues. They describe that EUA has a reserved budget for these scholarships, which it spends completely each semester. Students can get information on the webpage, where they can apply to receive discounts. EUA requires the same tuition fees from all students; however, students studying in the international classes have to pay higher fees than those studying in Armenian.

The experts further learn more on the student mentor program at EUA. The students describe to the experts that a lecturer is assigned to become a mentor of a course. These lecturers help them regarding this course outside the contact hours (assignment, learning, preparation for exams, etc.). In several cases, the mentor also involves students in extra-curricular activities such as on field trips to companies. The mentoring is defined in the “Student mentoring policy and procedure at the European University of Armenia” which aims to foster student mentoring to promote student centered learning, self-improvement and student networks. One mentor receives 15 to 17 students.

In the discussion, the university management further explain that the required English competences are a threshold for many applicants. In Armenia, schools often do not prepare their students adequately to communicate in English. However, EUA requires students to provide a documentation to have reached at least level B1. Students are allowed to take their test at the Pearson test center at EUA or at the British Council. In addition, EUA offers training and support for students who still need to improve their English competences with EUA’s partner organizations.

In the discussion with the experts, the university managers add that EUA further supports visiting and outgoing students regarding visa issues to avoid delays due to the long application process. According to the international students in the discussion with the experts, they confirm that they receive adequate support from the university and their lecturers. According to them, EUA strongly supports its international students offering additional advice. Thus, they feel well-integrated and welcome at EUA.

The experts perceive that the rector, university management and academic staff are open to suggestions and criticism. Each lecturer offers consultation at least once a week. Students can further request assistance and guidance by additional lecturers in the same faculty according to the self-assessment report. To offer complaint and grievances, EUA also offers a “letter box” where students can freely write and post about the problems they have noticed. A similar tool shall be installed on EUA’s webpage in the future, which the experts welcome. The students support the positive situation at EUA. Several students highlight that they choose to study at EUA due to its European values, which also includes its student-centered orientation. They appreciate the good relationship to their lecturers and emphasize that they can also contact the rector directly with their concerns and complaints.

Overall, the experts conclude that EUA has established a strong support system for students, including international students. Nevertheless, they detect that EUA has not issued regulations supporting student with disabilities and special needs. The experts note that the current campus does not support students with physical disabilities, besides ramps being installed in all buildings. This should be considered in their plan for improvements. Moreover, the experts welcome regulations towards respecting students with special needs by issuing regulations towards academic adjustments and advice. Students need to be able to claim academic adjustments regarding of physical impairments or disabilities or mental disabilities including learning disorders. The experts strongly recommend developing guidelines for the academic adjustments of coursework and examinations.

Furthermore, the experts consider it would be beneficial if the members of all student boards would be determined independently. EUA has established clear criteria for the selection process of the member of the Student Scientific Society (high GPA and dean nomination), which might be in conflict with independent governance of students. Moreover, the experts wonder on the influence of the rectorate and university management since all documents by the Student Council are stamped and approved by EUA. The experts note that this does not occur at other (Armenian) universities. Therefore, EUA should ensure that the work of all student bodies can take place independently.

Final Assessment of the Experts after the Comment of the Higher Education Institution regarding Criterion 2:

Regarding Criterion 2.2 – Cooperation with other Universities

EUA states that in their self-assessment report as well as during the on-site visit, they have provided examples of research cooperation: a) Cooperation with EURAC Research (Italy): As part of a one-year specialization program, the students engage in practical research. At

the end of the academic year, lecturers from EURAC visit Armenia to evaluate and defend the students' research papers, b) Research Grant: Lecturers from the Chair of Management have received a grant from the Committee of Science of the Republic of Armenia. They have been conducting research for three years in the field of microfinancing within agriculture, c) Collaboration with RA Ministries and Employers' Committee: EUA collaborate with various ministries of the Republic of Armenia and the Committee of Employers, who provide practical topics for bachelor's graduate papers and master's thesis research.

While the experts acknowledge, that EUA holds cooperation in teaching and research, they are nonetheless of the opinion that their number should increase in the future.

Regarding Criterion 2.3 – Student Mobility

The experts have asked EUA to ensure that frameworks are in place offering student exchange without the risk of prolonging one's study and to inform student adequately about this opportunity. Hereto, EUA states that they establish mobility agreements only with universities that hold accreditation from institutions listed in internationally recognized databases, such as DEQAR or CHIA. This ensures that credits earned during mobility are recognized without issues. Additionally, the curricula include mobility windows within elective courses, thus allowing EUA to integrate courses not offered in the curriculum to be recognized. EUA states that from their experience, no problems regarding recognition have been occurred, with the exception of students failing the exam at the partner university and thus not receiving the required grade. EUA further states that regarding credit recognition, they cannot be more flexible due to stringent Armenian legislation. This means that they can only recognize ECTS credits that are internationally recognized and approved by the national agency ENIC-NARIC. Armenian universities must adhere to this uniform recognition policy, and deviations are not permitted. The experts understand that ministry regulation allows only for credit transfer within the academic sector. They urge EUA, however, to facilitate discussions with the ministry to adhere to ESG regulation in the future.

Regarding Criterion 2.4 – Examination Forms

EUA states that, as outlined in the "Order on Application of Accumulation and Transfer of Academic Credits at EUA", the final grade of students is comprised of various components: a) Current Activity: This includes the evaluation of students' practical skills and abilities through assignments, b) Individual or Research Paper: This assesses students' research skills, c) Mid-Term and Final Exams: These exams evaluate students' knowledge, skills, and abilities using case-study methods and practical assignments. The experts thank EUA for the additional information, yet they still believe that it would be beneficial to include a broader range of examination forms, specifically oral exams, in all study programmes.

Regarding Criterion 2.4 – Final Thesis

The experts have viewed several examples of graduation papers and final theses that did not align with EUA's regulations and thus suggested closely evaluating the papers against EUA's regulations to ensure a representable quality of the students' competencies at graduations. In their statement, EUA showcases that in various university regulations, the assessment criteria for graduation papers and Master's theses are outlined, including technical requirements worth ten points. If a graduation paper or master's thesis does not meet these requirements, the assessment committee will deduct points accordingly. EUA has presented the auditors a variety of exams, including those with high, medium and low grades and some of them had a low grade because the students did not check to align their papers with the regulations. The auditors understand and agree.

Regarding Criterion 2.5 – Recognition of prior learning and non-formal education

The EUA states that according to Armenian legislation, universities in the Republic of Armenia are currently unable to recognize non-formal education. However, the government is working on regulations to address this issue. EUA is actively involved in this process and participating in the discussions. Once the regulations are in place, EUA will develop a procedure for recognizing non-formal education. In the meantime, EUA has introduced a new process, which involves incubators where students can address practical issues under the supervision of the university and mentors from partner companies.

Regarding Criterion 2.6 – Student Council

The experts have remarked that all documents by the Student Council are stamped and approved by EUA and that it must be ensured that the work of all student bodies can take place independently. EUA states that according to the regulation, the Student Council generally operates independently. The EUA Scientific Council only approves their annual working plan and annual report due to financial considerations and necessary cooperation with other departments, which require EUA management's approval. Generally, it was remarked the Student Council works independently and has the freedom to raise issues regarding student activities, express opinions, and vote on decisions within the Scientific Council. The auditors however do not agree with EUA's assessment on this matter. Based on their observation during the audit, it became evident that *all* documents from the Student Council are stamped and approved by the EUA, which affects the Student Council's ability to work independently. It further became apparent that the most significant decisions, which should be made by the Student Council, were actually made by the Deans or the Rectors. For instance, while student representatives in the EUA Scientific Council are supposed to be elected by the EUA, the site visit uncovered that they were actually appointed by the deans of their faculty. Additionally, the annual report of the Student Council

also requires EUA's approval. Considering these factors, the auditors do not believe that the Student Council operates independently or has the freedom to raise issues regarding student activities, express opinions, or vote on decisions within the EUA Scientific Council.

In summary, the experts regard this criterion as partially fulfilled.

3. Management of Resources

Criterion 3.1 Material and Personal Resources
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Preliminary Assessment and Analysis of the Experts:

The experts acknowledge that the education at EUA is divided into four faculties, eleven chairs and thirteen departments. The educational activities are supported by 249 members of the academic staff, of which 194 are currently located at the main campus in Yerevan and 55 at the other branches. Concerning the main campus in Yerevan, EUA lists 90 as full-time staff, 104 as part-timers. In addition, 82 people work in administration and management. The university management highlights that one of the main tasks of EUA's Strategic Development Plan is "Improving the quality of education and ensuring the trustworthiness of awarded qualifications" which is closely linked to the quality of the academic staff.

The experts discuss the recruitment processes of new staff, in particular concerning their qualification. The university management highlights that it primarily considers the applicant's professionalism as well as their proficiency in English. Each newly recruited person receives a contract for three months first as an internship period before they can be hired by EUA. Once the new person is employed, a responsible person from the Department of Human Resources. The lecturers confirm these statements; they add that minimum requirement for teaching is a master degree, but EUA does not require any specific competences in teaching. The experts observe that EUA employs also a high number of external lecturers and lecturers with a background from the industry. Although they generally approve the connections to employers and the industry, the experts are interested in how EUA ensure their academic qualifications as well as their didactic competences to teach, assess and supervise students. The academic staff confirms that mentoring programs of the quality of teaching within faculties exist. They add that those individuals involved in teaching at EUA generally have prior experience in lecturing and/or supervision (e.g. student supervision during internship). In addition, all lecturers are evaluated by the students, which also reveals their personal areas for further improvement to themselves. Thus, they consider the evaluation also as a personal benefit. The lecturers further explain to the experts

that there are no differences between full-time and part-time lecturers regarding their requirements in knowledge and teaching skills. Part-time lecturers further confirm that they feel equal to the full-time lecturers in all regards, including support from the university.

The heads of the units also discuss that students are involved in reviewing the qualifications of their lecturers in the end-semester evaluations. Based on these evaluations, the lecturers receive grades. When lecturers receive low grades, the respective Head of the Chair will review their competences. The students confirm that EUA has already ended teaching contracts with lecturers, whom the students considered not competent for their job or who lacked teaching skills. Each Head of the Chair also holds focus group discussions with students once a year where they can comment on the quality of their lectures. Overall, the students are satisfied with the competences and skills of their lecturers; in the discussion with the experts, they emphasize their professional attitude, international orientation and openness to discuss within and outside the classroom.

The university managers explain to the experts that they also consider the lecturers' English proficiency of the academic staff to ensure they are capable for teaching in English. For students, EUA requires at least level B1 when entering the first year; additional support is offered in collaboration with the British Council and a Pearson Test Center. They emphasize that EUA wants to educate its students to be fluent in English at graduation, therefore, they also offer programs to train its staff members. The university management describes that lecturers have opportunities to participate in training with their international collaboration partners such as the Chelsea Business School to receive certificates. Both, academic and non-academic staff, confirm this in the discussion with the experts.

In the various discussions, the experts learn that the academic staff at EUA is employed in working agreements; no fixed terms can be offered due to the Armenian legislation. However, working agreements were recently expanded to three-year contracts for main professional personnel, while other staff still receives one-year contracts. EUA supports this regulation since it allows it to ensure high standards of teaching and administration. The experts welcome an extension of contracts to ensure a continuation in the education process and a high quality education in the classroom with experience staff.

According to the university management, EUA works with an incentive system awarding financial incentives as well as promotions. A reward for good performance, EUA has previously appointed new chairs and awarded lecturers the rank of associate professors and professor. The university management as well as the academic staff confirm that they consider this as a great personal motivation while it also further strengthens their identification with EUA. They add that promotion and awards are based on criteria, which are defined in

their regulations for promotion. Furthermore, incentives for research are also available for students, which is appreciated by the experts.

The university management describes that one of the biggest challenges concerning their academic staff is the unstable situation within Armenia. Qualified academic staff and students would often search for opportunities abroad. Others also continue to search for opportunities in the private sector. The lecturer in the discussion with the experts confirm EUA's support for their work. They highlight especially the financial support for research publications and research. Nevertheless, they admit that university salaries are not competitive with the private sector, which challenges recruitment at EUA. As one example, they mention that the position of the Head of the Chair of Economics was vacant for a long time. To reduce this problem, the salary of academic staff was increase between 10–15%, accompanied by a rise between 30–50% for the Head of Chairs and 20–25% for all administrative staff.

The experts are further interested in EUA's strategy for replacement of teaching personnel in case of illness, mobility or otherwise. The university managers explain that EUA operates a database of CVs for potential replacement staff. Everyone in the database successfully passed an application process including a review of the person's qualification and an interview. The university managers state that EUA actively searches for new potential lecturers from the industry. When new recruits do not have experience in teaching or lack practice in English language, EUA offers a three months training program in coordination with their international partner universities (e.g. the Chelsea Business School).

Concerning the material resources, the experts discuss the financial resources with representatives of EUA's management, who explain that the university's total budget increased by 30% during the last years. This was caused by an increase in student applications (tuition fees) and from international grants. EUA's budget in 2023 was around 1.5 billion Armenian dram, equal to 3.5 million Euro. The university management admits that a large percentage (82%) derives from students' tuition fees. International collaboration projects include Erasmus+ and Horizon while collaboration projects with the industry are still under development. According to the management, the budget for research ranges between 1.9–4.5% of EUA's entire budget. The university management further describes that EUA has decided to focus only on operating its main campus in Yerevan while the other three locations are scheduled to be closed down. The motivation was the low number of student registration, which made is challenging to ensure the high quality education.

During the on-site visit, the experts review the facilities supporting the educational programs in Yerevan. On the main campus, EUA operates ten computer laboratories and one robotics laboratory within the Faculty of Information Technologies. Adequate software is

ensured by collaborations with industry partners. In addition, one computer laboratory is specially equipped for the needs of students in “Graphic Design” and one computer laboratory in the Faculty of Economics and Management. The Chair of Management oversees a research laboratory, where students and lecturers can engage in applied research. The Faculty of Tourism, Linguistics and Psychology supports its students to reach competences in “Translation Affairs” with suitable equipment. EUA has further installed a moot court associated to the Chair of Law. Moreover, sport facilities are available to students including a sports hall and gym with various equipment. Medical services are also provided to students and staff. EUA has also established a library on its main campus and is currently working on a digital platform/system as e-library. The heads of the units explain that despite the lack of a digital literature access at EUA, they share online access to scientific journals among staff members. Across the university, they have several members of their academic staff, who have additional access due to their editorial work and scientific networks.

The university management admits that the students are not fully satisfied with the facilities and equipment available at EUA. According to presented survey data, 86% of students and 85% of academic staff are satisfied with the condition and equipment of the auditoriums, while only 55% of students are satisfied with computer auditoriums in 2022–2023. However, the experts perceive that the university management is investing in the development of the campus to ensure the quality of the education. Furthermore, all members of EUA’s administrative staff confirm to the experts that sufficient and adequate equipment is provided to perform their duties. Both, the students and the academic staff mention the limited access to professional literature in the library and digital library. The experts acknowledge this as a hindrance to conduct research efficiently and also highlight this as an opportunity for improvement. Moreover, the experts highlight the need to offer facilities for staff and students with disabilities and special needs. During the on-site visit, the main building at the Yerevan campus did not offer an elevator or any other facilities for people with reduced mobility. Although the university describes that improvements were scheduled for 2024, the experts point out the importance of supportive facilities in terms of equality.

In summary, the experts consider that EUA has implemented a system to ensure and control its resources. The availability and management of human and material resources contributes to the achievement of the institution's objectives. EUA offers sufficient human resources to operate the university and all its study programs. The experts receive documents, which clearly define the rules and obligations of staff of different units. During the on-site visit, the experts form the opinion that suggestions for improvements are discussed openly among all units and feedback is considered at management and the rectorate.

Although the experts appreciate the challenges in Armenia to recruit qualified academic staff, they highlight the importance of high quality teaching to support the students in reaching the program learning outcomes. The experts emphasize that EUA needs to establish its own teaching concept, which defines good practice of teaching at all education levels and the application of modern student-centered teaching approaches. This concept should include all didactic competences mandatory each lecturer needs to have acquired in order to meet the standards of good teaching at EUA. It further should ensure that all full-time and part-time lecturers have completed pedagogic formal or informal training to ensure their skills in the classroom to teach, assess, and supervise students in their learning processes. If lecturers miss competences, the teaching concept should mention that EUA is responsible to take action to guarantee compensation strategies to overcome the lack of skills. Furthermore, regular training to update the didactic competences of the lecturers needs to be guaranteed to meet the demand of the students and guarantee good teaching practice. The experts conclude that EUA needs to develop its own statement of good teaching considering the opinion of various stakeholders.

Moreover, improvements towards modernization of the campus facilities would contribute positively to the situation at EUA. New infrastructure in the classrooms could allow for more interactive teaching formats, which benefitted EUA's student-centered approaches. This includes less traditional furniture supporting modern teaching methods (student-centered teaching). Furthermore, EUA needs to ensure that the equipment in laboratories remains in line with the developments in the fields of science and technology as well as the rising number in students. The experts note that the campus facilities in Yerevan are currently limited, but the numbers of students and staff will continue to increase to the closure of the external branches and the planned higher intake of students in the following years. The experts recommend developing suitable measures early on to overcome these problems. Moreover, the experts highlight especially the condition of the library, which currently does not meet international standards. An expansion of the library needs to include physical books and scientific journals as well as the access to digital libraries and databases. Currently, EUA does not have any access to the main scientific publishers, which poses an obstacle for effective scientific work for staff and students.

Criterion 3.2 Staff Development
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Preliminary Assessment and Analysis of the Experts:

The experts acknowledge that staff development is one task in EUA's Strategic Development Plan 2023–2027. To enforce steps towards improvement, EUA has issued the "EUA human resources management and development politics (sic)." The policy serves as a tool

to effectively manage and organize human resources at EUA. This includes reliable structures and guidelines for all human resource management procedures, including planning, recruitment and selection, interviewing, staff training and evaluation consequences. EUA emphasizes further, that all staff members are introduced to their values and ethics, including equality and academic integrity to ensure upholding its European orientation.

EUA describes in its self-assessment report that professional development for employees is organized regularly, including programs with external partners. In discussions, various partners confirm to the experts that EUA supports its staff in their development. This includes financial support for the academic staff to attend conference and visit collaboration partners abroad. According to the university management, EUA considers interaction with foreign partners as part of their internationalization strategy, which is well received by the academic staff. The discussion with the university management further reveals that EUA conduct regular training for lecturers. In addition, EUA has established a mentoring program, which pairs senior lecturers with new recruits to ensure its quality of teaching. The academic staff members confirm this and highlights that they receive support also for their professional development regarding their qualification in their area of expertise and in research. Moreover, they participate in international projects, where they enhanced their skills and professional profile. The academic staff further describes to the experts that they took part in staff exchange programs (e.g. in Slovakia) with the support of EUA, which strongly benefited their personal development in terms of modern teaching and research.

The experts acknowledge that the academic staff of EUA is often engaged with various responsibilities at EUA. Several hold administrative positions while also engaging in teaching. The experts acknowledge that this contributes positively to the interaction between academic and administrative staff; they also highlight the responsibility to continue their education in both directions. In addition, EUA employs various part-time lecturers, amounting to 40% of all teaching staff. The experts have expressed their opinion on the importance of a teaching concept, which should ensure good quality of teaching and the use of modern teaching methods in criterion 3.1. They emphasize that EUA should provide educational services for all lecturers; including part-time lecturers and external academic staff to ensure that modern approaches are implemented in all courses.

Furthermore, the experts want to point out the importance of English proficiency in teaching and administration. Although the experts hear statements during the on-site visit that EUA supports the professional development programs for academic and non-academic staff regarding their English competences, there are indications that the main support is targeted towards students. Therefore, the experts consider that EUA should offer programs that are easily accessible for all staff members, especially also in the light of English in administrative processes. Nevertheless, the experts appreciate that EUA financially supports

its academic staff to renew their English certificates every two years and offer training for oral practice to ensure their fluent English in the classroom.

Overall, the administrative and academic staff demonstrates a high satisfaction with EUA's staff training and development projects. This includes training for laboratories as well as workshops in new technology, such as renewable energy (solar panel). The experts approve that EUA offers flexible professional development opportunities and welcomes EUA's human development policy. Additionally, the experts summarize the need to offer strong support to continue to develop the academic staff's competences in research as describes in criterion 3.3.

Criterion 3.3 Research Interface

Preliminary Assessment and Analysis of the Experts:

EUA outlines in its submitted documents that the Vice-rector of Academic and Scientific Affairs coordinates all research activities. EUA's Strategic Development Plan states as the second goal the "Development of scientific research capacity" distinguishing the following five issues

1. "Providing the research component in the educational process
2. Increasing scientific and research projects
3. Encouragement of scientific research activity of the EU's academic staff
4. Development of postgraduate education at the EUA
5. Refinement of "European University" collection of scientific articles."

The experts are particularly interested in EUA's support for research. The university management describes that EUA aims to increase the number of research publications as well as (international) scientific grants. EUA offers incentives and bonuses for research activities. This includes, for example, research publications, attendance of international conferences and acquiring (international) research funds. EUA further publishes a collection of scientific articles twice a year, combining works in English and Armenian, including works from their foreign partners. In addition, it organizes international conferences in Yerevan. The academic staff confirms that they consider these incentives as motivation for conducting research. In the discussion with representatives from the private, non-governmental and governmental sector, the experts are informed that they participate in joint research projects with staff from EUA. These collaborations have resulted in research publications and books. In addition, they highlight the collaboration regarding the four newly established incubators at EUA.

The experts observe that research and teaching is linked in research-based courses as well as concerning the final thesis/final project. They confirm that all bachelor students take part in a course on “Research Methods” to learn the basics on how to conduct research and work with research literature. Students often conduct their final project in collaboration with external partners from the industry or the other sector. The university managers highlight that all bachelor students take part in pre-graduation internships, which are connected to their graduation paper. They highlight that the evaluation of the graduations papers and master theses also consider its scientific level as one aspect of its evaluation. The head of the units add that students in the bachelor program “Design” often work with employers in applied projects. Nevertheless, one component of their thesis always involves research as well as drafting and discussion. Consequently, several students were already able to publish their work in research journals. Similarly, students in Chair of Tourism and Hospitality conduct field research in Armenia in collaboration with partners from Italy with the aim to publish their results in a joint research publication. Students in the discussion with the experts confirm that they were successfully working on a research article, which they could publish and present at a meeting at an Armenian university.

The students describe to the experts that each of them is required to work on a final project individually, which they consider as a research project. They comment that their course on “Research Methods” prepares them with the fundamentals of conducting research, as they learn how to find literature and how to write a scientific work (including citation regulations, etc.). The students mention that they first learn to perform research in a smaller scale project on a topic in the field of their interest before they transit to professional topics. Their lecturers and supervisors are supportive and aim to include students in collaborative projects with partners from the industry. These collaborations are based on contracts and agreements between the partners and EUA according to the heads of the units.

The experts review the submitted documents, the information they have received during the discussions on-site and the presented scientific works, including student graduation projects and master theses. In summary, they confirm that all students engage in research activities during their studies as documented by their independent works. The experts welcome the new incubators providing opportunities for students, staff and industry partners to work jointly on projects. Nevertheless, the experts emphasize that a stronger research component in the educational programs would have a positive impact on the research activities of students. The research activities should further foster the problem-solving and critical thinking skills as well as their technical skills in the field of their expertise. This should provide the students sufficient experience to conduct complex research on a higher level in their graduation project and master thesis. The experts are certain that an increase in

research capabilities and projects at EUA will consequently lead to a stronger involvement of students in research and therefore deepen their skills to write their final thesis.

Thus, the experts form the opinion that EUA needs to intensify its efforts to provide opportunities to conduct research for its academic staff. They recommend that EUA develops and research agenda, which states its criteria for research and defines the responsibilities of different units. Furthermore, the research agenda should outline the main areas of research as well as the interaction between the different departments/chairs at EUA. Collaborations with external partners and companies should be included, such as universities, research institutes, (non-)governmental entities, companies, and others. EUA should further present a clear strategy to strengthen research capabilities at its institution and for the development of new research collaborations in Armenia and internationally. The experts highlight that a stronger research collaboration with external partners should also foster the staff mobility. EUA needs to remain open to support its staff to spend research visits outside EUA at higher education institutions, research institutions and companies. In turn, EUA should continue to invite collaboration partners to visit EUA for teaching and research. This should also include long-term stay of several month up to one year. The experts acknowledge that several of these topics are already addressed in EUA's Strategic Development Plan; however, the experts consider that EUA should increase its support for researchers by providing a suitable framework, including, for example, guidance for applying for (international) research grants, submitting to respectable international research journals and financial support to develop new research ideas. Furthermore, EUA needs to provide suitable structure and equipment, including access to scientific literature to facilitate good research.

Criterion 3.4 Administration Interface

Preliminary Assessment and Analysis of the Experts:

During the on-site visit, the experts get to know the different administrative units supporting the educational processes and campus facilities at EUA. Overall, the experts observe that the administrative and supportive units are well connected to the educational and scientific departments as well as the leadership at EUA. Representatives of the Department of Human Resources confirmed to the experts that they have meetings with the rectorate on a weekly basis. In addition, they take part in the monthly meetings of the Scientific Council. Their daily tasks require them to remain in close contact with the university management, who is responsible for approving their documentation.

The experts further gain a positive impression from representatives of other administrative units, who demonstrate a close interaction and good communication at EUA to the experts. All units report to be aware of EUA's strategic plan and that they cooperate in quality management procedures. Representatives of the different administrative offices describe that they receive quick reply, especially concerning urgent questions. The doors of each unit are always open to resolve matters in person, applying to students as well as academic and non-academic staff. Additionally, the administrative staff confirms that they participate in satisfaction surveys. Although they are not directly informed of the results of these surveys, the university management often acts based on their feedback. This included, for example, requests for new equipment (tables, computers, etc.), which were answered positively.

The experts observe a good collaboration of academic and administrative staff. They note that the administrative staff at EUA is well integrated into the various activities, including the implementation of study programs as well as quality assurance. The experts experience a high level of interaction and an effective communication management. Each representative is aware of EUA's strategic plan and exhibit a good understanding of the European values at EUA. The experts approve that EUA offers staff development programs for all units.

Final Assessment of the Experts after the Comment of the Higher Education Institution regarding Criterion 3:

Regarding Criterion 3.1 – Teaching Concept

The main requirements for lecturers are detailed in the "Charter on the Chair of the EUA". Here, the following knowledge, skills and abilities are detailed, that a lecturer must possess if he wishes to teach at EUA: a) at least a Bachelor's degree of a certified specialist or a Master's degree, work experience in the field of scientific-pedagogical or public administration corresponding to profession; b) knowledge of the legal and normative acts related to his/her power; c) abilities to reason, orientate in different situations, make decisions and negotiation skills; d) abilities to work, evaluate performance and ensure results; e) abilities to organize educational and research work; f) teaching, learning, knowledge assessment, audience management and communication skills; g) abilities of refining projects and summarizing results; h) abilities of teamwork organization, management, regulation of interpersonal relations; i) information analysis and management skills; j) time management and resource allocation skills; k) abilities to organize, conduct, prepare decisions and documents for meetings and consultations. The Charter further details the functions and responsibilities of the lecturers at EUA, as well as those of the Head of Chair and Chair employees.

To ensure that any new lecturers possesses these skills not only on paper but also in reality, the Heads of Chairs mentor new lecturers and conduct lesson observations. Additionally, EUA organizes training sessions to enhance lecturers' competencies.

Before commencing teaching at EUA Before commencing teaching at EUA, a lecturer must submit the Course Syllabus, which is presented at a Chair session. The syllabus must include the course topics and their descriptions, learning outcomes, alignment with the degree program outcomes, teaching and assessment methods, and assessments for each topic along with their respective rubrics. The draft Course Syllabus is discussed with and approved by the Chair members. During the semester, the Head of the Chair conducts lesson observations, monitors the course process, and provides mentoring to new lecturers. These observations also help identify best practices and facilitate discussions and training sessions with other lecturers within the Chair.

Regarding Criterion 3.1 – Infrastructure

EUA states that it has three buildings; currently, they are utilizing only two of them, while the third building is under lease. This is because there is still available space in the two buildings they are using. For instance, EUA plans to begin using the sixth floor of the main building in the upcoming academic year. All faculties are equipped with laboratories, projectors, and internet access. Financial records from recent years show expenditures on acquired furniture, equipment, and computers. EUA continually assess changes in student numbers and manage resources accordingly. For example, this summer they added a new computer laboratory to the IT faculty and are exploring the use of the sixth floor. The experts agree that EUA generally is well equipped to serve the needs of the students and lecturers but encourages planning for an increase in student numbers.

About the library, EUA acknowledges that they need to enhance the library's activities and services in the near future. Over the past year, they have integrated the EUA e-library with major American resources, including the Koha library system and the Irtex legislative database. Additionally, EUA plans to connect the e-library with Eurac Research (Italy), which will provide access to over 700,000 scientific and research publications. To facilitate this integration, a representative will visit Eurac Research in Italy from September 22-25 for training and guidance. Based on survey results, EUA also plan to link the e-library with the EUA website to improve accessibility and provide free access to resources. The experts deem this a fruitful undertaking in providing online access to important academic publishers.

Regarding Criterion 3.3 – Research

EUA provides a list of strategies that have been implemented in recent years to enhance research activities within the institution:

- **Academic Incentives:** EUA developed the Order on EUA Academic Incentives, Additional Payment Calculation, and Payment (Appendix 76). This order allows EUA lecturers and researchers to publish their research results in the EUA scientific articles collection, which is recognized by the RA Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sport. Additionally, researchers receive financial incentives for publishing scientific articles in internationally recognized journals, such as those indexed in Scopus or Web of Science.
- **Research Incubators:** To foster research involvement, including student participation, EUA has established incubators. Details of these incubators were provided in the EUA Self-Analysis Report and during the on-site visit.
- **Erasmus+ Projects:** EUA is involved in Erasmus+ projects, such as COMPIIT, which include research components involving both EUA lecturers and partners from national and European universities.
- **Partnership with EURAC Research:** One of EUA's significant partners and a member of the EUA Board of Trustees is EURAC Research (Italy). EUA has developed and is continuing to develop research projects with EURAC. For example, last year EUA and EURAC established a one-year specialization program for third-year students, culminating in the presentation of their research papers to Italian supervisors in Yerevan and a visit to EURAC Research. Additionally, EUA has joined the International Education Research Alliance (IERA), facilitating further research collaborations.
- **InnoTech Development:** To advance research in IT, EUA has developed InnoTech, where students, under lecturer supervision, conduct research and develop gadgets and other innovations. InnoTech is currently devising a strategy for the commercialization of its products.
- **PhD Programs:** EUA supports research activities by PhD students across three fields. This support includes facilitating communication with the practical sector and data collection.
- **Scientific-Research Laboratory:** The Chair of Management houses a Scientific-Research Laboratory where lecturers and students collaborate with companies on research projects. One notable outcome of this laboratory is a labor market analysis involving lecturers, students, and EUA partners.
- **Clinical Research:** In the Clinics of Psychology and Law, research components are integrated into practical case-solving exercises. Lecturers and supervisors from partner companies guide and mentor students throughout this process.

- **Increased Funding:** The EUA budget for 2024 includes a 20% increase in scientific and research expenditures. This increase reflects EUA's commitment to supporting research activities as outlined in the strategic plan, ensuring that both students and lecturers have access to the necessary resources, skills, and projects.

The experts see that EUA is working on intensifying providing opportunities to conduct research. Yet, they continue to recommend that EUA develops a concise research agenda that states its criteria for research and defines the responsibilities of different units. This research agenda should also outline the main areas of research as well as the interaction between the different department/chairs at EUA. All other points mentioned by the experts in the report also hold relevant here.

In summary, the experts regard this criterion as partially fulfilled.

4. Transparency and Documentation

Criterion 4.1 Relevant Regulations for Study Programs

Preliminary Assessment and Analysis of the Experts:

EUA describes in its self-assessment report that it shares its official documents and information on the study programs on the university's webpage in order to ensure its transparency. The webpage is available in an Armenian and an English version. According to the self-assessment report submitted for the accreditation procedure, EUA states "The official website of the EUA publishes documents related to the activities of the EUA, descriptions of the DPs, analysis of surveys, announcements, including those regarding tenders to fill vacant positions. The website's database of translated materials, which is continuous, has been enriched." However, the experts observe that EUA's webpage is incomplete during the time of the on-site visit and misses among other things, information on the study programs. The university manager confirms that the webpage was under a severe cyberattack in November 2023, which forced them to take down the webpage temporarily. While basic information are still available online, such as admission regulations, student activities and university reports, other content is distributed on their social media (LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram). This includes all announcements, admission and job vacancies. In the meantime, social media and public information platforms serve as main sources for information on study programs. The university managers further emphasize that EUA is constantly seeking to improve their webpage, benchmarking their webpage against internationally established institutions and collecting feedback for improvements. Two years ago,

EUA's webpage was based on WordPress, where they received various complaints by students and staff. Afterwards, they established a new page, which allowed them to manage their content more flexibly. According to the university managers, prior to the cyberattack, the webpage contains information, including among other things, information on each study program, university regulations and student support. The attack caused EUA to move their webpage to a more secure provider, where they are currently rebuilding their online presentation. They add that the university also distributed information on various events, in schools and on campus to compensate the missing online representation. University regulations, such as guidelines for ethical behavior and study regulations, are also available on desks on campus, where these can be viewed by anyone. The students describe to the experts that they are familiar with the problems of the webpage. Some of the students present in the discussion describe that they searched for information on the webpage before enrolling at EUA, which indicates to the experts that the webpage used to give sufficient information on the study programs. However, the majority of the students gathered information on events at schools, college or on campus ("open doors") or were referred to EUA by friends and teachers at school.

Moreover, the university managers confirm that EUA has established moodle as a learning management system. The university encourages each lecturer to intensify the application of moodle to share information on their courses.

After reviewing the submitted documentation and EUA's webpage and after the interesting discussions during the on-site visit, the experts confirm that EUA has established regulations and guidelines for its processes regarding the study programs. The procedure for the drafting, amending, and publishing study-related regulations is defined in a binding manner. Responsibilities and accountabilities are determined. The experts appreciate that EUA communicates with its stakeholders on all rules and regulations and seeks for improvements with responsible parties. The experts approve that EUA has already started to present its new webpage [accessed 22.07.2024], which is one key issue the experts detect concerning the transparency at EUA. Although documents might be available in paper form on campus, the experts emphasize that the main documents need to be shared publicly with internal and external partners, as well as third parties. Therefore, the online presence of the university is of key importance to inform potential collaboration partners and students. The experts describe that the webpage needs to contain the basic information on the webpage and should give information on progress reports and development. In addition, EUA should share information on each study programs, including admission regulations and requirements, program learning outcomes, curricula, course handbooks, and graduates qualification profile. The Two-Diploma programs need to outline the workload and involvement of the international partners in teaching and internships transparently.

Students should be informed on student support and student services, including for example scholarships, academic adjustments for students with disabilities and special needs, and counselling. The experts recommend that the EUA base the content of its website on the website of its European partner universities and further include information about career opportunities and events relevant to the students.

Criterion 4.2 Documentation

Preliminary Assessment and Analysis of the Experts:

The experts reviewed EUA's policies, regulations and other documents during this procedure. The experts learn that EUA has its own legal office to ensure being in line with the Armenian legislation. QEARD generally coordinates the process of developing new documents. It shares the drafts of documents with involved internal stakeholders for feedback, before new documents are shared with the Scientific Council for discussion and approval. All documents are prepared in English and Armenian.

The university management informs the experts that the main source to share documents and information is the webpage. Additionally, the rectorate distributes information on activities and accomplishments via social and mass media. Internal documents can be made accessible via a cloud service; however, the members of the university management describe that they still use email as the main source of distributing documents and templates internally. As an example, they describe that when the Scientific Council plans to improve a proposal, they share their draft via email and ask for feedback. In their next meeting, they consider all received feedback before the Scientific Council make its decision. The experts appreciate that EUA has defined regulations regarding the obligations and responsibilities of students and staff; however, they remark that employees and students should have easy access to all documents regulating their studies and work. The experts highlight that EUA needs to increase in efforts in digitalization concerning various processes. The experts strongly recommend EUA to develop an intranet, which allows them to store and distribute its policies, regulations and document templates. These documents need to be available when needed online (and thus with low thresholds) in order that students and staff can access them whenever necessary. Further digitalization concerns the quality management and facilities like the library.

For students, EUA has developed a Student Guideline, which provides comprehensive information on necessary regulations regarding their academic journey at EUA. This includes details on assessment, exams, student rights, EUA facilities, internal disciplinary rules, and the ethics code (Appendix 70).

For staff members, all employees receive the internal disciplinary rules and the EUA Ethics Code prior to signing their contracts. These documents are available at desks on all floors and faculties. The contracts also outline the main responsibilities, rights, and functions of the staff. Additionally, all key regulations are accessible on the EUA website. Furthermore, the university managers provide the experts with EUA's policy on achieving records, documenting that EUA has to store all internal documents for five years before they are transferred to their archive for further storage. All processes are defined and responsible parties are identified in the presented policy. Documents, such as contracts with industry partners, are managed by either the Career Development and Alumni Department or the External Relations and Internationalization Vice-Rector's Office, depending on the purpose of the contract.

Therefore, the experts conclude that EUA has formulated guidelines and principles for documentation and information and communicated them internally and externally. The experts consider that EUA has established processes to improve responsible documents.

Likewise as in criterion 4.1, the experts highlight the importance of a well-functioning webpage to share documents and information with all stakeholders and third parties. This should also include guidelines and regulations to make them easily accessible, especially regarding obligations and studies of students, staff and the university.

Final Assessment of the Experts after the Comment of the Higher Education Institution regarding Criterion 4:

In summary, the experts regard this criterion as partially fulfilled.

D Additional Documents

Before preparing their final assessment, the panel ask that the following missing or unclear information be provided together with the comment of the Higher Education Institution on the previous chapters of this report:

- D 1. Template Transcript of Records of a Two-Diploma program
- D 2. Template Diploma Supplement of a Two-Diploma program
- D 3. ~~Presentations of the chairs from the on-site visit~~ (submitted)

E Comment of the Higher Education Institution (03.09.2024)

The institution provided a detailed statement.

F Summary: Expert Recommendations (15.09.2024)

Taking into account the additional information and the comments given by EUA, the experts summarize their analysis and **final assessment** for the award of the ASIIN institutional accreditation seal as follows:

HEI	ASIIN Seal	Maximum duration of accreditation
European University of Armenia	With requirements for one year	30.09.2031

Requirements

- A 1. (ASIIN 1.2) EUA needs to establish regulations to ensure that internal and external stakeholders, in particular, students are entitled to receive feedback on the results and actions taken based on their participations in questionnaires and other quality management measures (“closing the feedback loop”).
- A 2. (ASIIN 2.6) EUA needs to issue a policy providing support and academic adjustments for students with disabilities and special needs, including learning disabilities.
- A 3. (ASIIN 3.1) EUA needs to provide support structures for students with disabilities and special needs.
- A 4. (ASIIN 3.1) EUA has to provide online access to important academic publishers.
- A 5. (ASIIN 4.1 & 4.2) EUA needs to improve its online presence to increase its transparency. The main documents should be available, such as rules and guidelines of staff and students, as well as information on the university and its study programs.

Recommendations

- E 1. (ASIIN 1.1) It is recommended to evaluate if the monitoring of KPIs on a quarterly basis is beneficial to identifying risks and developing new strategies.
- E 2. (ASIIN 1.2) It is recommended to develop new strategies to include alumni in the quality management processes and establish tracer studies.
- E 3. (ASIIN 1.2) It is recommended to redesign the course evaluation for each module including questions on the student workload.

- E 4. (ASIIN 2.1) It is recommended to transparently present the workload and outcome of the Two-Diploma programs to all stakeholders.
- E 5. (ASIIN 2.3) It is recommended to increase the number of collaboration partners in education and research.
- E 6. (ASIIN 2.4) It is recommended to include various examination methods in all study programs and offer sufficient feedback to support the students' learning progress.
- E 7. (ASIIN 2.6) It is recommended to ensure the independence of the student bodies at EUA; this should include student-based votes for membership in the Student Scientific Society.
- E 8. (ASIIN 3.3) It is recommended to develop a research agenda, which contain clear strategies to improve the research environment at EUA and implement research stronger in the educational programs.

G Decision of the Accreditation Commission (24.09.2024)

Assessment and analysis for the award of the ASIIN Institutional Accreditation Seal:

The Accreditation Commission discusses the procedure. It is generally satisfied with all the requirements and recommendations imposed by the experts. However, the Commission notes from the accreditation report that the experts also advise the university to integrate more elective courses into the individual degree programmes and thus also include this as a recommendation. Furthermore, the commission looks at the university's vision and mission. It notes that individual points in the vision and mission overlap, and that the vision also contains points that are already being implemented ('The vision of the European University of Armenia is to become a provider of educational programs in Armenia in accordance with national and European standards and guide-lines, to be student-centered, to train specialists according to the labour market requirements ...'). The Commission therefore also recommends that EUA should sharpen its vision and mission in the long term.

The Accreditation Commission decides to award the ASIIN Institutional Accreditation Seal as follows:

HEI	ASIIN Seal	Maximum duration of accreditation
European University of Armenia	With requirements for one year	30.09.2031

Requirements

- A 1. (ASIIN 1.2) EUA needs to establish regulations to ensure that internal and external stakeholders, in particular, students are entitled to receive feedback on the results and actions taken based on their participations in questionnaires and other quality management measures ("closing the feedback loop").
- A 2. (ASIIN 2.6) EUA needs to issue a policy providing support and academic adjustments for students with disabilities and special needs, including learning disabilities.
- A 3. (ASIIN 3.1) EUA needs to provide support structures for students with disabilities and special needs.
- A 4. (ASIIN 3.1) EUA has to provide online access to important academic publishers.

- A 5. (ASIIN 4.1 & 4.2) EUA needs to improve its online presence to increase its transparency. The main documents should be available, such as rules and guidelines of staff and students, as well as information on the university and its study programs.

Recommendations

- E 1. (ASIIN 1.1) It is recommended to evaluate if the monitoring of KPIs on a quarterly basis is beneficial to identifying risks and developing new strategies.
- E 2. (ASIIN 1.1) It is recommended to sharpen the vision and mission of the EUA.
- E 3. (ASIIN 1.2) It is recommended to develop new strategies to include alumni in the quality management processes and establish tracer studies.
- E 4. (ASIIN 1.2) It is recommended to redesign the course evaluation for each module including questions on the student workload.
- E 5. (ASIIN 2.1) It is recommended to transparently present the workload and outcome of the Two-Diploma programs to all stakeholders.
- E 6. (ASIIN 2.1) It is recommended to include more elective courses in the curricula of the study programmes.
- E 7. (ASIIN 2.3) It is recommended to increase the number of collaboration partners in education and research.
- E 8. (ASIIN 2.4) It is recommended to include various examination methods in all study programs and offer sufficient feedback to support the students' learning progress.
- E 9. (ASIIN 2.6) It is recommended to ensure the independence of the student bodies at EUA; this should include student-based votes for membership in the Student Scientific Society.
- E 10. (ASIIN 3.3) It is recommended to develop a research agenda, which contain clear strategies to improve the research environment at EUA and implement research stronger in the educational programs.