

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



**EXPERT PANEL REPORT  
OF INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION OF KOMITAS STATE CONSERVATORY OF YEREVAN**

YEREVAN– 2020

## INTRODUCTION

Accreditation of Komitas State Conservatory of Yerevan (YSC) is undergoing institutional accreditation based on its application.

The process of institutional accreditation is organized and coordinated by the National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation (ANQA). ANQA is guided by the regulation on “State Accreditation of RA Institutions and their Educational Programs” set by the RA Government on 30 June, 2011 N978 decree as well as by N959-Ն (30 June, 2011) decree on approving RA Standards for Professional Education Accreditation. The expertise was carried out by the expert panel formed according to the requirements of ANQA Regulation on the Formation of the Expert Panel. The expert panel consisted of 3 local experts and 2 international experts.

Institutional accreditation aims not only at the external evaluation of quality assurance but also to the continuous improvement of the institution’s management and quality of educational programs. Hence, there were two important issues for the European and Armenian members of the expert panel:

- To carry out an expertise of institutional capacities in line with the RA standards for state accreditation
- To carry out an evaluation for the improvement of institution’s quality and for its integration to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

The report includes the results of the evaluation of the Conservatory’s institutional capacities according to the state criteria and standards for accreditation as well as the results of peer review by the international experts from the perspective of being integrated into EHEA.

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## SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION

### PEER-REVIEW OF INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES ACCORDING TO STATE ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

While carrying out evaluation the Expert Panel took into account the fact that YSC is an educational, scientific and creative institution of musical culture. YSC is the only state university in the RA ensuring musical education in all levels and it aimed at the formation, development and transfer of knowledge and professional skills derived from the principles of state policy in the sphere of education.

The current Strategic Plan of the Conservatory was approved in December 14, 2018 and it involves YSC mission, goals, objectives and actions for 2019-2024. However in the action plan for the implementation of strategic goals and objectives time-schedule, responsible people and KPIs are not defined, which makes the implementation of the Strategic Plan difficult.

Mechanisms for the evaluation of the implementation results of mission and goals are Rector's annual reports which, however are not developed according to strategic goals thus making the monitoring and evaluation of the results of fulfillment of strategic goals difficult. There are no mechanisms and procedures for improvement. YSC structure ensures regulated procedure for decision making and for maintenance of management ethics. It is also positive that there is a Standing Ethical Committee. Current material and financial resources are not sufficient to ensure the stability of education process for the future.

Derived from the peculiarities of the Conservatory, in order to organize education process effectively in performance professions, it is necessary to have musical instruments of proper state. High price of musical instruments, absence of entrepreneurial activities of YSC as well as lack of funding from state for these purposes is a serious challenge for YSC. Lack of musical instruments and absence of funding for the acquisition of new musical instruments put the effectiveness of YSC education process in danger.

YSC carried out long-term planning, but the absence of mid-term and short-term planning at YSC puts the effectiveness of the structural units in terms of "compliance with the goals" under doubt. The activities of structural units are not monitored and evaluated, the respective mechanisms are missing. The QA cycle (plan, do, check, act) is not operating which hinders the effective activity of the Institution.

The publication of updated, objective and impartial qualitative and quantitative information about YSC academic programs and awarded qualifications is missing which hinders assurance of transparency of the activities of YSC.

YSC provides academic programs which are in line with 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> levels of NQF and the mission of the Conservatory and are developed according to the learning outcomes. The policy on the selection of teaching, learning and assessment methods in line with the learning outcomes is missing, academic programs need horizontal and vertical alignment. There are no mechanisms and improvement policy defined for monitoring, evaluation of effectiveness and improvement of academic programs. YSC hasn't yet defined mechanisms and procedures ensuring academic honesty which makes existence of plagiarism possible within education and research activities. There are

students-centered approaches within professional courses (performance, creative). It is a result of implementation of education process through individual lessons. During the mentioned courses the lecturer refers to the performance of each student stressing and correcting each occurred issue.

YSC has student enrollment mechanism. Admission to BA and MA studies is carried out based on the state regulations approved by the RA Government which however do not involve internal procedures of conduction of professional examinations at YSC. Professional courses of performance at YSC are carried out through individual lessons, which, besides effective teaching process also give students an opportunity to raise issues bothering them. Surveys for students' needs assessment are also conducted however, they are generic and are not organized regularly. It is important that recently Conservatory has introduced a new mechanism for students' and teaching staff's needs assessment: "meeting of the Rector with students and teaching staff". During those meetings a number of issues were revealed, some of which are already solved and others are in the attention of the Rector.

Students are involved in governing bodies of YSC however the link between the students involved in YSC governing bodies and YSC students' community is missing. Mechanisms for raising the issues of students' community through the students involved in the governing bodies are missing. As a result, students involved in governing bodies can speak out just their own opinion and they do not represent the student community. Non formal policy of "open doors" operates at YSC as a result of which students can turn to the staff of educational and administrative units. Protection of students' rights is carried out by the Students' Council and Ethical Committee. YSC has teaching and support staffs with necessary qualifications for the implementation of academic programs. Talented specialists work at YSC and most of them are honored art workers and laureates of international competitions. AT the same time YSC does not yet have policy and transparent mechanisms for the evaluation of teaching and support staffs, training professional program in line with the needs of the teaching staff has not been developed yet and the regulation of the recruitment, selection and promotion of the teaching staff needs improvement.

YSC gives importance to the scientific activities and places itself as research institution in the sphere of art which is also defined in the Strategic Plan as a goal. At the same time in the action plan mid-term and short-term planning are not described, KPIs are not defined thus the fulfillment of the goal is in danger.

The laboratory on the "Study of Armenian Folk Music" has a significant role for scientific research at YSC. However the existence of this only laboratory is not enough for the implementation of research activity at YSC. Though within the framework of musicology separate scientific research is carried out, YSC priority scientific directions are not defined and Conservatory does not coordinate research activities of its teaching staff.

YSC does not collect information on the publications made by the teaching staff. International practice of research in the spheres of theory and performance of music is not studied. Interconnection of research activity with education process is not carried out and is not given importance to.

YSC is ensured with necessary area for the implementation of educational and research processes in Yerevan and in Gyumri which involves classrooms, halls, library, laboratories and audio library. YSC has significant problems concerning the number and state of currently existing musical instruments. The absence of the necessary number and quality of instruments puts the effective and

continuous implementation of academic programs at a risk. The distribution of YSC budget is not carried out according to strategic goals and objectives and the main expense article is that of the salaries. Through the services directed to the assurance of health and security YSC creates secure and safe environment however the needs of students with special needs are not taken into account.

Through the formed tradition of transferring knowledge and values to the society, YSC has a significant investment in wider society in terms of development of knowledge and taste in the spheres of national, sacred, classical and modern music as well as in the maintenance, development and dissemination of national art of music.

Conservatory gives importance to internationalization and particularly, cooperation in the sphere of education and science with European universities and international higher education organizations. However international cooperation is mainly limited to the organization of master classes.

The level of mobility of students and teaching staff is low, however during the last two years there is an increase in the mobility of students and teaching staff. ERASMUS+ BOOST project had a great role in the regulation of internationalization processes at YSC. Within the framework of this project draft strategy on internationalization and action plan were developed. YSC is a member of AEC however the opportunities of this membership are not used. There are no mechanisms evaluating the effectiveness of cooperation with local and international institutions.

Though the Department of Internal QA of YSC was established in 2012, QA system is not formulated yet. QA policy of YSC is not formulated, mechanisms and tools for QA are not defined. Grounds created by the internal QA system for external evaluation are not sufficient. Internal QA system does not provide information about YSC activities to the stakeholders and does not ensure the transparency of activities of Conservatory either.

It is important to mention that changes were made in the management bodies of YSC. At the end of 2018 professor Sona Hovhannisyan who is RA honored worker of art was appointed as acting Rector later, on 14 May, 2019 she was elected as a Rector during the session of YSC Governing Board. The appointment of the new Rector brought to changes in the personnel. During the last year YS Vice-Rectors, Deans and Heads of chairs were changed. YSC new management team expresses great motivation of making effective reforms.

### **Strengths of the Institution**

- YSC has a clearly formulated mission, the mission of Gyumri branch is formulated separately and is directed to the needs of the region.
- Academic programs implemented by YSC are fully in line with YSC mission.
- YSC academic programs of performing professions are carried out through individual lessons during which lecturer pays attention to the performance of each student which fosters student-centered learning.
- YSC provides opportunities to students for additional lessons.
- Talented specialists of the field teach at YSC, many of them are laureats of international competitions, have titles of honored artists of USSR, RA and other titles.
- YSC has a significant investment in the development of musical taste among the RA society through the organization of concerts in the RA and beyond its boundaries as well as in the maintenance, development and dissemination of national art of music.
- YSC cooperates with a great number of educational and professional institutions as well as is a member of Association of European Conservatories.

- Many master classes with the involvement of Armenian and foreign specialists are organized in YSC.

### **Weaknesses of the Institution:**

- KPIs are not defined in the Strategic Plan of YSC. Mid-term and short-term planning is also missing.
- YSC does not have a policy on gathering information about its activities, information about the implemented actions (except for the main information concerning the education process) is not collected. Because if this, it is nearly impossible to make decisions based on the comprehensive analysis of the situation.
- PDCA quality management principle is not introduced in YSC.
- YSC academic programs need horizontal and vertical alignment.
- YSC does not have a clear policy on human resource management.
- YSC does not have a policy directed to the development of research activities, priority research directions are not defined, actions towards internationalization of research are missing.
- Base of the musical instruments of YSC is out of date.
- Financial resources directed to the research activities and improvement of resource base (particularly for the acquisition of musical instruments) are limited.
- Policy on the assurance of quality of YSC processes, internal QA system, processes, mechanisms and tools are missing.

### **Main recommendations:**

#### **Mission and Purpose**

- To regulate the processes of development and approval of the Strategic Plan by clearly defining the phases of development and discussion of the Strategic Plan, mentioning the responsible people, stakeholders, their involvement mechanisms and procedures. Put into action the document.
- To develop time-schedule for the implementation of the strategic activities defining necessary steps for the fulfillment of strategic goals, clearly mentioning the deadlines for the activities, their responsible people, necessary resources as well as KPIs.
- To develop annual reports of the Rector according to the strategic goals, making the activities of the Institution more transparent.

#### **Governance and administration**

- To develop and introduce mechanisms and tools ensuring planning, monitoring, and accountability of annual activities of structural units derived from the Strategic Plan of the Institution.
- To take active steps towards investment of PDCA cycle of QA in YSC.

- To carry out financial planning of YSC according to the activities envisaged for the fulfillment of strategic goals. This will later on simplify the evaluation of effectiveness of expenses made according to strategic goals.
- To develop policy and tools for the study of factors influencing the activities of the Institution.
- To develop and introduce mechanisms and tools evaluating the publication of updated, objective and impartial qualitative and quantitative information about the quality of education programs and awarded qualifications.
- To conduct trainings of administrative staff on modern principles and approaches to management of universities.

### **Academic Programmes**

- To review the document on “Methodical Guidelines for the Development of YSC Academic Programs” and to put into action the document that will involve:
  - Procedure of the involvement of internal and external stakeholders in the development/revision of the academic programs,
  - Methodology and tools for the conduction of benchmarking,
  - Methodology of the development of program and course learning outcomes (Dublin descriptors, Bloom taxonomy, etc.),
  - Methodology and tools for horizontal and vertical alignment.
- To conduct trainings (or give opportunities for training) directed to the enhancement of the level of awareness of staff involved in education process (administrative staff, deans, heads of chairs, teaching staff) about the development of learning outcomes, their importance and interconnection with teaching, learning and assessment.
- To involve policies of teaching, learning, assessment, academic honesty as well as provision of inclusive learning in the academic program packages.
- To involve teaching and learning methodology in the course descriptions, and for the courses that last more than one semester to define learning outcomes for each semester.
- To take steps for the organization of courses on general-humanities and theories with student-centered approach as well as with modular system.
- To take steps towards improvement of internationalization and mobility of teaching staff and students with European universities, taking also the advantage of being a member of AEC.

### **Students**

- To develop and introduce internal procedure describing professional peculiarities of YSC as well as internal regulations for the admission of BA and MA students.
- To develop and introduce clear actions for students’ professional orientation, time-schedule and responsible people.
- To improve and document mechanisms for students’ (including international) educational needs assessment.

- To enlarge the opportunities for additional lessons and professional consultancy, involving also theoretical professions and courses.
- To ensure regulated actions towards students' career development and reinforcement of university-employer link by defining also responsible people for those actions.
- To define policy directed to the involvement of students in YSC research activities and investment of the research outcomes in education process taking into account positive experience of European universities.
- To elaborate and introduce mechanisms for the provision of professional orientation to students, consultancy on the admission and organization of education process, for the evaluation of other services provided to students.

## **Faculty and staff**

- To improve the procedure on the selection of the teaching staff and to develop clear requirements for the professional qualifications of the teaching staff per academic program, which will later on foster also the evaluation of professional and pedagogical competences of the teaching staff.
- To develop and introduce tools for the evaluation of the teaching staff by promoting professional development of the teaching staff.
- To develop and introduce regulated programs of teaching staff's training that will be derived from YSC strategic objectives and will be based on the evaluation of the professional needs of the teaching staff.
- To develop and introduce clear and regulated mechanisms for the promotion and professional development of the teaching staff.
- To introduce clear policy on HR management directed to the optimization of the number of teaching and support staffs and their rejuvenation.

## **Research and Development**

- To develop and introduce policy on YSC research activities where leading scientific directions, ambitions and interests of YSC will be reflected.
- To improve planning of YSC short-term, mid-term and long-term plans of research activity ensuring the logical sequence of actions.
- To enhance funding for research giving preference to YSC priorities, as well as to diversify research studies with applied and interdisciplinary research.
- To promote the development of interdisciplinary research through the cooperation of chairs, faculties as well as through cooperation with other universities.
- To develop and introduce policy on internationalization of scientific-research activities by enlarging cooperation opportunities with international organizations.
- To introduce mechanisms directed to the assurance of interconnection of scientific-research activity with education process.

## **Infrastructures and Resources**

- To develop and introduce mechanisms and formats of accountability of structural units. To make the Rector's annual report more informative involving information (also statistics) about YSC progress in educational, scientific, creative and other spheres of activities.
- To ensure regular operation of YSC official web-site as soon as possible. To include information on all the spheres of the Conservatory, including documents regulating internal processes (rules, procedures, concepts, regulations, etc.) as well as reports and analysis of quality assurance.
- To develop and apply regulation on internal documentation system including mechanisms ensuring feedback got through electronic means.
- To introduce planning process of events directed to the transfer of knowledge and values to society.
- To ensure the availability of the library of the Conservatory to the international

## **Societal Responsibility**

- Develop and introduce mechanisms for accountability of the Conservatory departments. To make the Rector's annual report more informative, including detailed (also statistical) information on the progress of the Conservatory in the fields of education, science, creativity and other activities.
- Ensure the normal operation of the official website of the YPC as soon as possible. The website should include information on all areas of the Conservatory's activities, including internal regulatory documents (procedures, procedures, concepts, etc.), as well as activity reports and quality assurance analyzes.
- Develop and implement mechanisms for providing electronic feedback received by the Conservatory, including the internal document circulation procedure.
- Introduce a process of planning activities to transfer knowledge and values to the public.

## **External Relations and Internationalization**

- To develop mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of strategy for internationalization.
- To organize awareness events or trainings for teaching and support staffs about the internationalization of academic programs and research activities.
- To carry out international cooperation based on PDCA cycle.
- To initiate activities towards enhancement of the level of foreign language proficiency of YSC internal stakeholders.
- To initiate actions towards the current courses of foreign language in BA and MA academic programs.

## **Internal Quality Assurance System**

- To consider improvement, interconnection and investment of management and internal QA system as a priority.

- To develop a QA manual where policy on internal QA, goals and directions, main stakeholders, QA mechanisms and involvement of students and teaching staff in those mechanisms as well as time-schedule and tools for the activities will be mentioned.
- Through the investment of QA manual to ensure the effectiveness of management system and continuous improvement of processes implemented at YSC.  
To organize trainings on QA for administrative, teaching and support staffs.

## PEER-REVIEW FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF BEING INTEGRATED INTO EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

The Komitas State Conservatory of Yerevan (YSC) is the only higher music education institution in Armenia. It is a well-established institution with almost 100 years of history. Most of the musicians, conductors, composers and musicologists in Armenia have been trained in YSC. Many alumni of YSC have gained international recognition and some of them are performing on important stages all over the world.

The main focus of the Conservatory is European classical music although jazz music is taught as well. A strong emphasis is given to Armenian national music – to the music of Armenian composers as well as to traditional sacred music and folk music of Armenians. The Gyumri branch of YSC has to fill an important regional mission in the Northern part of Armenia. Thus, it is difficult to overestimate the role of YSC in the preservation and development of Armenian musical traditions and shaping the professional musical culture of the country in the future. Throughout its history YSC has had strong links with Moscow Conservatory and other similar institutions in Russia. Within recent decades YSC has expanded its international collaboration and sees its future development in the coherent interweave and synthesis of the national traditions and world's cultural experience (SER, p. 6). YSC is a member of the Association of European Conservatoires (AEC) and is engaged in several international programmes and activities.

Unfortunately, YSC has to operate in difficult conditions and with inadequate resources. This can be observed almost everywhere in YSC: its building desperately needs renovation, its musical instruments are too old and of low quality, its technical equipment is out-of-date etc. The more rewarding it is to note that the majority of teaching staff and students have maintained high motivation and the passion for the chosen profession, which is so important in the field of art.

The present report is based on the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) of the Conservatory, the Strategic Plan of YSC and other documents attached to the SER, and most importantly, on the observations and notes made during the site visit of the Expert Panel to YSC on December 9-13, 2019.

### **Mission and Purposes**

YSC has well-articulated mission statement and formally approved Strategic Plan for 2019-2024 that states four general goals of the institution. It is noteworthy that the specific mission of the Gyumri branch is brought out separately. However, there is little evidence that thorough analysis of the results of the previous Strategic Plan (2012-2017) and the previous institutional accreditation (2015) gave necessary input to the compilation of the present Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Plan describes general goals and planned actions for their achievement, but in most cases these goals are not measurable. For that reason, it will be difficult to evaluate the achievement of the goals and to plan further actions. It is recommended to define measurable indicators to each of the main goals of the Strategic Plan and to develop procedures for their periodical evaluation. Currently the monitoring of the implementation of the Strategic Plan is not set up clearly enough – in spite of the fact that, according to SER, the bottom up reporting system has been developed in YSC. It is my impression that the reporting system (including Annual Reports of YSC) and the Strategic Plan are not well integrated and miss the collection and analysis of concrete statistical data.

The SER, prepared by YSC for the current accreditation, clearly illustrates this shortcoming. Many of its required tables are empty because, as the representatives of the YSC explained, the institution did not have data to fill them. Data collection and analysis is not a mere technical exercise. It helps to identify problems, make better informed decisions, allocate resources etc. Therefore, it should be considered as an important part of strategic planning and quality assurance procedures.

### **Governance and Administration**

The governance of YSC includes two governing bodies (one with external members), the Rector and the Rector's office with three Vice Rectors. The academic structure consists of two levels – the faculties (led by deans) and departments (led by chairs). In general, the organizational chart of YSC and the division of responsibilities are clear. Recently several departments were merged to avoid unnecessary duplication of functions. On the other hand, a new Chamber Music Faculty was created to raise the importance of music making in different ensembles. Student representatives are engaged in decision making on different levels.

The present leadership of YSC is quite new: The Rector's mandate started 7 months before the site visit, two of the Vice Rectors were appointed at the same time, and the Director of the Gyumri branch was officially appointed even more recently. During the interviews many representatives of YSC assessed the changes in the leadership positively. They mentioned the raise of salaries, better organization of work, more open and better atmosphere. The staff and students trust the present leadership and want it to take the institution forward and to modernize its working conditions and general image.

An urgent matter for the present leadership is to introduce contemporary Quality Assurance principles in the management of YSC on all levels. This includes data collection and analysis that was mentioned before, as well as short, mid, and long-term planning together with monitoring and implementation mechanisms.

### **Students and Academic Programs**

From Soviet time Armenia has well developed national system of music schools and music colleges that prepare qualified student candidates for YSC. In spite of that, in recent years the number of students has decreased, which can be related to the low reputation of artistic work in the society and low salaries in the music sector in Armenia. On the other hand, the number of international students has increased, which can be assessed as a positive trend. Most of the international students

are native Armenians from the neighbouring countries who are able to study in Armenian. Piano and classical vocal studies are the most popular main subjects among them, which has probably to do with the high international reputation of some Armenian pianists and opera singers. This is a good foundation for raising the international reputation of YSC even higher and attracting motivated students also outside Armenia and Armenian Diaspora.

During the interviews it was revealed that formerly the admission criteria and the admission procedures were not always transparent and honest and that in 2019 the admission process has considerably changed. Such changes should be strongly supported and continued. Transparency of admission system and rigorous assessment of the quality of each student candidate are essential for the quality of studies and the reputation of the institution in general.

YSC has a good number of excellent students who perform in public and take part in international competitions. The Expert Panel had an opportunity to listen to the performance of some of the student groups that were on a high level (especially the chamber music ensembles, choir and the symphony orchestra). At the same time the student representatives were critical towards some fellow students because of their low motivation to study. Therefore, it is recommended to make sure that the same requirements and the same assessment criteria apply to all students to raise the overall quality of studies and to ensure the high quality of all graduates.

The students declared that they can talk openly about their wishes and problems and generally their proposals are taken into consideration. Their feedback is also asked through questionnaires, but the questions tend to be too general. YSC has an active Student Council that aims at building a stronger organizational structure and doing more for the students and for the enhancement of the study process. Unfortunately, formerly the reputation of the Student Council among the students has been low and the present Council wants to change its image.

The academic programs of YSC are generally well designed, and their content is comparable to that of the similar institutions in Europe. The renewal of curricula and subject descriptions has been initiated that should be assessed as a positive initiative. During this process it is recommended to assure better coherence between the general learning outcomes, subject descriptions and teaching methods. It is also important to raise the general awareness among the teaching staff about what is written in the program documents and subject descriptions.

The students are generally highly satisfied with their main studies. Regarding the subsidiary subjects the satisfaction is less unambiguous – the level of teaching varies, and the necessity of some subjects is not clear for the students. However, the main concern is the organization of studies. In spite of the fact that there is a necessary support staff in place, the students would like to see improvements in the management of the study process, information flow, development of electronic resources etc.

### **Faculty and Staff**

YSC has sufficient number of highly qualified and experienced teachers as well as the necessary support staff. Most of the teachers have eminent artistic careers or considerable experience in research work. Usually the best students of the outstanding professors start to teach themselves at

some point, which guarantees the continuity of teaching methods and helps to keep high professional standards. However, this system contains also some dangers. If YSC wants to promote exchange of ideas, more dynamic changes and diversity of teaching, it should try to engage teachers with more diverse backgrounds. It is true that YSC holds about 60 different master classes per year, which definitely promotes the exchange of ideas and gives new impulses to the students, but short-time visiting professors do not have as strong influence on the quality of teaching as the permanent staff.

The Expert Panel noted that the average age of the teaching staff is rather high in some departments and that for the young staff members it is very difficult to get sufficient teaching load. For many years the 5-year employment contracts, common in Armenia, were renewed almost automatically, without public competition. The new management of YSC has decided to change this practice and to organize public competitions to all vacant teaching positions. This change is definitely very justified. It is necessary to make sure that the requirements for each position are comprehensively described and that the assessment of all candidates will be transparent and impartial.

It is recommended to develop policies and procedures for the periodic evaluation of the teaching staff (performance review) and to find resources for the professional development of the staff members (including international staff mobility).

Some of the staff members are active researchers, working mostly in the field of musicology. YSC organizes scientific conferences, expeditions to villages to collect folk music (where both researchers and students are engaged), publishes musical journal as well as collections of Armenian folk and sacred music. These are important activities that should be continued. However, the research activity of YSC is very isolated and needs more strategic planning. Exchange of research information and new research results internationally and participation in international scientific cooperation should be highly prioritized in YSC.

### **Infrastructure and Resources**

As mentioned above, YSC has to work in difficult conditions and with very limited resources. The main problems are:

- bad condition of the auditoriums and classrooms (with the few exceptions, like the chamber music hall and acoustic laboratory);
- very bad sound isolation in the entire building;
- in the majority of classrooms, the pianos are too old and of poor quality (the situation is better in specialized piano classrooms and chamber music hall, equipped with Kawai grand pianos);
- the library has no financial resources to buy new books, printed music and to pay for the licenses of the electronic databases;
- the technology for sound recording and sound production is out-of-date (in the Recording Library, Folk Music Laboratory) and the composers have limited access to contemporary means of electro-acoustic composition.

It is obvious that the management of YSC is not able to solve all these problems at once. It is recommended to develop a long-term plan, how to improve the situation step by step and to guarantee the sustainable operation of the institution. The Expert Panel was informed that renovation of the building has already been decided on the government level and the funding for it is almost certain. We hope the renovation will be completed in the near future and both the students and teachers will be able to study and work in the conditions that they deserve.

For higher music education institution, it is important to provide necessary facilities for the students for their individual work (practicing). In this respect the situation in YSC is not bad. However, it is recommended to make sure that the information on practicing opportunities is equally available for all students (including international students and first year students) and that the building would be open to all students for practicing also on weekends.

### **Societal Responsibility**

Through annual reports, website and other electronic channels as well as by means of public artistic events YSC provides the society with information about its activities. However, all these channels and possibilities could be used in a more effective and innovative ways. For instance, the YSC website is currently not very informative and does not function properly. The Opera Studio of YSC did not give public performances for several years and has restored its activities only recently. There are also some positive examples: the students of both Yerevan and Gyumri branch regularly give concerts outside the conservatory, most often in music schools.

As an institution, dealing with music and arts, YSC has a great potential for being recognized and appreciated in the society. It is recommended to take advantage of this potential to full extent and to become even more visible in the society.

### **External Relations and Internationalization**

According to the Strategic Plan, YSC aims at being competitive in the international arena, raise the number and expand the geography of foreign students and promotes international cooperation. This ambition is commendable and should be strongly supported. However, at present, YSC lacks a clear policy, how to achieve these strategic goals. There are individual activities, some of them very successful (master classes, competitions), but it is recommended to build up a more sustainable framework for internationalization and to find institutions with whom to develop closer strategic partnership.

As mentioned before, YSC is a member of the European Association of Conservatoires. It is recommended to be more active in this European organization – to participate in meetings and working groups and to take full advantage of the guidelines and handbooks that AEC has prepared during many years.

As a result of globalization, international dimensions play a major role in the professional practice. To equip students with the knowledge and skills to work with and within international developments (inside and outside Armenia), the YSC has to develop a clear and own international vision and strategy. This vision and strategy contribute to the (artistic) quality of education and

research, the development of the profession and the musicians and to regional development. Internationalization refers to not only the international population of students and teaching staff (quantum) but especially the incorporation of an international dimension in the learning process of teaching and research. Internationalization is not a goal itself, but an enabler for achieving the strategic goals.

- Internationalization activities are guided by the strategic goals and the possibilities of YSC.
- International networks are a prerequisite for achieving the strategic objectives relating to the international dimension of education and research.
- Student, teacher and researcher mobility is increasing when projects have an explicit international perspective. Mobility offers the opportunity to strengthen existing networks and expand too.

These three elements: projects, mobility and networking are linked and form a kind of flywheel for the international dimension of higher music education and research.

*The YSC has to choose which items are important from the list below. From each selected point should be indicated how to achieve this and who is responsible. Please scratch, add and work out.*

- Activities that contribute to the quality of education and research:
  - Internationalization of the curriculum, for instance
    - Be a conservatory of international stature
    - Following the demands of the labor market (international profile)
    - Linking the professional profile of the musician to LO's, academic programs, courses and assessment with related (AEC-) learning outcomes.
    - Internationalization is included in the curriculum to prepare students for the international professional music
  - Internationalization of research, for instance
    - Building an international reputation in the field of research
    - Building (structural) international cooperation
    - Gaining international grant
    - Participation in strategic networks for education and research within and outside Europe/Asia.
- Activities that contribute to the development of the profession and professionals:
  - Development of international and intercultural competencies
  - Encourage student and teaching staff mobility
  - Increasing international mobility

- Collaboration with partner institutions
  - Participation in joint programs
  - International benchmark
  - Develop an international classroom
  - More attention to international and intercultural competencies of students and teachers
  - Language courses
- Activities that contribute to regional and international developments, for instance
    - Recruit international students
- Supporting conditions, facilities and infrastructure for education and research, for instance
    - Improve English language information services, including a working website in English.
    - Streamlining and transparency of information and administration.
    - Satisfy the information about the courses on the generally accepted European standards and guidelines developed under the Bologna process:
      - Providing a diploma supplement to all graduates
      - Full implementation of the European Credit Transfer (and Accumulation) System (ECTS)
      - Information and assistance in applying for international scholarships for studies abroad.
      - Support international projects.

The YSC has to describe how the international activities are monitored within its system of quality assurance.

### **QUALITY ASSURANCE/MANAGEMENT**

The aim of quality assurance is the continuous improvement of the program, involving all relevant stakeholders. Responsible for the quality assurance in YSC is the Quality Assurance Department.

The internal quality system in YSC is currently not systematically and is not covering all the important items. To make it completer and more transparent it is necessary to draw up a clear quality assurance plan that demonstrates all the YSC quality items, the bottlenecks and improvements. The YSC has to discuss with relevant stakeholders' questions like: What are the YSC quality goals/items, who is responsible for it, in what year is it object for evaluation and how do we evaluate this, which documents and participants are needed, what happens with results of the evaluations (feedback)?

The PDCA circle must also be implemented. The key elements for quality assurance are: defining the YSC goals, measuring the results and relating goals and results in the PCDA circle. Make clear how the PCDA circle works and fits within quality assurance:

- Plan what you are going to do;
- Then Do it;
- Afterwards Check if you have done what you meant to do and if it delivered good results;
- Reflect on the results of your checking and prepare Adaptations for future actions;
- Then start again: Plan – Do – Check – Adapt

To start the discussion and development of a quality assurance system I recommend following the next steps:

- State your quality goals (pick them up in the self-evaluation report). At least you have to pick up quality goals from the mission and purposes, decision making processes (governance), academic programs ( Ensure the Learning Outcomes, programs/courses goals and content and assessment as a process in the quality assurance), students, faculty, research and development, infrastructure and resources, internationalization and quality assurance system.
- Define your performance indicators and add outside demands.
- Develop the instruments (survey's, questionnaires etc.) to get feedback and statistics from students, teaching staff and relevant stakeholders.
- Formulate target results as concrete as possible.
- Make an implementation plan.
- Carry out.
- Review the system regularly.

On the internet there are a lot of examples of relevant quality assurance handbooks, systems, examples within higher music education and other educational programs. The AEC has also a lot of information and experience. Please use it to get more information how to develop an YSC quality assurance system.

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**M. Ayvazyan**  
**9<sup>th</sup> of March, 2020**

## DESCRIPTION OF EXTERNAL REVIEW

### Composition of the expert panel

External evaluation of the institutional capacities of YSC was carried out by the expert panel with the following composition:

Head of the Expert panel:

- **Mkrtich Ayvazyan** – Vice-Rector on Educational- Scientific Affairs at Armenian State Academy of Fine Arts, Candidate of physical-mathematical sciences, Associate Professor, RA
- **Narine Khachatryan** – Yerevan State University, Head of the Chair of Psychology of Personality, Associate Professor, RA
- **Jan Rademakers** - Retired Rector of the Conservatorium Maastricht, The Netherlands
- **Margus Pärtlas**, Vice Rector for Academic Affairs and Research of Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, Professor at Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, Estonia
- **Anahit Terteryan** - Yerevan State University, student at the faculty of Organization of Education

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

The works of the expert panel were coordinated by Gayane Ananyan.

During the site-visit the translation was provided by Mariam Harutyunyan. The Draft Expert panel report was translated by Ani Mazmanyman.

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

## PROCESS OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW

### Application for state accreditation

The Conservatory applied to ANQA for institutional accreditation by submitting the application form, the copies of the license and respective appendices to ANQA.

The ANQA Secretariat examined the data presented in the application form and attached documents and ANQA electronic survey completed by the Institution.

After making a decision on accepting the application (05.03.2019) an agreement was signed between ANQA and YSC. The timetable of activities was prepared and approved.

Within the time-period defined in the time-schedule the Institution submitted its self-evaluation according to ANQA format in Armenian and English as well as the package of supporting documents.

The self-evaluation of the YSC was carried out by a group formed by the order of the Rector especially for this purpose.

### **Preparatory phase**

ANQA coordinator conducted a technical review of the report against the ANQA requirements. The self-evaluation report was sent to the expert panel members by ANQA Secretariat for initial evaluation. The composition of the expert panel was agreed upon with YSC and was approved by the order of ANQA Director.

In order to prepare for the activities and to endure the effectiveness of the process the expert panel members had 5 trainings on the following topics:

- RA Regulation on Accreditation, criteria and standards,
- Main functions of the expert panel members,
- Preliminary evaluation as a preparatory phase for the development of expert panel report, main requirements for the report,
- Methodology of the examination of documents and resources,
- Ethics and techniques of the conduction of meetings and questioning

Having examined the self-evaluation report of the YSC and the supporting documentation base, the expert panel conducted preliminary evaluation according to the format by preparing the list of additional required documents and the questions for clarification mentioning also the respective structural units and target groups.

In the scheduled period the expert panel summarized the results of the initial evaluation and the time-schedule of site-visit was developed. Guided by the Accreditation Manual meetings of all the groups with the expert panel, close and open meetings, observation of documents, visits to different structural units of the Institution etc. were involved in the time-schedule.

### **Self-evaluation of Komitas State Conservatory of Yerevan**

The Institution presented its self-evaluation report in Armenian and English and the supporting documentation according to ANQA format on 19.07.2019. The self-evaluation report contained mainly general and descriptive information and most of the supporting documents were not approved/signed, though they contained information about the date and body or unit in charge for approval of the particular document, the quantitative data and its analysis was limited.

#### **Preliminary visit**

Taking into account the distance, the preliminary visit was replaced with a Skype meeting with the contact person of the Conservatory with the participation of the Head of the Expert panel and the Coordinator of the project 2 weeks prior to the site-visit. The time-schedule of the site-visit, the list of additional documents for observations were presented to the YSC, technical and organizational issues were discussed, decisions were made on the informative issues, behavior and ethics of the participants of meetings. The requirements for the rooms envisaged for the works of the expert panel and for focus groups were described, issues on their equipment with relevant furniture and technical means were clarified.

#### **Site-Visit**

The site-visit took place from 9 to 13 December 2019. The works of the Expert Panel launched with a close meeting a day before the site-visit, the aim of the meeting was to discuss with the

international experts and agree upon the evaluation framework, issues to be examined during the site-visit, strong and weak points of YSC per criterion, procedure of conducting focus groups as well as to clarify the future activities.

The whole Expert Panel, ANQA Coordinator and the translator were present at the site-visit.

The site-visit launched and ended with the meeting with the Rector of YSC. The expert panel chose the participants of focus groups (lecturers, alumni, self-evaluation working group members) from the list provided beforehand. All the meetings envisaged by the time-schedule were conducted except for the open meeting, to which no one was registered. During the site visit the Expert Panel observed documents and resources and had focus groups with different structural units of the Conservatory. The information obtained during different meetings as well as the main results of the examination of documents and observations were summarized at the end of each day and during the final meeting of the site-visit. The Expert Panel discussed the main outcomes and came to a common agreement first about the separate standards of the accreditation and then about the criteria. The final conclusions per criterion and standard were agreed upon with all the members of the panel through open discussion based on the consensus approach. The evaluation by the Expert Panel was conducted within the framework of State Accreditation criteria and standards which applies two-level scale: **satisfactory and unsatisfactory**.

### **Expert panel report**

The Expert Panel prepared the draft expert panel report based on the regular discussions organized for the examination of the SER of YSC and attached documents as well as observation during the site-visit. On the basis of facts withdrawn during the discussions, the Head of the Expert Panel and the ANQA Coordinator prepared the draft expert panel report which was agreed upon with the Panel members. International experts prepared separate opinion for peer-review. The documents were translated and provided to the Head of the Expert Panel. The responsibility for the involvement of the opinions and approaches of the international experts in the expert panel report was put on the Head of the Expert Panel and the Coordinator. The opinions on peer-review were fully involved in the expert panel report.

The Conservatory presented their comments and sent its feedback on the draft report on 14.02.2020. The Institution presented its observations in Armenian, which were provided to the local experts and discussed with the international expert. On 4 March 2020 ANQA organized a meeting for the representatives of the University and the expert panel, during which the expert panel's response was discussed. Taking into consideration the Conservatory's observations, the expert panel prepared the final report, which was approved by the panel on 09 March, 2019.

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**G. Ananyan**  
**9<sup>th</sup> of March, 2020**

## EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA BRIEF INFORMATION ABOUT THE EDUCATION INSTITUTION

**History.** Komitas State Conservatory of Yerevan was founded in 1921 first as a musical studio, and two years later in 1923 it became a musical higher education institution: Conservatory. It was the first suchlike educational institution in Armenia for the establishment of which all the prerequisites were in place.

Nowadays the Conservatory has 3 faculties and 19 chairs. The Institution provides higher education issuing the qualifications of bachelor, master and researcher. YSC proposes also additional educational program for the profession of “Musical Performing Arts”.

Currently the teaching staff of YSC is equipped with the best specialists: composers, musicologists and performers. Most of them are artists having international recognition. About 150 professors including Doctor of Arts, Candidates, Associate Professors and Assistants are laureates of different international competitions.

Currently more than 900 students study at the 3 faculties of YSC and Gyumri branch. Around 130 foreign students study at YSC.

**Education.** The profession of “Musical Art” at YSC includes the specialties of performer, musicologist and composer. The Conservatory enlarged its list of professions and since 2016-2017 it has been operating 3 BA and 3 MA programs: History and Theory of Music (musicologist), Musical Art (composition), Musical Performing Arts (performer of all specialties). The following specialties are provided in the 3 faculties of YSU: Vocal-theoretical, Piano and Orchestra.

The academic programs provided at YSC are in compliance with the mission of the Institution and are defined according to the learning outcomes. Academic programs of YSC are formed with the learning outcomes which are in line with NQF.

**Academic Programs.** YSC academic programs are in line with the RA musical-cultural needs, promote the cultural development and maintenance of national sacred cultural values. The academic programs are directed to the fulfillment of YSC mission and are stipulated in the Strategic Plan. Continuous development of the academic programs and assurance of their compliance with the current requirements are one of the most important goals of YSC (YSC 2019-2024 Strategic Plan, goal 1).

During the last 3 years YSU has implemented a number of processes towards the modernization of the academic programs, definition of learning outcomes and assurance of their compliance with the NQF.

**Teaching staff.** The key to YSC success is its teaching staff. Education process in YSC is carried out by the sufficient number of teaching staff having necessary qualifications and they ensure the preparation of specialists in compliance with the learning outcomes. There is a regulation of the formation of teaching staff at YSC. One of the main directions of the implementation of teaching at YSC is the involvement of young teaching staff members in the education process. The teaching staff of YSC is formed with the alumni of Conservatory. The qualifications of the scientific-pedagogical

staff us fully in line with the necessary requirements. The principles of the formation of the teaching staff include professionalism, inheritance of generations and experience.

**Teaching-learning.** General professional courses at YSC are mainly conducted in small groups, and the professional courses are conducted individually (with the principle lecturer-student). The peculiarities of the teaching methods of the Conservatory result in student-centered education as each student is treated individually.

**Learning environment.** According to its strategic goals and objectives, YSC consistently implements activities towards assurance of staff, material-technical resources and their continuous recruitment and quality improvement for the implementation of academic programs.

**Research.** Scientific and research sphere is one of the most important fields of musical art activities of the Conservatory. Mainly the specialty of “Musicology” deals with it according to its directions: theory, history, folklore, modern technologies. Research strategies and directions of YSC are defined based on the 2012-2017 and 2019-2024 Strategic Plans of the Conservatory.

Mechanisms of approving the research results of YSC are sessions of the historical-theoretical chairs (History of Music, Theory of Music, History of Performing Arts, Folklore) as well as sessions of YSC Scientific Council.

**Internationalization.** Direction of comprehensive development of external relations and internationalization of the Conservatory are reflected in 2012-2017 and 2019-2024 Strategic Plans of YSC. During the last three years the Institution has organized a number of national and international cultural events, has participated in master classes in foreign countries and in the RA with the participation of noted musicians, has participated in international creative projects towards internationalization. YSC has signed agreements with a number of musical universities of European countries, including Portugal, Italy, Austria, Netherlands, Finland as well as with Scotland, for the activation of internationalization of the current sphere and for the mobility of teaching staff and students.

**Quality Assurance.** Quality assurance policy of YSC is reflected in the Strategic Plan of the Institution and is directed to the fulfillment of mission and goals, development and improvement of quality. YSC strategy and policy on quality assurance are stipulated in the Strategic Plan which is approved by the Governing Board of the Conservatory. The control over the implementation of the above-mentioned policy and strategy is carried out by the Scientific Council and Rectorate of YSC.

*Source. Sources for the above-mentioned information are documents provided by the Institution (e.g. self-evaluation report, strategic plan, timetable, plans of structural units, concept papers, etc.)*

## I. MISSION AND PURPOSES

**CRITERION: The Tertiary Level Institutions' (TLIs) policy and practices are in accordance with its mission, which is in accordance with the Armenian National Qualifications Framework (hereafter ANQF).**

### Findings

**1.1 The TLI has a clear, well-articulated mission that represents the institution's purposes and goals and is in accordance with the Armenian National Qualifications Framework (hereafter ANQF).**

According to 2019-2024 Strategic Plan of the YSC, the Institution's mission is:

“Komitas State Conservatory of Yerevan is an educational, scientific and creative institution of music culture having national role. The main mission of YSC is to ensure musical education in all the educational levels, to formulate, improve and transfer knowledge and professional competences derived from the principles of state policy concerning the sphere of education.

Being the only higher musical education Institution in Armenia, Conservatory is aimed at educating high-quality musicians-specialists who meet the modern requirements and have relevant knowledge, skills and competences”.

Conservatory will continue raising its ranking as a musical educational institution having higher professional criteria in the international platform.

Gyumri branch of YSC, as a center of musical education for northern regions of the RA, gives an opportunity to get higher professional education implementing educational and social-cultural programs in the region.

In 2019-2024 Strategic Plan of the Conservatory State Non-Commercial Organization goals and objectives of the Institution are defined.

Based on the recommendations got from the previous accreditation, the mission of YSC is more clearly defined in 2019-2024 Strategic Plan as compared to that of 2012-2017, as well as the mission of Gyumri branch is also involved.

The main goals of 2019-2024 Strategic Plan of YSC are:

- Higher education
- Higher research and innovations
- Public involvement and services
- Development of financial investments in the budget of Conservatory.

For the fulfillment of the mentioned goals, 24 objectives are defined.

YSC implements academic programs in bachelor's, master's and researcher's levels which is in line with 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> levels of RA NQF and covers all the levels of higher education.

**1.2 The TLI's mission, goals and objectives reflect the needs of the internal and external stakeholders.**

According to the SER, the needs of internal and external stakeholders were taken into account while discussing 2019-2024 Strategic Plan of the Conservatory with the internal and external stakeholders. During the site-visit it turned out that issues were also raised during the meeting with the newly appointed Rector with the staff and students.

2019-2024 Strategic Plan was presented also to the Scientific Council of YSC before its discussion and approval in the Governing Board. YSC Governing Board is composed of 24 members, 12 of which are internal stakeholders (6 teaching staff members and 6 students) and the rest 12 are external stakeholders nominated by the founder and authorized body. YSC Scientific Council is

composed of 60 members, 45 (75%) of which are teaching and administrative staff members including deans, heads of chairs and heads of the main administrative structural units, and 15 (25%) members are student representatives. A number of suggestions like changes in the formulations in the Strategic Plan were proposed by the internal and external stakeholders during the discussions in the Councils.

The procedure describing the process of development of the Strategic Plan and particularly the needs assessment of internal and external stakeholders is missing.

### **1.3 The institution has approved mechanisms and procedures to evaluate the achievement of its mission and purpose and to further improve them.**

According to YSC SER, while the development of 2019-2024 Strategic Plan of the Institution, YSC gave reference to the analysis of the previous Strategic Plan. However, during the site-visit it turned out that thorough analysis of the previous Strategic Plan was not carried out. Rector's annual reports which are based on the reports of Vice-Rectors are considered to be a mechanism for the evaluation of results of fulfillment of YSC mission and goals. Rector's annual reports are presented for the discussion and evaluation of Governing Board. Rector's annual reports are not formed according to strategic goals and do not directly reflect their fulfillment.

In 2019-2024 Strategic Plan the time-schedule for the implementation of strategic goals and objectives is missing, the logical sequence of the activities, deadlines for the mentioned activities, responsible people as well as KPIs are not mentioned.

According to the recommendations of criterion 1 given to YSC by the expert panel as a result of the previous accreditation, and based on the improvement plan developed by YSC based on those recommendations, YSC envisaged to develop new mechanisms of regular monitoring and evaluation of results of the Strategic Plan, respective procedures, as well as surveys for the evaluation of effectiveness of fulfillment of YSC mission and Strategic Plan. However, the envisaged activities have not been implemented.

**Considerations:** YSC has defined and published mission and strategic goals which are generally reflecting needs of internal and external stakeholders. However, in the action plan of 2019-2024 strategic goals and objectives time-schedule, responsible people as well as KPIs are missing. This fact hinders the organization of implementation of the Strategic Plan. Rector's annual reports are considered to be mechanisms for the evaluation and improvement of the results of implementation of the Strategic Plan. However, the reports are not developed according to strategic goals which makes it difficult to monitor and evaluate the implementation of mission and strategic goals as well as planning of the improvement activities.

YSC provides musical education in bachelor's, master's and researcher's levels which is in line with 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> levels of NQF and the mission of the Conservatory.

**Summary:** Taking into account that strategic goals of the Institution are derived from the mission and in general they reflect the needs of internal and external stakeholders, the academic programs provided at YSC are in line with NQF and are derived from the mission of YSC, the Expert panel finds that the Institution meets the requirements of Criterion 1.

**Conclusion:** The compliance of the institution's institutional capacities with the requirements of criterion 1 is **satisfactory**.

## II. GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

**CRITERION: The TLIs' system of governance, administrative structures and their practices are effective and intend to the accomplishment of its mission and purposes by keeping the governance code of ethics.**

### Findings

**2.1 The TLI's system of governance ensures regulated decision-making process in accordance with defined code of ethics and has efficient provision of human, material and financial resources to accomplish its educational and other purposes.**

The governance of YSC is carried out with the combination of one-person and collegial government principles by the Governing Board, Scientific Council and Rector. The highest governing body is the Governing Board consisting of 24 members which is formed for a period of 5 years. The Board is composed with the representatives of the founder, authorized body, teaching staff and students. The composition of the Board is approved by the Prime-Minister of the RA. The Board approved the Strategic Plan of and the budget of the Institution, elects the Rector and evaluates the annual report of the Rector about the activities of the Institutions. Thus, the Board is responsible for the approval and short-term and long-term monitoring (acceptance of reports) of its implementation.

Scientific Council and the Rector are responsible for the implementation and current management of short-term, mid-term and long-term plans of the Strategic Plan. YSC Scientific Council is comprised of 60 members and is formed for a period of 5 years. The President of the Council is the Rector ad officio. Scientific Council is comprised of Vice-Rectors, Deans, Head of Chairs, representatives of teaching and administrative staffs and students. 25% of the members of the Scientific Council are students. Such a governing system ensures regulated process of decision making and maintenance of management ethics. The activities of YSC are regulated by the Vice-Rectors according to the relevant spheres:

- educational affairs,
- scientific affairs,
- international cooperation and PR
- financial-economic affairs.

The Education Department, acoustic laboratory, medical unit and 3 faculties with 19 chairs are under the supervision of the Vice-Rector for Education Affairs.

Publishing-editing Department, Library, laboratory of creative studies are under the supervision of the Vice-Rector for Scientific Affairs.

Department of International cooperation and PR are under the supervision of the Vice-Rector on International Cooperation and PR.

Accounting department, Coordinator of procurement procedure, storage, chief engineer, engineer of security, the Unit of Civil Protection, Economic Department and serving staff are under the supervision of the Vice-Rector on Financial-Economical Affairs.

YSC Opera Studio, Department of Internal Quality Assurance, Office, HR Department, General Law-adviser, archive and the Gyumri branch are under the direct supervision of the Rector.

According to SER, in order to enhance the effectiveness of the education process and to decrease corruption risks, a few professional chairs performing the same function were united. New faculty of Chamber Music was established.

Since February 2019 YSC has a Standing Ethical Committee comprised of 5 members, which is led by the work regulation of YSC Standing Ethical Committee. The regulation involves the functions and duties of the Committee members, complaints to be discussed, regulation of applying to the Committee and the mode of operation of the Committee. The principles of the activities of the Committee are mentioned, however their definitions or reference to their definitions are not given in the working regulation.

Regulations of YSC structural units are mainly old or are missing.

During the site-visit it became clear that YSC has serious problems concerning material and financial resources. Nearly all internal stakeholders and alumni mentioned during the meetings that material resources, especially musical instruments at the Conservatory are not sufficient for the long-term use during the educational process. The instruments mainly were obtained during the Soviet Union times, many of them were renovated and do not satisfy the needs of students. Financial resources are limited and do not endure the opportunity for the upgrading of instrumental base.

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

Internal stakeholders are involved in the higher management collegial bodies of YSC. Particularly, as teaching staff members Vice-Rectors for Educational and Scientific Affairs, Dean of the Orchestra Faculty, Head of the Chair of Folk Instruments and Singing, professor of the Chair of Chamber Ensemble is involved in the Board of the Conservatory and form 25% of the general number of Board members. Representatives of teaching staff members involved in the Board are appointed by YSC Scientific Council. 25% of the members of the Board are students, 6 students are selected by the Students' Council.

Among the 60 members of the Scientific Council are Vice-Rectors, Deans, Director of Gyumri branch, Head of 19 chairs (including from Gyumri branch), 7 representatives of teaching staff having the degree of a doctor and title of a professor and 15 students (forming 25% of the members of the Scientific Council). Representative of trade union is also involved in the Scientific Council who defends the rights of its members against decisions that violate their rights.

In the minutes of the sessions of Scientific Council and Governing Board of YSC, there were no suggestions from teaching staff and students on the decisions concerning them, except for the suggestion made by one of the professors during the Governing Board meeting about the change in one of the formulations in 2014-2019 Strategic Plan.

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

Long-term planning of YSC is reflected in the activities envisaged for the fulfillment of 2019-2024 strategic goals and objectives. However, time-schedule for the implementation of the activities, necessary resources, responsible people for the activities as well as KPIs are not defined. There is an

action plan for the Strategic plan 2012-2017, the objectives and their actions were presented with the responsables and certain timetable<sup>1</sup>.

Mid-term and short-term planning are carried out in YSC neither in the level of administrative unit, nor in the chair level.

The only way of monitoring is the annual reports of the Rector based on the reports of the Vice-Rectors which are not developed according to the strategic goals. Documents and other grounds defining the mechanisms of implementation and monitoring of long-term, mid-term and short-term planning are missing.

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

According to SER, YSC conducts surveys among its alumni and employers to study the factors influencing its activities. However, besides the mentioned surveys, study of the factors influencing the activities of the Institution is not carried out. Policy and processes on gathering necessary information for making decisions based on the valid data are missing. It is not mentioned who is responsible for the study of the situation of the Institution in compliance with the legal changes in the RA, social needs, tendencies in international educational and other related spheres.

According to the SER it is envisaged to develop and invest electronic system of management in order to get valid information about education process for decision making.

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

Planning at YSC is carried out at institutional level and is reflected in 5year Strategic Plan approved by the Governing Board and action plan approved by the Scientific Council. However, planning of activities directed to the implementation the Strategic Plan at structural unit level is missing.

Absence of annual plans derived from the Strategic Plan brings to the non-interconnection of strategic actions and activities of the structural units.

Rector's annual reports are not developed based on the strategic goals and the process of implementation of the Strategic Plan is not obvious from the reports.

#### **2.6 There are mechanisms in place ensuring data collection on the effectiveness of the academic programmes and other processes, analyses and application of the data in decision-making.**

According to the SER, surveys and focus groups among students, alumni and employers are regularly organized by the Department of Internal Quality Assurance of YSC. However, during the site-visit it turned out that they are not regulated and are directed to the evaluation of small number of activities. Surveys have generic nature. Generally, mechanisms evaluating the gathering of information about the effectiveness of YSC activities, their analysis and application are missing.

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

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<sup>1</sup> This section was reformulated considering the University's observations and discussions:

The study of publications made by YSC was limited for the Expert Panel during the site-visit as well as during the examination of SER because of the fact that YSC official web-site was not functioning. It was impossible to find information about and description of the academic programs provided by the Conservatory, information about the teaching staff, information for the applicants and students (including international ones), information about alumni (including noted ones), information about scientific-research and creative activities. Analyses of studies made for the QA are also missing.

As a result, the Expert panel states, that publication of updated, objective and impartial qualitative and quantitative information about YSC academic programs and awarded qualifications is missing. Thus, mechanisms evaluating all the mentioned components are also missing.

### **Considerations**

Studies show that the Conservatory has necessary structural units and qualifies staff for the implementation of strategic goals. The number of administrative, teaching, support and service staff is necessary for the implementation of educational and other strategic goals. The structure of YSC ensures regulated process of decision making and maintenance of the rules of management ethics.

In order to resolve the disputes in compliance with the ethical norms, the formation and functioning of Standing Ethical Committee is a positive fact. However, the existing material and financial resources of the Institution are not sufficient for the assurance of education process. It is mainly conditioned by the peculiarity of organization of education process at Conservatory on an individual lesson basis. This peculiarity that has a great effectiveness and promotes student-centered learning requires availability of many musical instruments of proper quality and condition. Taking into account high prices of musical instruments, absence of entrepreneurial activities of the Conservatory as well as absence of state funding for this purpose, it's a serious challenge for the Conservatory. Limited number of musical instruments and absence of financial resources for the acquisition of new instruments puts the education process of YSC at a risk.

Through the involvement of internal stakeholders in all the collegial bodies of YSC management, YSC gives an opportunity to students and teaching staff to participate in decision making procedure.

The Institution carried out long-term planning, however necessary resources for the implementation of actions, time-schedule, responsible people and KPIs are not defined. Mechanisms for the implementation of long-term, mid-term and short-term planning and monitoring are missing. The previous accreditation expert panel gave the recommendation of developing mechanisms for the evaluation of YSC activities.

The absence of mid-term and short-term planning at YSC puts the effectiveness of the structural units in terms of "compliance with the goals" under doubt.

Surveys and interviews conducted for the study of factors influencing the activity of the Conservatory are not systematic. Policy and processes for gathering necessary information in order to make comprehensive decisions are missing. Internal QA Department is not viewed as a unit gathering and providing necessary information for valid decision making by the governing bodies. The QA cycle (plan, do, check, act) is not operating which hinders the effective activity of the Institution.

Mechanisms evaluating the publication of updated, objective and impartial qualitative and quantitative information about the effectiveness of YSC activities, academic programs and awarded

qualifications are missing, which hinder assurance of transparency of YSC activities. In this respect, YSC hasn't taken into account the recommendation given by the previous expert panel on finding effective means of dissemination of information.

None of the 3 points of recommendations given to YSC by the previous expert panel for criterion 2 are carried out, which is a negative fact.

### **Summary**

Taking into account that there is no mid-term and short-term planning, allocation of resources is not carried out according to strategic goals and management is not carried out based on the QA principle (plan, do, check, act) and the fulfillment of YSC mission and strategic goals is put under risk, the Expert panel finds that the Institution does not meet the requirements of Criterion 2.

**Conclusion:** The compliance of the institution's institutional capacities with the requirements of criterion 2 is **unsatisfactory**.

## **III. ACADEMIC PROGRAMS**

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

### **Findings**

**3.1 The academic programs are thoroughly formulated according to the intended learning outcomes, which correspond to an academic qualification and are in line with the TLI's mission and the state academic standards**

The following programs are implemented in BA and MA levels of YSC which are in line with the Institution's mission: "Musical Art", "Instrumental Performance", "Conducting", "Vocal Art" and "Musicology".

In 2015 the document on "Methodical Guidelines for the Development of YSC Academic Programs" was approved where the description of requirements for the academic programs is described including definition of goals, learning outcomes at course and program levels, definition of human and material resources for education process as well as requirements for the documentation of the academic programs including the structures of program and course descriptions.

Academic programs are developed according to the formats defined by the Conservatory which include learning outcomes that were developed by the working group for academic program development, improvement and evaluation as a result of the study of international practice. However, the compliance of the academic programs with the NQF and Dublin descriptors is not tangible. Grounds and tools reflecting the compliance of the academic programs with NQF are missing. Academic program descriptions involve comparative matrix of learning outcomes and courses however the principle of filling in the matrix was not clear: how are the learning outcomes of the courses taken into consideration. At the same time there are learning outcomes for the formation of which there is one course (with 2 credits).

However, courses involved in the curricula ensure sequence and interconnection of the content of academic programs.

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

Course descriptions involve course learning outcomes according to knowledge, skills and competences however teaching and learning methods are missing. As a result, the level of coherence (horizontal alignment) of learning outcomes and teaching and learning methods on the course level is not tangible. Teaching and learning policy is missing also in the academic program descriptions.

There are courses in the academic programs that last more than one semester however their learning outcomes per semester are not defined. Such an example is the course on "Composition". It can hinder mobility of students with ECTS credit exchange.

Conduction of professional courses in the form of an individual lessons greatly fosters student-centered learning however courses on humanities and theories are not student-centered.

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

Since 2013 "Regulation on the Checking and Assessment of YSC students' knowledge" has been operating at YSC which defines the policy on the assessment of students based on the learning outcomes. Since 2014-2015 academic year the multi-component assessment system has been piloted at Conservatory which was fully introduced at YSC in 2018-2019 academic year. The new system describes components of formation of marks and the weigh given to them. Assessment is carried out with the presence of a professional committee. Investment of the new assessment system is aimed at the decrease of subjectivism of the assessment.

In the "Regulation on the Checking and Assessment of YSC students' knowledge" the phases and system of assessment including final attestation, methodology of assessment as well as requirements for the academic transcript of students are described. Assessment system is thoroughly described also in course descriptions.

Points on assurance of academic honesty in the "Regulation on the Checking and Assessment of YSC students' knowledge", academic program and course descriptions are missing.

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

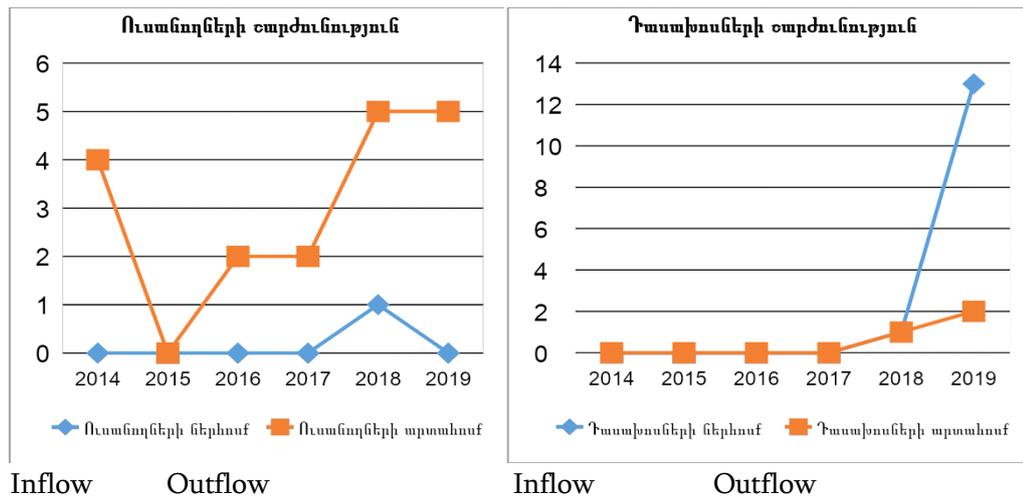
From the SER and during the site-visit it became clear that while developing its academic programs YSC studied the academic programs of Moscow State Conservatory after P. Chaykovskiy, Sankt Petersburg State Conservatory after Rimsky Korsakov, Tbilisi State Conservatory after V. Saakashvili, Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, Musical Academy after J. Vitali of Latvia, however, as such, benchmarking with clear methodology has not been carried out. Moreover, in its improvement plan of 2015, based on the recommendations of the previous expert panel, YSC envisaged to study the academic programs of AEC member conservatories and to carry out benchmarking. However, activities towards this have not been implemented as such.

YSC cooperates with 16 CIS and 11 European countries as well as 2 USA, 1 Mexican and 1 Mongolian universities. During the last 5 years with only 5 European universities out of the mentioned one's mobility of students and teaching staff has been carried out.

At the same time, it's worth mentioning that during the last two years the mobility of students and teaching staff has increased greatly.

### Mobility of teaching staff

### Mobility of students



### 3.5 The TLI has a policy ensuring academic program monitoring, effectiveness assessment and improvement.

From the SER of YSC and during the site-visit it became clear that there is a working group at YSC for the development, improvement and evaluation of academic programs which envisages to use the results of the surveys conducted among the students, alumni and other stakeholders as well as labor market requirements for the improvement of the academic programs.

However, surveys conducted among internal and especially external stakeholders are limited, are not regular and cannot serve as a firm basis for the improvement of the academic programs. As mechanisms evaluating the academic programs also the reports of the final attestation committees and invited foreign presidents of the Committees are viewed however they are mainly very generic and cannot serve as a basis for the improvement of the academic programs.

### Considerations

Academic programs provided by YSC are fully in line with YSC mission.

There is a document on “Methodical Guidelines for the Development of YSC Academic Programs”, which is however rather general. Academic programs are developed according to the learning outcomes. The policy on the selection of teaching, learning and assessment methods according to the program learning outcomes is missing. “Regulation on the Checking and Assessment

of YSC students' knowledge" thoroughly describes the procedure of students' academic progress, however it needs to be reviewed after the investment of the new multi-component assessment system. Assessment of courses according to the new multi-component assessment system is described in the course descriptions. Academic programs need horizontal and vertical alignment. Vertical alignment will foster development and investment of principles, procedures and tools expressing the alignment of program and course learning outcomes as well as NQF and academic programs. Horizontal alignment will ensure development and investment of procedures and tools for the selection of teaching, learning and assessment methods directed to the formation of course learning outcomes.

Procedures and mechanisms ensuring academic honesty are missing which makes the existence of plagiarism possible within the framework of educational and research activities.

Students centered approach is in place for the professional (performance, creativity) courses. It is the result of organization of education process through individual courses. During the mentioned courses the lecturer refers to the performance of each student stressing and correcting each occurred issue.

During the current improvement of the academic programs' comparisons were made with RF and European university academic programs. The level of students' and teaching staffs' mobility is low, however during the last two years there is a great increase in the mobility which is mainly conditioned by the activeness of the Conservatory in the international level.

Policy and mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation of effectiveness and improvement of academic programs are not defined, and the tools are not sufficient.

The Expert Panel finds its positive that a number of activities towards the development of course learning outcomes, study of the academic programs of SEC member-conservatories, trainings and seminars of chairs that were mentioned in YSC improvement plan which was developed based on the recommendations for criterion 3 by the previous expert panel were carried out.

### **Summary**

Taking into account that academic programs of YSC are in line with the mission of the Conservatory, they are part of institutional planning, are developed according to learning outcomes, there is a policy on the selection of assessment methods, the Expert Panel finds that the Conservatory meets the requirements of Criterion 3.

### **Conclusion**

The compliance of the institution's institutional capacities with the requirements of criterion 3 is satisfactory.

## **IV. STUDENTS**

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

### **Findings**

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

According to the SER of YSC, the peculiarity of the higher musical education is that the applicants of performance professions start their musical education at an early age at schools or in other specialized institutions. For the professional orientation of pupils of musical education institutions concerts, events, master classes and concert-lectures are organized with the participation of YSC students. Professional orientation is also carried out by the YSC lecturers who also gave lessons in musical education institutions. YSC teaching staff members are involved in listening, reporting concerts and well as are members of final attestation Committees at professional musical educational institutions. However, those processes are not systematic and their effectiveness is not evaluated.

From the SER and during the site-visit it turned out that internal admission examinations of YSC are carried out according to the regulation of admission to RA state and non-state higher education institutions. The mentioned regulations describe the phases of admission of applicants documents, regulation on the organization of unified exams however it does not involve procedure of implementation of internal professional examinations of the universities of art.

Examination criteria of professional courses are developed by the respective chairs of YSC and are presented to the approval of the RA Minister of Education. However, internal document defining the examination procedures and peculiarities derived from the characteristic features of specialties provided at YSC is missing. The same is about MA programs for which internal admission regulation is also missing.

During the site-visit it became clear that in order to make admission exams transparent, at the end of the admission exams of 2019-2020 before handing in their works, the students were given the copies of their works as the works are written in pencil derived from the peculiarities of the professions.

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

According to YSC SER, the following mechanisms are operating for students' needs assessment:

- obligatory involvement of students in Governing Board and in Councils,
- discussion of issues concerning students during the direct communication of lecturer and student at individual lessons,
- surveys conducted among the students about their satisfactory with the teaching quality and education,
- meetings of students with the Rector.

In the SER it is also mentioned that analysis of the results of surveys conducted among the students are also compared with the issues registered during the meeting of students with the Rector, mechanisms towards the solution of those issues are developed and respective decisions are made.

However, during the site-visit it turned out that the link between the students involved in YSC governing bodies and YSC students' community is missing. Mechanisms for raising the issues of students' community through the students involved in the governing bodies are missing. Wider range of students do not know the ones who are involved in governing bodies or do not trust them, on the one hand the opportunities for raising the issues through students involved in governing bodies are not realized and on the other hand the issues are not raised.

During the individual lessons about the needs assessment of students it should be mentioned that they are carried out only within the framework of applied and performing specialties and even in those cases they are not carried out during all the courses. During the individual lessons the joint work of lecturer and student and issues raised by the student are limited to the issues concerning that particular course: teaching methods, resources, etc.

During these courses the students have no opportunity for raising issues concerning other courses and especially courses on theory and humanities.

Surveys among the students are conducted through one unified questionnaire, there is no clear frequency and they are generic and not directed to each course. The meetings with the Rector are effective and they have risen excitement among the students. However, this mechanism is the initiative of the new management of YSC which is not documented yet, thus hasn't yet become a mechanism.

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

According to the SER since 2019 preparatory courses for applicants have initiated at YSC where international students are involved.

Education in the professions of performance is implemented mainly through individual lessons, which give an opportunity to students to get professional consultancy from the direct contact with the lecturer. During the site-visit the students confirmed this fact mentioning that they do not need any additional consultancy concerning those courses. However, within the framework of courses of theory or humanities, the Conservatory does not envisage consultancy or additional lessons. International students are mainly citizens of Russia and do not have that much problem with the language as the courses are organized in Russian for them.

During the site-visit it turned out that derived from the peculiarities of the professions of performance the students of these professions cannot prepare at home (because of the absence of sound insulation). For the solution of this problem YSC gives students an opportunity to organize additional lessons in the classrooms of YSC. The classrooms are available for additional lessons from 7:00 until the launch of classes and after the classes until 23:00. During the weekend also students have the opportunity to prepare at YSC but first they need to get permission from the Rector. About the problems concerning the organization of additional lessons were mentioned only by the foreign students.

YSC also provides a course on "Higher Performing and Creative Skills".

According to the SER, master classes with the participation of Armenian and foreign invited specialists are considered as professional consultancy services by YSC. During the site-visit it became clear that master classes are not planned beforehand by YSC but they are implemented in case there is an opportunity.

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

There is no separate clear regulation for students at YSC for applying to the administrative staff however instead of it there is a non-formal policy of "open doors" by the administrative staff. Each student of YSC at any time can turn to any administrative staff member, even to the Rector. Students mainly turn to the heads of chairs and deans for support and the coordination of international students is carried out by the Department of International Relations. Students freely apply also to the Education Department and Vice-Rectors. However, Conservatory does not gather statistic data about this process and YSC cannot mention the answers to the following questions:

- What percent of students is aware of administrative services concerning them?
- What percent of students uses those services?
- What percent of students is satisfied with those services?

#### **4.5 The TLI has student career support services.**

YSC does not have special institutional services fostering career of students, during the site-visit it turned out that there is no body dealing with the issues of later employability of students, YSC does not have alumni base, where information about work places, positions, etc. of the alumni will be involved. These works are currently under the supervision of the Vice-Rector for International Relations and PR and his Department. Through the Department YSC tries to provide wider services to students: writing CVs, principles of going to interviews, studying the labor market, managing career, etc. However, this process is not regulated, plan or time-schedule for the provision of the mentioned services, statistical data (how many students were involved, etc.) and information about the satisfaction of students are missing. The gap of having services promoting career of students at YSC is somehow compensated with the circumstance that there are also employers among the teaching staff of YSC who have the opportunity to choose employees from among their students, however this process is not regulated.

In its 2015 improvement plan, based on the recommendations of the previous expert panel, YSC initiated to create alumni union that would perform also functions of the Career Center however nothing was mentioned about the performed actions either in the SER, or during the site-visit. At the same time, there is a Career Center in Gyumri branch that cooperates with local schools and other institutions and tries to create opportunities for workplace of alumni.

#### **4.6 The TLI promotes student involvement in its research activities.**

According to the SER, Students' Scientific-creative Union fosters involvement of students in scientific-research activities. The Union organizes conferences with the participation of students from the faculty of musicology and performance each semester.

During the site-visit it became clear that most of the students are not aware of that Union. During the site-visit it turned out that the best speeches of students of the conference are published only in "Musician" paper which is not a scientific journal.

YSC researches having clear direction and funding are carried out in the laboratory of folklore however during the site-visit it turned out that few students are involved in those works.

During the site-visit it was also made clear that during the education process students are often also appearing to be in research process, as students compose, they compare different works of art, they try to get their "versions" of those compositions, etc. However, Conservatory does not consider it a research. Study of international practice of students' research in the sphere of art and particularly in the sphere of music has not been carried out.

YSC does not gather statistical data on the involvement of students in scientific and scientific-research activities.

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

According to YSC SER, bodies for the protection of students' rights are Students' Council and Ethical Committee.

Representatives of YSC Students' Council are involved in the Governing Board, Scientific Council and Rectorate and protect students' rights in these management bodies. Since October 2019 the Students' Council was restructured and a new composition was formed. Currently 40 students are involved in the Students' Council and in its separate subgroups. During the site-visit it turned out that because of belonging to a political party, the previous Students' Council was not that much

popular among the students and didn't have a good reputation. The new composition of the Students' Council is active towards the increase of the reputation of the current Students' Council.

Ethical Committee has been operating at YSC since February 2019. There is a working regulation of the Ethical Committee. One of the functions of the Ethical Committee is discussion and protection of the rights during the conflict between student-lecturer, lecturer-lecturer, student-student. During the site-visit it turned out that the students are not aware of the functions of the Committee.

#### **4.8 The TLI has evaluation and quality assurance mechanisms of student educational, advisory and other services**

According to the SER YSC QA Department carried out need's assessment of students through surveys. Surveys give opportunities to students to evaluate the works of administrative staff, faculties, chairs, support staff and other infrastructures as well as regulations of implementing academic programs and courses, existing assessment system and performance of the teaching staff.

However, during the site-visit it turned out that for the evaluation of the above-mentioned points only one unified questionnaire is applied among the students which doesn't deeply touch each issue. Moreover, during the last 4 years surveys were conducted only in 2017 and 2019. Some research was carried out also in 2018 however not through survey. Students presented their suggestions about the improvement of the activity of the Conservatory. The analyses of the mentioned studies were not discussed by YSC management.

#### **Considerations**

YSC carried out a number of actions towards professional orientation of allicians however these actions are not systematic, and their effectiveness is not evaluated. Internal admission exams of YSC are carried out according to the examination regulation of RA state and non-state education institutions. However, this regulation does not involve internal procedure of conduction of internal professional examination of YSC. The same situation is with the admission to MA studies. The absence of internal regulations for examinations puts the transparency and accountability of the admission process in danger. Examination criteria of professional courses are developed by the respective chairs of YSC. During the admission exams of BA in 2019-2020 new mechanism was introduced. However, all these need to be documented and clarified that will foster enhancement of effectiveness of the procedure and can service as basis for the development and investment of QA mechanisms.

There are a number of mechanisms for students' needs assessment at YSC, which, however, are not effective and need to be improved and documented. Particularly, the link between the students involved in governing bodies and student community is not ensured and as a result student involved in governing bodies can address their own needs and do not represent the student community.

Conditioned by the peculiarities of YSC professions YSC provides its students an opportunity of having additional lessons on all the days of the week since 7:0 till 23:00 which is very effective. Availability of administrative staff for students is ensured through "open door" non-formal policy due to which students can turn to any administrative staff member with their issues. Taking into account small number of students at YSC, this method is effective.

YSC does not have a career center which negatively effects on the opportunities of employability of alumni. Provision of information to potential employers about YSC alumni and making alumni aware of vacancies would foster enhancement of the level of employability if alumni and would reinforce university-employer link. Some functions of career center like writing CV, going to an interview, studying the labor market are implemented by the Department of International

Relations, which is however not clearly planned and is not involved in the functions of the above-mentioned Department.

Mechanisms for the involvement of students in scientific research activities as well as policy for linking education process with research are not operating at YSC. However, there are some cases of involvement of students in research carried out by the teaching staff. Investment of mechanisms for the involvement of students in research activities and linking education process with research would greatly foster study of international practice of research activities of European higher musical education institutions.

Bodies for the protection of students' rights are Students' Council and Ethical Committee. At the same time the reputation of the Students' Council among the students is negative. The new composition of the Students' Council takes active steps towards enhancement of reputation of the Council among the students however they have not yet got tangible results. But one-year activity of Ethical Committee was positively evaluated by the students. Some studies are made at YSC for revealing students' educational and other needs, for the evaluation of effectiveness of services provided to students and for QA. However, the frequency of studies is not defined, applied mechanisms and tools cannot ensure conduction of deep studies. Mechanisms for the evaluation and QA of educational, consultancy and other services provided to students are not sufficient and do not serve their purpose.

### **Summary**

Taking into account that YSC carried out activities towards creation of effective learning environment for students: enrollment, selection, admission, provision of additional lessons, as well as provides support for the protection of students' rights the Expert panel finds that Conservatory meets the requirements of Criterion 4.

### **Conclusion**

The compliance of the institution's institutional capacities with the requirements of criterion 4 is **satisfactory**.

## V. FACULTY AND STAFF

**CRITERION:** The TLI has a highly qualified teaching and supporting staff to accomplish the institution's mission and to implement the goals set for academic programmes.

### **Findings**

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

The policy on the selection of YSC teaching and support staffs is based on the "Regulation on the Formation of Teaching Staff" approved in 2010 and the "Procedure on Job Admission, Transfer, Dismissal, Promotion, Awards and Penalties" approved in 2012. In the "Regulation on the Formation of Teaching Staff" criteria for the positioning and promotion of the teaching staff in different rank positions as well as procedures for the organization and implementation of competitions are described.

However, as it turned out during the site-visit, the announced competitions were mainly of formal nature, in fact teaching staff members were re-elected in their positions. In order to solve this

issue, YSC has already adopted new policy and new competitions were announced since December 2019 in general for 100 positions. This new policy is aimed at overcoming the previously operating tradition and involving new specialists. AT the same time, the operating regulations were not evaluated and reviewed, new policy was not defined, and wide discussions were not made before the competition.

YSC implements the policy of involving young teaching staff members in the education process as the average age of the teaching staff is rather high: 57 years old. New staff members are mainly recruited from the alumni of YSC. However, in fact there is no policy of planning of the teaching staff, which is needed as the number of the teaching staff is rather big as compared to students' number, the student/teacher ratio is 1/2.

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

Based on the SER of YSC and on the data attached to it, it should be mentioned that academic programs are mainly provided by the lecturers and experienced specialists having necessary qualifications, scientific title and levels. According to the data presented by the Conservatory, 6 lecturers are Doctors of Science, 35- candidates of sciences, 79- USSR national artists, RA National Artists, Honored Worker of Art, Honored Worker of Culture. 140 staff members were awarded with RA national awards and medals, Diplomas from the Prime-Minister, medals and diplomas from the RA Ministry of Culture. 110 teaching staff members are International Contest Laureates.

In the SER it is mentioned that clear requirements for the professional qualities of the teaching staff are being developed in the respective chairs. However, during the site-visit there were no grounds that would proof about the institutionalization of that process. The existence of clear requirements for the teaching staff per academic program will foster effectiveness of planning and recruitment of the teaching staff as well as will serve as basis for the organization of effective professional trainings.

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

From the SER and during the site-visit it turned out that YSC conducts surveys among the students which are directed to the evaluation of the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment methods. However, those surveys are conducted only within the framework of general professional courses and in the "professional classrooms" evaluation of the teaching staff by the students is not carried out. According to the representatives of the Conservatory such surveys are not effective as from the one hand lecturer-student direct contact makes it difficult for the student to evaluate the lecturer and from the other hand during such work the lecturer directly gets the opinion of the student. AT the same time during the site-visit it turned out that such surveys are generic and are not regularly conducted. There are no respective grounds that will give an opportunity to the teaching staff to understand how the results are analyzed, what conclusions are made and how the survey results are used for e.g. for the evaluation, promotion and reward of the teaching staff. At the same time, it should be mentioned that during the previous accreditation the expert panel gave a recommendation to make student surveys more effective from the perspective of application of the results.

Besides surveys, other activities towards the evaluation of the teaching staff are not carried out. Organization of student concerts by the lecturers, giving importance to teaching staff's performance and scientific-research activity can be considered as informal mechanism of the evaluation of the teaching staff.

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

In the SER it is mentioned that the following activities are implemented towards improvement of the teaching staff: organization and conduction of master classes with the participation of YSC potential and foreign leading musician-specialists, provision of creative vocations to the participants of concerts, festivals and conferences. At the same time based on the data provided in the SER and on the opinions expressed during the site-visit, it can be mentioned that YSC does not have a systematized approach towards the issue of professional development of the teaching staff that will be based on the revealed opinions.

During the meetings at the site-visit it became clear that many of the internal stakeholders mentioned about the necessity of trainings abroad at the same time understanding that the Conservatory does not have sufficient financial resources to help them in this issue. In this respect it should be mentioned that during the previous accreditation the expert panel gave the following recommendation: "it is necessary to have policy on professional development, to organize trainings of the teaching staff especially in terms of development of pedagogical skills". YSC has taken into account the recommendation and in its improvement plan in 2015 has stipulated development of training program for the staff as an activity to carry out. However, factually such a program has not been developed and implemented by YSC.

#### **5.5 The TLI ensures the sustainability of the teaching staff according to academic programs.**

The guarantee for the stability of YSC teaching staff is first of all the 5year contract signed with the permanent staff. On the other hand, the absence of other higher musical educational institution in Armenia is an additional external factor for the stability of the teaching staff.

Viewing the facts presented to the Expert Panel it can be stated that YSC does not have a problem of outflow of the staff, just vice versa; the number of teaching staff is rather high as compared to that of students. According to the data presented in the SER, main staff members form 89%. According to the explanation by the Conservatory, such great number of teaching staff is conditioned by the existence of individual lessons within the framework of professional courses. According to the SER, YSC implements the policy on involvement of young teaching staff members in the education process however so far visible results have not been registered. Since February 2019, salaries of YSC teaching staff have been increased with 30%which can be an appealing fact for young specialists.

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

YSC has a "Procedure on Job Admission, Transfer, Dismissal, Promotion, Awards and Penalties" approved in 2012 according to which staff members are given promotion if they do not have any penalties and implement their professional duties in a proper quality. However, there are no data and comparative analysis what is the real picture of the professional development of the teaching

staff for the last 5 years. In particular, there is no data to understand how the number of teaching staff having scientific title (associate professor, professor) has increased taking into account that changing the position in the chair is mainly interconnected with the award of scientific title.

Based on the recommendation of the previous expert panel YSC mentioned the following in its improvement plan of 2015: “to redevelop the procedure of assuring professional development and promotion of the teaching staff”. However, in fact, planned activities towards this have not been carried out. It should be noted that since February 2019 the salaries have been increased with 30%.

At the same time, it should be mentioned that YSC gives an opportunity of the professional development of the teaching staff.

In the SER it is mentioned that teaching staff of the performance art are given opportunities to have solo concerts, concerts and organize master classes in the halls and classrooms of YSC free of charge. Teaching staff members dealing with research are given opportunity to be published in “Musical Armenia” scientific journal, educational methodical and scientific methodical collections free of charge.

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

During the site-visit it turned out that YSC has professional administrative and support staffs that is willing and devoted to their work. It is noteworthy that all the 11 members of the support staff have the scientific title of professor or associate professor and in the average 35 years’ of work experience, and the average age of the administrative staff is 64 which stands for the fact that rejuvenation of support staff is not carried out. At the same time specialists of the sphere with innovative thinking have been involved in the Conservatory for the last years, e.g. heads of opera studio, acoustic laboratory.

There are no grounds to state that needs assessment of administrative and support staff has been carried out. Evaluation of performance of the mentioned staff has not been carried out either.

### **Considerations**

YSC has respective regulations and procedures for the selection and recruitment of teaching and support staffs. However, these mechanisms were operating in a formal way: competitions were announced for already known candidates and factually it can be stated that selection was not carried out. At the same time, the expert panel finds it positive that YSC new management tries to change the situation.

Recruitment and rejuvenation of YSC teaching staff is carried out with YSC alumni. This fact can be evaluated from both positive and negative aspects. From the one hand, the professional tradition formed at Conservatory is maintained, from the other and Conservatory seems to become a closed system whereas new experience can be effective for new innovations. At the same time, it can be stated that YSC new management finds it acceptable to recruit teaching staff from specialists of other institutions and the announced competitions stand for it. However again a closed cycle is formed as Conservatory is the only higher musical education institution in the RA, thus specialists having higher musical education are mainly alumni of Conservatory. One of the solutions can be involvement of specialists that were educated abroad if not as permanent staff, at least as double jobbers.

Experienced musician-specialists are working in YSC and most of them are honored art workers and laureates of international contests. The Expert panel was impressed by the existence of such specialists. At the same time YSC does not have defined criteria for professional qualities of the teaching staff. Evaluation system of teaching staff is not introduced in YSC which is a serious shortcoming. Evaluation system would give an opportunity to make the professional progress of teaching staff objective, and at the same time would formalize the requirements to the teaching staff. It is an important mechanism from the perspective of assurance of policy of the selection of teaching staff, their professional development and promotion.

YSC gives much importance to the necessity of professional development however resources allocated, and activities carried out in this direction are not sufficient. Systematic programs of professional development and trainings have not been introduced in YSC.

Events on professional development are mainly organized through master classes and meetings with foreign specialists, which are organized by the initiative and cooperation of the teaching staff. These events are not based on the need's assessment, carried out analysis and are not derived from the Strategic Plan. The Expert Panel finds that the effectiveness of planning, recruitment and selection mechanisms of YSC administrative, teaching and support staffs are not evaluated and analyzed from the perspective of fulfillment of strategic goals and objectives.

In general, it can be stated that YSC is ensured with teaching and support staffs having necessary qualifications and professional qualities. A number of concerts and master classes organized in the RA and abroad stand for the high professional quality of the teaching staff. Most of them are art workers having international recognition. AT the same time, serious steps are needed in terms of human resource management at YSC to maintain and develop professional preparedness of the teaching staff in case of outflow and in line with the current challenges.

#### **Summary**

YSC has sufficiently operating policy on the selection and recruitment of teaching staff however implementation of the policy on evaluation, progress and promotion of the teaching staff and effective policy on human resource management is incomplete. At the same time YSC is equipped with teaching and support staffs having necessary qualifications and professional qualities. Taking into account all the above mentioned, the Expert Panel finds that YSC meets the requirements of Criterion 5.

#### **Conclusion**

The compliance of the institution's institutional capacities with the requirements of criterion 5 **is satisfactory.**

## **VI. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT**

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

#### **Findings:**

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

Research ambitions and interests of YSC are defined in 2012-2017 and 2019-2024 Strategic plans: higher research and innovations. Particularly, YSC gives importance to the assurance of preconditions for the involvement of teaching staff and students in the research programs and activities as well as promotion of interconnection of knowledge-teaching and learning. In the SER it is mentioned that the link between YSC strategy and research directions is ensured through the research strategy approved by the Scientific Council. At the same time in the documents there is no separate strategy for the development of research activities. From the SER and meetings with the field representatives it became clear that Conservatory links its research activities with the sphere of musicology. However, it was not clear how the Conservatory envisages to implement the development of applied research in the musical art sphere. The topics of teaching staff research depend on the interest of the lecturer, are not interconnected among them and are not directed to the solution of existing issues of the concrete scientific directions defined by the Institution. Financial allocations for the development of scientific-research activities of the Conservatory are merely not envisaged in the budget. However, it becomes clear from the SER that YSC allocated some financial means for the conferences, publication of journals and collections.

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

Long-term strategy expressing YSC research interests and ambitions is defined in the Strategic Plan of YSC. But in the second goal (high quality research and innovations) of the Strategic Plan the main priorities of the Conservatory in terms of scientific studies are not seen. Though in the SER it is mentioned that scientific-research activity is mainly carried out within the framework of “Musicology” specialty with the following directions: theory, history, folklore, medieval science, modern technologies, in this respect it is not clear how the studies in these directions are planned derived from the second strategic goal.

It should be mentioned that directions for the studies of chairs are not defined except for some chairs (e.g. Chairs of Musical folklore, Theory of Music, History of Music) that serve the profession of “Musicology”. However, in such cases research is mainly carried out upon the individual initiative of the lecturers. There is a base laboratory for the “Study of Armenian Folk Music” which operates attached to the Chair of Folklore. In some cases, teaching staff members are involved in the groups for the implementation of research topics at the scientific laboratory and chair levels. In this respect scientific activities of some lecturers can be considered as short-term and mid-term plans of YSC. However, in this case the planning of scientific activity of the chairs according to the second strategic goal is not clear.

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

From the SER and during the site-visit the Expert Panel states that YSC does not have clearly formulated policy and procedures for the development and implementation of scientific activity. However, Conservatory has created some opportunities for the involvement of students and teaching staff in scientific activities. For instance, “Musical Armenia” scientific journal is published in YSC which is involved in the list of journals approved by the Higher Qualification Committee. YSC has the goal to republish Bamber collection of educational-scientific articles which was published

previously. In these journals' articles of experiences lecturers, young lecturers and PhD students are published. There is a Publishing-Editorial Department at YSC. YSC publication has a Scientific Council that peer-reviews and evaluates the articles and works to be published. In the SER it is mentioned that at the end of each semester YSC organizes republican student conference where the participation of students from the faculty of Musicology is obligatory. Annual interuniversity educational-methodical conferences are also organized.

The scientific laboratory of the "Study of Armenian Folk Music" operates on the base of the Chair of Folklore (with the base funding of Scientific Committee). The laboratory deals with collection, publication and recruitment of gathered original and records. The laboratory presents annual reports, however the performance of separate researchers, published works and reports are not analytical. There are no grounds for the evaluation of the effectiveness of the performance of separate lecturers and laboratory.

In 2018-2019 the program of interdisciplinary courses was launched and according to the organizers it will give musicians an opportunity to deal with research activity. Within the framework of the program representatives of related professions are invited and the meetings with them reveal opportunities of the given profession and edges of contact with music. At the same time in the SER it was not mentioned how the meetings were planned, what concrete results the program gave for one-year period and what scientific projects were developed within the framework of this program.

#### **6.4. The TLI emphasizes internationalization of its research.**

Factually, YSC does not have a separate policy on internationalization of research activity however during the previous accreditation the expert panel recommended to take steps towards internationalization of research outcomes. In the actions derived from the goal of higher research and innovations stipulated in 2019-2024 Strategic Plan two points are mentioned about the internationalization of scientific activities. Particularly, YSC plans to support specialists and students concerning the issues of involvement of in international scientific projects as well as to evaluate the research according to internationally accepted standards. Teaching staff mainly publishes in local journals. There is no statistics in the SER and attached documents what would state about the publications of teaching staff in foreign journals or their participation in international conferences and workshops. "Musical Armenia" scientific journal published in YSC is mainly published in Armenian (in some cases also in Russian) and does not ensure internationalization of research outcomes. On the other hand, the library does not ensure availability of international scientific journals and other scientific publications which is a serious obstacle for internationalization.

YSC does not implement any scientific project within the framework of international cooperation. Mechanisms for the evaluation of scientific activities are missing either.

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

Based on the SER, the Expert Panel states that research component in education process is mainly linked with preparation of final works and thesis papers of students. Topics for final works and thesis papers are suggested mainly taking into account directions of scientific-research works of the teaching staff of the particular chair. Moreover, in case of the chairs delivering musicology and composition professions there is a document on "criteria for thesis paper" where points on the

content and volume of the thesis paper, plagiarism and public defense were mentioned. The study of randomly chosen final works and thesis papers of different professions showed that especially works of musicology profession are in compliance with the criteria for scientific research works. Works that were studies from other professions mainly didn't have individual analytical nature and differ from each other with volume, content and other criteria.

The study of structure and content of the academic programs show that there are few courses for the development of research skills. The course on "Principles of Scientific Study" is involved in MA program. Examination of course descriptions and class observations allow to state that teaching and learning methods which would be directed to the involvement of students in research activities are not applied.

Investment of teaching staff's research outcomes in the improvement, development and upgrading of the content of the courses is not carried out. However, there are some exceptions like monographs and manuals published within the framework of activity of "Study of Armenian Folk Music" laboratory as well as collections of series compiled as a result of expeditions that are involved in the courses. At the same time, it is not clear how the involvement of students in research activities is linked with academic program learning outcomes. For instance, within the framework of the activities of the laboratory attached to the Chair of Armenian Folklore, the students take part in expeditions in the RA regions as well as participate in current activities of the laboratory on a voluntary basis. However, very few students participate in the activities of the laboratory, as it was mentioned during the site-visit. At the end of each semester, as a reporting event, republican student conference is organized at YSC where the participation of students from the faculty of Musicology is obligatory. However, it is not clear how the works done by the students are evaluated, to the formation of what competences they are directed and how they are linked with academic program learning outcomes.

## **Considerations**

Being the only higher musical educational institution in the RA, YSC gives importance to the scientific activities of the Conservatory which is expressed in the Strategic Plan as a priority goal. AT the same time, mid-term and short-term planning and KPIs are not described in the action plan. Thus, not clearness of action planning puts the fulfillment of the second strategic goal (high quality research and innovations) at a risk. There is a necessity to elaborate a separate policy on the development of YSC scientific activities with clearly defined actions and mechanisms for the evaluation of those actions, due to which a new impetus will be given to enlargement and effectiveness of research activities. One of the most important achievements of YSC is the establishment of the "Study of Armenian Folk Music" laboratory in 2013. However, the existence of this single laboratory is not sufficient for the development of scientific activities in Conservatory. Though in the sphere of musicology separate scientific studies are also organized, priority scientific directions of YSC have not been defined. It seems that YSC continues its traditions and pays attention only to musicology as a priority direction. However, there is a necessity to study international practice and to find new directions of research activities by defining theoretical, applied and interdisciplinary research equally in the sphere of music and by giving much importance to the role of Conservatory's research activities from this perspective. YSC gives much importance to the

participation in festivals and contests from the perspective of international experience while regular and frequent participation in international conferences is needed too. From the perspective of extension of scientific research activities, the initiative on Interdisciplinary course program can become promising, however, it can be effective only in case of consistent team work, serious study of international practice as well as effective planning process.

Tangible steps are not taken towards the fund raising for the development of research activities. This situation is risky for the development of YSC research activities. There is a necessity to study actively the opportunities of research of mutually interested topics within the framework of international cooperation and international grant projects.

It seems that interconnection of research activities and education process is not given much importance to for the development of academic programs.

Moreover, research works carried out by the teaching staff and students remain isolated from the education process. The issue is more vivid in the academic programs of Performing Arts specialty. In this case, the strategic objective of YSC concerning the development of the 3<sup>rd</sup> level of higher education in the profession of Performing Arts becomes risky.

### **Summary**

YSC hasn't developed a clear policy and procedures to promote the development of scientific-research activities at YSC as a result of which there are no mechanisms in place for the interconnection of research activities with education process. YSC does not have processes promoting internationalization of scientific activities and does not implement research projects within the framework of international cooperation which does not give an opportunity to enlarge the scope of scientific-research directions. There are no mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of effectiveness of scientific-research works. Taking into account the above mentioned, the Expert panel finds that YSC does not meet the requirements of Criterion 6.

### **Conclusion**

The compliance of the institution's institutional capacities with the requirements of criterion 6 **is unsatisfactory.**

## VII. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

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

### **Findings**

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

YSC operates in Yerevan and Gyumri branches for which they have the campus in 1a Sayat Nova street (9420 sq.m) and one-floor building in 1 Ankakhutyan square street in Gyumri (1047.53 sq.m) which are given for free of charge use. Learning environment of YSC in Yerevan involves classrooms, halls, library, medical unit, food service unit, opera studio, folklore and acoustic laboratories, audio library and in Gyumri there are classrooms, halls, library, medical unit and food

service unit. Acoustic laboratory of YSC was established within the framework of World bank and is equipped with the newest technology and tools. General and professional literature is centralized in YSC in Armenian, Russian and other languages. Library fund of YSC and branches is 185 125 unit, 173170 of which are note literature and 10584 textbooks, educational-methodical journals, monographs, journals and other literature. There are more than 2500 cassettes, 8870 CDs and 167 videos in the audio library of YSC. But the textbooks and professional literature available in the library are mainly in Russian. Funding for the replenishment of library with new books is missing. YSC library does not ensure availability of electronic resources.

During the site-visit it turned out that Conservatory has significant problems concerning the number and state of musical instruments. The existing musical instruments were mainly maintained from USSR period. Many of them were have been repaired and are not subject for repairing any more. According to the opinion of internal stakeholders YSC base of musical instruments needs to be replenished with new instruments.

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

Development of financial investments is 4<sup>th</sup> strategic goal of 2019-2024 Strategic Plan of YSC. The objectives are:

- To coordinate the effectiveness of using financial resources through the planning of reforms.
- To create YSC fund of financial support.

Actions towards the solution of the defined objectives are also envisaged. However, from SER and during the site-visit it turned out that YSC forms its annual estimate of financial budget based on the analysis of the budget of the previous year. At the end of each year estimate of the next year is formed and approved by YSC Board. Inflows for the last 4 years expressed in percentage are as follows:

- State funding 69.5% - 73.8%
- State grants 0 - 3.4%
- Provision of paid services 22.1% - 30.6%
- Other sources 0 - 0.7%:

Allocation of budget according to strategic goals and objectives is not carried out. The main article of expenses of Conservatory is salary, for the last 4 years it was 77-85%. Expenses envisaged for the maintenance of necessary resources and obtain of materials for the assurance of the activities of Conservatory (including education process) in the annual budget of the Institution is less than 1%. Funding for the current renovations for the last 4 years was 00.5 - 0.15 %. YSC funding for improvement of learning environment and especially acquisition of new musical instruments is not sufficient and the volume of financial resources from other sources is low. In order to get additional funding Conservatory takes steps towards establishment of the Fund “Friends of Conservatory”.

## **7.3 The TLI has sound financial distribution policy and capacity to sustain and ensure the integrity and continuity of the academic programmes offered at the institution.**

During the site-visit it turned out that the practice of allocation of necessary financial resources for the development of the academic programs is missing in YSC. Allocation of finances according to the needs of the academic programs is mainly carried out through the salaries of the teaching and support staffs and main current organizational expenses. For the last 3 years the salaries of teaching and support staffs were 75.5-77 % against the whole salary fund of YSC. It should be mentioned that since February 2019 the salaries of the teaching staff was increased with 30%.

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

According to the 1<sup>st</sup> goal of "High quality education" mentioned in 2012-2017 and 2019-2024 Strategic Plans YSC has classrooms, laboratory, studios, library base including opera studio, audio library, folklore and acoustic laboratories for the implementation of academic programs however they need renovation and sound isolation. Laboratory equipment is old both physically and in terms of time change (cassette recorders, CD players, etc.).

According to the 2<sup>nd</sup> goal of "High quality research and innovations" of YSC 2012-2017 and 2019-2024 Strategic Plans as a positive resource for the implementation of research can be viewed scientific journal of YSC "Musical Armenia" where mainly research works carried out by the teaching staff of the Conservatory are published. However, journal is published only in Armenian and is not available for the international wider scientific public which limits dissemination of scientific thinking of the Conservatory.

YSC library does not assure opportunities to get acquainted with modern world scientific and scientific-methodical works and tendencies in the sphere of music and musicology. The library does not have availability for relevant scientific journals either in paper, or electronically.

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

According to the SER, the unit responsible for the information and documentation at YSC is the Office. However, policy on the management of information and documentation processes is not documented and clearly defined. Clear process of information management and tools (system of information management) are missing.

Mulberry electronic documentation system ensures the documentation circulation between the Conservatory and RA Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports. Mulberry does not operate in the level of YSC structural units (Deans' offices, chairs, etc.)

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

Services towards assurance of health of internal stakeholders of YSC are provided by the medical unit. The medical unit is equipped with medicine and medical tools for the first aid. During the site-visit it turned out that once a week the medical unit provides free of charge consultancy of laryngologist to the students of "Vocal Art" specialty for the maintenance and, if necessary, treatment of their vocal cord.

Security at YSC is ensured through the security unit. Policy on assurance of inclusion at YSC is not defined. There is no environment for the involvement of students with special needs.

Particularly, ramps, toilets for people with special needs and elevator are missing, library, food service unit, etc. are not adjusted to people with disabilities.

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

According to the SER, YSC Internal Quality Assurance Department organizes meetings with teaching staff and students, heads of chairs and deans. However, during the site-visit it turned out that the meetings are not regularly organized and steps towards the solution of the revealed problems are not envisaged, Conservatory does not have relevant financial resources.

### **Considerations**

YSC has sufficient area in Yerevan and Gyumri for the implementation of education and research processes. Those areas include classrooms, laboratories, studios, audio library and libraries. YSC acoustic laboratory is equipped with newest technology and tools however technical equipment of other laboratories is old.

YSC opera studio needs total renovation from the perspective of the enhancement of education process and for the increase of additional financial flows. YSC has many problems concerning the number and situation of existing musical tools. The absence of tools of necessary number and quality can become a serious obstacle for the effective implementation of education process. It is obvious for the professions of performance and especially for the faculty of orchestra. In general, YSC resource base for now still provides an opportunity for the implementation of academic programs however if this problem is not given an urgent solution to, the education process will be at danger.

The estimate of financial budget each year is approved by the Board of YSC however allocation of budget according to strategic goals and objectives is not carried out and the main part of expenses is allocated to salaried. Such management of financial budget is not effective and puts the balanced implementation of strategic goals and objectives in danger. Allocation of financial resources according to the needs of academic programs is mainly implemented through the allocation of salaries for the teaching staff and through the expenses for organizational issues. Thus, the policy on allocation of financial means for the implementation of academic programs and for the assurance of their continuity needs to be elaborated. The responsible people for education process and/or Department of Quality Assurance do not study the compliance of resource base with the academic programs and strategic goals. Hence, continuous quality improvement and stability are not ensured.

The process of management of information (system of information management) is not documented. Electronic documentation system is not introduced among the structural units of the Conservatory that would enhance the effectiveness of documentation circulation.

Through the services directed to the assurance of health and security YSC creates secure and safe environment however inclusiveness of learning environment is not ensured. Mechanisms for the evaluation of effectiveness and availability of resources provided to students and teaching staff are not operating. It is negative that as a result of the previous accreditation the recommendations concerning the evaluation of the effectiveness of resource base of Conservatory, development of plan for the improvement of Gyumri branch resource base as well as application to the RA Government for the construction of concert hall that were given by the expert panel for the improvement of Criterion 7 which was also involved in YSC improvement plan, have not been carried out.

### **Summary**

Taking into account that the resources of YSC are not enough for the implementation of defined mission and goals, particularly the implementation of academic programs, distribution of budget is not carried out according to strategic goals and objectives, there are no mechanisms for the evaluation of effectiveness and availability of resources, the Expert Panel finds that Conservatory does not meet the requirements of Criterion 7.

### **Conclusion**

The compliance of the institution's institutional capacities with the requirements of criterion 7 **is unsatisfactory**.

## VIII. SOCIETAL RESPONSIBILITY

**CRITERION: The TLI is accountable to the government and society for the education it offers and the resources it uses as well as for the research it conducts.**

### **Findings**

#### **8.1 The TLI has a clear policy on institutional accountability.**

YSC accountability towards the representatives of the RA Government and internal stakeholders is ensured through the presentation of annual reports in Governing Board and Scientific Council. In the Scientific Council the report is presented by the Rector and Vice-Rectors. Each Vice-Rector presents the results of works carried out within the framework of the field under their supervision. YSC annual report is presented to the Governing Board by the Rector for evaluation. Accountability through the presentation of annual reports to the Governing Board is defined in YSC Charter. However unified regulation for the accountability of structural units is missing in YSC. Unified formats and time-schedule for the reports for accountability are not defined.

According to SER YSC accountability towards public is ensured through the official web-site, YSC pages in social media, mess media and "Musician" online newspaper of YSC. Through all the mentioned means public becomes aware of the information on the activities of YSC. However, during the examination of the SER and during the site-visit the official web-site of YSC was not operating because it was being reconstructed. Thus, the public has no access to the annual reports of the Rector. There are no other mechanisms at YSC for ensuring complete accountability about educational, scientific and other activities of the Conservatory.

Accountability of scientific activities of YSC is carried out through the journal "Musical Armenia" where research outcomes of teaching staff members are mainly published. However, according to the SER the research results of YSC are not available in online platform.

One of the most important means of ensuring YSC accountability are numerous concerts of YSC students, alumni and teaching staff in the RA and beyond its boundaries. Today internal stakeholders of YSC or its alumni are involved in classical, national and other concerts organized in the RA that are in line with the directions of YSC.

YSC ensures its accountability towards the RA Government also through financial report and other reports defined by the authorized body.

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

According to the SER transparency and availability of regulations and processes of YSC to the public is ensured through:

- The establishment of a position of a Coordinator of PR and Media as a result of reformulation of the Department of International Relations for the creation of stable feedback mechanisms and assurance of university-public information flow,
- Publication of information and regulating documents of YSC in the official web-site
- Dissemination of information through Facebook.

However, during the site-visit it turned out that the position of a Coordinator of PR and Media was established only a year ago and currently it is a part-time (0.5) position. The official web-site of YSC is not operating, thus regulations defining and describing different processes and other regulating documents are not available to the public. There are no mechanisms ensuring transparency of processes and procedures. Social pages of YSC do not contain regulated information and investments are not made in this respect.

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

According to the SER of YSC the main ways of getting feedback from public and ensuring public relations are oral communication, email correspondence, Facebook messages and paper letter writing. Administrative staff of YSC: Rector, Vice-Rectors, Deans and Heads of Chairs are ready to receive the interested people every day. In case of any problem, the inquirer has the opportunity to apply to the head of the respective unit or directly to the Rector. YSC office circulates the letters got via post. However, regulation on the internal system of documentation is missing, deadlines for responding the questions and solving/rejecting addressed issues are not defined. Because of non-functioning of the official web-site, YSC official email and emails of different structural units are not available to the public. Mechanisms for presenting applications or for directing questions through social media are not defined. Gathering and analysis of data and statistics got through feedback mechanisms are not carried out.

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

YSC has formed traditions of transferring knowledge and values to the society. Due to the numerous musical events organized by YSC teaching staff, students and alumni, Conservatory directly or indirectly provides services to the society directed to the development of knowledge and taste in the spheres of national, sacred, classical and modern music, ensures the maintenance, development and dissemination of musical art within Armenia and beyond its boundaries. However, these activities are based only on the tradition and often the events with the participation of YSC teaching staff and students are not organized with the initiative of YSC and planning of activities is not carried out.

Dissemination of musical thinking is mainly carried out through YSC journal “Musical Armenia” where scientific articles of the teaching staff of Conservatory and other scientists on the topics of musicology and music teaching methodology are published.

YSC also provides additional and preparatory courses for the RA and foreign citizens within the framework of which people are get acquainted with musical instruments and master them, as well as YSC prepares applicants for admission exams. In order to make applicants aware of the activities of the university, since 2019 Conservatory organizes “Open Door Days”. In order to make Diaspora

representatives aware of the services provided by the Conservatory, YSC together with Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) has organized a summer school.

### **Considerations**

YSC has a policy on accountability to the internal stakeholders and to the representatives of the RA Government however mechanisms are limited to the annual reports presented to Governing Board and to the Scientific Council.

Other mechanisms of accountability of educational, scientific and other activities are missing. Because of non-functioning of the official website YSC Rector's annual reports are not available to wider society. These circumstances hinder assurance of accountability in front of a wider public. Non application of YSC official web-site hinders also assurance of transparency of procedures and process of YSC.

Through the "open doors" of the administrative staff of the University, YSC ensures feedback from society and especially from the internal stakeholders, however the absence of the approved internal documentation system, the impossibility of getting email addresses of officials of the Conservatory from the official web-site, as well as absence of mechanisms for accounting applications got through the social media violate the integrity of assuring feedback from society.

Through the formed tradition of transferring knowledge and values to the society, YSC has a significant investment in wider society in terms of development of knowledge and taste in the spheres of national, sacred, classical and modern music as well as in the maintenance, development and dissemination of national art of music.

"Musical Armenia" journal of YSC promotes dissemination of research on musicology.

It is a negative fact that as a result of the previous accreditation the recommendation on the creation of alumni union for making the link between university and alumni more formalized which was also involved in YSC improvement plan has not been carried out by YSC.

### **Summary**

Taking into account that YSC has a policy on assuring accountability about its educational, scientific activities and applied resources to the representatives of the RA Government and internal stakeholders, has a significant investment in the development and transfer of knowledge and values to the society in terms of development of knowledge and taste in the spheres of national, sacred, classical and modern music as well as in the maintenance, development and dissemination of national art of music in the RA and beyond its boundaries, the Expert Panel finds that YSC meets the requirements of Criterion 8.

### **Conclusion**

The compliance of the institution's institutional capacities with the requirements of criterion **8 is satisfactory.**

## IX. EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND INTERNATIONALIZATION

**CRITERION: The TLI promotes experience exchange and enhancement through its sound external relations practices, thus promoting internationalization of the institution.**

### **Findings**

#### **9.1 The TLI promotes its external relations through sound policies and procedures aimed at creating an environment conducive to experience exchange and enhancement as well as internationalization.**

In the SER it is mentioned that direction of comprehensive development of YSC external relations and internationalization are expressed in 2012-2017 and 2019-2024 Strategic Plans. However, in 2012-2017 Strategic Plan internationalization is viewed as current priority where clearly mentioned actions are missing. In this case it is difficult to evaluate the performance of the Strategic Plan. In 2019-2024 Strategic Plan there is no separate goal defined for internationalization, however objectives towards internationalization are reflected in the goals of high-quality education (objective 1), goals of public involvement and service (3.9 objectives) as well as in the actions for those objectives.

However, taking into account recommendation of the previous expert panel as well as actions towards internationalization mentioned in 2019-2024 Strategic Plan, the Department of International Relations and PR has developed a separate draft strategy for 2019-2024 by mentioning the following goals:

- To enhance the ranking of YSC on the international platform by promoting internationalization on institutional and program levels,
- To develop and enlarge systems of public involvement and provided services.

There is also a planning of actions according to the objectives where responsible people, time-schedule and indicators for the evaluation of actions are mentioned.

It should be mentioned that YSC participates in ERASMUS+ BOOST project the aim of which is to promote development of the format for internationalization policy and toolkit on national and institutional levels. As it was mentioned in the SER, the trainings organized within the framework of the project fostered development of necessary skills for internationalization among the staff of YSC. IN 2018 within the framework of the project an international conference on the topic “Formation of Strategy for Internationalization for Armenian Universities” was organized in YSC.

#### **9.2 The institution’s external relations infrastructure ensures regulated process.**

The Department of International Relations and PR is responsible for the assurance of YSC external relations and internationalization and the department is under the supervision of the Vice-Rector for International Cooperation and PR who, in its turn, is accountable to the Rector.

IN the SER it is mentioned that the main functions of the mentioned Department are formation of visas and necessary documents, including formation of invitations for foreign specialists and delegations, organization of their reception, registration of foreign guests, translation and official approval of academic transcripts and other documents of students, support to foreign students during the education process as well as organization of the distribution of scholarships to socially vulnerable students and students having high academic progress. The Department also studies scientific-educational projects and scholarships to support mobility of students and teaching staff, informs head of YSC structural units and students’ body about the opportunities. The Department also supports different structural units in the preparation of grant project documentation and coordination of those

projects. At the same time there are no grounds and documents showing the planning and effective performance of the Department.

In the SER it is mentioned that the regulation of the Department is in the phase of development. During the site-visit the Expert Panel was shown the draft regulation. Directions of the activities of the Department, its functions, principles of the organization of its activities, responsible, as well as authorities and responsibilities of the respective Vice-Rector are mentioned.

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

YSC has a number of international agreements with previous USSR and European countries as well as with different universities of music, culture and art in the USA. Moreover, the number of agreements has increased; as it is mentioned in the SER, YSC has revised and has signed dozens of new agreements with Moscow State Conservatory, Sankt Petersburg State Conservatory, National University of Art of Kazakhstan, Tromso (Arctic) University, Mongolian College of Music and Dance, etc. for the last 3 years.

In the SER it is mentioned about other cooperation with Orchestral Academy (Germany) li Verbier Festival Orchestra (Germany), Institute of Culture, Culture Orchestra (Poland), Symphonic Orchestra of CIS countries. The cooperation continues with the Committee of solo-singers international contest of Hans Gabor Belvedere (Austria). During the last 2 years, the initial phase of the contest was organized in the Opera Studio of the Conservatory.

Master classes by international professors or musicians are organized in YSC in nearly all specializations: singing, piano, violin, violoncello, guitar, brass instruments, composition, etc.

YSC cooperates with all the national musical education institutions (colleges, schools, etc.) as well as with scientific, social, charitable and other organizations. In the SER of YSC nothing is mentioned about the events organized within the framework of cooperation with RA cultural universities. YSC continues cooperation with AEC and is its member by paying annual membership fee.

AT the same time there was no analysis in the SER and during the site-visit no one mentioned to what extent those cooperation's were effective in terms of the revision of the academic programs, the enlargement of scientific-research activities and trainings of the teaching staff and to what extent they are derived and are in concord with the actions towards internationalization mentioned in the Strategic Plan.

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

#### **The Institution ensures internal stakeholders' appropriate level of a foreign language to enhance efficiency of internationalization.**

The proficiency of a foreign language, especially English is weak among the support and administrative staffs of YSC. As it is mentioned in the SER, nearly 90% of the administrative staff knows Russian and only 40% knows English. At the same time, 60% of the teaching staff doesn't know English at all, 15% has a weak command of English and 10% know English in the mid-level.

During the site-visit it turned out that currently YSC has organized English language courses for the staff.

YSC foreign students have preparatory courses of Armenian, thus during the education process teaching staff does not need that much knowledge of English. Besides, most of the foreign students

are from Diaspora who know Armenian to some extent as it became clear during the meetings, most of the teaching staff members teach either in Armenian or in Russian depending on the auditorium. However, this causes serious problems during the education process for the small number of students who does not know Armenian or Russian.

There is no data on the level of proficiency of a foreign language among the students. At the same time, during the meetings with students it turned out that most of them know English, but this knowledge is not got from the courses learnt at YSC. Students mentioned that English language courses at YSC are not effective as groups are big and the program is the same for all the students, even for those who have different level of English language proficiency.

### **Considerations**

Having all these facts, it becomes clear that YSC has formulated ambitions in terms of internationalization of the Conservatory. In 2019-2024 Strategic Plan actions towards internationalization are reflected in the first three priority goals. Based on the recommendations of the previous expert panel strategic plan for internationalization was developed. This shows that the University is consistent in this issue and has its vision. However, along with the implementation of actions, it is necessary to develop also evaluation mechanisms due to which the process will become manageable.

YSC has an infrastructure for international cooperation and PR which also states that internationalization is one of the priorities of the Conservatory. During the meetings of the site-visit it became clear that the Department factually implements more technical function in all the cases that deal with international cooperation, mobility and reception of foreign students. But a new draft of the regulation of the Department was developed where wider scope of functions was involved.

YSC cooperates with a number of international and local organizations and the existing agreements stand for that. However, at the same time the Expert Panel had the impression that some agreements just had a formal nature. In order to ensure effectiveness, purposeful and continuous agreements should be signed, that will foster consistent and continuous implementation of activities, will not put in danger the new initiatives and will ensure stability of activities. At the same time, it can be stated that organization of master classes by noted specialists is more effective, which is more often not documented in the form of an agreement. Indirect but effective outcome of internationalization can be considered participation of students and teaching staff of YSC in international competitions.

There is a strong need to enhance the level of proficiency of a foreign language among the staff and students of YSC. Non-sufficient level of a foreign language is a serious problem for mobility, joint projects, and in general for all kinds of international cooperation with international leading universities.

### **Summary**

Taking into account that YSC has developed a separate policy for internationalization with the existence of clearly defined actions, has established an infrastructure for international cooperation and PR which not in all directions, but ensures regulated process, YSC has registered some achievements in terms of international cooperation, the Expert Panel finds that Conservatory meets the requirements of Criterion 9.

### **Conclusion**

The compliance of the institution's institutional capacities with the requirements of criterion 9 is **satisfactory**.

## X. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

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

### Findings

#### 10.1 The TLI has internal quality assurance policies and procedures.

Investment of internal QA system in line with European criteria is defined in 2012-2017 YSC Strategic Plan as the 2<sup>nd</sup> objective under the goal of high-quality education. And the recruitment and development of teaching staff in line with international criteria of quality assurance is envisaged in the 1<sup>st</sup> objective under the goal of quality staff potential. In 2012-2017 Strategic Plan actions for the solution of the mentioned objectives are described in detail however most of them have not been implemented. Consistent development of education quality assurance system is defined in 2019-2024 Strategic Plan again as the 2<sup>nd</sup> objective under the goal of highquality education. Actions towards the solution of the objectives mentioned in the Strategic Plan are also defined.

Strategy and policy of internal quality assurance system of all the directions of YSC are not defined in any other document. Time-schedule and responsible people for the implementation of the processes are missing. From time to time surveys among students, teaching staff and alumni are conducted however those surveys are generic and are not directed to the study of a concrete process.

Procedures for internal quality assurance of YSC are not defined. In the regulation of YSC Department of Internal Quality Assurance elaborated in 2014, the following functions for the Department are mentioned:

- conduction of audit each semester
- carrying out diagnostics of YSC based on the results of continuous monitoring
- implementation of other processes linked with the internal quality assurance.

However, other actions as well as internal audit, continuous monitoring and YSC diagnostics are not defined in any document. YSC doesn't have any document defining internal quality assurance processes, tools and time-schedule, it doesn't have a QA manual either.

According to the SER, functions of Internal QA Department do not ensure sufficient grounds for carrying out evaluation and quality assurance processes.

In the SER the actions taken by the Department for the last 5 years are mentioned, some of which are not involved in the functional framework of the Department:

- preparation of applications for grant projects,
- coordination of RA and international projects at YSC,
- development of the draft of 2019-2024 Strategic Plan,
- elaboration of the manual on the development of academic programs,
- preparation of informative brochure for YSC students.

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

The Internal QA Department was established in 2012 and currently has 3 staff members: 1 head of the Department and 2 officers. However, up until the first half of 2019 only the position of

the Head of the Department was occupied. Conservatory provides material resources to the Department: paper, stationery, etc. The Department has all the necessary staff and techniques in the room. During the site-visit it turned out that there are QA responsible in the faculties however it is not documented, and the functions of those responsible people are limited to the technical assistance during the conduction of surveys.

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

Internal and external stakeholders are not sufficiently involved in QA processes. The involvement of stakeholders is limited to their participation in surveys and focus groups which are not conducted with a strict frequency. The Department conducts surveys among the students, teaching staff, alumni of YSC and employers. However, all these surveys were conducted with one paper directed to students, teaching staff and alumni, which cannot ensure sufficient deepness of the study of any issue. Mechanisms evaluating the processes carried out at Conservatory, tools and time-schedule are missing.

### **10.4 The internal quality assurance system is periodically reviewed.**

In 2012-2017 Strategic Plan of YSC the following were mentioned as objectives and processes:

*I B. To introduce a QA system in line with European standards:*

- to support the activities of internal quality assurance system: strategy of continuous quality improvement involving relevant procedures, organizational structure, management units, definition of functions and obligations,
- to develop criteria for the self-evaluation of the main spheres of activity of Conservatory taking into account accreditation criteria adopted by international accreditation organizations and ANQA,
- to initiate and implement self-study, self-evaluation and self-analysis of education process of Conservatory with the publication of respective manual, that will serve as a basis for external quality assurance and accreditation processes as well as for the development of activities towards the enhancement of education quality,
- to carry out institutional and program accreditation of Conservatory on national and international levels,
- to develop and introduce new education standards based on the learning outcomes for BA and MA level academic programs (qualifications) taking into account European qualifications and international compatibility of different spheres of different courses,
- to create internal criteria and procedures for the evaluation of staff and resources against their compliance to the requirements of the academic programs, for the development, approval, monitoring and regular revision of the academic programs,
- to create and publish guidelines with institutional criteria, regulations and procedures, to ensure their publicity and consistent application,
- to ensure transparency and availability of the report on criteria for internal quality assurance and self-evaluation procedure for the internal and external stakeholders of Conservatory, to ensure participation of staff and students in the processes of quality assessment.

IV A. To replenish and improve the teaching staff in line with QA international criteria:

1. to elaborate the working regulation of YSC teaching staff by defining criteria for work experience of pedagogical and scientific-creative work and age,
2. to ensure the formation of the teaching staff through the competition by improving criteria for the distribution of teaching staff positions,
3. to implement multi-component evaluation of the teaching staff according to their professional preparedness, pedagogical mastery, personal qualities and age,
4. to develop long-term program of teaching staff recruitment and development,
5. to develop academic program for the qualification enhancement of the teaching staff ensuring obligatory and complete participation of the main teaching staff,
6. to promote self-education, scientific and pedagogical mobility of the teaching staff,
7. to organize trainings for the teaching staff to be able to implement electronic courses and courses in foreign language,
8. to develop training courses with the cooperation of international institutions.

However, during the site-visit it became clear that the above-mentioned actions mainly were not carried out, particularly, the ones directed to the formation of internal quality assurance system:

- definition of strategy and respective procedures for continuous quality improvement,
- development of self-evaluation criteria,
- development of QA manual,
- development of internal criteria and procedures for the evaluation of staff and resource base in line with the requirements of academic programs, development, approval, monitoring and regular revision of academic programs,
- assurance of participation in and feedback from internal and external stakeholders in QA processes.

Internal QA system is not formulated yet thus it cannot be reviewed.

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

YSC has developed a self-evaluation report for the external evaluation of the Conservatory. However, the information involved in SER is not analytical and is based on the description of the procedures. In the SER statistical data are sometimes missing. Sometimes the information presented for the given standard does not refer to the requirement of the standard. The information on the attached documents (date of approval, approving body, etc.) is sometimes not seen.

During the site-visit it became clear that the Conservatory does not have a policy on gathering information about its activities for the external evaluation. Internal QA system does not provide sufficient grounds for the external evaluation of processes.

**10.6. The internal quality assurance system ensures the transparency of the processes unfolding in the TLI through providing information on the quality of the processes to the internal and external stakeholders.**

In the actions of YSC 2012-2017 Strategic Plan as action for the implementation of I B goal (to introduce a QA system in line with European standards) it was defined:

- to ensure transparency and availability of the report on criteria for internal quality assurance and self-evaluation procedure for the internal and external stakeholders of Conservatory, to ensure participation of staff and students in the processes of quality assessment.

However, these actions have not been implemented. The official web-site of the Conservatory was not operating during the site-visit and the study of the SER thus the Expert Panel registers that analysis on quality assurance and other information is not available to the stakeholders. Internal QA system does not provide any information on the quality of the Conservatory to the internal and external stakeholders.

### **Considerations**

Internal QA Department of YSC was established in 2012 however actions envisaged in YSC 2012-2017 Strategic Plan towards the investment of QA system has not been carried out and the internal QA system is not formulated. QA is viewed as an integral part of the University management. Policy on the QA of all the directions of YSC is not formed, procedures and tools for internal quality assurance are not defined either. All these put the purposefulness, effectiveness and continuous improvement of the activities of YSC at a risk.

YSC internal and external stakeholders do not sufficiently participate in QA process, surveys conducted by the Conservatory are not purposeful and regularly organized, besides they factually do not reveal key issues existing at YSC. There are no mechanisms and tools for the evaluation of a number of activities carried out by YSC. PDCA cycle is not applied at YSC. Internal QA system does not provide information about YSC activities to the stakeholders and does not ensure the transparency of activities of Conservatory either.

It is negative that recommendations concerning the formulation of mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of the activities of YSC, enlargement of resources allocated for QA, development of policy on the QA, development of feedback mechanisms and system for regular revision of internal QA system, development of procedures for QA of management and administration, that were given for the improvement of criterion 10 by the Expert panel conducting the previous accreditation and that were also involved in YSC improvement plan has not been carried out.

### **Summary**

The Expert Panel finds that Conservatory does not meet the requirements of Criterion 10 as QA policy, procedures, mechanisms are missing, and nothing fosters formation of QA culture.

### **Conclusion**

The compliance of the institution's institutional capacities with the requirements of criterion 10 **is unsatisfactory.**

## EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

CRITERIA	CONCLUSION
I. Mission and Purpose	Satisfactory
II. Governance and Administration	Unsatisfactory
III. Academic Programs	Satisfactory
IV. Students	Satisfactory
V. Faculty and Staff	Satisfactory
VI. Research and Development	Unsatisfactory
VII. Infrastructure and Resources	Unsatisfactory
VIII. Societal Responsibility	Satisfactory
IX. External Relations and Internationalization	Satisfactory
X. Internl Quality Assurane System	Unsatisfactory

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**Mkrtich Ayvazyan**

Panel Chair

9<sup>th</sup> of March, 2020

## APPENDIX 1. CVS OF THE EXPERT PANEL MEMBERS

**Mktrich Ayvazyan** - In 2000 M. Ayvazyan graduated from Yerevan State Pedagogical University, Department of Physics and Mathematics. In 2003 he received the degree of Candidate of Physical and Mathematical Sciences. In 2009-2013 worked as a specialist in the department of elaboration and development, head of Secretariat, head of the department of Institutional and Programme Accreditation at National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance, Foundation. Since 2012 he has been working in Yerevan State Academy of Fine Arts, first as the Head of Academic Affairs Department, then as the ViceRector for Education and Research. M. Ayvazyan is the author of numerous scientific articles.

**Narine Khachatryan** - in 1999 graduated from Yerevan State University (YSU), Faculty of Philosophy, Sociology and Psychology in specialization of Psychology, as a Diploma Specialist. Since 1999 she has worked as a Researcher in YSU, afterwards - as a teacher. In 2006 N. Khachatryan was awarded the Scientific Degree (PhD) in Psychological Sciences, and in 2008 - the Scientific Title of Associate Professor. Since 2011 up to now she is the Head of the Chair of Personality Psychology and the Scientific Supervisor of the "Personality and Social Environment" laboratory. She has conducted a number of grant projects in directions of both scientific research and development of innovative courses. Is a member of Editorial Board of four peer-reviewed periodicals, including the "Current Issues in Personality Psychology" international periodical.

**Margus Partlas** - since 2004 is a professor of the Musical and theatre Academy of Estonia, Since 2003 he is vice-recor of the Scientific Affairs and Research.

**Jan Rademaker** - Ex- rector of Musical Academy of Maastricht, The Netherlands, since 2017 works as a dean at the sae Academy.

**Ananhit Terteryan** - in 2018 graduated Social pedagogy department of Yerevan State University (Bachelor degree). Since 2018 studies Education Management (Master degree) at the same university.

## APPENDIX 2. SCHEDULE

### SITE-VISIT OF EXPERT PANEL CONDUCTING INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION AT KOMITAS STATE CONSERVATORY OF YEREVAN

**09.12.2019-13.12.2019**

	<b>09.12.2019</b>	<i>Launch</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Duration</i>
1.	Meeting with the Rector	9:30	10:15	45 minutes
2.	Meeting with Vice-Rectors of Scientific affairs, educational affairs, international and social relations, financial affairs.	10:25	11:25	60 minutes
3.	Meeting with the self-evaluation working group	11:35	12:20	45 minutes
4.	Break and internal discussions	12:30	13:30	60 minutes
5.	Meeting with the Deans	13:40	14:25	45 minutes
6.	Meeting with the Board representatives	14:35	15:20	45 minutes
7.	Meeting with the employer representatives(including the 3 academic programs) (10-12 representatives)	15:30	16:30	60 minutes
8.	Meeting with the educational department (8-10 representatives)	16:40	17:40	60 minutes

9.	Observation of documents, close meeting of the panel	17:50	18:40	50 minutes
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<b>10.12.2019</b>		<i>Launch</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Duration</i>
1.	Observation of the resources (Acoustic lab., Lab. of the observation of the national compositions, computer rooms, Opera studio, Professional Cabinets, library, medical centre e.g.)	9:30	10:15	45 minutes
2.	Observation of the lecture - Ansamble of National Instruments	10:30	11:00	30 minutes
3.	Meeting with the alumni representatives (10-12 representatives, part-time)	11:00	12:00	60 minutes
4.	Meeting with the head of the chairs (8-10 representatives)	12:10	13:10	60 minutes
5.	Break, discussions of the expert panel	13:10	14:10	60 minutes
6.	Meeting with the teaching staff (10-12 representatives)	14:20	14:40	80 minutes
7.	Visits to the chairs, deans' offices, observation of the documents	14:45	16:45	120 minutes
8.	Observation of documents, close meeting of the panel	16:55	18:25	90 minutes

<b>11.12.2019</b>		<i>Launch</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Duration</i>
1.	Meeting with the representatives of students Council (8-10 representatives)	9:30	10:15	45 minutes
2.	Meeting with representatives of BA and MA students	10:25	11:55	90 minutes
3.	Meeting with international students (8-12 representatives)	12:05	12:35	30 minutes
4.	Presentation of the dean of the Camera Music	12:45	13:00	15 minutes
5.	Break, discussions of the expert panel	13:00	14:00	60 minutes
6.	Open meeting	14:10	14:50	40 minutes
7.	Document revision, closed meeting of expert pannel	15:00	16:20	80 minutes
8.	Observtion of the class of the orchestra	16:30	16:45	15 minutes
9.	Observtion of the documents	17:00	18:00	60 minutes

<b>12.12.2019</b>		<i>Launch</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Duration</i>
1.	Meeting with the director of the Gyumri brunch of YSC	9:30	10:15	45 minutes
2.	Meeting with the administrative staff of the Gyumri brunch representatives of BA and MA students	10:25	11:55	90 minutes
3.	Meeting with international students (8-12 representatives)	12:05	12:35	30 minutes
4.	Presentation of the dean of the Camera Music	12:45	13:00	15 minutes
5.	Break, discussions of the expert panel	13:00	14:00	60 minutes
6.	Open meeting	14:10	14:50	40 minutes
7.	Document revision, closed meeting of expert pannel	15:00	16:20	80 minutes
8.	Observtion of the class of the orchestra	16:30	16:45	15 minutes
9.	Observtion of the documents	17:00	18:00	60 minutes

<b>12.12.2019</b>		<i>Launch</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Duration</i>
1.	Meeting with the director of te Gyumri brunch of YSC	9:30	10:15	45 minutes

2.	Meeting with the administrative staff of the Gyumri brunch	10:25	11:10	45 minutes
3.	Meeting with the teaching staff of the brunch (8-12 representatives)	11:15	12:00	45 minutes
4.	Meeting with the BA and MA students of the brunch (8-12 representatives)	12:10	12:55	45 minutes
5.	Break, discussions of the expert panel	13:00	14:00	60 minutes
6.	Meetings at the departments of the YSC	14:00	15:00	60 minutes
7.	Final Concert of the students of YSC	15:00	16:00	60 minutes
8.	Observation of the documents, expert panel closed discussions	16:10	18:10	120 minutes

	<b>13.12.2019</b>	<i>Launch</i>	<i>End</i>	<i>Duration</i>
1.	Meeting with the Internal Quality Assurance department	9:30	10:30	60 minutes
2.	Meeting with the representatives selected by the expert panel	10:40	11:40	60 minutes
3.	Document observation, Closed discussions of the expert panel	13:00	14:00	60 minutes
4.	Break, discussions of the expert panel	13:00	14:00	60 minutes
6.	Document observation, Closed discussions of the expert panel	14:10	15:10	60 minutes
7.	Meeting with the rector of the YSC	15:20	16:00	40 minutes
8.	Observation of the documents, expert panel closed discussions	16:00	18:00	120 minutes

### APPENDIX 3. LIST OF DOCUMENTS FOR OBSERVATION

<b>N</b>	<b>Name of the document</b>	<b>Criterion</b>
1.	Annual reports of the rector according to the SP for 2012-2017	2
2.	The facts of the discussions among internal and external stakeholder meetings	8
3.	The framework of the evaluation of the monitoring processes of the implemented goals and objectives of the SP Analysis of internal and external factors influencing the management of the Academy /IQA department/	10
4.	The annual reports of the rector (for the last 4 years)	2
5.	The list of the members of the scientific department and the regulation	2
6.	The minutes of the decisions made by the Governing Board for the last 3 years	2
7.	Action plan for 2019-2024 Strategic plan /draft	1
8.	Comerative analyses of the Academic programs done during 2014-2016	3

	(including the suggestions of the stakeholders)	
9.	Academic programs	3
10.	The regulation of the student assessment	2
11.	Course descriptions of the subjects for 3 academic programs	3
12.	The list of the elective courses	3
13.	The assessment mechanism formulating students final assessment (a filled-in example)	3
14.	Graduation thesis work of the MA students	3
15.	Regulation or criteria of the assessment of final graduation or Theses Papers	3
16.	The reports for the last 3 years of the president of the final attestation committee	2
17.	The examples of the journals, articles, books and etc, published by the internal methodological Committee	3
18.	The results of the questionnaire on the Academic programs conducted among the students and alumni	4
19.	The examples of the students' questionnaires	4
20.	The annual reports of the Students' Council for the last 4 years	4
21.	Questionnaires examples where students assessed the effectiveness of skills, methods of teaching and learning	10
22.	The regulation on the extra-payments for the teaching staff	5
23.	Normative document on calculating the workload of the teaching staff members	5
24.	Examples of the "Musical Armenia" Journal	9
25.	Reports on the scientific laboratory "The observation of the Armenian national music"	2
26.	Contracts implemented with international organisations and institutions.	9
27.	Analysis of survey results carried out among the students, teaching staff and employers	10
28.	The development plan for the external relations of the institution	9
29.	Contracts with international institutions	9
30.	Data on the exchange programs implemented in the YSC	9
31.	The inovated contracts of the YSC with post Soviet countries' institutions	9
32.	The established version of the charter of the IQA department	10
33.	The structure of the Gyumri branch	2
34.	The average age of the teaching staff	5
35.	The number of students and teaching and support staff members	2
36.	The contracts examples of the students and teaching staff participating in the exchange programs	5
37.	The distribution of the financial resources - the distribution among teaching staff, administrative staff, support staff separately in percentages	7

38.	The reports of the Commission for the improvement of Academic programs	3
39.	The reports of the chair of the Composition	2
40.	The programs of the admission examinations	4

#### APPENDIX 4. RESOURCES OBSERVED

- Opera Studio
- Chairs
- Faculties
- Computer classroom
- Library
- Halls
- Laboratory of Folkloragy
- Inovative acoustic classroom



## APPENDIX 6. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- **EHEA**- European Higher Education Area
- **ECTS**-European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
- **PAARA** –Public Administration Academy of the Republic of Armenia
- **AP**- Academic program
- **QA**-quality Assurance
- **ANQA**-National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation
- **ESG**- European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance
- **NQF**-National Qualifications Framework
- **PDCA**- Plan-do-check-act
- **SP**-strategic plan