

Approved

Rector

Armen Muradyan

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**SELF-EVALUATION REPORT
ON
INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES
OF TERTIARY LEVEL INSTITUTION**

“Yerevan State Medical University after Mkhitar Heratsi” Foundation

Koryun 2, 0025, Yerevan, Republic of Armenia

Yerevan 2018

Self-Evaluation Report Committee/ Working Group

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TERMS USED

Criteria. These are distinct and discrete statements, which define in verifiable terms, the characteristics of institutional operations or attributes of programmes of study.

Standards. These are statements, which stipulate the level of attainment to conform to a criterion, and requisite conditions for an objective evaluation of the extent to which an institution meets each criterion.

BRIEF OUTLINE OF YEREVAN STATE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

From 1920 onwards Yerevan State Medical University has played pivotal role in the region.

Yerevan State Medical University (YSMU) was founded originally as a Medical Faculty in 1919. Afterwards, it was reorganized into a Medical Institute in 1930, housing around 30 academic departments and engaged in instruction of 270 students.

In 1989, by the Resolution N234 of Council of Ministers of the Republic of Armenia, the Institute was named in honour of Mkhitar Heratsi – Medieval doctor and a preeminent thinker.

From 1930-1995 it was known as the Medical Institute. It has been called Medical University since full autonomy as a tertiary institution was granted in 1995.

By the Decree N450 of 23 April 2002 of the Armenian Government, the University was reorganized into a state non-commercial organisation, and afterwards, in November of 2014, the University gained a Foundation status.

Throughout the 95 years of its operation, the University has educated and trained around 34 000 high quality healthcare professionals and medical specialists, amongst them 3200 citizens from overseas countries. From amongst the graduates of the University, many have become preeminent scientists and scholars, skillful managers and organisers in healthcare, and public officials, and have further played pivotal role in healthcare, disease prevention and treatment, coupled with their vigorous input in a range of fields to develop medical sciences. To note, University scientists have proven record of outstanding accomplishments in medicine – both in theory and practice.

Adhering to its roots, *i.e.*, traditions and visions of Medieval Armenian schools of medicine, the University nowadays guides its operations with due regard to the requirements of Armenian higher education system, while ensuring degrees and qualifications comparable across the European higher education area, and strives to integrate into this landscape through creation of environment fostering faculty and researcher mobility.

Through introduction of mechanisms towards boosting a culture of quality, the University embraces a strategy of continuous quality improvement.

When ensuring higher medical education, the University is guided by both the conventional model and the three-cycle model of education, embracing degree programmes in Bachelors, Masters and Doctoral studies.

The Faculty of General Medicine, Stomatology Faculty, Faculty of Pharmacy, the Military Medicine Faculty, as well as Faculty of Public Health and Faculty of Postgraduate Education are the major platforms in delivery of programmes of study at the University. In addition, the University offers education through its Department of Premedical Education and the Medical College.

The institutional infrastructure houses faculties, academic departments/chairs, science centres, clinical complexes and clusters, the medical college, manifold departments, scientific and research library, student hostel, publishing house, bases for field practicum, etc. There are a number of services available at the University, ranging from computer labs, cultural and sports clubs to adequate facilities necessary for public catering services, recreation activities, health and training centres.

The Board of Trustees and the Chief Executive Officer – the Rector, are the governing bodies of the University.

Student self-governance is ensured through the Student Parliament.

For purposes of strengthening and enhancing international partnerships and external relations, the University collaborates with higher medical education institutions of Russia, France, US, Iran, Germany, Georgia and many other countries.

The University has a membership in International Association of Universities (IAU), World Federation for Medical Education (WFME), American International Health Alliance (AIHA), European Medical Students' Association (EMSA), International Federation of Medical Students Association (IFMSA), International Federation of Dental Students Association (IFDSA), International Pharmaceutical Students Federation (IPSF).

In addition, the University is involved in manifold European and international academic and research programmes, such as TEMPUS-PLUS, ERASMUS-MUNDUS, USAID, UNESCO, WB, etc.

In March of 2015, the University underwent international accreditation for a period of four years.

INSTITUTIONAL SELF-EVALUATION AGAINST ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

Every criterion in the self-evaluation report is built on the considerations, observations and recommendations, which are set forth in the 2013 Expert Report on Institutional Self-Evaluation (see [2013 Institutional Accreditation Report](#)), *inter alia*, being based on the University Action Plan 2015-2020 (dated 10.07.2015), and on the University Strategic Plan 2015-2020.

CRITERION I. MISSION AND GOALS

Criterion: *The Institution's policies and practices are in line with its mission and the latter is consistent with the Armenian National Qualifications Framework.*

Ambition. The University will enhance its standing as a preeminent institution of higher medical education in the region, gaining international acclaim in healthcare, education, science and research.

STANDARD A. The Institution has a clear, well articulated mission that reflects the institution's goals and objectives and is in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework.

Precepts:

[University Charter](#)

[University Strategic Plan 2015-2020](#)

[Programmes of Study](#)

University Science and Research Development Strategy and Policy 2015-2020

University Science Development Vision 2018 – 2038

Programme Speech delivered by the University Rector on 24 December 2016 at the Meeting of University Board of Trustees (Meeting Minutes N 9)

In the mission statement of the University Strategic Plan it is stipulated, that “Yerevan State Medical University” Foundation is a higher education institution engaged in education, science, research and clinical activities, and its main mission is the education and training of quality health professionals aimed at maintaining, enforcing and improving public health (see [University Strategic Plan 2015-2020](#)).

When forming the Strategic Plan, the University has predominantly had regard to the requirements of the Armenian National Qualifications Framework.

In addition, programme speech was delivered by the University Rector on 24 of December 2016 at the Meeting of University Board of Trustees. The speech made reference to how the processes on internationalization evolved, which were designed to promote institutional ambitions (see Programme speech delivered by the University Rector on 24 December 2016 at the Meeting of University Board of Trustees, Meeting Minutes N 9).

In the reporting period certain activities were launched toward creating a learning and scientific atmosphere that would create a doctor-student, who has the basic knowledge, skills and competencies to enable himself/herself be competitive, develop career in a specific field of medicine and be ready to enroll to postgraduate and continuing education.

To achieve the vision statements adopted, an array of reforms have been introduced within University education and science systems, healthcare and medical care delivery. In particular, the assessment of study programmes has allowed for improving the curricular contents, teaching and grading methodology, as well as developing science vision statement and strategic plan and bringing them into action. The cooperation with relevant international experts has allowed for specifying science pathways; introducing research component in the academic process; expanding the scope of international cooperation; renovating and upgrading relevant clinics and facilities of the University, and purchasing a new clinic (see [approved study programmes](#), relevant minutes of Council for Academic-Methodical Affairs, reports submitted by the Centre for Quality Assessment and Assurance, Science Strategic Plan and Vision, Memoranda of Understanding and Institutional Agreements, the statutory grounds of purchasing a new clinic).

According to the Armenian Law “On Higher and Postgraduate Professional Education”, adopted in 2006, the two-cycle system of higher education was introduced at Yerevan State Medical University from 2006 onwards. However, the analysis on labour market demands and the international benchmark revealed, that the graduates, who have a Bachelor’s degree in medicine did not have job prospects within the Armenian labour market (as a result, 99% of the first Bachelors programme graduates in 2011 continued their studies in Masters, afterwards). The University applied to the Armenian Government towards this issue, and by the Government Decision 1191-N of 23 October 2014, the University engaged in running education through continuing and integrated model (i.e., 4/Bachelors + 2/Masters for General Medicine, and “4+1” for Stomatology degree programme). Thus, in 2016-2017, “Doctor of Stomatology” and in 2017-2018, “MD Physician” qualifications were awarded to the first graduates of the continuing and integrated degree programmes (relevant decisions of the Armenian Government).

Taking account of the requirements of Armenian National Qualifications Framework, approved by the Armenian Government on 7 July 2016, the University, per programmes of study, developed and approved field-specific qualifications framework, thus stipulating what the graduate should know and be able to do (the National Qualifications Framework stipulates the courses to be taught, in order to obtain certain qualification) (see [study programmes](#) and subject-specific contents approved).

Currently, the University runs the following programmes of study: General Medicine specialty, qualification awarded – “MD Physician” (statutory duration: 6 years / number of academic credits: 360), Stomatology specialty, qualification awarded – “Doctor of Stomatology (statutory length of programme is 5 years / number of academic credits is 300), Pharmacy specialty, qualification awarded – “Bachelor of Pharmacy” (statutory length of programme in Bachelors is 4 years / number of academic credits is 240), Master of Pharmacy (statutory length of programme is 1 year / number of academic credits is 60), Military Medicine specialty, qualification awarded – “General medicine in military forces” (statutory length of programme is 6 years / number of academic credits: 360), and Public health and health care Master’s degree programme. It should be stated, that in 2016-2017, the University launched one more

study programme in Health Care Management. In 2017-2018, the first class graduated from Masters programmes of business administration in health care management

Overall, 5386 learners study at the Medical University as of 10.10.2018, amongst them 1266 (23,5%) are overseas students.

It should also be stated that the University has shaped and approved the programme of higher education of the 8th cycle (academic credits: 180, per European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) within the National Qualifications Framework.

It should also be stated that the first-ever benchmarking of University research activity, which was conducted in partnership with Shanghai Ranking Consultancy, was instrumental in the activities towards improving the university international ranking. This benchmarking is unique and has been carried out at Yerevan State Medical University and Armenian HEIs (see detailed in Criterion 6).

STANDARD B. The Institution's mission statement coupled with the goals and objectives, reflects the needs of internal and external stakeholders.

Precepts:

Reports submitted by Academic Departments

Deans' Reports at the Faculty Senate

Surveys and reports by Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance

http://ysmu.am/hy/page_list/hashvetvutyunner/#sthash.qvZgOqah.dpbs

Action Plan 2015-2020

[University Charter](#)

[University Strategic Plan 2015-2020](#)

Back in February of 2015, the University achieved institutional accreditation, and afterwards, initiated the process of developing and considering the strategic plan for the next few years. The development of the Strategic Plan 2015-2020 was achieved taking account of the self-evaluation conducted by the University in 2013, and having regard to the expert panel report on institutional accreditation. Furthermore, a vast array of relevant activities were conducted. In particular, institutional subdivisions engaged in discussing the needs and issues they were most concerned about; reports submitted by heads of subdivisions and heads of academic departments, as well as draft decisions of the scientific council coupled with performance reports thereon were duly analysed and studied. In addition, issues and challenges in operations, mechanisms towards their settlement, as well as reports on surveys among internal and external stakeholders, which were made by the Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance, were thoroughly studied. These activities generated specific pathways and objectives, around which the strategic plan evolved (see reports submitted by Faculty Senate and Academic Departments, containing also proposals and relevant mechanisms for settling relevant issues and achieving objectives). Afterwards, the strategic plan was discussed at the university subdivisions and was later approved by the Scientific Council Decision N4, dated 30.01.2015. The Rector further submitted the

strategic plan to the Board of Trustees for consideration and approval (see the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Trustees).

Taking due account of the University Strategic Plan, the heads of institutional subdivisions have submitted action plans, where they have specified certain objective and ways to achieve it, as well as means of achieving the objective coupled with the human resources, evaluation indicators and action timelines (see [University Strategic Plan 2015-2020](#) and Action Plan). The teaching faculty and students have directly been involved in the development of these action plans (one fourth of the members of councils and boards are students). External stakeholder involvement in the discussions on the Strategic Plan has been ensured through the participation of head physicians, head healthcare specialists of the Armenian clinical hospitals. These specialists also form part of the university community, working at academic departments and/or sitting on Board of Trustees.

Between 2016 and 2017, Draft Strategic Plan 2017-2022 on Institutional Development was submitted to the Scientific Council, and later to the Board of Trustees for further consideration. An array of proposals were generated towards the improvement of separate components/statements in the plan, and, most importantly, towards the advancement of internationalisation. Due to these recommendations, the plan is currently being reviewed and improved, to further incorporate it into the University Strategic Plan as one of the core directions of institutional operations.

STANDARD C. The Institution has formal mechanisms and procedures to evaluate the achievement and the improvement of its mission and goals.

Precepts:

Rector's Reports at the Meetings of Board of Trustees

Vice-Rectors' Reports at University Scientific Councils

Vice-Rectors' Reports

Reports submitted by Subject-specific Councils and Methodical Councils, Composition of Councils

Surveys and Reports by the Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance

http://ysmu.am/en/page_list/quality_assurance/#sthash.5Mwvg5vn.dpbs

Clearly shaped mechanisms and sound procedures are well in place to monitor and assess how effective was the achievement of institutional mission and goals. In particular, taking due account of the University Strategic Plan and Action Plan, the Rector and the Vice-Rectors present reports once a year, at the Scientific Council Meeting. The Rector also presents a report at the Meeting of University Board of Trustees. These reports contain numerical statistical data and analysis on performance, and the Scientific Council, ruling by its decision, defines the objectives and mechanisms, as well as recommendations on how to achieve them (Minutes of Board of Trustees and the Scientific Council, as well as Rector's and Vice-Rectors' annual reports).

In addition, Dean's Offices, Faculty Senate, Subject-specific Council and Council for Academic-Methodical Affairs are also viewed as major actors in the monitoring of the processes. The working plans of these bodies stipulate yearly agenda toward issues that evolve around assessment of university mission and goals, and review of its objectives (relevant working plans). It should be mentioned, that the teaching faculty is substantially involved in the said councils, boards and committees. The ratio of student body representation across all committees is ensured at 10 to 25 percentage (see composition of committees).

The University Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance has a clearly defined input in the mission assessment and improvement. Working closely with internal and external stakeholders, the Centre regularly reports to the Scientific Council about stakeholder feedback on various issues (see detailed in Criterion 10).

STRENGTHS

- Availability of University Strategic Plan 2015-2020
- Availability of University Science Development Vision 2018 – 2028/38
- Benchmarking of University science and research activity measuring performance on three levels (institutional and programme level)

WEAKNESSES

- No clear policy on allocation of funding per strategic priorities.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Availability of cooperation agreements with different universities.
- Making use of the potential and efforts of Armenian Diaspora and University alumni, who work in world-class universities and clinics.

THREATS

- Introduction and stages of running/implementing the programme towards development is preconditioned by the number of students and tuition fees.
- The pace and priorities of economic development in the country.

OVERCOMING WEAKNESSES AND ELIMINATING THREATS

- Develop clear policy on budget planning and achieve budget allocation per institutional priorities.

CRITERION II. GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

CRITERION. *The Institution's system of governance, administrative units/structures and their operations are effective and aimed at achieving institution's mission and goals, while maintaining the ethics of governance practices.*

Ambitions. Reform University governance system and ensure modernization and prospective development of the medical education vision statement, which will be aimed at effectiveness and harmonization of operations of institutional subdivisions and will also ensure institution's financial sustainability and effective management of tangible assets (see Goal 1, [University Strategic Plan 2015-2020](#)).

STANDARD A. The Institution's system of governance ensures regulated procedure of decision-making congruent with the defined ethics rules and provision of requisite human resources, tangible assets and finances to accomplish its educational and other goals.

Precepts:

[University Charter](#)

Board of Trustees Operation Guidelines

[Decision of Board of Trustees on Endorsing the University Structure](#)

Order on Disposition of Property

Scientific Council Regulation

Rector's Council Regulation

University Internal Disciplinary Rules

Model Regulation of Study Programme Faculty Operations

Policies on Academic Departments and Teaching Faculty

Heratsi High School Regulation

Available Regulations on Institutional Subdivisions

The University governance is ensured in conformity with the following statutory instruments: Law of the Republic of Armenia "On Foundations", the Law "On Education", the Law "On Higher and Postgraduate Professional Education", the Law "On Primary Vocational (Handicraft) And Secondary Vocational Education", the Law "On General Education", the Law "On Licensing", other statutes of the Republic of Armenia, as well as the Charter and various legal acts of the University.

Back in 2014, the University, then being a state non-commercial organisation, was organised into a Foundation (Armenian Government 1407-N Decision, dated 27 November 2014). Notwithstanding the positive effect of amending the form of organisation, which implies far more autonomous, collegial and independent governance, it should however be mentioned that similar system-specific changes to some extent affect the overall effectiveness of governance in a transition period (i.e., the stage when a new governance system is being endorsed). Therefore, it is important to maintain the established foundation

model as a form of organisation for the University. In addition, the model should further be advanced through consistent and requisite operations, which have already been outlined and designed.

Notwithstanding the fact, that the laws, which are imperative to University governance, are on the whole, adopted and brought into force, it should however be mentioned that the Armenian Law “On Foundations” or the Law “On Higher and Postgraduate Professional Education” fall short of specific regulatory mechanisms for the system of governance at higher education institutions.

In particular, the autonomy of the university, which is one of the major principles of the HEI governance system, cannot be fully ensured since representatives of the government and the Ministry of Education and Science are mandatorily involved in the Board of Trustees. Moreover, these representatives are persons who hold mainly positions in state bodies and who, *ex officio*, have certain leverage and may have some influence on the decision-making process. In addition, the principle of collegiality is not ensured through clear statutory mechanisms. In particular, the employment of collegial governance shall be regulated by clear mechanisms, thus drawing a statutory strict division of powers vested in the board of trustees, the rector and the scientific council (as a body governing the academic-methodical operations, science and research activity). However, no statutory stipulation exists and this affects ongoing institutional operations in terms of division of powers. More specifically, this refers to the uncertainty of scope of decisions made by the Scientific Council, the legal force of the statutory acts adopted, etc.

The University has presented these issues to the Armenian Ministry of Education and Science within the framework of discussions on the Armenian Draft Law “On Higher Education”. It is expected that the adoption of this Draft will settle the mentioned issues.

The University, the founder of which is the Republic of Armenia in the person of the Government, is a non-membership not-for-profit organisation. The state authorised body acting on behalf of the Republic of Armenia is the Ministry of Education and Science. University system of governance is based on the amalgamation and complementarity of two, principles, *i.e.*, sole trusteeship and collegial governance. The system of governance is multilevel and operates in a diversified constellation, in which actors from different sectors serve as representatives to the Board. These are government officials, outstanding individuals representing different fields of education, science, culture and economy, recommended for appointment by the Armenian Ministry of Education and Science, as well as employers, who cooperate with the University, and University teaching faculty members and students.

University system of governance may be provisionally separated into administrative and scientific-educational subsystems (see [University structure](#)). However, this is just a provisional division, and not a clear-cut borderline within the ongoing steering schemes, since the majority of subdivisions under two subsystems fulfill functions across both administrative and scientific-educational sectors.

The Board of Trustees is the supreme and collegial governing body of the University. Trustees, who in significant measure exercise guardianship over institution’s organisation and structure and oversight of financial and other controls, are appointed to a five-year term of office (Article 25 of the Law on Foundations, Point 39 of University Charter, Board of Trustees Operation Guidelines).

The Board of Trustees shall hold at least one regular meeting each year (see [point 37 of University Charter](#)). In fact, the meetings are convened several times per year, taking account of the scale of powers vested in the Board of Trustees.

In accordance with the University Charter, the Board of Trustees is also composed of members who have substantial and solid involvement in other areas. This circumstance poses certain obstacles for them to fully engage in issues, which relate to the university and come within the competence of Board of Trustees. In addition, currently existing stipulations do not enable involving in the Board of Trustees internationally acclaimed individuals, who also have networking opportunities. The involvement of such individuals could be an added value to institution's ranking and would generate an array of new investments coupled with the networking links with internationally renowned universities and hospital complexes.

The Rector, acting in the capacity of sole governance body, is entrusted with the powers of ongoing governance (Article 27 of the Armenian Law on Foundations, point 46 of the University Charter). Through Vice-Rectors, Chief of Staff and Administrative Subdivisions the Rector exercises administrative powers vested in him.

One of the issues, which poses obstacles to effective operations of different subdivisions, is the overlapping of functions and lack of strict division of powers vested in them. This is conditioned by lack of regulations and requisite descriptions of job responsibilities.

For purposes of settling this issue, the University Rector has approved a timeline, according to which institutional subdivisions, in 2018-2019, will design or supplement regulations guiding their operations and will submit them for further approval (Order N 87-M, dated 28 August 2018). These workings are underway; currently more than twenty (20) regulations are being shaped and are considered for approval. Meanwhile, the process of developing and approving positions classification and description has been initiated. More than 40 descriptions of positions have been developed, which are underway to approval, being circulated and discussed against the defined procedures at the University.

The University Scientific Council, which is the collegial body coordinating and regulating academic, methodical, scientific and research activity, exercises certain governance functions as well. It is elected for five (5) year terms (see points 53 and 55 of the [University Charter](#), point 11 of Regulation of Scientific Council).

Between sessions of the Scientific Council, the Rector's Council exercises deliberative functions related to academic, methodical, scientific and research activities (see point 52 of [University Charter](#), point 7 of Rector's Council Regulation).

Sessions of the Scientific Council shall be convened at least once per month (point 15 of Regulation of Scientific Council). However, these meetings are called more frequently, taking account of the scale of operations conducted by the Scientific Council (Meeting Minutes of Scientific Council).

Rector's Council holds regular meetings per week. However, where necessary, these meetings may be convened two to a couple of times weekly (Meeting Minutes of Rector's Council).

The main body engaged in academic-methodical and science activities is the Faculty (of a specific study programme), and the governance of faculty is as well carried out through amalgamation of sole trusteeship and collegial governance. Faculty governance is carried out by the Faculty Academic-Scientific Board and the Dean (see points 97-104 of the [University Charter](#), points 13-35 of the Model Regulation of Faculty Operations).

There are academic departments/chairs (education groups, laboratories, etc.) within the Faculty composition, which are the major bodies to be engaged in the academic and scientific processes (see points 105-107 of the [University Charter](#), points 4-5 of Policies on Academic Departments and Teaching Faculty).

The system of governance of the high school operating within the University structure, corresponds to the requirements of the Armenian Law “On General Education” (Article 10 of the Law, Chapter 4 of the Regulation).

In addition, the system of governance of the college, which operates within the University structure, is in compliance with the requirements of the Armenian Law “On Primary Vocational (Handicraft) And Secondary Vocational Education” (Article 18 of the Law). The University encompasses Heratsi Hospital Complex N1 and Muratsan Hospital Complex in its structure. The University also holds 90.5% of shares of “Mikayelyan Surgery Institute” CJSC. These medical establishments are governed in accordance with the requirements stipulated in the Armenian law “On Licensing”, Law “On Medical Assistance and Service to the Population”, and the Armenian Government Decree N 1936-N of 5 December 2002.

University human resources are sufficient to ensure smooth running of governance and administration. Institutional staffing list is approved by the Board of Trustees and is regularly reviewed against ongoing needs and systemic analysis of responsibilities. It should be stated, that the University places a high premium on involving quality personnel into the university community, and to this end, the Scientific Council has approved the Policies on Academic Departments and Teaching Faculty. This document stipulates requisite procedure on election and employment of prospective teaching faculty (Scientific Council Decision N11, dated 3 June 2013). The policies also stipulate the staffing list at the academic departments for purposes of ensuring most effective operations therein.

For purposes of replenishing the vacancies at administration, the University regularly organises and runs competitions, having due regard to the election policies on “Organisation and Administration of Competitions for Vacant and New Positions and Appointment of Officers” of Yerevan State Medical University Foundation, which is approved by the Rector’s Council (Decision 22/27, dated 27 June 27). Due account is also taken of the University Internal Disciplinary Rules approved by the Rector of the University (Rector’s Order N3-L, dated 10 November 2017).

However, it should be noted, that not all the vacancies in the administration are filled through competition-based procedures. Hiring, transfer or termination of employment, as well as reward procedures are ensured in accordance with the Armenian Labour Code and University Internal Disciplinary Rules.

For purposes of improving and bettering the effectiveness of university human resource management, in 2018 the University has developed and is currently supplementing the draft policy statement on human resource management. This statement provides for introduction of clear-cut and sound mechanisms on ensuring readily available data on number of university employees, replenishment, system of remuneration, reward schemes, disciplinary measures and liability enforcement.

The material/tangible and financial base of the University is defined by the Armenian Law “On Foundations” (Article 8 of the Law), and the University Charter (see [points 10-13](#)). In 2018, the

University bought 90.5% of shares of “Mikayelyan Surgery Centre” CJSC, aiming at expanding the clinical, education and science operations, and ensuring more optimal organisation of activities in these fields. In order to ensure smooth running of its operations, the University, in compliance with the Armenian Legislation on Procurement, regularly purchases property, equipment and devices, deemed as necessary.

Disposition of property, *inter alia*, lease, use, and disposal of property at the sole discretion of the University, is carried out in accordance with the procedure established by the Board of Trustees (Decision N11, dated 29 April 2017).

University possesses diverse financial resources. In particular, the University registers financial inflows from the state budget (educational and medical services), and inflows from educational, medical and other paid services provided locally by the University. The University Board of Trustees is entrusted with the powers of approval of budget and amendments thereto, and conclusion of contracts exceeding AMD 50.000.000 or equivalent foreign currency (see the stipulation under Point 39, [University Charter](#)). Performance-based budgeting information of previous year, particularly outcome data, and the needs assessment with summary of findings (produced by subdivisions) are used to assist draft budget formulation (see more detailed in Criterion 7).

STANDARD B. The institution’s system of governance provides for student and instructor input in decision-making in matters directly affecting them.

Precepts:

[University Charter](#)

Scientific Council Regulation

Rector’s Council Regulation

Model Regulation of Study Programme Faculty Operations

The University system of governance at all levels provides for collegial governance, *ex officio*, and governance through representation of faculty and students as well.

Members of faculty (instructors) serve as representatives to the Board of Trustees. University subdivisions nominate candidates from the members of the teaching faculty of the University. In addition, university employees may also be nominated by the subdivisions to serve on Board of Trustees. Nominations from faculty are elected by the Scientific Council and later presented to the authorised body. Twenty-five percent of the Board is composed of members elected from faculty to serve on the Board of Trustees (Prime Minister’s Decree N 286-A, dated 14 April 2015).

Student Councils of Programme Faculties nominate students to serve as representatives to the Board of Trustees. Nominee may be any learner (student or doctoral student), who has proven record of good academic performance and is socially active. The University Student Parliament elects from the nominees proposed by the Faculty Student Councils and later presents the nominations to the authorised body. Members to the Board of Trustees elected from the student body constitute 25 percent of the board (Prime Minister’s Decree N 286-A, dated 14 April 2015).

The teaching faculty and the president of Student Parliament serve on the University Scientific Council both *ex officio* and by virtue of representation. Deans of Programme Faculties, heads of academic and scientific subdivisions, and the president of the student parliament are *ex officio* involved in the Scientific Council. The heads of academic departments/chairs and instructors are involved through a defined procedure. The University Student Parliament makes the nomination and election of student body representatives. The number of students in the Scientific Council shall not be less than 25 percent of the number of councilors (Rector's Order N139 m (2), dated 27 December 2016).

The representation of faculty and student body is as well ensured in the Rector's Council, in conformity with the Regulation thereof (Rector's Order N97/M, dated 14 September 2017).

Teaching faculty and students are also represented in the Faculty Academic-Scientific Board, which is the collegial body of governance of Programme Faculty. In accordance with the Model Regulation of Study Programme Faculty Operations, one instructor per academic department (which is supervised by the Programme Faculty) is elected to the Faculty Academic-Scientific Board. In addition, at Dean's suggestion, instructors who teach in the given Programme faculty, yet work in academic departments, which are supervised by other Programme Faculty, may also be involved in the Council.

In accordance with the Model Regulation of Study Programme Faculty Operations, student body shall make up not less than 25 percent of the total number of councilors (for instance, the composition of Councils of Study Programme Faculties approved by Rector's Order N94M, dated 19 September 2018).

There are a range of student organisations across the University, which are vigorously involved in student life and related activities. One of them is Young Researchers Union – an autonomous body, which strives to support young researchers and foster the development of medicine and allied health sciences.

The Student Parliament, which has been operating since 1992, is a bridge to bring university students together. It is a social body aimed at organising student autonomy and self-governance processes and fostering social, scientific and intellectual skills, as well as creative competencies of students, coupled with enhancing them culturally, morally and spiritually.

There exist certain issues with regard to the participation of lecturers and students in the university governance. In particular, no clear-cut criteria exist for their selection and, in some cases, lack of governance knowledge and skills among them pose obstacles. More specifically, this refers to their participation in the complicated decision-making process of legal, financial-economic and scientific-educational spheres.

The problem also arises from the lack of real mechanisms, through which both lecturers and students could submit progress and summary reports to the governing bodies and, consequently, there are no tools to evaluate their effectiveness. The availability of such mechanisms and tools in the governing bodies will make the selection of faculty members and students more competitive and representational. As a result, more active candidates with innovative ideas will be selected.

More detailed information about the teaching faculty and students is available in Criterion 4 and Criterion 5.

STANDARD C. The Institution shapes and carries out short, medium and long term planning consistent with its mission and goals, and possesses clear tools to monitor and ensure implementation thereof.

Precepts:

[Programmes of Study](#)

[University Strategic Plan 2015-2020](#)

Operational planning per different levels of governance covers various aspects of university activity. However, it should be noted that at higher levels of governance the planning and monitoring include ongoing organisation of institutional activities, as well as academic, scientific and clinical sectors of operations, whereas the lower levels of governance ensure field-specific planning and monitoring of operations.

In particular, the University Board of Trustees, in accordance with the University Charter, approves the University annual and strategic plans (see point 39 of the [Charter](#)).

The Scientific Council, in accordance with the Charter, approves the programmes of study taking account of the admission data per specialty. The Council also approves curricular contents per specialties and specializations (point 11 of Council Regulation, Meeting Minutes of the Council).

Ongoing short-term planning is predominantly conducted by the Rector's Council, which, in accordance with the Rector's Council Regulation, holds discussions on issues related to academic, scientific and clinical operations, and develops relevant options towards settlement of these issues (point 7 of Rector's Council Regulation, Meeting Minutes of the Council).

Faculty Academic-Scientific Board, in accordance with the Regulation of Faculty Operations, approves Faculty development plan and work plans of academic departments/chairs under its supervision. It also submits to the Scientific Council the programmes of study and curricular contents (point 14 of Model Regulation of Study Programme Faculty Operations, Faculty Work Plan).

The planning is monitored through control and accountability mechanisms.

Pursuant to Point 143 of the Charter, an independent auditor or other person stipulated by the legislation of the Republic of Armenia inspects the University financial operations at least once a year. Upon request by at least one third of Members of the Board, extraordinary audit may be administered. The auditor is elected by the Board of Trustees in compliance with the requirements, stipulated in the legislation of the Republic of Armenia.

According to the University Charter, the Board of Trustees is entrusted with the powers of hearing and assessing the annual report of the Rector, approval of annual fiscal reports and annual reports on university operations, oversight of financial operations (see point 39 of the [Charter](#)).

In accordance with the University Charter, the Rector, within his competence, is entrusted with issuing orders, instructions, and commands, and delegating mandatory instructions for the execution thereof, as well as supervising the execution afterwards (see point 46 of the [Charter](#)).

In accordance with the Regulation of the Scientific Council, major annual work plan of the Council is approved at the first council meeting of the academic year, within the scope of which the Council hears and assesses annual reports on operations from institutional subdivisions (point 11 of Council Regulation, Meeting Minutes of the Council).

In conformity with the Regulation of the Rector's Council, summary reports on operations of subdivisions are heard at the Rector's Council Meetings (point 7 of Regulation of the Rector's Council, Meeting Minutes of Rector's Council).

Faculty Academic-Scientific Board, in accordance with the Regulation of Faculty Operations, hears annual reports from the Dean and assesses relevant operations; discusses and assesses reports from academic departments/chairs on academic-methodical, scientific and research activities (point 14 of Model Regulation of Study Programme Faculty Operations, Minutes of Faculty Academic-Scientific Board).

Notwithstanding the fact, that the University develops and carries out short, medium and long term planning per its mission and goals with clear mechanisms on the monitoring and implementation thereof, however, these processes need overall improvement in the following aspects:

- (1) more accurate and measurable methodologies for planning and monitoring, and;
- (2) making much stricter provisions on non-performance of responsibilities and for settling the issues surfaced through monitoring.

STANDARD D. The Institution conducts environmental scanning on issues affecting its performance and draws on clear-cut findings in making decisions.

Precepts:

Analysis of Mid-term Performance Plan targeted towards the settlement of issues and improvement of processes revealed during first institutional accreditation

The decision-making at the University is grounded on a comprehensive analysis of both internal and external factors of institutional activities, followed by reasonable decisions rendered.

The analysis of internal and external factors, conditioned by the nature thereof, is conducted by different subdivisions. However, in 2017, the Department of Institutional Development and Marketing Department were established at the University, which, *inter alia*, aim at revealing various factors affecting the institutional performance positively or negatively in the short-run and in the long-run; the analysis thereof, assessment of their effect and planning of requisite measures thereon.

An example of such practices is the analysis of new educational market environments, which is conditioned by decrease in number of students under general demographic tendencies. To this end, for instance, the visit of representatives of Sri Lanka Medical Council was hosted at the University in 2018 (see more at

https://www.ysmu.am/hy/content/shri_lankayi_bzhshkakan_khorhrdi_nerkayacucichnern_aycelecine_ha_malsaranakan_klinikaner_/#sthash.5AnBiZkT.dpbs).

Another example was the study of manifold internal challenges, whereby a decision was made to purchase 90,5 percent of shares of "Mikayelyan Surgery Institute" CJSC. Furthermore, 75 percent of clinical bases is to be focused at the University by 2021, concurrently structuring a new hostel setting.

As to the research of impact factors in academic field, it should be noted, that currently the "Electronic University" system is being developed (to be introduced in 2019). This system will digitalise overall

learning process, which will allow for comprehensive data on student performance, *inter alia*, missed programmes and retakes, transfers, reimbursements, fee discounts, scholarships, etc. This will enable having accurate database, which will lead to decisions based on reliable data and information.

In addition, the electronic database of University legal acts and statutory documents has also been developed and is currently being introduced. The database is designed to include institutional legal acts, whether effective to date, or revoked; amendments and supplements thereto, which will allow for accurate and comprehensive data on legal regulations of manifold institutional operations across different periods in time. Moreover, the database will enable developing new legal acts, having due regard to ongoing statutory framework.

With a view to ensuring institutional development in the long-run, *inter alia*, improving the effectiveness of decision-making, “Avenue Consulting Group” company, acting by the order of the University in 2017, developed and now discusses the Draft Strategic Plan 2017-2022 on Institutional Development. The company has developed the draft plan taking account of field-specific studies of institutional subdivisions. In particular, pathways of strategic development have been shaped drawing on overarching and SWOT analysis of University operations in education, science and research, as well as the medical care and healthcare services offered.

These analyses have also been based on internal institutional data, as well as information available from the Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia, 2014-2025 Strategic Program of Prospective Development of the Republic of Armenia, 2017-2019 Medium-term Expenditure State Framework, data available in the catalogues published by National Institute of Health after Academician S. Avdalyan, World Bank data, other internal and external trustworthy sources covering range of data in socio-economic, political and legislative contexts.

STANDARD E. The management of the policy and procedures draws on the quality management principle (plan-do-check-act).

Precepts:

[University Charter](#)

Scientific Council Regulation

Rector’s Council Regulation

Model Regulation of Study Programme Faculty Operations

In the management of policies and procedures at all levels of governance, the University mainly, with certain exceptions, draws on plan-do-check-act principle.

The preliminary stage of planning is achieved when University subdivisions reveal issues, opportunities and prospects for development, coupled with analysis thereon and tentative assessment on feasibility related to accomplishment of relevant operations (for instance, the report by the Head of Field Practicum Department on the analysis of field practicum and introduction of alternative new schemes of practicum (volunteering activities), presented at Rector’s Council Meeting, dated 29 October 2019).

During the major planning stage, relevant decisions are rendered drawing on assessment of operations in the preliminary stage of planning. The University bodies at different levels of governance render decisions within the scope of their competence (Standard G and Draft Policies on Field Practicum, which shall be approved at the Scientific Council Meeting scheduled in December 2018).

Quality management of ongoing execution of decisions is ensured through control and accountability mechanisms.

The conclusions drawn from report findings serve useful reference to introduce improvements and make reviews, which are reflected in the next plan-do-check-act cycle (see Standard G, herein).

The employment of autonomy, self-governance and collegiality for the University, which is enforced by the Armenian Law “On Higher and Postgraduate Professional Education”, lies behind the quality assurance towards administration of policies and procedures. Notwithstanding the fact, that these principles are not absolute in the context of current Armenian legislation, nevertheless, the University enjoys autonomy in organisational operations, financial and personnel management and in academic filed, *inter alia*, enjoying a wide scope of self-governance. The latter overall ensures the general quality of governance at the University, in case the powers and authorities vested in governance bodies are distinct.

As stated above, in the management of policies and procedures at all levels of governance, the University mainly draws on plan-do-check-act principle. However, in separate cases, consistent application of these principles cannot be ensured, which is viewed as an issue and is subject to gradual settlement as per priorities.

STANDARD F. The Institution has mechanisms in place ensuring data collection on the effectiveness of the study programmes and other processes, further analysis and application of such data.

See Criterion 3 and Criterion 10.

STANDARD G. The Institution has mechanisms in place to assess updated, objective and impartial quantitative and qualitative information on the quality of study programmes offered and qualifications awarded.

Precepts:

Armenian Law on Freedom of Information

Feedback mechanisms within electronic information dissemination system

The Armenian Law “On Freedom of Information” is the statutory framework to serve as basis for University policy on publicising information related to institutional operations and activity.

The University has placed major premium on electronic information dissemination system in the reporting period, taking account of the operational efficiency, accessibility and speediness of information disseminated via this route. In particular, the University launched its official new website (see at

www.ysmu.am, upgraded with more pages and sections for far more comprehensive information retrieval) in 2017. The University also opened Facebook (about 16 000 followers) and Twitter pages, as well as Rector's official Facebook page (about 30 000 followers).

Since 2015, the Career Development Office (Career Centre) has been operating at the University. The Centre engages in educational marketing activities, ensures informative advertising, and *targets the advertising to consumer* segments at local and global higher education market; develops for publication and later disseminates bulletins and prospectus, which detail the scope of educational and healthcare services offered by the University.

In addition, the University publishes "Future Doctor" monthly journal. It brings to the spotlight information related to the programmes of study (the hard-copy issue N 5-6 of the journal for 2017, issue N 5-6 for 2018, etc.).

Relevant feedback mechanisms are well in place on the University e-platforms, which allows for vigorous and efficient response to issues and queries raised by users. Responses and consideration of issues are achieved through officers in charge of specific fields, to which the issue pertains.

The Public Relations Department operates independently at the University and conducts daily monitoring of the periodical press, as well as online media monitoring for both news and social media.

As a result, information concerning the University, its operations or university community members or students is selected, analysed and later submitted to the Rector and relevant officers for further actions, where necessary (for instance, staff response towards issues on academic process, which were raised by University students through the Facebook initiative "Restart in teaching of cyclic classes" at <https://www.facebook.com/restartysmu/>).

In addition, the University employs tools and mechanisms stated above to assess and review the effectiveness and adequacy of relevant policies or procedures.

STRENGTHS

- Collegial governing prevails across the University governing bodies.
- Clear division of powers is done by University governing bodies through recourse to statutory framework and legal acts.
- Ensuring regular operation of the university governing bodies.
- Representation of teaching faculty and students is ensured across all governing bodies of the University.
- Defined term of office for governing bodies of the University.
- Publicity of institutional activities and vigorous responsiveness towards issues raised.

WEAKNESSES

- Legislative amendments aimed at changing the form of organisation in a relatively short period of time.

- Powers and authorities of institutional subdivisions are not sufficiently clarified and not strictly divided.
- Existing institutional statutory framework is not adequate to ensure smooth and effective running of University operations.
- Lack of relevant stipulations in the Armenian Law “On Foundations” on peculiarities of governance in higher education institutions.
- Lack of mechanisms to ensure, that internationally acclaimed individuals, who also have networking opportunities, are involved in the highest governing body of the University; and lack of legal regulations to hold liable in case of non-performance of statutory obligations.
- Low level of governance skills among students and other persons involved in University governing bodies.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Adoption of a new legislative framework governing educational foundations and the new legislation on higher education.
- Defining accountability tools on performance and more specified and clear mechanisms for the selection of persons involved in the governing bodies according to legislation.
- Extending the cooperation with universities abroad.
- Involvement of external stakeholders in the University system of governance.

THREATS

- Decrease in number of applicants, conditioned by various socio-economic or other factors.

OVERCOMING WEAKNESSES AND ELIMINATING THREATS

- Vigorous engagement into the discussions and development of legislative framework governing higher education institutions and higher education.
- Penetration into new educational markets.
- Continuous improvement of existing institutional statutory framework.
- Improvement of governance skills of groups involved in governance bodies using various modes of information provision.

CRITERION III. PROGRAMMES OF STUDY

CRITERION. *The programmes of study are in line with the University mission, form integral part of the institutional planning and promote processes of mobility and internationalization.*

Ambitions. University strives to ensure a learning environment, which, having due regard to the requirements of Armenian National Qualifications Framework, allows organising higher medical and postgraduate education, advancing the teaching approaches and methodology and improving the performance of academic, research and field practicum bodies, as well as ensuring integration of modern technologies into the education and research processes (see [University Strategic Plan 2015-2020](#)):

STANDARD A. Institution's programmes of study are consistent with its mission, are in line with the state educational standards and are thoroughly described per learning outcomes of the qualifications granted.

Precepts:

Descriptions of Programmes of Study (see [3-1.1](#), [3-1.2](#), [3-1.3](#))

Precepts of activities toward benchmarking on leading practices for study programmes (see [3-2](#))

The programmes of study at Yerevan State Medical University are consistent with the university mission statement, which is *per se* the education and training of quality health professionals aimed at maintaining, enforcing and improving public health (see [University Strategic Plan 2015-2020](#)).

The University delivers higher professional education in healthcare within defined cycles of higher education, i.e., 1-3 cycles, compliant with the Dublin descriptors.

“General Medicine” study programme is achieved in the form of continuing and integrated model of study and is delivered by the Faculty of General Medicine (statutory length of programme – six (6) years, qualification awarded – “MD Physician”, programme code 091201.00.7, see [3-1.1](#)).

“Stomatology” study programme is achieved in the form of continuing and integrated model of study and is delivered by the Faculty of Stomatology (statutory length of programme – five (5) years, qualification awarded – “Doctor of Dental Medicine”, programme code 091101.00.7, see [3-1.2](#)).

“Pharmacy” study programme is achieved in the form of continuing and integrated model of study and is delivered by Pharmacy Faculty (statutory length of programme in Bachelors – four (4) years, qualification awarded – “Bachelor of Pharmacy”, programme code 091601.00.6, see [3-1.3](#)). Statutory length of programme leading to Master of Pharmacy degree is one (1) year. The programme is delivered by the Pharmacy Faculty and culminates in the attainment of Master of Pharmacy degree (programme code - 091601.00.7).

“General Medicine” and “Stomatology” specialties are included in the list of professions and qualifications of higher professional education annexed to Armenian Government Decision N 1191-N, dated October

23, 2014. However, this decision does not provide for componential separation into bachelors and masters.

The state educational standards for graduate Master degree programme and continuing and integrated programmes of study in the health sector are not approved in the Republic of Armenia. Nevertheless, the qualifications of these study programmes are consistent with the 7th cycle of Armenian National Qualifications Framework (see the relevant diagram enclosed see [3-5.1.2.2](#)). In particular, the programme of study “Bachelors in Pharmacy” corresponds the 6th cycle and “Master of Pharmacy” programme is consistent with the 7th cycle (see [3-5.1](#), [3-5.2](#), [3-5.3](#)).

Only under the supervision of a licensed healthcare specialist may the graduate of medical programmes of study independently fulfill professional functions related to treatment, diagnosis and prevention. The graduate may independently engage in professional medical practice upon successful completion of postgraduate education (i.e., clinical residency for physicians and stomatologists). The education in clinical residency is an imperative to independently engaging in medical practice. These practices are as well underscored in healthcare sector of Armenia, throughout the region and across the countries of European Union, United States and Commonwealth of Independent States.

These study programmes are thoroughly described as per learning outcomes of qualifications awarded (see the descriptions enclosed, [3-1.1](#), [3-1.2](#), [3-1.3](#)).

To ensure internationalization of study programmes and boost competitiveness of graduates across different countries abroad (EU, US, CIS countries, etc.), the Department of Programmes of Study has carried out a programme benchmarking on leading practices in 2015 and 2016, comparing degree programmes General Medicine, Stomatology and Pharmacy with the relevant undergraduate and graduate degree programmes at more than 25 European, American and CIS medical institutions.

The benchmarking has been carried out with due reference to the Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications, WFME (World Federation for Medical Education) Basic Medical Education, WFME Global Standards for Quality Improvement 2015 and WFME standards for Continuing Professional Development of Medical Doctors.

It is important to note, that benchmarking / comparative analysis is performed on a regular basis and where necessary. Specific priority has been attached to the differences existing between the curricula (subjects/disciplines, workload, knowledge testing mode). Subject-specific programmes and curricula of study programmes have been reviewed, thus developing integration of curricular contents from different knowledge domains along horizontal and vertical dimensions. In addition, relevant learning outcomes have also been revised (see the timeline defined by the plan).

A new format for filling out the courses was introduced at the Meeting (dated 19.05.2015) of Council for Academic-Methodical Affairs. The curricula for “General Medicine” integrated degree programme (1-6 years of study), and the curricular contents for “Pharmacy” degree programme in Bachelors (4 years of study) and Masters (1 year of study) were amended and approved at the Council Meeting (dated 23.06.2015). This was done taking due account of the comparative analysis of curricular contents in similar programmes running in about twenty-five (25) HEIs abroad (see Council Meeting Minutes).

Within the scope of Tempus ALIGN project, academic subdivisions at the University have produced requisite guidance on the novel model of continuing and integrated study programmes, on how to document and fill out the courses within the study programmes, as well as alignment methodology along vertical and horizontal dimensions. At its meeting convened on 03.07.2015, the University Council for Academic-Methodical Affairs approved the said documents and policies.

For purposes of running the novel model of courses (the model is enclosed, see also [3-1.1](#), [3-1.2](#), [3-1.3](#) enclosed), university officers have attended local and overseas trainings and have carried out consultations and explanatory activities at academic departments/chairs. In particular, these activities have been delivered between *December 2014 and February 2015* within the bounds of reforming and developing descriptions of study programmes of General Medicine, Stomatology and Pharmacy degree programmes. The activities go as follows:

- Meetings with more than 100 heads of academic departments/chairs and office managers/officers in charge of departmental academic affairs. During the meetings, the expediency of implementing the new model was showcased, its advantages, structure, as well as ‘know-how’ of completion were introduced, Bloom’s Taxonomy of measurable verbs and action verbs was highlighted.
- The model (both in Armenian and English) filled out by academic departments/chairs was peer-reviewed and commentary was provided thereon.

In April 2016, the Council for Academic-Methodical Affairs considered revised descriptions of the said study programmes and approved for further adoption (see Council Minutes).

Between 2013 and 2018, activities were carried out toward revision of programme-level learning outcomes and ensuring their alignment with the Armenian National Qualifications Framework descriptors pursuant to the national guidelines (find enclosed national guidelines and alignment patterns, which were developed under Tempus ALIGN project, see [3-1.6](#), [3-5.1](#), [3-5.2](#), [3-5.3](#)):

It is noteworthy that the definition of prerequisite course-level and programme-level learning outcomes in the preceding cycles through innovative model has enabled for more effective mastery of subjects. However, successful completion of a prerequisites course/subject is not always an imperative to enrollment in the module proceeding the prerequisites course/subject (2011-2018 Policies on Expulsion (withdrawal) and Reinstatement in Armenian Higher Education Institutions, defined by the Armenian Ministry of Education and Science, in regard with fulfillment of missed programme requirements for courses within 12 ECTS credits limit). In this respect, The University has submitted a proposal to the Ministry on making amendments to the said policies; the proposal was approved on 17.12.2018, by the Ministry Order N 1676-N and enabled certain freedom to universities to apply the policies and define the subjects to be fulfilled (see the amendment in the Appendix to the Ministry Order N 1242 2011, dated 17.11.2011).

The Medical University implemented these changes and defined the list of non-specialised courses (per programmes of study) to be fulfilled as a missed programme within the limit of 12 ECTS credits (see the

Meeting Minutes N 2 of Council for Academic-Methodical Affairs, dated 18.12.2018). It is expected that this decision will positively influence the performance of students of 2-5 years of study in the long-term. List organisations (specifying the country), which have been used by the Institution as reference point for running comparative analysis (benchmarking) on leading practices toward programmes of study. The list is available in [3-2](#), see enclosed.

STANDARD B. The institution has a policy of choosing teaching and learning methods in line with the intended learning outcomes of study programmes, and the policy fosters student-centred learning.

Precepts:

Learning outcomes and teaching and learning methods and approaches, which are in line with the learning outcomes (see [3-5.1.1.](#), [3-5.2.1](#), [3-5.3.1](#) for three (3) study programmes enshrined in the accreditation application)

Procedure for developing and reviewing courses of study programmes (see [3-4.2](#))

Relevant National Guidelines (see [3-16](#))

	Learning outcomes ¹	Instruction/teaching methods				Learning approaches			
1									
2									
The alignment between study programme courses and intended learning outcomes (ILO) (insert rows and columns where necessary) ²									
	Course title	ILO 1	ILO 2	ILO 3	ILO 4	ILO 5	ILO 6	ILO 7	ILO 8
1									
2									

Having due regard to the findings of first Self-analysis Report of 2011-2015, the University has adopted a policy of choosing teaching and learning methods (see Goal 3, [University Strategic Plan 2015-2020](#)), which foster student-centred learning. Pursuant to this policy, the University shall be committed to ensuring the transition from teacher-led/teacher-centered instruction to student-centered learning. In

¹ See [3-5.1.1.](#), [3-5.2.1](#), [3-5.3.1](#) enclosed

² See [3-5.1.3](#), [3-5.2.3](#), [3-5.3.3](#) enclosed

connection with this, recommendations regarding teaching and learning novel approaches have been discussed and approved at academic departments/chairs, subject-specific and university-wide methodical commissions (see relevant minutes). The University has developed a policy and procedure for periodic revision and modernization of teaching and learning approaches and methods (see the procedure on developing and reviewing courses of study programmes, [3-4.2](#) enclosed).

Concurrently with conventional (traditional) teaching methods, the institution of interactive, problem-based and small group instruction is also employed at the University (e.g. pathophysiology subject). Student performance is graded based not only on the account of student effort and in-class participation, but also on group projects.

It should be mentioned, that the development of course-level learning outcomes as per Bloom's Taxonomy is of great importance under the novel formats, which are used to develop programme-level courses. It is also important to clarify learning outcomes and ensure their compliance with testing methods and their alignment with the programme-level outcomes (horizontal and vertical dimensions, constructive, alignment).

University officers have engaged in developing national guidelines for alignment (see the Guidelines, see [3-16](#) enclosed). The national guidelines comprehensively detail the alignment methodology, also being employed in selection and improvement of teaching and learning approaches, which are consistent with the intended learning outcomes.

When choosing effective teaching approaches/methods, high priority is attached to surveys, which are conducted among students, graduates, and employers. Of great importance are also the focus-group meetings and studies on international practices, which are carried out by relevant subdivisions of the University (see relevant surveys conducted by Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance, Conference Proceedings [3-17](#) enclosed, survey findings, comparative analysis).

Having due regard to the proposal on developing multidisciplinary courses, which was suggested by experts during the first institutional accreditation, from 2014 through 2018, an interdisciplinary course on Palliative Medicine (course for two weeks) was developed jointly by Academic Departments of Pathophysiology, Pharmacology, Public Health, Anaesthesiology, Family Medicine, Endocrinology and Medical Psychology. This course was designed for Family Medicine study programme in Clinical Residency. In 2015 the course was approved by the subject-specific Council for Academic-Methodical Affairs and was later implemented within the said residency programme (see the approval statement and the description). The said practices are envisaged to apply to the General Medicine continuing and integrated study programme.

Between 2015 and 2018, a series of interdisciplinary courses have been developed and run for students enrolled to General Medicine study programme. The courses are specifically structured to reflect and offer coverage of current issues in medicine. Most importantly, the surveys and meetings conducted among students revealed higher rate of satisfaction with the courses. Hence, the University currently considers to widely employ the said practices (i.e., extension of the thematic coverage and development of a separate component within the curricular contents).

In 2017 and 2018, and in 2018 through 2019, students of General Medicine degree programme in 5th and 6th year of study, as well as clinical residents have attended free courses (3 to 6 months long), which were organised by the Career Development Office/Career Centre under GLOBUS and FMGE academic projects. These projects involve American and Indian models of theoretical and clinical medicine and more than 94 students have attended these courses.

Between 2013 and 2018, having regard to the Strategic Plan, the University undertook to establish educational departments (Simulation Centre and Stomatology Excellence Centre) furnished with innovative and state-of-the-art teaching equipment through World Bank funding (computerized robot-simulators, selected skills trainers, Phantoms) and employing high quality staff trained abroad and in Armenia as well. These departments have been integrated into institution's education infrastructure. The choice of equipment and devices has been conditioned by the feedback, which the alumni and employers have reported in relevant surveys. In addition, the meetings with relevant healthcare professionals surfaced information on skills and competencies, which are vital to master. This information was also considered when obtaining special equipment for the centres (see survey findings).

Learner-centred innovative technologies, which meet international standard requirements, are employed at the centres and are aimed at developing and testing practical skills and competencies. This is specifically important in terms of the changing landscape of higher medical education and emerging developments in medical education in the western societies, in the region and the CIS countries.

Within the framework of General Medicine and Stomatology continuing and integrated study programmes (Internal Diseases, Surgical Diseases, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Anaesthesiology and Reanimatology, Paediatrics, Therapeutic Stomatology, Surgical Stomatology, Orthopaedic Stomatology, Orthodontics and Paediatric Stomatology), students attend courses, which are organised at these centres in accordance with the subject syllabus (see relevant timetables).

STANDARD C. The Institution has a policy toward student assessment against learning outcomes and ensures academic integrity.

Precepts:

[Regulation on organization of test-based e-examinations and quizzes 3-4.1](#)

Policies on administering oral examinations [3-4.1](#)

Policies and procedures on fulfillment of missed programme requirements within the limit of 12 ECTS credits [3-4.1](#)

Master's Thesis Defence Guidelines in Public Health Degree Programme [3-4.1](#)

Policies on Final Attestation (see [fin. attestation](#)) [3-4.1](#)

Descriptions of multicomponent assessment system, approved by decisions of Council for Academic-Methodical Affairs (see relevant decisions)

Assessment methods and criteria defined in compliance with learning outcomes ([3-5.1.1.](#), [3-5.2.1.](#), [3-5.3.1](#) enclosed)

Describe learning outcomes and relevant assessment methods ³ , which apply to three (3) study programmes enshrined in application on accreditation	
Learning outcome	Assessment method
...	

The University has a policy toward student assessment against learning outcomes and ensures academic integrity (Goal 2, Strategic Plan 2015-2020) enshrined in the institutional regulatory documents (these documents have been developed having due regard to the Armenian Law on General Education, Law on Higher and Postgraduate Professional Education, taking due account of the European Directives on higher-education qualifications). Having regard to the results of the self-analysis, carried out by the University in 2012-2015, and the commentary and recommendations provided by local and international experts within the scope of the mentioned institutional accreditation, the University achieved diversification and alignment of assessment modes. In doing so, the University has taken account of the types of courses and relevant learning outcomes making gradual transition from test-based system of assessment (operating between 2006 and 2011) to multicomponent system of assessment of learning outcomes. However, the electronic test-based system is the most widespread method used at the University thus far. For purposes of increasing the reliability, accuracy and objectivity of this method, in 2017-2018 the University organised professional trainings for those officers at the academic departments, who are in charge of composing the tests (see the relevant timeline).

The assessment policy is achieved through the documents going as follows:

1. [Regulation on organization of test-based e-examinations and quizzes](#) (adopted by University Scientific Council Decision N08, dated 24.05.2017)
2. Policies and procedures on administering oral examinations (adopted by University Scientific Council Decision N 04, dated 31.10.2012)
3. Policies on fulfillment of missed programme requirements within 12 ECTS credits limit (adopted by University Scientific Council Decision N 05, dated 04.03.2016)
4. Master's Thesis Defence Guidelines in Public Health Degree Programme (approved by Public Health Faculty Scientific Council on 20.09.2017)
5. [Policies on Final Attestation](#) (adopted by University Scientific Council Decision N 06, dated 02.12.2015)

³ See [3-5.1.1.](#), [3-5.2.1.](#), [3-5.3.1](#) enclosed.

6. Descriptions of multicomponent assessment system, approved by decisions of Council for Academic-Methodical Affairs (e.g. Pharmacology, [3-1.1](#), [3-1.2](#), [3-1.3](#) enclosed, Hygiene, Council Decisions).

In case of majority of theoretical subjects (except for Pharmacology and Hygiene) taught at 1-3 years of study in degree programmes, examinations and tests (in test-based e-exam format) are administered, also taking into account the ongoing assessment of student performance (i.e., at least 5 oral responses during the academic semester). The multicomponent assessment system in Pharmacology presupposes ongoing assessment against thematic sections, as well as comprises research component and test-based e-examination for the semester (see specifications of study programmes, [3-1.1](#), [3-1.2](#), [3-1.3](#) enclosed). The system was introduced in the first semester of 2017-2018 academic year and was launched as a pilot project. Once being revised, it was afterwards (in the second semester of 2018-2019) run as an approved system having due regard to the plan-do-check-act principle (The Deming Cycle).

Taking into account the successful practices of research component introduction, its positive effect on the overall academic performance, as well as the positive feedback from students, a number of clinical departments/chairs (e.g., Cardiology, see 3-1.1) currently introduce research as a component in the specialty courses. Meanwhile, they develop instruction and assessment new approaches, which would be compliant with the learning outcomes.

One more example of good practices is observed for Hygiene and Ecology subject, which was furnished with the multicomponent assessment system in 2015-2016 academic year, applying the PDCA cycle, thus ensuring vigorous student engagement in research (see specification on General Medicine study programme, [3-1.1](#) enclosed). The multicomponent assessment system for Pathological Anatomy has been operating since 2016 and comprises, *inter alia*, component of a learning portfolio/student portfolio.

For the courses of clinical disciplines, test-based and oral exams are administered. The assessment of acquisition of practical skills and mastery of patient communication skills is accordingly assessed at clinics, in particular, at the bedside, and through modern specialist equipment (robot-simulators, skills trainers, dummies) available at the simulation centres.

Within the practicum courses specific logbooks are used, which clearly stipulate clinical skills and competencies in the form of intended learning outcomes, and define number of performed procedural skills (checklists) (see practicum journal templates).

Final attestation in General Medicine and Stomatology continuing and integrated study programmes involves three stages. The first stage determines how well the student performs clinical and practical skills, which is organised at the university simulation centre (General Medicine programme of study, [fin. attestation](#) enclosed). Starting from 2018-2019 academic year, the performance of practical skills will also be checked at the newly established Stomatology Excellence Centre (specifically for Stomatology programme of study).

The second stage involves administering test-based e-examinations at computer labs. The last stage involves oral examination, which is assessed by relevant exam board. The cumulative of the three components is reflected in the final grade and counts 10% for practical skills, 40% for computer-based test exams and 50% for oral exam.

In addition, Master's Thesis Defence in Public Health and Pharmacy degree programmes serves as an assessment method.

The University ensures academic integrity through the Armenian Policy on Education and relevant institutional policies (see University Internal Disciplinary Rules, Master's Thesis Defence Guidelines in Public Health Degree Programme,).

The Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance conducts surveys and focus-group meetings about the assessment system both per semester and where deemed as necessary. Afterwards, the findings are analysed at the academic departments, subject-specific methodical councils and at the University Council for Academic-Methodical Affairs.

Based on the outcomes of pilot multicomponent assessment system, the Council adopts a decision, which may refer to making relevant supplements to the system, may render it as effectively operating system or may discontinue the operation thereof, while applying the PDCA cycle (see relevant decisions). Students provide positive feedback on the reforms of the assessment system (see survey results). In addition, the employment of multicomponent assessment modes has improved student performance. For instance, in summer 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 terms, the performance in Pharmacology subject has improved to 74 percentage instead of former 64,8 (see report by the Dean of General Medicine Faculty, dated 31.10.2018). Moreover, students display greater interest toward the subjects taught. The University envisages to continue introduction and monitoring of multicomponent assessment systems, taking into account the course-level learning outcomes and having due regard to the alignment methodology.

STANDARD D. Institution's study programmes, in terms of contents, are consistent with other relevant study programmes of recognized HEIs and promote mobility of students and faculty.

Precepts:

[University Strategic Plan 2015-2020](#)

Regulation of University Council for Academic-Methodical Affairs, [3-4.4](#)

[Student and Faculty Mobility Indicators, e-questionnaire 2018](#)

Student Transfer Rates by Intensity, 2013 through 2017 and 2018 cohorts (see [3-12](#) enclosed)

Diploma Supplement Templates (see [3-3.1](#), [3-3.2](#) enclosed)

List education institutions (specifying the country and number of students as per years), with which the Institution has concluded effective agreements to ensure student exchange and mobility.⁴

Student inflow

	<i>Country, institution</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>
--	-----------------------------	-------------	-------------	-------------	-------------	-------------

⁴ See pp. III4 and III5, [e-questionnaire 2018](#), enclosed.

1						
2	...					
<i>Student outflow</i>						
	<i>Country, institution</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>
1						
2						
<i>List education institutions (specifying the country and number of instructors as per years), with which the Institution has concluded effective agreements to ensure teaching faculty exchange and mobility.⁵</i>						
<i>Faculty inflow</i>						
	<i>Country, institution</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>
1						
2	-----					
<i>Faculty outflow</i>						
	<i>Country, institution</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>
1						
2						

The University Council for Academic-Methodical Affairs is the body in charge of the coordination of academic-methodical activities (see Regulation of Council for Academic-Methodical Affairs). The Chair of the Council is the Vice-rector for Academic Affairs, *ex officio*. The Council engages in discussion of methodical aspects of academic process and ensures operation thereof. It also considers the operating study programmes and subject-specific programmes, as well as amendments thereto, and issues ranging from newly developed programmes of study, curricular contents and subject-specific programmes to new approaches and methods used in teaching. The Council also considers amendments to knowledge assessment system, issues related to academic, methodical and research cooperation with various extra-institutional bodies, consistency of new academic literature with the curricular contents and programmes of study, publication of such literature, integration of subject-specific programmes along vertical and horizontal dimensions, and many other issues deemed as necessary.

⁵ See pp. III4 and III5, [e-questionnaire 2018](#), enclosed.

The subject-specific methodical boards and academic departments/chairs, which act under the Council for Academic-Methodical Affairs, participate (within the scope of their powers and discipline taught) in the mentioned activities as bodies of first instance recourse. Having due regard to recommendations/commentary by international experts, which they made about the first self-analysis report in 2012-2015, the University was committed to establishing Department of Study Programmes within the Office for Academic-Methodical Affairs with a view to promote requisite reforms in this field. Ongoing programmes of study, which operate in accordance with the University policy (see [University Strategic Plan 2015-2020](#)), are consistent and well articulated – in terms of contents – with similar study programmes of EU and CIS countries. Such consistency between the study programmes is achieved through periodic review and update of the programme contents and courses, having due regard to relevant analyses carried out by the University. To note, for purposes of improving the 2014-2018 curricular contents, more than 30 study programmes of 20 countries were analysed for “General Medicine” integrated programme, 28 study programmes of 14 countries for Stomatology programme. Improvements and amendments to study programmes are constantly made on a regular basis (this can also be proved by the improvements made to “Higher Mathematics and Medical Physics” and “Biophysics” subjects, Council for Academic-Methodical Affairs Meeting N1, dated 11.09.2018, see also “General Medicine” study programme specifications, [3-1.1](#) enclosed).

The professional literature available in Armenian language is regularly updated (for instance, comprehensive and practical manuals have been composed and published covering professional literature for stomatology-related subjects (these manuals are available online at http://ysmu.am/hy/science_list/stomatologiakan_krtutyayn_gerazancutyayn_kentron/)).

Pursuant to its strategic plan, the University has envisaged to ensure student and faculty mobility through developing and running partnership projects with higher education institutions of the region and European Higher Education Area (see Goal 2, [University Strategic Plan 2015-2020](#)).

These partnership projects have led to increased participation in international mobility schemes over the last five (5) years. In addition, relevant indicators prove increase in student and faculty mobility under intercollegiate agreements.

One more evidence, that the University’s study programmes are – in terms of curricular contents – are consistent with similar programmes of internationally recognized HEIs, is the increase in mobility indicators of students and faculty, as well as the positive tendencies in internationalization in the reporting period for 2013-2018 (see Appendix enclosed, [e-questionnaire 2018](#), and Criterion 9). In addition, increase is observed in percentage of the number of students wishing to continue their studies at Yerevan State Medical University (see number of students transferred from other HEIs between 2013 and 2017, through 2018, [3-12](#) enclosed, as well as data on increase in admission of overseas students). It should be noted that back in 2012-2015, the group of international experts had stated about the necessity of increasing the mobility indices within the first institutional accreditation.

The delivery of mobility schemes also surfaced certain issues, such as the absence of mobility window in curricular contents of study programmes, coupled with the multidisciplinary approach typical to the U.S., and the Western and European countries, which hinders further growth of student mobility. There exist also certain obstacles in terms of finances and funding when it comes to achieving student and

faculty mobility (the programmes, which have already been delivered, have been financed exquisitely under international project schemes).

One of the endeavours contributing to student mobility and internationalisation is the revision/improvement (contents revision, ensuring Diploma Supplement readability and digitalisation) of Diploma Supplement of study programmes, which was carried out by the University between 2017 and 2018 (see the Diploma Supplement Template in [3-3.1](#), [3-3.2](#) enclosed).

It is consistent with the provisions of the *Paris Communiqué* adopted at the *European Higher Education Area* (EHEA) Ministerial Conference in Paris, 24-25 May 2018, and approved revised Diploma Supplement, which aimed at encouraging student and alumni mobility. Underscoring the importance of internationalization of University, the Rector was one of the delegates in the said Ministerial Conference.

STANDARD E. The Institution ensures a policy aimed at assessing the effectiveness of study programme and ensure the monitoring and improvement thereof.

Precepts:

[University Strategic Plan 2015-2020](#)

Guidelines on how to conduct e-surveys (Teacher through student eyes) among students (see [3-13](#) enclosed)

“Higher Medical Education: Present and Future” Academic-Methodical Conference, 2014 (see conference proceedings [3-17](#) enclosed)

University Strategic Plan stipulates the necessity of policy aimed at monitoring and improving the programmes of study, as well as assessing the effectiveness thereof (improve the domestic system of education quality assessment and assurance, aligning it to the criteria defined by National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation (ANQA) and European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) (see Goal 2 and Goal 9, [University Strategic Plan 2015-2020](#), and Criterion 10).

The Action Plan stipulates a roadmap for monitoring and improving the programmes of study, as well as assessing the effectiveness thereof (see Criterion 10).

The University possesses requisite infrastructure aimed at developing, assessing and improving programmes of study. There are also mechanisms and toolsets (academic department – the subject-specific board on academic-methodical affairs – Council on Academic-Methodical Affairs – University Scientific Council, Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance), which are specifically designed to monitor and review programmes of study, while applying the PDCA cycle (see the minutes of Council on Academic-Methodical Affairs, Criterion 10).

These mechanisms and toolsets are based on findings of surveys among students and other stakeholders, as well as make reference to analysis of labour-market demands. Amendments to different specialty descriptions in EU and CIS countries and the region are also instrumental for the said toolsets and mechanisms. To this end, various tools are used ranging, not limited to, from surveys among internal and

external stakeholders (see the university website), focus-group meetings and individual meetings to conferences and congresses and evaluation of achievement of defined education goals. Since 2015, Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance carries out student surveys in electronic format (see [“Teacher through student eyes”](#) survey description, enclosed).

The vigorous communication between students, administration and the Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance is ensured through discussions and debates on issues surfaced on the University official website and through official pages on social networks. In addition, the University publishes “Future Doctor” journal and it brings to the spotlight issues, which students encounter and raise regarding the university life and the teaching and learning process.

One more journal published at the University – “Medicine, Education and Science” – presents the commentary and feedback on programmes of study, which the teaching faculty periodically publicizes (see relevant issues of the journal).

Between 2014 and 2019, extensive workings have been conducted toward improvement of the assessment methodology. In addition, international practices and effectiveness of existing procedure, as well as its conformance to quality assurance principles have been analysed. The findings are further discussed and serve useful reference point for designing relevant reforms (see “Higher Medical Education: Present and Future”, XX Academic-Methodical Conference Proceedings, 2014).

The analysis of learning outcomes is reflected in the reports submitted by the Faculty Dean, Vice-rector for Academic Affairs, Chairs of Final Attestation Committee. One of the examples of good practice in monitoring and in-depth reformation of study programmes is the improvement of continuing and integrated Stomatology degree programme, which was achieved between 2015 and 2018 (clarification and alignment of curricular contents, courses and programme-level outcomes with the Armenian National Qualifications Framework; alignment between teaching-learning-testing, thorough upgrading of professional literature database, introduction of simulation-based learning (simulation-based education), improvement of logistics and human capacity building, consolidation of clinical chairs, revision of diploma supplement, organization and delivery of large-scale international research conferences at institutional premises).

STRENGTHS

- Programmes of study, viewed as core educational programmes, in terms of duration, structure and contents, are mainly consistent with the European Directive, and the requirements of Armenian National Qualification Framework.
- Availability of Coordination Board for University Academic-Methodical activities, subject-specific methodical boards and Department of Study Programmes.
- Availability of procedure on developing and reviewing courses within study programmes, accessibility of innovative and coherent formats for course descriptions and the guidelines for filling out the courses, as well as the application of vertical and horizontal alignment methodology (in accordance with the national guidelines).

- Clearly defining prerequisite course-level and programme-level learning outcomes in the preceding cycles.
- Gradual implementation of multicomponent assessment and the introduction of research component.
- Introduction of innovative simulation-based learning.
- Streamlined practices on introduction of learner-centered education elements; tendency of extending these practices.
- Availability of a bilingual Diploma Supplement acceptable and readable in European Higher Education Area.
- Availability of a monitoring process for programmes of study are monitored.

WEAKNESSES

- Lack of mobility window in the curricular contents.
- Limited funding opportunities for student and faculty mobility.
- Absence of continuous and integrated multidisciplinary courses in Masters and Bachelors study programmes.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Full introduction of multicomponent assessment system.
- Continuous refurbishment of simulation/excellence centres, enhancement of facilities, increase in the number of courses/trainings run therein.

THREATS

- Continuous and constant diversification of trends in medical education recognition in the European Higher Education Area, in the regional countries and the CIS countries.

OVERCOMING WEAKNESSES AND ELIMINATING THREATS

- Envisaging mobility window in the curricular contents.
- Generation of new financial sources for student and faculty mobility through increased institutional participation in international grants and scholarship programmes.
- Introduction of continuous and integrated multidisciplinary courses in Masters and Bachelors study programmes taking into account the good practices for study programmes in postgraduate education.
- Further improvement of programmes of study.

CRITERION IV. STUDENTS

CRITERION. *The University provides students with relevant assistance with a view to ensuring effective learning environment.*

Ambitions. Ensure necessary learning environment, which will guarantee higher effectiveness for the academic process.

STANDARD A. The institution has clear mechanisms for implementing student recruitment, selection, and admission processes.

Precepts:

Admission Procedure for State and Non-State Armenian HEIs

Admission Procedure of Overseas Students

Admission Procedure of Public Health Faculty

Number of students in each programme of study

Number of students at education institutions as per programme of study and mode of study (see e-questionnaire 2018 page IV.1)						
Number of students		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Bachelors	Full-time					
	Part-time					
Masters	Full-time					
	Part-time					
Researcher	Full-time					
	Part-time					
Learner mobility						
Learner mobility over the past five (5) years (see e-questionnaire 2018 page IV.1)						
Student Outflow						
Institution/Country		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
1						
Student Inflow						
Institution/Country		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
1						
Expulsions and Readmissions						
Number of students		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
1	Percent/number of expelled students					
2	Percent/number of readmitted students					

Since 1991 the University has engaged in admission of students in accordance with the Procedure set by the Armenian Government (overseas students, and students to Masters in Pharmacy and Public Health are not included in this admission process) (see the admission procedure of state and non-state universities of the Republic of Armenia).

The applicant, in accordance with the stated Procedure, may choose to take 2 from amongst 3 specialized examinations in physics, chemistry, biology. The Grading and Testing Centre of the Republic of Armenia (hereinafter referred to as the GTC) is the body, which administers examinations in a unified form.

Consistent with the number of seats defined by the Armenian Government, each year 350-440 students are matriculated in the University and enrolled to the General Medicine programme of study. The number of students enrolled to Stomatology study programme constitutes 80-150, and the number of students in Pharmacy study programme is 50-90 people.

To note, the number of students enrolled to first-year studies free of charge (full state reimbursement of tuition fee) constitutes, in average, 90 persons (amongst them 50-60 students are enrolled to the General Medicine programme of study, 8 students enrolled to the Stomatology programme, 5 students matriculated into the Pharmacy study programme and 20 students enroll to the Military Medicine programme).

By and large, average number of local students admitted to the University per year is 700 in the reporting period (it was only in 2018/2019 that this number was eclipsed to 421, which was conditioned by smaller number of school graduates).

It should be mentioned, that the University applies to the Armenian Ministry of Science and Education beforehand, in order to get permission to conduct additional admission (the average number is 150 seats). The additional seats are allocated to applicants, who have taken the unified examinations but have failed to ensure the average score threshold (see the copy of admission document).

The body which conducts the admission to the Master's Programme at the Faculty of Public Health is the University (see the Regulation). The number of students enrolled to the Public Health programme of study has increased over the last five years and now it counts 65 students instead of former 15.

The admission examinations of overseas students are organised and conducted by the University (see Procedure on Admission of Overseas Students). Meanwhile, the Armenian Ministry of Education and Science is the body, which ensures the process of submission of requisite documentation. In the reporting period, on average 1300 overseas students have studied at the University (number breakdown by years is as follows: 1291 students in 2014-2015; 1294 students in 2015-2016; 1337 students in 2016-2017; 1295 students in 2017-2018).

Having regard to the comments made by the group of experts during the previous accreditation, as well as to understand the extent to which the student recruitment and admission mechanisms are effective, a correlation analysis was conducted by the University Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance in 2014-2015 and 2015-2016. This analysis measured the quality of student performance at the stage of admission and the quality of academic performance within later stages of education.

Three-year long vigorous comparative studies conducted by the Centre, highlighted that students, who ensure a minimum admission exam threshold score and enroll to university within additionally organised admission, mainly demonstrate poor academic performance.

In particular, about 40% of students, who have scored 8-11 (which is the lowest threshold for passing the exams) during admission examinations, fail to continue studies during the first three years at the university. In addition, only 2-3% of these students demonstrate good academic performance (see the succinct data of the analysis conducted by the University Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance, as well as the Report of the Head of Centre at the University Scientific Council).

Having regard to the analysis submitted, the University currently considers the extent to which it is effective and expedient to matriculate students with low scores, who enrolled during the additional examinations. Discussions are currently underway with the respective agency on the feasibility of making amendments to the admission policy and necessity of ensuring institutional autonomy.

There are also complications in connection with the choice of specialty, since certain portion of first-year students apply for a transfer from one study programme to another already in the second year of study. In particular, 31 students transferred from one faculty to another in 2015-2016 academic year. The same happened in 2016-2017 where the number of students exceeded that of the previous academic year and counted 66 students. In 2017-2018 academic year, 62 students applied for a transfer and 53 students applied in 2018-2019. This is certainly an issue to be concerned about. Therefore, we have most importantly suggested (and this suggestion is currently being discussed) clarifying the mechanisms of transfer from one HEI to another HEI in the new Draft Law on Higher Education (see the new Draft Law on Higher Education).

Furthermore, the University Career Development Office (Careers Centre) and the Student Parliament have organised manifold meetings between 2016-2017 and 2017 through 2018 at Armenian high schools and military units in order to make presentations on the specialties and study programmes offered at the Medical University. During these meetings, the audience was provided with necessary information through the requisite guides. Guest appearances on behalf of different medical professionals and healthcare specialists were also organised, during which the specialists highlighted the peculiarities of various specialties (see the guides).

Due to the increase in the number of students, the University experiences certain issues and currently reviews the capacity of separate institutional divisions. In this regard, Mikayelyan Surgery Hospital was purchased; a new reading hall is being designed, etc.

STANDARD B. The institution has policy and procedures for identifying student educational needs.

Precepts:

Analysis of Surveys on Identified Needs and Issues

(http://ysmu.am/en/page_list/reports/#sthash.zD7xTSf8.dpbs)

Report by Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs at the Meeting N 13 of Board of Trustees, dated 26.12.2017

In compliance with its policy, the University is committed to routinely review and improve the process through which student educational needs are analyzed (see Goal 3, [University Strategic Plan 2015-2020](#)). In this regard, the respective subdivisions of the University (dean's offices, Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance) have conducted necessary studies and have provided evaluations on the following:

- student estimation/student feedback on the organization and implementation of the teaching and learning process;
- current state of lecture rooms and research lab facility resources (see detailed in Criterion 10).

Afterwards, through mapping these data with the issues encountered during the meetings (stated below) throughout the year, mechanisms and ways have been developed to settle these issues and respective decisions have been made, being subsequently introduced. In addition, the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs has presented a report at the Scientific Council towards the settlement or ongoing state of issues raised by students (see annual reports by the Vice-Rector on Academic Affairs).

In addition, the following activities are carried out throughout each academic year:

- consultation meetings for students of each year of study are convened by dean's offices (these meetings are also attended by people who are in charge of the subjects taught for specific academic term and for defined year of study; as a rule, the head of department or the academic programme officer attends these meetings);
- twice or thrice a year meetings with the rector are convened for students of every faculty and every year of study;
- meetings with the vice-rector for academic affairs thrice a week during defined office hours;
- once a week (specifically on Thursday) Rector holds reception, which can also be attended by students;
- University official website ensures a communication forum between a student and the rector;
- twice a year e-surveys are conducted by the University Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance;
- meetings are convened with the Legal Clinic and the Disciplinary Committee, where issues on student needs and challenges are voiced and afterwards discussed with the respective bodies (dean's offices, academic departments/chairs, study programme faculty committees and respective methodical commissions, rector's council, scientific council); relevant decisions are rendered to address the issues surfaced at these meetings (see the meeting minutes of academic departments/chairs, methodical commissions, rector's council, scientific council, survey analyses by the University Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance, sample announcements by the dean's offices, all the registers and schedules of the meetings).

To note, over the last two years, respective reforms have been introduced after the students raised, through this schedule, eight (8) issues they had encountered in separate components of the study programme, and also surfaced issues regarding the knowledge testing system (amendments into the subject programme of medical physics, separation of components within the internal medicine subject,

amendments into the programme of traumatology and orthopaedics, introduction of multi-component system, amendments into the policy on assessment system, organisation of thematic and inter-modular lectures, etc.) (see minutes of Board of Trustees, University Academic-Methodical Council and the amended programmes). The issues have been settled through plan-do-check-act principle.

For instance, over the past years, the students have continuously surfaced the necessity of having Internal Medicine subject lectured by relevant narrow specialists, i.e., lectured by a rheumatologist, gastroenterologist, cardiologist, nephrologist, pulmonologist, and other relevant specialists (see minutes of student debate clubs and analyses of “Teacher through student eyes” survey results conducted over the last three years). The issue was discussed in 2017 at University Subject-Specific Committees and Academic-Methodical Council, at the Rector’s Council, as well as within the Board of Trustees and afterwards, a relevant decision has been adopted (see the report of University Vice-rector for Academic Affairs, presented at the 13th Meeting of Board of Trustees, dated 26.12.2017, and also relevant decision adopted by the Board of Trustees). The decision has been effected in 2017-2018 academic year (see the documents on organisation of competition at the same academic departments). In 2018-2019 academic year, the Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance conducted survey on this issue, which revealed that 83,7% of students appraised the amendment and which was later proved by their improved level of academic performance from these subjects.

One more example dates back to June – December of 2015, when questionnaire survey (comprising 54 questions) was conducted among students, clinical residents and employers. The survey was designed to measure the satisfaction with the extent and mode of teaching practical skills, as well as to gain respondent feedback on the knowledge attained (see the analysis of survey results http://ysmu.am/en/page_list/reports/#sthash.mEnf3grH.dpbs). The survey revealed the urgent necessity of establishing a simulation centre, which was created in 2018 through the grand project launched by the University. Since 2019, the component of manual clinical skills in stomatology subjects has been taught at this centre. The effectiveness of centre activities will be measured through surveys at the end of 2019. Issues, which surfaced and were settled following the surveys among students, referred to many other issues on improving the organisation of academic process and have accordingly been categorized as per priority. Hence, the University has acquired 120 units of up-to-date literature pieces in 18 different branches of medical sciences. This literature also involves reference electronic materials. The issues, which have been solved, range from upgrading student hostel conveniences to purchasing 150 modern microscopic devices and locating 180 computers. Moreover, two lecture rooms and more than 50 classrooms have been renovated, and the Stomatology Excellence Centre has been built, etc. (see detailed in Criterion 7).

STANDARD C. The institution provides opportunities for organising make-up classes and running consultation aimed at supporting effective student learning.

Precepts:

Policies on Fulfillment of Missed Programme Requirements

<i>Please respond.</i>	%	
The percentage of students, who are aware of counselling services.	64.3	
The percentage of students, who are involved in extra-curricular counselling classes.	36.5	
The percentage of students, who are satisfied with the counselling services.	25.4	
Mark "YES" or "NO" to questions below.	YES	NO
Are counselors assigned to students?	V	
If not, is it envisaged?	V	

One of the major issues, which the Board of Trustees considered in 2017, relates to the structural changes within the dean's offices. These changes aimed at improving the office workings in respect of students (see the Board of Trustees meeting minutes N 13, dated 26.12.2017).

In compliance with number of students at various faculties and the indices on student-dean's office work-interrelation, the number of deputy deans at the General Medicine Faculty was swelled by the number of new deputy deans, i.e. six (6) deputy deans instead of former three (3). One deputy dean and one office manager were thus assigned to working with and running consultation to body of students of specific year of study. This was conditioned by the huge number of students enrolled to specific year of study at the Faculty of General Medicine; namely, the number of students ranges between 400 to 500).

In addition, the dean's offices and academic departments/chairs employ faculty and staff shift schedules. Pursuant to these schedules, instructors provide consultations throughout the academic semester on issues or topics raised by the student (see faculty and staff shifts at dean's offices and academic departments/chairs). During the last month of the each academic semester, academic departments/chairs hold 5 to 10 make-up classes and everyday classes (3-5 days) before the final exams within the scope of topics designed beforehand (see the schedule of academic departments/chairs for make-up classes).

In compliance with the "Policies on Fulfillment of Missed Programme Requirements" upon the culmination of the academic semester, make-up classes are organised for students who haven't attended the classes (see the Policies on Fulfillment of Missed Programme Requirements). The schedule of these classes is approved by the Rector. By the decision of the the Mandates Commission, students who have missed the classes for reasonable excuses, attend the make-up classes free of charge, and those who haven't submitted reasonable excuse for missing the classes, pay the tuition fee for make-up classes. For

instance, during the second term of 2018-2019 academic year, 177 students have attended the make-up classes, quarter of which (by reason of illness) – free of charge (see minutes of Mandates Commission). Over the last two years (2017-2018 and 2018-2019) additional and free of charge 3 to 6 month-long classes have been organised for 5th and 6th year students and clinical residents (both local and overseas students and residents). The classes have been organised within the scope of GLOBUS and FMGE academic projects and involved American and Indian models of theoretical and clinical medicine. More than 94 students have attended the make-up/additionally organised classes. Moreover, since October of 2018, proposed by students, twice a month additional thematic lectures are delivered, and three to six different lecturers (both theoretical specialists and clinicians) engage in introducing and discussing a specific topic in medicine. The discussions are held in the form of case presentations and analysis followed by question-answer sessions. To note, 97% of students have praised this model of delivery of lectures (see the survey results).

STANDARD D. There is a clearly defined regulation and timeline for students to apply to administrative staff for further support and guidance.

Precepts:

Working Plans of Dean's Offices

Minutes of Mandates Commission

<i>Please respond.</i>	%
The percentage of students, who are aware of student-targeted administrative services.	56.7
The percentage of students, who avail themselves of this opportunity for administrative services.	27.2
The percentage of students, who are satisfied with the said services.	26.5

University students apply to the Administration through groups (the whole group) or representatives (i.e. course leader or the group monitor) elected by batches and students of specific year of study. Students may also avail themselves of the opportunity of in-person meetings. All these meetings are convened in compliance with the approved schedule, viz. meeting with vice-rectors thrice a week, meeting with rector once a week, meetings with deans or deputy deans on a daily basis.

Furthermore, once or twice during the academic semester, the deans convene consultation meetings with deputy deans and heads of academic departments/chairs. These meetings surface manifold issues related to the academic process (see the working plans of dean's offices). Over the past two years, deans of

Faculties hold individual meetings with first-year students in September and introduce them their rights and responsibilities. Most importantly, these meetings allow the dean to document the issues that students raise in terms of academic, social and any other aspects, and registering this information, to plan the relevant steps and workings necessary to address those issues (see minutes of dean's offices).

Students also avail themselves of the opportunity to submit written requests and applications on various issues to Administration through the Department of General Services every working day. To note, about 3112 written applications were submitted in 2017-2018 academic year (see the registers of Department of General Services). Since 2016, a Disciplinary Committee has functioned at the University and it has thus far considered 21 applications submitted by students (see the minutes of Disciplinary Committee). The Mandates Commission, which has been operating at the University since 2017, has considered and had proposals for settlements on issues surfaced through 277 student applications (see the minutes of Mandates Commission). In addition, respective institutional subdivisions also consider and duly settle the issues, which students raise during non-formal meetings.

STANDARD E. The institution has special student career support services.

Precepts:

University Alumni Union website

(http://ysmu.am/hy/page_list/shrjanavartneriakumb/#sthash.algXqVG7.dpbs)

Regulation of the Careers Centre

<i>Please respond.</i>	%
The percentage of students, who are aware of career support services.	43.2
The percentage of students, who avail themselves of this opportunity.	12.5
The percentage of students, who are satisfied with the said services.	10.6

It should be noted, that one of the recommendations on this standard made by the group of experts during the previous accreditation referred to the creation of a career development office.

Back in 2014, the University Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance had conducted studies which resulted in a proposal to create a career development office (career centre) at the University. This suggestion was submitted to the University Administration for discussion, specifying that such centre could be committed to improving the competition in the labour market, as well as strengthening the links between the University and its alumni. In addition, the centre could support in strengthening the cooperation between the University and the medical establishments of the country coupled with rendering requisite careers guidance at Armenian high schools. Hence, the career

development office (career centre) started to operate at the University in 2015. It fulfills the following responsibilities:

- (a) ensure informative advertising, and *target the advertising to consumer* segments at local and global higher education market;
- (b) conduct research and analysis on local and global labour-market development trends, study on leading global systems and practices;
- (c) ensure contact and communication between University and its alumni;
- (d) ensure networking between local and international organisations, further involvement into activities of funding and development of relevant projects;
- (e) ensure networking with and involvement of professional associations into institutional activities;
- (f) organisation, implementation and completion of institutional activities aimed at addressing issues, which relate to graduate job search and placement schemes;
- (g) ensure effective communication between university students, alumni and prospective employers;
- (h) conduct systematic analysis toward career development expectations among students and alumni, as well as study competitiveness indicators in both local and international labour markets, carry out activities deemed as necessary;
- (i) organise manifold courses, run consultations, seminars, training courses and other activities aimed at boosting alumni representativeness and disseminate information on mentioned activities (see Career Development Office Regulation).

Over the last three (3) years the Career Development Centre has formed University Alumni Union. To note, more than 2500 graduates of the University, who work in different countries across the globe, have already subscribed to the Union (see the Alumni Union web page at http://ysmu.am/en/student_login/). Since its inception, the Centre has cooperated with a number of organisations within the bounds of job placement functions. In particular, cooperation has been maintained with pharmaceutical companies (e.g. “TAKEDA”, “Les Laboratoires Servier”), global pharmaceutical networks (“Georgia Pharmaceuticals”), laboratories (“FMD K&L”), major medical centres (Shengavit Medical Centre, ArtMed Medical Centre, Scientific-medical Centre of Dermatology and Sexually Transmitted Diseases of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia). Within the scope of this cooperation, a database has specifically been created at the Centre and it allows for subscribing and storing applications which are later submitted to the partner companies as per eligibility requirements. As a result, from amongst 40 applicants, 20 specialists already engage in professional practice. In addition, with a view to fulfilling its functions, the Centre operates sections in its web page under “Employers”, “Alumni”, “Vacancies” which offer breadth of useful information.

The Centre has also created a number of informative videos about the university, which offer breadth of digestible and illustrative information about the the university at global education markets (see the videos).

The Centre engages in organizing “GLOBUS” and “FMGE” academic projects, which count more than 94 students to participate over the last two years. For purposes of career support, ten senior-year students and six clinical residents have provided careers guidance to more than 500 Armenian high school pupils

and over 600 soldiers at military units. Every year careers guidance is provided to final-year students and graduates. To note, in academic year 2017 to 2018, more than 1200 students have availed themselves of careers guidance and career support opportunities. In addition, about 70 students have participated in seminars, which covered full range of information on how to apply for scholarship programmes funded by the European Union.

The Centre participates in education fairs organised annually in Armenia and abroad. One of the core functions of the Centre is to ensure student engagement in internationalization. For this purpose, information days and talks have been organised on topics ranging from self-development to submitting applications for overseas courses at partner countries and institutions. These events hosted guest talks from field specialists and were organised for an audience of about 98 students and clinical residents. The Centre also updates currently available alumni database, which records alumni biographical information and data.

STANDARD F. The institution has set mechanisms to support student involvement in university scientific and research activities.

Precepts:

Minutes of Academic-Methodical Council

Relevant Decisions of Scientific Council

Number of students engaged in institutional priority research as per programme of study						
Students/Learners	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	
Total	48	122	67	73	55	
List of projects embracing student engagement and number of students therein as per years (see e-questionnaire 2018 , p. IV.2)						
	Research project	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
1						
Number of published works authored or co-authored by learners (see e-questionnaire 2018 , p IV.2)						
	Published works	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
1						

Pursuant to the University Strategic Plan (in particular Goal 3 thereof), University Vice-rector for Academic Affairs and the Vice-rector for Science have submitted at University Scientific Council and Science-Coordination Council the policy and clear mechanisms on achieving extensive student involvement in the research workings (see Scientific Council Minutes N 3, dated 22.03.2018, available at <http://ysmu.am/website/documentation/files/8dbd67e9.pdf> and Science-Coordination Council Minutes N 4, dated 04.10.2018).

Specific procedure has been devised, which allows students to earn academic credits for involvement in research workings. The procedure provides for attainment of academic credits upon evaluating both research activity and the participation in scientific events (see Science-Coordination Council Minutes N 4, dated 07.06.2017).

The University Academic-Methodical Commission has approved the multicomponent format of evaluation of teaching and learning, which clearly provides for the research component. It is worth mentioning that within one academic department/chair about 60 percentage of students of specific year of study were involved in research activities throughout one academic year (see 252 research works of students at the academic department/chair of hygiene and ecology within one academic year).

Moreover, about 35 works, completed within the scope of the research activities, have been published in scientific journals and have been presented at conferences. Over the past three years, one of the components in the organisation and assessment of the academic process has been the student research activity in a number of academic departments/chairs (for example, the Department of Hygiene and Ecology, Pharmacology Department, Department of Cardiology, Microbiology Department, etc.). Furthermore, the agenda of Subject-specific Methodical Commissions involves the question of extensively incorporating this approach in academic departments/chairs. This approach is planned to be introduced in the majority of academic departments within the next few years. Most importantly, this format of the said assessment has gone through the complete 'Plan-Do-Check-Act' cycles (see on this issue the minutes of academic departments/chairs, minutes of Faculties and relevant Academic-Methodical Commissions, and also the analysis of surveys conducted by the University Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance).

The other route for student engagement in research activity is through research groups, which operate in the academic departments/chairs. In this respect, certain progress is noticeable compared to data of the previous accreditation. For instance, 45 students engaged in university priority research activities between 2010 and 2014, whereas this number has increased eight times in 2015-2018. The number of works published by students has also increased by 17:109, respectively.

STANDARD G. The institution has a special body that enforces and protects students' rights.

Precepts:

Student Parliament Charter

Minutes of Mandates Commission dealing with student rights, complaints and appeals

Minutes of Legal Clinic

Minutes of Disciplinary Committee

Minutes of Appeals Panel

<i>Please respond.</i>	%
The percentage of students, who are aware of relevant services.	71.4
The percentage of students, who avail themselves of this opportunity.	
The percentage of students, who are satisfied with the said processes.	32.6
	29.3

The major body, which enforces and protects student rights is the Student Parliament (hereinafter referred to as “the Parliament”). It was created in 1992 and was the first-ever self-government elective representative student body. The Parliament is committed to ensuring student self-governance across the entire student body of the University. In addition, the Parliament has a specific mandate to represent and protect rights and interests of students, foster their social integration, performance in research, creative skills and characteristics of cultural development. The Parliament also submits to the University Administration reports and proposals in respect of issues, which are student-specific or may relate to the academic process and persistently contributes to the implementation thereof (see Point 3 and Point 12 of the Charter of Parliament).

Pursuant to the Charter, a close ballot forms the Parliament, taking account of the number of students in different years of study.

The Parliament encompasses six committees involved in discussion of manifold issues. In furtherance, students who form part of these committees, routinely voice these issues at relevant institutional bodies. In addition, 25 percent proportional student representation is ensured across academic-scientific councils of the University (see compositions of Study Programme Faculty Council and Scientific Council).

Students are also members of subject-specific committee, methodical committee and appeals panel (*inter alia*, the final attestation), as well as the mandates commission, tuition fee discount commission, etc. (see composition of respective committees and commissions). Once per academic semester, students organise debate club meeting, which touches upon the issues related to the academic process. During such meetings, students surface earlier identified (through surveys) and duly analysed issues, and then discuss them with invited instructors and members of administration.

In addition, events organised annually by the Student Parliament are as follows: “Doctors debate”, “Current challenges for academic literature”, “The smartest future physician”, “From Theory to Practice” contests, “Student Fall” and “Student Spring”. One of the most successful events is the festival titled “Friendship” and the sports competition titled “Healthy Doctor”.

In 2018 the “Masks” Theatre Club was founded, which has already staged the first performance. In social media networks, the Student Parliament is represented through the Media and Information Committee, which not only does voice issues raised by students, but also creates a wide platform for student self-expression and skills development. The Student Scientific Society, which forms part of the Student Parliament, collaborates with the Science Department and Academic Departments/Chairs, organising manifold events. Back in February of 2015, the Student Scientific Society organized a Winter School in

Tsaghkadzor (city in Armenia) entitled “First Steps on the Path to Research”. In addition, in October 2018, the Student Scientific Day was organised, which was attended by many famous physicians and healthcare specialists, who were invited from different countries. Later, it was decided to organise this event annually.

The Scientific Conference of Overseas Students, which was held in February 2016 was instrumental in overcoming the challenge of their engagement in research and science (about two dozen overseas students presented their reports during the conference). The series of remarkable events also features the Brain Awareness Week, which is one of the successful two-year long grant projects. In addition, reports presented during the Science Week 2017 were further published in the New Armenian Medical Journal. Within the bounds of the exchange programmes IFMSA, IADS, IPSF and TSMU, which are implemented by the International Relations Committee over the past several years, more than 600 Armenian and 500 overseas students have undergone professional practicum in Armenia and abroad.

This Committee has also delivered different projects, such as International day – TB, HIV/AIDS, Leading the Future, Learn English, and IAD ReNewal.

One more body committed to enforcement and protection of student rights is the Legal Clinic, which has been functioning at the University since 2017. To note, over the past year, the Clinic has received 102 written applications submitted by students. In about six dozen cases, the Clinic has also been running oral consultations, related to issues ranging from tuition fees and discounts to policies on fulfillment of classes missed without reasonable excuses, the right of military service deferral, etc. (see the Legal Clinic register).

Enquires and applications submitted by students were responded either orally or in writing within a timeline not exceeding one working day, thus ensuring the promptness of consultation. The student has thus been fully introduced into the legal precepts of any legal process initiated specifically against him/her. Furthermore, the Legal Clinic has always run consultations having due regard to principles of confidentiality and mutual trust.

The Clinic also undertakes awareness-raising activities toward improving the legal acts, which cover the rights and legitimate interests of learners. One such activity was the conference titled “Medical Ethics on Scales of Lady Justice” and was devoted to major issues in Health Law. The conference was held under the cooperation between the Student Scientific Societies of Yerevan State Medical University and Yerevan State University. In addition, the Legal Clinic has developed and upgraded the documents for university website sections “Student-Centred Documents” and “Frequently Asked Questions” (see the documents at <http://ysmu.am/hy/>).

In respect of the conceptual basis for further development of the Legal Clinic, the following steps are also envisaged: adopting the Regulation of the Legal Clinic, ensuring electronic access to the Legal Clinic, ensuring requisite mechanisms for the Legal Clinic to get involved in the development of student-centred institutional documents, developing necessary toolsets, which aim at additionally raising awareness among students on decisions regarding their rights and legitimate (legally protected) interests, conducting seminars and conferences on legal topics, which are proposed by clinical residents (medical staff) as per their preferences. In this regard, the development of institutional mechanisms will significantly boost further perspectives of gradual advancement of the legal clinic.

Over the past three years, the University has adopted a policy of ensuring conditions for students with limited physical abilities. Every newly constructed building maintains the norms required in this regard, and the necessary conditions are, to the extent possible, created in the buildings, which undergo renovation. However, workings in this direction are still far from being satisfactory.

STANDARD H. The institution has set mechanisms that ensure the assessment and quality of the student educational, counselling and other services.

Precepts:

Learner engagement in Institutional Performance Quality Assurance Committees
Manifold Analysis of Learner Feedback on Academic Processes

Student satisfaction with the mentioned processes through this model is mainly measured by the University Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance (see detailed in Criterion 10). It should also be noted, that student representation is ensured in the Study Programme Faculty Commissions on Education Quality (see detailed in Criterion 10). The surveys on the quality of services delivered have been conducted among students and alumni. The University Careers Development Office/Careers Centre was as well involved in the process of conducting the surveys. Both target-specific and general surveys have been conducted among students in order to register their feedback on the quality of educational and counselling services (see findings of surveys among 2500 students, which have been conducted at the end of each academic semester by the Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance). It is worth mentioning, that in the reporting period more than 10000 students have participated in similar surveys (see detailed in Criterion 10).

Graduate employment rate over the last five years (in numbers) (see e-questionnaire 2018 , p. IV.3)						
	Employment / Continuation of study	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
1	Immediately after graduation					
2	Before graduation					
3	Professional practice					
4	Non-professional practice					
5	Percentage of students continuing study after graduation					
6	Rate of employment after 2-5 years off graduation					

7	Percentage of unemployed students					
8	Rate of employment after five year off graduation					

STRENGTHS

- Student engagement in institutional councils/boards and committees/commissions, at 10-25%
- Percentage increase in the number of overseas students, at 5-10% annually
- Anonymous online surveys on academic process, conducted per academic semester among representational number of students (about 2500 students surveyed per academic semester)
- Clearly defined regulation and timeline for meetings between students and the administrative staff
- Organisation of make-up, free classes, lectures and courses for students
- Availability of Student Parliament and Legal Clinic as bodies to enforce and protect student rights
- Student surveys conducted periodically by the Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance
- Significant percentage increase in the number of students engaged in research over the last three (3) years

WEAKNESSES

- Low level of careers-related activities and guidance among applicants
- Necessity of repairing and improving the classroom pool and laboratory facilities
- Necessity of boosting the activities of the careers development office/careers centre
- Low level of conditions for students with limited physical abilities

OPPORTUNITIES

- Opportunity to renovate lecture rooms and research lab facilities through involvement of resources of external investors (in particular through engagement of university alumni)

THREATS

- Selection of students achieved mainly through state-wide unified examinations scheme
- Poor academic performance demonstrated by students, who have enrolled to university within additionally organised admission (ensuring minimum exam threshold score)
- Increased number of students

OVERCOMING WEAKNESSES AND ELIMINATING THREATS

- Make more vigorous the institutional activities conducted with respects to careers guidance
- Improvement of mechanisms of cooperation between Careers Development Office/Careers Centre and employers
- Conduct consistent activities toward incorporating the specificities of medical education in the new Draft Law on Higher Education
- Boosting the mobility of students
- Improvement of the capacity of separate institutional divisions; acquisition of new facilities and adding new training rooms
- Boosting necessary workings towards creating requisite learning conditions for students

CRITERION V. TEACHING FACULTY AND STAFF

Criterion. *The institution provides for a high quality teaching faculty and staff to achieve institution's mission and the goals of academic programmes.*

Ambitions. To ensure that the guarantor of quality of higher medical education is a faculty comprised of members, who are highly qualified in their profession and have wider set of moral and intellectual qualities (see Goal 4, [University Strategic Plan 2015-2020](#)).

STANDARD A. The Institution employs specific policy and procedures promoting recruitment of a highly qualified teaching faculty and supporting staff, capable of ensuring the running of programmes of study.

Precepts:

Regulation on Academic Departments and Teaching Faculty

Composition of Permanent Faculty and Split Appointment Instructors as per Academic Departments/Chairs and Qualifications (science degrees, titles, seniority level in the University, major courses taught)

Instructor Reward/Incentives Policy (relevant decision of the University Scientific Council)

The University holds teaching staff elections in accordance with the Regulation and Procedure on Academic Departments and Teaching Faculty. Pursuant to the Regulation (which also stipulates the professional and moral set of qualities of teaching faculty), the list of academic departments/chairs (or the list of vacancies available therein) is defined and these departments should undergo competition-based elections for the given academic year.

Afterwards, the Human Resources Department submits information to the University Scientific Council Secretariat on holding elections at the relevant academic departments (the information is submitted on the account of employment contract termination dates). The Secretariat then, at least 2 months prior to the election date, posts the announcement on vacancies on the university official website and publishes in press with circulation of at least 2000 (usually in “Hayastani Hanrapetutyun”⁶ daily newspaper).

The competition takes place in conformity with the set procedure for elections (see the Procedure).

Once the candidate has passed through the relevant stages of competition and has been elected, the University Rector concludes an employment contract with the candidate for a period of up to five years.

In 2016, for purposes of measuring the target-specific (the activity in academic, research and clinical spheres) and general performance of the instructor, the University Centre for Quality Assessment and Assurance devised the instructor qualification approval system. The necessary approval questionnaire and the minimum threshold scores were developed. For a couple of years, this measuring system has been cited as instrumental and has been considered at the meetings of Commission on Academic-

⁶ “Hayastani Hanrapetutyun” is the official newspaper of Armenia.

Methodical Affairs and Scientific Councils. Based on this system, the Qualification Assessment Board, provides feedback about the instructor (the University Council on Academic-Methodical Affairs considered and approved the Instructor Qualification Approval scheme in April 2016, see the minutes of the Council on Academic-Methodical Affairs).

It should be noted that the Instructor Qualification Approval scheme has undergone through the complete PDCA cycle. The preliminary version of the approval scheme was submitted to academic departments and upon their recommendations, the new questionnaire on instructor qualification approval was composed. It was later used during the departmental competition in the stage of qualification approval. Threshold scores were developed in the result of composing over 800 questionnaires for different teaching faculty ranks (i.e. professor, associate professor, senior lecturer, lecture/instructor).

To note, during the last two (2) years, 250 employees at 18 academic departments have been elected through the said competition. From amongst 311 instructors, 19,6 percentage of candidates did not meet the requisite requirements (see the minutes of the Scientific Council Secretariat).

In compliance with the existing regulation, the University hires service contract instructors without competition, based on the contract concluded with the Rector. As of 10.11.2018, service contract instructors constitute 3.2 percentage of the university community of teachers.

The recruitment of supporting staff is organised in compliance with the Policies on Organising and Holding Election Competition for Vacant Seats, dated 27 June 2017, approved by the Rector's Council Minutes N 22/7. The applicants who meet the qualification requirements as defined in the position description, are eligible to participate in the competition. The competition ensures equal opportunities for applicants to demonstrate their professional knowledge and core competencies that apply most to the job role. Moreover, the publicity principle is maintained throughout the whole competition (see the Policies, [qualification procedures](#)).

As of 10.10.2018, 1074 officers work at the University as members of teaching faculty and 105 employees are hired as supporting staff.

STANDARD B. Each study programme clearly states the set of core professional qualifications required for teaching faculty.

Precepts:

Policies on Academic Departments and Teaching Faculty

Professional Qualifications Requirements with regard to Teaching Faculty

Two institutional documents specifically regulate the requirements set for core professional qualifications of teaching faculty. The first document is the Regulation on functions and job descriptors for different teaching faculty ranks, i.e. head of department, professor, associate professor, senior lecturer, instructor. The second document stipulates the indicators and minimum threshold score, which are designed to assess the effectiveness of functions performed by the instructor. In conformity with the first Regulation,

for instance, the post of a professor requires a candidate with a postdoctoral degree with not less than a nine-year pedagogical experience, at least 5 years of which holding an associate professor's position. In addition, the candidate shall lecture and conduct practical classes for students, clinical residents and doctoral students. He/she should also supervise doctoral thesis projects and run consultations, etc. The mentioned document also stipulates the faculty academic workload for each teaching rank.

Another core requirements for lecturers, who teach professional subjects, is that they should have narrow specialized knowledge obtained during the clinical residency. For instance, the position of a lecturer in cardiology requires completion of clinical residency in cardiology. A number of subjects are specifically taught at academic departments/chairs, which are structured solely for the purpose of driving forward the delivery of given study programme, i.e., four (4) academic stomatology departments are specifically structured to teach stomatology programme. Pharmacy programme is delivered through the department of chemistry, department of drug technology, that of phytotherapy and department of pharmaceutical chemistry. Faculty of Military Medicine delivers the study programme at the specifically structured Military Field Therapy Department, Department of Toxicology, as well as Military Field Surgery. As to the study programme in General Medicine, instruction is carried out through the department of traumatology, neurology, urology and many other academic departments/chairs.

There are academic departments, where the subject is taught to students of different study programmes and in this sense, the University Council on Academic-Methodical Affairs approves subject-specific curricula, having regard to the programme of study and qualifications granted upon the completion of programme (see subject-specific programmes composed per study programmes).

STANDARD C. The institution has stipulated clear policy and procedures for regularly evaluating the teaching faculty performance.

Precepts:

Instructor Qualification Assessment Dossier

Analysis of "Teacher through student eyes" Survey

http://ysmu.am/en/page_list/reports/#sthash.0xBsgG1X.dpbs

Assessment Indicators on Instructor Performance in Academic and Research fields

Minutes of Qualification Assessment Board

As it was stated above, final outcome of the competition reflects the final grade regarding the qualification of teaching faculty. One of the key factors, which has impact on this outcome, is the dossier (comprising scoring metrics) on Instructor Qualification Assessment. The dossier assesses instructor's five-year-long performance in each of the academic, research, clinical, administrative and social/public sectors (see Instructor Qualification Assessment Dossier). To note, in 2018, the performance report submitted by 4 instructors was not approved by the Qualification Assessment Board (see the Minutes for 2018, Qualification Assessment Board). This questionnaire also separately lists the findings of the survey "Teacher through student eyes".

It is worth mentioning, that each academic semester, an online anonymous survey among representational number of students evaluates the performance of the instructor, who has taught the given subject over the last semester. The questionnaire includes seven (7) questions evaluating instructor's professional and pedagogical qualities. If the instructor scores below 3.5 threshold in a 5-score system within 5 years (10 semesters), the Qualification Assessment Board may not issue qualification approval during the teaching faculty competition.

To note, in 2018 the Board did not issue approval to five instructors during the teaching faculty competition, since performance indicators over a five-year period were beneath the set threshold (see the relevant minutes of Qualification Assessment Board).

When assessing instructor's core professional standards and performance, due account is taken of the discussion and analysis of class observations and the ways of eliminating obstacles, and these observations are held by head of academic department/chair, professors, associate professors or *ad hoc* committees (see relevant minutes of departmental meetings and dean's offices).

STANDARD D. The institution promotes faculty professional development pursuant to the needs surfaced through routinely conducted internal and external evaluations.

Precepts:

Faculty Professional Advancement Regulation and Procedure
Minutes of Faculty Training Sessions

In 2012, a survey was conducted among instructors aimed at checking whether or not it was necessary to run pedagogical and psychological trainings. Conditioned by the analysis of survey findings, the Department of Instructor Qualification Improvement has been functioning since 2013, which ensures training through Pedagogical Psychology, Pedagogy and Knowledge Assessment through Testing.

Within the scope of these modules, the Department runs ten-day long lectures by guest instructors *once* every three *years*. In the reporting period, 1213 lecturers have attended these courses, which have culminated in the attainment of a relevant certificate (see the registers of the Department of Instructor Qualification Improvement).

At its meeting convened on 03.07.2015, the University Council on Academic-Methodical Affairs approved a new format for continuing and integrated programmes of study and the course documentation thereof, as well as guidelines for completing the course-related required documents, coupled with the alignment methodology along vertical and horizontal dimensions (see detailed in Criterion 3).

For purposes of running the novel model of courses, officers at the Department of Programmes of Study have attended local and overseas trainings and have carried out consultations and explanatory activities at academic departments/chairs. In particular, these activities have been delivered between *December 2014 and February 2015* within the bounds of reforming "General Medicine" and "Pharmacy"

programmes of study in Bachelors. Furthermore, once the relevant decision was adopted, activities have been conducted between October and December 2015, under the scope of forming an integrated study programme in “General Medicine”. The activities go as follows:

- Meetings with 73 heads of academic departments/chairs and office managers/officers in charge of departmental academic affairs. During the meetings, the expediency of implementing the new model was showcased, its advantages, structure, as well as ‘know-how’ of completion were introduced, Bloom’s Taxonomy of measurable verbs and action verbs was highlighted, etc.
- The draft models (both in Armenian and English) composed by the academic department/chair were peer-reviewed. In addition, officers of the Department of Programmes of Study have run at least one individual consultation with the instructors and departmental staff.
- Final editing and design of the programme have been carried out.

In addition, the practices of continuing and integrated study programmes between 2016 and 2018, also apply to “Stomatology” and “Pharmacy” Masters study programmes (approved by Minutes 07 of Meeting 20.06.2017 of University Council on Academic-Methodical Affairs).

Professional training of young instructors is also achieved within the scope of international partnership/cooperation schemes of the University. In particular, young instructors have attended professional training courses at l'Université libre de Bruxelles, University of Münster, Klinikum Ernst von Bergmann Potsdam, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore Roma, Georgia Neurosurgical Institute, Jefferson Philadelphia University, etc. Overall, 34 instructors have attended six-month long professional trainings at European and US-based universities and clinics, 3 շաբաթ տևողությամբ՝ 73 instructors have attended three-week long trainings (the number of instructors was 33 in the previous reporting period) and have engaged in workings on 347 conferences, and more than 320 instructors have undergone short-term trainings.

However, there are manifold challenges in terms of faculty trainings at theoretical departments. In particular, the trainings therein cannot be characterized as being systematic, and difficulties arise when it comes to running trainings for separate specializations (e.g., Pathophysiology, Anatomy, Histology). Having due regard to findings of student surveys and with a view to improving the assessment system, as per instruction by the vice-rector for academic affairs, 8 two-day workshops were organised between 2017 and 2018 academic years. These workshops have been attended by at least two departmental officers (as a rule, the head of academic department or the officer in charge of academic affairs and officers in charge of developing tests). Two specialists trained in test development have run the training. The workshop has also covered the pathways toward improving the ongoing assessment system and focused on introducing/improving student knowledge assessment approaches, which are better suited to accurately evaluate subject-specific outcomes.

During test developing, methodology on composing the vignette type of items (context rich multiple choice questions) has been introduced, as well as common errors in ‘multiple choice questions’ tests, mechanisms of further improvement of assessment through introduction of feedback in computer-based examinations.

Upon completion of the course, the team running the training has assessed the tests composed by the participants and has provided relevant feedback on the quality thereof. Afterwards, they have routinely run consultation for departmental specialists, who have attended the trainings.

In 2019, workshops are envisaged to offer insight into the 'know-how' of employing medical e-resources and introduce the institution of small group instruction.

During the previous accreditation, one of the recommendations made by the group of experts referred to inviting lecturers from abroad. In this respect, over the past four years the number of invited lecturers and the number of courses and delivered lectures has significantly increased. Over the past four years, 52 professors from different countries have been awarded the title of a visiting lecturer. 15 of them have delivered lectures and run courses. Thus, for example in 2015 and 2019, four-day course on the issues of health and disease prevention among children and adolescents was run by a professor from University of Lausanne, Switzerland. In May, July and October of 2017, three professors from the University of Copenhagen, Denmark ran four-day course on various issues related to nutrition. During 2016, five specialists from Cheboksary medical university and four lecturers from our university had exchange lectures for students of both universities, etc.

STANDARD E. Institution ensures sustainability of competent teaching faculty for relevant programmes of study.

Precepts:

List and Qualification Characteristics of Permanent Teaching Faculty

List and Qualification Characteristics /Merit and Promotion Dossier/ of Split Appointment Faculty Members

The 4th Goal of the University Strategic Plan firmly stipulates the following: "To ensure that the guarantor of quality of higher medical education is a faculty comprised of members, who are highly qualified in their profession and have wider set of moral and intellectual qualities (see Goal 4, [University Strategic Plan 2015-2020](#)). Currently, the teaching faculty comprising 1072 specialists at 73 academic departments/chairs ensures the delivery of study programmes (as of 09.11.2018). To note, the number of permanent employees forms 73.7% percentage of the entire teaching faculty.

The average age of heads of academic departments/chairs (university has 73 chairs, from amongst the heads of departments 24 are females, and 49 are males) is 57; average age of 59 professors – 61; 228 associate professors – average age is 53; 81 senior lecturers – 49 years of age; 420 lecturers/instructors – 41 is the average age and the average age of 203 laboratory assistants is 32. It should be noted that the average age of lecturers at the theoretical medicine departments is much higher compared to the age of lecturers at clinical departments. Over the last five years, the teaching faculty has involved 2 academicians, 110 postdoctoral degree holders and 341 PhD holders. The student-lecturer ratio is 1:5. Every year the university teacher stock is replenished by an average of 45 instructors (up to 30 years of age), who run for a lecturer position once they have completed 3 years of laboratory assistantship and

have ensured the requisite level of training (see relevant Policies). Over the last five years, 243 young lecturers have joined the university community (which constitutes 22,6% of the teaching staff), and contracts with five (5) lecturers have been discontinued.

Pursuant to the University policies on tuition fee discount, students who demonstrate good academic standing and whose parent is a teaching faculty at the University, are granted the right of 30 to 80 percent tuition fee discount. The attainment of discount is also conditioned by the instructor's seniority level in the workplace. Over the last five (5) years, children of about 109 instructors have availed themselves of this opportunity. It should also be mentioned, that the University has devised incentives, such as monetary rewards/allowances, extra pay and need-based financing, for the teaching faculty throughout the year. Outstanding scientists also receive rewards throughout the year (see the relevant documents of the Accounting Department).

By the 07.10.2018 decision of the Scientific Council, large pool of funds was envisaged under separate item in the budget, which aimed at incentivising and boosting the academic and research performance of instructors through monetary rewards. Based on the activity assessment indicators, the winners (instructors) will receive monetary rewards in 2019 (see the Scientific Council Decision and the evaluation indicators, which have gone through discussions).

During the previous accreditation the experts made notice on increasing the number of lecturers engaged in science and research and, in this respect, a concept paper has been designed, a point of which makes reference to incentivizing the lecturers. Hence, instructors receive monetary rewards for research published overseas, i.e., in international journals with impact factor. In 2017-2018, a number of lecturers have received such rewards (see detailed in Criterion 6).

Since 2018, the University offers the graduates, who have demonstrated best academic performance (merit-based scholarship holders), the opportunity to engage in postgraduate free education and later creates conditions for them to get involved in the teaching community of the University.

STANDARD G. The Institution possesses requisite administrative and support staff to pursue the goals set forth in the Strategic Plan.

Precepts:

The list of administrative and support staff

Over the last decade, not only has the University strived to maintain the student-teacher ratio, but also follow the ratio set forth in the Regulation on Range of Subdivisions and Position Ranks, thus trying to maintain the ratio of administrative and support staff officers (see the relevant regulation). The total number of officers within the university community and university clinics counts 3162 people, amongst them 1341 officers involved in academic process. To further break the number down, 1074 people constitute the teaching faculty, and 267 officers are assistants (228) and laboratory assistants (39). The percentage of resident/permanent faculty forms 73,7% of the employees. The teaching faculty involves 1 academician, 119 postdoctoral degree (Dr.Sc.) holders and 397 PhD holders. Amongst them 71 lecturers

hold professorship, and 146 lecturers are associate professors. In two of its meetings, the University Board of Trustees has considered two issues related to the structural changes at the university. The Board envisages discussing two more structural changes in its upcoming meeting.

STRENGTHS

- Faculty member election is held through competition in accordance with the Policies on Academic Departments and Teaching Faculty.
- Core professional requirements for faculty members and academic workload for each teaching rank are well stipulated.
- When electing an instructor, University Qualification Assessment Board attaches specific priority to methodology on Instructor Qualification Assessment designed and implemented by the Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance.
- “Teacher through student eyes” online anonymous survey is imperative and is routinely carried out (twice a year) among more than fifty percentage of the student body. Analysis of survey findings is published and discussed at relevant institutional bodies.
- Significant increase in the number of instructors trained abroad under international partnership/cooperation schemes of the University.
- Pecuniary reward scheme is specifically framed for each year; instructors receive funding based on assessment of effectiveness of their overall academic and research performance.

WEAKNESSES

- Not all academic departments/chairs structured through competition.
- Not complete infusion of younger faculty members to replenish the current teacher stock.
- Professional training of instructors at the theoretical departments not regulated.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Improve instructor training process through recourse to resources of University alumni, who engage in extensive professional practice abroad.
- Involve in the academic process and clinical workings at the newly acquired Mikayelyan Institute of Surgery the alumni, who work as leading specialists abroad.
- Starting from 2020, implement the methodology, approved by the Scientific Council, incentivizing the professional activity of lecturers.

THREATS

- Seniority in age of lecturers at academic departments of theoretical medicine.

OVERCOMING WEAKNESSES AND ELIMINATING THREATS

- Make wide use of every opportunity toward professional trainings.
- Fully bring into effect the proposals made by university alumni, who engage in professional practice at European and US-based medical institutions, as well as make thoughtful benefit from alumni resources.
- Fully implement the reward policy for teaching faculty, which has been approved by University Scientific Council in 2018.

CRITERION VI. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Criterion. *The Institution drives forward research activity and ensures its association with higher education.*

Ambitions. Transform into an academic institution of international acclaim, ensure institutional competitiveness and sustainable advancement in global education/research market through excellence programmes in fundamental and applied research (University Research Development Vision 2018 – 2028/38). The achievement of objectives set forth in the Vision will ensure higher institutional ranking among global universities with further integration into the top thousand of universities. For purposes of gaining a competitive edge, the University shall, over the next 10-20 years, ensure a smooth transition from predominantly education-oriented activity into an academically robust bastion of science and research.

STANDARD A. The Institution has set a strategy, which addresses institution's research interests and ambitions.

Precepts:

University Science and Research Development Strategy and Policy 2015-2020

University Science Development Vision 2018 – 2028/38

Science-Coordination Council Decision N6 of 7 October 2015

Science-Coordination Council, as the body in charge of sanctioning research activity at the University, has approved new strategy on institutional research, which specifically stems from the University ambitions and priorities. This strategy clarifies the role of research within institutional activities and programmes of study (see Decision N 2, dated 04.10.2015). The analysis on value of research interests and ambitions is reflected in the priority areas, which are described hereunder.

Having studied global development trends and priorities in the field of medicine and healthcare in Armenia, taking due account of research capacity of academic departments/chairs and institutional logistics available, the University has set up science priority areas, which are duly capacitated to get integrated into international research landscape.

Pursuant to accepted practices, priority areas may be set up by science groups, which have effective lab capacities, relevant personnel, and experience in international cooperation and in running state grant projects. Science groups shall be composed of members, who have scholarly works in journals of WoS database, and are able to design research proposals submitted for relevant international calls. Having due regard to this rationale, and taking into account the achievements in the field and the index on publications, the Science-Coordination Council, ruling by its Decision N8, dated 04.12.2015, has approved of 'Brain Research' as priority science area. Hereby, the University makes first-ever attempt to focus its science potential and pool its research efforts toward a specific target, and consolidate research

workings conducted at academic departments. To note, better-targeted workings foster the advancement of research, *inter alia*, boosting its effectiveness on an international landscape.

Between 2017 and 2018, ranking of the University has been internationally measured using various metrics and methodology (e.g., QS World University Ranking, The Times Higher Education World University Rankings, etc.).

In partnership with Shanghai Ranking Consultancy, the first-ever benchmarking of University performance in research/science was measured. In accordance with the contract concluded, institutional performance data in terms of number of personnel and students and financial resources have been devised and submitted to Shanghai Ranking Consultancy.

Making use of the said data, as well as collecting requisite information from ARWU, THE, QS, ELSEVIER databases, the University has conducted benchmarking, thus measuring performance on institutional level and programme level in two areas: Human Biological Sciences and Clinical Medicine. The benchmarking has resulted in recording institutional key performance indicators and offering practical advice toward development of a strategy, which aims at gaining higher competitive edge for the University.

The Council for Academic-Methodical Affairs has considered and decided on introducing multicomponent assessment system within university education. This system already runs in a number of academic departments (e.g., Hygiene and Ecology, Pharmacology, Cardiology) and has been tested through introduction/piloting stages.

The novelty of this methodology lies in the fact, that outcomes of student research activity are counted toward student final grade. The latter is the cumulative based on assessing student engagement in laboratory works, student ability to produce critical review of scholarly literature, conduct certain studies independently, and participate in research and student scientific events. In particular, this is the motivation stimulating extensive student engagement in research. The University envisages introducing this methodology in the majority of academic departments over the next five years (see Criterion 4).

In addition, University encourages extensive student participation in scientific events, ensuring also requisite facilities for young specialists to independently design and run scientific events under state and international grant schemes (see Table 1).

Taking account of the relevant strategic plans, the Biochemistry and Biophysics Laboratory at the Scientific-Research Centre, through engagement of Academic Department of Biochemistry and the Brain Research Team, was reorganized into a Neuroscience Research Lab. The University Board of Trustees, rendering it as a structural change within the University, approved the initiative.

In particular, this is the first-ever attempt to approve a research priority area. In this respect, laboratory's staffing list has been approved and relevant workplace premises and resources have been allocated, thus creating an environment, where one can drive forward a research compliant with modern international standards. Most importantly, within the science programme, the lab nowadays accommodates three doctorate students and one researcher to carry out their projects (see Tables 1 and 2).

In addition, benchmarking is conducted with regard to institution's vivarium considering the practices employed at vivarium facilities of a number of European universities, such as University of Heidelberg

and Warsaw University. The analysis in respect of compatibility will enable submitting a proposal on feasibility of establishing similar vivarium within the University.

The University consistently maintains the practices of ensuring researcher involvement (on ¼ basis) in all research projects, which is in line with competitiveness criterion in state grant schemes. However, this strategy is still not a sufficient basis for extensive involvement of young researchers in research activities. In addition, there is not enough motivation among teaching faculty to vigorously engage in research activities, who carry out research along with academic activities and often fail to succeed as to the final outcomes.

In 2017, Young Scientists Council was re-organised into Young Researchers Union. The Union Charter provides for extended opportunities for students and young researchers to engage in a variety of scientific and research-related organisational activities (see data available at http://ysmu.am/en/page_list/young_researcher_s_unien/#sthash.cFZRjGnO.dpbs):

The participation of young researchers and students in programmes, which run through institution's base financing, exceeds by 28% the number of programme staff. With financial incentives well in place (rewarding scheme for students in the form of a monthly salary), students are stimulated to engage in laboratory research and this has a chain-effect on boosting extensive and high participation of other students in scientific events. Being involved in all aspects of institutional governance, the youth also engages in development and approval of regulations and procedures, which foster the advancement of research.

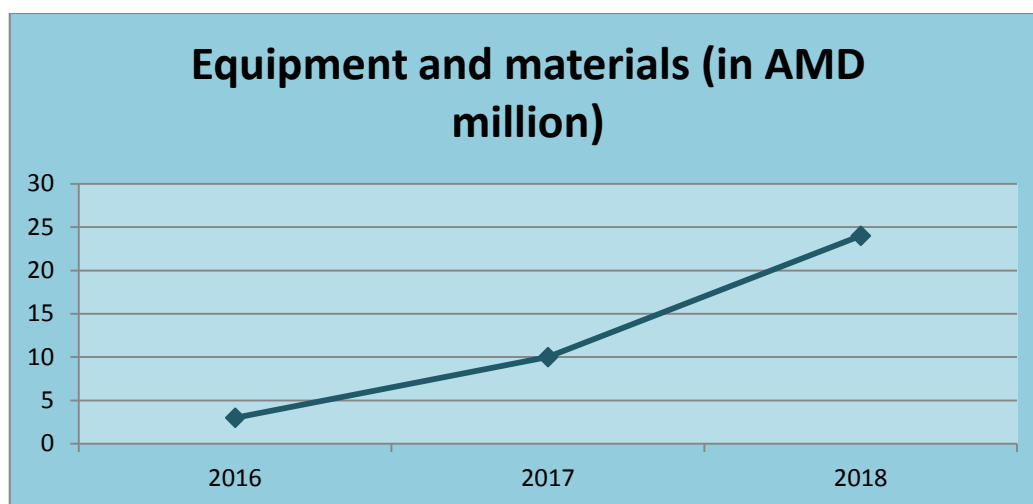
The Science-Coordination Council approved the University Science and Research Development Strategy and Policy 2015-2020 by Decision N2 of 11 November 2015. In addition, University Scientific Council approved UNIVERSITY SCIENCE DEVELOPMENT VISION 2018 – 2028/38 by Decision N3 of 28 March 2018 (see relevant data at http://ysmu.am/hy/documentation_list/kanonakarger/).

These strategic documents serve useful reference point in revising and supplementing regulations and guidelines, which govern the performance of science-coordination council, science division, scientific-research centre, ethics committee, expert commissions. The mentioned documents are also used for making relevant supplements to the programme of the 3rd cycle of higher education.

Amendments and supplements to these documents stem from the practical advice, which was produced through benchmarking-analysis made by the Shanghai Ranking Consultancy. The amendments and supplements also stem from University action plan, which was approved at the Meeting N9 of 24 December 2016, of Board of Trustees of Yerevan State Medical University Foundation. These statutory documents are available at the University website and are accessible to every student and researcher.

Though the allocation of a separate item for science in the university general budget is not yet approved, however, the funding allocated for science and research under University budget scheme has increased over the past years constituting AMD 3 million in 2016, AMD 10 million in 2017 and AMD 24 million in 2018. These allocations have led to purchasing laboratory equipment, lab research materials and animals, and have also been projected toward financing researchers participation in various international science events (see Chart 1.)

Chart 1. Equipment and materials acquired for research activities



STANDARD B. The Institution has a long-term strategy and medium and short-term programmes which address institution's research interests and ambitions.

Precepts:

Science-Coordination Council Decisions on approval of scientific projects for a specific period of time
University Science Development Vision 2018 – 2028/38

The University has set out sound policy on conducting research activities, and this policy is achieved through integrated performance of major interfaces supervising the scientific-organisational activities; namely, Science-Coordination Council, Division of Science, Scientific-Research Centre and relevant academic departments.

It should be stated, that long-term projects ensure the advancement and progressive development of science priority areas of the University through amalgamation of capacity and resources of diverse research groups. University science subdivisions, i.e., research laboratories and academic departments drive forward medium term (3-5 years) research projects and foster the achievement of goals in science priority areas. They involve short-term projects, which are *per se* delivered by individual researchers, postdoctoral students and small research groups (see data at http://ysmu.am/hy/page_list/gitakan_hetazotutyunner/#sthash.XgyHQ3nV.dpbs).

Following the annual expertise by relevant state authorities, the University remains the leader in the capacity of state grant recipient in biomedical research. To note, the University has annually received state funding in the amount of about AMD 110 million for delivery of long-term projects. Between 2015 and 2017, University has been awarded stated funding for delivery of nine (9) medium-term projects. The amount has constituted AMD 117 588 000. Between 2018 and 2020, seven (7) projects have been envisaged for funding in the amount of AMD 81 307 000 (see e-questionnaire, [VI.2](#)).

Three of these programs are conducted through international partnership and involve partners from the Russian Federation and Belarus. Nonetheless, the quantitative index of research funding from other sources, as well as international research programs, is still not sufficient.

Pursuant to its mission, the University organizes and runs scientific events for purposes of summative assessment and coverage of project results. Among attendees are various overseas experts and colleagues from different countries and university students. These events are funded under state grant scheme of the Committee of Science of Armenian Ministry of Education and Science.

STANDARD C. The Institution ensures research activities and institutional development through sound policies and procedures.

Precepts:

University Science and Research Development Strategy and Policy 2015-2020

University Science Development Vision 2018 – 2028/38

Science-Coordination Council Decisions on approval of scientific projects for a specific period of time

Decisions of Science-Coordination Council on scholarly papers/articles published in journals with impact factor

Guideline on the Third Cycle Education Programme at Yerevan State Medical University

Draft Order on Incentivising Research Works Published in Journals with Impact Factor

Since 2015, being committed to maintain the University policy on improving international ranking, the Scientific Council and the Science-Coordination Council have adopted a number of decisions for purposes of aligning the research outcomes with international standards.

The publication of scholarly articles in journals registered in WoS database became imperative for the teaching faculty, once the findings of benchmarking analysis conducted jointly with the Shanghai Ranking Consultancy were introduced (see the benchmarking analysis of University research activity, which measured performance on institutional level and programme level in two areas - in Human Biological Sciences and Clinical Medicine), and taking due account of the need to align institutional research outcomes with international standards. Thus, international recognition of research outcomes and eligibility descriptors to run for positions at the University will hereinafter be presented primarily through internationally accepted metrics and standards (see Table 2). In addition, the University has sound mechanisms to either approve or reject research publications and expertise of doctorate projects.

Furthermore, the University has developed policies on incentivizing publication of scholarly papers in impact factor journals and has devised the draft order on Incentivising Research Works Published in Journals with Impact Factor. Pursuant to Rector's Order, 27 officers of the university community have been awarded pecuniary reward in the amount of AMD 3.431.729, for publication of their works in impact factor journals between 2017 and 2018. In addition, the clarification of requirements on scientific publications and the introduction of the incentives scheme have led to improving publication rates in

impact factor journals, which are registered in the Web of Science database. When comparing data between 2015-2016, it becomes obvious, that the number of publications Web of Science database in 2017 has increased by 13 works, and the rates for 2018 have rapidly increased. However, the total number still remains insufficient, since the University aims to annually publish 100 scholarly papers in WoS, in order to be included in the top 1000 of world universities. This is an ambition for the University to achieve in the next 10 years.

Chart 2. Number of publications in the WoS database for 2015-2018

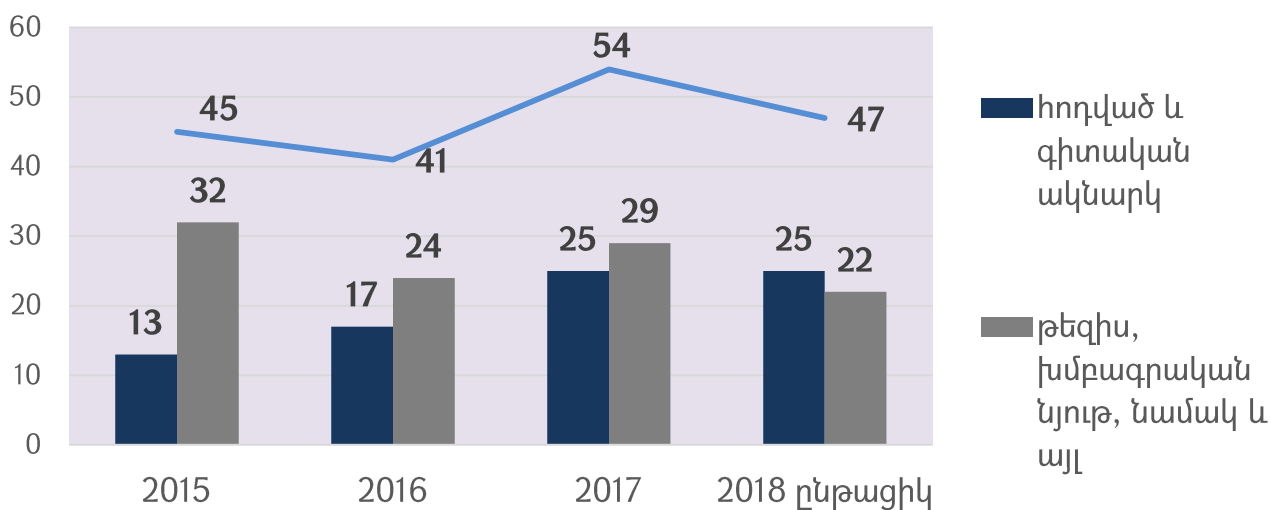
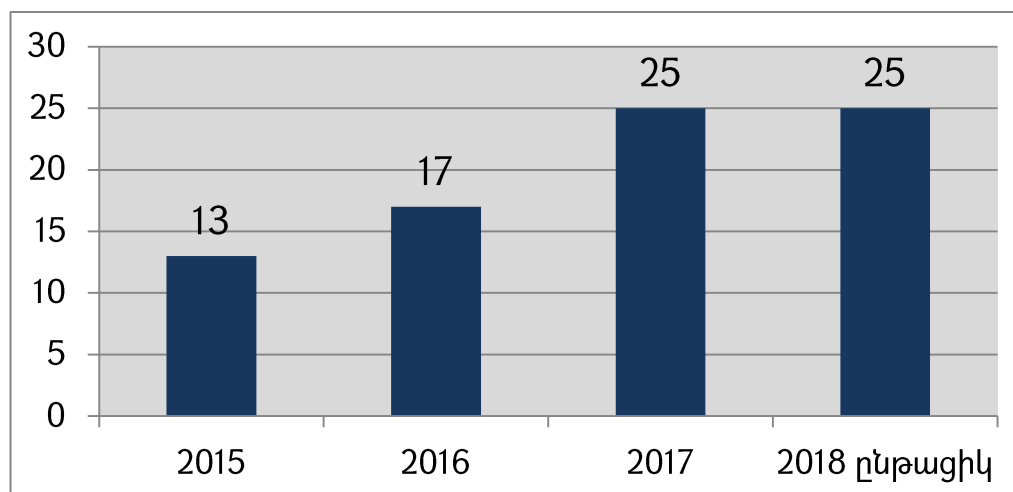


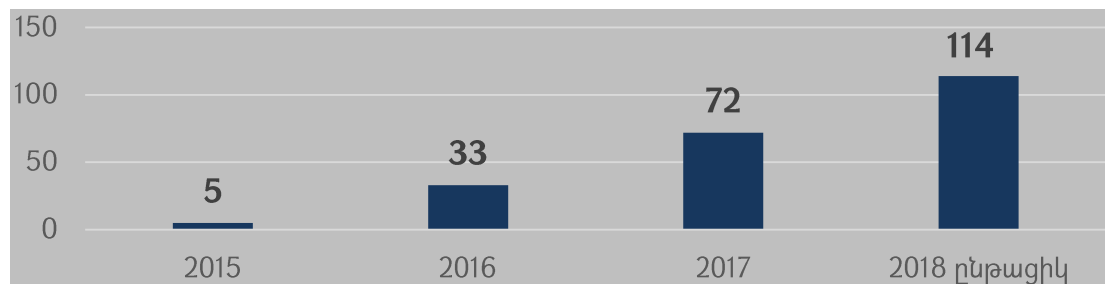
Chart 3. Research papers with impact factor in WoS database



However, it should be mentioned, that the University still has no highly cited researchers in ClarivateAnalytics. To date, no scientific publications have been included in such reputed journals as the “Nature” and “Science”. In addition, journal citation index remains relatively low and does not exceed the average arithmetic of 3.4.

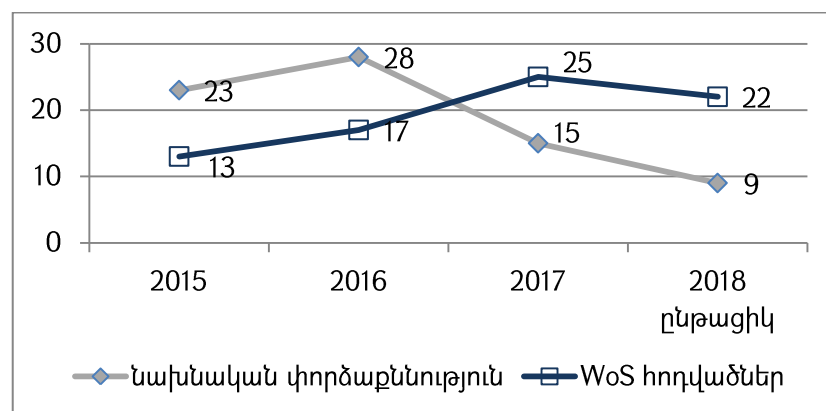
The analysis of the last 2 years has revealed that, despite the increase in the total number of scholarly papers/articles, the index of published articles mainly authored by the University officers is still low.

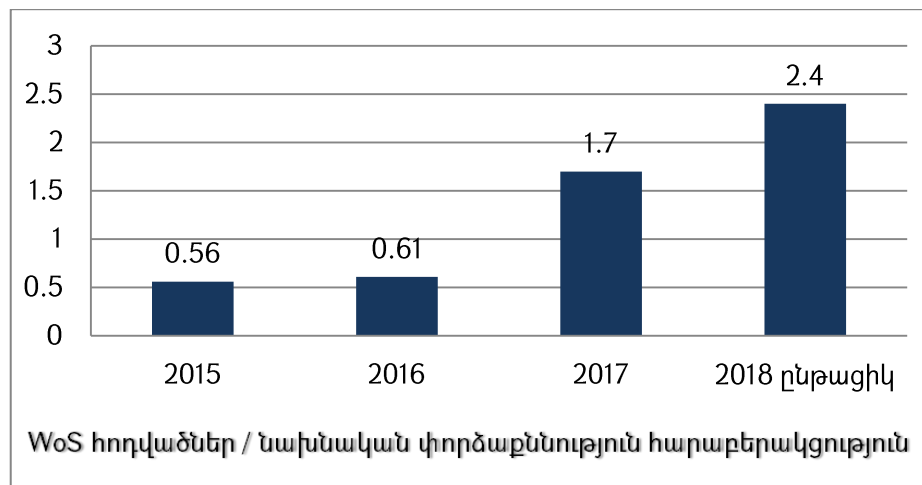
Chart 4. Cumulative citations of 2015-2018 scholarly papers/articles in Web of Science database (without self-citations)



In 2017, according to the Decision of the Science-Coordination Council (see Meeting Minutes N 1 dated March 2 of 2016, N1 dated 8 February 2017, N4 dated 7 June 2017, N 5 dated 20 September 2017) internal working policies have been adopted, which stipulates, that the doctoral students and researchers shall publish at least one (1) scholarly paper/article in Web of Science database prior to thesis pre-defence, and this paper shall reflect the research findings of the doer. This practice is compliant with the recommendations submitted through the benchmarking-analysis done jointly with the Shanghai Ranking Consultancy. As a result, the number of articles published in WoS database in 2018 has increased compared to the number of doctoral theses submitted for pre-defence.

Chart 5. Data on thesis pre-defence and WOS publications





STANDARD D. The Institution attaches high priority to internationalisation of research.

Precepts:

Draft Order on Incentivising Research Works Published in Journals with Impact Factor
University Science Development Vision 2018 – 2028/38

List of publications in peer-reviewed journals of CIS countries (see e-questionnaire 2018 VI.5)							
	Journal (country)	Ranking	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
1							
List of publications in international peer-reviewed journals see e-questionnaire 2018 VI.5							
	Journal (country)	Ranking	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
1							
List of publications in peer-reviewed journals of the Republic of Armenia (see e-questionnaire 2018 VI.5)							
	Journal	Ranking	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
1							

As one of its traditional practices, the University is committed to hosting lectureships, which are delivered by visiting professors and honorary doctors invited from different countries abroad.

Between 2014 and 2018, the University has hosted official delegations, honorary doctors, has organised lectures delivered by guest professors (see Criterion 9). However, these have been short-term lectures often not exceeding a day schedule. The University human resource management policy is solely based on local standards and, in this sense, no overseas faculty teams or research groups are invited to run complete courses.

Over recent years, the University underscores the importance of holding annual scientific events and ensures additional funding for due organisation thereof (see http://ysmu.am/en/page_list/published_proceedings/#sthash.GKFSzUXj.dpbs).

In this respect, events agenda of the University has embraced a much essential component, which is in particular, “Student Scientific Day” and “Youth Science Day”. These events provide University young researchers with opportunity to present the findings and course of their research either orally or through poster presentations (see http://ysmu.am/en/content/this_year_science_week_2018_annual_reporting_conference_will_be_held_in_yerevan_state_medical_university_from_november_2/#sthash.Vk4oUAsD.dpbs).

Between 2015 and 2018, 34 scientific and research events were organised at the University, from amongst which the following events can be highlighted:

- Nobel Days in Yerevan: counting 2250 attendees, participants from 22 countries abroad and 1650 students
- YSMU Annual Summative Conference dedicated to 95th Anniversary of University Foundation: 2000 attendees, participants from 17 countries abroad and 1500 students
- Brain Awareness Week (being run for three consecutive years from 2016 through 2018): organised and run by students reaching out to the Yerevan and Armenian regions
- Science Week 2017: YSMU Annual Summative Conference, counting 1200 participants, amongst them 566 students
- Science Week 2018: YSMU Annual Summative Conference, counting 500 participants, amongst them 400 students

The events offer local and international academic credits with a view to strengthening new approaches in continuing education and for purposes of gaining international recognition. Over the last three (3) years, the University has delivered three events, which have been internationally accredited under the European Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (EACCME) (19+33+12):

Since 2016, one of the EU Framework Programmes – Research and Innovation programme Horizon 2020 – has been focusing its activities in Health, Demographic Change and Wellbeing sub-programme at the University. Relevant information and assistance on all aspects of participation in the programme are ensured. In addition, the programme aims to boost economic growth in Europe through interlinking innovation with research.

In 2017, two information days were organised at the University, which aimed at covering details on Horizon 2020. The first information day was held on 1st of May 2017 and the second was run on 2 November 2017, in the framework of Science Week. These information days were specifically designed to offer guidance, practical information and assistance on all aspects of participation in the programme.

For purposes of advancing “Brain Research”, as one of the science priority areas, and with a view to expanding frameworks of institutional research, the working group of Science Division and Neuroscience Research Lab has submitted a proposal on 15 November 2018, titled “Armenian Center for Translational Research on Chronic Neurodegenerative Disorders: A Neuroscience Initiative on Maintaining Healthy Brain Ageing” (referred to as “COBRAIN”) under HORIZON 2020 TWINNING call.

Successful implementation of this project will aim at settling two key issues: bettering institutional research activities and strengthening and fostering science priority areas (selection results will be publicized in April 2019).

In 2018, the University has been awarded ERASMUS + KA2 project in “Doctoral Programmes in Public Health and Social Sciences”. The University acts as the programme applicant and coordinator. The University has also been awarded the programme on Strengthening Research Management and Open Science Capacities of HEIs in Moldova and Armenia (MINERVA). In this programme the University acts as a local coordinator.

Between 2014 and 2017, the University, acting as a coordinator, has delivered European Union Tempus VERITAS (Structural Development of the Third Cycle Based on Salzburg Principles) Project. It aimed at reforming the doctoral education in the Republic of Armenia, aligning it with the European Qualifications Framework and the Salzburg Principles. The project has led to the analysis toward ongoing operation of the doctoral education, and novel procedures stemming from ten (10) Salzburg principles have been developed and introduced, respectively. In addition, novel model of research project and the roadmap of running doctoral education have been launched on an experimental basis.

Major outcomes of the VERITAS project have led to strengthening institutional capacity among Armenian universities, ensuring quality doctoral education, as well as creating prerequisites for quality scientific research and PhD degree award, coupled with developing and determining quality standards and criteria.

STANDARD E. The institution has well established mechanisms for linking research with teaching and learning.

Precepts:

Regulation of Young Researchers Union

Regulation of Student Scientific Society

University Scientific Council Decision N 14 (dated 07.11.2018)

Please respond (see at http://ysmu.am/en/page_list/reports/#sthash.Q3Q47EQQ.dpbs).	%
The percentage of learners/students, who are satisfied with the said processes.	90
The percentage of instructors, who are satisfied with the said processes.	85

It has become instrumental for each student to engage in various research pathways, and to incorporate its outcomes in his/her overall academic performance.

In addition, in order to participate in departmental research competitions, it is mandatory for student groups to be involved in departmental scientific projects (medium term projects). This requirement stimulates student engagement in various research projects. Students display real potential for large-scale

research and this is one more way through which the University ensures favourable environment for student engagement in research.

University Science-Coordination Council, based on the report submitted by the Student Scientific Society, approves the annual action plan on student research, considers reports and presentations. This process leads to replenishing the Science-Coordination Council with younger members and bring forth fresh visions and perspectives.

The Student Scientific Society acts as an independent structure within the University and involves 110 students, who are actively engaged in departmental clusters of science and research (see relevant details in Criterion 4).

Moreover, student engagement in and interest toward research is best showcased by the number of grant projects awarded. Between 2015 and 2018, nine (9) grants were awarded, amongst which six (6) grants were awarded for purposes of running events and three (3) grants were specifically awarded for purposes of research activities. The grants are as follows:

- Young researcher support programme: 2 grants
- The Company of Biologists: 3 grants for running requisite events
- International Brain Research Organisation: 1 grant for running events
- International Science and Technology Center: 3 research grants held by cooperation

STRENGTHS

- The University has a duly performing research and science school, which adheres to research ethos and culture, and has set mechanisms and extensive experience for validating research outcomes.
- Availability of University Science and Research Development Strategy and Policy 2015-2020 and University Science Development Vision 2018 – 2028/38.
- In partnership with Shanghai Ranking Consultancy, the first-ever benchmarking of University research activity was conducted, which measured performance on institutional level and programme level in two areas: Human Biological Sciences and Clinical Medicine.
- Significant rise in the funding allocated to science and research under University budget.
- Development, approval and introduction of policies on incentivizing publication of scholarly works in impact factor journals.
- Significant increase in the number of published scholarly articles in impact factor journals, which are registered in Web of Science database.
- Significant increase in the scale of funding awarded under state grant schemes.
- Availability of electronic database to record research performance of university officers.

WEAKNESSES

- Lack of clear policy on budget allocation toward science.
- Lack of requisite laboratory equipment, which meet international standards.

- Necessity of improving the mechanisms toward the commercialisation of university research, and mechanisms to ensure association of business with research.
- Not sufficient involvement of international teaching faculty or research group in research workings.
- Not sufficient number international research projects running at the University; not sufficient funding for research from other sources.
- Not sufficient number of highly cited researchers in ClarivateAnalytics, as well as low records on published papers in high impact journals (10 and higher).
- Significantly low percentage of personnel engaged solely in research.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Making use of the opportunity to cooperate with Armenian scientists who demonstrate high research performance and have proven record of outstanding accomplishments in international organisations, universities and laboratories operating in the field of medicine and healthcare.
- Introduction at the University of the successful practices on organising research activity at partner institutions.

THREATS

- State funding allocated to science and research is not sufficient to drive forward innovative programmes.
- Young people display a lower level of interest in science and research activities, due to lack of appealing labour-market practices.
- Medical establishments, which are not vigorously involved in research and science, have the right to approve themes for scientific projects.

OVERCOMING WEAKNESSES AND ELIMINATING THREATS

- See in the objectives attached to the UNIVERSITY SCIENCE DEVELOPMENT VISION 2018 – 2028/38.

Table 1. Student and Young Researcher Participation in Events organised at the University.

Nº	Title	Date
1.	The Art of Applying to Grants: Young Scientists School	28-31 May 2015

2.	Global Health Armenia: Current Issues	17 June 2015
3.	Evidence-Based Medicine: From Theory to Practice” II International Conference	24-26 September 2015
4.	9 th Black Sea Neurosurgical Congress	8-10 October, 2015
5.	Current Issues in Medicine Jubilee Conference dedicated to the 95 th Anniversary of Foundation of Yerevan State Medical University	12-15 October 2015
6.	Scopus – a search engine and a tool for scientometrics analysis. Mendeley – a free reference tool to manage scientific papers and articles. ClinicalKey – a medical search engine and database tool for medical universities and medical practitioners.	21 October 2015
7.	Nobel Days in Yerevan 2016	11-16 April 2016
8.	International Conference on “Fighting Cancer with Smile”	18-20 May 2016
9.	Prospects of Developing Cooperation between Young Researcher and Labour Market	2-3 June 2016
10.	The role of medical communication in the field of public health	4-5 June 2016
11.	Introduction to Neuroscience: From Neuron to Neurogenesis	4-6 November 2016
12.	YSMU Annual Summative Conference	6-8 December 2016
13.	Days of Medicine in Artsakh	3-5 May 2017

14.	Horizon 2020 Information Day	9 June 2017
15.	Round-table Discussion on Practical Issues in Biomedicine	14 June 2017
16.	“Man Under Stress” International Conference	7-9 July 2017
17.	Science Week 2017, YSMU Annual Summative Conference	27 November – 1 December 2017
18.	International Congress on “Thrombosis: From A to Z”	19-20 January 2018
19.	Conference dedicated to current issues in Immunodiagnosis and Immunotherapy	16 April 2018
20.	International Conference on Current Issues in Preventive Medicine	21-23 May 2018
21.	Congress on “Challenges in Paediatrics: the past, present and future”	31 May – 1 June 2018
22.	International Congress on Current Perspectives of Neonatology	21- 22 August 2018
23.	International Congress on Paediatric Surgery and Neurosurgery	6-7 September 2018
24.	Science Days of Russia in Armenia	20 September 2018
25.	International Conference dedicated to the Anniversary of Foundation of YSMU Medical Psychology Department	20-21 September 2018
26.	E.S.S XXII Annual Meeting	26-28 September 2018
27.	Yerevan Cardiology Forum 2018	27-29 September 2018
28.	The Role of Information Technologies in the Modern System of Medical Education	27-29 September 2018
29.	Conference titled “In the Appealing World of Endocrinology”	19-20 October 2018
30.	International Conference “Help Armenia fight	26 October 2018

	against Alzheimer's Disease"	
31.	Cooperation as a key to Success in Science	27 and 28 November 2018
32.	Science Week 2018 YSMU Annual Summative Conference	26-30 November 2018
33.	"Cooperation as a key to Success in Science" Young Scientists School	27 November 2018
34.	3 rd Science School on "Neurosciences: From Theory to Practice"	29 November 2018

CRITERION VII. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

CRITERION. *The Institution has requisite resources to create a learning environment and effectively support the implementation of its mission and goals.*

Ambitions. The University strives to create a learning environment, which is essential for the delivery and continuous improvement of programmes of study, and which will be substantiated with a clear policy of needs-assessment and allocation of resources.

STANDARD A. The Institution ensures a learning environment appropriate to the delivery of study programmes.

Precepts:

Auxiliary buildings of Institution and the purposes of their use

University website at <https://www.ysmu.am/>

University 2019 draft budget

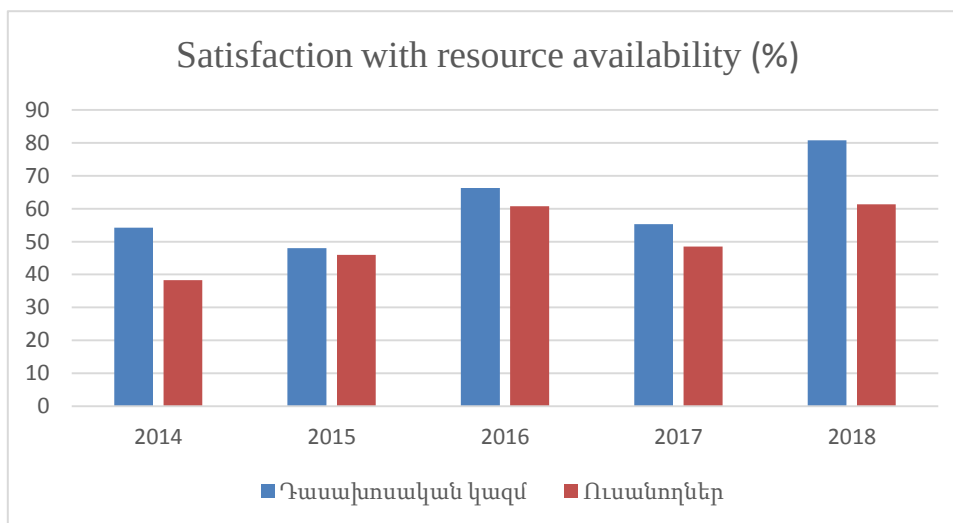
University Strategic Plan underscores the issues of renovating and refurbishing the University auditorium facilities, building conditions, material and technical base and logistics, the clinics, the library and other components of the learning environment.

The Strategic Plan also confirms the importance of modernization of teaching methods, the introduction of a distance learning system, furnishing academic departments/chairs with selected skills trainers and materials, modernization of laboratory stock, computerization of the academic process and the secretarial work. The plan also records the importance of renovating student hostels (dormitories), training and industrial bases and service buildings (see Goal 6, [University Strategic Plan 2015-2020](#)).

The University currently occupies 88226 square meter space. The main building is composed of four separate buildings, where the academic departments/chairs of theoretical subjects are mainly located. Clinical chairs are located in 22 clinical bases of state-wide significance and 2 clinical bases of university significance, as well as 3 university out-patient clinics. The lectures of theoretical subjects are held in 14 auditoriums of the University main buildings that can concurrently host 1420 students.

The lectures of clinical subjects are delivered in specially equipped auditoriums in clinics. In addition, the University also has laboratories, a library, a reading hall, museums, a sports complex, a swimming pool, a gas shelter, first-aid post, as well as public catering facilities, a student hostel/dormitory and training and industrial facilities.

In the reporting period, facility-related objectives enshrined in the Strategic Plan were achieved in the following manner: control stock (90,5%) of “Mikayelyan Institute of Surgery” CJSC was acquired. Since then, the institute is used as a clinical complex of the University and as an academic facility.



These resources are sufficient for learners' demands (see Chart 7.1.).

Figure 7.1 The figure presents the results of the survey conducted in November and December of each year covering satisfaction rates for learning environment, the library, the website, and other resources.

As a result of the previous analysis, the practical skills of students of the General Medicine Faculty were significantly improved due to the opening of the simulation centre. However, the development of manual skills among students of the Faculty of Stomatology needed to be markedly improved. Hence, the Stomatology Excellence Simulation Centre was established and furnished with up-to-date equipment, and, afterwards, put into operation. It serves as training centre for the students of Stomatology Faculty. It is the only centre in the Republic of Armenia when it comes to technical supply and maintenance logistics. Training centres of Faculty of General Medicine and Military Medicine Faculty also operate within the University. The University campus and outdoors of university clinics are completely enhanced by the design and landscaped courts, utilising as many shrubs and trees as possible across these areas. With regard to the simulation centres, taking into account the positive feedback, it is planned to set up to a similar centre for the Faculty of Pharmacy (see Minutes of the Faculty Council session). At the same time, assessing the results of the focus-group discussions on the Simulation Centre of the General Medicine Faculty, it is envisaged to heavily equip the Simulation Centre for better serving the educational needs of the Faculty.

The University has a printing house to ensure its printing works and related operations. The printing house also serves as a copy centre, and offers quality and accessibility of services, which make it preferable in comparison with outsourced resources beyond the university.

Over the past two (2) years, certain workings have been directed towards the improvement of the auditorium resources. In particular, 26 auditoriums were renovated and put into operation in the Mikayelyan Institute of Surgery. 15 teaching rooms were renovated in the University Hospital No 1. More than 5 classrooms and 2 auditoriums were totally renovated in the main building of the University (see two performance acts as an example).

The University website is completely upgraded. However, it lacks uniformity in three languages (Armenian, Russian, English). Hence, taking into account current priority of available e-resources, a

decision has been made to ensure the upgrading of the website and its consistency in three languages by the end of 2019.

STANDARD B. The Institution allocates requisite financial resources to technically support, maintain and operate its facilities as needed to achieve its mission and goals.

Precepts

University 2019 draft budget

Appendix to University 2019 draft budget

Taking account of the previous year expenditures, budget inflows, budget estimates provided by state authorities, as well as need-based yearly estimates submitted by relevant subdivisions, funds are allocated in the budget estimate of financial management (composed for each year), and the funds are then allocated among different units and services of the University, based on duly substantiated documents for that specific year. During the allocation of financial resources, it is highlighted that the faculty should have enough monetary incentives, which is a precondition and pledge for ensuring delivery of study programmes by high quality teaching faculty. Results of studies revealed that throughout the previous years the teaching staff was not satisfied with the available resources because of the fact that not every resource was made readily available.

Hence, in order to ensure necessary learning environment at the academic departments, in 2018 upgraded request form was put into circulation, which enables to justify and describe the required resource in a more detailed manner. The effectiveness of this approach will be assessed at the end of 2019.

STANDARD C. The institution has sound financial policy to sustain and ensure the accomplishment and continuity of study programme objectives and goals.

Precepts:

University 2019 draft budget

Appendix to University 2019 draft budget

University financial resources are generated from state budgetary and extrabudgetary revenues. Among state budgetary revenues, the major part goes to student benefits, scholarships, financial resources generated from the training of physicians and nurses, thematic research funding and the resources received from medical services provided within the framework of state order (copies of contracts).

Extrabudgetary revenues are mainly generated from tuition fees paid for education (making up about 90% of the extrabudgetary revenues). The financial resources generated from different national and

international grants make up 1,8% of the budget, on average. Every year, proceeding from the balance statement of the budget estimate of the previous year, contracts ensuring revenues for the specific year and budget estimates submitted by the state authorities (Armenian Defense Ministry, Committee of Science of the Republic of Armenia), a request submitted by the academic-scientific subdivision, a budget estimate of financial resource provision and allocation is developed covering salaries, scholarships, the expenditures for refurbishment of the laboratories and the library, economic expenses, etc. This estimate is posted on the University website in a generalized form. Afterwards, each year, the main buyer (the rector in this case) issues an order for the organisation of procurement.

This speaks in favor of the fact that the university subdivisions take part in the procurement of educational resources. The transparency of the procurement is ensured in the following manner: the procurements are implemented by tenders, and the decisions are issued by separate commissions approved by the order of the rector. The bids and goods submitted to the tender are examined by a person in charge of a specific industry. The latter comes up with a decision on their appropriateness to the technical specifications submitted by the subdivisions.

At the end of each year, the university budget balance is published in a print media with a circulation of about 1000 copies, which ensures the transparency of financial resource management. Respective authorities (presidential staff, territorial tax inspection, scientific committee, Ministry of Education and Science, relevant agency of Ministry of Health) regularly check the effectiveness of managing the funds provided by the state. The effectiveness of using the funding generated from grants is monitored by organisations that coordinate respective projects. Nevertheless, it should be stated, that the financial resource planning is not based on a policy developed through a needs assessment of separate subdivisions.

STANDARD D. The institution's resource base enables delivery of study programmes and accomplishment of the strategic plan for sustainability and continuous quality enhancement.

Despite the fact that the auditorial resources of the University do not fully meet the normative stipulated in Annex 5 of Decision No: 1490-N of 13 December 2007 of the Government of the Republic of Armenia (for example, space per 1 student) with respect to several criteria, however, surveys conducted among the faculty show that the learning environment, auditoriums and laboratory base are sufficient for the delivery of study programmes.

Further detailed studies have shown that this issue is particularly obvious in the teaching of clinical subjects. The inclusion of Mikayelyan surgical base into the university teaching facilities is also aimed at overcoming this gap. Further studies will show whether this issue has been settled.

The University Strategic Plan underscores the assessment of the current state of the auditorium base, its gradual renovation, modernization and further enlargement in accordance with objectives of study programmes and enhancement of the university staff and students. In the reporting period, relevant working were conducted to enlarge the university resource base and to align it with the study programmes. For instance, the University library, which was established in 1930, joined the All-Armenian Library Consortium and nowadays has a web page in the electronic literature database within the consortium (<http://armunicat.am:8991//ARMA> , <http://armunicat.am:8991//ALEPH>). This has

improved the process of book search, and the way one can learn about the contents and the authors of the books.

Today the University library houses about 550000 books. Over the past five (5) years, the University has acquired 8645 books under 310 titles, 18% in a foreign language (English, French, German, etc.) (Library Catalogues). Over the past 5 years, the University has enriched its electronic archive with 1 million scholarly papers and manuals (see in electronic form at <http://armuniecat.nla.am>).

The University has two reading halls, housing 250-person in one of the institutional academic buildings and another housing 50-person in the student hostel/dormitory. The University reading hall is capacitated to serve around 300 readers at the same time. The main reading hall that operates from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. serves about 500 students on average daily (Library Catalogues).

Taking account of the into account the increase in the number of students, which is envisioned in the Strategic Plan, it is expected that the University hospitals will also be equipped with a reading hall (Mikayelyan Institute of Surgery and the hostels/dormitories).

Thanks to the investments by the University, an electronic library has been created covering handbooks, textbooks, and atlases authored by the University teaching faculty.

Taking into account the learners' and teaching faculty needs, the University has extended its subscription to Hinari and UpToDate electronic databases and has temporarily discontinued its subscription to other services. A detailed monitoring is however needed in this respect, in order to assess the necessity of paid subscriptions. Semi-official portal 'sci-hub.com' is essential in this case, which may markedly reduce the necessity of official subscription.

Despite the investments aimed at structural improvements and the new literature acquired within the framework of the goal to improve the library services, the University needs improvements in this regards since, as mentioned above, only 0.02% of the budget is spent to that end.

The abovementioned is also confirmed by the findings of the study, which has been carried out by the Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance. Despite the fact that the number of subscribed readers on average makes up 6200 (the number of students is 5530) annually, 37% of students surveyed by the Centre mentioned that they not always attend the library in order to read the assigned books. Those who attend the library most frequently (35%) consider that the books do not satisfy their educational and information needs fully. Majority of the students, as well as one third of instructors of theoretical chairs (1/3), consider that the literature used within the chairs is not fully represented in the library.

STANDARD E. The Institution has a sound policy and procedure to manage information and relevant documentation.

Precepts:

University Policies on Operations Management (available at <https://www.ysmu.am/website/documentation/files/0bb24885.pdf>)

In accordance with the Armenian Law on Accounting, every year the University undergoes an audit, and the results are published in the media and the university website.

The University implements correspondence work within its operational goals, including document processing, formulation, preparation, circulation, and record-keeping. The information and documentation processes of the University are regulated by the University Internal Disciplinary Rules, relevant Armenian codes and other legal acts (respective regulations and legal acts).

The University has introduced and operates 'Mulberry' system of electronic circulation and management of documents (hereinafter "electronic system") since 13 May 2017. The main goals of the electronic system are as follows: effective management of document flow within the University; centralized storage of electronic version of documents and related materials; document tracking and document control at all stages of document flow; ensuring oversight over execution, fast document searching, ensuring templates of documents and simultaneous workflow of several subdivisions, as well as exclusion of loss of documents.

Based on the aforementioned, the University Rector, ruling by his Order N126 M of 28.11.2017, approved the Correspondence Procedure of the University (hereinafter "procedure") and the official forms. The procedure includes regulations on the creation of documents and their flow. Particularly, the procedure stipulates that:

- a. University implements correspondence through the electronic system. The internal correspondence is organised, and the ongoing supervision over the organization of the correspondence is conducted by the General Services Department. University Chief of Staff conducts the general management and supervision over the correspondence. Every employee has his or her password to use the electronic system and has no right to publicise the password. Any record (note, mention) under the name of a user in the electronic system corresponds to a record (note, mention) made on a document. In case of the authenticity of the electronic signature of the employees (the ones who do have electronic signatures), the electronic version of the document equals to the hard-copy document.
- b. Registration of incoming documents, internal document circulation, document registration and document deadlines, outgoing document flows and their delivery, periods for completing the assignments, preparation of draft orders to be approved by the rector and their flow.
- c. The documentation rules and document creation requirements are clarified. The procedure introduced uniformity of approaches, which apply to every subdivision in terms of document circulation and requisites of forms. In addition, the forms for an institutional order, a letter, and papers of official persons have been approved.
- d. Cases and procedures of use of forms created through printing and computer equipment.
- e. The dates for oversight documents, deadlines of execution of applications submitted by students and other persons; clear division of those responsible for the execution of the documented task and the deadlines for completion thereof.

At present, the electronic system is accessible in all institutional subdivisions.

University Public Relations Office oversees information published about the University on internet pages, newspapers, journals and information pamphlets (see detailed in Criterion 8).

The 'electronic university' is currently underway to introduction, which will coordinate the whole process.

STANDARD F. The institution ensures the environment is safe and secure through health and safety measures and mechanisms, considering students with special needs.

Precepts:

[University Strategic Plan](#)

Internal Disciplinary Regulation available at <http://ysmu.am/website/documentation/files/3ff6be95.pdf>

The University security is ensured by the legislation and internal disciplinary rules, which are defined by the Security Department in a prescribed manner. In its operations, the Security Department is guided by the legislation, relevant regulation, other institutional rules, rector's orders and instructions.

The university Security Department fulfills the following responsibilities: ensuring the security of the University, University buildings, premises, auxiliary buildings, hospital clinical complexes, outpatient clinics, cash registers, power plant, neighbouring yards and areas, entire property; ensuring the safety of the University leadership and staff when the latter perform their duties.

Anti-fire security and safety of staff in case of emergencies is organized in accordance with Armenian legislation. The security of the University is implemented through a passing point and mobile service (Internal Disciplinary Rules at <http://ysmu.am/website/documentation/files/3ff6be95.pdf>).

In its Strategic Plan, the University also underscores the preservation of the health of the staff and provision of medical assistance (see [University Strategic Plan 2015-2020](#)). In particular, the University has discounts and assistance services to its employees through a specific scheme of the Trade Union, aiming at supporting employees to overcome health problems and alleviating the financial burden. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that the interests of students with special needs are not always protected: not all buildings are equipped with elevators; entrances are not fully equipped with paths for wheelchairs.

STANDARD G. There are special mechanisms in place to measure the effectiveness of resources, their applicability and availability.

Precepts:

The toolset of and studies conducted by the Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance http://ysmu.am/en/page_list/quality_assurance/#sthash.xfvNoIYL.dpbs

The applicability, accessibility, and effectiveness of resources provided to students and faculty are assessed against relevant needs. The representatives of the theoretical and clinical departments/chairs, as well as heads of the University hospital subdivisions submit resource proposals that they need to fully organise the academic process. Afterwards, tools and procedures are applied to conduct needs assessment, whereby multifaceted monitoring is to be conducted towards financial and educational resource

planning, acquisition, use and provision. The monitoring should be based on survey results, needs assessment, on the study of reports submitted by relevant subdivisions and detailed analysis of results of the expert monitoring.

STRENGTHS

- The University Strategic Plan places a premium on development of a learning environment necessary for the delivery of study programmes.
- The needs of subdivisions are taken into account in the planning of financial budget estimate.
- The University fully regulates the document circulation.
- Availability of a toolset to assess satisfaction of stakeholders with the educational resources and auxiliary services.

WEAKNESSES

- No sufficiently clear policy on allocation of financial resources and expenditure planning.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Acquisition of new premises for improving the educational process.
- Rent of clinical bases on a contract basis.

THREATS

- Uncontrollable changes into the learning environment by the heads of clinical bases, up to the point, which adversely affects the medical education environment.
- Ignoring specific medical issues in the wider context of alternating political decisions.

OVERCOMING WEAKNESSES AND ELIMINATING THREATS

- Fully introduce university-wide unified electronic system.

CRITERION VIII. SOCIETAL RESPONSIBILITY

CRITERION. *The Institution is accountable to the government and society for the education it offers, research conducted and for the resources it uses.*

Ambitions. The University strives to run a unified management system of information on institutional responsibilities (functions), which will foster accountability and performance transparency.

STANDARD A. The Institution has defined policies on accountability.

Precepts:

Policies on Accountability

[University Strategic Plan 2015-2020](#)

The University has clearly defined policies on accountability.

The University has a unified information database, which manages accountability of all subdivisions at the University. In accordance with the system, University subdivisions submit to Public Relations Department different types of information. This includes departmental information, news stories, key facts, success stories and so on. Information-related accountability is specifically achieved through disseminating information via official website and through public domain information systems.

The newly upgraded official website enables to learn about daily and scheduled events, also serving a useful reference point to get data on accomplished projects and accountability.

It should be mentioned, that the information produced on public domain is offered through certain key schemes. In particular, annual publications on specialties offered, admission seats, terms and conditions are available through the first route. The second scheme involves published advertising and information brochures and catalogs. Third route ensures information flow through institutional newspapers (monthly newsletters, magazines), various guides and course flyers, as well as via university website. The most effective and operational from amongst these sources to produce information go as follows:

1. News
2. Applicants
3. Alumni Union
4. Faculties
5. Academic Departments/Chairs
6. Medicine
7. Student Parliament
8. Legal instruments (statutory documents)
9. Reports (reports on long-term, medium-term and short-term performance of academic departments/chairs, rector, vice-rectors, deans of faculties and other bodies).

Most importantly, the information related to accountability is published also in Russian and English. One of the recommendations by the group of experts during the first institutional accreditation was that the University shall employ more diverse tools to ensure the accountability of institutional processes and procedures. A major step in this regard is the application of ‘Yerevan State Medical University’ and ‘Armen Muradyan’ Facebook pages, which are widely used to make relevant information publicly available, and also serve to boost institutional accountability and ensure further planning on requisite action steps.

STANDARD B. The Institution ensures transparency of its procedures and processes and makes information thereon publicly available.

Precepts:

Reports, presentations, analyses

Through its website, Facebook pages and the press service, the University ensures transparency and public accessibility (for internal and external stakeholders) of information related to education, science and research activities. This is best showcased through the following tabs under the “Information” section in the university’s website:

- News
- Doctor’s Pathway
- Events
- Announcements
- Online Resources
- Journals
- Gallery
- Video Gallery
- In the Media Spotlight
- Question-Answer
- Phone Directory
- Advanced Search

Over 200,000 users access the University official website annually, and it has been revealed that 20% of users are from abroad. To note, users from countries such as India, Russia and Iran, access the website as a useful reference point for information on admission, education practices, etc. (see Reports [1](#), [2](#)).

In 2017, the University Quality Assessment and Assurance Centre participated in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Anti-corruption Network for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ACN) meeting on Istanbul Anti-Corruption Action Plan. Within the scope of this meeting, an online platform has been created. It makes readily available analytical information and data on

activities across manifold institutional sectors for purposes of increasing the transparency of HEI performance (see Criterion 10).

STANDARD C. There are firm feedback mechanisms to foster creation of links between the Institution and society.

Precepts:

Summarised findings and analyses

The University has implemented the recommendation by the experts on developing formal procedures of getting feedback. In particular, the University employs four principal feedback schemes in the form of e-mails, Facebook e-mails, modes of verbal and written communication.

1. University website accommodates “Connectivity” window, which enables users submitting a query, also leaving his/her e-mail address, and afterwards, they receive relevant responses. “Question-Answer” window constantly operates and allows for scrolling through universal issues and responses provided thereon. It should be stated that “Question-Answer” window, which operates separately from other windows and tabs, enables addressing the query directly to the Rector of the University. “In the Media Spotlight” section allows to publicise and make readily available information on university, its staff and faculty, illustrates interesting clinical cases managed by physicians, as well as news stories and events, which are featured in media (through various routes, for instance, TV shows, radio programmes, etc.). Multicomponent studies that are conducted by the University Centre for Quality Assessment and Assurance also help surface student needs. Being conducted periodically, these studies ensure firm feedback with general public.
2. E-mail letters are addressed to Yerevan State Medical University and Armen Muradyan official pages on Facebook social media platform. These e-mails are further forwarded to relevant departments/subdivisions and are accordingly replied upon, and in case of major concerns, immediate reply is sent to the enquirer. It’s worth mentioning, that over the past two (2) years, the Facebook pages have significantly facilitated connection and communication in terms of voicing issues, expressing approval/disapproval on university performance. On average, about 200 e-mail letters are addressed to Yerevan State Medical University official Facebook page in a week, and about 300 e-mail letters are addressed to Armen Muradyan official Facebook page weekly. These e-mails are adequately considered and replied. In certain cases, the letter is forwarded to the relevant department/subdivision, and where possible, the issue is settled and the enquirer is informed thereon. Where necessary, the enquirers are invited to specific meetings to get involved in discussion of issues they voiced.

3. University Rector and vice-rectors have scheduled office hours for appointments, as a rule Thursdays within the week. Making a prior appointment, the enquirer has a chance to address the issues to the relevant department and the rector. No clear statistics exists, though, as to the number of people voicing their concerns during such meetings and number of settled issues over the years.
4. As for written requests and applications, the feedback assessment in this case is manageable. Requests and applications addressed to the Rector are submitted through the Department of General Services. Applications addressed to other institutional bodies are handled by relevant secretariats. However, the procedures here are not clarified, for instance, no clear specification exists as to how many days shall the response to an application be processed.

It should be mentioned, that taking due account of the importance of feedback, the introduction of one-stop shop within the University is envisaged. This will allow for measuring applications, complaints, and settled or rejected issues in numbers.

Major work has been done to develop public feedback mechanisms. However, the mechanisms to evaluate their efficiency still need improvement.

STANDARD D. The Institution employs mechanisms that take care of knowledge (values) transfer to the society.

The Institution employs a range of streamlined mechanisms to periodically disseminate specialised and general information to society. In particular, university website (www.ysmu.am), university gazette / official newspaper (“Future Doctor”), and two official pages moderated on Facebook social media platform (“Armen Muradyan”, “Yerevan State Medical University”) are the major tools, through which information is made publicly available.

Facebook pages share online the information about institutional activities and University life, and also surface ongoing issues coupled with relevant analysis thereon. They offer both specialised and general information on various issues. In addition, the University periodically carries out awareness-raising specialist activities within different target groups of society. For instance, University professors visit regions of Armenia under “doors open days” scheme. University professionals also participate in specialist and non-specialist TV shows, radio and Facebook programmes providing professional information to the general public. Moreover, there are also robust mechanisms to disseminate knowledge and information on science and research. In particular, the University regularly runs international scientific conferences and student science weeks, thus enabling the university community to learn about domestically and globally conducted research by leading scholars/scientists. During these events, the University research community members report the outcomes of their scientific projects as well.

One more route to ensure flow of information are the quarterly journals “Medicine, Education and Science”, and “New Armenian Medical Journal”, which also boost dissemination of up-to-date information on academic, science and research landscapes. Live video streaming on Facebook ensures instant live broadcasting to cover daily events and make them publicly available.

Further information on additional academic, counselling and support services is available in Criterion 4.

STRENGTHS

- Availability of accountability mechanisms and tools at the University.
- Availability of information ensured in three languages and targeted at both internal and external stakeholders.
- Research/scientific journals and university newspaper published periodically.

WEAKNESSES

- Mechanisms on assessing effectiveness of every institutional process not yet fully devised.
- Unified Information Management System not yet introduced.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Making more effective use of information platforms, designed under international funding schemes.
- Introduction of one-stop shop within the University to receive information.

THREATS

- When ensuring improved transparency and accountability coupled with gaining competitive edge for the University in the region, there is an increased risk of leak of data.

OVERCOMING WEAKNESSES AND ELIMINATING THREATS

- Development of mechanisms, which are intended to evaluate information effectiveness and feedback efficiency, and these mechanisms will enable measuring the applications, complaints, settled and rejected issues in numbers.

CRITERION IX. EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND PROFILE INTERNATIONALISATION

CRITERION. *The Institution fosters experience exchange and strengthening through external relations, thus contributing to institutional internationalisation.*

Ambitions. The University aims at reinforcing the institution's international acclaim and ranking through boosting the policy, which fosters international relations (see Goal 8, [University Strategic Plan 2015-2020](#)).

STANDARD A. The Institution promotes its external relations through sound policies and procedures aimed at creating an environment conducive to experience exchange, advancement and internationalisation.

Precepts:

[Goal 8, University Strategic Plan 2015-2020](#)

Strategic Plan on Comprehensive Development of University External Relations and Internationalisation of University Profile and Activities

Action Plan 2015-2020, Criterion 9-3

Report for 2017 and 2018, delivered by Vice-Rector for External Affairs and International Partnerships at the University Scientific Council Meetings

An overarching development of external relations and internationalisation of institutional activities are one of the priorities towards advancement of the University. The improvement of these processes comes as a clearly stipulated policy within the University Strategic Plan 2015-2020. Pursuant to the Strategic Plan, the University is committed to ensuring institutional internationalisation through building an environment, which will promote exchange of experience.

During the first institutional accreditation, the recommendations by experts also referred to the absence of a clear policy fostering international relations. It was recommended to develop standards and mechanisms to assess the performance effectiveness in regard with external/foreign relations and internationalisation. These recommendations were taken due account of in the development of the University internationalisation policy. Hence, the University Strategic Plan 2015-2020 stipulates the issues, which are necessary settle, in order to improve the process on internationalisation. These issues predominantly range from developing requisite regulations, making use of international best practices to improving conditions for student and faculty exchange, as well as developing standards and metrics to measure institutional and departmental performance toward internationalisation.

Based on the previous self-evaluation report submitted by the University for accreditation purposes, the experts made recommendation on putting more emphasis on international benchmarking. This

recommendation has been taken due account of and the University Strategic Plan has underscored the importance of running international benchmarking as a prerequisite to introducing international best practices (see Goal 8, [University Strategic Plan 2015-2020](#)).

For purposes of achieving the goals, and in order to settle the issues set forth in the University Strategic Plan; relevant procedures and action plan, as well as requisite mechanisms and timeline have been devised (see Strategic Plan toward Internationalisation, Action Plan on External Relations and Internationalisation). To note, the University has persistently settled the issues outlined in the Action Plan.

In particular, the indices on effectiveness of internationalisation and external relations have been reflected in the institutional key performance indicators. Reports template has also been designed, intended for academic departments to track the effectiveness of practices and schemes toward internationalisation and external relations (see Reports Template).

For purposes of addressing issues related to institutional ranking, relevant draft project has been developed, coupled with forming a working group and producing an action plan. In addition, requisite workings have also been carried out. Formal relations have been established with international ranking consultancies, followed by running a benchmark. In partnership with Shanghai Ranking Consultancy, the benchmarking of University performance in research/science was measured in 2017-2018 (see detailed in Criterion 6).

The effectiveness of planned activities has been discussed at the extended meetings of the Rector's Council, through the reports presented by heads of subdivisions of the International Office. The activities have also been measured in terms of effectiveness in the report of the Vice-Rector for External Affairs and International Partnerships; the report being presented at the annual meeting of the University Scientific Council (see reports delivered by Vice-Rector for External Affairs and International Partnerships, Scientific Council Decisions, reports delivered at the Rector's Council).

The effectiveness of the employed practices is showcased through the increased number of overseas students. In particular, percentage increase in the number of overseas students at 23% was observed in 2016-2017, compared to data between 2013 and 2014 academic year. The number of students and instructors linguistically proficient in foreign languages and the number of students and instructors, who participate in exchange programmes has also increased to a certain extent. Cooperation with medical universities and schools, as well as international health organisations of the countries in the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States), across Europe, Central Asia and the United States has been launched through new partnership agreements. In addition, the University has increased its engagement in European study projects (see the [list of Institutional Agreements](#)).

The recommendations of international experts also referred to the limited number of students participating in exchange programmes. For purposes of settling this issue, in addition to the numerous new cooperation agreements, the University has also put emphasis on improving and reforming programmes of study, on the methods and models of their design and assessment of effectiveness.

With a view to making institutional programmes of study more compatible with those of leading medical universities across Europe, the US and the CIS countries, a comparative analysis has been conducted. Based on the findings of the analysis and, *inter alia*, having regard to other factors, necessary

amendments have been made (and are still underway) to the curricular contents and the subject-specific programmes (see detailed in Criterion 3).

The amendments made and the new cooperation agreements led to stimulating and boosting student exchange and mobility. In particular, if between 2012 and 2015, 1260 students from the University have participated in exchange programmes, the number of students has risen to 1836 between 2015-2018, (see [student and faculty mobility statistics](#)).

The absence of mobility window in curricular contents of study programmes, poses certain challenges to participation in exchange programmes, thus hindering student mobility. This issue was discussed in relevant committees and it was decided that requisite amendments to the curricular contents will render them more flexible and will further facilitate student mobility.

In the reporting period, experienced physicians, lecturers and scientists have been invited from leading clinics and universities abroad and have delivered lectures for university students and physicians, and staff of university clinics. In this context, the visit of Nobel laureates to the University is significantly important. In particular, five (5) Nobel Prize winners visited the University back in 2016 and two (2) laureates were invited in 2018 (see detailed in Criterion 6). Moreover, the majority of invited lecturers and scholars have become members of university community in the capacity of honorary doctors and visiting professors. In particular, between 2016 and 2018, the University has conferred upon 12 scientists the title of University Honorary Doctor. About 70 lecturers have become University Visiting Professors between 2017 and 2018 (see the [list of University Visiting Professors and Honorary Doctors](#)).

Certain challenges and complications have surfaced, when driving forward the policy on University internationalisation. These issues mainly surface throughout the delivery of exchange programmes. Notwithstanding the notable progress over the past years, the number of students and faculty participating in exchange programmes is still low. This is conditioned by limited funding opportunities. Participation in exchange programmes is predominantly ensured under international, and specifically, through European grant funding schemes.

One of the exchange programmes is achieved under intercollegiate agreement with the Faculty of Medicine of Chuvash State University. Within the scope of this programme, student and faculty exchange was achieved in 2014-2016 academic year (see [number of exchange students and lecturers per years](#)). Students have enrolled to two-week clinical courses, and the lecturers have delivered thematic lectures.

Selection of students was merit-based and was run by the University as demonstrated by proven academic achievement and linguistic competence. In 2016-2018 academic years, 55 students of University have participated in exchange programmes, which have been launched under intercollegiate agreements with N.I. Pirogov Russian National Research Medical University and I.M. Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University.

STANDARD B. The Institution's infrastructure, specifically designed to boost external relations and internationalisation, ensures smooth flow of the process.

Precepts:

Position Classification and Description of Vice-Rector for External Affairs and International Partnerships
Regulation on External Relations and International Partnerships
Regulation on Premedical Education of Overseas Students
Responsibilities (functions) of International Cooperation Department
Reports at Rector's Council Meetings delivered by Heads of Departments in charge of external relations and internationalization
Reports template for subdivisions to track effectiveness of practices toward internationalization and external relations

Almost every department at the University, under the supervision of the Rector, has its input (in terms of involvement and responsibilities) into the process, which evolves around the internationalisation. However, key responsibilities toward ensuring external relations and internationalisation are managed by the Department of International Cooperation and the Department of Overseas Students' Affairs. These departments operate and fulfill their responsibilities under the supervision of University Vice-Rector for External Affairs and International Partnerships (see Position Classification and Description of Vice-Rector for External Affairs and International Partnerships).

These Departments run relevant activities in a duly regulated manner. In addition, responsibilities of all officers are clearly determined and outlined (see Regulation on External Relations and International Partnerships). The responsibilities of International Cooperation Department envisage development of collaboration between the University and higher education institutions abroad; producing performance reports; ensuring smooth circulation of requisite documentation, as well as providing necessary data and information, which is further posted on the university website.

The Department of Overseas Students' Affairs manages the delivery of intercultural events, the process of filling out the requisite documents, which overseas students need to submit to receive residence permit, etc. The Dean's Office of Overseas Students' Education and the Premedical Education Department are the institutional bodies in charge of study-related issues, ranging from methodical and research matters to managing routine activities with academic departments and students (see Regulation of Premedical Education Department). Communication with parents of overseas students is also ensured through the mentioned bodies.

The University Hostel is a separate structural unit and duly ensures adequate facilities necessary for residing, studying, and recreation activities of students.

To note, two more bodies – the Department of Institutional Development and Marketing Department – have effective input toward internationalization. Departments report on accomplished workings at the Rector's Council Meetings. These data is later succinctly incorporated into the annual reports delivered by the Vice-Rector for External Affairs and International Partnerships.

It should be stated, that the University Scientific Council has approved positively of the departmental activities having regard to reports for 2017 and 2018 years (see Reports of Vice-Rector for External Affairs and International Partnerships, Scientific Council Decisions, Reports delivered at the Rector's Council Meetings).

The effectiveness of departmental activities is also showcased by the increase in number of overseas students over recent years, as well as availability of internationally robust agreements and increased exchange of students and faculty (see [number of exchange students and instructors per years](#)).

Standard C. The Institution has achieved effective collaboration with local and international counterparts.

Precepts:

List of Institutional Agreements on External Relations and Internationalisation

[Number of exchange students and teaching faculty per years](#)

University official website at <http://ysmu.am/>

The University has achieved extensive cooperation with international and local HEIs, healthcare and research organisations, student unions and professional associations in the healthcare sector (see the [list of institutional agreements effective to date](#)).

Over the past three years, key accomplishments towards external relations and internationalisation go as follows:

- Participation in European programmes of study. The University has coordinated internationally robust VERITAS (Structural Development of the Third Cycle Based on Salzburg Principles) Project) and MedGen (Developing Medical Genetics Education through Curriculum Reforms and Establishment of Postgraduate Training Programs) programmes. In programmes GOVERN, ALIGN and DECERPH, the University has engaged in the capacity of a partner. The participation in these programmes, *inter alia*, has significantly boosted reforms, which were made to ensure compatibility between programmes of study and curricular contents.
- Participation in programmes under Erasmus Mundus and Erasmus+ schemes, in particular exchange programme MEDEA (MEDical UnivErsities Alliance), Erasmus+International, Mobile+2 and USC Erasmus+. These programmes have further fostered student and faculty mobility.
- 2016 and 2018 were marked with the visit of Nobel laureates, who delivered lectures at the University (see detailed in Criterion 6).
- Conducting international benchmark analysis (see detailed in Criterion 6).
- Running GLOBUS and FMGE academic projects (see detailed in Criterion 3).
- Expanding the community of University Guest Professors and Honorary Doctors (see the list of professors and doctors).
- Institutional membership to SGroup European Universities' Network (SGroup) in 2016, for purposes of participating in exchange programmes through consortiums.
- Conclusion of agreement with the Research Centre of the Ministry of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy) of Republic of India, for purposes of

introducing Homeopathy course in postgraduate education and for engaging in joint research projects.

- In 2018, Sri Lanka Medical Council's recognition of diploma of General Medicine degree programme.

The University has fostered communication and joint activities with university alumni, *inter alia*, with those, who have strong record of achievements in their professional practice abroad. This allows for making best use of alumni capacities and potential. For this purpose, University Alumni Union was created, which counts membership of about three thousand alumni of different graduation years (see University website for further details available at http://ysmu.am/en/student_login).

In the reporting period, the cooperation initiated with Oxford Academy for Education and Development and University Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg was not effected due to lack of relevant funding.

STANDARD D. The Institution ensures requisite level of a foreign language proficiency among internal stakeholders, in order to boost effectiveness of internationalisation.

Precepts:

[English Language Course Timetable designed for University Staff](#)

Number and percentage of linguistically proficient (foreign language proficiency) teaching faculty and administrative staff over the past three (3) years							
University officers	Language	2015		2016		2017	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Teaching faculty	English	609	46.1	633	47.2	694	51.7
	Russian	1179	89.2	1221	91	1214	90.5
	Other / please specify the language/						
Administrative staff*	English						
	Russian						
	Other /						

	please specify the language/						
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* no clear statistical data is available on foreign language proficiency of administrative staff, though.

Number and percentage of English-speaking and Russian-speaking students over the past three (3) years							
Students	Language	2015		2016		2017	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Specialty							
General Medicine	English	1528	54	1661	59	1684	60
	Russian	1763	61	1760	62.5	1788	63.7
Stomatology	English	517	49	440	51	463	54
	Russian	639	60.5	524	60.7	528	61.5
Pharmacy	English	130	42	126	43	109	46
	Russian	187	58.8	174	59.4	143	60.5
Public Health	English	13	65	16	65	28	66
	Russian	16	78.1	19	79.2	33	79.3
Military Medicine	English	58	41	62	42	71	48
	Russian	85	60.2	89	60.3	89	60.7

Study programmes instructed in foreign languages and offered to overseas students / number of overseas students over the past five (5) years						
Programme of study	Language of Instruction	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
General Medicine	English	746	878	892	961	943
General Medicine	Russian	97	95	157	103	112
Stomatology	English	96	72	95	94	113
Stomatology	Russian	72	78	75	94	82
Pharmacy	English	30	31	30	32	35
Pharmacy	Russian	5	5	4	3	3
Total		1046	1159	1253	1287	1288

Number of students enrolled to study programmes instructed in foreign languages (over past five (5) years as per countries)
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Country	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
India	650	767	799	829	841
Russian Federation	164	163	164	144	131
Iran	98	85	78	99	100
Syria	40	48	66	72	71
Jordan	3	6	23	35	43
Georgia	31	29	34	38	21
USA	19	13	14	10	11
Lebanon	11	8	18	12	13
Kazakhstan	7	8	9	7	9
Turkmenistan	3	6	10	9	9
Israel	1	7	3	3	5
Sri Lanka	4	11	7	5	5
Greece	8	2	2	2	4
Ukraine	2	8	6	5	4
Canada	0	0	2	2	4
Iraq	2	2	5	4	4
Cyprus	2	0	2	2	2
Germany	0	0	1	1	2
Abkhazia	0	3	4	2	2
France	0	0	1	1	1
Venezuela	0	0	1	1	1
China	0	0	1	1	1
Great Britain	0	0	2	2	1
Singapore	1	1	1	1	1
Poland	0	0	0	0	1
Australia	0	0	0	0	1
Total	1046	1159	1253	1287	1288

During the previous accreditation, it was rightly stated that the level of foreign language knowledge is not high at the university and it was accordingly recommended to enlarge the opportunities for foreign language teaching. The University leadership also underscores the importance of increasing foreign language proficiency and as one of the core requirements toward internationalization of the University, the Strategic Plan specifically stipulates the importance of developing mechanisms, which aim to ensure foreign language proficiency among internal stakeholders (see Goal 8, [University Strategic Plan 2015-2020](#)). For this purpose, range of relevant activities has been conducted over the recent years, going as follows:

- University Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance has conducted surveys among students and teaching faculty. The surveys surfaced feedback, that the

effectiveness of teaching was significantly undermined if students demonstrating different levels of foreign language proficiency were grouped together. Consequently, by Decision of University Scientific Council (2017-2018), students, who attend foreign language courses, are grouped per language proficiency level, which makes the teaching significantly effective.

- Foreign languages are also taught throughout the clinical residency (see relevant curricular contents).
- Language courses run for university faculty (see language course timetable 2018-2019, first academic term). To note, teaching in overseas student groups may be sanctioned, only if the lecturer has attended the language course and, upon completion of the course, has demonstrated proven knowledge of foreign language in the relevant language exam (having received either good or excellent grades).
- Participation in international conferences, coupled with social and cultural events organized at the University, as well as attendance to congresses and seminars abroad are streamlined tools to boost foreign language proficiency among the teaching faculty.

The instruction of foreign languages is conducted not only through the Academic Department of Foreign Languages, but also through assistance and efforts by Yerevan State University of Languages and Social Sciences, American University of Armenia and French University Foundation in Armenia, as well as through assistance of U.S. Embassy in Armenia. To note, since 2015 through 2018, about 350 students and instructors have attended free language courses (English, French and German) under the stated cooperation schemes.

The library stock of the University is routinely furnished with scholarly literature in foreign languages. Taking account of the findings of needs-based analysis, which was conducted by Centre for Quality Assessment and Assurance, the library stock has been replenished with 18 units of up-to-date foreign literature in different branches of medicine. Since 2017, the literature is accessible to university students, faculty and staff via electronic library.

In addition, research journals published by the University (New Armenian Medical Journal and Medicine, Science and Education) accommodate scholarly papers and works in Armenian, Russian and English languages.

The effectiveness of activities towards ensuring foreign language proficiency among internal stakeholders is showcased by the significant increase in number of instructors and students, who have the requisite command of a foreign language. In particular, compared to percentage of 2015, the number of instructors proficient in English language has risen by 5.6% and number of students – by 4.6% in 2017 (see relevant statistics). Notwithstanding the fact, that the university academic community counts not a low number – 694 instructors and teaching assistants proficient in English (51,7 percent of the teaching faculty), University remains concerned by the number of instructors proficient in English at certain clinical departments, where it does not exceed 40% of lecturers. The current number of English-speaking teachers is sufficient to run study programmes in English. However, taking due account of prospective increase in number of overseas students, English language courses have been amplified for the teaching faculty.

In respect of knowledge in foreign languages, certain percentage of students is not yet proficient, which poses obstacles to making use of professional scholarly literature and participating in exchange programmes. In this regard, the University has major workings yet to complete and new measures are being developed for purposes of settling this issue. The involvement of skillful language specialists and the application of modern teaching methods are specifically important and these major steps are currently being fulfilled.

STRENGTHS

- University has a long-term proven record of working with overseas students; increased number of overseas students matriculated to university programmes of study.
- Presence of high quality, linguistically proficient teaching faculty at the University.
- Participation in European programmes of study.
- Increased rates of student and faculty mobility under intercollegiate agreements.

WEAKNESSES

- Certain percentage of students is not yet linguistically proficient in foreign languages.
- Limited funding opportunities hindering participation in exchange programmes.
- Lack of 'mobility window'.

OPPORTUNITIES

- University alumni, who have strong record of achievements in their professional practice abroad; a perspective exists on boosting university internationalization if making best use of alumni capacities and potential.

THREATS

- Apart from Yerevan State Medical University, there exist other medical institutions in the Republic of Armenia, which offer higher medical education to overseas students and any performance default on behalf of any such institution may be generalized and significantly affect the reputation and ranking of Yerevan State Medical University.

OVERCOMING WEAKNESSES AND ELIMINATING THREATS

- Mechanisms have been proposed to extend the duration of foreign language teaching in the curricular contents.
- University active involvement in educational-legal processes across the country, which aim at improving the quality of higher education (*inter alia* the medical education).

CRITERION X. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

CRITERION. *The institution has an infrastructure for internal quality assurance, which promotes continuous improvements of institutional processes and fosters the establishment of a quality culture.*

The University pursues to develop education quality assurance system, which will involve institutional processes and will be based on the indicators devised to assess the effectiveness of institutional activities. The quality assurance system will aim at gradual and continuous improvement of institutional processes.

STANDARD A. The Institution has quality assurance policy and procedures.

Precepts:

Manual on internal quality assurance system

[Regulation of Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance](#)

University Strategic Plan devised 2015-2020 attaches high priority to continuous improvement of education quality assurance system, the routine self-analysis of various institutional subdivisions, comprehensive amalgamation of education, research and finance components into the quality assurance processes, etc. (see the Goal 9, [University Strategic Plan 2015-2020](#)).

For purposes of achieving these objectives, the University routinely reviews and reforms the toolsets and the system of education quality assessment.

Up until 2011, the Department for Institutional Reforms and Integration Policies was the body at the University to have engaged in quality assurance. However, the functions, policy and strategy of the Department did not provide sufficient grounds to ensure quality assessment and assurance processes.

In 2011, Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance was established at the University and the quality assessment and assurance system was thus introduced. Afterwards, the Centre policy and strategy were designed, and regulations and procedures were devised to measure the quality of operations and activities across manifold institutional sectors (see the [Decision](#) on Establishing a Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance and the [Regulation](#) thereof).

These documents were furnished with necessary supplements in 2018 and were later incorporated into the Regulation of the University Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance. This Regulation covers the core functions, objectives, management, structure and staff composition of the Centre.

The actions within the bound of education quality assessment and assurance system are regulated through several procedures. These may be the procedure by which knowledge testing system is assessed, or the procedure by which the institution monitors the effectiveness of study programmes, and also the procedure serving basis for composition of self-analysis report, and the procedure through which self-analysis indicators are measured and the quality is improved, as well as the procedure for launching self-analysis process, etc. Taking into account the issues revealed by the group of experts during the first

institutional accreditation, these procedures have been routinely updated in 2018 through the regular assessment of proficiency of teaching faculty and academic departments (attachments [1](#), [2](#)). In addition, the institution has also devised requisite forms for submission of relevant action reports.

In the reporting period, a manual has been published, which provides specific guidance on education quality assurance system. The handbook covers the aims and objectives of higher education internal quality assurance system, core descriptions, processes and methodological maxims of devising the system. The handbook also provides a description of the core precepts and procedures relating to the system (see the [Regulation](#) of the Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance, as well as respective procedures at https://ysmu.am/en/page_list/documents/#sthash.AkYt6MAM.dpbs).

The Regulation of the Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance, as well as the amended and supplemented procedures enable comprehensive evaluation of the institutional processes, as well as identifying and justifying ongoing issues and later implementing necessary reforms.

STANDARD B. The institution allocates requisite human, material and financial resources to manage internal quality assurance processes.

Precepts:

[Order on Creating Committees on Education Quality Assessment and Assurance](#)

[Order on Establishment of Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance](#)

[Order on Establishment of Standing Committee on Self-Evaluation](#)

[Charter of Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance](#)

[Policy of Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance](#)

[Medium term report on performance action plan](#)

Institutional system of education quality assurance involves the Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance, as well as respective Central Committee and Study Programme Faculty Commissions (see relevant orders/decisions). For the personnel at the Centre six (6) positions are defined. The Centre has also introduced the description, core functions and responsibilities inherent to each position in 2017. In addition, the University has furnished the Centre with requisite workspace premises, as well as with property and necessary equipment (see the [Regulation](#) of the Centre).

Since 2013, in conformity with the Rector's Decision N113/M, the following bodies operate at the University: the Central Committee and the Study Programme Faculty Commissions, which are committed to assessing and ensuring education quality. The Central Committee operates next to the University Scientific Council. The staff involved in these bodies consists of twenty-four university trained officers and students of the university community, whose core functions are enshrined in the quality assurance policy (see the Order and Policy). Further studies have shown that the faculty committees in such composition do not play essential role and have not great effectiveness in the processes towards assuring the university education quality. Thus, a decision was made at the meeting N

14 of the Scientific Council (dated 7 November 2018) to review and expand the composition of the committees. Within the framework of this decision, for purposes of making the workings with academic departments more effective and in order to reach out to the departments for quality assurance, one representative from each academic department/chair will be involved in the new faculty committees and thus a system of quality assurance agents will be created.

Attaching high importance to the routine self-assessment processes at the University, and considering the necessity of submitting medium term reports and controlling the performance of action plan, requisite funding was allocated by the Rector's Order N 118/M, which permitted to create a University Standing Committee regulating the accreditation processes (see the relevant Order). Between 2016 and 2018, the Committee has carried out the activities as follows:

- once the institutional accreditation awarded, the Committee has evaluated and analysed reports directed toward the performance action plan of institutional processes;
- composing and submitting to the National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance the medium term self assessment report on performance action plan;
- having prepared reference materials, the Committee currently takes necessary steps to launch the process of study programmes accreditation;
- throughout the seminars organised at the National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance, the Committee was involved in designing and implementing a streamlined process and standards toward professional study programme accreditation (work is still underway);
- in 2017 the Committee conducted a SWOT analysis and comprehensive self-analysis, which was consistent with the accreditation standards defined by the German organisation 'ASIIN' (see the medium term report on performance action plan);
- the Committee routinely convenes meetings and considers what aspects of the institutional processes need improvement, and how to increase accountability across the university subdivisions and within the overall institutional system. It also considers the planning of further accreditation of infrastructures and programmes of study.

The Committee is composed of five (5) officers, who are members of university community.

On 13 June 2018, by the Rector's Order 95M, an additional committee was created to compose the self-evaluation report within the framework of the institutional accreditation. The committee involves sixteen (16) university officers, who occupy key positions in various fields of the University.

It should also be noted, that notwithstanding the high priority that the University Management attaches to quality assurance processes, the expenditures to support the process objectives are not clearly envisaged and arranged within the budget planning. This may be explained by inadequate clarity of policy and procedures of financial planning.

STANDARD C. Internal and external stakeholders are involved in the quality assurance processes.

Precepts:

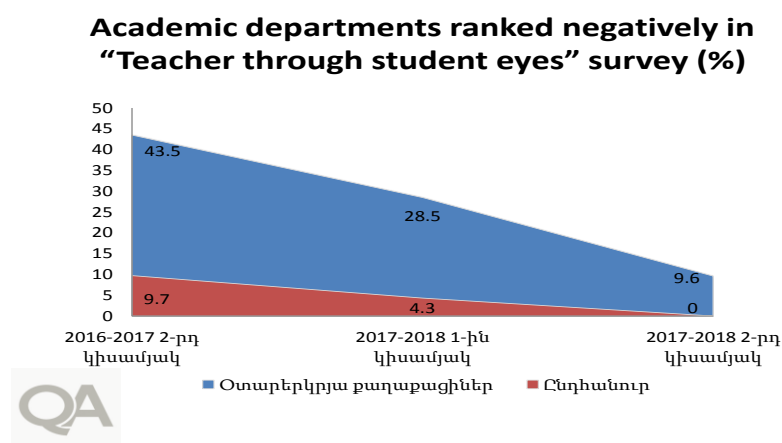
Study Reports by the Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance
Toolsets developed by the Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance
http://ysmu.am/en/page_list/quality_assurance/#sthash.xfvNoIYL.dpbs

The Regulation of the Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance, which was reviewed, supplemented and approved in 2018, clearly underscores the importance of stakeholders' involvement in quality assurance processes. Accordingly, throughout different stages of management, it is necessary to ensure the engagement of students, alumni and employers in the internal quality assessment and measure satisfaction rates, respectively (see the [Regulation](#) of Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance).

As it has been stated, both the teaching faculty and the students are involved in the education quality assurance system. However, extensive stakeholder involvement is achieved through the application of toolsets, which the Centre has developed, as well as through surveys and focus-group meetings coupled with comprehensive studies, which relate to activities across various institutional sectors.

The note, "Teacher through student eyes" is the most extensive e-study routinely conducted by the Centre and it aims to assess the feedback of students about the academic departments and teacher performance. The study is conducted every academic term and allows students to surface their opinions and issues encountered in their learning. About 2500 – 3000 students participate in the surveys every term (on average: 55%). The findings serve as reference points to introduce reforms in teaching and learning as well as in faculty and staff policy. The University Management and Administration display great attention toward the survey findings and the issues raised by students. In particular, these findings are brought to the spotlight of the University Rector, Vice-rector on Academic Affairs the Vice-rector for Science, as well as deans and other bodies, deemed as necessary.

The effectiveness of identifying the issues through stakeholder involvement and the efficiency of processes of vigorous responsiveness is showcased through gradual decrease in negative feedback about the academic departments that students have:



Herewith, the examples display, how certain processes improved based on the findings of similar study:

- Findings of the “Teacher through student eyes” study are submitted to academic departments and dean’s offices and later considered at departmental and faculty council meetings. As a way to surface objective student feedback, this survey allows for improvements in teacher’s professional characteristics.
- By the decision of the University Scientific Council, subject-specific programmes at the Academic Department of Therapy were reformed and, as a result, specific subject components are taught by relevant narrow specialists.
- “Teacher through student eyes” also surfaced data, according to which *ad hoc* committees conducted multifaceted inspections at certain academic departments and aimed at assessing the education process therein. Within the last two (2) years, similar inspections were carried out at the Academic Department of Traumatology and Orthopaedics, Department of Pathophysiology, Chemistry Department and Operative Surgery Department. The inspection issue was considered at the Rector’s Council and the Academic-Methodical Council (see the Report).
- Relevant workings are carried out toward improving the quality of lectures. In particular, problem-based learning and inter-modular approaches are developed.
- The studies, which have been conducted, revealed the issues present at the assessment system and the institution started to create and implement new and more effective systems of assessment (multi-component assessment systems). Similar systems are well in place at the Department of Pharmacology, Department of Pathological Anatomy, as well as Cardiology Department. It should be mentioned, that such systems are currently being developed at a number of academic departments, as well as at the Surgery Department. The studies conducted after the introduction of these assessment approaches revealed that they are much effective (e.g. increase in learning outcomes, on average 20%), as well as revealed drawbacks, which needed to be reviewed (e.g. the value correlation between components forming part of the assessment system, or the impossibility of introducing such systems at certain academic departments, etc.). The systems will be implemented during the first term of the academic year 2019 to 2020.
- A formulae system has been designed to measure the quality of examination tests and it will be introduced in the e-university project in 2019, thus allowing for quality assessment of departmental tests. This will enable more systematic and balanced incorporation of different subject-specific components into the test, leaving no room for any test, which fails to meet the set requirements (see the formulae for test assessment).
- The findings of “Teacher through student eyes” survey serve as reference point for other studies and research in education, which are carried out by the University Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance.

Hereby, the above reforms and statements showcase, how manifold studies and their findings form part and basis of planning at an institutional level.

For purposes of ensuring stakeholder involvement in activities across various institutional sectors, the University Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance has also carried out, in the reporting period, studies which range from student participation in lectures, assessment of learning outcomes to routinely obtaining feedback on final examinations and assessing the effectiveness of amended grading

systems of certain academic departments (see relevant reports at http://ysmu.am/en/page_list/reports/#sthash.7aRR3uXa.dpbs).

Involvement of external stakeholders in the improvement of academic process is mainly hindered by the fact, that employers work in the capacity of instructors at academic departments. For purposes of achieving extensive stakeholder involvement, the Quality Assurance Centre has designed questionnaires addressed to employers. These questionnaires set forth questions related to university graduates and field of specialty (see the toolset at <http://ysmu.am/website/images/website/%D5%88%D6%80%D5%A1%D5%AF%D5%AB%20%D5%A3%D5%B6%20%D5%AF%D5%A5%D5%B6%D5%BF%D6%80%D5%B8%D5%B6/Harcatertik/%D4%B3%D5%B8%D6%80%D5%AE%D5%A1%D5%BF%D5%B8%D6%82.pdf>).

It should be mentioned, that the toolsets of comprehensive and vigorous studies are routinely reviewed at both question and analysis stages.

For purposes of raising awareness among the Quality Assurance Centre officers, relevant discussions and trainings are routinely organised. For instance, specific trainings were organised in 2016 within the bound of TEMPUS GOVERN programme, which was attended by more than thirty (30) officers of the university community and students involved in quality assurance processes.

Nevertheless, it should be mentioned, that certain studies need to be modernized, and the full involvement of stakeholders in the institutional processes will be possible only after these processes have been fully mapped (the working towards mapping are currently underway).

STANDARD D. The internal quality assurance system is periodically reviewed.

Precepts:

[Regulation of Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance](#) [University Strategic Plan](#)

As stated in the previous standards, education quality assurance system and employed toolsets are periodically reviewed, taking into account institutional needs and stakeholder feedback.

In the reporting period, a standing committee on self-assessment has been structured within the education quality assurance system. In addition, the performance of central and academic faculty commissions has been analysed in terms of effectiveness. As a result, at the Scientific Council meeting on 07 November 2018, it was decided to change and make the composition of commissions more inclusive. In this regard, taking also into account the issues revealed during the previous accreditation, as well as having regard to the provisions stipulated in point 10 of 2015-2020 Action Plan approved by the Decision N8 of Scientific Council, dated 10.07.2015, it is planned to operate at academic departments a network of representatives of Quality Assurance Centre, which will make the cooperation between the centre and the departments more streamlined. Through specifically designed trainings, the network will also increase awareness and involvement of stakeholders (see Standard B, Criterion 10).

Since academic year 2016 to 2017, the involvement of overseas students in quality assurance studies has been increased. To note, in 2018 about 350 overseas students have participated in studies conducted towards quality assurance.

In addition, the designed toolsets are employed only after they have been validated and have further been consulted with stakeholders. The toolsets of routinely conducted surveys and studies are consistently reviewed, taking into account the respondents' feedback and findings of previous surveys.

University Strategic Plan and the Regulation of the Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance serve as reference points and indicators in assessing the effectiveness of education quality assurance system (see the [Regulation](#) of Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance and the University Strategic Plan).

STANDARD E. Internal quality assurance system provides sufficient backing for the success of the external quality assurance processes.

Precepts:

Orders on Establishment of Committees

Medium-term Report

Strategic plans of both the University and the Education Quality Assessment and Assurance Centre underscore the importance of ensuring sufficient grounds for external assessment processes. In this respect, requisite resources have already been allocated. As it has been stated, Standing Committee regulating the accreditation processes operates at the University and it constantly spotlights the settling of issues, which surface within the strategic plan and in the course of self-analysis. Meanwhile, the Committee ensures accountability in the form of reports and presentations.

For purposes of fostering the effectiveness of external assessment, the University routinely provides interested external agencies with relevant information. For instance, within the bounds of rating of HEIs, the University routinely provides the national Centre of Educational Technologies (this body operates under the Armenian Ministry of Education and Science) with relevant information and data. Furthermore, in 2017, medium-term performance report was submitted to ANQA, which covered the actions toward the settlement of issues and the improvement of processes surfaced throughout the infrastructure accreditation, etc. (see relevant analysis documents).

It should also be mentioned, that the key indicators for assessing the effectiveness of institutional performance and which also serve as the basis of annual departmental accountability, are currently reviewed taking into account the queries made by external agencies. This ensures more coherency throughout both internal and external quality assessment in higher education (see key performance indicators).

To note, the online domestic platform “Electronic University” is currently being developed and it will in turn foster transparency and effectiveness of the process, which is designed to ensure sufficient grounds for data mining, analysis and external assessment.

For purposes of making this self-analysis report, an ad hoc committee was created. The committee members are representatives of different institutional sectors. In fall 2018, within the scope of cooperation with ANQA, the committee members have undergone one of the regular trainings on self-analysis processes (see the Order).

STANDARD F. The internal quality assurance system provides for the transparency of the processes unfolding in the institution through providing information on the process quality to internal and external stakeholders.

Precept:

Policy of Centre for Education Quality Assessment and Assurance

Reports available at the University website http://ysmu.am/en/page_list/reports/#sthash.7aRR3uXa.dpbs

The Policy of Quality Assessment and Assurance Centre clearly stipulates the necessity and importance of ensuring transparency across institutional activities and quality assurance processes.

Taking due account of this fact, the Centre's web page operates within the University official website, the latter being annually accessed by about 200 000 users, 20% of which are users from abroad (see the [Report](#)). Being updated on a regular basis, the web page presents outputs and findings of studies conducted by the Centre, as well as quality-related reports at the Rector's and Scientific Councils. The web page also provides links to major documents (see at https://ysmu.am/en/page_list/documents/#sthash.jj8NhAse.gOjfBijh.dpbsv). In order to make the information on institutional processes readily available, Facebook page of the University Quality Assessment and Assurance Centre was opened in 2017.

In 2017, the University Quality Assessment and Assurance Centre took part in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Anti-corruption Network for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ACN) meeting on Istanbul Anti-Corruption Action Plan. Within the scope of this meeting, an online platform has been created. It makes readily available analytical information and data on activities across manifold institutional sectors with the view of increasing the transparency of HEI performance.

In addition, field-specific reports are regularly presented during the Academic-Methodical Council meetings, as well as at Rector's Council or Scientific Council meetings (see the Report).

Study findings related to evaluation of departmental performance or academic programmes are also submitted to relevant dean's offices and vice-rectors.

It should also be mentioned, that the document circulation e-system, which was introduced in 2017, has in its turn fostered information dissemination and accessibility.

In addition, focus-group meetings, trainings and new toolset discussions with stakeholders also aim at enhancing the transparency of quality assurance processes.

STRENGTHS

- University Strategic Plan attaches priority to routine improvement of quality assurance processes

- Availability of monitoring processes on quality assurance
- Availability of quality assurance toolsets; regular review of these toolsets in the result of analysis of findings of studies and discussions with stakeholders
- Availability of requisite human and financial resources to drive forward the delivery of quality assurance processes
- Sufficient transparency of quality assurance processes
- Quality Assurance Centre, University self-assessment and self-analysis report team engages officers, who have undergone trainings within such international projects as PICQA, DIUSAS and ARQATA

WEAKNESSES

- Necessity of improving the mapping of institutional quality assurance processes
- Lack of clear financial planning policy
- No culture of conducting annual self-evaluation on activities within institutional subdivisions

OPPORTUNITIES

- Enhancement of cooperation with ANQA and other interested external agencies

THREATS

- Poor motivation among external stakeholders

OVERCOMING WEAKNESSES AND ELIMINATING THREATS

- Mapping of institutional processes, developing additional procedures and assessment standards
- Separate item under university budget for processes on education quality assurance

LIST OF ANNEXES

N	Title
1	YSMU structure scheme
2	Regulation YSMU
3	Strategy. 2015-2020 eng.doc
4	Regulation for Final Attestation
5	Teaching Staff Quality Evaluation Procedure
6	Procedure for the Evaluation Process of the Teaching Staff by students
7	The List of Specialties
8	Development and review of the educational programs
9	QA center Regulation
10	Procedure for checks and exams