

**YEREVAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
QUALITY ASSURANCE CENTRE**

**REGULATION ON  
THE APPROVAL OF YSU STUDY PROGRAMMES**



**YEREVAN 2014**

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**QUALITY ASSURANCE CENTRE**

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Chairman of Academic Council \_\_\_\_\_ A. H. Simonyan

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**YEREVAN - 2014**

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## USED ABBREVIATIONS

AC - Academic Council

YSU - Yerevan State University

PPA - Programme Proposal Application

DPPA – Documentation Package of Programme Approval

WGPD - Working Group for Programme Development

QAC – Quality Assurance Centre

QASC - Quality Assurance Standing Committee of Academic Council

Vice-Rector on EA - Vice-rector on Educational Affairs

EMD -Educational-Methodological Department

ASC - Academic Subdivision Council (or Centre Directorate Session)

EC – Evaluation Committee

FQAC - Quality Assurance Committee of Faculty Academic Council

## 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. YSU study programmes approval regulation (hereinafter - regulation) introduces the procedures of YSU bachelor's and master's degree programmes approval, which consist of three stages:
  - validation of programme development (preliminary approval),
  - creation of documentation package and expert-review of the programme proposal,
  - implementation of expert-review conclusions and approval of the programme.
2. Validation, expert-review and approval procedures of study programmes are the main mechanisms for their quality assurance at the development stage of YSU study programmes.
3. The regulation defines the goals and objectives of validation, expert-review and approval procedures of YSU study programmes, relevant requirements, applied procedures and corresponding schedules.
4. The application form for the development of new study programme and the set of the documentation package are also provided in the regulation.
5. The proposals for the development of new study programmes are presented by YSU academic subdivisions (faculty, centre); in the case of bachelor's degree programme – at least 12 months prior to the latter's approval, and for the master's programme – at least 8 months prior to the approval of the programme.
6. All the newly created YSU bachelor's and master's degree study programmes should undergo the approval process beginning from academic year of 2014/15<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The timelines of validation, expert-review and approval procedures of YSU bachelor's and master's degree study programmes are presented in appendix 1 and appendix 2.

## 2. VALIDATION OF YSU STUDY PROGRAMMES DEVELOPMENT

### 2.1. Goal and Objectives of Validation

7. The validation of study programme development is the official assent of the university to the academic subdivision (faculty, center) to start the process of developing the new study programme according to the presented application.
8. The goal of validation procedure is to evaluate the grounding for the presented programme application and its compliance with YSU requirements/standards for programme approval.
9. The objectives of the procedure are as follows:
  - to clarify the expediency of the programme implementation through market analysis, to substantiate the social demand and need of the proposed programme in local and international labor market, to reveal the competitive advantages and weaknesses of the programme in regard to the similar programmes (if present) carried out in other HEIs of the Republic of Armenia (RA),
  - to substantiate that the proposed programme is relevant for being implemented at the given subdivision of YSU, to analyze the feasibility of the proposal from the perspective of the programme team's evaluation competences of programme development,
  - to give the preliminary assessment of the resource support for the proposed programme and to reveal the necessity for additional resources.
10. The scheme describing the validation procedure of YSU study programmes is presented in Appendix 4.

### 2.2. Proposal of Programme Development

11. The proposal for working out a new study programme is presented by the corresponding academic subdivision (faculty, center) in accordance with the requirements of YSU study

programmes development and the application form of the programme proposal (PPA). The proposal of the programme development is presented for validation at the decision of the faculty academic council (or centre directorate session) on the basis of positive decision of the Quality Assurance Committee of Faculty Academic Council (FQAC).

12. For the development and further implementation of the proposal the corresponding subdivision(s) forms a working group which formulates the application for the programme proposal (PPA) according to Appendix 3.
13. In the course of application development, the goal (qualification profile) of the proposed programme is formulated, i. e., the direction of the programme and the specific aims which should be achieved as a result of its implementation. PPA also grounds the necessary resource support for the implementation of the programme, gives the description of the potential labor market.
14. The bases for the proposal development are as follows:
  - strategic priorities for the development of the subdivision (faculty, center),
  - analysis of the requirements and needs of the potential labor market and employers, the opportunities for targeted learning by a specific order,
  - competitive position of the proposed programme (advantages and weaknesses) in regard to similar programmes (if present) carried out in other in other HEIs of the Republic of Armenia (RA),
  - the requirements of external (national and international) programme benchmarks (qualification framework for national and European higher educational area) and/or learning standards for the given specialty,
  - availability of the necessary teaching staff, material, information and other resources for the implementation of the programme in the academic subdivision,
  - availability of computer infrastructure and technical means of teaching,
  - the assessment of the financial expediency of the proposal.

### 2.3. Working Group of Programme Development

15. In order to develop a new study programme at the academic subdivision a working group for programme development (WGPD) is formed which includes experienced lecturers from the professional field of the programme and other experts, as appropriate.
16. In case of developing interdisciplinary study programmes, one of the subdivisions assumes administrative responsibility for the development and further implementation of the programme. The head of the subdivision (dean of faculty, director of center) consulting with the heads of other subdivisions participating in the programme appoints the head and members of the working group.
17. WGPD is responsible for the formulation of the application for programme proposal (PPA), creation of the documentation package of the programme development (DPPD) and supervision of the implementation of programme expert-review conclusions.
18. YSU quality assurance centre (QAC) provides WGPD with the necessary consultation concerning the required documentation list for the programme validation and approval, their contents and preparation.

### 2.4. Programme Validation Procedures

19. The first step of the validation procedure is the formulation of the application for programme proposal (PPA) by WGPD<sup>2</sup>.
20. PPA is initially established in the academic subdivision proposing the programme (in the faculty academic council, centre directorate session), in case of interdisciplinary programmes it gets the assent of the heads of participating subdivisions and is presented to QAC. The latter examines the compliance of the PPA with the established requirements and presents it to Vice-Rector on Educational Affairs (EA) for validation.
21. The proposal of two or more academic subdivisions referring to the development of an interdisciplinary study programme is presented for validation by the decision of the

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<sup>2</sup> The application form with the appropriate instructions is presented in Appendix 3.



academic council of the subdivision which assumes the administrative responsibility for the development of the study programme.

22. The conclusion on the validation of study programme development is made by the Vice-Rector on EA. The conclusion about the validation may be positive, positive-conditional (mentioning about the correction of some drawbacks) or negative.
23. WGPD studies the validation conclusion and takes measures to address the mentioned drawbacks.
24. After PPA has been validated by the Vice-Rector on EA, the corresponding academic subdivision (faculty, center) and QAC make up the timeline for the further procedures of the programme approval.
25. The copies of the validated PPA are submitted to the Educational-Methodological Department (EMD) for arranging the portfolio of YSU study programmes.
26. The positive decision on the validation of the newly developed programme serves as a basis to apply for licensing the given programme by YSU.

### **3. EXPERT-REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF YSU STUDY PROGRAMMES**

#### **3.1. Goal and Objectives of Programme Expert-Review and Approval**

27. The goal of the procedures<sup>3</sup> of expert-review and approval of study programmes is to evaluate the quality of the programme development and the competence of the academic subdivision to implement it in accordance with the established educational standards and/or programme benchmarks.
28. The objectives of the procedure are:
  - to assess the compliance of the goals (qualification profile), learning outcomes and the content of the programme curriculum of the worked out study programme with the requirements of the national higher education qualifications framework of the RA and with the requirements of the corresponding educational standard;

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<sup>3</sup> The diagram describing the processes for programme expert-review and approval of YSU study programmes are presented in Appendix 5.

- to ascertain that the requirements defined in YSU official documents and concerning the study programmes development, their structure and content are preserved;
- to approve the composition and content of the constituent courses (study modules) of the programme, to ascertain that their learning outcomes correspond to the qualifications descriptors of the programme;
- to ascertain that the drawbacks pointed out in the validation conclusion of the developed programme are basically resolved;
- to ascertain that the academic subdivision(s) authoring the programme proposal is(are) able to implement the worked out programme in accordance with the defined educational standards and requirements of teaching quality;
- to evaluate the compliance of the newly created programme and its resource base for the implementation of its constituent courses (study modules) and study infrastructure with the established normative requirements.

### **3.2. Documentation Package of Programme Approval**

29. The necessary documentation package for the study programme approval includes:

- conclusion on the validation of the programme development with appropriate remarks and improvement proposals;
- specification of the programme including the map of curriculum. The specification of the programme clarifies its goal, expected learning outcomes which the student should acquire by the end of the programme, describes the methods of learning, teaching and students' assessment applied, career and further education continuation opportunities for graduates of the programme. It also includes references to the corresponding subject/programme benchmarks and/or standards

- used in working out the programme. The specification of the programme is comprised in accordance with the YSU common format<sup>4</sup>;
- brief descriptions of the constituent courses (study modules) of the programme and their learning outcomes;
  - conclusion of external programme expert-review and the opinions of potential employers (if present).
30. The proposed document package of the programme approval (DPPA) is comprised by the working group for programme development (WGPD).

### **3.3. Internal Expert-Review of Programme Proposal**

31. The corresponding academic subdivision and QAC ensure the preparation works on the expert-review of study programme documentation package by the Evaluation Committee (EC). The documentation package of the programme approval is submitted to QAC at least 6 weeks in case of bachelor's degree programme and 3 weeks in case of master's degree programme prior to the appointed day of the expertise.
32. After QAC checks the compliance of the documentation package to the university programme requirements, the subdivision submits the required number of copies of the final package (6 in case of bachelor's and 5 in case of master's degree programme) to QAC to pass it on to the EC members not later than 4 (in case of master's degree programme – 2) weeks prior to the appointed day of the programme expert-review. QAC assures that the DPPA and the instructions concerning the implementation of expert-review are handed out to EC members at least 3 (in case of master's degree programme – 1,5) weeks prior to the day of programme expert-review.
33. YSU Quality Assurance Centre is responsible for the organization of programme expert-review.

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<sup>4</sup> See "Methodological Guideline of YSU Study Programme Development", YSU, 2010 (section II, p. 13)

### 3. 4. Evaluation Committee of the Programme

34. QAC is responsible for the creation of the evaluation committee (EC), which will discuss the proposal of the new programme and will give its conclusion about the approval of the programme to the Quality Assurance Standing Committee of YSU Academic Council (QASC).
35. When determining the composition of the committee the nature, goals of the programme, the professional field, the proper experience of EC members and other factors which are essential for the objective and comprehensive expert-review of the programme proposal are taken into account.
36. The EC staff of the bachelor's degree programme consists of 6, and the one of master's degree programme – 5 members (including the chairman), at least 2 of them are external experts and other 2 – YSU academic staff representatives from the specialty field of the programme.
37. If the programme is designed for international students and is to be implemented in a foreign language, the head of the international cooperation department should also be included in the committee staff.
38. The responsibility of the EC chairman can be undertaken by an experienced member of YSU academic and/or administrative staff (e.g. dean of the faculty, deputy dean, head of the chair, an experienced professor or associate professor, etc.).
39. In order to ensure impartiality of programme expert-review both internal and external experts of the EC as well as the chairman should not have direct relation (should not be members of WGPD) to the development activities of the proposed study programme.
40. The secretary of the committee is a representative of QAC who is not a member of EC.
41. The external experts included in EC staff, whose experience and evaluation competences can be valuable for the implementation of an objective expert-review, should be specialists from the subject field of the programme. It is advisable that one of the external experts should be from academic sphere and the other – have experience of practical work concerning the professional field of the programme under discussion.

42. It is desirable to involve external experts into EC from different professional associations and organizations, as well as bodies regulating the given professional sphere (e.g. from National Centre for Providing the Quality of the Professional Education (ANQA), ministries and other sectors) for further licensing and facilitation of accreditation procedures of the programme.
43. EC staff coordinates with the QAC director and is appointed by the decree of Vice-Rector on EA. In the decree the dates of the activity of the committee are mentioned.
44. On the appointed day of the programme expert-review the EC meets with WGPLD for the discussion and evaluation of the programme under review. The event usually lasts one full working day, as a result of which EC presents the conclusion on the quality of the study programme development to the YSU AC QASC. EC also reveals the examples of the best experience of the programme development in order to disseminate them in the university.

### **3.5. Programme Evaluation Report**

45. The result of the programme expert-review is the report by EC which is a list of expert-review conclusions. The conclusions may include the requirements, which are subject to being compulsory implemented by WGPLD prior to the approval of the programme, as well as the proposals to be implemented by WGPLD and other interested academic subdivisions before the official commencement of the programme. The final version of the report is signed by the EC chairman and all the members.
46. EC should avoid presenting issues linked with the resource support of the programme as a requirement, since the implementation of that requirement is outside the area of WGPLD's responsibilities. EC should take into account that the resource support of the programme is generally evaluated and ensured at the stage of programme validation. Nevertheless, those issues may be discussed in the course of the expert-review in order to ascertain that the resource requirements revealed in PPA are wholly met or there are bases, that they will be met before the commencement of the programme.

### **3.6. Follow-up to Expert-Review Conclusions and Programme Approval**

47. WGPD is to prepare a response report concerning the requirements and proposals pointed out in the conclusions of the EC report within 10 days (in case of master's degree programme - 5 days) and to submit it to QAC. The latter studies the report and submits it to the EC chairman for information.
48. The AC QASC of the university considers the conclusions of EC report and WGPD response-report. If QASC finds that the EC requirements and proposals are met or there are sufficient grounds for their implementation prior to the official commencement of the programme, the programme is guaranteed for approval by YSU AC.
49. In case of approval 2 copies are submitted to QAC and EMD with one copy for each of the parties in the course of 1 week.
50. At the end of each academic year (June) QAC and QASC cooperatively comprise an annual summary report on the results of approval procedure of newly opened study programmes. The report also includes the revealed exemplary experience of ECs and summarizes it for the dissemination in the university.

## APPENDICES

**APPENDIX 1. TIMELINE OF VALIDATION AND APPROVAL PROCESSES OF YSU  
BACHELOR'S DEGREE STUDY PROGRAMME<sup>5</sup>**

01 October <sup>6</sup>	Decision of academic subdivision council (ASC) or centre directorate session for the submission of the programme application
15 October	Formation of working group for programme development (WGPD)
15 December	Programme proposal application (PPA) formulation and concordance with QAC
30 December	Application approval by ASC and presentation to QAC
<b>20 January</b>	<b>VALIDATION OF PPA AND FORMATION OF THE TIMELINE OF PROGRAMME APPROVAL</b>
10 April	Preparation of documentation package of programme approval (DPPA) including programme specification
20 April	Preliminary review of DPPA by QAC
05 May	Final submission of DPPA to QAC
10 May	Distribution of DPPA to the Evaluation Committee (EC) members
<b>05 June</b>	<b>PROGRAMME EXPERT-REVIEW</b>
20 June	QAC hands over expert-review conclusions (requirements, proposals) to WGPD for the comprisal of response-report
01 July	WGPD submits the response-report on the expert-review conclusions to QAC
25 August	The response-report is reviewed by the EC chairman
01 September	EC report and WGPD response-report are submitted to the Quality Assurance Standing Committee of Academic Council (QASC) for drawing up conclusion
05 September	QASC reviews EC conclusions, WGPD response-report and submits the conclusion on the approval/refusal of the programme to YSU Academic Council (AC)
<b>01 May</b>	<b>YSU AC APPROVES THE NEW STUDY PROGRAMME</b>

<sup>5</sup> The given schedules are of guiding nature and may be accelerated in specific cases, e.g. in order to respond quickly to the needs of the labor market.

<sup>6</sup> Here the deadline of the corresponding process is given.



## **APPENDIX 2. TIMELINE OF VALIDATION AND APPROVAL PROCESSES OF YSU MASTER'S DEGREE STUDY PROGRAMME**

15 October <sup>7</sup>	Decision of Academic Subdivision Council (ASC) for the presentation of programme application
30 October	Formation of working group for programme development (WGPD)
15 December	Programme proposal application (PPA) formulation and concordance with QAC
30 December	Application approval by ASC and presentation to QAC
<b>15 January</b>	<b>VALIDATION OF PPA AND FORMATION OF THE TIMETABLE OF PROGRAMME APPROVAL</b>
01 March	Preparation of documentation package of programme approval (DPPA) including programme specification
10 March	Preliminary review of DPPA by QAC
15 March	Final submission of DPPA to QAC
20 March	Distribution of DPPA to the Evaluation Committee (EC) members
<b>01 April</b>	<b>PROGRAMME EXPERT-REVIEW</b>
10 April	QAC hands over Expert-Review Conclusions (requirements, proposals) to WGPD for the comprisal of response-report
15 April	WGPD submits the response-report on the expert-review conclusions to QAC
20 April	The response-report is reviewed by the EC chairman
22 April	EC report and WGPD response-report are submitted to the Quality Assurance Standing Committee of Academic Council (QASC) for drawing up conclusion
25 April	QASC reviews EC conclusions, WGPD response-report and submits the conclusion on the approval/refusal of the programme to YSU Academic Council (AC)
<b>01 May</b>	<b>YSU AC APPROVES THE NEW STUDY PROGRAMME</b>

<sup>7</sup> Here the deadline of the corresponding process is given.

**APPENDIX 3. TEMPLATE OF PROPOSAL FOR DEVELOPMENT OF NEW STUDY PROGRAMME APPLICATION**

Below the application form for the development of new YSU study programme is given.

The application form is filled in by the work group of new study programme development, approved in the academic subdivision council or the session of directorate and submitted to QAC for the evaluation of the application and validation of further development of the programme.

*Approved*

“ \_\_\_\_\_ ” \_\_\_\_\_ 201\_\_\_\_\_

**Vice-Rector on Educational Affairs**

\_\_\_\_\_

**1. General Characteristics of the Programme**

Faculty .....

Name of the study programme and specialty code  
 .....  
 .....

Awarded qualification (bachelor, master).....

**2. Admission Figures**

Expected number of student admissions in the 1st year.....

Prospective number of student admissions .....

### **3. Rationale for the Introduction of the New Programme**

To present briefly the necessity and expediency of the introduction of the new study programme. To clarify as well, how the introduction of the programme will contribute to the implementation of the mission and main goals of the university and/or academic subdivision.

### **4. Analysis of the Labor Market**

To present data (considerations of potential employers, specialists and interested bodies, statistical and other available material) concerning the demand of the labor market in the direction of the proposed study programme.

### **5. Competitive Position of the Programme**

To present brief data on other similar study programmes carried out in other HEIs of the RA and to evaluate the competitive advantages and weaknesses of the proposed programme. To ground the expediency of the implementation of the programme in the given YSU academic subdivision. To enumerate the national and/or international requirements of programme benchmarks and standards for the given specialty.

### **6. Programme Goals and Learning Outcomes**

To enumerate the main goals of the introduced programme and expected learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competence) which will be gained by students at the end of the programme<sup>8</sup>.

### **7. Structure and Content of the Programme**

To point out the main academic modules/courses of the study programme and the credits allotted for them, distribution of the modules/courses in accordance with semesters and so on. To present the project of the programme curriculum.

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<sup>8</sup> See "Guideline for YSU Study Programmes Development", YSU, 2013 (Section I, point 2 and 3)

## **8. Programme Peculiarities**

To point out the peculiarities of the study programme, the innovative methods or means of teaching and learning that are essential for the successful realisation of the goals of the given programme.

## **9. Practical Training**

To point out the forms of implementation and duration of academic or production practical trainings, as well as the associations and organizations, where it is possible or appropriate to carry them out.

## **10. Work Opportunities for Graduates**

To present possible work positions and career opportunities for programme graduates. If the programme is aimed at meeting the specific orders of local or international employers (companies, organizations, state bodies), i.e. is introduced intentionally, it should be ascertained with relevant documents.

## **11. Academic Staff**

To ascertain that there is academic staff with sufficient qualification and in necessary number for the implementation of the proposed programme at the academic subdivision. To present the information relating to the lecturers (CV-s according to YSU defined formats) who are supposed to service the programme.

## **12. Academic Staff Development Needs**

To reveal the lecturers' training needs and opportunities for the implementation of the proposed programme (e.g. for the adoption of new courses, teaching methods and technologies, modern equipment and technical means).

### **13. Requirements for Study Space and Laboratory Facilities**

To ground that there are necessary academic and ancillary areas, laboratory and scientific-educational equipment for the implementation of the programme in the academic subdivision or they can be allocated prior to the official commencement of the programme.

### **14. Computer and Technical Learning Facilities**

To describe the available computer base and offered technical facilities of teaching which are necessary for the implementation of the programme. To point out what additional (including computer) technical facilities will be required for the implementation of the proposed programme and how they should be obtained.

### **15. Library and Other Information Resources**

To point out what literature, education-methodological and information materials (printed or electronic) are available at YSU library and at the academic subdivision implementing the programme and the necessity of obtaining or developing new materials (if present).

Head of the working group for programme development: .....

Members:

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The application of the programme development has been discussed and approved by the faculty academic council or centre directorate session (decision No. ...., date).

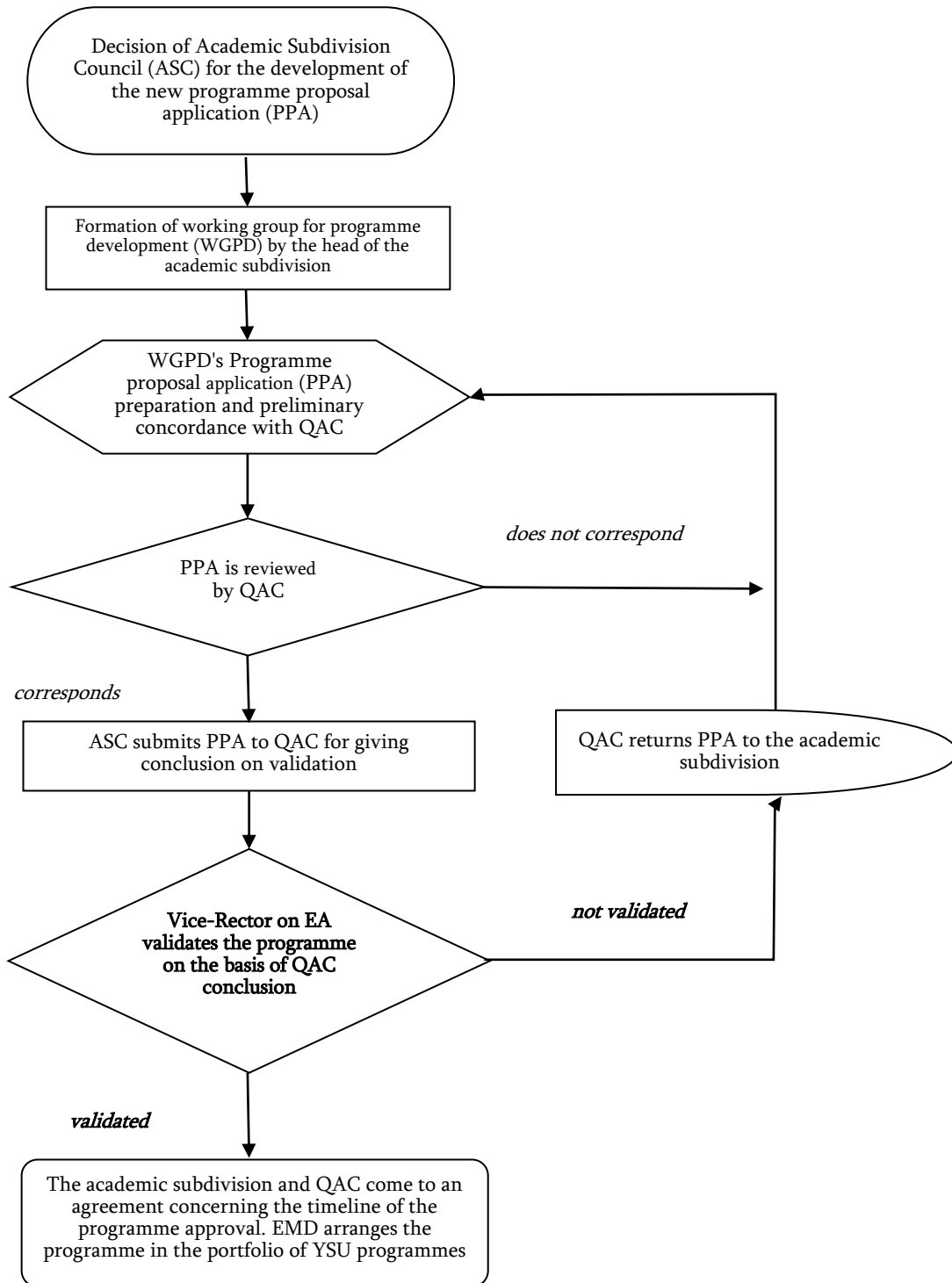
The dean of the faculty .....

Conclusion of YSU QAC on the validation of the programme development

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QAC Director .....

**APPENDIX 4. VALIDATION PROCESS OF STUDY PROGRAMME**



**APPENDIX 5. PROGRAMME EXPERT-REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESSES**

