



Acting Rector

"I hereby endorse"

G. Gevorgyan

14 September 2020

L. S.



**YEREVAN STATE UNIVERSITY
SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR
INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION**

«Yerevan State University» Foundation

(Name of the institution)

Republic of Armenia, Yerevan, 0025, 1 Alex Manoogian

(Address of the institution)

Yerevan, 2020

CONTENTS

THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE OF THE SELF-ASSESSMENT PROCESS	3
SELF-ASSESSMENT WORKING GROUPS	3
FACTS ABOUT YSU	6
I. MISSION AND PURPOSE	9
II. GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION	16
III. ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES	29
IV. STUDENTS	41
V. FACULTY AND STAFF	53
VI. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT	67
VII. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES	80
VIII. SOCIETAL RESPONSIBILITY	94
IX. EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND INTERNATIONALIZATION	104
X. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE	111

THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE OF THE SELF-ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Self-assessment coordinating committee	Position
Gegham Gevorgyan, president of the committee	Acting rector of YSU
Elina Asriyan	Vice-Rector for Humanities and Social Sciences
Rafayel Barkhudaryan	Vice-rector for Natural and Exact Sciences
Artur Israyelyan	Vice-Rector for International Cooperation and Public Relations
Armen Budaghyan	Director of the Quality Assurance Centre
Emil Gevorgyan	Dean of the Faculty of Biology
Anushavan Makaryan	Associate professor at the Chair of Optics of the Faculty of Physics
Mari Santurjyan	Leading Specialist of the Quality Assurance Centre
Davit Apoyan	2 nd Year student of master's programme at the Faculty of International Relations

SELF-ASSESSMENT WORKING GROUPS

	Working groups	Position
	Criterion 1. Mission and Purpose	
1.	Gegham Gevorgyan, coordinator	Acting rector of YSU
2.	Arthur Vagharshyan	Head of the Chair of History and Theory of State and Law
3.	Levon Hovsepyan	Academic Secretary
4.	Anahit Brutyan	Leading Specialist of the Quality Assurance Centre
5.	Nvard Melkonyan	Associate professor at the Chair of Social Work and Social Technologies
6.	Shushanna Vardanyan	3 rd Year student of bachelor's programme at the Faculty of Chemistry
	Criterion 2. Governance and Administration	
1.	Arthur Vagharshyan, coordinator	Head of the Chair of History and Theory of State and Law
2.	Armen Tadevosyan	Head of the Department of Human Resources Management and Legal Support
3.	Vahe Hovhannisyan	Head of the Chair of Civic Procedure
4.	Karlen Khachatryan	Head of the Chair of Management and Business
5.	Gor Aleksanyan	Associate professor at the Chair of Service
6.	Leyli Tadevosyan	4 th Year student of bachelor's programme at the Faculty of Law
	Criterion 3. Academic Programmes	
1.	Elina Asriyan, coordinator	Vice-Rector for Humanities and Social Sciences
2.	Mari Santurjyan	Leading Specialist of the Quality Assurance Centre
3.	Narine Khachatryan	Head of the Chair of Personality Psychology

4.	Karen Trchounian	Associate professor at the Chair of Biochemistry, Microbiology and Biotechnology
5.	Harutyun Movsisyan	Associate professor at the Chair of Regional Geology and Minerals Survey
6.	Gor Ohanyan	4 th Year student of bachelor's programme at the Faculty of Radiophysics
Criterion 4. Students		
1.	Artur Israyelyan, coordinator	Vice-Rector for International Cooperation and Public Relations
2.	Raffi Qaramyan	Deputy Director of the Centre for Student Affairs
3.	Lilit Hakobyan-Galstyan	Director of the Alumni and Career Center
4.	Vachagan Galstyan	Head of the Pre-University Education Department
5.	Davit Apoyan	President of the Student Council
6.	Khachik Abajyan	1 st Year student of master's programme at the Faculty of International Relations
7.	Rebeka Gevorgyan	4 th Year student of bachelor's programme at the Faculty of Radiophysics
Criterion 5. Faculty and Staff		
1.	Elina Asriyan, coordinator	Vice-Rector for Humanities and Social Sciences
2.	Zhasmen Aghasyan	Head of the Postgraduate Additional Education Department
3.	Serob Khachatryan	Assistant at the Faculty of Philosophy and Psychology
4.	Anushavan Makaryan	Acting director of Yerevan State University Ijevan Branch
5.	Menua Soghomonyan	Associate professor at the Chair of Political Institutes and Processes
6.	Arshaluys Ghazaryan	1 st Year student of master's programme at the Faculty of European Languages and Communication
Criterion 6. Research and Development		
1.	Rafayel Barkhudaryan, coordinator	Vice-rector for Natural and Exact Sciences
2.	Ishkhan Vardanyan	Head of the Scientific Management Department
3.	Arthur Sahakyan	Dean of the Faculty of Mathematics and Mechanics
4.	Atom Muradyan	Head of the Chair of General Physics and Astrophysics
5.	Mikayel Malkhasyan	Associate professor at the Chair of the History of Armenia
6.	Meri Azizyan	1 st Year postgraduate student at the Faculty of Philosophy and Psychology
Criterion 7. Infrastructure and Resources		
1.	Rafayel Barkhudaryan, coordinator	Vice-rector for Natural and Exact Sciences
2.	Liana Varosyan	Head of the Financial Analyses Department

3.	Ruben Abrahamyan	Head of the Department for Information Systems and Development
4.	Eznik Mirzoyan	Director of Sargis and Marie Izmirlians Library
5.	Armen Sargsyan	Head of the Division of Educational Process Supervision
6.	Anahit Terteryan	1 st Year postgraduate student at the Pedagogy and Education Development Centre
Criterion 8. Societal Responsibility		
1.	Artur Israyelyan, coordinator	Vice-Rector for International Cooperation and Public Relations
2.	Gevorg Emin-Teryan	Head of the Department of Information and Public Relations
3.	Vahagn Hakobyan	Associate professor at the Chair of the History of Armenia
4.	Nvard Melkonyan	Associate professor at the Chair of Social Work and Social Technologies
5.	Karine Nazaryan	Deputy Director of the Alumni and Career Center
6.	Siranush Baghumyan	1 st Year postgraduate student at the Faculty of History
Criterion 9. External Relations and Internationalisation		
1.	Alexander Markarov, coordinator	Head of the International Cooperation Office
2.	Naira Mnatsakanyan	Deputy Head of the International Cooperation Office
3.	Haykuhi Mkrtchyan	Leading Specialist of the International Cooperation Office
4.	Martin Tovmasyan	Assistant at the Chair of International Relations and Diplomacy
5.	Grigor Hayrapetyan	Associate professor at the Chair of Economics and International Economic Relations
6.	Arshaluys Ghazaryan	1 st Year student of master's programme at the Faculty of European Languages and Communication
Criterion 10. Internal Quality Assurance		
1.	Armen Budaghyan, coordinator	Director of the Quality Assurance Centre
2.	Mari Santurjyan	Leading Specialist of the Quality Assurance Centre
3.	Anahit Brutyan	Leading Specialist of the Quality Assurance Centre
4.	Armen Sargsyan	Head of the Division of Educational Process Supervision
5.	Silva Petrosyan	Associate professor at the Faculty of Philosophy and Psychology
6.	Narek Margaryan	4 th Year student of bachelor's programme at the Faculty of Radiophysics

FACTS ABOUT YSU

Yerevan State University (YSU) was established in the days of the first Republic of Armenia by order of the Council of Ministers issued on May 16, 1919. According to article 28, paragraph 8 of the RA Law “On Education” (adopted in 1999), Yerevan State University is an educational and scientific-cultural institution, the status peculiarities of which are defined by the RA government.

By Decision N1222 of the RA government approved on December 15 of 2001, YSU was reorganized into “Yerevan State University” state non-profit organization and by Decision 1408-N of November 27, 2014 – into “Yerevan State University” foundation. In accordance with the new legal-organizational form, changes were made in the university management system; the YSU Board of Trustees was established as the supreme governing body of the University.

The process of the first state accreditation was initiated at the University in March of 2012. Large-scale work was carried out which resulted in the generally positive evaluation of the YSU activities by the expert group comprised of international and local experts. And the Accreditation Committee of the RA “National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance” foundation (ANQA) granted YSU institutional accreditation for a term of 6 years by Decision 1 of February 21, 2015.

After the completion of the YSU 2010-2014 development strategic plan (SP), YSU developed and approved the new YSU SP (for 2016-2020) with its implementation schedule-plan and appropriate budget, as well as established SPs for the faculties and other educational subdivisions. The SP performance is drawn up for each academic year based on the results of regularly conducted monitoring.

EDUCATION

The University has 19 faculties, 2 institutes and 3 scientific-educational centers implementing academic programmes, over 100 general and specialized chairs, one regional branch with 4 faculties in the town of Ijevan. As of January 1, 2020 the number of YSU students was 14048 (11126 BA students, 2505 MA students and 417 postgraduate students), 3061 of which are part-time students (in the correspondence education system).

In 2019-2020 academic year YSU implements 53 Bachelor’s and 122 Master’s programmes, as well as 140 Doctoral programmes.

The YSU Bachelor’s programme is 4-year with a study load of 240 ECTS credits, the Master’s programme is 2-year with a study load of 120 ECTS credits, and the academic programmes for correspondence education are 5 and 2.5 years respectively. For a few specialties there are also Master’s programmes lasting 1 and 1.5 years (60 and 90 ECTS credits). The university also implements 3-year Doctoral (postgraduate) programmes with a scientific-academic load of 180 ECTS credits.

The YSU staff is comprised of about 2800 employees, 1116 of which are the permanent teaching staff (169 professors, 468 associate professors, 479 assistant professors and lecturers). 22 members of the RA National Academy of Sciences are also involved in the scientific-educational activities of the university. During the course of its century-old activity YSU has had over 145 thousand alumni.

The university has a library and a publishing house, training and production bases, learning-experimental infrastructure, student dormitories, a guest-house, etc.

In accordance with its strategic goals, YSU periodically reviews its academic programmes, develops new ones, applies contemporary methods of teaching and learning, and provides students with efficient supporting services. As the university attaches great importance to the issue of improving the quality of education, a considerable amount of work has been carried out particularly with regard to quality assurance processes.

For the purpose of fulfilling the SP “Quality Education” goal, the standards and guidelines regulating structural and content alterations of academic programmes were elaborated, supplemented or reviewed at YSU. In particular, in order to comply with the national qualifications framework and the requirements of the contemporary labor market the following regulations were developed and introduced: the reviewed order of organizing the educational process, the standards defining the structure and content of academic programmes, the order of preparing and evaluating the Master’s thesis and the Bachelor’s graduation paper, the procedure for organizing and conducting students’ internship. All of these are included in the collection entitled “Documents regulating the educational process in Bachelor’s and Master’s degree academic programmes” (2017 and 2019).

In the first semester of 2019/2020 academic year, all the YSU faculties and subdivisions implementing academic programmes conducted monitoring of Master’s degree programmes in accordance with “The Regulation for Monitoring and Periodic Review of YSU Study Programmes” (2014, 2019).

For the purpose of providing quality education YSU has a constantly improving internal quality assurance system, which is in line with the requirements of European standards and guidelines. In order to align its academic programmes with the needs and requirements of the labor market and society, YSU has a number of mechanisms for receiving feedback from students and graduates.

The ongoing professional development of the teaching staff is of great importance to the University as well. As early as in 2011 YSU initiated “The credit-based educational-scientific programme for the teaching staff professional development”, which is periodically improved on the basis of internal and external appraisals. For instance, in order to modernize the teaching and learning processes, YSU has implemented the ERASMUS+ PRINTEl project since January of 2018. The project involves a number of European and Eastern Partnership universities.

YSU has developed and operates the Intranet system which is a new tool providing for the teaching staff accountability.

RESEARCH

YSU is one of the largest scientific-research centers in Armenia. The research activities at the University are carried out across a wide spectrum of specialties in various fields of social, social-economic, physical-mathematical, natural sciences and humanities. About 407 researchers are involved in the sphere of scientific-research activities (170 of whom are full-time employees). The current university budget for scientific-research activities amounts to USD 2.92 million.

There are 3 scientific-research institutes, 34 research laboratories and 1 research center at YSU. Most scientific research laboratories are involved in research carried out in various fields of natural sciences, including Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Pharmacy. As for humanities, Armenian Studies occupy the leading position.

Nearly all the YSU faculties have specialized research laboratories, centers and cabinets – 38 in total.

In 2018/2019 academic year around 1314 scientific articles, 52 monographs, 26 textbooks and 46 training manuals, as well as 323 conference abstracts were published at YSU. 191 publications came out in periodicals having high impact quotient, 220 – in “Web of Science” and 224 – in “Scopus”. The number of publications in the YSU academic journals was 194.

65 state and international grant projects are implemented at YSU annually.

For the purpose of evaluating research activities, YSU has established certain assessment criteria for scientific-research activities which are summarized in “The procedure for calculating and paying additional bonuses to YSU employees for certain types of work”.

The University publishes two major scientific periodicals - “Proceedings of Yerevan State University” and “Bulletin of Yerevan University” - in their specific series, each of which is a unique scientific journal. In addition to them, 20 more academic journals are published at YSU.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

In recent years the field of international cooperation has considerably expanded. At present YSU cooperates with more than 250 universities, institutions and international organizations of around 50 countries. At the same time, YSU is actively involved in a number of grant projects and international programs, such as ERASMUS, DAAD, INET, FEMS, ANSEF, HORIZON 2020, VOLKSWAGEN, NAPA, ASCN, ISTC, World Bank-funded Education Improvement Project in Armenia and others.

YSU is a full-fledged member of the International Association of Universities (IAU), the European University Association (EUA), the Eurasian Universities Association, the Black Sea Universities Network (BSUN) and the International Association of University Presidents (IAUP), as well as a member of the Francophone University Agency (AUF) and the University League of the Collective Security Treaty Organization.

Exchange visits within the framework of the Erasmus+ Programme involving YSU staff and students from different faculties, have enhanced the international cooperation of the University. The number of lecturers and students going abroad within the scope of exchange programs has considerably increased. In 2018/19 academic year about 260 YSU lecturers and 300 students and postgraduates went overseas, about 100 professors from various foreign universities visited YSU to deliver lectures.

Over 250 foreigners study at YSU, about 25 of which are postgraduate students.

YSU successfully implements double diploma programmes within the framework of CIS Network University consortium, as well as with Belgorod State University (Russian Federation) and the University of Le Mans.

I. MISSION AND PURPOSE

CRITERION: THE TLI'S POLICY AND PRACTICES ARE IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITS MISSION, WHICH IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ARMENIAN NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (HEREAFTER ANQF).

YSU aims to become an institution, which:

- offers academic programmes that provide students with comprehensive knowledge, skills and competences based on research, creative work and innovation in accordance with the fundamental principles of the European Higher Education Area,
- provides students with the education founded on moral, national and human values,
- is affordable and offers a wide range of opportunities for different segments of the society,
- provides students and staff with necessary modern infrastructures, as well as conducive environment to implement high quality education and research,
- ensures ongoing quality enhancement in all its fields through productive and efficient administration and management of the university,
- supplies with supplementary continuing education and professional advisory services in accordance with public demand.

(See YSU Strategic Development Plan 2016-2020, Yerevan, 2015, page 5

http://ysu.am/files/quality/YSU_Strategic_Development_Plan_2016-2020.pdf)

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

"Yerevan State University" Foundation (YSU) is an educational, scientific-research and cultural autonomous higher education institution, which has a mission reflecting its goals and objectives, defined by the YSU Charter (approved by the RA Government Decision N 1408 on November 27, 2014 [http://ysu.am/files/quality/Charter_of_YSU_Foundation_\(2014\).pdf](http://ysu.am/files/quality/Charter_of_YSU_Foundation_(2014).pdf)), as well as by the YSU Strategic Development Plan 2016-2020 (approved at the meeting of the YSU Board of Trustees, by Decision N15 on December 23, 2015).

"General Provisions" of the YSU Charter state that the YSU activities are aimed at organizing education in different fields of Armenian Studies, natural and socio-economic sciences, humanities, technology and culture, as well as fundamental and applied scientific research and learning at general, secondary vocational, higher professional and other educational levels ensuring the continuity of education in compliance with the academic programmes and procedures adopted by the RA legislation.

The objectives of the YSU activities are based on its mission and are defined in point 17 of the University Charter (sub-point 1-11, [http://ysu.am/files/quality/Charter_of_YSU_Foundation_\(2014\).pdf](http://ysu.am/files/quality/Charter_of_YSU_Foundation_(2014).pdf)), as well as in the Charters of the units implementing scientific-educational programmes).

The mission of the university and the realization of its vision are conditioned by the implementation of the YSU Strategic Development Plan 2016-2020. ([http://ysu.am/files/quality/YSU Strategic Development Plan 2016-2020.pdf](http://ysu.am/files/quality/YSU_Strategic_Development_Plan_2016-2020.pdf))

The realization of the University vision is based on the fundamental values of YSU: student success, affordable education, high-quality scientific-pedagogical staff, academic freedom and honesty, democratic environment, social partnership, national responsibility.

To achieve the 9 strategic goals defined by the Strategic Development Plan, 27 objectives should be implemented aimed at ensuring quality education, realization of modern high-quality research and innovations, enhancement of public involvement and services, upgrading of quality human resources, establishment and improvement of quality infrastructures, provision of quality services, increasing diversified admission and relevance, financial stability and enhancement of effective management, strengthening strategic partnership and promoting internationalization of the activities at YSU. For the implementation of each goal included in the Strategic Development Plan, objectives are set with appropriate activities and their key performance indicators.

For the implementation of the YSU Strategic Development Plan 2016-2020, a schedule-plan and related annual budget were developed and approved (http://documentation.ysu.am/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/EPH_razmavarakan_tsragri_irakanacman_zhamanakacuyc_plan.pdf).

YSU provides education in accordance with the three levels of the Armenian National Qualifications Framework (bachelor's, master's, candidate of sciences).

Due to the YSU mission, all the faculties, institutes and centers, implementing academic programmes, possess their strategic plans stemming from the YSU Strategic Plan (see the Annexes of Yerevan State University Self-Assessment Report for Institutional Accreditation, Annex 10.2)

To assess and further improve the implementation of the YSU mission and goals, a range of mechanisms are applied (see standard 1.3).

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

The following documents underlie the YSU mission, as well as the policy of implementation and review of the set goals and objectives.

- The YSU Charter (2014),
- The YSU Strategic Development Plan 2016-2020

Point 21 of Section 4 of the Charter of "Yerevan State University" Foundation states: "The stakeholders of YSU are individuals and legal persons related to education, science, culture, research and production and other fields fixed by this Charter."([http://ysu.am/files/quality/Charter of YSU Foundation \(2014\).pdf](http://ysu.am/files/quality/Charter_of_YSU_Foundation_(2014).pdf)).

According to the YSU Charter and SP the University mission is implemented in accordance with the principles of participation and collegiality.

YSU has a definite mission-based frame of internal and external stakeholders that encompasses:

- the YSU students, alumni, applicants and their parents,
- the YSU teaching, academic and administrative staff,

- state, private and non-government employers, as well as international organizations in the RA,
- academic society of Armenia, concerned organizations in the fields of education, science and culture,
- the RA Government and state authorized body,
- foreign partners, international research and educational organizations, professional communities,
- diaspora,
- Armenian society.

There are several mechanisms operating at YSU aimed at identifying the needs of the aforementioned stakeholders.

The representatives of both internal and external stakeholders are involved in all the collegial management bodies of the University and its units (see Standard 2).

Students are the most important stakeholders of the University. According to the YSU SP, “student success” and “affordable education” (see the YSU SP 2016-2020 ([http://ysu.am/files/quality/YSU Strategic Development Plan 2016-2020.pdf](http://ysu.am/files/quality/YSU_Strategic_Development_Plan_2016-2020.pdf))) are declared to be the fundamental values, as for quality education it has been set as a strategic goal to meet their educational needs (see the YSU SP 2016-2020). YSU attaches great importance to identifying students’ interests and needs through such mechanisms as student autonomy, students’ participation at the University management, the activities of the student organizations operating at the University, surveys conducted among students and alumni and so forth. According to the YSU Charter and ANQF requirements, the YSU students have the right to participate in forming the content of their education (selection of educational courses and specialization), assuring the quality of education and assessing the efficiency of the academic staff activities.

To achieve the goal of "Quality Services" defined by SP, an objective was set to develop student support services aimed to provide a motivating learning environment, for which 10 strategic measures have been envisaged (see YSU SP 2016-2020 ([http://ysu.am/files/quality/YSU Strategic Development Plan 2016-2020.pdf](http://ysu.am/files/quality/YSU_Strategic_Development_Plan_2016-2020.pdf))). Four strategic measures have been identified to develop the competences of the University student organizations and promote student self-government (see YSU SP 2016-2020).

The YSU mail server systems have been upgraded to ensure permanent connection with students, and all students have been provided with the University e-mail address, which can also be applied after their graduation. The YSU staff has also been provided with the University e-mail address, which provides permanent connection between the university-employee and student-employee (particularly a lecturer).

One of the most important stakeholders of YSU are applicants, and to meet their needs a strategic goal “Diversified Admission and Relevance” has been set (see YSU SP 2016-2020 ([http://ysu.am/files/quality/YSU Strategic Development Plan 2016-2020.pdf](http://ysu.am/files/quality/YSU_Strategic_Development_Plan_2016-2020.pdf))). Applicants are guided by the governing units of the University, Pre-university Education and Educational-Methodological departments as well as faculties and student organizations.

The stakeholders of the University are the applicants' parents as well, and the above-mentioned units provide connection with them. The University administration signs contracts related to underage students with their parents.

YSU provides permanent connection with the parents and relatives of the University freedom fighters – members of the University community.

The SP envisages establishment of multilateral relations with alumni, which is implemented mainly through the Alumni and Career Center.

One of the important internal stakeholders of YSU is the University academic staff, which is defined as a fundamental value by SP, considering it as the most important potential of the University and the main guarantee for the success of its activities, due to which the University implements its mission. Enhancement of professional development programme for teaching staff, envisaged by SP, is being implemented.

SP also takes into account the social interests of the YSU employees of all categories. Considering quality human resources as one of the main strategic goals of the University, SP sets an objective to improve the well-being of the YSU employees. In this regard, a number of programmes are implemented (bonuses paid to the employees for certain types of work, health insurance package, discounts for the University holiday homes both for the employees and their family members and students, monthly allowance to the full-time employees with disabilities, development of infrastructures for ensuring free movement of people with disabilities at the University, providing necessary support and advisory services to the students with special needs and so forth).

Employers are one of the external stakeholders of YSU, thus SP considers cooperation with them as a strategic objective for the implementation of the University mission. In order to increase the efficiency of cooperation with these stakeholders, the strategy of the YSU cooperation with the enterprises was developed and approved (http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Dzern_hamagorcakcu_cragir1.pdf). Standing Committee adjacent to AC (Academic Council) of YSU was established ensuring the cooperation with the enterprises, with its appropriate working regulations. The regulation of the Council regarding faculty cooperation with enterprises was approved, which defines the functions of the Council.

The external stakeholders are the RA Government and Ministry of ESCS. The reforms implemented at the University are in line with the state policy in the fields of science and education, legislative acts regulating the field, as well as education development programmes.

According to the YSU SP, the Armenian society is the stakeholder of the University, since a part of the University mission is to promote the improvement of the economic, social, human and cultural life of the society. YSU, as a leading university among the institutions of higher education in Armenia, has set its commitment to be devoted to and serve the society, Armenians and the Armenian diaspora.

The relations of YSU with the society, as one of the external stakeholders, are ensured by various means, including the online feedback mechanisms (e-mail, Facebook and so forth) and the reception of citizens (from the different circles of the society) by the YSU rector every Friday.

A number of concepts, regulations and work activity rules have been developed and adopted to identify the needs of internal and external stakeholders, to ensure and further develop cooperation with them (see Criterion 2).

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

YSU has a number of mechanisms and procedures to evaluate and further improve the achievements of its mission and strategic goals.

“The YSU SP implementation schedule-plan 2016-2020” is one of the evaluation mechanisms of the YSU SP implementation process. Based on the results of regular monitoring during the implementation of the YSU SP, the performance of the activities for each academic year is evaluated, a report on the SP performance is published aimed to transparently and publicly present the performed activities in the scope of the YSU development strategic goals, as well as to ensure the accountability of the YSU activities to the university and general public. The analysis of the SP performance enables to point out the YSU achievements and shortcomings in different fields of its activities (<http://documentation.yosu.am/> , http://documentation.yosu.am/wp-content/uploads/-2016/12/Razmavarakani_kataroghakan_2015-2016.pdf; <http://documentation.yosu.am/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Kataroxakan-2017.pdf>; http://documentation.yosu.am/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/-Kataroghakan_2018.pdf; http://documentation.yosu.am/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Kataroghakan_2019.pdf).

All the YSU educational subdivisions (faculty, center, institute) possess their own strategic/implementation schedule-plans (see Annex 10.2).

In order to monitor and evaluate the SP implementation progress, the YSU key performance indicators (KPI) are regularly compiled and published (for 2003-2009, 2005-2010, 2008-2013 and 2010-2015 years respectively, the subsequent set of KPIs is to be published).

An annual income and expenditure budget of YSU is drawn up for each financial year, as well as the performance of the income and expenditure budget relating to the previous year’s indicators is compiled.

The YSU financial planning is not always in line with the University strategic goals and objectives, as the total amount of annual financial inflows, chiefly comprising tuition fees, is not fully predictable. For this reason, the University does not possess a long-term strategic budget to provide a resource base for the achievement of the main goals and objectives defined by SP. This is facilitated by the extremely low level of public funding.

One of the mechanisms contributing to the ongoing enhancement of the education quality at YSU is the student semestrial surveys on the quality and efficiency of teaching, as well as graduate satisfaction annual surveys on the education received at the University, carried out in accordance with the relevant regulations and procedures (<http://documentation.yosu.am/wp-content/uploads/-2017/01/kanonakag4-2.pdf>, <http://documentation.yosu.am/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/karg.pdf>).

Licensing, peer-review and approval of academic programmes as well as their current monitoring and periodical review are conducted at the University in accordance with the relevant procedures (http://ysu.am/files/quality/Approval_of_YSU_Study_Programs.pdf,

http://ysu.am/files/quality/Monitoring&Review_of_YSU_Study_Programs.pdf). These processes are the main mechanisms of quality assurance and continuous improvement of academic programs in the stage of their implementation.

The YSU bottom-up reporting system is one of the mechanisms evaluating the implementation of the YSU mission and its main goals (the annual reports of chairs, faculties, the YSU rector). The comprehensive presentation and evaluation of the YSU activities are also carried out through the annually published general report, presenting the results of the activities of all the University units for previous academic year.

"The YSU employees internal web-space" (Intranet system: www.intranet.ysu.am) has been developed and launched, which aims to automate and increase the efficiency of information exchange flows and accountability processes, as well as to contribute to the formation of the YSU joint information system.

**YSU activity strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats
by Criterion 1**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. YSU has a mission reflecting its goals and objectives defined by its Charter. 2. YSU has a strategic development plan (SP) reflecting its mission, goals and objectives, an implementation schedule-plan and a relevant budget, as well as SPs for educational units. 3. Key performance indicators are defined for each objective of the YSU SP goals. 4. Based on the results of regular monitoring, the SP performance is compiled and published for each academic year. 5. YSU has a number of mechanisms for identifying the needs of its internal and external stakeholders (multilevel system of accountability, employee encouragement mechanisms for research and educational activities and so forth). 6. The representatives of both external and internal stakeholders are involved in all the collegial management bodies of the University and its units, as well as in different committees and work groups. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The current mechanisms for identifying the needs of the YSU key stakeholders are not sufficient yet. 2. Because of its insufficient funds, YSU does not possess a long-term strategic budget to provide required resource base for the achievement of priority objectives and specific activities defined in SP. 3. YSU does not have well-articulated criteria for optimizing its structure and increasing the efficiency of administration.
Opportunities	Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Active involvement of employers and other external stakeholders in the University processes, particularly in the development and implementation of academic programmes and external peer-review, as well as in the 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. YSU lacks sufficient level of state support for more effective fulfillment of its activities. 2. The existence of different statuses of universities in the RA and different laws

<p>processes of internships, can promote the development of cooperation with them.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The expansion of educational and scientific cooperation with partner universities and organizations at the national and international levels offers a wide range of benchmarking opportunities, which can enhance the effectiveness of the University activities. 3. The full use of the opportunities of international mobility programmes, especially European ones, contributes to the mobility expansion of the academic staff and students. 4. The growth of free mobility of quality labor force in the world market is a promoting factor for the YSU graduates to be employed in the relevant profession. 	<p>regulating their activities create unequal conditions in the competitive field.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The decrease in the number of school graduates, because of unfavorable demographic indicators, threatens the number of competitive students necessary for the process of admission to higher educational institutions. 4. Insufficiently interested and proactive involvement of external stakeholders, especially employers, in the University processes hinders the effectiveness of university-employer cooperation.
---	--

Planned ways to overcome weaknesses and threats

1. Develop a long-term development strategy for YSU in cooperation with the Government of the Republic of Armenia.
2. Develop and implement mechanisms for assessing and increasing the efficiency of the YSU administration.
3. Develop and implement additional mechanisms for identifying the needs of key stakeholders, revealing and enhancing professional opportunities of the YSU employees.
4. Clarify management peculiarities of the higher educational institutions by legislation, set legal regulations that will guarantee equal competitive conditions for all universities.

II. GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

CRITERION: THE INSTITUTION'S SYSTEM OF GOVERNANCE ENSURES ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING AND EFFICIENT PROVISION OF HUMAN, MATERIAL AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO EFFECTIVELY ACCOMPLISH ITS MISSION, EDUCATIONAL AND OTHER PURPOSES.

YSU was reorganized from a state non-profit organization to a state foundation, and the governance system was adapted to that change. The YSU SP 2016-2020 has envisaged to improve the governance system and promote the increase of its effectiveness and transparency. To achieve this goal, the YSU SP envisages to: 1) ensure the necessary inflow of financial resources by diversifying their sources and increasing the volume, 2) develop the financial planning system, increase the management efficiency of financial and material resources, 3) improve the legal field and governance system, 4) ensure the transparency of the university processes by reducing corruption risks. Improvement measures have been planned and carried out to implement these strategic objectives of SP (see SP, Objectives 8.1-8.4, pp. 29-32)¹.

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

According to Article 38 of the RA Constitution, "higher education institutions, in the scope prescribed by law, have the right of self-governance, including academic and research freedom". The basics of governance are fixed in laws on "Education" (14.04.1999), "Higher and Postgraduate Professional Education" (14.12.2004), and in law on "Foundations" (14.12.2004) since 2014².

The levels of the YSU governance are: a) state participation in governance, b) governance through the university bodies, c) governance in the University subdivisions.

The RA government and state-authorized body participate in the governance of the YSU state foundation legal entity through the authorities and membership. Their authorities in governance-related issues are fixed by law, the YSU Charter and other acts. The state representatives are the members of Board of Trustees: 16 out of 32 members are representatives of the founding and authorized body (the YSU Charter, clauses 27-28). The participation of the state is a means of implementing educational policy and University accountability.

The strategic and current governance of YSU is carried out by the statutory bodies (Board of Trustees, Academic Council, Rector, Rectorate), as well as the intra-university structures (Vice-Rectors, departments and units).

The jurisdiction and regulations on formation and activities of the YSU governing bodies define the YSU Charter (see the YSU Charter, Section VI, clauses 23-61), the "Work regulation of the YSU Board of Trustees" (29.04.2015)³, "Regulation of the YSU Academic Council" (24.09.2015)⁴, "The YSU Rector Election Regulation" (31.01.2019)⁵, "The YSU Rectorate Regulations" (22.12.2011)⁶.

¹ http://ysu.am/files/quality/YSU_Strategic_Development_Plan_2016-2020.pdf

² <https://www.arlis.am/>

³ <http://documentation.ysu.am/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/ashka.pdf>

⁴ http://documentation.ysu.am/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Git_khorhurd_kanonakarg.pdf

⁵ http://documentation.ysu.am/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Rektori_yntrutyany_kanonakarg.pdf

The governance of the YSU subdivisions is differentiated. The faculty governance regulation is defined by the legislation, the YSU Charter, as well as “The YSU Faculty Exemplary Charter”, revised in 2015⁷; based on which the faculty new charters and the procedure for “The YSU Faculty Dean Election” (2016) were adopted⁸. Numerous administrative acts have been adopted during the reconstruction since 2015. Chairs, centres and laboratories are formed and governed according to the YSU and faculty charters and their regulations. There is also procedure for “The Election of the YSU Head of Chair” (26.05.2016)⁹.

The governance of Ijevan branch, institutes and centres is carried out according to the YSU and their charters (see the YSU Charter, clauses 83-88¹⁰, the Charters of the YSU Institute of Armenian Studies (02.07.2013) and the YSU Ijevan branch (29.04.2015))¹¹.

The YSU bodies have paid due attention to the legal regulation of human resources, taking into account the role of the human resource factor. The YSU Charter fixes the rights and responsibilities of the employees and students (see clauses 126-138). The occupation of the YSU scientific and pedagogical staff vacancies are regulated by the procedures on the competitive election of the YSU scientific and pedagogical, as well as academic staff and replacement of posts¹².

To improve the management of human resources, YSU has adopted the "Concept of Human Resource Management System Development" (06.07.2017)¹³, and steps have been taken to implement it. In March 2018, “The Charter of the YSU Staff Management and Legal Support Department” was approved, which is a prerequisite for further effective development of the human resource sector¹⁴. “The Internal Disciplinary Rules of the YSU Foundation”, revised in 2015¹⁵, as well as the new collective agreement signed between YSU and Trade Union in the same year, are aimed at improving the discipline, relations between the management and employees in the field of governance¹⁶.

In June 2018, the "Mulberry" electronic document circulation system" was introduced, which has been fully operated since 2019.

YSU has always paid great attention to staffing issues. In 2016 the regulation on the staff rank of the YSU administrative, teaching, support and technical positions has been approved aimed to ensure the effective management of the staff potential of those categories, including the principles of staff position system formation and hierarchy¹⁷, as well as general provisions of passports of administrative positions and other employees job descriptions and so forth.

On July 6, 2017, the YSU Academic Council approved the “Concept/Framework of Human Resources (HR) Management System Development”¹⁸, which defines the vision of system reforms,

⁶ http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/205_REKTORATIVoroshum_14.3-2011.pdf

⁷ http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/orinakeli_kanonadrutyun.pdf

⁸ http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/fakulteti_dekani_yntrutyun.pdf

⁹ http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/ambioni_varich_yntrutyun.pdf

¹⁰ <http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/IAS-Kanonadrutyun-2013.pdf>

¹¹ http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Ijevani_kanonadrutyun.pdf

¹² http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/3.6_kanonakarg_17.12.2012.pdf

http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Dasakhosakan_kazm_election-new.pdf

¹³ http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/mardkayin_res_kar_zargacman_hayecakarg.pdf

¹⁴ <http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/kanonadrutyun.pdf>

¹⁵ http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/EPH_nerqin_kargapahakan_kanonner.pdf

¹⁶ http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/paymanagir_new.pdf

¹⁷ <http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/voroshum.pdf>

¹⁸ http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/mardkayin_res_kar_zargacman_hayecakarg.pdf

emphasizes the conceptual approaches to incentives and discipline, and other issues of HR management. Since April 1, 2018, the Staff Management and Legal Support Department has been operating, which, together with the structural subdivisions, has developed the position passports for the YSU administrative subdivision employees and submitted them to the YSU Rector for approval. More than 90 percent of administrative subdivisions have approved position passports. Position passports for the academic and teaching and support staff have also been approved. "The Procedure for Calculating and Paying Additional Fees to the YSU Employees for Certain Types of Work" has been adopted and applied since 2017/2018¹⁹. The latter includes clearly formulated and measurable achievements, according to which extra payments are calculated and provided by the intranet automated system in line with the undertaken activities. According to the decision of the meeting of YSU Academic Council, dated March 26, 2015, "Rules of the Internal Discipline of YSU" (in a new edition) were adopted²⁰. The following documents were also adopted at YSU: regulation on the organization of the programme for the academic staff qualification enhancement²¹, procedure for the YSU faculty dean election (in a new edition)²², procedure for the YSU head of chair election (in a new edition)²³, decision on making amendments and additions in the procedure on the competitive election of the YSU academic staff and replacement of posts²⁴, regulation on the staff rank of the YSU administrative, teaching, support and technical positions²⁵, norms for calculating the teaching workload of the YSU academic staff and so forth²⁶.

The material basis of the YSU activities is the property owned and possessed by it. The YSU revenues and expenditures are envisaged and used according to the annual budget approved by the prescribed procedure. YSU has an annual performance report on incomes and expenses (budget), which is approved by the Board of Trustees. YSU has a reserve fund for possible losses, as well as deposits in the bank. The financial audit in YSU is carried out according to the relevant regulations defined by the RA legislation and YSU charter. Assembled financial reports are drawn up and submitted (on which independent audit reports are compiled), for which the YSU authorities and legal entity are liable. All financial processes are regulated by the University acts (all the documents are available on the "Documents" section of the YSU website)²⁷.

The decision-making process is regulated. To maintain the defined code of ethics, the principles of discipline, planning, transparency and accounting of stakeholders' needs are at its bases (see analysis of standards 1.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5). The allocation and clear division of the body authorities, the combination of collegial and single management are also used in the governance (see standard 2.5). The control function over the inferior units and the reporting system are the mechanisms for the effective implementation of the YSU mission and management quality assurance.

¹⁹ <http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/karg.pdf>

²⁰ http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/EPH_nerqin_kargapahakan_kanonner.pdf

²¹ http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/DOB_cragir.pdf

²² http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/fakulteti_dekani_yntrutyun.pdf

²³ http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/ambioni_varich_yntrutyun.pdf

²⁴ http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Dasakhosakan_kazm_election-new.pdf

²⁵ <http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/voroshum.pdf>

²⁶ http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/GX_voroshum_11-3.pdf

²⁷ http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/GX_voroshum_8-3.pdf

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

The requirements of this standard have always been essential in all the YSU SPs. The "democratic environment", based on the participation of students and employees, is considered a fundamental value of YSU (see page 6 of the SP). Participation and involvement have legal guarantees defined by the RA Law on "Higher and Postgraduate Education" (Articles 17-19 define the rights of the University employees, the basics of students' participation in governance). The principle of participation is specified by various intra-university acts.

The rights to vote and be elected to the positions of academic staff and governing bodies, as well as participate in the discussion of issues related to them, are reproduced in the YSU Charter (clause 129). The realization procedures of these rights are also regulated at all levels of governance.

The academic staff participates in the university governing bodies. The YSU Charter defines the proportions of their participation in the Board of Trustees - 25% (clauses 27-28), their involvement proportion in the Academic Council (clause 52), and other intra-university acts detail these regulations (see the regulations of the mentioned bodies adopted in 2015)²⁸.

The heads of all core structural units of YSU are presented in the Academic Council, and other members are elected according to the allocated seats. The heads of the YSU core structural units are members of the rectorate (see "The YSU Rectorate Regulation")²⁹.

The academic staff participates in the governing bodies of the University faculties. The charters of YSU, faculties and educational centres define the forms and procedure for the participation of lecturers in the governing bodies, as well as the procedure for the membership of lecturers in the University chairs.

The participation principle of the academic staff in the faculty academic councils and dean's offices is the representation based on the principles of ex officio and selectivity. In other bodies of the faculties, for example, in the methodical council the participation of lecturers is elective (see the Exemplary Charter of the YSU Faculty³⁰, the regulations adopted in the new edition of the YSU Methodical Council³¹ and the YSU Faculty Methodical Council³²).

The lecturers participate in the organizational and scientific-educational activities of the YSU chairs through membership. According to the charters of the YSU faculties, the professors, associate professors, assistants and lecturers are involved in the staff of the chair, who, under the leadership of the elected head of the chair, take part in the discussions of the educational and scientific issues at the chair sittings. Researchers, post-graduate students, the educational support staff and other employees take part in the sittings of the chair acting in an advisory capacity.

Article 17 of the Law on "Higher and Postgraduate Education" stipulates the right of students to participate in the University governance. The YSU acts guarantee students' rights to: a) participate in the activities of the University governing bodies, b) participate in the formation of the content of their education (the selection of courses and specialization).

²⁸ <http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/ashka.pdf>

http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Git_khorhurd_kanonakarg.pdf

²⁹ http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/205_REKTORATIVoroshum_14.3-2011.pdf

³⁰ http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/orinakeli_kanonadrutyun.pdf

³¹ <http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/kanonakarg-met.xorhrdi.pdf>

³² <http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/kanonakarg-metodakan.pdf>

The main forms of students' participation in the activities of the University bodies are:

a) 25% of the members of the YSU Board of Trustees and Academic Council are students elected in the YSU Student Council (Student Council, see the YSU Charter, clauses 29 and 51, the YSU Academic Council Regulation, clause 6, as well as the YSU Student Council Charter, clause 5.17),

b) according to clause 116 of the YSU Charter, Student Council - the Student Self-governance Organization operates at YSU (the charter was adopted in 2010)³³,

c) the chairman of the YSU Student Council is considered to be an ex officio member of the rectorate (see the YSU Rectorate Regulation, clause 6)³⁴,

d) 25% of the academic councils of the faculties and branches are students elected in the SCs (see the YSU charter, clauses 91, 113, 114).

e) the chairman of the faculty SC is an ex officio member of the faculty dean's office (see the YSU Charter, clause 101),

f) the postgraduate students participate in the sittings of the scientific-pedagogical staff of the chairs acting in an advisory capacity (see the YSU Charter, clause 108),

g) Student Scientific Society operates at YSU (the Charter was adopted on June 20, 2001)³⁵.

One of the guarantees of the activities of the student organizations is their share in the YSU budget. One of the mechanisms for students' participation is their right to take part in the functions of teaching quality assurance and assess the teaching effectiveness of the academic staff.

The participation of lecturers in the structural subdivisions is based on timing: they are re-elected every 5 years, which provides an opportunity of replenishment with new human resources. Professionalism is the main requirement for the candidates for the executive bodies of the University: rector, dean, head of the chair (see the YSU Charter, clauses 37, 60). The next principle of democratic participation is the responsibility and accountability of executive bodies of the University and its subdivisions and the representative bodies of officials (see the analysis of Standard 2.4).

To increase the efficiency of participation, the YSU SP envisaged the implementation of reform programmes, which led to the creation of guarantees and conditions for the conscious, active and full participation among students. To this end, SC has implemented numerous programmes (seminar-courses "Student Issues at YSU", "Student Rectorate", "Student Council Development School", "Student Self-Governance" conference and so forth) aimed at raising students' awareness on various issues related to the YSU activities (including governance), as well as promoting students' participation in intra-university life. The online tool "Direct Connection with SC" has been created and launched (<http://ysu.am/studline/hy/home>).

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

The main goals and objectives set by the YSU mission are planned and implemented in different directions and ways.

³³ http://documentation.ysu.am/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Kanonadrutyun-Stud_council.pdf

³⁴ http://documentation.ysu.am/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/205_REKTORATIVoroshum_14.3-2011.pdf

³⁵ http://documentation.ysu.am/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/UGY_kanonadrutyun22.pdf

The strategic planning toolkit of the YSU mission is the YSU Strategic Development Five-Year Plan, the legal basis of which is the law on “Higher and Postgraduate Professional Education”, Article 15, Section 10. See Criterion 1 for the implementation and monitoring of this planning.

Strategic planning is carried out at YSU at the level of structural subdivisions as well (faculties, branches, institutes, centres). (see Annex 10.2).

The planning of the educational activities is carried out at long-term, annual and current levels. The legal basis for this type of planning is the RA law on “Education”. According to Article 14, Section 1 of the law, education in universities is organized based on curricula, subject programmes, academic schedules and timetables. The process begins with the development of academic programmes and their approval by the YSU Academic Council. Later, the approved academic programmes are submitted to the authorized body of education management, which grants the relevant license.

Based on the academic programmes, the faculties develop curricula (see Standard 2.6), after which the annual curricula are developed. Based on the latter, the chairs carry out annual planning of courses teaching, teaching staff positions and academic workload and submit them to the approval of the educational management.

Timetables and exam schedules are also forms of current planning of the educational process. At the beginning of each semester, the schedule of the educational process is approved, which clearly defines the deadlines of learning, tests and examinations, reexaminations, the beginning and end of the academic semester and so forth.

The SuperVision e-governance system, which was recently upgraded, operates for the control of operational planning, governance and performance of the educational process (see Standard 2.4).

YSU also plans to conduct research activities (see Standard 6.2), the process of qualification enhancement of the academic staff, which is organized based on five-year plans, with annual and five-year summaries of the results. The mechanisms of implementation and monitoring of the latter are presented in Criterion 5, Standards 3 and 5.

The annual budget of incomes and expenses and its performance are the toolkits for the YSU financial planning, which are discussed in Academic Council and approved in Board of Trustees (see the YSU Charter, clause 42, subclause 7)³⁶

STANDARD 2.4. The TLI’s conducts environmental scanning and draws on reliable data during the decision making process.

Management decisions at the University are made based on the data obtained by studying the needs of internal and external factors influencing its activities and the needs of its stakeholders. For the implementation of this requirement, governance at YSU is carried out in line with the forecast, planning, current organization, control and report functions. The fulfillment of this cycle provides an opportunity to collect the necessary data and take into account the influencing factors, which contribute to the well-grounded decisions and results in the efficiency of their implementation.

³⁶The documents on YSU financial activity are available at the “Documentation” section of YSU portal <http://documentation.y-su.am/category/%d6%86%d5%ab%d5%b6%d5%a1%d5%b6%d5%bd%d5%a1%d5%af%d5%a1%d5%b6/%d5%b0%d5%a1%d5%b7%d5%be%d5%a1%d5%ba%d5%a1%d5%b0%d5%a1%d5%af/d5%a1%d5%b6/>

YSU uses the KPI system to identify and study the factors influencing its activities (key performance indicators, see Standard 1.3.). It pursues the goal of analyzing the internal environment of the University, revealing its strengths and weaknesses, and ensures the practicality of the strategic goals, objectives and separate actions, as well as the connection with the YSU external and internal environments. With the help of KPIs, six fields of the YSU activities are studied, and the collected data is used in the development of the strategy of the relevant fields. In the last decade, the collection and analysis of KPIs were carried out already four times for the following periods: 2003-2009, 2005-2010, 2008-2013 and 2010-2015, and the results were published in separate booklets. A new KPI collection for 2015-2019 is currently being compiled and published.

As it has already been mentioned, YSU has been running the electronic automated information management system SuperVision for years, which makes the whole educational process controllable and transparent. The system is regularly upgraded to make planning, control, and performance of the process more effective. In particular, the scope of its application has been expanded, the registration of students' attendance at the courses is carried out electronically, the system of student electronic record book has been created.

The following forms of accountability are a management tool for reliable data collection and effective decision-making:

- 1) rector's annual report to Board of Trustees,
- 2) the report of the heads of structural subdivisions (dean, branch or institute director) and chairs to their academic councils (Charter, clause 95, subclause 4),
- 3) the accountability of the academic staff is reflected by the re-election process of every five years, with the submission of the relevant academic achievements,
- 4) the reports and statistical data submitted to the RA National Statistical Service and authorized state governing body, for example, statistical reports, analyses according to the 1-GM and 3-GM templates, and so forth.

Reports, as a systematic summary, are at the same time a tool to identify shortcomings and omissions, reveal challenges, analyze the difficulties encountered, as well as plan to overcome them.

Thus, in the process of the YSU governance, great importance is attached to the identification of the University internal and external environmental factors, their analysis, disclosure of trends, and forecasting of their impact on the University. This provides an opportunity to apply the obtained information for making grounded decisions and plans. For example, in recent years, as a result of studies of the decline and fluctuation of the applicants' number conditioned by the influence of demographic and other factors, the strategic goal of "Admission Diversification and Relevance" was envisaged by the YSU SP (see SP, Objectives 7.1-7.3, pp. 25-29).³⁷ To neutralize the negative impact of the economic crisis and decrease in the number of applicants in the system of paid education, YSU adopted a strategic approach to ensure financial stability (see SP, Objectives 8.1-8.2). The constant changes in the education legislation made YSU envisage a separate objective 8.3 in SP aimed at improving the legal field and governance system.

³⁷ http://ysu.am/files/quality/YSU_Strategic_Development_Plan_2016-2020.pdf

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

Governance and administration are one of the essential tools for the implementation of the University mission. They are aimed at solving two key issues: ensuring the organizational integrity of YSU as an institution and continuous quality enhancement during its governance.

The bases of the current governance system of YSU were laid in 2014 by the new Charter. YSU evolved from a state non-profit organization into a state-established foundation³⁸. The YSU governance is based on self-government, autonomy, in combination with the principles of single and collegial management, by the implementation of the functions of the founder, the authorized body, Board of Trustees, Academic Council, the Rector (see the YSU Charter, Section VI).

The activities and administration of the above-mentioned institutional structure defined by the YSU Charter are built based on the planning-do-check-act (PDCA) cycle aimed at the continuous quality enhancement of the processes. Quality management cycles include central governance (for example, SP), decentralized and faculty functions (such as the implementation of an academic programme), as well as quality management mechanisms .

1) The identification of strategic, current and other issues that need to be addressed. At this stage, analysis of the environment (internal and external), identification of factors and trends are carried out. For example, analyses related to SP are compared to the improvement measures based on the results of the previous plan implementation, as well as the results of the reports at different levels and the issues raised are taken into account (see Standards 1.2, 1.3, 2.2).

In the case of academic programmes, admission statistics, labor market and public demand, and other analyses are carried out based on the results of which the decision to launch a new academic programme is adopted.

2) The development (planning), expertise, adoption and release of the management decision draft. The regulation - the adoption of intra-university acts is one of the important functions of the YSU governance. In addition to the general bodies, there is a special body aimed at systematic implementation of this function, i.e. the Standing Committee on the Development and Examination of Legal Acts of the YSU Academic Council which develops and/or expetises the drafts of the University main acts (charter, regulation, procedure, work regulation and so forth) (see the work regulation of the Standing Committee on the Development and Examination of Legal Acts of YSU dated on 20.04.2012)³⁹. Special all-university committees are set up to develop a strategic development plan. The process of creating academic programmes is carried out according to the approval procedure of the YSU academic programmes.

3) At the implementation stage of the adopted management decision, the university bodies, in the scope of their competences, undertake the implementation of the tasks and actions assigned to them. Thus, in 2016-2020 to organize the implementation of SP in the most effective way, parallel to it the SP implementation work-plan was developed, which included the units/bodies responsible for the implementation of the measures stemming from the relevant objectives, implementation time,

³⁸ [http://ysu.am/files/quality/Charter_of_YSU_Foundation_\(2014\).pdf](http://ysu.am/files/quality/Charter_of_YSU_Foundation_(2014).pdf)

³⁹ <http://documentation.ysu.am/?s=%D5%AB%D6%80%D5%A1%D5%BE%D5%A1%D5%AF%D5%A1%D5%B6+%D5%A1%D5%AF%D5%BF%D5%A5%D6%80%D5%AB+&lang=hy>

progress evaluation index (see also Standards 2.3, 2.4. for performance quality assurance cycle)⁴⁰. The academic programme is implemented in line with the defined schedule and involvement of planned human and material resources.

4) The assessment system carries out the control and reporting of the implementation of the adopted management decision (see Standards 2.3, 2.4. for the analysis of control and reporting principles in the University administration). In the case of SP, at the end of each year, the SP performance assessment is carried out, an annual performance report is compiled, which also identifies the shortcomings and omissions⁴¹. Based on the performance reports at the final stage of SP implementation a full assessment of the SP is carried out.

During the academic programme implementation, quality and effectiveness assessment is also conducted, both for separate courses (student surveys on the quality and effectiveness of teaching during the semester), as well as for complete programme upon its completion (graduates' satisfaction surveys with the education received at YSU, current monitoring of academic programmes and compilation of relevant report). For more details, see Criterion 3.

5) The improvement as a stage of the quality assurance management process follows the assessment stage and initiates the identification of the raised issues and disclosure of unrealized programmes revealed as a result of assessment. Thus, the process of developing a new management act begins, i.e., the programme/list of improvement measures is being developed, which forms the basis for the preparation of the next SP.

As a result of the assessment of academic programmes, a plan of improvement measures is compiled as well, which forms the basis for the next review of the programme (see the Regulation for Monitoring and Periodic Review of YSU Study Programmes)⁴². For more details, see Criterion 10.

The YSU policy and procedures are implemented in line with the general principles of governance. The main goals set in SP are the basis of the YSU activities. The YSU governance and administration are also based on the principles of legality, transparency and considerations of public opinion (see Standard 1.2). “Public Relations and Information Department” operates at YSU, which carries out functions of internal and external awareness, as well as university-related public information collection (see the Charter on [www.http//ysu.am](http://ysu.am))⁴³.

The University administration is also based on a number of other organizational principles applied in the field of governance:

1. the principle of differentiation and delegation of functions and authorities of the governing bodies. Internal acts define the jurisdiction, staff and fundamentals of work regulation for all bodies. After becoming a foundation, YSU tried to clarify the scope and cooperation of issues managed by the governing bodies and officials as much as possible (see Standard 2.1.),

⁴⁰http://documentation.ysu.am/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/EPH_razmavarakan_tsragri_irakanacman_zhamanakacuyc_plan.pdf

⁴¹ http://documentation.ysu.am/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Kataroghakan_2019.pdf,
http://documentation.ysu.am/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Kataroghakan_2018.pdf

⁴² http://ysu.am/files/quality/Monitoring&Review_of_YSU_Study_Programs.pdf

⁴³See the Charter http://documentation.ysu.am/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Hasarakaynutyan_het_kaperi-ev-lratvutyany_varchutyany_kanonadrutyun.pdf

2. the principle of combining collegiality and sole management. The governing body is dominated by collegial bodies, and the sole bodies are elective, provisional, accountable and responsible.

3. the combination of centralization and decentralization, ensuring subordination. The governance system provides the subdivisions with some autonomy, including the financial one.

Thus, the administration of policies and procedures of the University is carried out on the principle of quality management, i.e., forecasting, planning, implementation, assessment, control and reporting, improvement. After becoming a foundation, for the implementation of the mentioned processes a number of regulations, procedures and other acts were adopted regulating the functions and work regulations of the governing bodies.

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

YSU has the following mechanisms for the data collection on academic programmes and the related processes and the assessment of the effectiveness:

a) justification of professional academic programmes and quality assurance at the stage of their development (see “The Regulation for Approval of YSU Study Programmes”, adopted on 30.01.2014)⁴⁴),

b) current monitoring and assessment ensuring the effectiveness of professional academic programmes and quality at the stage of their implementation, according to the “Regulation for Monitoring and Periodic Review of YSU Study Programmes”⁴⁵, 30.01.2014 (see also the analysis of Standards 2.2 and 2.5),

c) periodic review, which guarantees the continuous improvement, relevance and demand for professional academic programmes (see “Regulation for Monitoring and Periodic Review of YSU Study Programmes”, 30.01.2014)⁴⁶.

The mechanisms for collecting and applying information on the effectiveness and quality of the YSU academic programmes are detailed in Criterion 3, in more detail in Standard 3.5.

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

Taking into account the importance of the dissemination of up-to-date information on professional academic programmes, YSU has been pursuing a multi-layered policy of information dissemination for already 15 years. The initial stage of the latter is the dissemination of information on academic programmes among the society and public schools aimed at professional orientation.(see the Charter of the Department of Pre-University Education, 08.07.2010⁴⁷). To this end, applicant guidelines, CDs about faculties and professions are being prepared and distributed. This function is

⁴⁴ http://ysu.am/files/quality/Approval_of_YSU_Study_Programs.pdf

⁴⁵ http://ysu.am/files/quality/Monitoring&Review_of_YSU_Study_Programs.pdf

⁴⁶ http://ysu.am/files/quality/Monitoring&Review_of_YSU_Study_Programs.pdf

⁴⁷ http://documentation.ysu.am/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Minchhamalsaranakan_krtutyun_varchutyun_kanonadrutyun.pdf

also performed through the official website of YSU, where all information related to academic programmes is posted, there is also a question and answer section (for more detail see Standard 4.1).

However, this is not the end of the process. The University charter guarantees that the student has the right to receive full and detailed information on the content of the professional academic programme, as well as participate in the open and free discussions of the academic programme. Therefore, the next stage of the policy is the dissemination of information on the content of professional academic programmes, which is implemented in several directions.

1. Special policy for disseminating initial information on academic programmes is implemented for newly admitted students. One of the applied mechanisms is the bachelor's and master's degree programmes package “Credit System Educational Guidelines and Course Directory”, which is updated every academic year and is made available to students on the YSU website.⁴⁸ Orientation lectures are held for freshmen. The academic counselors’ (curators) activities also serve this purpose.

2. The information provided during the learning process is further deepened. In particular, there are bachelor's and master's degree programmes specifications, which present the most important descriptors of the programme in detail: objectives, learning outcomes, methods and techniques used for teaching, learning and so forth. (see Standards 3.1-3.3). Each academic programme includes an orientation course “Introduction to Profession”.

The mechanisms for assessing the objectivity and accessibility of the dissemination of published information on academic programmes are:

a) mechanisms for identifying the opinions, interests and needs of potential stakeholders of the academic programmes include the participation of stakeholders in the University governance (see Standard 2.2), student autonomy, the activities of student organizations and pre-university education department (concerning the applicants), various forms of cooperation with employers and so forth (see Standard 1.2),

b) the study of feedback on the social network, including through the YSU Public Relations Service, is a mechanism for disclosing public opinion and appraisal of academic programmes,

c) anonymous surveys conducted among students, which include questions related to the qualitative aspects of professional academic programmes,

d) anonymous surveys on graduates’ satisfaction with the received education, in which an entire section is devoted to the academic programmes and the applicant's awareness of them,

e) periodic meetings of the academic staff and heads of educational subdivisions with students and the representatives of student organizations,

f) the institutes of the academic counselor, the head of the academic programme and the scientific seminar-lecturer in the master's programme are also aimed at providing students with information and guided counseling on the principles and features of the academic programme.

The means of information dissemination on the educational process in YSU, its accessibility and objectivity, as well as feedback provision are the YSU portal and its various sections, such as “Question-Answer” section, where questions of students’ concern are addressed, as well as messages

⁴⁸ See <http://ysu.am/education/en>

in Armenian, English and Russian receive immediate replies. Information on student and lecturer exchange programmes is posted on the “Announcements” section of the “International” website⁴⁹.

The YSU official pages, which are active on social networks, are an important tool for information dissemination on the educational process in YSU, its accessibility and objectivity, as well as feedback provision. News published on the YSU portal is also posted on the YSU “Facebook” and “Twitter” pages. Many Facebook visitors (<http://www.facebook.com/ysu.am>) have active discussions. The number of the followers is already 52,000, which has increased by about 10,000 compared to the previous academic year. Social network "Twitter" is also active (https://twitter.com/YSU_official). About 2,224 news (trilingual) were posted. Since May 2017 the official page of the YSU “Instagram” https://www.instagram.com/ysu_yerevan_state_university/ has been launched, and by September 1, the number of followers reached 1,760. 193 videos were uploaded on the YSU Youtube in the current academic year. The total number of the videos uploaded reached 392.

For more details on these and other ways of providing information on academic programmes at YSU, see the analysis on Standards 4.1-4.3., 8.1, 8.3 and 10.6.

**YSU activity strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats
by Criterion 2**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To achieve its goals, YSU has the necessary effective mechanisms for the management of human, material and financial resources. 2. YSU has a multi-level governance system, which allows the stakeholders to participate in making the most important decisions related to the University. 3. YSU has a well-established strategic planning experience, which is a means to undertake its mission consistently in three key fields: education, research and public involvement. 4. Adoption of basic management decisions based on the reliable data obtained as a result of internal and external environment analysis and identification of stakeholders’ needs. 5. Existence of digital management systems (SuperVision, Mulberry, Intranet and so forth) for the educational, research and administrative processes. 6. Existence of top-down control and bottom-up accountability mechanisms in the governance system. 7. Multilayer system of information provision to public and internal stakeholders on the YSU 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Absence of a single integral institutional structure implementing the YSU internal and external environment analyses. 2. High level of centralization of the YSU governance system. 3. Absence of qualitative and quantitative clear criteria for the performance assessment of the YSU governing bodies and officials. 4. Incomplete implementation of PDCA management cycle at the faculty and chair levels. 5. Absence of mechanisms for eliminating conflicts of interests and preventing subjective approaches in the governance system. 6. Low level of application of digital learning management platforms (Moodle, Google Classroom, Blackboard and so forth). 7. Absence of mechanisms for encouraging performance in the governance system. 8. Repetition of functions between some structural subdivisions.

⁴⁹ <http://ysu.am/international/en>

academic programmes.	9. The outflow of staff with managerial and scientific potential, a significant increase in the number of inexperienced staff.
Opportunities	Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implementation of benchmarking with the RA and foreign university governance systems. 2. Development of administrative staff management skills and abilities through training programmes and courses. 3. Training of administrative staff and exchange of experience in foreign partner universities in the scope of international grant programmes. 4. Transition to the competition format for occupying vacancies in the administrative staff. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expected changes in the legislation of the higher education field, which keep the YSU new strategic directions in uncertainty. 2. Forcing the direct introduction of foreign university governance systems without taking into account the peculiarities of the University. 3. The tendency of a decrease in the share of teaching staff and the number of student representatives in the higher governing bodies of the University. 4. Existence of non-competitive human resources policy. 5. The penetration of the market management model into the University, as a result of which the long-term strategic plans are replaced by short-term tactical plans, and the University fundamental education is replaced by the training of tactical specialists.

Planned ways to overcome weaknesses and threats

1. Introduce strategic-long-term (10-15 years), mid-term (5 years) and current planning and management systems in the YSU governance system.
2. Establish an integral institutional structure for the YSU internal and external environment analysis.
3. Improve the YSU governance system, administration, structure, aiming at quality assurance and efficiency, in particular, balance centralized and decentralized management of subdivisions, develop a full implementation programme of PDCA management cycle at the level of subdivisions, eliminate functional repetition between governing bodies and subdivisions and so forth.
4. Introduce in the governance system clear qualitative and quantitative criteria for the performance assessment of the YSU governing bodies and officials, clarify the forms of reports, introduce mechanisms for encouraging performance in the governance system.
5. Develop an urgent plan to prevent the outflow of human resources with managerial and scientific potential and pedagogical experience.

III. ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES

CRITERION: THE PROGRAMMES ARE IN CONCORD WITH THE INSTITUTION'S MISSION, FORM PART OF INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING AND PROMOTE MOBILITY AND INTERNATIONALIZATION.

As a multidisciplinary classical university, the YSU activity defined by its mission is aimed at implementing academic programmes in various fields of Armenian studies, natural and technical sciences, social economics and humanities, as well as carrying out fundamental and applied scientific research. YSU seeks to provide quality education, to encourage a student-centered approach to teaching and offer academic programmes providing comprehensive knowledge, abilities and skills based on research, creative work and innovation, which are established in the objectives of the “Quality Education” goal of the YSU 2016-2020 Strategic Development Plan (SP)¹ and its respective actions.

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

YSU implements academic programmes at all three educational levels (BA, MA and PhD) in accordance with the main directions of the YSU activity defined by its mission (see the YSU 2016-2020 SP) promoting the development of natural, humanitarian and social-economic sciences. In fact, YSU still occupies a leading position in the country, providing specialists for a wide range of fundamental areas (for instance, Armenian studies, Geology, Radiophysics, Chemistry, Biology, etc). In 2019/2020 academic year 244 academic programmes are implemented at the university structural subdivisions, including 62 Bachelor's degree, 120 Master's degree, 62 Postgraduate (Doctoral) degree programmes (see Annex 3.1). Furthermore, 60 Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes are in the direction of natural and physical-mathematical sciences, 32 – social-economic sciences, 82 – humanities. The academic programmes implemented at all the three levels include a research component, which provides an opportunity for the students to make learning more research-oriented and get involved in the fundamental and applied scientific research carried out at the university.

While elaborating academic programmes YSU has been guided by “The State General Standard of Higher Professional Education”² approved by the resolution of RA government and the format of standards³ set by RA Ministry of Education and Science, as well as “The National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education of Armenia”⁴ approved by RA government with resolution №714 of July 7, 2016 and the qualification frames adopted (established) for some professional spheres (Law, Physics, Psychology, Sociology, Pedagogy, etc.).

¹ YSU Strategic Development Plan 2016-2020, Yerevan, YSU, 2015

http://ysu.am/files/quality/YSU_Strategic_Development_Plan_2016-2020.pdf

² RA government resolution №24, January 16, 2001 // On approving the state general standards of higher and secondary vocational education <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=49003>

³ <http://www.irtek.am/views/act.aspx?aid=22040> has been expired on the bases of the document underlying the following link <https://www.arlis.am/documentview.aspx?docid=13646>.

⁴ <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=107371>

As a result of internal (Institutional Self-Evaluation Report, 2013)⁵ and external (Expert Report on YSU Institutional Accreditation, 2013) evaluation, as well as consistent with the improvement plan based on the recommendations of the latter and the YSU 2016-2020 development SP, YSU implemented the next round of programme reforms. In 2015/2016 academic year YSU initiated processes to review the normative documents on the structure, content and organization of the educational process in Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes. As a result, the following normative documents⁶ were elaborated and approved by the YSU Academic Council: "The order of the organization of the educational process in the baccalaureate and magistracy for educational programmes" (May, 2017), "The structure and content of YSU bachelor's educational programme" (May, 2017), "The structure and content of YSU master's educational programme" (July, 2016), "Order of Preparation and Assessment of Bachelor Study Graduation Work at YSU" (October, 2017), "Order of Preparation and Assessment of Master Study Graduation Thesis at YSU" (March, 2017), "The order of organizing and conducting YSU students' internship" (May, 2018).

Based on the above-mentioned documents and the established policies, as well as compliant with the objective 1.1 of the "Quality education" goal in YSU 2016-2020 development SP – "to implement structure and content alterations of academic programmes consistent with the national qualifications framework and current requirements of the labour market", about 130 Master's degree programmes (since 2016/17 academic year) and 60 Bachelor's degree programmes (since 2017/18 academic year) based on learning outcomes were either altered or newly elaborated in accordance with the national qualifications framework and current requirements of the labour market, taking into consideration international benchmarks as well.

The processes of elaborating/altering and approving academic programmes have been implemented in accordance with the provisions of "The Regulation for Approval of YSU Study Programmes" (2014)⁷: license for programme development, formation of the programme document package, expert examination and approval. The following tutorials, guidebooks and normative documents have served as methodological guidelines for the working groups developing academic programmes: "Methodological Guidelines for Development of YSU Study Programmes" (2010)⁸, "Guidebook on Completion of Programme Specifications and Course Descriptions" (2016)⁹, "Elaboration of Outcome-Based Courses and Educational Programmes: Lecturer's Tutorial" (Yerevan, 2017)¹⁰, "The structure and content of YSU bachelor's educational programme" (2017), "The structure and content of YSU master's educational programme" (2016)⁶.

At present all YSU Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes have specifications of the established format (see Annex 3.2 for the exemplary form) providing the criteria/requirements for programme admission, its aims and learning outcomes (knowledge, ability, skill) according to the intended final outcomes of the awarded qualifications, the educational standards and programme

⁵ YSU Institutional Self-Evaluation Report, 2013 / http://ysu.am/files/quality/YSU_Inst_SER.pdf

⁶ The elaborated documents are summarized in the guidebook "Documents regulating the educational process for Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes", YSU publishing house, 2018, updated annually. The electronic version is available by reference http://www.ysu.am/uploaded/Bak_mag_doc.pdf

⁷ Regulation for Approval of YSU Study Programmes
URL: http://ysu.am/files/quality/Approval_of_YSU_Study_Programs.pdf

⁸ http://ysu.am/files/quality/Development_of_YSU_Study_Programs.pdf

⁹ http://ysu.am/files/quality/Guide_for_Program_Specification&Course_Descriptors.pdf

¹⁰ <http://armenqa.am/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Program-Development-Guide.pdf>

benchmarks used for elaborating the programme, the programme curriculum (structure and content) and map, by means of which each learning outcome of the programme is related to the courses and learning modules forming it, as well as the descriptors of all the programme courses and other academic modules. For instance, at the educational levels of Bachelor's and Master's degree, in order to meet the RA HE NQF (National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education) requirement for the educational descriptor "Communication, ICT and Data Processing Skills", the courses "Basics of Information Technologies Application", "Applied Statistics and Data Processing" are included in the compulsory courses of the general learning structural component in the structure of YSU Bachelor's degree academic programme, and the course "Information Technologies in the Professional Sphere" – in the general courses of the learning structural component in the Master's degree programme with their respective learning outcomes. A number of other compulsory components and courses are included in the structure of academic programmes in order to provide for the RA HE NQF specific descriptors, such as "Research Planning and Methods", "Contemporary Issues of Profession" in the learning structural component, "Scientific Seminar", "Professional Internship" in the research structural component of the Master's degree programme, and term-papers¹¹, academic and professional internships – in the Bachelor's degree programme, etc.

When elaborating and reviewing academic programmes, a comparative analysis (benchmarking) of similar programmes of leading universities has been carried out and their experience presented thoroughly in standard 3.4. has been considered. Those data are presented in section 16 of each academic programme specification. However, it should be noted that formally this process is not clearly regulated yet. Taking into account this circumstance, as well as the fact that mandatory accreditation of academic programmes is planned to be introduced, YSU envisages elaborating formal procedures for the implementation of programme benchmarking.

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

The latest programme reforms have been implemented at YSU in accordance with the requirements set in "The Regulation for Approval of YSU Study Programmes" (2014)⁷ and "Guidebook on Completion of Programme Specifications and Course Descriptors" (2016)⁹, taking into consideration the YSU new normative documents as well (see Standard 3.1). At this stage, in the process of reviewing the academic programmes and their curricula it has also become necessary to reevaluate the traditional forms of teaching and learning, as well as the experience common at the university, and to introduce such innovative methods that would enable the students to acquire the intended learning outcomes more effectively.

"Guidebook on Completion of Programme Specifications and Course Descriptors" (YSU QAC, 2016) and "Elaboration of Outcome-Based Courses and Educational Programmes: Lecturer's Tutorial" (Yerevan, 2017)¹⁰ provide the principles of developing academic programmes, defining the aims of academic programmes and courses, formulating their final learning outcomes and choosing proper teaching, learning and assessment methods. These have guided the working groups elaborating

¹¹ Since 2020/21 academic year term-papers in the Bachelor's degree programme will be replaced with an independent research component introduced in a number of programme courses.

academic programmes, as well as the structural subdivisions and lecturers implementing the academic programmes. According to the set requirement, each course descriptor in the academic programme specifications must provide the description of the teaching and learning methods consistent with the final learning outcomes of the programme.

The course descriptors of the 4 academic programmes attached to the application for accreditation provide the teaching and learning approaches and methods consistent with the final educational outcomes (see Annex 3.3).

The variety of academic programmes and courses respectively requires various forms of teaching and learning. They are necessarily defined in the course descriptors, where the teaching and learning methods consistent with the course final outcomes are given in a specific section (Annex 3.3, course description 11). For instance, the following teaching and learning forms and methods are mainly mentioned for acquisition of professional theoretical knowledge – lectures, seminars, survey of the additional literature assigned by the lecturer, and for practical professional knowledge – workshops and laboratory work, different types of internship, group projects implementation, discussions, research components, term-papers, preparation of graduation papers and master’s theses, etc. Team work, essays, thematic reports, oral presentations, light show projector presentations, implementation of independent projects and other methods are offered for acquisition of transferable skills.

YSU academic programme specifications and course descriptors are presented in the “Guidebook on learning in the credit system of education” of the YSU structural subdivision implementing the learning process and are available on the “Education” website (<http://www.ysu.am/education/en>) of the YSU portal and in the education section on the faculty websites.

It was intended to establish a teaching and learning (teaching support) university center at YSU based on the improvement plan to fulfill YSU institutional accreditation expert report’s recommendations and the respective goals of YSU 2016-2020 development SP. In order to fulfill act 2 of YSU SP¹ objective 1.2 – “Develop intra-university mechanisms for promoting progressive pedagogical experience, contribute to introduction of up-to-date teaching methods and technologies” - YSU QA Center initiated and was granted the EU ERASMUS+ PRINTEl project “Change in Classroom: Promoting Innovative Teaching and Learning to Enhance Student Learning Experience in Eastern Partnership Countries”¹². The main aim of the project is to improve student academic performance, to promote development and innovation in teaching and learning, to support the integration of research and teaching technologies, as well as to share the best experience. Taking into consideration the best experience of the leading European universities involved in the project, the YSU Academic Council approved the new plan for 2019/21 activities of the YSU Postgraduate Additional Education Department (2019), which involved 5 courses aimed at introducing innovative teaching and learning methods and technologies: Active Learning and ICD-enhanced Teaching; Mobile Learning and Gamification, Video as a Teaching Tool, Active Learning in the “Flipped” Classroom, Hybrid/Blended Teaching, Active Learning with Special Focus on Technology Enhanced Collaborative Learning. Since 2019 these courses were included in “The structure and content of the

¹² <http://www.printel.am/>

scientific-educational training program for the tutorial staff based on the credit system”¹³ in order to orient and support the teaching staff with regard to the choice of effective teaching and learning methods.

For the purpose of evaluating the effectiveness of the teaching and learning methods employed by the YSU teaching staff, student surveys on the teaching quality and efficiency are conducted online each term, the results of which are thoroughly presented in standard 5.3. The survey results serve as a basis for continuous improvement of the teaching process.

STANDARD 3.3. The TLI has policy on students assessment according to the learning outcomes and ensures academic integrity.

In the phase of reforms initiated since 2015/2016 academic year YSU also reconsidered the policies for evaluation of students’ knowledge and skills enshrining them in the following regulations approved by the YSU Academic Council: “The order of the organization of the educational process in the baccalaureate and magistracy for educational programmes” (May, 2017)⁶, “The Order of Preparation and Assessment of Bachelor Study Graduation Work at YSU” (October, 2017)¹⁴, “The Order of Preparation and Assessment of Master Study Graduation Thesis at YSU” (March, 2017)¹⁵, “The order of organizing and conducting YSU students’ internship” (May, 2018)⁶.

For the purpose of implementing the acts of Objective 1.2 of YSU 2016-2020 development SP, as well as revealing the problems of the current assessment system, University subdivisions conducted surveys and received proposals and comments. Based on the received data, new procedures for assessment and appeal were established in the above-given regulations. A multifunctional system for periodical check and assessment of students’ knowledge was developed with its main goals of application, assessment components and forms (see Provision 3 of “The Order of Organizing the Educational Process”)⁶. According to the given order and proceeding from the workload in the frames of the courses (academic modules) planned by the programme curricula, as well as the form of classes and the teaching and learning methods used, courses were divided into 4 groups according to their assessment form: with final assessment, without final assessment, without mid-term assessment and knowledge test.

The 12th descriptor of the course forming part of the academic programme specification (Annex 3.3) defines assessment methods and criteria. Here the set requirement is to describe the methods, forms and standards for acquisition of learning outcomes and assessment of knowledge and skills in this course. The analyses of specifications indicate that, in general, both assessment methods and criteria are presented thoroughly and clearly in accordance with the intended learning outcomes.

¹³ “The structure and content of the scientific-educational training program for the tutorial staff based on the credit system (2016-2021)”, 2007, revised in 2011, 2016 and 2019

/ <http://extension.yasu.am/images/pdf/1473058982-3Tsragir.pdf>

¹⁴ Order of Preparation and Assessment of Bachelor Study Graduation Work at YSU, October 12, 2017.

http://yasu.am/files/quality/Bachelor_Graduation_Work_Assessment.pdf

¹⁵ See “Order of Preparation and Assessment of Master Study Graduation Thesis at YSU”, approved by the YSU Academic Council at meeting №5 on March 2 of 2017, Yerevan, 2017,

http://yasu.am/files/quality/Master_Thesis_Assessment.pdf

YSU educational subdivisions and their academic councils regularly discuss the forms of checking students' knowledge and skills, the assessment system and the issues of academic honesty. In order to find out the effectiveness and problems of the new assessment system introduced since 2017/18 academic year, a survey was conducted among the two main beneficiary groups – students and lecturers (over 500 students and 190 lecturers voluntarily participated in the survey) at the end of the first semester of 2019/20 academic year. The results of the survey revealed that students and lecturers find that the current system of assessing students' knowledge and skills and the 20-point grading scale are generally acceptable. But they also find that it needs some additions and amendments. Both the students and the lecturers participating in the survey consider the written form of mid-term and final exams to be mainly inefficient. Most of them suggest that the established assessment step of 0.5 point should be revised, the 2nd mid-term exam should be removed, and that the assessment system should include students' independent work (in the form of assessing essays, group activities and individual work), as well as professional language proficiency (oral and written). They also suggest that the points given for the student's presence at lectures should be reestablished in the assessment system.

Information on the efficiency and objectivity of the student assessment system is also obtained by means of feedback received through student and graduate surveys (see standard 5.3).

The multifunctional system of assessing master's theses and bachelor's graduation papers was introduced at the University in 2017/18 academic year. It clearly defines the assessment criteria and standards, as well as the assigned points (see standard 3.1). Students are informed beforehand about the criteria and standards, by which the presented graduation papers and master's theses will be assessed.

The regulated process of preparing graduation papers and master's theses and defending them is aimed at providing mechanisms for academic honesty. The above-mentioned orders of preparing and assessing a graduation paper and master's thesis at YSU present the exemplary structure of the paper, requirements for its design, the methodology of giving references, the process of implementation and requirements, as well as the schedule of thesis preparation and defense, assessment criteria and standards, and the form of appeal. In particular, independent work and pre-defense of graduation papers and master's theses are of great importance in this process. The work performed by the student is evaluated in each phase as well. In case of essential remarks the paper is sent out for amendments, after which it is submitted for external review. In case of detecting plagiarism during pre-defense or defense, the student is not allowed to defend the paper.

The process of preparing master's theses is also controlled at scientific seminars. Students present their current performance in the frames of the master's thesis, the theoretical analysis carried out on the studied issue and conclusions, research plans, the implementation process and preliminary results, etc.

In spite of the introduced multifunctional assessment system and measures aimed at academic honesty, the mechanisms for struggle against plagiarism are not perfect yet and need a systemic solution.

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

By acts 2 and 4 of Objective 1.1 of YSU 2016-2020 SP “Quality Education” goal it is envisaged “to redraft the Master’s and Bachelor’s degree academic programmes in accordance with the national qualifications framework and international subject benchmarks¹. In order to implement the mentioned actions, and taking into account the results of the previous self-evaluation as well, the academic programmes have been revised since 2016/17 academic year in accordance with the national and professional (in case of availability) qualifications framework, as well as on the basis of other academic programmes benchmarking. For instance, according to “Guidebook on Completion of Programme Specifications and Course Descriptions” (YSU QAC, 2016)⁹, academic programme specifications refer to the educational standards or programme benchmarks, which were taken into consideration in the process of developing the given academic programme. (see Annex 3.2, descriptor 16). It should be noted that a number of academic programmes (e.g. Chemistry, Geography, Geology, etc.) were developed mostly taking into consideration the programme experience of the leading universities of the Russian Federation and other CIS countries, and in case of the educational programmes related to contemporary applied spheres - the experience of not only CIS countries was taken into consideration, but that of the USA and a number of European universities as well.

For instance, the Master’s degree programme “Applied Microbiology” was developed with counseling support of the American Society for Microbiology (ASM) and Federation of European Microbiological Societies (FEMS) and taking into consideration the analogous programmes developed at a number of universities in Germany and the USA as well. This programme has been implemented at YSU since 2018/2019 academic year with the joint effort of the YSU Chair of Biochemistry, Microbiology and Biotechnology and the YSU innovative Center for Microbiological Biotechnologies and Biofuel.

For another instance, the Master’s degree programme “Personality Psychology and Psychological Consulting” was developed taking into consideration the programme benchmarks for psychological counseling of the UK Quality Assurance Agency; as for the experience of western universities, a number of academic programmes, such as “MA in Counseling Psychology” programme of The University of British Columbia (Canada), “MA in Counseling Psychology” of University of Minnesota (the USA) accredited by professional associations were studied as well. In addition, both the above-mentioned Master’s degree programme and Bachelor’s degree programme “Psychology” were guided by the respective educational programmes of the leading universities having the Russian Federation state accreditation (NRU Higher School of Economics, Saint-Petersburg State University, Moscow State Pedagogical University).

When developing Bachelor’s degree programme “Pharmacy”, the relevant curricula of the following leading universities were taken into consideration: Faculty of Pharmacy at Charles University (the Czech Republic), School of Pharmacy at the University of Kansas (the USA), Faculty of Pharmacy at Belgorod State University, First Moscow State Medical University named after I. Sechenov, Moscow State University (the Russian Federation) and others. The Master’s degree programme “Pharmacy” was developed taking into consideration the relevant curricula of Faculty of Pharmacy at Charles University (the Czech Republic), Department of Pharmacy at University of

Copenhagen (Denmark), Faculty of Pharmacy at Belgorod State University (the Russian Federation) and other leading universities.

YSU performs activities in the direction of developing new double-diploma academic programmes with various universities. In 2018/19 academic year YSU implemented 14 different double-diploma Master's degree programmes, which were implemented, in particular, with RF Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (Russian language and Literature, Economics, Pharmacy, International Relations and other specialties), RF Belgorod National Research University (specialties of Biology and Pharmacy), the University of Le Mans, Saint-Petersburg branch of Higher School of Economics, Bourgogne Franche-Comté University (specialties of Optics and Applied Biology). Besides, the project "CIS Network University" has been in operation for many years implementing the programme for the specialty of "Information Technology and Applied Mathematics" with Ural Federal University. It should be noted that in the period from 2015/16 to 2018/19 academic years 15 Master's degree students studying in various programmes (International Relations, International Law, Service, Management) participated in student mobility (in the frames of CIS Network University).

The YSU Center for European Studies cooperates with the best regional universities - Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Belarus State University, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, implementing regional Master's programme "Human Rights and Democratization in the Caucasus". The programme already has 174 graduates from 14 countries. Foreign students are also involved in the programme (30-50%); it is one of the unique programmes at YSU offered in foreign languages.

The former "tough" structure of the YSU academic programmes did not provide opportunities for the students to choose among a wide range of courses. Taking into account this fact, the share of optional (elective) courses was increased while elaborating the documents establishing the structure and content of the YSU Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes as a factor promoting and contributing to student mobility. The share of the latter in Bachelor's programmes makes up around 10%, and in Master's programmes – 25%, which triggers mobility at intra-university, intra-state and international levels. Thus, for instance, the 3rd semester of Master's degree programmes is entirely intended for elective courses, which enables students to use it freely in another university (or academic programme) to study other courses in the scope of their specialty and transfer the earned credits.

However, there are still a number of problems with transferring the credits earned by students in a foreign country, despite the fact that it is regulated by "Procedures on Academic Mobility of Higher Educational Institution Students" adopted by the RA Government with resolution №1240 on August 25 of 2011¹⁶.

During 2015/16–2019/20 academic years around 3400 people went on overseas business trips from YSU, nearly 1300 of them – from the teaching staff, and 1000 – students and postgraduates. In the same period, about 1700 students studied at YSU, and about 50 foreign guest-lecturers taught at the university (see Criterion 9 for the details of the quantitative indicators of the YSU teaching staff and student international mobility). One of the measures aimed at the teaching staff mobility and internationalization is the PRINTeL project which has been coordinated by YSU since 2018 (see

¹⁶ <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=70813>

standard 3.2). For the purpose of its implementation, competitively elected YSU lecturers, as well as a number of administrative staff representatives, have been trained at the leading European partner universities and disseminated their experience at the university (see Criterion 5).

Some measures implemented jointly with employers also contribute to the programmes internationalization and their alignment with the labour market requirements. However, it should be noted that both the public and private sectors do not have any clearly set requirements for the knowledge and skills of specialists prepared by higher education institutions.

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

An efficient mechanism for evaluating the effectiveness of the YSU academic programmes are the annual surveys on the graduates' satisfaction with the education received at YSU, which have been conducted online since 2016 (SP goal 1, act 6 of objective 1.3)¹. Over 2000 graduates participate in surveys annually making up more than a half of the total number of graduates. The questionnaire contains a relevant section, where graduates evaluate their satisfaction with the contents and teaching methodology of academic programmes. It should be noted that, in general, graduates are satisfied with the education received at YSU (estimations fluctuate between 4 and 5 on a 5-point scale). The analyses of surveys indicate that the overwhelming majority of graduates (in Bachelor's degree) have a desire to continue their studies at YSU. It is worth mentioning that the number of graduates working on specialty has increased, which confirms the topicality of many academic programmes provided at YSU. The mentioned survey outcomes are summed up, analysed and published in the respective annual report, which is widely considered at YSU academic council's session.

Estimations on the quality of academic programmes at the level of specific courses have been made each semester through student surveys since 2002. Since 2016 these surveys have been conducted online (SP goal 1, act 6 of objective 1.3)¹. Students evaluate the quality and efficiency of the courses studied at the given semester (see details on student surveys in standard 5.3).

For the purpose of programme quality assurance and continuous improvement, as well as the evaluation of their alignment with public demands and labour market needs, the YSU Academic Council adopted "The Regulation for Monitoring and Periodic Review of YSU Study Programmes" in 2011, which was revised in 2014 and 2019 (and now operates in new edition, "The Regulation for Monitoring and Periodic Review of YSU Study Programmes", approved in June of 2019)¹⁷. According to the procedure, all YSU academic programmes have to undergo current monitoring and periodic review. The regular monitoring of academic programmes is aimed at the evaluation of the programme implementation and their alignment with the set goals. The monitoring process is undertaken and implemented by the subdivision supporting the programme. The monitoring process results in the development of the programme improvement plan. In addition, as it was described above, a periodical review of academic programmes is done, the regularity of which in Bachelor's programmes is determined 6-7, and in Master's degree – 3-4 years. A programme revision is also required in all

¹⁷ "Regulation for Monitoring and Periodic Review of YSU Study Programmes", 2011, revised in 2019 / http://ysu.am/files/quality/Monitoring&Review_of_YSU_Study_Programs.pdf

those cases when the current changes in the programme content exceed more than 10% of its total volume.

As it was mentioned above, in 2017/18 academic year YSU started to implement the newly revised Master's degree programmes, and at the end of the first phase of their implementation, in 2019/20 academic year YSU initiated the monitoring process for the Master's degree academic programmes in accordance with the above mentioned procedure and act 2 of objective 1.3 of the YSU SP goal 1 - "Implement the procedure for current monitoring and periodic review of educational programmes for Master's degree academic programmes". As a decentralized process, it was carried out by the subdivisions implementing the academic programmes under the direct guidance of the YSU Quality Assurance Center. The current monitoring of the Master's degree programmes was carried out according to the regulation¹⁷ approved by the YSU Academic Council in June of 2019 and the schedule established by the Rector's order of September 5, 2019.

In the scientific-educational structural subdivisions working groups for current monitoring of the academic programmes were established with the participation of the programme supervisor, the teaching staff body, students and external beneficiaries. A new experience in this process was the fact that focus-group discussions were held with students involved in Master's programmes in order to receive feedback from the programme beneficiaries. An appropriate guidebook and questionnaire was prepared for creating the mentioned focus-groups. Focus-groups discussions were conducted by 25 Master's degree students studying at the faculties of Sociology, Philosophy and Psychology. The findings of the focus-group surveys for each academic programme were analyzed by independent researchers (selected postgraduates from the faculties of Sociology, Philosophy and Psychology), then respective accounts were submitted to 98 academic programme monitoring groups to prepare final monitoring reports. A monitoring report includes the following sections: the quantitative characteristics of the programme for the past 3 years, student survey results, results of the surveys on graduates' satisfaction, feedback from the programme beneficiaries (student focus-group research), collaboration relations in the frames of the programme, programme changes made in the previous phase, strengths and weaknesses of the programme according to the SWOT analysis, evaluation of the performance on the previous monitoring conclusions and the programme improvement actions' plan.

Some common issues were revealed on the basis of the analyses carried out. First of all, students involved in many academic programmes underlined the problem of ineffectiveness of internships, as well as the inconvenience of the library working hours, difficulties in obtaining literature, scarcity of contemporary and Armenian-language literature. The revealed problems served as a basis for making relevant changes in the "Norms for calculating the teaching and academic workload of the YSU teaching staff" (March, 2020)¹⁸. At the same time, students mostly noted that the contents of academic programmes come up to their expectations, and they value the dedication and hard work of the teaching staff involved in the academic programmes. Appropriate measures have been elaborated to overcome the weaknesses and threats of particular academic programmes to be implemented by the time of next monitoring.

The accounts on the academic programme monitoring are presented to the QA committees set up under the academic councils of the subdivisions, as well as to subdivision heads, afterwards they

¹⁸ YSU AC resolution N11/3 on establishing the norms for calculating the teaching and academic workload of the YSU teaching staff, 12.03.2020 / http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/GX_voroshum_11-3.pdf

are discussed at the academic council meeting and later brief reports are submitted to the YSU QA Center. The latter reviews the compliance of the reports to the set standards. Based on the monitoring results, the QA Center presents a general report on the programmes at risk to the YSU Academic Council, which takes an appropriate decision on the given programmes.

As the revised Bachelor's degree programmes have been implemented since 2018/19 academic year, their monitoring will be conducted starting from 2022/23 academic year.

**YSU activity strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats
by standard 3**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes are thoroughly described in accordance with the intended final outcomes and meet the requirements of NQF and the descriptors for professional frameworks. 2. There are mechanisms and procedures for licensing, developing, appraising, approving, current monitoring, efficiency evaluating and periodic review of the academic programmes which are implemented consistently. 3. The methods of teaching, learning and evaluation are mainly consistent with the learning outcomes of courses. 4. Innovative, technologically equipped teaching methods and active learning methods have been introduced at the University. 5. There is a relevant learning environment for proper implementation of academic programmes, a number of auditoriums and scientific-educational laboratories have been updated. 6. There is a multifunctional system of evaluating Bachelor's graduation papers and Master's theses. 7. The structure of the YSU Master's academic programme contributes to student mobility and transfer of credits earned in other higher education institutions. 8. There are research modules and components in all academic programmes. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of common methodology for the implementation of academic programme benchmarking. 2. Some part of the older teaching staff lack skills to use innovative methods of teaching and learning. 3. Lack of a common policy for evaluating the effectiveness of the chosen teaching methods. 4. Imperfection of the mechanisms ensuring academic honesty. 5. Lack of student mobility windows in the structure of Bachelor's degree programmes. 6. Insufficient level of efficiency in the implementation of some professional internships.
Opportunities	Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The existence of a requirement for content licensing and mandatory accreditation of an 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Low involvement of the labour market representatives in the formation of the final

<p>academic programme in the new draft law on higher education.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. An opportunity to improve the academic programmes through studying best practices in the frames of international cooperation. 3. An opportunity to study with part-time load, to implement fully the cumulative function of credits and hence to organize flexible academic programmes in the new draft law on higher education. 	<p>learning outcomes of the academic programmes.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Limited possibilities of detecting plagiarism due to the absence of a common database for digitalized Armenian-language sources. 3. Imperfection of the present legislation on the sphere of higher education and uncertainty about the adoption of the new law on higher education. 4. Natural disasters, global virus pandemics (COVID-19 and others), wars are an imminent threat to the natural implementation of academic programmes.
--	--

Planned ways to overcome weaknesses and threats

1. Development and approval of an internal policy for the implementation of benchmarking.
2. Further promotion and dissemination of best teaching practices using innovative teaching and learning methods and technologies.
3. Development of a unified policy for evaluating the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment methods and introduction of relevant mechanisms.
4. Creation of an intra-university Armenian-language digital database for graduation papers and Master's theses.
5. Revision of the Bachelor's programme structure with an aim to introduce students' mobility windows into them.
6. Implementation of the plan for complex measures aimed at raising the efficiency of students internships.
7. Dramatic expansion and promotion of the use of online learning platforms and tools, provision of appropriate material resources for the creation of a proper technological base.

IV. STUDENTS

CRITERION: THE TLI PROVIDES RELEVANT STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES ENSURING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT.

YSU ambitions:

- Following the YSU Strategic Development Plan 2016-2020, to significantly optimize the admission process and enrollment numbers, bringing them in line with the needs of the labor market and public demands (see SP goal VII, objective 7.2).
- Regularly carry out monitoring of the activities and tendencies in the acquisition of practical and entrepreneurial skills, as well as analysis on the graduates' employment and introduce them to the different units of YSU (see SP goal VI, objective 6.1)
- Set a clear regulation for students to address the University staff (see SP goal I, objective 1.3).
- To ensure conducive conditions for the student-centred learning environment at the University.

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

In the scope of “Diversified Admission and Relevance” supremacy, set by the YSU Strategic Development Plan 2016-2020, it is intended to develop the university admission marketing processes, optimize the admission and bring it in line with the country's development needs, public and labor market demands, as well as to expand the contingent of foreign students (see SP objectives 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3).

Pre-University Education Department¹ coordinates the activities of the University faculties and subdivisions for the YSU admission and applicants' preparation. Olympiads on different subjects are organized for already 11 years. Hundreds of universitarians' visits to schools and thousands of pupils' targeted educational visits to YSU in the scope of Open Door Days are organized throughout a year. Every year information materials and films about YSU and its faculties are released, aimed to inform and orient the applicants, as well as provide them with an opportunity to make an informed choice. All these materials are also available on the Internet. There is a subsection “Applicant” on the YSU official website.

The applicants' admission to the YSU full-time Bachelor's degree is carried out according to the RA Government Decree on “Admission to Bachelor's Degree Programmes in State and Private Higher Educational Institutions” approved on April 26, 2012².

¹Within the framework of SP objectives, a partnership contract has been signed with 44 high schools and in the scope of the signed agreements activities are carried out with another 42 schools. There are partnership contracts with 17 colleges as well. Traditionally, “Summer schools” in different professions are organized for pupils of the schools having a partnership contract with YSU. The University also organizes preparatory courses for its applicants.

² According to the above-mentioned decree, the higher educational institutions carry out the admission for the current academic year in accordance with the list of specializations approved by the RA Government. See <http://www.y-su.am/files/quality/kv11.pdf> The admission is realized via unified examination system. The applicants take centralized, unified admission exams at special exam centres. The latter are organized and carried out by “Assessment and Testing Centre” SNPO. The YSU admission process is organized and carried out by the YSU Admission Commission.

Despite the constant decrease in the number of applicants in recent years, during 2015-2019 YSU managed to maintain a stable inflow rate of the applicants to the full-time Bachelor's degree. It comprises 30-33% in the total volume of the centralized admission system for the mentioned years.³

The admission to the part-time Bachelor's degree is carried out according to the Decree on "Admission to Part-time Learning System in the RA State Higher Educational Institutions" approved by the RA Minister of Education and Science on July 27, 2012. According to the Decree, the list of admission specializations and the number of spaces are approved by the RA Minister of Education and Science. The Admission Commission, formed by the YSU rector's order, organizes admission examinations controlled by the RA Ministry of Education and Science. The admission examinations fully meet the state unified examination requirements for the full-time Bachelor's degree in terms of both content and organization. Aiming to ensure transparency of the admission process, the applicants are provided with a copy of the test answer form, as well as the correct answers of the test are published on the YSU website within an hour after the end of the examination.

The number of students in the part-time learning system comprises about 12% of the total number of students studying in the Bachelor's degree.⁴

The admission to a Master's degree is carried out according to the Decree on "Admission to a Master's Degree in the RA Higher Educational Institutions" approved by the RA Minister of Education and Science on December 06, 2007.

In order to increase the attractiveness of Master's degree for applicants, YSU offers about 120 academic programmes in various specializations (compared to 60 programmes in Bachelor's degree). The number of applicants and admitted students to the Master's degree for 2015-2019 is introduced in Annex 4.1.

Postgraduate admission is carried out according to the Decree on "Admission to Postgraduate Studies in the RA" approved by the RA Minister of Education and Science on September 15, 2006.

In recent years the number of full-time postgraduate students has decreased because of the reduction in the number of spaces by the RA Government. Meanwhile, the number of part-time postgraduate students has increased (the number of students admitted to the postgraduate system for 2015-2019 is presented in Annex 4.1).

The admission of foreign citizens is carried out according to the Decree on "Admission of Foreign Citizens to the RA Higher Educational Institutions" approved by the RA Government on April 28, 2011. Currently, YSU has about 261 foreign students and 25 learners involved in the preparatory courses (the number of foreign applicants and admitted students for 2015-2019 is presented in Annex 4.2).

Students' transfer is conducted according to the Regulation on "Academic Mobility of Students in the RA Higher Educational Institutions" approved by the RA Government on August 25, 2011 (students' inflow rates for 2014-2019 are presented in Annex 4.3). According to the presented data, the outflow from YSU is insignificant, and no studies have been conducted in terms of countries (students' outflow rates for 2014-2019 are presented in Annex 4.4).

³ See Annex 4.1.

⁴ See *ibid.*

Students' dismissal and reinstatement are carried out according to the Decree on "Dismissal and Reinstatement of Students in the RA Higher Educational Institutions" approved by the RA Minister of Education and Science on November 17, 2012. Students' dismissal and reinstatement rates for 2014-2019 are presented in Annex 4.5.

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

A number of university units and subdivisions are involved in the process of revealing students' educational needs.

An institute of academic counselors (curators) functions at the University. The requirements for curators' activities are defined in the clause 12 "Academic counselor (curator)" of the Regulation on "Organization of the Educational Process in the Bachelor's and Master's Degree Programmes" approved at the meeting N7 by the YSU Academic Council on May 4, 2017. As per the regulation, to support the freshmen during their learning process, academic counselors are appointed, who are faculty experienced lecturers. The number of academic counselors is determined by the faculty, providing one consultant for 30 students. The academic counselor introduces students to their rights and responsibilities, rules and regulations related to them, student guides, rules on making use of YSU library facilities and so forth.

The academic counselor gets acquainted with the social and living conditions of the students, monitors their academic progress, helps them to overcome the difficulties encountered during the learning process, organizes consultations for them on various issues related to the educational process. At the end of each academic year, the faculty Academic Council listens to the reports of the academic counselors and evaluates them. Thus, according to the survey results conducted among the Bachelor's degree students, almost 46.88% of students in 2015/16, 55.5% in 2016/17, 56.69% in 2017/18, and 58.05% in 2018/19 academic years assessed the work of curators as effective. Along with the curators' reports, alumni and student surveys containing open-ended questions for their suggestions (therefore needs), are equally important.⁵

STANDARD 4.3. The TLI provides advising services, opportunities for extra-curricular activities supporting student' effective learning.

To ensure the interconnection between the University supply and public demand, a number of the YSU subdivisions, faculties and centres suggest students the opportunities of extra-curricular courses and advising services using modern information and communication technologies⁶.

Non-credit bearing bridge courses are organized for the students admitted to the Master's degree from other specializations. Advising services (review lectures) are organized for students before the final attestation in the Bachelor's degree.

Different centres and other structural units are operating in a range of faculties (the Centre of the Chinese Language and Culture in the Faculty of International Relations, Distance Learning Laboratory in the Faculty of Sociology, Legal Clinic in the Faculty of Law, the faculty of European Languages and Communication, IT Educational and Research Centre and so forth), which offer

⁵ See Criterion 3, 5 and 10

⁶ See SP goal III, objective 3.2 http://ysu.am/files/quality/YSU_Strategic_Development_Plan_2016-2020.pdf

students additional opportunities to learn languages, develop computer skills, as well as meet other educational needs.

The programme of "Student Self-government Issues at YSU" envisaged for the freshmen has been implemented since 2013. In the scope of this programme, they get acquainted with the University management system, students' participation in it, as well as mechanisms for raising and solving student issues and so forth. During the pre-examination period, Student Council conducts awareness meetings, informing about the examination appeal procedure.

The freshmen admitted to YSU (about 1500 students, more than 85%) participate in the programme "Awareness of freshmen" implemented by Student Council since 2018. During the programme, students get acquainted with the peculiarities of their academic programme, learning process, credit system, as well as their rights and responsibilities.

The YSU Alumni and Career Centre regularly organizes various seminars, courses, advising meetings or individual advising/advisory services aimed at increasing students and alumni competitiveness in the labor market in line with its challenges and requirements.⁷

YSU has also a number of other centres and subdivisions (Russian Centre, Centre for European Studies, Caucasus Research Resource Centre, Centre for Applied Psychology, Centre for Civilization and Cultural Studies, Chinese and Korean Centre, Armenian-Indian Centre for Excellence in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)). All these centres in the framework of their activities support students to meet their educational needs.

Centre for Entrepreneurship Development, established in 2017, provides extra-curricular courses and advising services. The Centre has implemented a range of successful courses and projects, out of which we can especially highlight "Startup Boost Weekend Vol4" event.⁸

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

Although there is still no formal regulation and schedule for students to contact the administrative staff at YSU, students have some practice of referring to the administration. Some mechanisms are developed, and in case of certain issues, appropriate procedures, including schedules, are defined. Students refer to faculty deans on various issues and problems of their concern either in written or oral form (in case of the issues solved at the faculty level). At the same time, they have an opportunity also to refer to their academic counselors (curators) on different issues.

Various issues (tuition fee discounts, students' transfers, reinstatements, other educational issues) are solved according to the University formal procedures. Thus, according to the YSU Regulation on "Allocating Student Grants, State Scholarships and University Scholarship" approved by the YSU Academic Council on November 18, 2010, students must submit a corresponding written

⁷ See Standard 4.5

⁸ See <http://www.yasu.am/news/en/Startup-Boost-Weekend-Vol-4>

application for full or partial reimbursement of tuition fees. Appropriate procedures and conditions for applying are defined.⁹

According to the procedure on the organization of the educational process¹⁰, a student has a right to appeal the score of the current /mid-term or final exams or tests to the lecturer or the examination committee after it has been announced. In case of disagreement with the latter, the student may refer to the head of the chair organizing the course on the same day and then the dean of the faculty. Students may also refer to Student Council, which provides them with appropriate advising/advisory services and support.

The position of the YSU Vice-rector for International Cooperation and Public Relations was established by the decision N49 of the meeting of the YSU Board of Trustees on June 28, 2019. The scope of vice-rector's responsibilities includes solving various issues related to students, university internationalization processes, as well as the regulation of the public-related issues.

The YSU students also have an opportunity to refer to the YSU administrative staff with various questions using "Question and Answer" online tool on the YSU official website.¹¹ Student meetings with the representatives of the University administrative staff (rector, vice-rectors and so forth) are organized regularly. During these meetings, students raise their concerns and receive answers.

The question of "How effectively do the procedures and mechanisms for students' applications and complaints work?" is included in the questionnaire of graduate surveys on satisfaction with the education received at YSU. 1251 students from the graduates of 2018/2019 academic year took part in the survey (27% of the total graduates for the given year), and about 65% of them rated the efficiency of the procedures and mechanisms for submitting applications and complaints as "Good" or "Excellent", 14% "Satisfactory" and 7% "Unsatisfactory" respectively (others found it difficult to rate).

According to the "Comprehensive Programme of Measures Aimed at Combating Corruption Risks and Phenomena at YSU in 2015-2018" approved by the YSU Academic Council on February 19, 2015, it is envisaged to more clearly regulate and formalize the process of discussing student applications, complaints and suggestions, as well as providing them with appropriate responses.

STANDARD 4.5. The TLI has student career support services.

The promotion of student career support services is fixed in the YSU Strategic Development Plan 2016-2020 (objective 6.1). The YSU Alumni and Career Centre carries out the coordination of the activities aimed at solving problems related to the future career of the YSU students.¹²

According to the Charter approved by the YSU Academic Council in 2006¹³, the YSU Alumni and Career Centre carries out the following activities:

⁹ Changes were made in the **Regulation on "Allocating Student Grants, State Scholarships and University Scholarship"** by the Decision N8/3 of the YSU Academic Council dated on July 6, 2017, see http://documentation.ysu.am/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/npast_kanonakarg.pdf

¹⁰ See **Regulation on "Organization of the Educational Process in the Bachelor's and Master's Degree Programmes"**, clause 3.3.6 "Extract from the YSU Regulation on Educational Process Organization" http://ysu.am/files/quality/YSU_Student_Assessment.pdf

¹¹ See Standard 8.3

¹² See <http://www.ysu.am/careercenter/en>, <http://www.ysu.am/cooperation/en>, <https://www.facebook.com/careercenterysu/>

- various thematic seminar-courses, advisory services, organization of extra-curricular supplementary practices, internship (probation period) programmes and volunteer work,
- cooperation expansion with various companies (meetings, consultations, receptions, signing memorandums of cooperation),
- development and management of electronic resources,
- organization and participation in job fairs.

The centre has organized various training/thematic courses in different format and duration for over the past 4 years. About 5000 students and graduates have attended the centre courses ("KPMG" days at YSU, "From Idea into a Business Plan", "Master Classes at "Ingo Armenia" Insurance CJSC", "Presentation Skills", "The Role of Emotional Intelligence in the Career Development and Self-government", "How to Become a Successful Tour Manager: TOP 5 steps" and so forth) over the past 4 years.

About 500 students participated in extra-curricular practices and internship programmes (probation periods) organized by the centre in 2016-2020, and about 900 students took part in the meetings with the employers. The centre regularly informs students and graduates about vacant job positions, and as a result, about 200 people have been employed.

Through the Centre, YSU signed memorandums of cooperation with such enterprises and organizations as the State Committee of the Real Estate Cadastre under the RA Government, "GRC Knowledge Centre" LLC, "HSBC Bank Armenia" CJSC, "ArmenTel" CJSC, "UMCOR Armenia" Charitable Foundation, "Blocktek" LLC, "A&M Rare" LLC, "FMDKL Europe", etc.

In the scope of cooperation with organizations, the Centre initiated the development and implementation of programmes due to which the best participants have been employed or received scholarships. In 2017-2019, within the framework of social responsibility, a scholarship programme "Support to Education: Investment in Future" was implemented in cooperation with "UMCOR Armenia" Charitable Foundation. About 40 students had an opportunity to participate in the educational part of the programme. As a result, 24 students received full tuition reimbursement for two years of Master's degree.

In 2017, in the scope of cooperation with "Beeline Armenia", "Rosgosstrakh Armenia" and "HSBC Armenia", about 90 students and graduates participated in a number of courses, meetings and internship programmes. One of the successful programmes is "Support to Displaced Armenian Young Specialists" implemented within the framework of cooperation with the "World Vision Armenia" International Charitable Organization. Out of 51 participating beneficiaries, 35 received offers of job, additional probation and volunteer work. The Centre regularly organizes and takes part in various job fairs aimed at career support, including the annual job fair "Education and Career Expo". In 2018, the Centre, together with "Breedge" company, organized a job fair "Internship Hunt. Search and Find Your Opportunity" (about 20 participant organizations).

The Centre continues to monitor the development tendencies in the RA labor market and the employment trends of young specialists. In 2018, "Green Job Market Assessment" research was carried out in cooperation with the German International Cooperation Organization (GIZ). In the framework of this research, surveys were conducted among both employers and graduates. The

¹³ http://documentation.yсу.am/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Shrjanavartneri-ev-karierayi_kentroni-kanonadrutyun.pdf

obtained information can be effectively applied for the enhancement of cooperation, particularly between the Faculty of Biology and Green Job Market, further development of the faculty, elaboration of the academic programmes, and training of competitive specialists. The research is available both in print and online.¹⁴

Career services are provided through the use and development of efficient electronic resources.¹⁵

STANDARD 4.6. The TLI promotes student involvement in its research activities.

YSU has a number of units that promote students' involvement in the research activities of the University laboratories, centres and chairs.

Student Scientific Society (hereafter SSS) was established at YSU in 1947 to promote students' scientific, creative and spiritual development.¹⁶ All the faculties have SSS formed from the students, proposed by the chairs. Currently, more than 146 students (on average 7 students in each faculty) are involved in SSS, and more than 2500 students and postgraduates participate in the projects and events of the society. With the support of the YSU academic staff representatives, SSS regularly conducts training course-programme on "Teaching research paper writing skills", in the scope of which seminars, practical classes, scientific experiments are organized. According to the requirements of the RA Law on "Higher and Postgraduate Professional Education" Article 17, the activities of the YSU SSS are financed by the YSU off-budget funds. Every year, based on the YSU annual budget, relevant funds are allocated for the implementation of the YSU SSS activities.

According to the YSU Strategic Development Plan 2016-2020 clause 6.2.4, which aims at the enhancement of the programmes promoting the efficiency of student research activities, SSS has organized a number of events aimed at the development of students' research skills, including competition on making popular scientific reports, intellectual competition "Book Battle", as well as student scientific camps organized by the SSS of the Faculties of Biology, Philosophy and Psychology, Physics.

During 2014-2019 the YSU SSS organized 3 international, 27 republican and faculty conferences. In the scope of these conferences about 2152 scientific reports were presented by students, 31 collections of scientific articles and theses were published, which include about 2000 scientific works. At the same time, SSS members published more than 170 scientific articles and theses in other journals and collections. The YSU SSS also assists the participation of the YSU students in youth conferences and programmes organized in other universities of the RA, as well as supports the publication of their works in the RA leading scientific journals and conference digests. SSS also informs students about international research programmes and assists their participation in international conferences abroad. To this end, the SSS concludes agreements with youth scientific units of universities in different countries, mutually assisting their students' participation in various international programmes.

¹⁴ About the research see http://ysu.am/uploaded/Green_job_market_assessment_report_Eng.pdf

¹⁵ See Standard 8.4:

¹⁶ See <http://ysu.am/ss/en/about-us>

YSU has a separate budget line for student business trips funding YSU students' participation in various conferences, seminars, workshops and other events. During the previous academic year, a large number of SSS members participated in international conferences and seminars.

It should be noted that, on October 30, 2014 the "SSS Collection of Scientific Articles" was registered in the International Standard Serial Numbering System, as a regularly published collection (ISSN 1829-4367). In December 2014, the "SSS Collection of Scientific Articles" was also included by the Higher Attestation Commission (HAC) of the RA in the list of periodic scientific publications, in which the main results and theses of dissertations can be published.

The SSS collection of articles became a yearbook, based on the HAC Decree N86A on December 28, 2018.

In recent years there has been poor participation of academic staff in the SSS activities, but it should be noted that these activities are not often included in the formal scope of the teaching staff responsibilities. The application of the internet tools by the SSS is sufficient. At the same time, the website of scientific electronic publications of the YSU SSS was launched¹⁷.

Many Bachelor's and Master's degree students from a number of YSU faculties and institutes¹⁸ are directly involved in research activities, and they graduate from the university, having already published a scientific article in journals with an impact factor. Some Bachelor's degree students already have published theses on the papers presented at international conferences by the time of graduating from YSU. Students of the Faculties of Biology and Physics carry out their graduation papers in the SRI laboratories of Biology and Physics, respectively, and are also involved in various scientific and research activities.¹⁹ The students of the Institute of Pharmacy conduct their works on graduation paper and Master Thesis at pharmaceutical or related specialization universities and research centers in both Armenia and overseas (Germany, Russian Federation).

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

The YSU students' rights are defined by the RA Legislation (the RA Law on "Education", Article 49, the RA Law on "Higher and Postgraduate Professional Education", Article 17, clause 3), the YSU Charter (Article 132), the YSU Inner Disciplinary Rules (Article 27) and other internal legal acts of YSU.

The YSU Student Council (SC) provides students' rights protection and deals with the solution of a number of other issues. It is a student organization functioning at YSU, which is an elective representative body of student self-government. The YSU SC activities are regulated by the RA legislation, the YSU Charter and the SC Charter.²⁰ The SC Charter is adopted by the SC governing body and approved by the authorized body (the RA Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport), (the YSU Charter, Article 116).

The current YSU SC Charter was adopted by the SC congress held on November 15, 2018. According to the SC Charter, the main goals of SC are to protect students' interests and rights, ensure

¹⁷ <http://www.y-su.am/ssspub/en>

¹⁸ Examples are Faculties of Philosophy and Psychology, Institute of Pharmacy and the Microbial Biotechnology and Biofuel Innovation Centre.

¹⁹ See Standard 6.5 for interconnection between research and learning process.

²⁰ http://ysu.am/files/Kanonadrutyun-Stud_council.pdf

students' participation in the management of the University, submit different student-related issues to the corresponding governing bodies, participate in the organization of educational process and implementation of the programmes aimed at enhancing the efficiency of teaching, inform students about their rights and responsibilities, promote the creation of a conducive environment for the students and foster students' academic, educational, spiritual, cultural, creative and physical development, assist students to improve their social conditions, organize students' rest and leisure and so forth (the YSU SC Charter, Article 2.1). All the mentioned goals are directly or indirectly related to the rights of the YSU students.

Student Council carries out its activities according to the strategic plan (strategic plan 2019-2021 adopted at the meeting of the YSU Student Council Presidency on 10.09.2019), which includes the main tools for the protection of students' rights and interests, trends and programmes regulating social, scientific and educational, cultural, military-patriotic fields. The overwhelming majority of students are aware of the SC activities and refers to it when necessary. About 70-80% of full-time students participate in the Student Council elections, about 500 students are elected in different levels of the SC units, and about 500 students annually participate in the social assistance programmes for summer and winter vacation implemented by SC.

The governing bodies of the YSU SC are defined by its Charter: Congress and Presidency. Relevant standing committees (legal, foreign affairs, scientific-educational, social, cultural, sports and so forth) operate in the presidency aimed at carrying out the SC activities effectively.

The YSU SC programmes aimed at the protection of students' rights can be divided into three main groups:

- Prevention activities and awareness (dissemination of information, meetings, explanatory work and so forth),
- Non-individualized activities or development of institutional mechanisms (discussions of different regulations, procedures and various issues, submission of suggestions and so forth),
- Individualized activities (protection of the rights of a student or a group of students on separate issues based on their oral or written applications).

Throughout its activities, the YSU SC has developed various mechanisms for protecting students' rights: disclosure of students' problems and violations of rights, discussion of these cases in governing bodies and so forth. Students' problems are also discussed in the SCs of faculties, the YSU SC Presidency, in legal and other committees. An effective way of responding to a question is chosen based on its content. The functioning SC Facebook page is an effective and useful tool for providing online communication with students. There are more than 16000 followers.

Activities of the YSU SC are financed by the YSU off-budget funds; appropriate funds are allocated to SC in the annual budget of YSU.

YSU has an appropriate multi-level system for the protection of students' rights and interests.²¹ Students refer to the faculty deans and curators with different problems. At the same time, they turn to the Faculty Scientific Council and, in some cases, to the Student Scientific Society. Within the University, students can turn to the rector or vice-rectors directly or through SC. The immediate

²¹ See the order of the organization of the educational process for the Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes. <http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/voroshum7-5.pdf>

solution to the students' problems is provided by the YSU rector, relevant vice-rector, the Division of Student Affairs, and when necessary, by other departments.

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

Assessment and quality assurance of students' educational, advisory and other supportive services²² are conducted through student surveys on the quality and efficiency of teaching and graduate surveys on the satisfaction with the education received at YSU. Graduate surveys are conducted according to the regulation on "Graduate Surveys on the Satisfaction with the Education Received at YSU" approved by the YSU Academic Council on June 17, 2010.²³ According to clause 1.2 of the regulation defined at the meeting of the YSU Academic Council on October 12, 2017, the graduate surveys on the satisfaction with the education received at YSU are carried out online.²⁴

Some points of the graduate questionnaire are directly related to student educational, advisory, graduate employment²⁵ and other supportive services. In particular, the following questions are included in the questionnaires:

- Are you planning to continue your studies?
- Do you know where you will be employed?
- Are you currently employed?
- To what extent do the library and reading halls provide contemporary professional literature?
- How satisfied are you with the condition and furnishing of the library reading halls?
- How satisfied are you with the availability of the Internet?
- The role of the university Alumni and Career centre in terms of further employment.
- How satisfied are you with the administration of the University and the faculty?
- How satisfied are you with the academic staff²⁶?
- How satisfied are you with the student units (SC, SSS)?
- How effectively do the procedures and mechanisms for students' applications and complaints work?
- What do you think about corrupt practices?

Student Surveys are conducted according to the regulation on "Student Surveys on the Quality and Efficiency of Teaching at YSU" approved by the Academic Council on January 26, 2017. The Student questionnaire includes questions that have not been much changed. In particular, the following questions are included:

- Do you find the academic counselor's (curator's) work with you effective?
- Assess your faculty dean's, deputy deans' work with students.

²² See Standard 10.3 for the regulations defining the role of learners in the processes of quality assurance.

²³ The new regulation was approved at the meeting of the YSU Academic Council on January 6, 2017.

²⁴ <http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/karg.pdf>

²⁵ The results of surveys on graduate employment of 2015-2019 are presented in Annex 4.6.

²⁶ The institution established a well-defined policy and procedures for assessing academic staff regularly. See Standard 5.3 for students' feedback on educational processes.

- Assess your faculty dean's office work with students.

It is worth mentioning that the University regularly conducts current surveys, and, as a result, student units (SC, SSS) raise issues of students' concerns, trying to find solutions.

**YSU activity strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats
by Criterion 4**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presence of an effective system for working with general education institutions and applicants. 2. Sustainable inflow rates of applicants in the YSU full-time Bachelor's degree system (30-33% of admission to the YSU Bachelor's degree in the centralized admission system). 3. Availability of students' education, the existence of clear admission mechanisms, precise organization of activities according to the established admission regulations. 4. Presence of Student Council faculty subdivisions and specialized committees (scientific-educational, legal, social and so forth). 5. Presence of strategic planning for the organization of the Student Council activities and implementation of supervisory functions (presence of the SC monitoring and development committee). 6. Presence of mechanisms for supporting students' future employment due to cooperation with enterprises from different sectors of the RA economy, international organizations, state and private institutions. 7. Introduction of new academic programmes in line with the challenges of the labor market. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A small number of foreign students in the YSU admission system. 2. A small number of academic programmes in foreign languages. 3. Incomplete application of well-defined legal procedures and mechanisms for the protection of students' rights. 4. Insufficient mechanisms for contacting students and information dissemination. 5. Insufficient mechanisms and procedures for collecting and processing statistical data on graduates employment. 6. Mechanisms for students' involvement in research activities have not been institutionalized yet.
Opportunities	Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Formation of joint information system (database) of utmost importance for the activities of professional orientation, based on the data received from the relevant state bodies and employers. 2. Presence of alternative platforms and opportunities aimed at raising levels of 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A tendency of a significant decrease in the number of graduates from public schools in the current demographic situation. 2. Growing competitiveness between local and foreign universities in the field of the RA higher education under unequal

students' awareness and legal consciousness.	admission conditions. 3. The mutual weak linkage between the labor market and the educational system. 4. Reduction of students' involvement in the University governing bodies as a result of new legislative changes.
--	--

Planned ways to overcome weaknesses and threats

1. Develop current cooperation with employers and involve their representatives in the process of collecting data on applicants'/students' professional orientation and graduate employment.
2. Conduct labor market research and monitoring to bring the admission process in line with the labor market needs as close as possible.
3. Increase the number of academic programmes in foreign languages and develop other mechanisms for foreign students' involvement.
4. Develop and introduce well-defined procedures to protect students' rights and raise their awareness.
5. Develop and introduce an online system for collecting and processing data on graduate employment involving the YSU main employer organizations.

V. FACULTY AND STAFF

CRITERION: THE TLI HAS HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHING AND SUPPORTING STAFF TO ACCOMPLISH THE INSTITUTIONS MISSION AND TO IMPLEMENT THE GOALS SET FOR ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES.

The YSU Strategic Plan envisages the development of the teaching staff potential by improving advanced training programmes for the teaching staff, developing and implementing training courses to improve the young lecturers' pedagogical and psychological skills, setting requirements for appropriate teaching staff's professional qualities in compliance with the final learning outcomes of study programmes', as well as revising the allocation standards of the teaching staff's academic workload. In addition, the Strategic Plan envisages advanced training of the teaching staff for developing and providing electronic learning resources, as well as introduction of certain mechanisms to promote the use of the electronic resources.

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

According to the data for 2019/2020 academic year, the implemented 62 Bachelor's and 120 Master's degree programmes are aimed at training specialists in various fields defined by the mission of the University, such as Armenian studies, natural sciences, social economics, humanities, technology and culture. Fundamental and applied scientific research is carried out by the University academic staff in the same fields. Lecturers are the main subjects of the work performed in these two directions.

The principles of the teaching staff recruitment policies are reflected in the "[Regulation on Competitive Election and Appointment of YSU Teaching Staff](#)", which clearly defines the categories of the teaching staff (professor, associate professor, assistant professor, lecturer), forms of their activity and appointment standards.

The appointment of the YSU teaching staff is made through competitive election for a term up to five years. The main professional requirements for election (reelection) of the teaching staff are the following:

1. professional qualification,
2. academic degree, title,
3. professional and pedagogical skills,
4. results of scientific research activities,
5. professional development and retraining,
6. other formats of teacher assessment (self-evaluation, peer review, assessment by an immediate supervisor, etc.).

Some additional requirements are set for the teaching staff categories: candidates for the post are to have a monograph, a textbook or three articles published in the periodicals included in the "List of periodical scientific journals acceptable for publication of dissertation results and provisions" approved by the RA SCC (Supreme Certifying Committee), earn at least 30 ECTS credits within the

framework of the YSU faculty professional development (FPD) programme, meet the minimum threshold of the student evaluation survey results (established by qualifying mandates commission).

The full-time rates for the supporting staff are established according to the “Regulation on categorization of the YSU administrative posts and full-time rates for the supporting and technical staff” (<http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/voroshum.pdf>). The list is approved by the order of the YSU Rector, and the terms of reference and responsibilities for posts are outlined in the corresponding position passports (http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/usumnaojandak_tarakargi_pashtonneri_andznagrern_hastatelu_masin.pdf).

As a result of applying the principles of the teaching staff recruitment, the main teaching staff of the University in 2018/2019 academic year (http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Rektori_zekuyts_2019.pdf) amounted to 1116 lecturers, among whom there are 169 (15,1%) professors, 468 (41,9%) associate professors and 479 (42,9%) assistant professors and lecturers. 797 specialists from this staff (71,4%) have an academic degree. Notably, most of those not having an academic degree are the lecturers from supporting chairs whose function is mainly to teach minor, non-specialized subjects, such as languages, physical education, etc.

Evaluation of academic degrees and results of scientific research activities is aimed at those components of the University’s mission, which contribute to carrying out fundamental and applied scientific research in various areas of study in armenology, natural sciences, social economics, humanities, technology and culture.

According to the scientific research results of the teaching staff over the last 5 years, 155 textbooks, 9132 articles, 424 monographs, 494 training manuals have been published, as well as 1732 abstracts have been presented at international and national conferences. The YSU research papers make up 30% of the RA scientific publications testifying of the intense scientific activity and efficiency of the teaching staff. These facts prove the success of the policy to involve research oriented teachers in the educational process.

Another component of the YSU mission is providing educational services and training of quality specialists with higher education. The professional qualification, academic degree, professional and pedagogical skills are the qualities which are of great importance in the process of forming the YSU teaching staff. The use of various evaluation formats and the processes of professional development and retraining are aimed at improving the pedagogical abilities of the teaching staff.

The teaching staff, as a rule, possesses basic education for teaching the relevant subjects and is engaged in teaching and research activities. Those teaching specialized courses or involved in Master’s programmes, as a rule, have an academic degree and a title or they are employers of the relevant sphere with extensive work experience.

Online student surveys on the quality and efficiency of the teaching staff reveal that, on the whole, they are content with the teaching staff. According to the data on 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 academic years, the average rating of the YSU teaching staff makes up 4.68 out of a maximum of 5 points. In fact, in 2018/2019 academic year the lowest result is 4.43, and the highest one – 4.83. This testifies of the high level of professionalism and pedagogical qualities of the teaching staff involved.

As for the level of satisfaction with the education provided by YSU, the review of the graduate responses in 2017/2018 and 2018/19 academic years (<http://documentation.y-su.am/wp->

[content/uploads/2020/05/YSU_ANALYSIS_comparative-2018-19.pdf](#)) indicates that, according to their assessment, getting education at YSU:

- contributes to acquiring professional competences (4,37),
- provides for theoretical knowledge (4,55),
- provides for practical skills (4,12).

97,3% of graduates are satisfied with the education they have got and will recommend their relatives and friends to continue studying at YSU.

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

On the basis of recommendations by the previous accreditation expert group YSU envisaged, as an improvement action, the setting of general (including pedagogical) and professional requirements in the description of academic programmes for the teaching staff in accordance with the objectives and educational outcome of the programme. The improvement action was launched in 2019/2020 academic year: YSU started a pilot project on setting general and professional requirements for the teaching staff in the description of academic programmes. The experimental project encompassed 10 faculties and one scientific-educational centre with a total of 16 academic programmes. As a result, general (transferable) and professional skills of a teacher were defined for each academic programme.

The establishment of general and professional requirements will solve two problems:

1. improving the process of recruiting relevant high-quality human resource based on a lecturer's professional development,
2. developing professional and general competences necessary for the teaching staff through FPD (faculty professional development) programmes management and targeting.

In the second phase it is envisaged to set general and professional requirements for the teaching staff in terms of all YSU academic programmes. Thereafter, they will be included in the "Regulation on Competitive Election and Appointment of YSU Teaching Staff" and taken into consideration in the process of distributing academic workloads.

From the standpoint of implementing the teaching staff election policy, there has been a positive shift in the form of introducing position passports (2018), which define the position requirements regarding the organization of work and liability, knowledge and skills and job responsibilities. Nevertheless, the standards set in position passports (http://documentation.ysu.am/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/profesoradasaxosakan_hamakazmi_pashtoni_andzragrern_hastatelu-masin.pdf) are general and are not immediately associated with the goals and final results of academic programmes.

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

In order to fulfill Objective 1.3 of the "Quality Education" goal in the YSU strategic plan ("...raise the students' level of satisfaction with the education received at YSU"), the following actions have been envisaged:

- a. to apply procedures for multifunctional evaluation of the YSU teaching staff activity in all chairs and centers,
- b. to prepare and conduct online student surveys on the teaching quality and efficiency at YSU, as well as graduate surveys on the satisfaction with the education received at YSU.

According to the “Guidebook on the Evaluation of the Annual Activity of the YSU Teaching Staff” worked out by the YSU Quality Assurance centre, it is envisaged to assess the teaching staff in each of the three main areas of activity (teaching and academic activity, scientific research and creative activity, social and administrative activity). The assessment is to be made by the main beneficiaries involved in the process (students, peer colleagues and the immediate supervisor, e.g. head of the chair) with the help of certain evaluation standards developed for each category (lecturer, assistant professor, associate professor and professor).

The guidebook, which also defines the assessment procedure, various formats and evaluation rubrics of the teaching staff categories, has been discussed at the YSU Academic Council and generally approved by it. However, it was proposed to test different components of the system and, in the case of their efficiency, introduce the system fully.

The most important group of beneficiaries is the student body and surveys carried out among students are one of the primary mechanisms of the teaching staff evaluation. Since 2002 student surveys have been regularly conducted at the University in accordance with the “Order of Student Surveys on the Quality and Efficiency of the YSU Teaching Staff” (<http://documentation.ysu.am/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/kanonakag4-2.pdf>). They are conducted on schedule among students attending full-time and part-time (correspondence) courses - twice a year, after the end of the examination period every term.

Surveys are components of the YSU internal quality assurance system and are conducted by the teaching-methodological department and faculties, and the survey results are processed in the educational-research IT centre. Thereafter, the analyses are handed over to the faculties and chairs, as well as briefly presented at the session of the YSU academic council at the end of the year. In order to increase the surveys objectivity and accelerate the process of their outcome analysis, surveys have been conducted online through the YSU Internet portal since 2018, after the previous accreditation. Following the recommendations by the previous accreditation expert group, the objectives for the survey results have also been expanded as follows:

- to develop the self-awareness of the teaching staff and continually improve their teaching approaches and methods,
- to ensure the teaching staff promotion and reward,
- to allocate bonuses to the teaching staff.

Surveys give an opportunity to reveal students’ opinion about the professional skills and abilities of the teaching staff, their teaching methods, pedagogical proficiency and the efficiency of organizing the working process. Evaluation results are discussed at the University chairs and often lead to revision of teaching materials and analysis of the applied methods. As a result, interactive and combined methods of teaching are increasingly applied by the teaching staff, which contributes to the development of students’ critical thinking and analytical abilities.

Surveys conducted over 2015-2019 revealed that on the whole the YSU students are satisfied with the professional and pedagogical qualities of the teaching staff. Since the introduction of the online system of surveys in 2017/2018 academic year the number of survey respondents has dramatically decreased: for instance, in 2017/2018 academic year 56,5% of students attending full-time and part-time (correspondence) courses participated in surveys, as compared with only 32,5% in 2018/2019 academic year. However, it did not cause any alteration in the average rating of the teaching staff: both in 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 academic years the average rating by faculties fluctuated between 4.43 and 4.83 on a 5-point scale.

According to the “Regulation on Competitive Election and Appointment of YSU Teaching Staff” (http://documentation.ysu.am/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Dasakhosakan_kazm_election-new.pdf), the list of appointment standards considered by the Mandates Commission also includes the results of the lecturers’ evaluation through student surveys. The survey results are also considered when awarding academic degrees, which is a mandatory requirement for their promotion.

The results of student surveys have been considered for allocation of bonuses to the teaching staff since 2009, the payments being made in the form of paying differentiated salaries. The approaches are periodically improved. At present, according to the “Order of Calculating and Paying Bonuses to the YSU Workers for Performing Some Work Types” (in new edition, 2020, http://documentation.ysu.am/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/lravtsar_karg-new.pdf), the YSU main teaching staff is paid a bonus twice a year on the basis of student survey and competition results.

According to the “Order of Organizing Surveys on Graduates’ Satisfaction with the Education Received at YSU” (<http://documentation.ysu.am/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/karg.pdf>), in the context of learning environment and resources evaluation, graduates’ opinions have been collected since 2014 with regard to the methodologies applied and general satisfaction with the teaching staff. The analysis of this survey results also indicates, that students, on the whole, are satisfied with the teaching staff professional qualities and training level.

Surveys conducted over 2014-2019 revealed that graduates estimated the teaching staff between 4.58 and 4.67 on a 5-point scale.

The work performed by the teaching staff is also evaluated by the teaching-methodological department through checking register notes and curricula implementation. The results are reported at meetings of the Rector’s office.

These evaluation approaches and procedures give the teaching staff an opportunity to get informed about the achievements and shortcomings in their work, they also give the University management an opportunity to take appropriate measures to get rid of incompetent specialists, to assess the needs and work out professional development and training programmes for the teaching staff.

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

Since 2011 YSU has launched “Scientific-Educational Programme for the YSU Faculty Professional Development by Credit System”, which is to be implemented in two phases by the Department of Postgraduate and Supplementary Education (DPSE).

The programme was developed by a specifically established committee considering the analyses of the earlier training results, the main provisions of the YSU strategic plan and other proposals. In the matter of identifying the faculty needs, DPSE was assisted by the university staff responsible for FPD (faculty professional development) and was provided with the results of student surveys.

In the process of organizing the courses the trainees' needs were also analyzed by DPSE. The internal evaluation of the FPD programme is made on 3 levels: the Rector's Office (development and periodic evaluation of the programme), faculties (student surveys and transference of training results) and courses (DPSE and trainees). The new format of the programme and individual training enabled lecturers to obtain competences consistent with their individual interests and needs, as well as the contemporary requirements in the fields of specialization.

In 2015 an overall external evaluation of the programme was made by "The Institute on Public Policy" research centre – ["The quality and efficiency of the faculty professional development measures"](#).

On the basis of internal and external evaluation the following improvements were made in the 2nd phase of the programme (2016-2021).

1. Annual update of the list of "Elective Courses" module considering the proposals of teachers and trainees.
2. Enrichment of the "Pedagogical-Psychological Training" module with new courses aimed at improving the trainees' competence in teaching, learning and evaluating methods, as well as developing their pedagogical and psychological skills.
3. Development of the "Compulsory Course for Professional Training" module including all the components of the given specialization with its problems and topicality. The trainees are encouraged to participate in topical professional courses given by guest lecturers from overseas.
4. Teaching of the MOODLE electronic tool in the framework of the "Information Communication Technologies (ICT)" module (e-learning.y-su.am), which simultaneously produces necessary resources for developing distance learning at YSU.
5. Introduction of new components in the "Research-Teaching Methods" module: manuals on teaching methods, copyright patents, differentiation of credits given to articles according to the periodical influence ratio, its inclusion in the RA SCC (Supreme Certifying Committee) list of periodicals. Students' involvement in the teaching staff scientific research work is also of great importance.

According to the results of the first phase of the faculty professional development programme, 839 lecturers were trained in the English language and attained the A1-C2 level, including 214 lecturers who passed exams on the highest C1 and C2 levels. In the first three years of the second phase (2016-2019), 189 lecturers were retrained in "Online Teaching Technologies" (including the *Google Classroom* distance learning system), 210 lecturers – in English, and 61 of them raised their language competence.

The running programme is continually monitored, evaluated and improved. Therefore, as a result of monitoring 2 essential shortcomings were revealed: low level of innovative educational

technologies application and incompleteness of courses aimed at forming skills in up-to-date pedagogical and teaching methods. ERASMUS+ [PRINTeL project](#) was aimed at addressing the above shortcomings.

416 lecturers have already been trained in innovative teaching approaches and digital skills introduced by the PRINTeL project presented in 5 courses. Surveys conducted among trainee lecturers indicate that the programme mainly provides the acquisition of the expected competences. The newly introduced courses resulted in the gradual formation of 5 non-formal communities at YSU led by consultant lecturers.

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

Based on the YSU “High-quality academic staff” fundamental value, the University’s most important potential and the key to success is its high-quality academic staff, due to which YSU fulfills its mission.

As it was stated above, the YSU permanent teaching staff is comprised of 1125 lecturers, including 169 professors, 468 associate professors, 488 assistant professors and lecturers (2018/2019 academic year). Given below are the quantitative data of the teaching staff by categories over the past five years:

Table 1. YSU permanent teaching staff

	2013/2014		2014/2015		2015/2016		2016/2017		2017/2018		2018/2019	
Professor	162	12,6%	174	13,9%	184	14,8%	182	15,2%	181	15,1%	169	15,0%
Associate Professor	491	38,1%	485	38,6%	496	39,9%	477	39,9%	498	41,6%	468	41,9%
Assistant Professor and Lecturer	635	49,3%	596	47,5%	562	45,2%	537	44,9%	518	43,3%	479	42,9 %
Total	1288		1255		1242		1196		1197		1116	
Including those with an academic degree	852	66,1%	874	69,6%	852	68,6%	836	69,9%	819	68,4%	797	71,4%

Over the last five years, 56% of the teaching staff has been professors and associate professors, and the balance of those having an academic degree makes up 71,4% of the permanent teaching staff (see Table 1). There are also 14 academicians and 19 corresponding members of the RA National Academy of Sciences teaching at YSU. The quantity of the supporting staff is conditioned by the number of students and lecturers involved in the academic programmes. The student/lecturer ratio is 13,9.

Over 2013/2014-2017/2018 academic years there was a decrease in the number of the permanent teaching staff by 7%. Those having an academic degree in the given period make up more than 2/3 of the permanent teaching staff.

In the process of recruiting and forming the teaching staff, great importance is also attached to the gender and age factors of the teaching staff. In 2013/2014-2018/2019 academic years the balance of female lecturers in the permanent teaching staff fluctuated between 55-58%.

As it is given in table 2, the middle-aged lecturers (35-65 years old) prevail in the permanent teaching staff. The number of lecturers above 65 exceeds those under 35. Hence, in the given period the average age of the teaching staff became lower: the average age in 2017/2018 academic year was 51,9; and in 2018/2019 academic year it was 50,4.

Table 2. Age distribution of permanent staff at YSU

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Under 35	224	229	200	179	166	146
35 – 65 years old	821	786	806	752	771	717
Above 65	243	240	236	265	260	253
Total	1288	1255	1242	1196	1197	1116
Average age	50,6	50,4	50,9	51,3	51,9	50,4

In order to provide the academic programmes with an appropriate teaching staff, YSU also envisages various forms of employment contracts: permanent appointment, internal and external part-time employment. There is also a system of hourly paid and guest lecturers, which ensures the provision of academic programmes with more specialized experts and those having practical skills. As it is given in Table 3, over the last five years the number of permanent and part-time lecturers makes up about 80%, and the number of hourly paid lecturers is in the range of 20%. This means that about 20% of the staff are guest lecturers, which is conditioned by special purposes and final results of the academic programmes. The number of guest lecturers prevails in the Master's degree programmes.

Table 3. Distribution of the teaching staff according to employment contracts (permanent and part-time, hourly pay)

	2013/14		2014/15		2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19	
Permanent and part-time	1586	79,2%	1544	92,2%	1559	80,6%	1514	81,3%	1480	80,8%	1439	81,0%
Hourly pay	417	20,8%	361	7,8%	375	19,4%	348	18,7%	352	19,2%	337	19,0%
Total	2003		1905		1934		1862		1832		1776	

A number of procedures are implemented at YSU which are aimed at promoting the recruitment and maintenance of a teaching and supporting staff having the required professional qualities. The procedure of the teaching staff competitive election and appointment is of special importance among them.

The YSU faculties and chairs provide the academic programmes with an appropriately qualified teaching staff. Each chair, being well aware of its resources, is able to provide the academic modules

with an appropriate permanent teaching staff, as well as to arrange their short-term and long-term substitution. The teaching staff the academic programme is selected by the programme supervisor and the head of the chair assisting the programme.

A number of normative acts and procedures ensure the stability of providing the academic programmes with an appropriate teaching staff. One of them is the above-mentioned procedure of the teaching staff competitive election and appointment, which envisages certain guarantees for the long-term involvement of the teaching staff in the educational process. Thus, according to the procedure, employment contracts with lecturers are signed, in case of the first election, for up to 3 years and for 3-5 years subsequently. Upon the expiration of the contract a new employment contract may be signed on one occasion for up to 5 years without competitive election on the basis of evaluation of the lecturer's academic activity and in case of the availability of an appropriate full-time position at the chair.

Pursuant to the observed procedure, a change is made in the lecturer's position, and accordingly, the salary is periodically raised. Such policy both contributes to ensuring the teaching staff stability, and fosters the professional promotion.

The main provisions of the "Order of Calculating and Paying Bonuses to the YSU Workers for Performing Some Work Types" are also aimed at the teaching staff encouragement and stability. A YSU specialist may get a bonus, up to 1 million AMD yearly, for performing some types of scientific research and academic activities.

Another procedure ensuring the stability of the YSU staff maintenance is the "Norms for Calculation of the Teaching and Academic Workload of the YSU Teaching Staff" (approved by the YSU Academic Council at the meeting on 12.03.2020, http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/GX_voroshum_11-3.pdf). For the given category of the teaching staff the individual workload for one academic year is formed on the basis of these norms. A relatively low workload is an appealing factor for working at YSU (one YSU lecturer's individual workload is among the lowest ones in the Republic of Armenia). To ensure the stability of high-quality specialist, YSU regularly improves their working environment, as well as the necessary resources and services.

Another mechanism ensuring the stability of the YSU teaching and supporting staff is the discount system for their student-children's tuition fees. At YSU and YSU Ijevan Branch tuition fee discounts are given to student-children of the YSU permanent staff. For instance, in 2018/2019 academic year, the sum discounted under this article made up 50 686 500 AMD.

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

The policy of promoting the professional progress of the teaching staff at YSU is multi-component. It includes the FPD (faculty professional development) programme, programmes for the teaching staff international mobility, business trips, publication of the teaching staff scientific and academic works, as well as the mechanisms for financial rewards aimed at increasing the efficiency of academic activities.

In order to update the FPD process of the YSU teaching staff the Institution worked out "2019-2021 Action Plan for the YSU Department of Post-graduate Additional Education" (PRINTeL project). Providing for the improvement of the training staff for the YSU lecturers at the leading

European universities, the project made it possible to raise the level of YSU teaching staff professional development and training organization.

A number of changes were made in the operating programme for the teaching staff training ([Annexes 5.1 and 5.2](#)).

1. In the “Information Communication Technologies (ICT)” division of the programme a new module comprised of five courses was introduced – “Innovative methods of Teaching”. In 2019 the mentioned courses were attended by 416 lecturers:

No.	Course Name	Term		Total
		2018/19,2	2019-20,1	
1.	Active Learning in the Flipped Classroom	61	48	109
2.	Hybrid / Blended teaching	41	10	51
3.	Active Learning with Special Focus on Technology Enhanced Collaborative Learning	60	41	101
4.	Active Learning and ICD-enhanced Teaching: Mobile Learning and Gamification	63	23	86
5.	Video as a Teaching Tool	33	36	69
	Total	258	158	416

In fact, the programme envisages to include some compulsory educational components for beginner lecturers in its “Academic Plan for Training a Researcher at YSU” division as a compulsory module for postgraduate pedagogical preparation.

The programme also introduces the institute of “consultants” to perform mentor works.

2. One of the most important provisions established for the teaching staff professional development according to the YSU strategic plan of 2016-2020, “Application of Online Teaching Technologies”, was also included in PRINTeL project acquiring a new meaning.

Results of the Teaching Staff Training in “Online Teaching Technologies”

No.	Course Name	Number of Trainees According to Academic Years				Total
		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	
1.	Online Teaching Technologies	33	26	68	28	155
2.	Google Classroom in the System of Distance Learning	0	13	8	0	21
3.	Application of Online Teaching Technologies in the Educational Process	0	0	13	0	13
	Total	33	39	89	28	189

25 trained lecturers received a bonus of 50 000 AMD in the 1st term of 2019 for utilizing the YSU teaching management system (e-learning.yసు.am).

3. In the 5th module a new component has been added – “Teaching at Leading Foreign Universities” (for instance, “Participation in Erasmus+ Staff Training Mobility Programme). Since 2013, 76 lecturers have already participated in such programmes.

4. According to FPD programme a special importance is attached to improving the teaching staff knowledge of English. In 2011-2016, the first phase of the programme, 214 lecturers demonstrated their knowledge of English at C1-C2 level.

Results of the YSU Teaching Staff Knowledge of English (2011-2016)

Level of English	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2	Total
Lecturers' Results	291	221	17	98	127	87	839

In the second phase it was required to increase the level of knowledge in English by one degree. Over 2016-2019, 210 lecturers have taken examinations in English, and 61 of them have increased the level of their knowledge in English.

In order to promote the academic activity of the teaching staff, since 2007/2008 the order of paying differentiated bonuses has operated at YSU, which has been revised for many times (last in 2019). The purpose of bonuses is to promote the continual professional progress of the YSU teaching staff, their scientific research activities, extra-curricular work with students, the teaching and methodological activities, participation in increasing the work- efficiency of the University and its structural subdivisions.

On 27.11.19 the order of organizing and holding a competition “Excellence Award in Teaching at Yerevan State University” (http://ysu.am/files/quality/Regulation_on_Excellence_Award_Eng.pdf) was approved by the acting Rector’s order 221/120, containing two components – selection of nominees and video-recording of one course suggested by the prize winner for the purpose of the best practice dissemination

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

In order to fulfill Objective 4.2 of the “Quality Human Resources” strategic goal in the YSU strategic plan (“Introduce an efficient system of HR management”), the following actions have been envisaged:

1. Develop a concept of HR management.
2. Implement a plan to develop the abilities for HR management.
3. Design position passports for the supporting staff.
4. Work out job descriptions for supporting, engineering-technical and other staff categories.
5. Develop and implement a training and attestation system for supporting, engineering-technical and other staff categories.

Number of employees in the YSU administrative, supporting, engineering-technical staff categories over the last 3 years

Employees	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Administrative	235	305	299
Supporting	371	360	357
Engineering-technical	128	135	146
Total	618	800	802

In 2016 the YSU academic council adopted the “Regulation on full-time positions of the YSU administrative, supporting and engineering-technical staff”.

The aim of the regulation is to ensure the effective management of the HR potential of the YSU administrative, supporting and engineering-technical staff. The document defines the principles of forming the system of full-time administrative, supporting and engineering-technical positions, the hierarchy of the mentioned positions and the main provisions of their job description, as well as the terms of reference for such employees. The regulation also defines some other processes regarding the organization and regular operation of the established system.

In 2017 the YSU academic council approved “The Concept of Developing the System of the YSU HR Management”. The latter contains the vision of reforms in the YSU HR management and outlines some conceptual approaches to the staff recruitment, reward and disciplinary punishment, terms of reference and activity results, as well as other HR management issues. Pursuant to the approved concept, since April 1, 2018 Department of Staff Management and Legal Security has been operating at YSU. Jointly with structural subdivisions the department designed position passports for the YSU administrative subdivisions’ staff which were later approved by the YSU Rector. Over 90% of the administrative subdivisions’ staff has valid position passports. Passports for the supporting category positions have also been approved (head of laboratory, senior lab technician/laboratory assistant, senior lab technician/laboratory assistant for research cabinet, senior lab technician/laboratory assistant on chair operation, training instructor, dean’s office operator, chair preparator). The passports give the details of job organization and responsibility, requirements for the necessary knowledge and skills, as well as the duties of the employee. The position passports for the vice-rectors, the library and purchase department workers are currently under development. Thus, the requirement of action 3 (“Design position passports for the supporting staff.”) of the strategic plan objective 4.2 (“Introduce an efficient system of HR management”) will be fulfilled.

In action 4 of the above-mentioned objective it is stated, “Work out job descriptions for supporting, engineering-technical and other staff categories”. Since 2018/2019 academic year job descriptions have been attached, as an indivisible supplement, to individual legal acts on job admission. The job descriptions for the engineering-technical staff are currently under development.

In action 5 of the objective it is stated, “Develop and implement a training and attestation system for supporting, engineering-technical and other staff categories”. The formation norms for the full-time positions of the YSU supporting body and their attestation standards were approved by the YSU Rector’s order of 18.01.2018, which is a mechanism for the staff quality evaluation. In

accordance with the order, the full-time positions of the supporting body were synchronized with the norms for their formation. Every year an attestation of the supporting staff is held on June 15-25 to determine their eligibility for the positions they hold. No measures have been taken yet for attesting and training the administrative and engineering-technical staff. The YSU administrative staff and some subdivision workers have been trained in English, Information and Communication Technologies, as well as have attended some professional training courses. Nevertheless, any systematic approach to their training has not been introduced yet.

The academic department division responsible for controlling the learning process has conducted surveys among students evaluating the work of faculty deans, deputy deans and dean's offices. Over the last 3 years the average rating results have been within the range of 4.6.

Results of Student Surveys on Evaluation of Deans, Deputy Deans and Dean's Offices
(on a 5-point scale)

Academic Year	Dean and Deputy Deans	Dean's Offices
2016/2017	4.6	4.5
2017/2018	4.6	4.6
2018/2019	4.6	4.6

**YSU activity strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats
by Standard 5**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. YSU has highly qualified full-time teaching staff possessing great research potential. 2. High-quality specialists from the job market working in relevant professional spheres are also involved in the teaching process. 3. There is a continually updated system at YSU for the teaching staff professional development and training, as well as a regularly updated infrastructure to implement that system. 4. Innovative interactive educational technologies and leading practices are implemented in the teaching staff professional development programme. 5. YSU pursues a policy of giving financial and moral rewards for the teaching staff scientific research and academic activities, and there are appropriate procedures to 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Low payment is the main factor hindering the involvement of high-quality young human resources in the teaching process. 2. There is almost no external competition in the process of involving lecturers through competition. 3. There is a downward trend in student survey participation. 4. There is no systematic training programme for the YSU administrative, supporting, engineering-technical staff categories. 5. Some drawbacks are observed in the systems of the teaching staff self-evaluation and peer evaluation. 6. There is no distinct connection between the teaching staff evaluation results and their training programmes.

<p>implement it.</p> <p>6. There is a well-functioning system for the teaching staff evaluation through regularly conducted student and graduate surveys.</p> <p>7. Position passports and job descriptions for the administrative, supporting, engineering-technical categories have (almost entirely) been approved.</p>	
Opportunities	Threats
<p>1. Improvement in the programmes for the teaching staff mobility within the frames of international cooperation through the study of the best practices.</p> <p>2. An updated programme for the YSU professional development in cooperation with the teaching staff of the internationally leading institutions of higher education.</p>	<p>1. The extremely low public funding of YSU may lead to an outflow of the best human resources.</p> <p>2. The competitive environment among the RA higher education institutions is not adequate and therefore needs to be improved.</p>

Planned ways to overcome weaknesses and threats

1. Increase in the teaching staff payment by 10% since 2020/2021 academic year.
2. Introduction of varied methods for getting feedback from the student body on the teaching efficiency (regular group-focused research, in-depth surveys).
3. Full application of the standards and procedures for the teaching staff multi-factor evaluation envisaged in the “Guidebook on the Evaluation of the YSU Teaching Staff Annual Activity”.
4. Revision of the teaching staff training programmes taking into consideration their evaluation results, regular assessment of the teaching staff needs, as well as the set of competences necessary for ensuring the final outcome of the programmes.
5. Introduction of a systematic programme for training and attestation of the YSU administrative, supporting, engineering-technical staff.

VI. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

CRITERION: THE TLI ENSURES THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RESEARCH ACTIVITY AND THE LINK OF THE RESEARCH WITH TEACHING AND LEARNING.

Expand the involvement of the teaching staff and students in the scientific-research activities, contribute to greater academic cooperation and internationalization of scientific-research activities, align the standards of postgraduate education with the pan-European requirements¹.

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

YSU is a multi-profile educational institution, and scientific research is carried out across a wide spectrum of social, social-economic, humanitarian, natural and physical-mathematical specialties^{2, 3}.

The YSU Armenian Studies Center is the leading research unit performing activities in Armenian studies - a contemporary and priority aspect for the country. It has about a dozen divisions and laboratories, two master's degree programmes, a library, a journal of Armenian studies and a broad list of partner organizations.

One of the most significant achievements of the research strategy has been the formation of YSU Institute of Pharmacy to carry out academic, scientific research and investment (innovative) mission and the activities performed by its three specialized chairs and two scientific-research laboratories. Among the YSU accomplishments is also the foundation of scientific research institutes (SRI) of Biology (2015) and Physics (2016) on the basis of budget laboratories operating at the faculties of Biology and Physics respectively. A number of educational-research centers also successfully operate at YSU: Information Technologies Educational and Research Center with its 3 Master's degree programmes, 2 departments and 2 laboratories, European Studies Center, as well as the Innovative Center for Bacteriological Biotechnologies and Biofuel financed by the World Bank (2017). Here we should also add the development of multimedia courses financed by "Open Society Foundations-Armenia".

In addition, at nearly all YSU faculties there are specialized research laboratories, centers and cabinets – 37 in total. Let us mention the ones founded recently: the Scientific-analytical Center of Constitutional Economics at YSU Faculty of Economics and Management (2016), the Armenian Climate Technology Academic Network at YSU Faculty of Geography and Geology (2017), Research Laboratory of Nanoplasmonics at YSU Faculty of Radiophysics (2017), Research Laboratory of British Literature and Linguoculture at YSU Faculty of European Languages and Communication (2017). In order to promote innovative research activities Start-Up laboratories have been set up on the basis of master's degree programmes and postgraduate studies of the faculties on natural sciences.

¹ YSU Strategic Development Plan 2016-2020, 2015,

http://ysu.am/files/quality/YSU_Strategic_Development_Plan_2016-2020.pdf

² Schedule of the YSU 2016-2020 Strategic Plan Implementation, 2015, pp. 16-23

http://documentation.ysu.am/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/EPH_razmavaran_tsragri_irakanacman_zhamanakacyc_plan.pdf

³ YSU Faculty Statute, September 24, 2015, p. 3, article 24.7

http://documentation.ysu.am/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/orinakeli_kanonadrutyun.pdf

The quality and topicality control of research activities is performed in accordance with both the regulations established internally and the requirements set by external sources of finance.

In order to promote publications in the internationally acknowledged journals YSU periodically reviews the criteria for calculation and payment of salary bonuses⁴. There are regulations on internship, the bachelor's degree graduation paper^{5,6} scientific seminars, research papers⁷, specialty internship, as well as master's degree thesis writing and assessment.

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

The University's long-term strategy in the field of research are the maintenance and development of the scientific schools established over the years, as well as the formation of new scientific groups in new, up-to-date science trends.

The medium-term programmes addressing the University's interests and ambitions in the field of research are mainly reflected in the YSU Strategic Development Plan 2016-2020. Objective 2.1 of the goal "Up-to-date Research and Innovation" defines: "Contribute to the increase in the amount of research and expansion of the teaching staff and student involvement in research projects". In particular, it envisages:

- a. to develop and introduce appropriate mechanisms to promote the publication of articles in journals having high impact quotient,
- b. to improve the implementation of the research component in the bachelor's and master's degree academic programmes.

Objective 2.3 of the strategic plan promotes the internationalization of the University's research activities. In particular, it envisages:

- a. to reinforce the internationalization of research activities as a necessary component of the YSU scientific-educational subdivision activity,
- b. to encourage the YSU employees' publications in journals included in international scientific databases,
- c. to increase the number of YSU scientific journals published in foreign languages.

⁴ The Regulation on Calculation and Payment of Salary Bonuses to YSU Employees for Performing Certain Types of Work (in new edition)

<http://documentation.ySU.am/%d5%a5%d5%ba%d5%b0-%d5%a1%d5%b7%d5%ad%d5%a1%d5%bf%d5%b8%d5%b2%d5%b6%d5%a5%d6%80%d5%ab%d5%b6-%d5%a1%d5%b7%d5%ad%d5%a1%d5%bf%d5%a1%d5%b6%d6%84%d5%ab-%d5%b8%d6%80%d5%b8%d5%b7-%d5%bf%d5%a5%d5%bd-4/>

⁵ The order of the organization of the educational process in the baccalaureate and magistracy for educational programme, May 04, 2017, article 8.

http://publishing.ySU.am/files/YSU_zhoghovatsu.pdf

⁶ Order of Preparation and Assessment of Bachelor Study Graduation Work at YSU, October 12, 2017.

http://ySU.am/files/quality/Bachelor_Graduation_Work_Assessment.pdf

⁷ On the approval of the procedure for doing research work in the major courses of the YSU bachelor's and master's academic programme. Resolution №11/2, March 13, 2020.

http://documentation.ySU.am/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/GX_voroshum_11-2.pdf

The short-term programmes (for 1-2 years) addressing the University's interests and ambitions in the field of research proceed from the medium-term programmes. They are designed at chairs, institutes, centers and laboratories operating in basic or thematic scientific groups and are mainly financed by the Science Committee of RA Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport, as well as international grants.

The long-term programme entitled "Preservation and Development of the Institute of Armenian Studies Research" envisages large-scale research in the following trends: issues of the Armenian statehood history, historical geography-cartography of Armenia, Armenian-Georgian, Armenian-Kurdish, Armenian-Ottoman relations, archaeology, virtual Armenian studies and information, genocide and diaspora studies.

Within the framework of the Institute of Pharmacy's Scientific-Research Institute program, the synthesis of pharmacophore compounds of synthetic and herbal origin which have pharmacologically active potential is carried out. The development of methods to obtain various drugs based on the mentioned synthesis, as well as studies on their antiviral, anti-cancer, antibacterial, bactericidal and other properties are made. The research on control and monitoring of drugs quality produced in and imported into the country is also conducted.

The aim of the programme entitled "Preservation and Development of the Institute of Pharmacy" is to study the biological peculiarities of various ecological and typological groups of agaricomycetes fungi having food and medicinal value and make specialized collections of pure cultures, as well as to evaluate their biotechnological potential and reveal the prospects of their application in the biomedical field.

The aim of the programme entitled "Preservation and Development of the Center for Mathematical Research" is to extend and develop the theory of function spaces, to investigate a number of general properties of partial periodic groups, to identify the relevant algorithms.

The Biology SRI programme envisages the study of the variety of RA living organisms and the investigation of their cellular-molecular mechanisms, the elaboration of biotechnologies to get bio-hydrogen through bacteria, as well as fungal studies of vegetable cultures.

The Physics Scientific Research Institute envisages research activities in the fields of quantum phenomena modeling, the physics of macromolecules, solid state physics, theoretical physics, optoelectronics and photonics, super-speed optics and photonics, astrophysics.

The aim of the Information Technologies Educational and Research Center is to explore the decision-making systems and databases relying on inaccurate information, to investigate safety and security issues for big data integration systems, as well as to develop programme tools and e-learning resources based on them.

The aim of the programme of the research laboratory of Nanoplasmonics is the exploration of the physical processes of light propagation through subwavelength structures.

The aim of the research laboratory of Physical Chemistry is to reveal the intermolecular interactions of non-covalent nature.

The objectives of the programme of the research laboratory of Organic Chemistry are to carry out target-oriented syntheses in compounds containing saturated and unsaturated imino-lactone cycles, polymer and oligomer recovery by means of little nucleophilic reductants and metal salts.

The aim of the programme of the scientific-educational Center of Environmental Law is to expand the scope of scientific research on environmental law, contribute to the improvement of environmental legislation, as well as the implementation of the international environmental agreements ratified by the Republic of Armenia.

The aim of the programme of the European Studies Center is to coordinate and implement scientific and interdisciplinary research on European studies, human rights, Democracy index and Stability index.

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

The YSU research policies and procedures proceed from the long-term and medium-term programmes, the YSU Charter, as well as the institutional order of allocating and managing the means for basic and thematic financing of science. They are enshrined in the YSU regulations and planning documents. The YSU Strategic Development Plan (2016-2020)⁸ belongs to the latter type of documents. Action 1 of objective 2.1 of the goal “Up-to-date Research and Innovation” envisages: “to assess research activities proceeding from scientific publications, references made to them and other accepted indicators”.

Table 1. Financial expenditures of research activities at YSU (million AMD)

Expenditure Type	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Programmes for academic and scientific-technical activities	1021	1022	1088	408	1511
Expenses for development of students' research skills within the academic workload of the teaching staff	747	903	705	806	888
Activities on research implementation envisaged by the YSU strategic development plan	–	97	136	5	32
Bonuses for scientific-research activities	– ⁹	– ¹⁰	70	87	88
Expenses for research-related business trips	36	46	50	35	39
Publishing expenses (publication of books, journals)	33	27	25	27	26
Other scientific programmes (including the Student Scientific Society, financing scientific projects of partner organizations)	101	152	8	19	5
Total	1937	2247	2081	1819	2229
Percentage share in YSU total expenditure	18,9%	19,9%	21,1%	19,7%	24,3%

⁸ YSU Strategic Development Plan (2016-2020)

URL: http://ysu.am/files/quality/YSU_Strategic_Development_Plan_2016-2020.pdf

⁹ Up to 2017/2018 academic year, publication of articles and monographs, as well as participation in conferences were taken into account when paying differentiated salary to the teaching staff. The amount was 288,315 million AMD in 2015, 358,766 million AMD in 2016, 240 million AMD in 2017. This is not included in Table 1, as it is impossible to distinguish the part envisaged for the research from the total.

¹⁰ The procedure for calculating and paying additional fees for YSU employees for certain types of work (in new edition)

URL: http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/lravtsar_karg-new.pdf

In order to assess research activities, YSU has adopted some evaluation standards for scientific-research activities presented in “The Regulation on Calculation and Payment of Salary Bonuses to YSU Employees for Performing Certain Types of Work”¹⁰. In order to promote the publication of articles in journals having high impact quotient some mechanisms have been developed and introduced, which are periodically revised and improved. In particular, by Resolution №7/5 approved by the YSU Academic Council on 28.06.2018, the additional amount paid for an article published in journals having high impact quotient has been increased by 50% in accordance with provision 1 of table 1 in article 2.1 of the above-mentioned procedure (in new edition). The list of journals having high impact quotient is regularly updated according to the annual Journal Citation Reports (JCR) account by Clarivate Analytics agency. The implementation of the above procedure has had the following impact on the publications of the YSU employees.

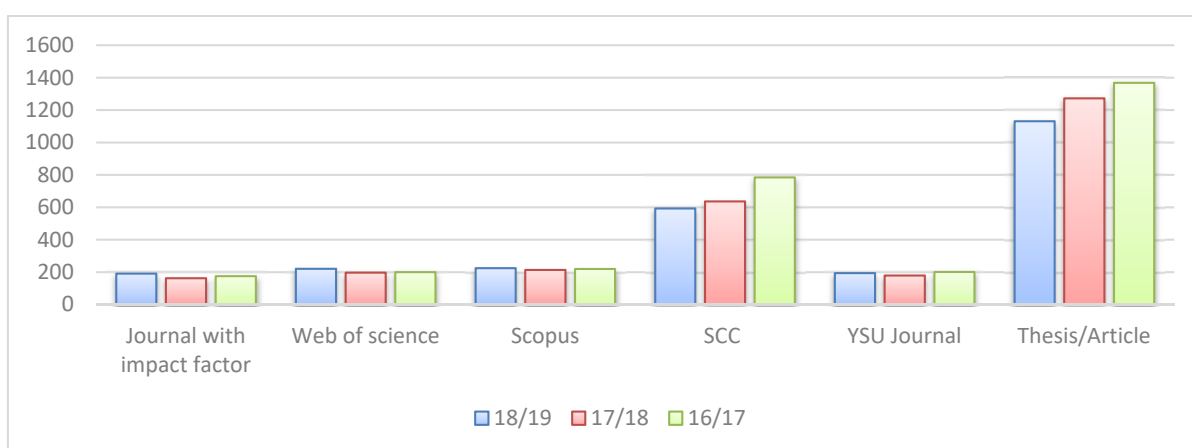


Figure 1. Distribution of YSU publications according to databases

As it is seen from the diagram, over the past three years the total number of articles published by the YSU staff has decreased from 1368 to 1131, but the number of publications in journals indexed in international databases (Web of Science, Scopus) has increased.

The implementation of programmes in various spheres jointly with scientific-research centers is of long-term nature: in particular, joint projects are implemented by the YSU subdivisions and respective institutes of RA NAS (National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia), which results in close cooperation of a large number of specialists. The growth in the number of involved employees from other scientific-research centers in projects won by YSU staff in thematically financed competitions announced by the Science Committee of RA Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport undoubtedly testifies to that fact.

YSU regularly organizes international conferences, and this process has become even more productive due to “The Order for granting financial assistance for conferences organized at YSU”¹¹.

¹¹ The procedure for granting financial assistance for conferences organized at YSU, approved by the YSU Academic Council on May 26, 2016
 URL: http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/dramakan_ajaktsutyun.pdf

YSU publishes series of two major publications: “Proceedings of Yerevan State University” and “Bulletin of Yerevan University”, each of which is an independent scientific journal. Besides them, 20 more periodicals are published at YSU¹².

STANDARD 6.4. The TLI emphasizes internationalization of its research.

The internationalization of the YSU research activity is the priority of each subdivision activity which is conditioned by the international nature of science, as well as availability and access to international sources of financing research activities. In this regard the strategic objective of YSU is to promote the internationalization processes of the University’s research activities and provide for the integration of the University’s research findings into the European, American and CIS research frames. Over the past 5 years, a number of measures have been taken to realize this task, among which has been the publication of scientific works in internationally acknowledged specialized journals, the outcome of which is seen in figure 1. YSU publications in foreign languages are presented in Figure 2.

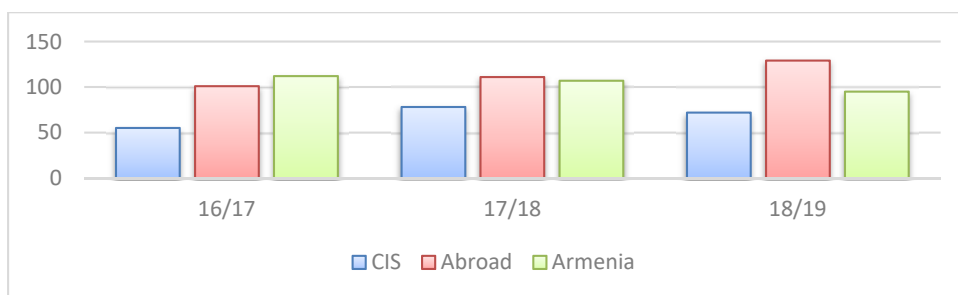
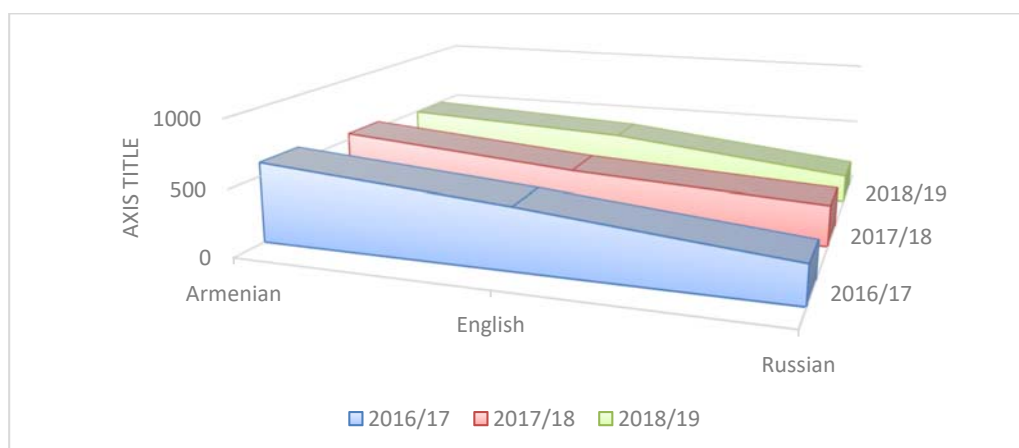


Figure 2. YSU publications according to periodicals and their distribution by regions

Figure 3 presents YSU publications according to journals, as well as their regional distribution, from which the steps towards the internationalization of the YSU research activities can be clearly discerned.



¹² YSU publications
 URL: <http://www.y-su.am/science/en/banber>
<http://www.y-su.am/science/en/scientific-magazine>
<http://publications.y-su.am/>

Figure 3. YSU employees' publications according to language distribution

The foreign business trips (including participation in international conferences) of the YSU staff are organized in accordance with the “Regulation for the formation of foreign business trips of YSU employees”¹³ and financed from the following sources:

1. RA state budget – basic financing, thematic financing,
2. YSU budget – business trip expenses allocated to faculties and other subdivisions,
3. Grants and contracts,
4. Other sources of financing.

Apart from the YSU business trips, great importance is also attached to organizing and holding international conferences at YSU (in 2018/2019 academic year 29 local and international conferences were held at YSU), as well as the scientific internship of the teaching and research staff.

Over the past 5 years the involvement of the YSU research units in international academic and scientific-technical projects and grants has been as follows: state grant projects – 132, foreign grants – 67.

In 2018/2019 academic year YSU signed 17 agreements with foreign partners (see the YSU 2018-2019 academic year report, p.84); in the same year there were 784 business trips – 260 lecturers, 14 postgraduate students, 286 students and 224 administrative staff employees went on business trips (see the YSU 2018-2019 academic year report, p.84).

The number of joint research projects with foreign partner organizations increased by 24% in 2018/2019 academic year as compared with the previous year¹⁴.

YSU students regularly participate in conferences organized overseas – in the USA, Belarus, Germany, Italy, Poland, Hungary, Norway, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Georgia, Ukraine, France and other countries. In order to expand international cooperation and joint organization of scientific and educational events, YSU SSS has signed cooperation memorandums with the Armenian Society of Columbia University, Student Union of Moscow State University named after M.Lomonosov, Student Union of Ural State University, Student Parliament of Kiev National University, Student Union of Zhetysu State University (Kazakhstan), Student Scientific Society of Armenian State Pedagogical University, Student Council of the NAS RA international scientific-educational center and other youth structures.

In 2019, the Pharmacy Institute of YSU won a grant from the World Bank-funded Education Improvement Project, which aims to establish an analytical laboratory equipped with state-of-the-art equipment and methodology to research the drugs quality, as well as to initiate an academic Master programme of drugs quality control and monitoring based on the mentioned laboratory.

In 2018/2019 academic year, due to the Erasmus+ program several grant projects were implemented, such as Minerva working with innovative partners to alter the current education approaches simultaneously developing strategies pertinent to the logic of “Open Science” (see the

¹³ Regulation for the formation of foreign business trips of YSU employees

URL: <http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/kanonakarg-gorcuxumner.pdf>

¹⁴ YSU Strategic Development Plan 2016-2020 (report on the implementation of the actions planned for 2018/2019 academic year)

http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Kataroghakan_2019.pdf

YSU 2018-2019 academic year report, p.115, Strengthening Research Management and Open Science Capacities of HEIs in Moldova and Armenia). Another cooperation is the one within the framework of the Modest project (duration – 36 months, 2018-2021), which aims to develop the enhanced skills of the scientific-research and academic human resources training them by means of new teaching methods, as well as to create a modern environment for learning and research. In order to implement international grants YSU provides appropriate office space and supporting equipment (an auditorium with respective inventory will be provided in the frames of Armdoct Erasmus project).

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

YSU students do research work in accordance with the requirements of compulsory components in academic programmes and their research interests.

The research sphere includes all the scientific units and certain constituent parts of academic programmes: the postgraduate programme almost entirely, a specific educational component in the Master's degree programme¹⁵ and “Professional internship” and “Graduation paper” educational modules in the Bachelor's degree programme¹⁶. Since 2017/2018 academic year “Research Planning and Methods” course has been introduced into Master's educational programmes. Writing a graduation thesis has become compulsory in Bachelor's educational programmes.

As a development priority, the research strategy and its relation to the learning process is enshrined in the YSU 2016-2020 Strategic Development Plan with four objectives and particular actions for their implementation, such as “Improve the implementation of the research component in Bachelor's and Master's educational programmes”, “Develop and introduce appropriate mechanisms to encourage publications in journals having high impact quotient”, etc.

In fact, the successful implementation of the Strategic Plan^{17,18,19} has enabled to maintain the research activity in the traditional trends and academic programmes and at the same time to coordinate actions for the elaboration of academic programmes for new specialties acquiring high demand in the republic and organization of respective subdivisions.

Along with the improvement of educational modules, new academic programmes – 8 Bachelor's degree programmes and 4 Master's degree programmes – have been launched at YSU over the past 3 years. YSU and RA NAS subdivisions jointly implement Bachelor's degree, Master's degree and postgraduate programmes, which also contributes to the collaboration of specialists. Since

¹⁵ The structure and content of YSU Master's educational programme, July 07, 2016, pp. 2, 5-7, Annex 1, 2
http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/mag_cragir.pdf

¹⁶ The structure and content of YSU Bachelor's educational programme, May 04, 2017, provision 2.2.4 on p. 7, the last four lines of Annex 2.
http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Bakal_krtakan_tsragri_karucvatsqi_ev_bovandakutyany_hastatum.pdf

¹⁷ YSU Activities in 2015-2016 Academic Year, pp. 84-90.
http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/2015-2016_ustarva_gorcuneutyany-hashvetvutyun.pdf

¹⁸ YSU Activities in 2016-2017 Academic Year, pp. 84-91.
http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/2016-2017_ustarva_gorcuneutyany-hashvetvutyun.pdf

¹⁹ YSU Activities in 2017-2018 Academic Year, pp. 79-85.
http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/2017-2018_ustarva_gorcuneutyany-hashvetvutyun.pdf

2019/2020 academic year, courses with compulsory research activities have been introduced in Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes.

The final component for the award of Bachelor's degree is the preparation and public defense of graduation paper. It is an independent work of theoretical or practical significance which reflects the student's abilities to apply the knowledge acquired within the scope of the given profession, as well as to raise issues related to the professional sphere and to propose solutions²⁰. Since 2019/2020 academic year, a procedure for implementing research in the professional courses of the Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes of 7 YSU faculties has been experimentally introduced. The aim of the procedure is to promote the student's abilities to conduct an individual or group research and assist in the professional skills development. At the end of the semester some drawbacks were found in this process through monitoring, based on which the procedure has been improved²¹. In 2020/2021 academic year it will be compulsory at all YSU academic programmes.

A compulsory research component is included in Master's degree programmes providing for the development of students' research skills. Hence, the research component is 45 credits and makes up 37,5% of the total. It has three constituent elements: scientific seminar, professional internship and Master's degree thesis. In the frames of the scientific seminar the professors or associate professors involved in the chair research activities present the research issues of the field, introduce to the methodological and technical requirements for Master's thesis, and organize periodical reports and discussions on the subject-matter of students' theses²². Master's thesis is an independent research work of analytical and/or practical significance which reflects the abilities of the student to apply the acquired knowledge and carry out independent investigation, as well as to raise research issues and to offer solutions to them²³.

The research component in postgraduate programmes, the next educational degree, is 122 credits (scientific seminars, scientific-research work and preparation of doctoral thesis) – about 68% of the total, as the aim of this scientific-educational programme is to prepare a researcher²⁴. On average, YSU has had about 400 postgraduate students over the last 5 academic years.

²⁰ See “Order of Preparation and Assessment of Bachelor Study Graduation Work at YSU”, approved by the YSU Academic Council at meeting №1 on October 12 of 2017, Yerevan, 2017.

http://ysu.am/files/quality/Bachelor_Graduation_Work_Assessment.pdf

²¹ On establishing the procedure of implementing research component in the professional courses of the Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes of YSU faculties of Mathematics and Mechanics, Philosophy and Psychology, International Relations, Journalism, Law, History and Institute of Pharmacy, Orders №153/69, 164/12, 169/62, 177/63, 229/15

http://documentation.yasu.am/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/hraman_169-62.pdf

<http://documentation.yasu.am/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/hraman-177-63.pdf>

<http://documentation.yasu.am/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/hraman-229-15.pdf>

http://documentation.yasu.am/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/hraman_164-12.pdf

http://documentation.yasu.am/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Hraman_153-69.pdf

²² See “The structure and content of YSU Master's educational programme”, approved by the YSU Academic Council at the meeting of July 07, 2016, Yerevan, 2016, pp. 2, 6, Annex 1, 2.

http://documentation.yasu.am/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/mag_cragir.pdf

²³ See “Order of Preparation and Assessment of Master Study Graduation Thesis at YSU”, approved by the YSU Academic Council at meeting №5 on March 2 of 2017, Yerevan, 2017, p. 3

http://ysu.am/files/quality/Master_Thesis_Assessment.pdf

²⁴ See “The structure and content of postgraduate studies (researcher preparation) educational programme”, approved by the YSU Academic Council at meeting №3 on May 10 of 2010, Yerevan, 2010, pp. 1,3. “The order of organizing the

Table 2. Expenses for the development of students' research abilities in the teaching workload of the YSU teaching staff (million AMD) and the share in total expenses

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
YSU total expenses	10 259	11 307	9 874	9 232	9 167
Total expenses for the teaching staff payment from the above given amount	3 508	3 555	3 135	3 565	3 470
Including expenses for the development of students' research abilities and skills	747	903	705	806	888

Table 3. Number of hours spent on the development of students' research abilities in the teaching and academic workload of the YSU teaching staff

Academic year \ Work type	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Postgraduate supervision	20740	20390	18490	18030	17960
Doctoral candidate supervision	2000	1785	1850	1925	1495
Term-paper supervision	36390	34015	33910	35770	27965
Bachelor's graduation paper supervision	81200	77130	57460	65470	64960
Master's thesis supervision	74130	48505	59125	58518	52145
Other (Review of Bachelor's graduation paper and Master's thesis, membership in a defense board, scientific seminar guidance in Master's degree programme)	27254	22385	12782	13088	12440
Total	241714	204210	183617	192801	177045
Percentage share in the total workload (%)	25,4%	22,5%	22,6%	25,6%	23,9%
How much it exceeds lecture hours (by %)	43,7%	16,6%	20,8%	39,1%	22,5%

Table 3 presents the number of hours spent on the development of students' research abilities in the teaching and academic workload of the YSU teaching staff. The decrease in the number of hours over 2015-2020 is the consequence of the reduction of the total number of students at YSU. It is noteworthy that over the past 6 academic years the hours stipulated for the development of students' research abilities and skills have constantly exceeded the lecture hours conceding only to practical classes, and in 2018/2019 academic year they exceeded even the latter.

The Student Scientific Society, a student organization operating at YSU faculties, is also a mechanism for interconnecting research and learning. Over the period of 2012-2019, each year around 1500 students from YSU participated in the events organized by the Society, and 400 more – from other institutions of higher education and RA NAS. More than 500 lecturers directly assisted

educational process by credit system for the postgraduate educational programme” approved by the YSU Academic Council at meeting №3 on May 10 of 2010, Yerevan, 2010, pp. 6-7 “Individual plan for postgraduate students' educational-research activities” approved by the YSU Academic Council at meeting №3 on May 10 of 2010, Yerevan, 2010

<http://ysu.am/files/phd/Karucvacqy&Bovandakutuny.pdf>

the SSS activities by supervising and reviewing scientific articles, presiding at conference sessions, conducting seminars, giving supplementary lectures, etc. Over the mentioned period the SSS member-students have published 276 scientific articles in the RA and foreign scientific journals making up, in general, at least 1/6 of the YSU total scientific outcome in annual average calculation.

Table 4. YSU SSS publications over 2012-2019

Methodological manual and monograph	Collection of articles	Article in SSS collections	Collection of abstracts	Abstract for report
7	45	1792	3	150

Figure 5 presents the grades for graduation paper/master’s thesis scientific supervisors’ work in 2017/2018 academic years according to graduates’ educational level. It should be noted that in 2019 the differences for these grades were insignificant and did not essentially differ for Master’s and Bachelor’s graduates, unlike the significant disparity in 2018, when Master’s degree graduates were much more contented than Bachelor’s degree graduates. The grades of the latter greatly improved in 2019.

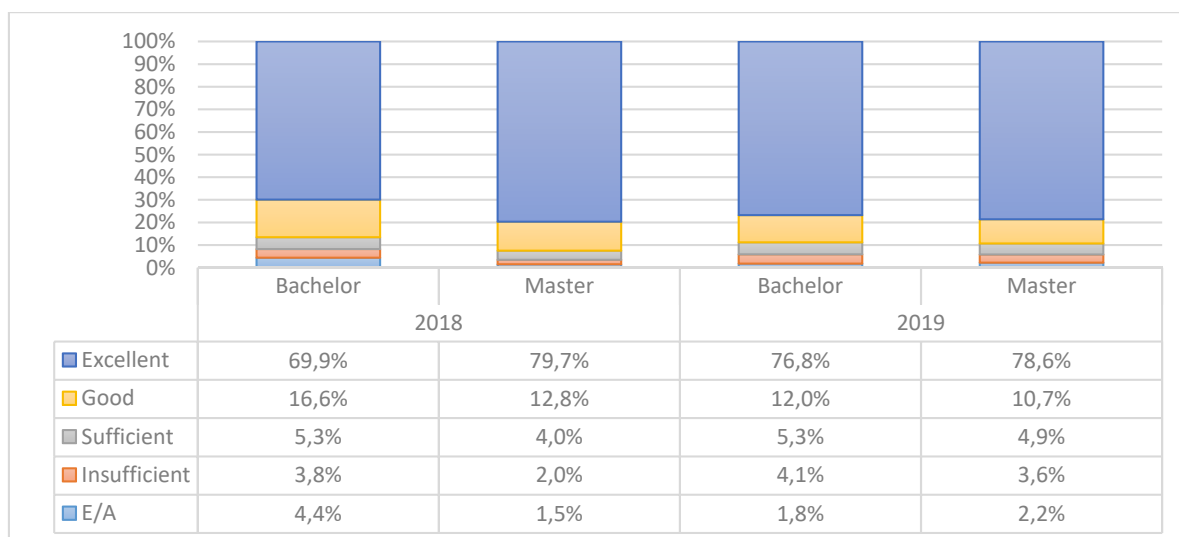


Figure 5. The grades for graduation paper/master’s thesis scientific supervisors’ work according to graduates’ educational level in 2018 and 2019

**YSU activity strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats
by Standard 6**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The high level of YSU research internationalization and a continual growth of publications in international scientific databases. 2. Students are involved in research activities. 3. Among the RA higher education institutions YSU occupies a leading position with the number of scientific publications and the amount of financing research projects. 4. There are mechanisms for promoting the research activities of the teaching staff and students. 5. Scientific-research institutes, centers and laboratories tend to obtain increasingly more financial means from external sources. 6. YSU publishes periodicals in the fields of exact sciences, natural sciences, social economics, humanities and Armenian studies. 7. There are professional councils awarding scientific degrees in the fields of exact sciences, natural sciences, social economics and humanities. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There exists an unequal level of development in various fields of science at YSU. 2. The level of cooperation with private companies and commercialization of research is low. 3. The number of internships needs to be increased. 4. Shortage of laboratories provided with up-to-date experimental equipment.
Opportunities	Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. YSU has scientific schools providing theoretical knowledge on data processing, artificial intelligence, machine learning, quantum computing and other modern technologies. 2. Competitions and grant projects regularly announced by the RA Science Committee. 3. International research grants, scientific-educational programmes and research carried out jointly with beneficiary organizations. 4. Financial support of various foundations and charities. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Low demand for fundamental knowledge in the RA economy. 2. The non-competitiveness of the earnings of the teaching staff and researchers as compared with those at private sector enterprises. 3. Low motivation of young specialists to work at the University, weak mechanisms for their promotion/involvement in research activities.

Planned ways to overcome weaknesses and threats

1. Encourage publications in journals included in international scientific databases by applying necessary adjustments in the Regulation on Calculation and Payment of Salary Bonuses.
2. Increase the financial capacity of contract activities and grants by 15-20% improving their contents in accordance with the market demand.
3. Regularly update the list of organizations conducting research internships and involve new enterprises in this task.
4. Define and present separately the programme research component in Bachelor's degree programme specifications.
5. Continually expand activities for participating in research competitions with technological outcome organized by the Ministry of High-Tech Industry and Competitive Innovation Fund.
6. Promote diversification of research towards various spheres of applied science.
7. Raise the staff salaries along with improving the quality of research work.

VII. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

CRITERIA: THE TLI HAS NECESSARY RESOURCES TO CREATE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND TO EFFECTIVELY SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TIS STATED MISSION AND OBJECTIVES.

Establish university infrastructures that meet modern requirements. Ensure sustainable and diversified financial flows of the University and increase the effectiveness of their management. Improve the University governance system and promote its efficiency and transparency to reduce the corruption risks².

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

The creation of quality infrastructures is the 5th strategic goal of YSU^{1,2,3}. To meet students' educational needs and create a rich learning environment, the University has 1 administrative, 1 library and 10 educational buildings, 8 of which are located on the central campus, and 4 others within 8 km distance (see Annex 7.1). There are 3 research institutes, 30 laboratories and 639 classrooms in the University, the utilization of which is managed based on the requests submitted by faculties, institutes and educational centers. Classes are conducted on a two-shift basis. The YSU Ijevan Branch implements academic programmes for its 1390 students in 4 buildings (one of which is a guest house) with 55 available classrooms. YSU has educational and production complexes in Tsakhkadzor, Dilijan, Hankavan and Byurakan^{4,5}. A significant amount of money is allocated annually from the University budget for the renovation and reconstruction of the aforementioned buildings, educational and production complexes and other constructions. As a result, today, the YSU buildings are in a good state in terms of furnishing and technical equipment. YSU has 186 educational laboratories and specialized cabinets, 141 of which, comprising the majority, are located in 3 buildings where the faculties of Natural Sciences, Physics and Mathematics are located.

The development of the library is one of the essential strategic directions of YSU (see 2, Goal V, Objective 5.2, Action 6-10). As a result of the implementation of the library development concept adopted by the YSU Academic Council in 2007 (the new concept of scientific library development has been in circulation since 2018), the electronic reading hall of the library has been enlarged, the University portal of electronic resources has been created, participation of the library in international library networks and consortiums has been expanded, as well as participation of students and

-
1. The YSU Strategic Development Plan 2010-2014, goal V, 2009 / http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Zargacman_razmavarakan_cragir_2010-2014.pdf
 2. The YSU Strategic Development Plan 2016-2020, 2015
http://ysu.am/files/quality/YSU_Strategic_Development_Plan_2016-2020.pdf
 3. The YSU 2016-2020 Strategic Development Plan implementation schedule, 2015
http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/EPH_razmavarakan_tsragri_irakanacman_zhamanakacyuc_plan.pdf
 4. Concept-programme for Infrastructure Development Outside the Complex of the Main Educational Buildings of "Yerevan State University" Foundation
URL: <http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/tcragir.pdf>
 5. Decision № 9 / 8.1 on Approval of the Concept-programme for Infrastructure Development Outside the Complexes of the Main Educational Buildings of "Yerevan State University" Foundation
URL: http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/voroshum_9.8.1.pdf

academic staff in the planning and development of information resources has been increased. The YSU library is close to the international and European standards in terms of the technical equipment and quality of providing information. It is one of the RA leading libraries. It is the third biggest library in the country and the first among the university libraries with more than 2 million book reserves. The library building occupies an area of about 16,000 square meters. It has 2 book depositories with about 1.85 million units of literature. There are about 90,000 units of literature in 6 reading halls, and about 100,000 units in circulating and open shelf stack. These reading halls can simultaneously serve 1200 readers. There are faculty libraries in 9 faculties of the University with about 10,000 units of literature.

A number of resource bases are also available for the users of the library, such as Elibrary.ru, mathnet.ru, SPRINGER, EBSCO, DOAJ, Mathematical Reviews Database, Armenian Virtual Science Library, which provide 375 scientific and informative databases, more than 360 thousand e-books, 20 thousand scientific journals with about 9 million scientific articles, about 700,000 dissertations and abstracts. The most frequently used literature, as well as ancient and rare books, are available on the website of the library. The library also has an electronic article service group which provides users with the electronic versions of scientific articles^{6,7}.

Since 2001, YSU, together with the 12 largest libraries in Armenia, has started the creation of the Armenian booklist collection. At present, almost all libraries in RA (republican, regional, urban and so forth) have joined this system. By the end of 2020, the entire YSU library fund will be reflected in the booklist collection. It enables the readers to learn about the literature available in libraries, as well as make an online order via the Internet from anywhere. There is a WiFi connection within the library area. Different environments are envisaged for the readers: discussion rooms, a soft area, a computer room, balcony tables and foyer sections for discussions. The library carries out the service of the educational fund on the principle of open shelves, where the readers choose the books from the library shelves and then register in the electronic system. Storage cabinets are also provided for the users' belongings. The library is annually replenished with about 13,000 units of literature. The library cooperates with a number of leading European libraries and is a member of library associations (LIBER, IFLA and so forth).

The library entrance is customized for those with special needs. There are also two sections in the restrooms furnished for them.

In the graduate satisfaction surveys on the education received at YSU the learning environment - educational areas, learning resources and support services are also assessed⁸. For example, the results of the comparative analysis of the satisfaction survey among the YSU graduates of the 2017/18 and 2018/19 with the University learning resources and support services are presented in Annex 7.3.

In a 4-point system (where 2 is the minimum value and 5 is the highest) students rate the classroom working conditions much higher (average rate 4.09), while the Internet availability and access to computer rooms received relatively lower ratings (about 3.9) (see Table 2). The rating scales among the graduates of the 2017/18 and 2018/19 slightly differ from the ratings of the previous years,

6. YSU Sargis and Marie Izmirlyans library, <http://lib.y-su.am/index.html?lg=1>

7. The YSU Library Council regulation

URL: http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Library_Council_Kanonakarg_10_07_2013.pdf

8. Procedure on Organizing Graduate Satisfaction Surveys on the Education Received at YSU

URL: <http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/karg.pdf>

as there has been some increase in the ratings of laboratory equipment and some decrease in those of the Internet and computer rooms.

The YSU buildings and subdivisions located in them are presented in Annex 7.1.

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

In order to manage and control the YSU financial flows an annual estimate of budget inflows and outflows is drawn up based on the forecasts and planned events for the coming year. As a rule, in case of significant changes in income or expenditure articles during the year, the budget is changed at most once in order to manage the budget in a more targeted and efficient way. After the end of the fiscal year, based on the analysis of the actual data, the annual budget performance is presented, mostly with a deviation of no more than 3-5%.

Table 1. Income and expense summary for 2016-2020 ^{9,10}

Thousand AMD

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Incomes	11,100,000	10,172,000	9,373,000	9,458,000	9,368,000
Tuition fees	6,377,800	6,429,700	5,812,500	5,517,000	5,460,000
State financing	2,871,324	3,018,300	2,840,500	2,965,000	2,714,400
Other incomes	1,850,876	724,000	720,000	976,000	1,193,600
Expenses	11,100,000	10,172,000	9,473,000	9,824,000	9,518,000
Salary	6,574,000	6,730,500	6,332,000	6,887,000	6,700,000
Scholarship	217,000	241,000	215,000	206,000	204,000
Service acquisition	428,000	553,500	557,500	503,500	502,000
Non-current asset acquisition	429,500	478,000	350,000	368,000	401,000
Renovation	1,800,500	500,000	400,000	375,000	285,000
Utility and postage	375,500	371,500	356,500	269,000	246,000
Other expenses	1,275,500	1,297,500	1,262,000	1,215,500	1,180,000

9. Decision № 62 on the Approval of the Income and Expense Estimate for the 2020 Financial Year of the Yerevan State University Foundation

URL: http://documentation.yasu.am/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/HKH_voroshum_62.pdf

Income and Expense Estimates for 2016-2020 of the Yerevan State University Foundation

<http://documentation.yasu.am/?s=%D5%B6%D5%A1%D5%AD%D5%A1%D5%B0%D5%A1%D5%B7%D5%AB%D5%BE%D5%A8+&lang=hy>

10. Financial Reports and Independent Auditor's Report of YSU for 2018

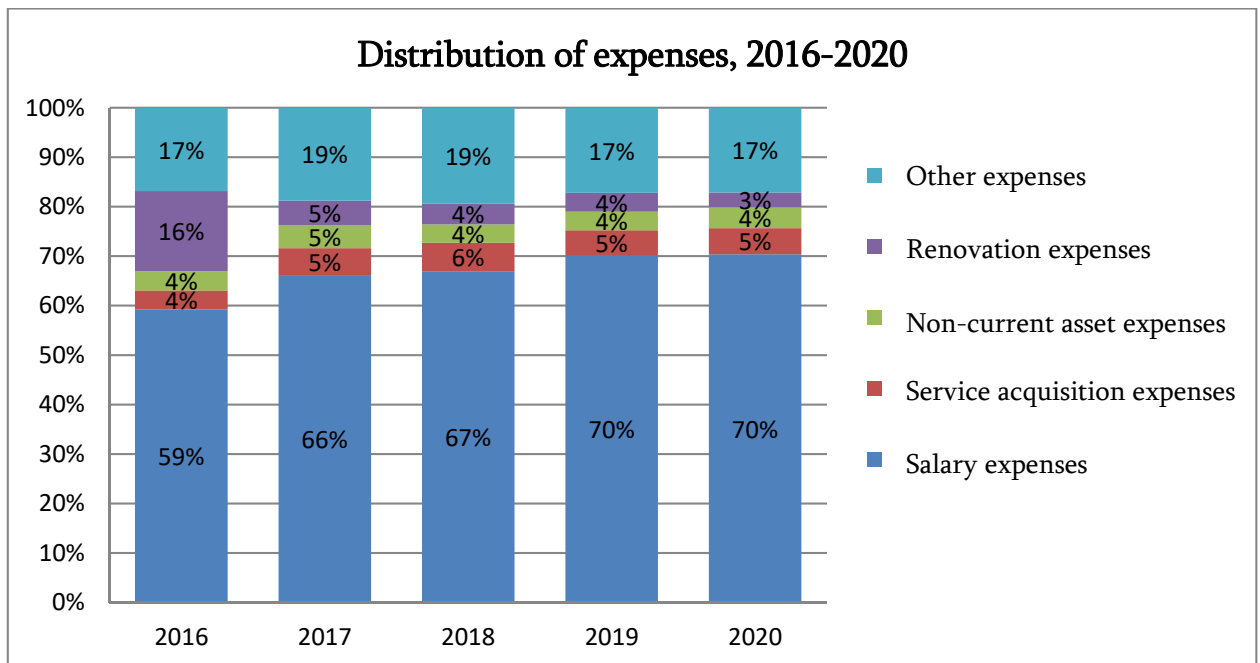
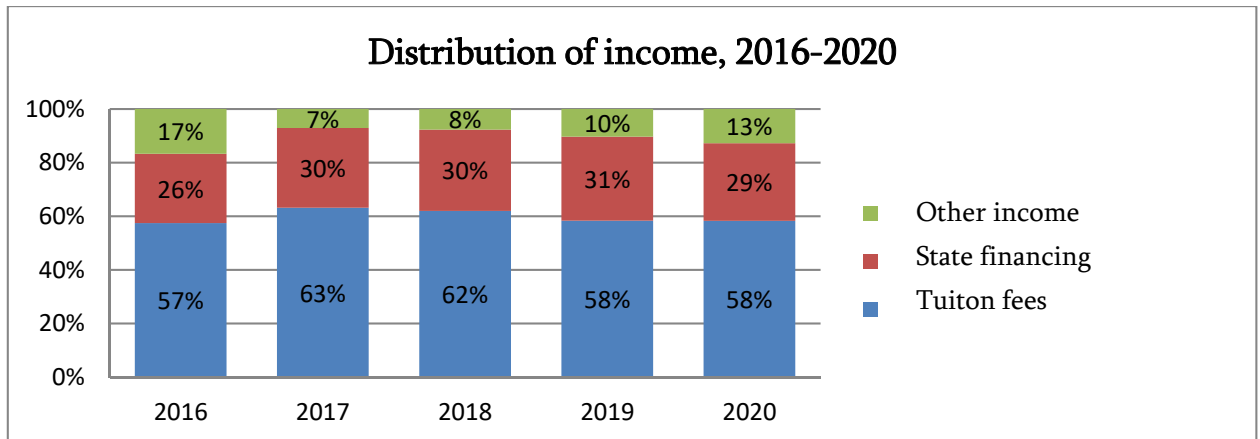
URL: http://documentation.yasu.am/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/audit_2018.pdf

Independent Auditor's Reports

URL: <http://documentation.yasu.am/?s=%D5%A1%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%A4%D5%AB%D5%BF&lang=hy>

Table 1 shows that income from tuition fees was reduced by 14.4% compared to 2016, conditioned by the decrease in the number of students. In 2016, the income received from the sale of the YSU guest house is also included in other incomes, that is why other incomes are higher than that of subsequent years. As we can see, other incomes in 2020 compared to 2017 have increased by 65%, which is mainly conditioned by the University income diversification programme, as well as the growth of grant programmes.

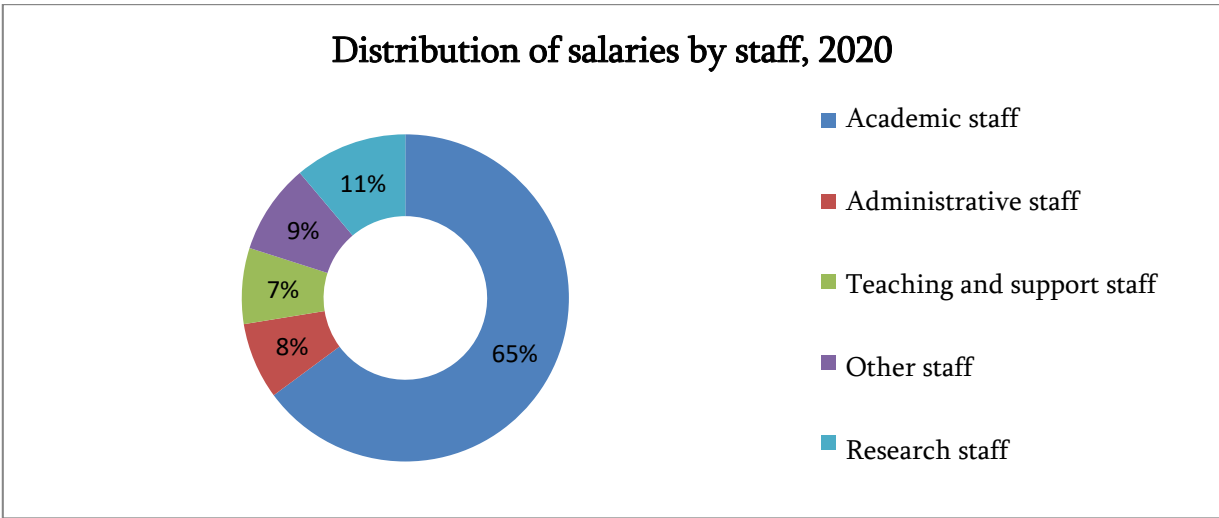
Income and expense proportions of the total budget by years based on Table 1 are presented below.



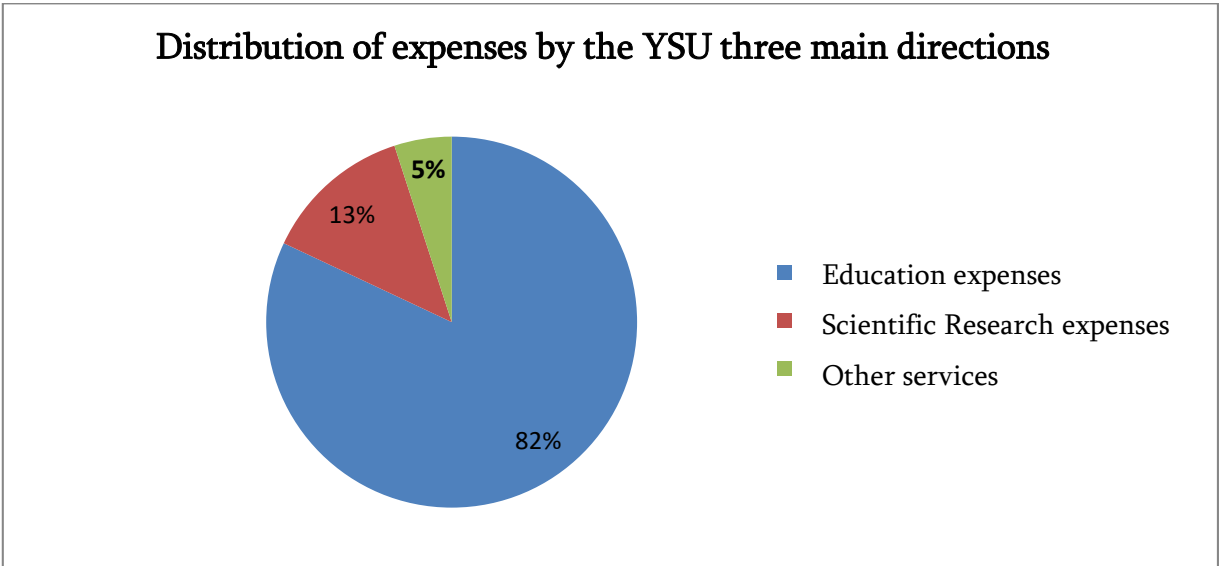
According to the above charts, the share of salaries in total expenses is the highest, with a tendency of annual growth, making up about 70% in 2020.

A significant part of “Other Expenses” comprises utility payments, business trip and targeted funding expenses, as well as Ijevan Branch funding costs and state budget payments.

The distribution of salaries for 2020 by individual staff members is shown below.

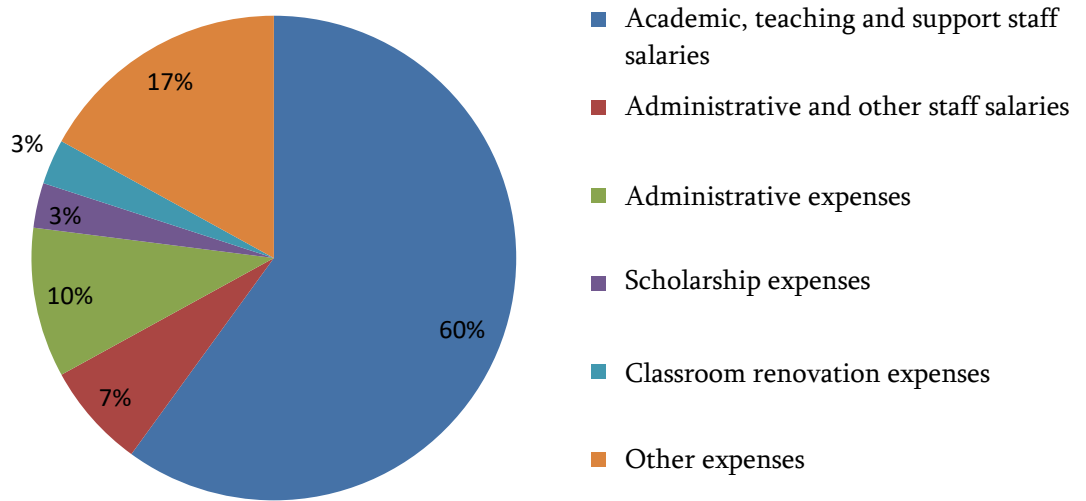


Distribution of expenses by the YSU three main goals according to the 2020 budget data is shown below, which in terms of proportion does not differ significantly from the previous years' data. The proportion of salary expenses served as a basis for the allocation of operating expenses.



Education expenses, in turn, have the following structure:

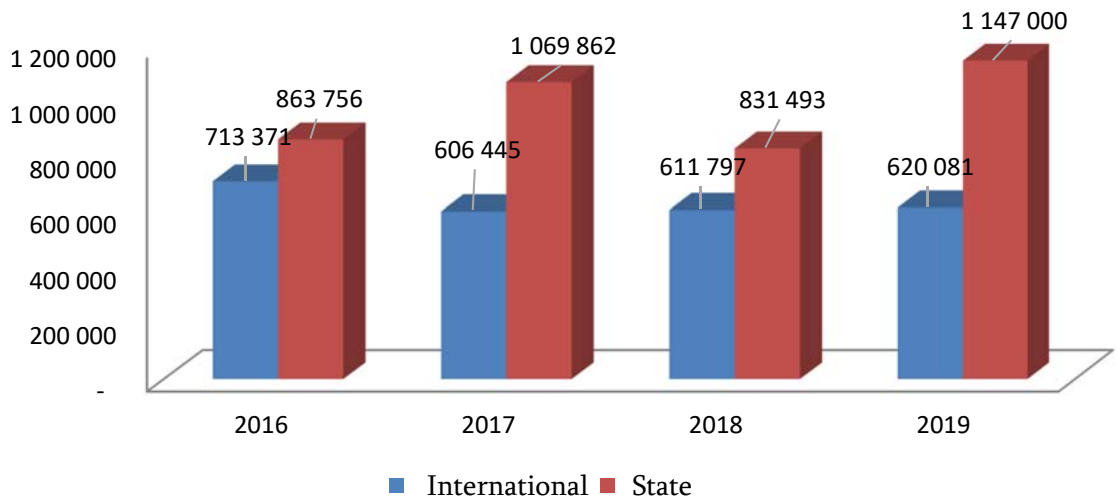
Distribution of education expenses

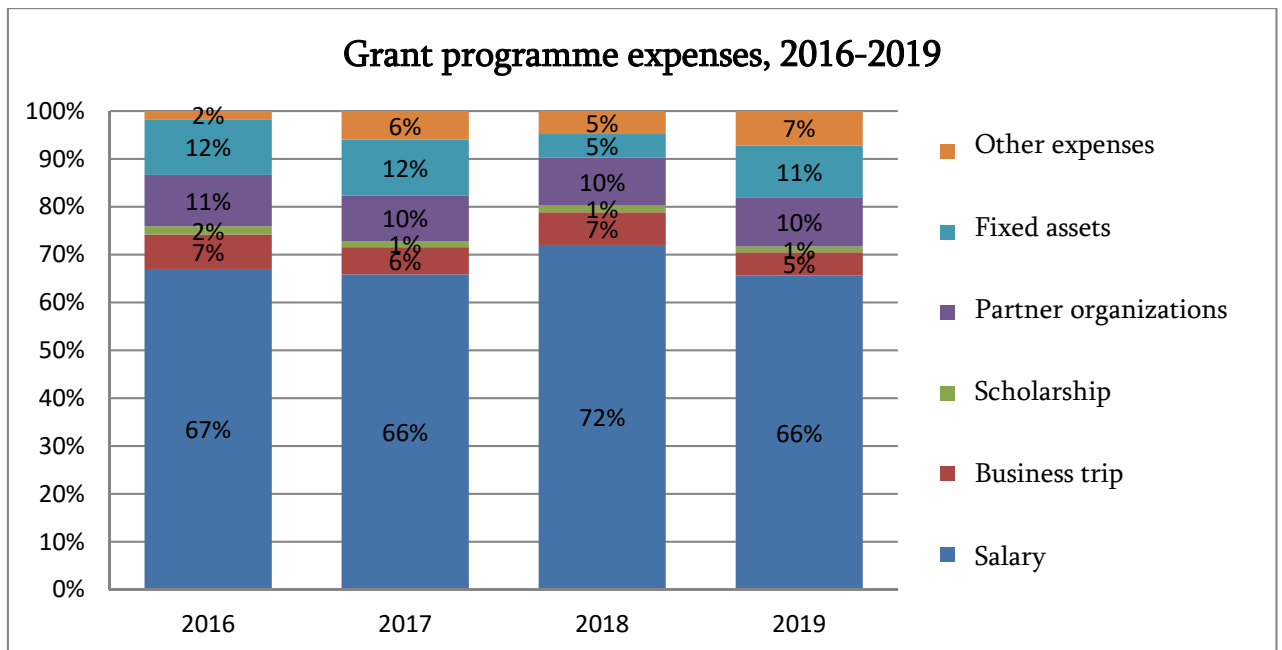


Grants, which are received from both the state budget and international programmes, make up a significant part of other incomes of the YSU budget.

Incomes from grants according to international and state financing and the relevant directions of their spending are presented below.

Grant programme income (thousand AMD), 2016-2019





“The YSU 2016-2020 Strategic Development Plan Implementation Schedule”¹¹ (see Annex 7.2) defines financial resources required for those years according to separate strategic directions.

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

Financial resources in YSU are distributed as follows: the draft budget is drawn up by the Rector, Vice-rectors, the Department of Financial Analysis and the chief accountant, based on the performance of previous years, scheduled events for the planned year, expected incomes and expenses. Individual subdivisions submit the list of goods, services and activities needed for the following year, after agreeing with the relevant units, and the Procurement Planning Department compiles a procurement plan according to the abovementioned lists. The draft budget is discussed at YSU Academic Council meeting, and if approved, is submitted to the YSU Board of Trustees for confirmation¹².

The YSU budget incomes are concentrated and then allocated to individual faculties according to the number of academic staff.

11. “The YSU 2016-2020 Strategic Development Plan Implementation Schedule”, 2015

URL: http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/EPH_razmavarakan_tsragri_irakanacman_zhamanakacuyc_plan.pdf

URL: <http://documentation.y-su.am/?s=%D5%AA%D5%A1%D5%B4%D5%A1%D5%B6%D5%A1%D5%AF%D5%A1%D6%81%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%B5%D6%81-%D5%BA%D5%AC%D5%A1%D5%B6&lang=hy>

12. Decision № 62 on the Approval of the Income and Expense Estimate for the 2020 Financial Year of the Yerevan State University Foundation

URL: http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/HKH_voroshum_62.pdf

Income and Expense Estimates for 2016-2020 of the Yerevan State University Foundation

<http://documentation.y-su.am/?s=%D5%B6%D5%A1%D5%AD%D5%A1%D5%B0%D5%A1%D5%B7%D5%AB%D5%BE%D5%A8+&lang=hy>

The salary of the academic staff is determined according to the workload, scientific degree, rank and position. There is also a differentiated salary bonus system¹³ for lecturers.

For each academic year, the faculties present their academic workload based on which the formation of staff and respective remuneration are realized.

The YSU faculties also have certain autonomy to distribute the financial means obtained by them. For example, part of the financial means received from part-time learning is disposed of by the faculty to provide basic academic staff with additional fees and cover material-technical expenses of the educational process.

Another mechanism of distributing resources is also the procurement of goods, jobs and services by the YSU Procurement and Supply Department based on orders of separate subdivisions¹⁴.

Conducting the audit of the YSU financial activities stems from the requirement of the RA legislation (Article 39 of the RA Law on Funds, article 26 of the RA Law on Accounting). According to the abovementioned legal acts, every year, an audit of financial statements and financial-economic activities is conducted by the licensed audit companies.

Although the limited resources of the University are managed as efficiently as possible, however, the enhancement of their management and implementation efficiency, being the YSU current strategic priority, is at the center of attention of the YSU Rector and the authorities of the relevant subdivisions.

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

The development of the YSU resource base and its efficient implementation in the ongoing development of academic programmes is fixed in the YSU Strategic Development Plan 2016-20, which aims to develop the classroom and laboratory conditions for the learning process, modernize the university infrastructures, develop the information systems and library infrastructures necessary for the implementation of the educational process². To settle these issues, YSU constantly technologically equips classrooms and educational laboratories, renovates and modernizes scientific laboratories, develops and implements a concept for the development of information systems and so forth.

Before starting a new academic programme at YSU, firstly, the justification of the programme implementation and availability of necessary resources are assessed. It is carried out by the process of licensing the given academic programme, during which initial assessment of the programme resource availability is undertaken and the need for additional resources is revealed. In the process of programme expertise and approval, the compliance of the resource base and educational infrastructure for the newly established programme and its component courses (educational modules)

13. Order 12 § 7 on the Review of the YSU Teaching and Support Staff Monthly Salary Rate

URL: <http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/druyqachap.pdf>

http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Profesoradas_anznakazmi_ashxatavarzi_druyqachapi-popoxman-masin.pdf

14. Decision № 51 on the Reorganization of the Procurement Planning and Storing Department of the YSU Foundation

URL: http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/HKH_voroshum_51.pdf

implementation with the established normative requirements is assessed¹⁵. Not only is the working group for the current academic programme development responsible for this process, but also the YSU ANQA (see “Regulation for Approval of YSU Study Programmes”¹⁵).

The mechanism for assessing the resource provision of the existing academic programmes is their current monitoring, during which the need for additional resources necessary for the implementation of the programme is regularly assessed¹⁶.

STANDARD 7.5. There is a sound policy and procedure to manage information and documentation.

In recent years, the University has provided significant material, financial and human resources for the improvement of this field, as a result of which the information systems operating in YSU and the computer network with its volume, technical equipment, functions and quality have made significant progress ensuring the University's leading position among the Armenian higher education institutions. All the University buildings are connected to the YSU central server by fiber-optic channels, the total length of which is several dozens of kilometers. As a result of the technical upgrade in 2019, the capacity of the internal network between the buildings reached up to 10 Gbps. The total number of computers connected to the YSU internal network is about 3000. There are more than 130 Wi-Fi routers that distribute wireless internet in all the buildings of YSU. Moreover, in 2019, YSU integration into the Eduroam¹⁷ global research roaming Wi-Fi network has started, as a result of which the YSU students, representatives of the academic staff and other employees can use free Wi-Fi internet not only at YSU but also in all the research centres of the world that joined the network. In general, the University has been providing unlimited internet to its students and lecturers since 2013. At present, all the employees and students have university email addresses¹⁸.

Since the beginning of the 2019/20 academic year, the Mulberry electronic document circulation system has been introduced at YSU, which has greatly accelerated and facilitated the document circulation process¹⁹.

The development of Supervision multifunctional network system for information management introduced at YSU in 2008 (the development of the system started in 2006) is still in process. This system is designed to automate all the stages of the educational process, to create an electronic database of students' academic data and educational progress.

Supervision provides simultaneous access to the system for many users - faculties, chairs and other university subdivisions. It allows to increase the efficiency of work organization due to the rapid exchange of information through the system.

The system includes the following stages of the educational process:

15. Regulation for Approval of YSU Study Programmes

URL: http://ysu.am/files/quality/Approval_of_YSU_Study_Programs.pdf ;
http://documentation.ysu.am/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/voroshum_4-4.pdf

16. Regulation for Monitoring and Periodic Review of YSU Study Programmes

URL: http://ysu.am/files/quality/Monitoring&Review_of_YSU_Study_Programs.pdf
http://documentation.ysu.am/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/voroshum_12-4.pdf

17. URL: http://wiki.ysu.am/xwiki/bin/view/IT%20dep/How_to_connect_to_eduroam/

18. URL: <http://mail.ysu.am/>

The YSU Staff Intranet (user guide)

URL: http://documentation.ysu.am/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/YSU_staff_intranet_2017.pdf

19. URL: <http://mul.ysu.am/>

- Registration of students and lecturers,
- Student mobility management and control,
- Calculation and control of curricula and chair workload,
- Compliance of the timetable with the curricula,
- Automatic registration of examination results,
- Student progress calculation and control,
- Automatic provision of information to the students about the learning process,
- Ensuring students' assessment of the learning process,
- Prompt reporting.

The automation of the educational process organization makes it possible to avoid human errors and improve the speed and quality of the work. System improvement continues up to now and gradually covers and automates more functions.

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

The health service in YSU is coordinated by the first-aid post under the supervision of the Vice-rector on General Affairs. The first aid post provides its services in the sports complex, 7th and 8th buildings, having one doctor in each of those buildings. The main function of the first-aid post is to provide first aid to students and staff.

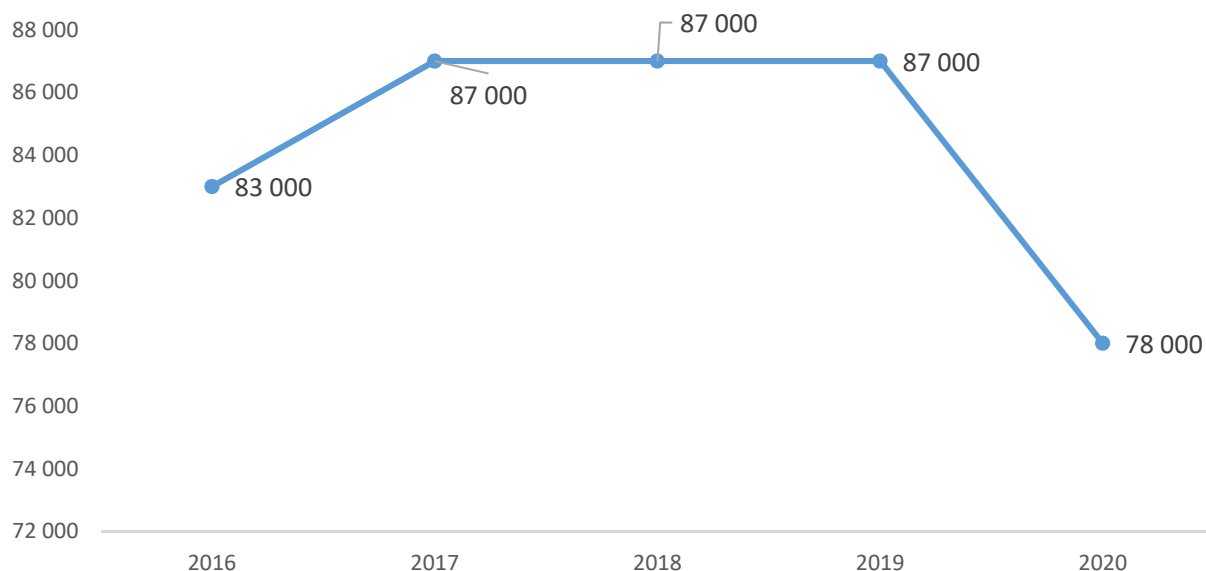
The YSU freshmen submit a statement from outpatient cards of their local polyclinics on their current health.. According to the data presented for the subject of Physical Education, the students are divided into four groups by their health state: basic, preparatory, special and therapeutic. In the second semester of the academic year, students without chronic diseases (postoperative period) included in the therapeutic group again present a statement on their health state from their outpatient cards. Depending on the latter, group change is possible²⁰.

YSU has a 24-hour security service carrying out the maintenance of the buildings and property, as well as providing security for students and staff. The Security Service is delegated to the external companies with relevant experience and qualification according to the RA Law on Procurement. The resources allocated for the maintenance and security by years are presented below²¹. In 2019, the YSU Security Service was carried out by about 60 employees.

20. Decision № 8/10 on the Approval of the “Charter of the Department of Physical Education and Sports of YSU”
URL: http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/voroshum_8-10.pdf

21. Decision № 72 on the Approval of the Procurement Agreement for the Provision of Security Services to the "Yerevan State University" Foundation
URL: http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/HKH_voroshum_72.pdf

Maintenance expenses , 2016-2020 (thousand AMD)



YSU also has a sanitary cleaning service to ensure the sanitation of all buildings. Like the security service, it is also delegated to the companies with relevant experience and qualifications. In the last few years, YSU has provided about 140,000 AMD for the provision of this service, which was carried out by about 80-90 relevant employees.

The YSU students and employees can use the YSU educational and production complex in Tsakhkadzor to organize their rest, where discounted prices are available for them²². This year it is planned to restore and modernize the educational and production complexes in Byurakan and Dilijan, after which it will be possible to organize rest also in those resorts.

In case of emergency, the civil defense of students and staff is carried out by the YSU Civil Defense Headquarter. Permanent civil defense headquarters operate in YSU buildings with the involvement of the building superintendents and faculty deans ²³. The headquarter also conducts preventive activities to organize student rescue groups to involve them in rescue operations, if necessary. Some buildings have a fire alarm system.

YSU takes measures to ensure a safe environment and inclusive education for students with visual, auditory, motor and other problems. For this purpose, by the Order No. 187/20-A dated on October 10, 2019 of the Acting Rector relevant faculties will be provided by financial incentives²⁴.

22. Order 205 § 14 On Establishing the Price of the New Year Tickets and Reservation Procedure at YSU Educational and Production Complex in Tsakhkadzor

URL: <http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/hraman-205-14.pdf>

23. URL: http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/hraman_165-199.pdf

24. URL: http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Hraman_187-20.pdf

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

The YSU graduate and student surveys are effective mechanisms for assessing the usefulness/ effectiveness and availability of the resources and services provided to students. The availability and effectiveness of the learning resources and support services provided by YSU are assessed through 8 questions included in the online survey on graduates' satisfaction with the education received at YSU, where there is a separate section of opinions and suggestions²⁵.

Table 2 shows that the graduates are mainly satisfied with the usefulness of the YSU learning resources and support services.

Table 2. Levels of characteristics related to learning resources and support services by average ratings of students' satisfaction

	2018		2019	
	Average rating	Standard deviation	Average rating	Standard deviation
Satisfaction with the classroom working conditions	4.09	0.92	4.14	0.88
Satisfaction with the library service	4.09	0.96	4.06	0.98
Satisfaction with the library facilities	4.06	0.94	4.08	0.94
Satisfaction with the library modern literature	4.0	0.997	3.96	0.99
Satisfaction with the role of the Career Centre	3.95	1.04	3.95	1.04
Satisfaction with the laboratory facilities	3.95	1.07	4.00	1.02
Satisfaction with the accessibility of computer rooms	3.94	1.01	3.94	1.02
Satisfaction with the Internet accessibility	3.90	1.02	3.86	1.02

There is also an opportunity to assess learning resources and support services on the online platform of students' surveys about the quality and effectiveness of teaching, where students can submit opinions and suggestions on the quality of the provided resources and services.

The results of the surveys conducted over the years show that often the functions of enhancing learning resources and support services are based on the information obtained through these mechanisms.

25. Procedure for Organizing Surveys on Graduate Satisfaction with the Education Received at YSU
 URL: <http://documentation.yosu.am/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/voroshum-1-3.pdf>
<http://documentation.yosu.am/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/karg.pdf>

As can be seen from Table 2, the graduates rated the classroom working conditions higher. This tendency is maintained in the studies conducted in recent years as well. Graduates rate the various characteristics related to the library work relatively higher.

**YSU activity strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats
by Criterion 7**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. YSU has the necessary infrastructure to organize the educational process properly, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • renovated and modernized educational research laboratories and library reading halls, • modern student dormitory and guest house, • renovated and modernized gyms in line with modern requirements, • the library meeting modern requirements. 2. Effective mechanisms are introduced to distribute and control financial resources. 3. There are modernized IT infrastructures in YSU: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • educational document circulation is carried out through the multifunctional SuperVision network system, • administrative document circulation is carried out through the Mulberry system, • various other IT systems are introduced, such as Intranet, Armenian Software and so forth. 4. There is an online platform for organizing graduate and student surveys. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Incomplete automation of financial transactions. 2. Weak feedback mechanisms for graduates. 3. Non-optimal use of buildings. 4. Poor Wi-Fi access in some areas of YSU. 5. Insufficient conditions for students and employees with special needs.
Opportunities	Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Active participation in international cooperation grant programmes. 2. Increase in financing received from state and private sources along with the development of the RA economy. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The share of tuition fees in financial entries is high, which creates a dependency on the number of students. 2. The YSU premises and buildings are provided for an indefinite period and gratuitous use.

Planned ways to overcome weaknesses and threats

1. Synchronize IT systems (AS, Intranet, Supervision, Moodle).
2. Equip buildings and areas with Wi-Fi routers.
3. Allocate resources and create the necessary infrastructure to provide mobility/movement for students and employees with special needs.
4. Collaborate with various organizations, including local and foreign foundations and charities, to modernize educational research laboratories and libraries.
5. Renovate and reconstruct the YSU sports and health complexes in Dilijan and Hankavan.
6. Provide resources to activate the marketing processes of the YSU paid services, in particular for the new dormitory, language centre, preparatory and ongoing education courses and so forth.
7. Create a new YSU Graduate Union, involving it in the processes of solving the YSU issues and implementing development programmes.

VIII. SOCIETAL RESPONSIBILITY

CRITERION: THE TLI IS ACCOUNTABLE TO THE GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY FOR THE EDUCATION IT OFFERS AND THE RESOURCES IT USES AS WELL AS FOR THE RESEARCH IT CONDUCTS.

YSU ambitions:

- Preserve and strengthen the mission of YSU as the main educational and research institution of Pan-Armenian significance.
- Reorganize the institution that develops dynamically by offering and implementing modern and affordable academic programmes, taking into account the hundred-year experience of the YSU academic and research activity and adapting the heritage and traditions to the modern world processes.
- Create and strengthen the image of a University with high social responsibility by implementing social programmes for the YSU students and staff, and actively participating in various initiatives and programmes at national and state levels.
- Regularly review academic programmes in line with the labour market requirements, conduct training and create a trusted partner rating among employers and cooperate with them.
- Create and develop a reputation of a responsible University and partner in relations with foreign educational and research institutions, as well as foreign students, offering and implementing modern, quality academic and scientific research programmes.¹

STANDARD 8.1. There is clear policy on institutional accountability.

Taking responsibility for its mission and role, YSU has developed a certain system of accountability over the years. It can be divided into internal and external by its direction, and educational-research and financial-economic by its nature. The accountability of YSU is defined both by its Charter and various regulations, as well as by the legislative and sub-legislative acts of the RA*.

For almost ten years, the University development process and directions have been determined by strategic plans (SP) and their implementation schedules. Those documents also predetermine the content of the University reports and promote the improvement of the management system.

Since 2009, the YSU supreme governing body, the YSU Board (since 2014 Board of Trustees) discusses and approves the five-year strategic development plans developed by the University subdivisions and submitted by the rector, as well as the schedules for their implementation (two have been approved so far: 2010-2014 and 2016-2020). These documents, in accordance with the fields and directions, present the actions to be taken, people in charge, financing sources, as well as the deadlines of implementation. On this basis, at the end of each year, YSU structural subdivisions

¹ The presented ambitions stem from “Yerevan State University” Foundation Charter (Yerevan,2014), the YSU vision and fundamental values, as well as the goals of the YSU Strategic Development Plan ((2016-2020), Yerevan,2015). See pp.3-5 and 5-6 respectively.

* See Article 22 of the Charter of "Yerevan State University" Foundation, clause 6 of Article 42, clauses 3-5 of Article 56 [http://ysu.am/files/quality/Charter_of_YSU_Foundation_\(2014\).pdf](http://ysu.am/files/quality/Charter_of_YSU_Foundation_(2014).pdf), Laws on “Education”, “Higher and Postgraduate Professional Education” and other, as well as the RA Government decisions.

(faculties, research institutes, branches, chairs, centers, departments and so forth) submit reports to the governing units in line with their statutory requirements*, clarifying their activities carried out in accordance with the strategic plan and schedule, pointing out the shortcomings as well. Apart from the actual report, the managers' ability to perform general and local actions, as well as to ensure the natural course of subdivision activities during the year according to the SP schedule is considered an important indicator while assessing the efficiency of subdivisions' performance. In other words, the connection between the governing units and subdivisions, their cooperation and control may be characterized as permanent. This is important in terms of effective management and capacity to respond promptly to shortcomings.

In terms of improving the accountability process at YSU, the launch of the "Intranet" system in 2017 has become a major positive change, due to which lecturers upload the results of their activities and reports making the YSU general reporting procedure simplified and more systematic.

The main and comprehensive report summarizing the internal reporting process is the rector's annual report submitted to the Board of Trustees, which is compiled with the participation of almost all the departments of the University.

The YSU Public Relations Service collects, coordinates and summarizes the information for this report. The latter publishes annual performance reports of the YSU Strategic Development Plan to ensure the YSU accountability to the university and general public.²

Internal reporting in the financial and economic fields is carried out through the budget for the fiscal year adopted by the YSU Academic Council, and the approval of its performance report by the Board of Trustees, submitted by the Rector at the end of the year. From this point of view, importance is attached to the obligation of the University to carry out an annual mandatory external financial audit, in accordance with the RA "Law on Accounting" and Article 22, Clause 2 of the YSU Charter. The audit opinion is also approved by the Board of Trustees.

As for external accountability, YSU annually submits various reports on educational and research activities to the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of the Republic of Armenia by the requirement of a number of laws and by-laws, as well as reports on financial and economic issues to the State Revenue Committee, National Statistical Committee and other state agencies.

The YSU accountability process is a system that has passed a certain path of development and still needs to be improved. To get an idea of the mentioned process, the main problems observed and changes introduced in the implementation stages of the YSU strategic development plans for 2010-2014 and 2016-2020 are presented below, and the future plans are outlined as well.

Thus, in 2010-2014 the low level of involvement of the faculties in the creation of the strategic

* E.g. Clause 4 of Article 24 of the faculties' typical charters defines, that faculties' Academic Councils listen to the annual reports of the Dean and assess the performance, and Article 50 mentions the obligation of the heads of chairs to submit an annual report to the Academic Councils of the faculties and so forth. See Ysu Faculty Exemplary Charter http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/orinakeli_kanonadrutyun.pdf

² The YSU strategic development plan 2016-2020. Report on the implementation of the actions planned for 2016-2017 academic year, Yerevan., 2017, p. 92. The YSU strategic development plan 2016-2020. Report on the implementation of the actions planned for 2017-2018 academic year, Yerevan., 2018, p. 88. The mentioned performance reports were also used when writing this Standard. See http://ysu.am/files/quality/YSU_Strategic_Development_Plan_2016-2020.pdf

plan and its schedule* has led to the fact that even in case of availability of these documents, faculties did not play a major role in solving the problems mentioned therein and overall, they have been working with inertia as before. This, in turn caused some disruption in the activities of the University central governing units and faculties. This problem was overcome to some extent in the process of creating the strategic development plan 2016-2020 and its schedule, since the faculties' participation in this stage increased significantly. In parallel with all-university plans, faculty strategic plans were created, in which, along with all-university issues and activities, measures important for the faculty activities were also introduced. Thus, localization of the strategic plan took place. This step has contributed to both the improvement of management, plan implementation efficiency, as well as to the formation of a unified pace in all University subdivisions and units.

The strategic plan 2010-2014 and its schedule did not include indicators of expected measurable progress in case of problems solving, which would allow the proper assessment of the achieved results and the work done. The latter was also added to the strategic development plan 2016-2020.

In terms of financing, the schedule of the first strategic plan is inferior to the next one: the financing sources needed to solve almost all the problems of the first strategic plan— were indicated as "appropriate funding", while the new schedule already indicates specific amounts of money and relevant sources for certain issues.

Nevertheless, YSU realizes the need to make necessary changes for meeting its objectives and implementing strategic development plans. To this end, in the coming years it is planned to specify the roles of those responsible for the implementation of the activities envisaged by the SP, especially concerning the central and lower governing units. Further elaboration of tasks and actions and the specification of those responsible will contribute to the individualization of responsibilities and the increase of work efficiency of the governing unit. Reporting standards will be defined whereby the reporters will not only cover the work done, but will also be required to indicate the quantitative data of the activities during the reporting period envisaged by the plan, steps taken in their directions, or to explain the reasons for their non-implementation. The mentioned standards will promote the responsibility in terms of the plan implementation. It is also important to introduce more specific mechanisms for calculating the necessary financial resources for actions envisaged by the strategic development plans, to avoid non-implementation or improper implementation of the mentioned actions due to the lack or insufficiency of financial resources.

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

Ensuring the further development of the Institution's public relations and the public responsibility promotion, in 2006 the Department of Information and Public Relations was

* The study of the report on the implementation of the Strategic Development Plan 2010-2014 shows that in the framework of the goal of "Financial Stability, Effective Management", more efforts have been made to increase the stability of planning, management and use of financial resources. Although in clause 8 "E" the need to increase the efficiency, decentralization, and accountability of YSU management is mentioned, however, actually no significant steps have been taken in that direction. The report only dwells upon the equal distribution of powers and responsibilities between the central and local government branches in the regulations, the evaluation of the eight fields of the YSU activity and the introduction of an electronic inventory system. See Report on the implementation of the YSU strategic development plan (2010-2014), Yerevan, 2014.

established at YSU, which was reorganized into the Public Relations Service on July 26, 2019. The service has a range of important functions: introducing proposals on public relations policy, developing and implementing relevant programmes and events, cooperating with Armenian and foreign media, covering the YSU events, developing Internet resources, disseminating information and videos about YSU on the Internet, replying to inquiries, emails, application-requests and relevant guidance, organizing separate English and Russian websites for foreign students and scholars, recording popular-scientific films and lectures, as well as videos about all the University departments and educational programmes, compiling annual reports, preparing and designing the YSU brand book and working with media aimed at organizing interviews and expert analysis with the YSU employees and so forth.

The introduction of the YSU spokesperson position, combined with the position of the Head of Public Relations Service, has also promoted the enhancement of relations of YSU with the society and mass media.

Developing the unified system of public relations, increasing the efficiency of the intra-university network of public relations have put the regular meetings and work with the heads of public relations of YSU structural units, as well as with the YSU faculty deans, vice deans, centers and departments on a new level in recent years.

Guided by “the YSU Strategic Development Plan 2016-2020”, Objective 3 “Public Involvement and Services”, Action 3 “Ensure the Dynamic Development of the Internet Portal by Enriching, Modernizing Its Content and Software Components”, the YSU Internet Portal is being developed according to the action plan for the development of the University internet resources. There are more than 100 websites and sub-websites in the YSU portal established in 2006.

The lecturers’ data (in Armenian and English), their photos, and the data on scientific publications are edited and posted on the websites of the faculties. There are 28.688 publications available on the website.

To various groups of the society YSU presents itself as a leading educational, scientific, cultural and social structure, which contributes to the fact that more or less public events held at the university attract the attention of the media. The events taking place at YSU are covered in the "News" section on the YSU portal. Annually 2771 articles in Armenian, Russian and English are released on the "News" section of the website. All the films (1000 minutes) and audio files (83 files) stored at YSU were digitized and later selected and edited in the form of 55 films together with their descriptions.

Ongoing work is carried out on "The YSU Documents" website (<http://doc.y-su.am>), ensuring the transparency principle. Not only are the YSU charters, regulations, procedures, plans, orders, reports, financial documents uploaded, but also minutes and decisions of the collegial body (the YSU Board of Trustees, the YSU Academic Council, faculties and other units operating at the University) sessions are presented.

Relevant information is available for the applicants of full-time and part-time modes of study in the "Applicant" section of the YSU website (<http://www.y-su.am/entrant>), including the movement of the full-time applicants admitted in the given academic year by days, as well as the lists of the admitted students. And the educational documents (programmes, guidelines, orders, etc.) are posted on the “Education” section of the portal to make the mentioned documents more available for the

students and relevant target groups. The electronic version of the “Freshmen Guide” has also been created.

Filming the faculty official videos, covering the activity of the YSU centres and laboratories, preparing materials on scientific achievements, as well as uploading the University and universitarians archive photos on the "Retro Gallery" section of the YSU website and regularly updating the "Gallery" section with new photos related to the University events ensure the transparency of the YSU processes.

STANDARD 8.3. The TLI has sustainable feedback mechanisms for establishing relations with society.

One of the most important objectives of the YSU development is the expansion of feedback with different groups of society and the development of the monitoring system ("The YSU Strategic Development Plan 2014-2020", Objective 3.1, Action 5). It should be noted that the Internet is one of the effective means of providing feedback that facilitates the formation of relations with society.

YSU has a rapid response system for letters and emails addressed to the Institution, and the posts with negative content about the University receive answers in the form of announcements. The YSU official email (info@ysu.am) receives about 70 letters a day, which receive prompt responses as well. The announcements on students and lecturers exchange programmes added on the "Announcements" section of the "International" website of the YSU portal also provide feedback. The letters received via email, Facebook social network and "Question-Answer" section of the YSU portal are being elaborated and analyzed. More than 2,000 questions are received annually, about 1,800 of which receive consummate answers. The news updated on the YSU portal is also posted on the YSU Facebook and Twitter pages. This way, communication with the audience through social networks becomes more direct. The YSU pages are very active on social networks. In particular, many Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/ysu.am>) visitors (the number of followers is about 52,000) conduct active discussions. About 2,224 news (trilingual) have been posted on the YSU Twitter (https://twitter.com/YSU_official). The YSU Instagram official page (https://www.instagram.com/ysu_yerevan_state_university/) has been launched since May 2017, the number of followers is already 1,760. The total number of videos uploaded to the YSU Youtube page is 392. Special attention was paid to the events and preparatory programmes dedicated to the 100th anniversary of YSU. The employees of the YSU Public Relations Service send the events of public interest to the Armenian mass media in the form of ready-made materials and photos (39 invitations and 197 messages per year), as a result of which the number of positive reviews and articles about YSU has increased. The events organized at YSU are published and covered by the Armenian print and electronic media.

The Public Relations Service monitors the materials published about YSU in the Armenian print media, on websites and TV companies, as well as films, information and announcements about upcoming events are transmitted by TV screens at YSU Central and other building halls.

It should be noted that the need and importance of the use of feedback tools are fixed in the YSU Public Relations concept³ and some other documents, and the YSU potential contributes to more effective implementation of the process.

³ See http://documentation.ysu.am/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/PR_hayetsakarg_28_06_121.pdf

STANDARD 8.4. The TLI has mechanisms that ensures knowledge transfer to the society.

The strategic goals and policies of the services provided to the society by YSU derive from the goals, vision and values defined in the University Charter and Strategic development plans⁴.

The YSU Strategic Development Plan defines a number of goals and objectives aimed at intellectual, spiritual and moral development of an individual, formation of a civic viewpoint, dissemination of knowledge among the population, assistance in educational, economic, scientific and cultural progress of the society and introduction of scientific research and creative activity outcomes in the economy.⁵

YSU organizes higher, postgraduate professional and additional education, carries out staff training and qualification enhancement, as well as scientific-research and publishing activities, provides counseling and expert services, organizes cultural events and so forth.

According to the YSU SP, the stakeholders of the University are the Armenian society and the general public⁶ representatives. The transfer of economic, social, humanitarian and cultural values to the public is also part of the YSU mission. Among the mechanisms for transferring values to the society are public lectures in the regional universities and military units of the RA Ministry of Defense, meetings with representatives of various groups of society, participation in various civil movements and programmes (environmental, social, charitable and so forth).

YSU has contributed immensely to the formation of the scientific thought of the republic⁷. The YSU scientific library provides an opportunity for the general public to use library funds. The books published by YSU are regularly donated to the city and university libraries of the capital and the regions. During exhibitions and fairs, certain amount of professional literature of the YSU Publishing House was provided to those interested in the relevant field.

The role of YSU as a center of Armenology is important in terms of maintaining and strengthening national values and, in this regard, it is worth mentioning the YSU Research Institute of Armenology, the activities of which are aimed at preserving national identity and studying homeland-diaspora relations, as well as national issues. The YSU Chair of Diaspora Studies at the Faculty of History, the Faculty of Armenian Philology and so forth also play an important role in strengthening the homeland-diaspora relations and preserving cultural values of diaspora and the mother tongue.

The YSU Postgraduate and Additional Education Department is one of the units implementing additional educational projects for different groups of society. In 2017, the Department developed about 10 programmes for the RA National Assembly, the RA Civil Service System, the RA Ministry of Defense, etc. to expand partnership with public and private organizations. As a result of the monitoring carried out in the Department during the 2016/2017 academic year, the additional academic programmes of the department were completely or partially revised in terms of content and staffing in the 2017/2018 academic year.

⁴ Charter of "Yerevan State University" Foundation, Yerevan, 2014 ([http://ysu.am/files/quality/Charter_of_YSU_Foundation_\(2014\).pdf](http://ysu.am/files/quality/Charter_of_YSU_Foundation_(2014).pdf)), YSU SP 2016-2020, Goal I (http://ysu.am/files/quality/YSU_Strategic_Development_Plan_2016-2020.pdf).

⁵ See YSU SP 2016-2020, Goal I (http://ysu.am/files/quality/YSU_Strategic_Development_Plan_2016-2020.pdf).

⁶ See Standard 1.2.

⁷ See Criterion 6.

In the 2017/2018 academic year, the YSU Postgraduate and Additional Education Department (PAED) conducted a study and monitoring of additional academic programmes available in the market, aimed at revealing the public demand for additional education. As a result, two reports were submitted; 1. "Study of Public Demand for Additional Education"⁸, 2. "Report on the Monitoring of Academic Programmes of the Postgraduate and Additional Education Department"⁹. To study the public demand for additional education in the labor and education markets, a documentary analysis was mainly carried out based on numerous studies carried out by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of the RA. The studies were also carried out in a quantitative method, based on the results of the surveys of civil servants trained at YSU. These studies reveal the special role of additional education in labor market-University relations.

To raise the level of public awareness about the additional academic programmes, the YSU PAED has created the "YSU Postgraduate Additional Education" website (<http://extension.y-su.am>), which presents all the additional academic programmes implemented at YSU. The website ensures relation with postgraduate additional education stakeholders and promotes the publicization of the relevant YSU services. All the reports of the studies are uploaded on the "YSU Postgraduate Additional Education" <http://extension.y-su.am/en/> website.

YSU provides a range of distance learning courses in Sociology, Social Work, Social Pedagogy, Human Resource Management, Public Relations, Marketing, Philosophy, Oriental Studies, International Relations, Asian Studies, English and a number of other fields. In 2014-2019, by order of World Vision, the Distance Learning Laboratory of the Faculty of Sociology conducted training courses for the community social workers. The complete information on the implemented courses is available on the <http://distancelearning.am/index.php/en/> website. Upon completion of each course, the Distance Learning Laboratory of the Faculty of Sociology assesses graduates' satisfaction and conducts surveys aimed at revealing their expectations and suggestions.

YSU also comes up with new initiatives to provide additional educational services. On December 26, 2019, members of the YSU Board of Trustees voted in favor of the decision to establish a Language Training and Testing Centre. The centre will provide language training services to the YSU students and employees, as well as to all citizens who will pay for the service provided at that affordable price.

The University provides counseling services in the field of professional orientation and works with the pupils of public schools and applicants¹⁰. The University also provides psychological counseling services implemented by the YSU Center of Applied Psychology.¹¹ The service was provided to about 80 children in 2016-2019.

The YSU Alumni and Career Center is also a unit providing support services to the public, which in 2016-2019 along with other functions organized a series of events and seminars promoting the acquisition of knowledge related to the business world, development of business ethics and other skills with the participation of the following companies and organizations; "Breedge", "Beeline", "Armenpress", "Rosgosstrakh Armenia", "HSBC", "World Vision International" and so forth. As a

⁸ See http://extension.y-su.am/images/pdf/9LK_Hanrayin_pahanjark.pdf

⁹ See http://extension.y-su.am/images/pdf/10LK_mshtaditarkum.pdf

¹⁰ See Standard 4.1.

¹¹ See <http://ysu.am/psy/hy/1385203581> ; <http://ysu.am/psy/en>

result, about 5,000 students and former graduates took part in the events¹².

The University also attaches great importance to the work with Diaspora. “Diaspora” summer school was organized together with the RA Ministry of Diaspora until 2018. In the scope of the activities carried out with the Diaspora, distance learning programmes on Armenian history and Genocide were conducted, and almost 430 participants from 5 countries took part in that programmes in 2016 and 2017. The "Armenian Language" and "Armenian History" re-qualification programme for Diaspora teachers has also been carried out.

The reputation and positive image of any organization are conditioned by its concept of social responsibility and the programmes implemented within its framework.

The joint concept of "Public Relations, Marketing Activities and Corporate Social Responsibility of YSU" was developed and adopted on July 6, 2017, according to the YSU SP schedule of implementation¹³. Under this concept, financial assistance was defined and continuously provided to the participants of the April war and their families. In particular, from 2016 to the present day, YSU provides monthly financial assistance to 55 underage children of 23 killed soldiers until adulthood¹⁴.

The traditional annual tree planting in Artsakh, donations to schools and rural communities were also implemented, as well as financial assistance was provided to the «Hayastan All-Armenian Fund»¹⁵ and the “Youth Foundation of Armenia”¹⁶.

**YSU activity strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats
by Criterion 8**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. YSU has a bottom-up reporting system, the activity of which is ensured by the established procedures, based on the University SP, its implementation schedule and measurable progress indicators. 2. The University involves not only the administrative staff but also the lecturers and students in the development and implementation of its SP, as well as in the activities ensuring its accountability, which is 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There are no performance indicators in the reports. 2. The roles of those responsible for the actions envisaged by the SP are not individualized. 3. Incomplete mechanisms for identifying the needs of the stakeholders of the YSU additional educational and counseling services. 4. Insufficient level of commercialization

¹² See Standard 4.5. YSU SP 2016-2020 VI, Objective 6.1, Action 2 http://ysu.am/files/quality/YSU_Strategic_Development_Plan_2016-2020.pdf.

¹³ See <http://documentation.yasu.am/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/hayecakarg.pdf>

¹⁴ The amount of monthly assistance paid to one underage child of each family is 40,000 AMD, and to each subsequent child of the same family, 20,000 AMD. In 2016 this annual financial aid comprised about 13,3436,000 AMD including VAT, in 2017 25,000,000 AMD including VAT, in 2018 after excluding VAT it comprised 18,000,000 AMD and in 2019 18,040,000 AMD.

¹⁵ Financial assistance in amount of 3,000,000 AMD was annually provided to Hayastan All-Armenian Fund in 2015-2018, and 4,000,000 AMD in 2019.

¹⁶ Financial assistance in amount of 130,000,000 AMD was provided to Youth Foundation of Armenia in 2015, 120,000,000 AMD in 2016, 125,000,000 AMD in 2017, and 25.000.000 AMD in 2018.

<p>one of the key indicators of ensuring the SP accountability and management efficiency.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The services provided to the society by YSU match the goals, vision and values defined by its Charter and SP. 4. The activities of the units providing additional educational and counseling services to the public by YSU are properly regulated. 5. The efficiency of providing additional educational and counseling services to different groups of society is assessed by satisfaction surveys. 6. There are mechanisms for multilateral cooperation between the university and the enterprise. 7. The transparency of the YSU activities is ensured by the provision of regularly updated electronic and printed information. 8. Daily monitoring of the press and social networks is carried out to provide feedback to the public. 	<p>of the YSU additional educational and counseling services.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Low level of institutionalization of the function of transferring knowledge and values to the society. 6. Lack of regular analysis of media daily monitoring data.
Opportunities	Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expansion of the YSU additional educational and counseling services through the intensification of marketing processes among various educational and research institutions and production enterprises. 2. Intensification of the YSU graduates' involvement in inter-university life and programmes. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increasing competition among RA institutions providing additional educational and counseling services. 2. Mismatch of public demand and supply for additional education. 3. Frequent subjective attitude of the media towards YSU.

Planned ways to overcome weaknesses and threats

1. Improving the YSU accountability and management systems and increasing efficiency through the individualization of the roles and functions of those responsible for the implementation of SP.
2. Implementation of awareness-raising activities about the YSU additional educational and counseling services among different groups of societies and businesses.
3. Application of mechanisms to study the market of the YSU additional educational and counseling services and revealing the needs of the stakeholders.
4. Development of internal and external mechanisms to assess the efficiency and relevance of the YSU additional educational and counseling services.
5. Implementation of business and marketing programmes to increase incomes from the YSU additional educational and counseling services.
6. Institutionalization of the process of transferring knowledge and values to the society and development of a joint management programme.

7. Creation of a mobile application for the YSU portal.

IX. EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND INTERNATIONALIZATION

CRITERION: THE TLI PROMOTES EXPERIENCE EXCHANGE AND ENHANCEMENT THROUGH ITS SOUND EXTERNAL RELATIONS PRACTICES, THUS PROMOTING INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE INSTITUTION.

Internationalization is a YSU strategic objective, which implies training of the staff involved in the sphere of internationalization, introduction of academic programmes and modules in target foreign languages, promotion of internal and international mobility, development of joint Master's degree programmes, as well as an increase in the number of subjects taught in foreign languages (see YSU 2016-2020 Strategic Development Plan, Yerevan, 2015, p. 33-34).

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

The policy for the YSU internationalization is implemented in accordance with:

- a. the concept of internationalization approved by resolution 4/5 of the YSU academic council on January 26, 2017¹, which defines the main directions of the process of the YSU internationalization, as well as the annual key indicators for the evaluation of clarified and developed internationalization processes.
- b. YSU 2016-2020 Strategic Development Plan,
- c. YSU Charter.

Within the international cooperation evaluation context YSU attaches particular importance to the following components:

- increase in incoming and outgoing mobility,
- double diploma foreign language modules and subjects offered in foreign language and their number, overseas lecturers, internationalized contents of academic programmes, overseas supervisors of research works carried out during the study, international orientation of the research topics,
- increase in YSU participation in international grant programs,
- extensive involvement in international academic associations and consortiums,
- acquisition of new international partners,
- broad efforts aimed at expanding the overseas student body in all degrees of university education by taking complex measures for students' enrollment and organization of learning.

The provisions of the YSU 2016-2020 Strategic Development Plan concerning the Institution's internationalization are consistent with the YSU mission and its most important goals, proceed from them and are expected to assist in the fulfillment of YSU mission and goals.

It should be noted that YSU has reviewed its policies for internationalization. The field of international cooperation has been considerably expanded. Currently, YSU cooperates with 264 universities and institutions. The mentioned number is complemented by the list of partner universities in the frame of the Erasmus+ Programme, which is a considerable progress over a 5-year

¹ <http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/hayecakarg.pdf>

period. The number of exchange visits by the administrative and teaching staff representatives and students has increased reaching 784. It is important to note that in 2013/2014 academic year there were only 537 exchange visits.

The increase in the university's international cooperation has been fostered by the exchange programmes in the frame of the Erasmus+ Programme, with the participation of a number of the YSU faculty, staff and students. Actually, in November of 2019 the YSU Rector's order was approved on regulation of learning, teaching and training within the framework of Erasmus+ "Main Action 1", based on which the exchange programmes are organized.

The University staff and students get support and information on the University's international cooperation, grant acquisition and submission procedures through the International Cooperation Office, the Department of Scientific Policy, as well as on the YSU website.

In recent years, the YSU website section on internationalization has become more visible. It has been dedicated a special section which regularly updates information on various directions of internationalization, opportunities for international research and exchange programmes, including those implemented within the framework of the Erasmus+ Programme and interuniversity cooperation. Moreover, the YSU staff and students are regularly provided with information on exchange programmes by their email.

In spite of the fact, that there are no specific programmes of annual activities in the sphere of foreign relations and internationalization, YSU is guided by the 5-year strategic plan, the annual performance of which also includes these spheres. Also, the YSU Rector's annual report contains a yearly account of internationalization activities at YSU².

STANDARD 9.2. The institution's external relations infrastructure ensures regulated process.

The main structural subdivision dealing with foreign relations and internationalization issues at YSU is the International Cooperation Office (hereinafter ICO), which operates on the basis of ICO regulations established by the YSU Charter and approved by the academic council. It is comprised of three divisions: International Relations, Organization of Oversea Students' Education and Grant Coordination. It is managed by the head of the office, who is immediately accountable to the YSU vice-rector on international cooperation and public relations. In fact, the working activity of the ICO staff is organized in accordance with their position passports.

The division of international relations mainly deals with organization of reception for oversea specialists and delegations, official documentation exchange, translation and official ratification and correspondence maintenance with universities and research centers representing parties in international academic agreements warranted by the relevant YSU subdivisions. It also arranges business trips for the staff participating in overseas events important for the YSU goals, as well as issuing orders for the students going abroad for various learning purposes, etc. (see ICO Charter, functions of the International Cooperation Office)³.

According to ICO regulations, the functions regarding organization of oversea students' education include enrollment of foreign students, compilation and registration of their personal files,

²<http://documentation.y-su.am/category/%d5%b0%d5%a1%d5%b7%d5%be%d5%a5%d5%bf%d5%be%d5%b8%d6%82%d5%a9%d5%b5%d5%b8%d6%82%d5%b6%d5%b6%d5%a5%d6%80/>

³ <http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2006/08/5.8.pdf>

organization of their admission procedure, preparation of draft orders regarding foreign students in the process of their learning, etc.

According to ICO regulations, the functions of the Grant Coordination division include providing the YSU structural subdivisions with information on international academic programmes, grants, scientific-educational programmes offered by foreign universities, preparation of documents on grant projects and coordination of their implementation.

The implementation of the processes ensuring the Institution's internationalization is not limited to the activities of the YSU International Cooperation Office only. YSU seeks to involve as many academic and administrative subdivisions as possible in the processes of internationalization, which will contribute to the improvement of the relevant services qualities and the growth in foreign students' number. A key requisite for an effective internationalization infrastructure is also the availability of an internationalization network, a network portal for supporting internationalization and a virtual platform.

In a number of YSU faculties positions of deputy deans on international cooperation were established over the past three years (Faculties of Law, International Relations, Economics and Management, Sociology, etc.), which can be regarded as an ICO achievement. It enabled to ensure constant communication between the YSU International Cooperation Office and individual academic subdivisions. Bodies responsible for internationalization help to provide information, as well as organize and coordinate events within the frames of various programmes.

Let us turn to the main problems hindering the effectiveness of the office and its subdivisions.

Having vast experience in international cooperation, YSU needs to review the procedures for signing international contracts, putting particular emphasis on the responsibilities of the parties, the expected outcomes, precise actions and methodology of their evaluation. In order to increase the efficiency of international cooperation, it is necessary to improve it not only from the quantitative, but also qualitative standpoint, that is – to move from declarative documents to planned actions, working plans and efficiently acting responsible bodies.

While performing a number of functions, ICO interacts with other structural subdivisions: the Quality Assurance Center, the Department of Scientific Policy, the Educational-Methodological Department, the library and faculties. The improper regulation of this cooperation often results in some problems, so a certain amount of work is presently being carried out to address these problems.

At present the YSU International Cooperation Office operates within the framework of traditions and procedures worked out and formed over the years. The development and introduction of new, flexible and up-to-date procedures is connected with considerable resources (human, material, financial, etc.), as well as the availability of some methodological guidelines. The participation of YSU in international (particularly European) grant programmes aimed at internationalization is an opportunity to obtain and introduce those resources and guidelines. However, the number of workers having experience in drafting grant proposals is very few, there is a need for certain training in working out grant projects, especially in post-graduate courses. YSU lacks sufficient promotional materials for foreign audience.

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

YSU has international cooperation agreements and contracts with 264 universities, various institutions and international organizations in nearly 50 countries all over the world, including the University of Connecticut (USA), Saint-Petersburg State University (Russia), Kuwait University (Kuwait), Cairo University (Egypt), Montpellier-1 and Montpellier-3 universities, Aix-Marseille University (France), Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg (Germany), Charles University (the Czech Republic), I. Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University (Georgia), The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (China), etc. Currently YSU is actively involved in international projects and is a full-fledged member of the International Association of Universities (IAU), the European University Association (EUA), the Eurasian Universities Association, the Black Sea Universities Network (BSUN) and the International Association of University Presidents (IAUP), as well as a member of the Francophone University Agency (AUF) and the University League of the Collective Security Treaty Organization.

In addition, YSU is actively involved in a number of grant and international projects, such as ERASMUS, DAAD, INET, FEMS, ANSEF, HORIZON 2020, VOLKSWAGEN, NAPA, ASCN, ISTC, World Bank-funded Education Improvement Project in Armenia, etc. Thus, in the frame of the Erasmus+ Programme YSU closely cooperates with the universities of Lille, Montpellier-3, Aix-Marseille, Le Mans (France), Masaryk (the Czech Republic), Ca' Foscari, Bologna, Florence (Italy), Granada, Cadiz, Complutense of Madrid, Valencia, Valladolid, Almeria, Barcelona (Spain), Catholic University of Leuven (Belgium), universities of Saarland, Nuremberg, Humboldt University of Berlin (Germany), Iasi (Romania), Silesian University of Technology, Jagiellonian University in Krakow, University of Silesia in Katowice, University of Rzeszow (Poland), Universities of Salzburg, Graz (Austria), Varna University of Management (Bulgaria), universities of Minho, Aveiro, Porto (Portugal), Middle East Technical University (Turkey), Tampere University (Finland), University of Osijek (Croatia), Erasmus University Rotterdam (Netherlands), Linköping University (Sweden) and numerous other universities. Within the frames of cooperation, on the whole, exchange visits were arranged for 47 students, 25 lecturers and 17 administrative workers only in 2017/2018 academic year.

YSU successfully implements double diploma programmes within the framework of CIS Network University (in the fields of international relations, law, Russian philology, information technologies, economics, management, tourism and pharmacy). Double diploma programmes are implemented with Belgorod State University (Russian Federation) in Pharmacy and Biology, the University of Le Mans (France) in Mathematics.

Along with the above-mentioned achievements there are some difficulties hindering the effectiveness of the international cooperation process. Thus, a number of bilateral and multilateral agreements signed by YSU, which are still in force, do not operate as intended or have ceased to operate due to two basic issues. First of all, some agreements do not specify any real actions, plans, short-term and long-term goals and objectives, i.e. the agreement itself means nothing, if there is no fulfillment vision.

Another concern is the scarcity of the ICO staff. Performing various technical and organizational functions at a time, the staff is not able to efficiently manage the further

implementation and monitoring of agreements. Therefore, the consideration of new opportunities for international cooperation ought to be consistent with its implementation vision and availability of necessary resources.

In general, over the past three years there has been a considerable increase in the quantity of cooperation with both individual faculties and centers and international, local and regional organizations. A considerable increase has also been observed in the number of business trips and exchange programmes. This testifies to the fact that the internationalization process at YSU proceeds actively enough in both domestic and foreign arenas.

STANDARD 9.4. The TLI ensures internal stakeholders' appropriate level of a foreign language for enhance productivity of internationalization.

YSU operates a system of organizing foreign language courses for all students and lecturers, which in the case of students implies inclusion of a foreign language course in syllabi, and in the case of lecturers – compulsory training in foreign languages and examinations. The latter are arranged by the Postgraduate Additional Education Department within the framework of a 5-year compulsory training programme for the YSU teaching staff (see standard 5.4.). In particular, a large number of YSU academic (also administrative) employees working at various subdivisions are involved in the “Academic English” course. It should be noted that from numerous courses included in the teaching staff training programme, the majority of lecturers give priority to foreign language courses which attests the Institution’s current internationalization trends.

Foreign language proficiency at YSU is also necessary for the development and implementation of joint interdisciplinary programmes with various foreign universities. Providing an appropriate level of foreign language is an important precondition for arranging guest lecturers’ periodical visits to YSU.

In general, the language proficiency of the whole YSU staff can be considered to be average. All the 12 workers of the International Cooperation Office have a command of at least one foreign language at a sufficient level. The level of students’ foreign language proficiency is average, though some students have a perfect command of language. These are mainly students involved in international programmes or having some relevance to international organizations.

Thus, appropriate ongoing measures are taken to ensure a sufficient level of foreign language proficiency at YSU. In order to integrate fully in the internationalization process, YSU envisages further expansion and improvement of those measures – training courses for lecturers and more foreign language courses in syllabi for students.

**YSU activity strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats
by Standard 9**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is a normative base defining the YSU internationalization policy and ensuring transparency. 2. A stable, long-term cooperation is maintained with local and international partners. 3. YSU possesses periodically trained human resources ensuring international cooperation. 4. YSU participates in interuniversity and international projects. 5. There are interuniversity agreements, as well as the experience of implementing the ERASMUS + programmes. 6. There is an increase in the international mobility of the teaching staff and students, counselling for students applying for exchange programmes, transparency of information on mobility programmes and an opportunity to submit online applications. 7. There is an increase in the number of subjects offered in foreign languages. 8. Courses of Academic English are conducted for the YSU staff. 9. There are infrastructures contributing to internationalization – the dormitory and the sport complex. 10. The information on the YSU website is available in English and its transparency is fully ensured. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The relations with Diaspora are weak. 2. A limited number of faculties participate in the implementation of international programmes and grants. 3. The number of educational programmes offered in foreign languages needs to be increased. 4. There are no courses (including online) aimed at developing and managing grant projects. 5. There is no subdivision responsible for Fundraising and improvement of the YSU rating. 6. The faculty/center staff is not involved actively enough in the events aimed at internationalization. 7. The amount of work performed within the framework of international interuniversity agreements is low. 8. The number of Bachelor’s and Master’s programmes offered in foreign languages, as well as joint/double diploma programmes is small. 9. There is a scarcity of applications to donor organizations and various programmes. 10. There is no system of monitoring and benchmarking.
Opportunities	Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of joint programmes for interuniversity cooperation with foreign universities, funds and centers, including joint research projects. 2. A more active use of the international cooperation network. 3. Utilization of the potential of renowned specialists, including that of Diaspora representatives, in the frames of international cooperation. 4. Provision of educational services on the international market (including online services) for a greater number of Diaspora 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Uncertainty about setting priorities and providing resources in the field of internationalization policy pursued by the state. 2. An outflow of the qualified human resources of the International Cooperation Office. 3. Lack of coordination in the joint activities carried out by the state with higher education institutions in the sphere of internationalization. 4. COVID-19 is a threat to YSU internationalization by large - for mobility, international

<p>Armenian students.</p> <p>5. Fund-raising through international and/or national grants to carry out joint research, compile textbooks and implement curricula.</p> <p>6. Active cooperation with the oversea RA representatives.</p>	<p>projects implementation, research challenge, foreign students' recruitment, etc.</p>
---	---

Planned ways to overcome weaknesses and threats

1. Develop strategies for international cooperation, implement accurate planning of actions.
2. In order to implement international cooperation and programmes more effectively, organize training for the YSU International Cooperation Office staff in various directions (cooperation programmes, grants, raising finance). Create a database on international cooperation programmes and disseminate the results of those programmes.
3. Plan activities and facilitate a more active participation of students and lecturers in international programmes.
4. Plan and implement actions on the improvement and expansion of foreign language educational programmes and introduction of new ones.

X. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

CRITERION: THE TLI HAS AN INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM FOR PROMOTING ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUALITY CULTURE AND CONTINUES IMPROVEMENT OF ALL THE PROCESSES OF TLI.

According to the YSU QA concept (approved in 2012) the main goals of the YSU QA system are:

- to create a regulatory and organizational basis for the self-evaluation, external evaluation and accreditation of the University and its academic programmes,
- to form the necessary prerequisite and promoting mechanisms to maintain the educational standards, quality assurance of academic programmes and continuous improvement,
- to ensure the transparency of QA processes and the participation of the teaching staff, students, employers and external experts in them contributing to the development of quality culture.

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

The YSU Quality Assurance concept¹ which is consistent with the requirements of European standards and guidelines² (ESG) was adopted as early as in 2012. The concept establishes the organizational structure of the YSU quality assurance (QA) system, its operating mechanisms and procedures, the main structures and actors involved, whose interaction scheme is presented in Annex 10.1. As indicated in the scheme, all the main structures and units of the University, as well as the most important internal and external beneficiaries are involved in the QA processes.

In accordance with the YSU QA concept, a number of internal mechanisms and respective procedures operate currently at YSU which are aimed at the quality assurance and continuous improvement of the academic programmes, the teaching staff and learning resources. For the purpose of the efficient application of those mechanisms the Institution has relevant structures, which cooperate both among themselves and with other academic subdivisions (faculties, chairs, centers, institutes). These are the YSU QA Center³ (QAC), the QA Permanent Commission of the YSU Academic Council⁴, QA commissions of faculty academic councils⁵, the department of postgraduate additional education⁶ and the department of educational process management⁷. All the actors

¹ “Yerevan State University Quality Assurance Policy”, 2012, [/http://ysu.am/files/quality/YSU_IQA_Policy_2012_Engl..pdf](http://ysu.am/files/quality/YSU_IQA_Policy_2012_Engl..pdf)

² Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). (2015). Brussels, Belgium. https://enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf

³ “Charter of Yerevan State University Quality Assurance Center”, 2012 / http://ysu.am/files/quality/Charter_Eng.pdf

⁴ “The Order of Work of the Permanent Commission of YSU Academic Council on Quality Assurance”, 2012, revised in 2017 / <http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/kanonakarg-ashxatakarg.pdf>

⁵ “The Order of Work of the Permanent Commission of Faculty Academic Council on Quality Assurance”, 2013, revised in 2017 / <http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/voroshum6-6.pdf>

⁶ “Charter of the YSU Department of Postgraduate Additional Education”, 2007 / [/http://documentation.y-su.am/wpcontent/uploads/2015/07/Hetbuhakan_lracucich_krtutyany_varchutyany_kanonadrutyun.pdf](http://documentation.y-su.am/wpcontent/uploads/2015/07/Hetbuhakan_lracucich_krtutyany_varchutyany_kanonadrutyun.pdf)

⁷ “Charter of the YSU Educational-Methodological Department”, 2010 / <http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Usumnametodakan-varchutyany-kanonadrutyun.pdf>

involved in the QA system implement their functions in compliance with the YSU QA policies and are guided by the formal procedures, which are thoroughly presented in the guidebook on the YSU internal QA system⁸.

The new strategy of YSU QA is formulated in objective 1.3 of the first goal of the YSU 2016-2020 development Strategic Plan (SP), “Raise the efficiency of the activities of the structures involved in the internal quality assurance system”. In order to fulfill this objective, appropriate measures are established in the SP that have been implemented consistently.

Since the previous YSU accreditation (February, 2015), a considerable progress has been made in terms of both the expansion of the structures involved in the QA processes and the introduction and implementation of new QA mechanisms and procedures. Thus, in accordance with the goals and objectives presented in the YSU QA concept, the organizational structure of the QA system has been altered. In particular, the level of QAC independence has been raised: the center has been taken out of the vice-rector’s direct supervision and at present it is accountable only to the rector of the university.

New QA processes and procedures have been introduced at YSU, which are aimed at the continuous improvement of the university quality. In particular, along with the YSU ACQA Permanent Commission, which has been operating at the institutional level since 2012, faculty ACQA commissions have been established and operating at the faculties since 2013 for the purpose of implementing decentralized QA processes. Since 2015 the procedure regulating the processes of validation, development, peer review and approval of academic programmes has been put into practice⁹, and since 2019 – the procedure for ongoing monitoring and periodic review of YSU educational programmes¹⁰. The programme for the teaching staff training and professional development^{11,12} has been substantially expanded and diversified since 2003. Since 2019 new training courses for interactive teaching with innovative and technologically-enhanced methods have been introduced at the university, as well as individual and group consultations, workshops and forums¹³. Since 2017 student surveys on the teaching quality and effectiveness¹⁴ (conducted regularly since 2002) and surveys on graduate satisfaction¹⁵ (conducted since 2008) have been carried out online. The university has considerably reviewed and expanded the procedures for promoting the effectiveness of the teaching staff activities through financial and moral rewards. The fund providing financial

⁸ “Guidebook on continuous improvement of the YSU Quality Assurance”, 2013 / http://ysu.am/files/quality/YSU_QA_Handbook_Final.pdf

⁹ “Regulation for Approval of YSU Study Programmes”, 2011, revised in 2014 / http://ysu.am/files/quality/Approval_of_YSU_Study_Programs.pdf

¹⁰ “Regulation for Monitoring and Periodic Review of YSU Study Programmes”, 2011, revised in 2019 / http://ysu.am/files/quality/Monitoring&Review_of_YSU_Study_Programs.pdf

¹¹ “Schedule of the training programs for the YSU teaching staff” 2002, revised in 2007, 2011 and 2016 / http://documentation.yasu.am/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/DOB_cragir.pdf

¹² “The structure and content of the scientific-educational training program for the tutorial staff based on the credit system (2016-2021)”, 2007, revised in 2011, 2016 and 2019 / <http://extension.yasu.am/images/pdf/1473058982-3Tsragir.pdf>

¹³ “Operational Plan for 2019-2021 of Teaching Staff Development Department of Yerevan State University”, 2019 / [http://www.printel.am/uploads/page/pdfs/\(ENG\)%20YSU%20TSDC%20Operational%20Plan_Updated.pdf](http://www.printel.am/uploads/page/pdfs/(ENG)%20YSU%20TSDC%20Operational%20Plan_Updated.pdf)

¹⁴ “Regulation of the student survey on the quality and effectiveness of the YSU education”, 2002, revised in 2003, 2004, 2010, 2016 and 2019. / <http://documentation.yasu.am/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/kanonakag4-2.pdf>

¹⁵ “Order of organizing surveys on graduate satisfaction with education received at YSU”, 2008, revised in 2010, 2016 and 2019 / <http://documentation.yasu.am/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/karg.pdf>

incentives has been increased, and the criteria for its allocation have been specified as well¹⁶. Moreover, since 2019 a new process has been introduced promoting the application of innovative methods in teaching, as well as revealing the best teaching practices and contributing to their dissemination^{17, 18}.

Student surveys on the teaching quality and effectiveness¹⁴ help to evaluate the professional and pedagogical qualities of the teaching staff, as well as the quality of conducting specific courses and academic modules. The results are utilized both for improving the quality of teaching and for reviewing the processes of the teaching staff reelection, promotion and financial reward. Since 2017 the surveys have been conducted online. According to the results of surveys carried out among the YSU employees (350 employees participated in 2019 which makes up nearly 13,5% of the total number of the YSU staff), 61,2% of participants evaluated the process as partially effective, and 12,6% - as fully effective. However, 22,8% of the respondents evaluated the process as ineffective, pointing to students' low motivation and subjectivity (demanding lecturers sometimes receive lower appraisal, especially after grading their students), as well as the fact that the survey results are not fully utilized in the teaching and learning improvement processes.

Surveys on graduate satisfaction with the education received at YSU¹⁵ help to evaluate their satisfaction with the contents and teaching methods of academic programmes, the learning resources and supporting services, as well as the organization of the educational process and the general educational environment. The results are utilized for the purpose of continuous improvement of the spheres in question. As a result of the above-mentioned survey, it was found out that 50,8% of the YSU staff evaluated it as partially effective, 15,4% - as fully effective, and only 16,9% of respondents evaluated graduate surveys as ineffective. As main reasons for the latter, they mention their unawareness of the survey results or their absence; they also note that graduate surveys should be conducted only 2-3 years after students have graduated from the university, and not in the graduation year. A vast number of respondents are unaware of the process (16,9%), as they ex officio have no relation to it.

The processes of academic programme validation, development, peer review and approval provide for the quality of the YSU academic programmes in the phase of their elaboration. In this case the substantiation of the newly developed programme is estimated (public and labor market demand, availability of resources, etc.), as well as the programme compliance with the national and professional qualifications framework and/or requirements of other educational standards, the programme elaboration quality in accordance with the set requirements and submission format. All the YSU academic programmes – over 130 Master's degree programmes (2016) and 60 Bachelor's degree programmes (2017) – have been developed according to these procedures and criteria, which has contributed to an essential increase in programme elaboration quality. As a result, they have become more substantiated, outcome-based, informative and legible. In particular, 77,6% of the teaching groups and administrative body involved in the processes of programme development and

¹⁶ “The procedure for calculating and paying additional fees to YSU employees for certain types of work”, 2007, revised in 2009, 2012, 2015, 2018, 2019 and 2020 / http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/travtsar_karg-new.pdf

¹⁷ Order on Organization and Conduction of Annual Competition for “Excellence Award in Teaching at Yerevan State University”, 2019 / http://ysu.am/files/quality/Regulation_on_Excellence_Award_Eng.pdf

¹⁸ Work-order of the Coordination Committees' on the “Excellence Award in Teaching at Yerevan State University”, 2020/ http://ysu.am/files/quality/Work-Order_of_the_Committees_Eng.pdf

review, has fully or partially approved of these processes' implementation considering it to be effective, and only 12,9% of them evaluated it as not very effective. The following factors are mentioned as the main drawbacks in the phase of programme elaboration: the ongoing teacher-centered approach, voluminous paper work in some cases, and in others – the formal approach of external experts to the evaluation of newly developed programmes.

The aim of the current monitoring and periodic review of academic programmes¹⁰ is to evaluate the quality of programme provision and its relevance to the established learning outcomes, as well as to check its continuous substantiation and relevance. The main result of this process is developing and implementing an action-plan aimed at the programme improvement. The monitoring of YSU programmes was first conducted in 2019 for over 120 Master's degree programmes. For each of the programmes monitoring reports were drawn up, which were considered by the faculty QA permanent commissions and discussed at the faculty AC meetings. The monitoring reports were primarily based (in the case of 95 programmes) on the findings of the focus-group research carried out among the students involved in the given programmes. In the end, action plans for improving the programmes were drafted which are to be implemented by the start of next monitoring within two years. According to the results of the survey on the efficiency of this process, 66,5% of the YSU employees evaluated the monitoring process as effective or partially effective, and 13,2% of them – as ineffective. When giving the main reason for their viewpoint, the latter noted the fact that a vast number of lecturers had not been trained for conducting the monitoring process.

The programme for the professional development and training of the teaching staff^{11,12,13} is aimed at improving and updating the professional and pedagogical skills of the YSU teaching staff. The lecturers participating in the programme are not only trained to use innovative interactive methods of teaching and learning, to master skills for teaching with new technologies, but they also acquire new, progressive knowledge about their professional sphere. The results are taken into consideration in the processes of the teaching staff promotion and financial rewards. 64,4% of the YSU staff find this process effective or partially effective; however, 31,1% do not agree with this standpoint. The latter note that the schedules of the training courses do not fit in with their free hours, there are few training courses providing up-to-date practical skills, there are no effective mechanisms for revealing the lecturers' training needs, the courses are not individualized and properly addressed and do not provide conditions for practical application of the training skills. Lecturers also prefer to have trainers invited from abroad or, if possible, to be trained at foreign universities as well.

At present there are two mechanisms for the teaching staff financial and moral rewards at YSU. The first of them¹⁶ evaluates the efficiency/intensity of lecturers' activities in the spheres of education, research and public involvement. The second one^{17,18} is aimed at promoting the application and improvement of up-to-date teaching methods, as well as dissemination of the best practices. The latter was put into practice in the current academic year and it is still too early to judge about its results. But the first procedure has been operating for over a decade, and the overwhelming majority of the lecturers who participated in the survey (65,2%) find it effective; on the other hand, it is ineffective for 29,2% of them. The following factors have been noted as the main drawbacks of this mechanism: the process mostly focuses on promoting research activities and does not directly contribute to improving the teaching quality and increasing motivation; the forms of reward are only

financial and there are no forms of moral reward. For the purpose of addressing these shortcomings the annual competition “Excellence Award in Teaching at Yerevan State University”^{17,18} was introduced in the current year.

The availability of the above-given QA mechanisms and procedures, as well as information on their efficiency received through feedback, testify to the fact that there is a system of continuous quality improvement at YSU which, undoubtedly, does improve constantly.

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

The involvement of human resources in the YSU QA processes is regulated by the following documents:

- YSU QAC charter³, full-time staff list, position passports, relevant employment contracts¹⁹,
- Order of work and membership^{20, 21} of the YSU AC QA permanent commission⁴ and faculty (academic subdivision) AC QA permanent commissions⁵,
- order of organizing training programs for the YSU teaching staff¹,
- YSU QA concept¹, etc.

The allocation of financial resources provided for the implementation of QA processes is regulated by the following documents:

- the YSU annual budget estimate²² and its performance²³,
- the schedule plan of the YSU SP implementation with the allocation of necessary additional financial resources²⁴,
- the norms for calculating the teaching and academic workload of the YSU teaching staff²⁵.

The allocation of material resources provided for the implementation of QA processes is regulated by the procedure for the YSU procurement planning²⁶ and the annual procurement plan²⁷.

The structure primarily responsible for the YSU quality assurance processes is the Center for Quality Assurance (QAC), which was set up by the YSU AC resolution in 2012 and starting from 2019 directly reports to the rector. The center has its director (1 full-time position), 2 leading specialists (1 full-time position per specialist), 2 specialists (1,5 full-time position), in total – 4,5 full-time positions, whose job descriptions are established by the QAC charter and the YSU QAC position

¹⁹ On approving YSU QAC position passports. Order 85/5, 10.05.2018 / <http://ysu.am/files/quality/YSU-QA-pashtonneri-andznagrner.PDF>

²⁰ <http://ysu.am/files/quality/cs.pdf> / http://documentation.yzu.am/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/voroshum_5-4-3.pdf

²¹ http://ysu.am/files/quality/YSU_AC_QA_Committees_2020.pdf

²² YSU 2020 income and expenses estimate / <http://documentation.yzu.am/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/nakhahashiv-2020.pdf>

²³ Performance of YSU 2018 income and expenses estimate / http://documentation.yzu.am/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Byujei_kataroghakan_2018.pdf

²⁴ Schedule plan for the implementation of the YSU Strategic Development Plan in 2016-2020 / http://documentation.yzu.am/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/EPH_razmavarakan_tsragri_irakanacman_zhamanakacyc_plan.pdf

²⁵ YSU AC resolution N11/3 on establishing the norms for calculating the teaching and academic workload of the YSU teaching staff, 12.03.2020 / http://documentation.yzu.am/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/GX_voroshum_11-3.pdf

²⁶ Order of acquiring goods and services (making purchases) by the YSU subdivisions, 2019 / http://ysu.am/files/quality/Gnumneri_karg_2020.pdf

²⁷ Plan for 2020 Procurement by YSU / <http://gnumner.am/website/images/original/83c1a0d8.pdf>

passports (director, leading specialist, specialist). The center is located in 3 rooms at the YSU central building, it possesses necessary inventory and is provided with up-to-date equipment. The main goal of the center is to develop and implement QA internal mechanisms and procedures at the university compliant with ESG (the standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European higher education area), as well as the promotion of continuous quality improvement culture. The framework of the center functions is established by its charter; in particular, the Center for Quality Assurance together with other administrative and academic subdivisions and bodies organize, implement and control the QA mechanisms and procedures established by the YSU QA concept described in standard 10.1.

The YSU AC and faculty AC QA permanent commissions play an important role in the YSU QA processes. 78 employees and 25 students are totally involved in the mentioned commissions. The commissions participate in the processes of academic programme development and approval, as well as their monitoring processes. On the other hand, the YSU AC, which has 88 members, hears the report of the relevant vice rector on the student surveys and graduate satisfaction surveys and, if necessary, takes an appropriate decision aimed at the improvement of those processes, as well as hears the report of the chairperson of the AC QA commission on the newly developed or reviewed academic programmes and approves them.

The permanent commission of the YSU Academic Council Quality Assurance²⁸ was established in 2012 for the purpose of forming the regulatory and methodological basis of the QA processes. The commission is comprised of 7 representatives of the administrative, teaching and student bodies who are members of the Academic Council. The commission has its modus operandi (approved by the YSU AC in 2012) which defines its main functions:

- developing draft QA legal acts,
- providing guarantees and proposals in regard to the application of new QA standards, processes and procedures, as well as approval of newly developed or reviewed academic programmes,
- cooperation with the YSU QA other structures and groups (see annex 10.1).

The YSU QA concept establishes a centralized regulation of the QA processes and their decentralized implementation. Therefore, in order to implement QA processes effectively on the ground (faculty, center, institute, chair), permanent commissions of faculty academic councils on quality assurance were established at all the YSU 19 faculties, 5 educational centers and 2 institutes in 2012. The membership of the commissions²¹ changes every five years (last time - in 2019). These commissions are comprised of 4 members, including 1 student. The main functions⁵ of the commissions are as follows:

- to provide guarantee on QA issues to faculty academic councils,
- to align academic programmes and courses with the requirements of the YSU educational standards,
- to draw up conclusions about reports on current monitoring of academic programmes and to submit them to the faculty/center administration,

²⁸ YSU Academic Council Membership / http://www.y-su.am/uploaded/YSU_Academic_Council_members_2019_new.pdf

- to discuss the results of student surveys and to propose measures for learning process improvement.

The main structures/bodies involved in the QA system and their reciprocal relations are given in Annex 10.1 which shows the organizational structure of the YSU QA system.

YSU allocates appropriate human and material resources to organize the work of the YSU AC and faculty AC permanent commissions, to conduct student surveys and to coordinate the process of the teaching staff training, as well as to implement the processes of programme licensing and approval, current monitoring and periodic review. Standard 10.3 presents in detail the data on the involvement of human resources in the above processes. In fact, human resources are involved not only from the structures immediately responsible for the QA processes, but also from other central and educational subdivisions ensuring the learning process.

For instance, since 2002 student surveys on the teaching effectiveness and graduate surveys on their satisfaction with the education received at YSU have been conducted by joint efforts of over 20 employees of the Educational-Methodological Department, 4 employees of IT Educational and Research Center and the supporting staff of the respective faculties and educational subdivisions. As a result of the improvement of these processes, since 2016/17 academic year surveys have been conducted online; this contributed to a considerable reduction of the allocated human, material and financial resources.

The programs for the teaching staff training and professional development^{11,12,13} (courses, trainings, individual and group consultations, etc.) are implemented by 4 employees of the FPD (faculty professional development) department and 8 training consultants.

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

The involvement of students and other internal and external beneficiaries in the YSU QA processes is enshrined in a number of official documents, which have already been mentioned above. In particular, the following are among those documents: “The Concept of YSU Quality Assurance”¹, “The Order of Work of the Permanent Commission of YSU Academic Council on Quality Assurance”⁴, “The Order of Work of the Permanent Commission of Faculty Academic Council on Quality Assurance”⁵, “Regulation of the student survey on the quality and effectiveness of the YSU education”¹⁴, “Order of organizing surveys on graduate satisfaction with education received at YSU”¹⁵, “Regulation for Approval of YSU Study Programmes”⁹, “Procedure for ongoing monitoring and periodic review of YSU educational programmes”¹⁰, etc.

The concept of YSU quality assurance¹ envisages wide involvement of internal and external beneficiaries in the processes of internal quality assurance. Although QA processes are regulated in a centralized way, the form of their implementation is of decentralized nature – at faculties, chairs, institutes and centers. And the latter involve lecturers, students, graduates, employers and professional community representatives and experts in those processes.

Thus, 6 representatives of the academic and administrative staff and 1 student are involved in the QA permanent commission of the YSU Academic Council²⁰. 3 lecturers and 1 student are involved in each of the 24 QA permanent commissions of YSU faculty academic councils, in total – 72 lecturers and 24 students.

On average, 30% of the total number of the YSU Bachelor's and Master's students (14,200 students in total) participate in online student surveys on the teaching quality and effectiveness¹⁴ conducted at the end of each semester for all the courses provided (on average over 4,800 courses), which makes up about 4,260 students (in the case of paper-based surveys participation was about 75% - about 10,650 students). Online surveys on graduate satisfaction with education received at YSU¹⁵ are conducted among nearly 4,600 graduates of about 60 Bachelor's and 120 Master's degree programmes every year. About 35% of respondents, i.e. 1,610 graduates, participate in them (in the case of paper-based surveys participation was about 80%, i.e. 3,680 graduates).

The procedure for the YSU academic programme licensing, development, expert examination and approval⁹ also implies involvement of a great number of both internal beneficiaries (mostly from the teaching and administrative staff) and external experts in this process. Thus, during the last revision of Master's and Bachelor's degree programmes (2016 and 2017), about 180 working groups were established involving over 900 lecturers, and about 600 lecturers (internal experts) and 360 external experts were involved in the programme expert examination committees. The YSU QA Center, the QA permanent commission of the YSU Academic Council and 24 QA permanent commissions of YSU faculty academic councils are also involved in these processes.

The processes of current monitoring and periodic review of the YSU academic programmes¹⁰ are also implemented in a decentralized way involving a large number of lecturers and especially students. Thus, in 2019 for the purpose of conducting current monitoring of 120 Master's degree programmes, an equal number of monitoring groups were established involving about 600 lecturers, 120 students and the same number of external experts (production specialists). In order to report student feedback/views to the monitoring groups, over 95 focus-group research studies (in-depth surveys) have been carried out by 25 YSU student-moderators among over 750 students involved in Master's degree programmes. As a result of this process, 120 monitoring accounts on Master's programmes were drawn up with appropriate SWOT and plans of improvement measures, which were considered by 24 permanent commissions of the faculty academic councils and discussed at AC meetings, and the faculty deans produced respective reports on them. Thereafter, on the basis of the monitoring accounts and deans' reports the YSU QA Center prepared an overall report on the YSU Master's programme monitoring, which was discussed by the QA permanent commission of the YSU Academic Council and submitted to the YSU Academic Council for further consideration. The latter approves the plans of programme improvement measures and passes respective resolutions on the academic programmes which are considered to be at risk.

Another characteristic example of involving internal beneficiaries in the QA processes is also the participation of lecturers and students in the process of preparing the two YSU institutional self-evaluation reports. Thus, 31 employees and 7 students were involved in this process in 2013 (in the coordinating committee and 10 working groups), and 49 employees and 13 students – in 2019.

The wide involvement of the YSU internal and external beneficiaries in the above QA processes essentially contributes to the further development of quality culture at the university as well.

STANDARD 10.4. The internal quality assurance system is periodically reviewed.

The YSU internal quality assurance system was formed as early as in 2012 and has been thereafter periodically reviewed and improved proceeding from the effectiveness of a specifically implemented QA mechanism or procedure, changes in external or internal environments, as well as the study of best practices in this sphere.

Thus, the first YSU QA concept was adopted by the YSU Academic Council as early as in 2007. As it did not meet the main requirements set by ESG², a new QA concept was developed and approved by the Academic Council in 2012. In 2018 a QA mechanism for postgraduate education – “YSU internal quality assurance policy manual for doctoral education”²⁹- was added to it within the frames of ERASMUS+ C3QA project (2017-2019).

The processes aimed at the teaching staff training and professional development have been implemented at YSU since 2002; and the relevant programs¹² and procedures¹¹ for its implementation were reviewed in 2007, 2011, 2016 and 2019.

Student surveys on the teaching quality and effectiveness¹⁴ have also been conducted at YSU since 2002. The implementation procedure and questionnaire have undergone numerous changes and revisions, notably in 2003, 2004, 2010, 2014 and 2017. The content changes of questionnaires mainly related to the questions on the teaching quality and making them more perceptible for students; some other groups of questions are revised every year. As a result of revising the survey regulation, both the survey procedures and the forms of their outcome processing, summarizing and utilizing have been made more explicit. In particular, since 2017 surveys have been conducted online instead of paper-based surveys.

Surveys on graduate satisfaction with education received at YSU¹⁵ have been conducted since 2008. The process was regulated by the Academic Council in 2010 thereby establishing the procedures for conducting surveys and processing, utilizing their outcomes. The survey questionnaire has been revised twice since 2008, notably in 2010 and 2016. Since 2017 surveys have been conducted online.

The processes of programme licensing, development, expert examination and approval in accordance with the established procedures⁹ were first put into practice in 2014 for a number of newly elaborated academic programmes. Proceeding from the outcomes of that practice, the procedures were reviewed and thereafter put into practice for revising all the YSU 120 Master’s degree programmes (2016) and 60 Bachelor’s degree programmes (2017).

Another important QA process at YSU – monitoring and review of academic programmes¹⁰ – was initiated in 2019 and, naturally, has not been revised yet.

As it was already mentioned, the review of the QA processes is based on the analyses of their results, such as the annual analyses of the results of student surveys on the teaching effectiveness and quality, surveys on graduate satisfaction with the education received at YSU and the implementation of the teaching staff training programme, as well as the analysis of the results of the Master’s programme current monitoring and others.

²⁹ YSU Internal Quality Assurance Policy Manual for Doctoral Education / https://c3-qa.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/YSU_IQA.pdf

The involvement of the university in a number of projects within the frames of the European TEMPUS/ERASMUS+ program has played a significant role in the establishment of the YSU QA system and its continuous improvement. The projects were aimed at establishing at partner universities internal quality assurance standards and systems consistent with the ESG requirements. In particular, as a result of the participation in “Internal Quality Assurance System in Armenian Higher Education Institutions” TEMPUS ARMQA project³⁰ (2007-2009), some vital components of the university QA system were formed, such as the YSU QA concept and a number of QA mechanisms and procedures for academic programmes. The experience of the European partner universities involved in the project served as a prototype for them; in particular, the universities of Greenwich and Middlesex (England) and the University of Genoa (Italy). As a result of participation in another TEMPUS project, “Development and Integration of University Self-Assessment Systems” DIUSAS³¹, the main YSU QA structures were established – the QA Center, the QA permanent commissions of YSU AC and faculty academic councils and the modus operandi of the latter, as well as the process of the university self-evaluation was introduced. The European technological universities of Koblenz-Landau (Germany), Le Mans (France), Campus Malta (Italy) and Wroclaw (Poland) participating in the project were viewed as benchmark while implementing the process. The YSU participation in “Armenia Quality Assurance Technical Assistance” ARQATA international project³² (2011-2014) financed by the World Bank was a very significant factor, which resulted in cooperation with the Accreditation Organization of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO). As a result, the processes of institutional and programme self-evaluation were implemented at YSU, and the first accreditation of several academic programmes was undertaken thereafter (2015). The YSU involvement in TEMUS “Implementation of National and Sectorial Qualifications Frameworks in Armenia” ARMENQA project³³ (2014-2016) was essential in terms of formation of the standards for the YSU academic programmes and the development of the programme QA processes. In fact, it established the RA higher education national qualifications framework (NQF) and several sectorial frameworks (SQF) which became and still are a basis for the further establishment of the new ones. The latter served as a guideline for the formation of the learning outcomes and conformity verification of the YSU academic programmes. In this case the applied experience and expertise of the European partner universities of Linköping (Sweden), Ghent (Belgium), Aarhus (Denmark) also contributed to the improvement of the academic programme QA processes. The YSU QA system for doctoral programmes, as it was already mentioned, was formed as a result of the YSU participation in ERASMUS + C3QA project "Promoting internationalization of research through establishment and operationalization of Cycle 3 Quality Assurance System in line with the European Integration Agenda"³⁴ (2017-2019). In this aspect, the doctoral programme QA systems of the following European

³⁰ TEMPUS JEP-27178-2006 project: “Internal Quality Assurance System in Armenian Higher Education Institutions”, ARMQA / <http://www.armqa.mdx.ac.uk/home.html>

³¹ TEMPUS SMGR 510950-2010 project: “Development and Integration of University Self-Assessment Systems”, DIUSAS / https://www.uni-koblenz-landau.de/en/cifet/cifet-team/former-employees/serge_chernyshenko/projekte/DIUSAS

³² World Bank project: “Armenia quality assurance technical assistance”, ARQATA / <http://arqata.anqa.am/>

³³ TEMPUS SMHES 543817-2013 project: “Implementation of National and Sectorial Qualifications Frameworks in Armenia”, ARMENQA / <http://armenqa.am>

³⁴ ERASMUS+ CBHE-SP 574273-2016project: "Promoting internationalization of research through establishment and operationalization of Cycle 3 Quality Assurance System in line with the European Integration Agenda" / <https://c3-qa.com/>

universities – Lyon 3 and Auvergne (France), Alcalá (Spain), Kielce (Poland) - have served as guidelines for the QA system of the YSU postgraduate education. The participation in ERASMUS+ PRINTEL project “Change in Classroom: Promoting Innovative Teaching and Learning to Enhance Student Learning Experience in Eastern Partnership Countries”³⁵ (2018-2020) with the YSU coordination was of great significance to the improvement of the YSU teaching staff QA process. As a result, the function range of the structure responsible for the teaching staff training improved considerably, the structure was supplemented with classrooms intended for interactive and technologically-enhanced learning and a studio for producing video-lectures, and the training programme in use was completed with new courses applying interactive methods and ICT technologies. The best practices of the European partner universities were also considerably employed in this sphere; these were Catholic University of Leuven, the universities of Barcelona (Spain), Porto (Portugal), Linkoping (Sweden) and Graz (Austria).

YSU QAC regularly participates in the awareness meetings and seminars organized by the RA National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance (ANQA); it closely follows the ENQA publications and the results of annual quality forums as well.

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

One of the primary goals of the YSU internal quality assurance system is also to prepare the University for the processes of external evaluation and accreditation¹. This system comprises internal mechanisms and information systems for valid implementation of external evaluation processes.

The structure of the goals and objectives of the YSU strategic development plan (SP) is compliant with “Accreditation Standards of RA Professional Education”, which provides sufficient background for overall evaluation of the YSU activity and development of complex measures of improvement. YSU 2016-2020 Strategic Development Plan³⁶ and the schedule-plan for its implementation³⁷ are the main guidelines, according to which the activities of the university are performed at the macro level. Naturally, the results are also evaluated in accordance with the set goals and objective performance. For that purpose, YSU assesses the performance of SP actions intended for the given year and publishes a respective report³⁸. All the YSU faculties and educational-scientific centers and institutes have their own published SPs and their implementation schedule-plans (see Annex 10.2), according to which a final assessment of their learning outcomes is made at the micro level.

³⁵ ERASMUS+ CBHE585760-2017 project: “Change in Classroom: Promoting Innovative Teaching and Learning to Enhance Student Learning Experience in Eastern Partnership Countries”/ <http://www.printel.am/>

³⁶ YSU Strategic Development Plan in 2016-2020, 2015 / http://ysu.am/files/quality/YSU_Strategic_Development_Plan_2016-2020.pdf

³⁷ Schedule Plan of the YSU Strategic Development Program in 2016-2020 / http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/EPH_razmavarakan_tsragri_irakanacman_zhamanakacuyc_plan.pdf

³⁸ Reports on the Strategic Development Plan in 2016-2020 (the implementation of the actions planned for 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 academic years) / http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Kataroghakan_2018.pdf ; <http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Kataroxakan-2017.pdf> ; http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Razmavarakani_kataroghakan_2015-2016.pdf

In order to provide some bases for assessing the effectiveness of the various spheres of the university activities YSU also makes institutional evaluation publishing a relevant analytical report³⁹ every five years (YSU SP, Objective 1.3, Act 5), which serves as a basis for both external quality assessment/assurance processes and implementation of intra-university measures aimed at quality improvement. The self-evaluation is carried out in accordance with the “Accreditation Standards of RA Professional Education” approved by the RA government in 2011. In order to conduct it, a coordinating committee on the self-evaluation process is established under the supervision of the YSU Rector, as well as 10 (7) working groups implementing the self-evaluation processes according to the institutional (program) accreditation criteria. Representatives of both YSU administrative and teaching/academic staff, as well as students are involved in those working groups. The elaborated draft of the self-evaluation report is submitted to the YSU internal beneficiaries and discussed at the University AC meeting. The report, along with the received respective proposals and remarks, is thereafter submitted to the structure implementing external evaluation (National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance - ANQA), as well as made available for the public at large.

The “bottom to top” accountability system operating at YSU creates a favorable environment for the implementation of external QA processes. It includes the annual reports of the faculties and other subdivisions on the results of their activities, as well as YSU Rector’s annual report⁴⁰ on the university activities and the publication of the respective report⁴¹. The latter are published on the YSU website and made available to the internal and external beneficiaries. Of great importance is the fact that all official documents related to the QA processes are disseminated at the YSU subdivisions and published on the university website.

A particular form of the YSU self-evaluation and accountability is also drawing up, collecting, analyzing and periodically publishing “The Key Performance Indicators of Yerevan State University”, by means of which it is possible to assess the YSU “state of health” and its efficiency in the most important spheres of activity⁴².

In order to ensure the effectiveness of audits implemented for the purpose of external evaluation, a virtual database of official documents required/used in the evaluation process was created, which is regularly updated and enables external experts to get acquainted with them in an operative manner. In addition, YSU QAC employees organize and provide for the meetings of external expert groups with various internal and external beneficiary groups of the University in accordance with the agenda and schedule set by them.

³⁹ YSU Institutional Self-Evaluation Report, 2013 / http://ysu.am/files/quality/YSU_Inst_SER.pdf

⁴⁰ Report of YSU Rector on the activities in 2017/2018 academic year / http://documentation.ysu.am/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Rektori_zekuyts_2019.pdf

⁴¹ Reports on the YSU activities in 2017/2018 u 2018/2019 academic years / http://documentation.ysu.am/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/2017-2018_ustarva_gorcuneutyan-hashvetvutyun.pdf http://documentation.ysu.am/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/2018-2019_ustarva_gorcuneutyan-hashvetvutyun.pdf

⁴² “The Key Performance Indicators of Yerevan State University” / <http://www.ysu.am/files/quality/od22.pdf> (2008-2013), <http://publishing.ysu.am/en/1499080337> (2010-2015) ; <http://publishing.ysu.am/hy/1599641194> (2014-2019)

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

For the purpose of ensuring transparency of the YSU activities for internal and external beneficiaries and promoting public relations, the following actions/measures were established in objective 3.1 of the YSU Strategic Development Plan in 2016-2020³⁶ (“Provide for the further development of

public relations and increase in public responsibility”), which are being constantly implemented:

2. Develop a uniform system of public relations; raise the efficiency of the intra-university public relations network.
5. Get more feedback from different social groups and develop the monitoring system.
7. Increase the efficiency of internal corporate communication.

From the standpoint of ensuring the transparency of the YSU activities, it is important to possess appropriate mechanisms for providing beneficiary awareness. For that purpose, a number of internal information systems and mechanisms are implemented at YSU, which include:

- The annual report on the YSU activities⁴¹ in the given year, which summarizes the general results of the activities of the YSU educational, scientific-research and administrative structures (for instance, see YSU 2018/2019 Academic Year Activities, Yerevan, 2019).
- YSU Rector’s annual report⁴⁰ at the meeting of the University Board of Trustees, where the Rector presents the results of the university activities in all the main spheres, including the performance of the YSU budget²³ in the given year, the annual performance of the YSU SP³⁸ according to the implementation schedule-plan³⁷, as well as the draft YSU budget²² for the following year is approved by the board.
- Annual reports on the activities of the YSU faculties and other structural subdivisions (institutes, centers) /See Annex 10.2/.
- The regularly published collection of the key performance indicators⁴² assessing the effectiveness of the YSU activities. The aim of this study is to present through some quantitative indicators the outcomes of the university activities and its “state of health” in all the main activity spheres over the past 5 years, as well as to provide appropriate benchmarks guide the YSU SP implementation.
- Annual reports on the results⁴³ of student surveys on the teaching quality and effectiveness¹⁴ and surveys on graduate satisfaction with the education received at YSU¹⁵, which are submitted to the YSU Academic Council for consideration.
- The all-university network information system “SuperVision” providing information on students’ progress and mobility, as well as other educational processes. The system makes available the large-scale database on the educational process through providing for regular collection of the quantitative and qualitative data on the student body and their progress indicators, as well as their analysis and publication for internal beneficiaries.

⁴³ For instance, http://ysu.am/files/YSU_ANALYSIS-Final-2014.pdf (2011-2013), http://documentation.ysu.am/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/YSU_ANALYSIS_comparative-2018-19.pdf (2017-2019).

- Handbooks on credit system learning and course catalogs⁴⁴, which are annually updated and put on the YSU website becoming available in electronic versions to students and other internal and external beneficiaries. This provides overall information on the organization of the learning process at YSU and the implementation of academic programmes and specific courses. The specifications of the YSU academic programmes serve that purpose as well.
- The information provided on the YSU website (<http://doc.ySU.am/>) referring to internal processes and regulations. It enables students, future entrants and other external beneficiaries to get acquainted with the university, as well as the educational and scientific-research services provided by it. The website also provides for an opportunity of getting feedback (question and answer).
- Accounts and reports on the results of the monitoring processes implemented since 2019 for the purpose of evaluating the effectiveness of the YSU academic programmes. These also present the plans for improvement measures aimed at raising the efficiency of the academic programmes. All these documents are considered and approved by the faculty (institute, center) academic councils and the YSU Academic Council.
- YSU institutional self-evaluation report³⁹.
- Guidebooks for entrants⁴⁵ and freshmen⁴⁶.

Since 2015 the internal network platform Intranet⁴⁷ for the YSU employees has been in operation, which aims at automating and making more efficient the flows of the YSU information exchange and accountability processes, as well as supporting the formation of a unified information system at YSU. At the same time, it should be also noted that in 2019 the Mulberry⁴⁸ administrative information system was introduced and is already in operation at YSU. This system essentially expanded dissemination and operative provision of information and made it available to all the university employees.

**YSU activity strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats
by Criterion 10**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. YSU has a QA concept and appropriate policies which are implemented consistently. 2. YSU has stable student feedback mechanisms, which are implemented steadily (student and graduate surveys, etc.). 3. There are criteria and procedures for licensing, development, expert examination, approval, current monitoring and periodical review of academic programmes, due to which educational subdivisions are directly 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The internal quality culture has yet to be fully formed, which is conditioned by low motivation of the teaching staff and a vast number of students, as well as their low involvement in the QA processes. 2. The transition to the online mode of student and graduate surveys resulted in the decrease in the number of their participants. 3. The QA internal mechanisms for assessing the effectiveness of learning resources and student supporting services have yet to be

⁴⁴ <http://www.ySU.am/education/en>

⁴⁵ <http://www.ySU.am/entrant/>; <http://www.ySU.am/files/Dimord-2020.pdf>

⁴⁶ <http://1course.ySU.am/>

⁴⁷ <https://intranet.ySU.am/>

⁴⁸ <https://mul.ySU.am/am/>

<p>involved in the QA processes and provide for the quality of the programmes both during their development and the subsequent implementation.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. To make the YSU activities transparent there are mechanisms for accountability, network information systems, guidebooks and directories for the organization of the learning process. 5. The university ensures the involvement of the teaching staff and students in the QA processes and structures (QA permanent commissions of the YSU Academic Council and academic councils of educational subdivisions, the self-analysis commission and working groups, working groups for the current monitoring of academic programmes, regular surveys, etc.). 6. There is a programme for the teaching staff training and professional development which is periodically updated, as well as an appropriate technological infrastructure. 7. There are mechanisms for material and moral reward of the teaching staff to promote the efficiency of their activities (salary bonuses, awards for excellence in teaching, etc.). 8. There are internal systems for collecting and analyzing information (the key performance indicators of YSU, the Intranet platform for collecting data on the activities of the YSU employees, the electronic information system SuperVision for the educational process management, the Mulberry system for document circulation, etc.). 9. There are mechanisms for strategic planning and accountability at university and faculty (institute, center) levels. 	<p>fully activated.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. The inadequate payment of the teaching staff conditioned by the extremely low level of state financing results in an outflow of high-quality human resources. 5. There is still low involvement of the potential employers and other representatives of the labor market in the establishment of the final learning outcomes/competences of the academic programmes and in their acquisition processes by students. 6. There are no student commissions on the academic programmes to follow up the survey results and provide feedback on the quality of programmes.
Opportunities	Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The adoption of the new law on higher education will contribute to the improvement of the quality of educational programmes conditioned by the requirement for programme content licensing and mandatory programme accreditation. 2. The expansion of international cooperation opportunities can promote the 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The effectiveness of implementing internships in the framework of some specialties is rather low conditioned by the weak link between university and labor market. 2. The insufficient evaluation of the teacher's role by the public and state endangers the involvement of high-quality human resources in the teaching processes.

<p>implementation of a more effective benchmarking of academic programmes, contribute to the improvement of the teaching staff training and increase the efficiency of other QA processes.</p> <p>3. The enlargement of open educational resources can substantially promote modernization of the teaching and learning processes and enhance distance and combined learning at the university.</p> <p>4. The active participation of the university in the European ERASMUS+ and other international projects gives vast opportunities to adopt and disseminate best practices at YSU.</p>	<p>3. In some professional spheres the labor market, being yet unformed, is unable to put forward clearly set requirements (competences) for specialist training.</p>
---	---

Planned ways to overcome weaknesses and threats

1. Develop the process of current programme monitoring initiated at the University in 2019 extending it also for academic programmes of Bachelor's degree and hence involving much greater number of students and the teaching staff.
2. Establish student commissions on the academic programmes to follow up the survey results and provide feedback on the programme quality.
3. Develop and introduce mechanisms for assessing the effectiveness of learning resources and student supporting services.
4. Promote the involvement of practitioners in the teaching processes collaborating with employers and other representatives of the labor market.
5. Enhance and develop the practices for working by the PIRI system (Plan, Implement, Review & Improve) in all the YSU structures and processes.
6. Implement the procedure for the multi-factor assessment of the teaching staff activities in all the YSU chairs and centers.
7. Increase the level of the teaching staff and student awareness about the QA processes unfolding at YSU.