



**Developing Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Programmes and
Strengthening Research Networks in Geoinformation Technologies
in Armenia and Kyrgyzstan
(GeoTAK)**

**Quality assurance policies in Higher
Education in Armenia**

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GeoTAK Technical Training – Piloting new PhD courses in GIT



SOME STATISTICS

- Number of state HEIs: **26**
- Number of private HEIs: **31**
- Number of foreign HEI branches: **7**
- Number of HEIs with State participation: **5**
- Number of students in HEIs: **69,600**

Higher education is provided in institutes, universities, academies and conservatory.

Source: Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of the Republic of Armenia (<https://escs.am/am/category/listings>)



Education Sector in Armenia

The education sector in Armenia is represented by two types of educational establishments:

1. general (**Preschool establishment and School**) and
2. professional (Preliminary Professional Educational Institution):
 - ✓ **Technical School**; Middle Professional Educational Institute
 - ✓ **College**; Higher Education Institution (HEI)
 - ✓ **University, Institute, Academy and Conservatory**). Post-graduate studies are available within HEIs as well as in scientific institutes.

In 2006 Armenia converted to a three level 12 year general education system having the following sequence: *elementary school (4 years), middle school (5 years) and high school (3 years)*.



The Legal Base

The general principles of legislation in the tertiary sector are determined in the framework of

- **Law on Education (LE)** adopted in April 1999 and
- **Law on Higher and Postgraduate Professional Education** adopted in 2004.

The university or college status as an organizational entity is regulated by the **Law on State Non-Profit Entities** adopted in October 2001.

Member of Bologna Process and Adoption of Agenda for the implementation of the principles of Bologna Process in 2006.



PROGRAMMES AND QUALIFICATIONS

According to the **Law on Higher and Postgraduate Professional Education (LHPPE)** and subsequent **Government Decree** the 2-cycle system (Bachelor – 4 year and Master – 2 year) was introduced in Armenia at the system level from 2005-2006 academic year.

LHPPE envisaged “Mandatory implementation of credit system into the higher education system shall start from 2006/07 academic year”, nevertheless, due to actual unreadiness of HEIs, the Ministry of Education and Science shifted the start of introduction of credit system to 2007/08 academic year.



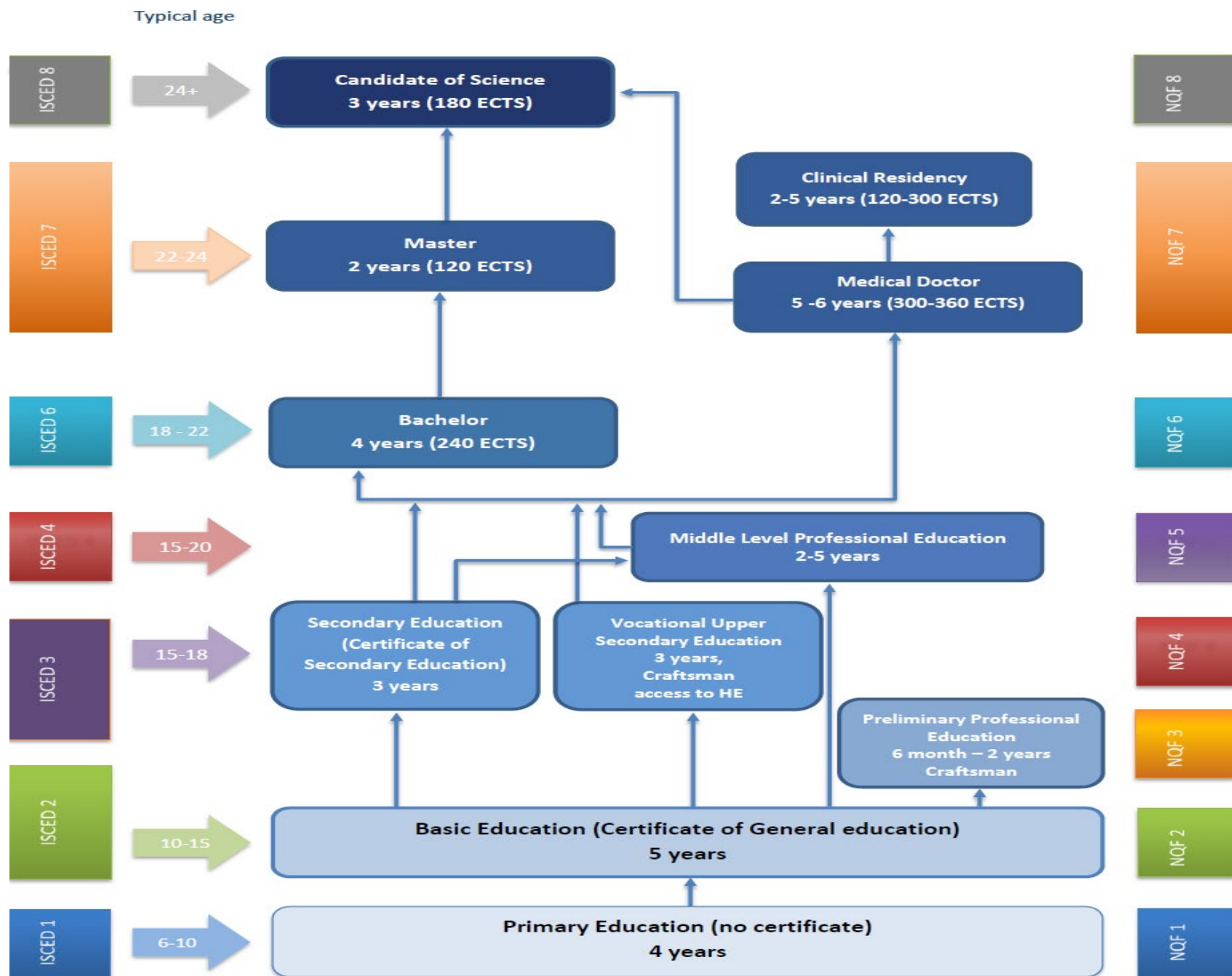
PROGRAMMES AND QUALIFICATIONS

The Armenian national qualifications framework (NQF) adopted by the Government Decree (No 332-N) in March 2011, and revised in 2016 (No 714-N) with new definitions for each level.

The Armenian NQF has eight levels and follows the EQF level descriptors categories: knowledge, skills and competences. Level descriptors for NQF levels 6-8 are based on the Dublin Descriptors in line with the QF-EHEA.

The NQF defines the types of qualifications allocated by levels. General education qualifications correspond to NQF levels 1, 2 and 4. VET qualifications correspond to NQF levels 3 and 4, “Primary VET” in Armenia (initial VET), and NQF level 5, “Secondary VET” in Armenia (higher VET). Higher education qualifications are allocated to NQF levels 6-8.

Armenian Education System



Qualification descriptors

Qualification descriptors are generic statements of the outcomes of study (learning outcomes). They provide clear points of reference that describe the main outcomes of a qualification often with reference to national levels.

European Qualification Framework



National Qualification Framework



**Sectorial Qualification Framework
(Construction Field)**



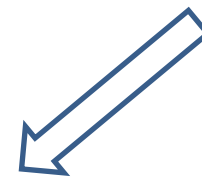
Mission of NUACA



Strategic Plan of NUACA



**Action Plan of NUACA and
other regulatory documents**



**Learning Outcome Based
Educational Program**

NQF: Bachelor (6th level)

General description (characteristic) of the Qualification

The Bachelor degree qualifies individuals who have broadband coherent knowledge and skills in a range of fields to undertake professional work and/or further learning.

KNOWLEDGE

1. Knowledge and understanding

Demonstrates advanced knowledge and understanding of basic and state-of-the-art concepts, theories and methods within the field of professional work or study.

SQF: Bachelor (6th level)

General description (characteristic) of the Qualification

The Bachelor Degree qualifies individuals who have a broad and coherent knowledge and skills in a range of fields to undertake professional work and/or further study.

KNOWLEDGE

1. Knowledge and understanding

- demonstrates a basic knowledge of construction and field advanced practice, traditional and new technologies and building materials, as well as is aware of modern research and practical work in the field
- demonstrates a basic knowledge of mathematics and natural sciences related to the field
- demonstrates knowledge of basic and modern concepts, theories and methods of engineering systems and processes
- demonstrates a general knowledge of adjacent subjects regarding the construction and other interdisciplinary subjects
- carries out the activities in the professional field, demonstrates the general knowledge in the field of urban development, environment and cultural heritage protection.

NQF: Bachelor (6th level)

SQF: Bachelor (6th level)

SKILLS

2. Applying knowledge and understanding

Can apply acquired knowledge and understanding, basic principles and methods of the field for solving problems during the professional work or study.

SKILLS

2. Applying knowledge and understanding

- using the modern and innovative techniques can apply knowledge and understanding to identify, formulate, and analyze the processes related construction and solve engineering problems, taking into account the ethical, social, legal, environmental and economic factors, as well as work safety and hygiene rules
- can critically and systematically use his/her knowledge to analyze and present a range of events on the basis of relevant information
- within the relevant authorization can use his/her knowledge during a project planning, engineering research, design, construction, management, operation and monitoring.

NQF: Bachelor (6th level)

SQF: Bachelor (6th level)

SKILLS

3. Communication, ICT and numeracy skills

- Can communicate and explain information, arguments, ideas, problems and their solutions that are related to the given field to the specialist and non-specialist audiences.
- Can apply ICTs to solve problems and intensify work in the specialty area.
- Can collect, process, analyse and interpret relevant quantitative and qualitative data within the specialty area to make reasonable judgments.

SKILLS

3. Communication, ICT and numeracy skills

- has interpersonal communication and teamwork skills and ethical obligations
- can communicate by native and at least by one foreign language, negotiate effectively, present and explain to professional and non-professional society information, ideas, problems, facts and solutions
- can use the necessary methods, skills and modern tools, including information and communication technologies to solve problems and to facilitate the work in the professional field
- can collect, process and interpret quantitative and qualitative data related to the field to carry out logical justifications and necessary analysis of the construction process.

NQF: Bachelor (6th level)

SKILLS

4. Generic cognitive skills (including making judgments)

- Can analyse and make judgments applying critical thinking, as well as demonstrate creativity to identify and provide different solutions to the problems of the specialty area.

SQF: Bachelor (6th level)

SKILLS

4. Generic cognitive skills (including making judgments)

-is able to present critical and self-critical thinking

-is able to understand the role of principles and approaches of the leader (manager) and leadership (management)

-is able to understand the interactions of the technical and environmental aspects and take them into account during the planning, designing and implementing the construction works maintaining the requirements of quality assurance and standards of the field

- is able to demonstrate a creative approach during the field challenges identification and proposing of the solutions, as well as the skills to adapt to new situations and to learn.

NQF: Bachelor (6th level)

SQF: Bachelor (6th level)

COMPETENCES

5. Autonomy and responsibility (including learning skills)

- Can undertake full-fledged professional activity, manage professional functions and projects, and make autonomous decisions.
- Can manage working team and take on responsibility for the professional activity of its members.
- Is able to identify one's educational needs and/or career opportunities to decide on the ways of further study.
- Is able to take personal responsibility for the nation and the State, follow up the realization of democratic principles and dissemination of national and human values.

COMPETENCES

5. Autonomy and responsibility (including learning skills)

- is able to operate within the framework of its authority, to make decisions and take responsibility for the team members and their professional development, maintaining democratic principles
- can develop separate parts of design documents of the construction objects within respective authority and professional specialization (based on the requirements of the urban development documents)
- can consider the experts' opinions and specify procedural documents and reports
- can present relevant information within the framework of the authority granted to him
- is able to realize professional, ethical and environmental responsibility of construction engineer and understand the impact of decisions made for the construction works in universal and public context
- can work within an interdisciplinary team and assess the role and multiculturalism of related disciplines,
- can promote through his/her activity the dissemination of national and universal values
- is able to identify his/her educational needs and make decision regarding further study.



HIGER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

University: HEI providing higher, postgraduate and supplementary education in different branches of natural and sociological fields, science, technology, and culture, as well as providing opportunities for scientific researches and studies.

Institute: HEI, conducting specialized and postgraduate academic programs and scientific researches in a number of scientific, economic and cultural branches.

Academy (educational): HEI the activity of which is aimed at the development of education, science, technology and culture in an individual sphere; it conducts programs preparing and re-training qualified specialists in an individual field, as well as postgraduate academic programs.

Conservatory: HEI preparing specialists in the field of music, providing qualification development and postgraduate academic programs.



ADMINISTRATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION FIELD

The main external stakeholder that claims significant formal power and influence in Armenian tertiary education sector is the [Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia](#) which is the authorised state body for education and responsible for developing and implementation of state policy/strategy and legislation in tertiary education.

At present, the right to main decision making within the academic community is mostly reserved to the institutions of higher education. They are autonomous in determining the main spheres of activity, adopting budgets and supervising execution thereof, introducing new majors and upgrading the existing ones, adopting curricula and teaching methods. Rectors and deans are now elected by the academic community of each institution rather than being appointed by the Ministry as was the practice under the soviet regime.



ADMINISTRATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION FIELD

Among the institutions responsible for the organisation and administration of the HE system are the **State Licensing and Accreditation Service** – the only intermediate body established by the Ministry by operating in the area of the central accreditation system – and **National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation (ANQA)**, established on December 28, 2008, as an independent foundation for promoting quality education at tertiary level.

There are also two main representative bodies in the tertiary education system: **the Council of Rectors of State Higher Educational Institutions** and **the Council of Rectors of Private Higher Educational Institutions**, which are advisory bodies to the Ministry.



QUALITY ASSURANCE

The external review of quality assurance of HEIs is done by the **National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation (ANQA)** – an independent foundation aimed at promoting quality education at tertiary level, being established on December 28, 2008. ANQA is founded and subsidized by the Armenian Government and is projected to be financed through entrepreneurial initiatives. It is governed by the board of stakeholders and is independent of the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) and institutions at tertiary level.



QUALITY ASSURANCE

Among the objectives of the center are to accredit quality of the educational programs and provide the decision to the MoES for state accreditation; make academic audit of HEI, evaluate and accredit HEI, provide the decision on accreditation to the MoES for state accreditation of HEIs, as well as evaluate quality assurance systems of HEIs and make recommendations, etc.

The Universities themselves are involved in the development of internal mechanisms for quality assurance. They are becoming increasingly introspective and analytical about their strengths and weaknesses and need to develop a culture of constant improvement through periodic evaluation.



ACCREDITATION PROCESS

Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and Academic Programmes in Armenia is carried out by the [National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation](#) (ANQA) – a full member of European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE).

- **Institutional accreditation** is a regular **mandatory process** both for private and public HEIs operating on the territory of Armenia. Institutional accreditation is a prerequisite for Academic Programme Accreditation.
- **Academic Programme Accreditation** is carried out on the initiative of the HEI, based on **voluntary basis**, except for medical academic programmes, the accreditation of which is compulsory.



ACCREDITATION PROCESS

Accreditation is granted for a certain period and guarantees that the institution or academic programme has the necessary capacity to provide education for a definite time span.

Both, institutional and academic programme accreditations are carried out in **three consecutive phases**:

- 1. Self-evaluation** (a written report of the institution's internal review) according to State Accreditation Criteria and Standards
- 2. External review** through site visit carried out by an independent external expert panel
- 3. Decision making** on accreditation status by ANQA's Accreditation Commission



INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

1. Policies and practices in accordance with institutional mission, in line with the Armenian National Qualifications Framework (ANQF).
2. Effective governance, administrative structures and practices aligned with the institutional mission and supportive of the governance code of ethics.
3. Academic programmes aligned with the institution's mission, promoting mobility and internationalization.
4. Relevant student support services.
5. Qualified teaching and supporting staff.



INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

6. Implementation of research activity and the link of the research with teaching and learning.
7. Infrastructure and resources necessary to create learning environment.
8. Societal responsibility for the education and resources offered, as well as for the conducted research.
9. External relations and availability of practices promoting internationalization of the institution.
10. Internal quality assurance system.



ACADEMIC PROGRAM ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

1. Academic program design is in accordance with ANQF, national qualifications descriptors, and state academic standards as well as is in line with the institution's mission.
2. Teaching staff has necessary professional qualifications to realize the goals of the academic programs.
3. Teaching and learning practices used within the academic program ensure the achievement of intended learning outcomes.
4. Academic program provides assessment system that allows ensuring the students' progress as well as the formation and achievement of intend learning outcomes.



ACADEMIC PROGRAM ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

5. Academic program ensures links between learning and research and creative activities.
6. Academic program promotes the quality educational provisions by creating an environment conducive to learning.
7. Academic program has internal quality assurance system that promotes its maintenance and continuous improvement.

With a view to making accreditation results available to public and international organizations, **State Accreditation Register** is developed in concord with the accreditation policy. The register is sustained by ANQA and provides information about accredited institutions and academic programs.



ACCREDITATION PROCEDURE

A HEI seeking accreditation status can apply to ANQA or other quality assurance agencies that are either registered on the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR henceforth) or are full members of ENQA. Institutions implementing academic programmes with non-EHEA countries or branches of foreign institutions can apply to recognized accreditation agencies, the list of which is approved by the RA Minister of Education and Science. Any institution that has applied to an international accreditation organization must notify ANQA of the start of the accreditation process within five calendar days.



ACCREDITATION PROCEDURE

Steps for institutional accreditation include:

1. Submission of application and [self-evaluation](#) for institutional accreditation
2. Examination of documentation compliance to the set requirements
3. Recognition of an educational institution as an accreditation seeker
4. Payment of the accreditation application examination fee
5. Creation of accreditation expert panel
6. Accreditation site visit and expert panel's draft report
7. Decision on accreditation by the Board of Trustees
8. Publication of a substantiated decision of ANQA Accreditation Committee and accreditation report by ANQA
9. The decision with the accreditation certificate and supplement forms sent to the Ministry of Education and Science for approval
10. Inclusion of accredited institutions and programs into the State Accreditation Register



ACCREDITATION PROCEDURE

The Board of Trustees can make one of the following decisions:

- Award institutional accreditation
- Award conditional institutional accreditation
- Reject institutional accreditation

The procedure for the approval or rejection process of applications is adopted according to the [Statute on Accreditation](#).

To undergo the process of Academic Program Accreditation a HEI must:

1. Submit application according to the respective form developed by ANQA and approved by the Board of Trustees
2. Have an authority to carry out educational activity – licensing
3. Fill in ANQA online questionnaire (web.survey.anqa.am)
4. Submit the certificate of institutional accreditation (state accreditation)



TERM OF ACCREDITATION

Institutional Accreditation is awarded for **4 or 6 years**. Conditional Institutional Accreditation is awarded for **2 years'** period, and the institution awarded with conditional accreditation **cannot apply for the program accreditation**. In case of conditional institutional accreditation, the education institution **cannot open a new specialty**.

Academic Program accreditation is awarded for **5 years** and in case the shortcomings mentioned in the expert panel report Conditional Program Accreditation can be granted for no more than **2 years**. Upon being awarded with conditional program accreditation, a HEI submits a written report to ANQA once every 6 months on the elimination of the shortcomings. In case of not eliminating the shortcomings within the set period the supplement of state accreditation certificate is repealed.



ACCREDITATION PROCEDURE

Duration of the process

ANQA carries out the processes of institutional and program accreditation within a year after accepting the application. Within one week after accepting the application a service contract is signed between the applicant and ANQA according to Armenian legislation. The date and the schedule of the process launch are clearly mentioned in the contract.

Renewal of accreditation

At least one year before the end of the deadline of the Institutional and Academic Programme accreditation a HEI should apply to ANQA for starting new Institutional and Programme Accreditation processes.



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



THANK YOU!