



Assessment Report on Fulfilling the Requirements of the Secondary Condition of Institutional Accreditation

Yerevan Haybusak University

2025



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Introduction

Background and aim of the assessment

‘Institutional accreditation’ is the process of external evaluation which assesses the conformity of a university or higher education institution’s management, work procedures, study and research activities and environment to both legislation and the goals and development plan of the higher education institution itself. This is feedback-based evaluation in which an international expert panel analyses the strengths and weaknesses of the institution of higher education based on the self-assessment report of the institution and on information obtained during the assessment visit, providing recommendations for improvement and ways of implementing them.

The goal of institutional accreditation is to support the development of strategic management and quality culture that values learning-centeredness, creativity and innovation in the higher education institutions (HEIs), as well as to increase the societal impact of education, research and development delivered by the HEIs.

The institutional accreditation of Yerevan Haybusak University took place in April 2023. HAKA Council decided at its meeting on 29.06.2023, that the next accreditation is to take place in three years if the HEI meets certain requirements set by the HAKA Council.

The task of the current expert panel was to evaluate whether the requirements (secondary condition) set by the HAKA Council have been met by Yerevan Haybusak University.

The expert panel consisted of the following members:

Anca Greere	Chair of the Panel, Professor, Babes-Bolyai University Cluj; Romania
Jonathan Loose	Director of Learning & Teaching, Heythrop College, University of London; UK
Kristi Joamets	Senior Lecturer, Tallinn University of Technology; Estonia

Assessment process

The higher education institution sent its progress report on the fulfilment of the requirements of the secondary condition to HAKA on 27.06.2025.

The members of the expert panel wrote the report based on the written materials presented by the HEI and the information obtained in the interviews during the site visit on October 1-2, 2025.

In the following sections, the expert panel summarises their findings regarding the fulfilment of the secondary condition and provides feedback on the progress the HEI has made in connection with experts’ recommendations made in the institutional accreditation report in 2023.

The institution did not have any clarifications or comments on the report. The panel submitted the final report to HAKA on 23.10.2025.

The current report is a public document and made available on HAKA website after HAKA Council has made its decision.

General progress report

General assessment of the actions taken by the Yerevan Haybusak University with regard to improvement areas presented in the HAKA Council decision on 29.06.2023.

Comments

Following the visit in 2023, the University has intensified its quality assurance activities finding guidance in the HAKA report produced at the time. While the secondary conditions were prioritised, all other areas noted were also given attention in as far as resources permitted.

While the panel acknowledges that the time elapsed from the last visit is insufficient to take actions through their full quality assurance cycle and determine their level of effectiveness and impact on the educational experience of students, it is worth noting that the panel is of the opinion that the steps taken have the potential to render positive outcomes.

The University has a new Strategic Plan for 2025-2030 and a strengthened Scientific Council which focusses on promoting research priorities at YHU. The University also has new strategic partnerships, especially in the area of curriculum development, which, if operated correctly, have the potential to improve the educational experience of students and their employability prospects. The panel observed that some of the operational details for these partnerships are yet to be finalised. To strengthen capacity, some new staff appointments have been made and many part-time staff have been moved to full-time contracts, with a distribution of workload which staff members reported to be helpful. Also, the University has since rearranged its physical spaces relocating specific programmes to the building which previously housed the Haybusak College. The building in construction at the time of the 2023 visit has been finished with medical and dentistry programmes currently making full use of their facilities. The University has also continued other renovations and investments to bring its infrastructure in alignment with specific programme needs.

The University highlighted its capability to adjust course as and when needed in order to come closer to aligning to quality expectations. While the panel found this to be helpful, in principle, it also warned the University against over-responsiveness to external steer at the risk of overriding important mission and vision stipulations. While the panel understands that a small, private higher education institution is likely to face more challenge in engaging in meaningful partnerships, securing additional funding or maintaining national dialogue with ministerial structures, the steps taken by YHU through its strategic efforts can, in time, consolidate its position with a view to meeting its international ambitions.

This report focusses specifically on the secondary conditions highlighted, with the panel seeking to gain full understanding on what progress may have been achieved. Other aspects of the previous assessment in 2023 were not directly in scope for analysis now, but, where it was possible to substantiate, the panel endeavoured to present opinions more broadly, in support of quality assurance re-assessments to be undertaken in the future.

Commendations

- *YHU is commended for instituting research development grants to expedite interdisciplinary research collaborations*
- *YHU is commended for the suitable international partnerships it has secured for the Psychology and Law programmes, which have the potential to greatly benefit staff and students*
- *YHU is commended for its responsiveness in relation to the introduction of full-time employment contracts for the majority of staff members*

Further considerations

- *KPI targets must be more clear and must be adequately supported by SMART operational plans*
- *The established trajectory towards implementing areas of research and achieving strategic goals around research environment must be stabilised*
- *The approach to the approval of research activity across the institution must be strengthened*
- *Library acquisitions must continue*
- *Development of BA Psychology and MA Law must continue to consider international standards for alignment and national Armenian requirements for employability*
- *Teacher performance evaluation must be better communicated and more thoroughly implemented*
- *English language training for teachers must continue*

Report on fulfilling the requirements of the secondary condition

At its meeting on 29.06.2023 HAKA Council decided that the next institutional accreditation of Yerevan Haybusak University will take place in three years but set a secondary condition that the university must meet in two years.

The following are the requirements set by the HAKA Council to be met by Yerevan Haybusak University, and the expert panel's assessment on the developments the Yerevan Haybusak University has made in this regard.

Shortcomings in research, development and/or other creative activity: Absence of clear and systematic definition of research goals and areas of focus at the institutional level within the University. YHU should clearly and systematically define research goals and areas of focus at the institutional level. YHU claims to have an ambition of becoming a leading research institution in Armenia. The Panel finds this goal not achievable in the nearest future. Strategic research ambitions should be more modest in approach, setting realistic and achievable objectives. This will enable the university to focus its resources and efforts effectively and to make progress.

Assessment of the expert panel:
the secondary condition is partly met

Evidence and analysis

According to YHU, shortcomings identified in the area of research have been addressed first through the development of the YHU 2030 Strategy, which established institutional goals. This took place

through an internal SWOT analysis leading to the defining of research objectives (among others). The process of strategic management has involved an external organisation. Internal discussions resulted in approval of the Strategy by the Academic Council (Senate). Areas of focus were also identified through this process as: (i) drug and agrochemical design, (ii) modern methods for correcting neurodevelopmental pathology and disorders, (iii) technologies and legal mechanisms to prevent, diagnose, and treat reproductive diseases. In order to take achievable steps in research, YHU provided two internal research grants in: (i) drug design and (ii) cognitive interventions in developmental disorders, as well as establishing a Fair of Ideas competition to promote student engagement in research. The management of research is underpinned by the formation of a new Scientific Council in September 2024 chaired by a senior, research active academic.

The panel heard from YHU leadership that the involvement of more active researchers in the institution and its Scientific Council continues to be a priority, and that internal grants had been provided to this end, with further opportunities to come. While research activities were being undertaken at the time of the 2023 visit, these lacked systematisation and sufficient co-ordination – areas which YHU has been working to address. In the meantime, staff have also been taken on full-time and are publishing with their YHU institutional affiliation. It was also clear from the most senior level that there is an ongoing desire for academic community, including the involvement of students in grant-funded activities.

The panel read that the 2025-2030 institutional strategy is in place and that one of its two directions includes professional competencies and research capabilities. This 'direction' is constituted by six goals, five of which are particularly research relevant: (1.1) Improving joint programmes through benchmarking against European Universities, including a research component; (1.2) Improving resources, infrastructure, databases, and research programme management to enable impactful research; (1.3) Promoting teamwork and interdisciplinary working to foster research, including through inter-departmental research projects; (1.4) Develop strategic, operational, and cultural aspects of internationalisation to foster expansion of international research activities. (This includes publishing in international journals, conferences, and a diaspora scholars program); (1.5) Expand ties with local and government bodies in order to strengthen the impact of research activities [Pathway of Change: 2025-2030 Strategy, file: S0125-YHU-2030_Strategy-EN.pdf].

The panel considered the process by which YHU had produced its strategy following the 2023 institutional review. This was done to assess YHU's ability to provide a systematic approach to research development.

This process is summarised here: A timeline provided to the panel indicated eight meetings between June 2023 and June 2025. The initial phase (June-November 2023) involved discussions of the Institutional Review report, update of goals and KPIs and drafting of a revised research strategy (20th September, 2023). A second phase (November 2023 - May 2024) included publication of a draft for comments and revisions discussed subsequently in November 2023. A 'research needs assessment' was also conducted, including a survey of lecturers' research needs. Working group meetings focused on institutional review in December 2023, February 2024, and April 2024 considered the implementation of responses to secondary conditions, including research. In May 2024 the research strategy was discussed and approved by University Council. In a third, very recent phase (September 2024 - April 2025) 'institutional changes' led to decisions to incorporate the research direction into a broader, new institutional strategy. A meeting to revise the research strategy objectives led to the adoption of a goal around public impact. A new strategy was at this time deemed required due to structural changes that had taken place previously in Autumn 2024. Thus, by early 2025 the YHU 2025-2030 strategy was drafted, incorporating the research strategy

and some subsequent changes. External advice ('Management Mix') was not included in the process until 2025 to guide the SWOT analysis, development of SMART objectives, etc. Hence this external advice led to a second draft strategy presented in April 2025 that was approved in June of that year. [YHU Research Strategy Development Timeline, file:01-Research_Strategy-Timeline.pdf]

The panel also heard that the initial work to develop an independent research strategy was reconsidered in light of the external advice to promote integration of research through a unified institutional strategy. (This more unified approach also included consideration of internal and external grant-funding.) In fact the panel heard different accounts of the timing and use of SWOT analyses through this period and formed the view that a change of approach had taken place at the time a new Chair of the Scientific Council was appointed. The panel also understood that during this period a significant restructuring of the institution took place (the 'institutional changes' referred to above), including moving departments between buildings, and that these changes had implications for the strategy development process. Overall, the panel recognised that this has been a period of cross-cutting change across the institution and so not a simple of linear process.

The panel noted the more recent emphasis placed by the institution on the integration of its research strategy into its wider institutional strategy [meetings]. While recognising the value of such integration at the top level, and welcoming evidence of KPI development around research-relevant strategic objectives, the panel noted the importance of ownership of research strategy within the Scientific Council and the need for effective enabling strategies and operational sub-strategies to ensure specified KPI targets are met within a published time-frame [Key Performance Indicators for Research, file: 02-Research_KPIs.pdf]. The panel observed that steps are emerging towards this type of strategic approach, and this indicated that efforts are being made to establish an approach towards research that is *realistic and achievable*, but that this realistic and achievable approach is not yet fully established and embedded. The panel would expect this more detailed strategic planning process to be increasingly evident over time.

The panel heard that the development of the three focus areas for research identified in YHU's response to the secondary conditions was driven by SWOT analyses to reflect institutional strengths and weaknesses in the face of various opportunities and threats. The panel also heard that two other goals also impacted selection of these three areas. First was a concern for the competency and knowledge-base of the institution, and second a concern for 'environmental friendliness'. [YHU Fulfilment of the Secondary Condition of Institutional Accreditation: file YHU-Secondary_rpt.pdf, meetings] The panel judged that areas had been selected that reflect institutional strengths.

The panel also heard that, looking forward, members of the Scientific Council understand success in terms of inter-disciplinarity of research teams, engagement with digital technologies, and involvement of students in research activities. The Council was also aware of the need to monitor numbers of research publications, with quality being understood in terms of acceptance in the SCOPUS database. In addition to those publishing in this way it was noted that there are others in the university doing work that has standing in a local context, and the panel heard an appreciation for the need to provide ongoing enhancement of research capability among its staff. This may bring a larger number through to produce work of international standing.

In the area of research ethics, the panel noted the institutional policy and awareness of various norms [Rules of Procedure of the Ethics Committee, file: 08-09_YHU-Ethics_Committee.pdf]. Through its meetings with the institution the panel was not able to establish that there is a comprehensive requirement for all research projects working with human participants to obtain explicit approval from a properly-constituted ethics committee. Such a committee should reflect in

its judgments the guidelines that are typical of such committees in European institutions. The panel nevertheless formed a view that ethical conduct is held as an important value by YHU and that the institution is seeking to ensure that this is reflected and embedded in its culture among staff and students [e.g. Scientific Research Fundamentals and Academic Ethics Syllabus, file: 10-202509_YHU-Research-Ethics_Syllabus.pdf]. Overall the panel formed the view that the development of a comprehensive approach to research ethics is not yet complete, and recognised that YHU's approach of seeking advice from European institutions would also be of value here in further developing this area as (the panel heard) the institution would like to do.

Overall, the panel found the process of research strategy development over the last two years to have been energetic but turbulent. The turbulence is due in part to the attempt to make major changes in multiple, cross-cutting areas in a short time. A more orderly and linear developmental approach through well-documented processes and carefully minuted meetings is desirable. Progress has nevertheless been made and research goals have been produced that are relatively clear and well-defined. This has been accomplished by a Scientific Council that is structured for this purpose, being led by a member of staff deemed to be a senior, research-active academic and including the head of the Research Resource Centre and the Research Grant Manager, as well as student representation. The panel, thus, formed the view that some effective co-ordination, action, and oversight is taking place in this area.

Conclusion

Based on its analysis, the panel judged that the concerns of the secondary condition in the area of research are **partly met**. Research goals and areas of focus have been defined at the institutional level, and these have a measure of clarity and systematicity, reflecting energetic pursuit of a research strategy that is well-integrated into the institution as a whole. YHU has also gone some way to ensure that its research objectives are realistic and achievable by refreshing, strengthening and clarifying the work of the Scientific Council, and seeking external advice in matters of strategy development. The trajectory that has been established in the last two years now needs to continue with similar energy and increased orderliness to ensure that objectives and KPI targets remain clear, and operational and enabling strategies are in place so that steady progress can be made, which may indicate in future that concerns in this area are met more fully.

Strengths

- *YHU has provided two initial internal grants to support research development, with plans to provide more soon. It has also made efforts to secure external grant funding, with some success. The panel commends this activity as an important start in this area.*

Areas of concern and recommendations

- *Ensure KPI targets are clear and that enabling strategies and operational plans are in place so that these may be achieved in a published time-frame.*
- *Ensure a period of stable continuation of the current trajectory towards establishing the defined areas of research and achieving strategic goals around research environment.*
- *Ensure a comprehensive approach to the approval of research activity across the institution through approval of a research ethics approvals committee established for the purpose.*

Opportunities for further improvement

- *Establish effective partnerships with European institutions to align YHU's research management and operations with European standards and norms.*

Shortcomings in study programmes (SP). BA programme in Psychology: The SP does not conform to international professional standards. The psychology SP development should be managed according to international standards for psychology curricula. Study materials are mostly outdated. The curriculum should increase access to modern professional knowledge in psychology. It is essential to use more up-to-date materials, including those in English. **MA programme in Law:** The SP is composed of courses from many areas of law with no logical division and sequence and with no clear specialization demonstrating misalignment with current European and international practice. The SP should be revised and the prospect of offering a specialisation should be considered. The number of students in the SP is very small. The institution should reflect on the minimum number of students that are required to ensure that the programme is sustainable and should increase student numbers accordingly.

Assessment of the expert panel:
the secondary condition is partly met

Evidence and analysis

The 2023 report highlighted issues with curricular approaches across the study programmes. In the view of the panel, curricula lacked coherence and were insufficiently aligned with international requirements or national employability needs. The University was advised to intervene for specific programmes but also to take a more holistic approach to curricular development. The approach demonstrated on the two programmes below, which entails setting up Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with reputable international partners, has the potential to render positive outcomes, if extended to other programmes where international benchmarking may prove necessary. For the two programmes discussed below, the benefits will become evident in time, if the University makes full use of their collaborations and proactively draws on the educational and subject-specific expertise which the partners have to offer.

For the BA Psychology

According to YHU, shortcomings identified in the BA Psychology programme through the Institutional Accreditation Report (2023) have been resolved through institutional benchmarking of the programme with Mykolas Romeris University, Lithuania (MRU), followed by the development of a new programme and purchase of additional study materials, including books in English, as well as additional electronic resources.

The panel heard that Mykolas Romeris University (MRU) was selected as a comparator institution. YHU sought advice from the Lithuanian national Erasmus+ office and formed the view that MRU has strong engagement with international collaboration, a diverse student body, and ranks among the top psychology institutions in Lithuania. YHU believes that MRU is known for a modern, interdisciplinary approach to psychology, offers programmes in English, and emphasises practical skills and research [YHU Fulfilment of the Secondary Condition of Institutional Accreditation: file YHU-Secondary_rpt.pdf, meetings]

The panel confirmed that a memorandum of understanding is in place with MRU [Unsigned copy of Memorandum of Understanding between YHU and MRU, file: 15-MOU_MRU-YHU]. The MOU includes commitments on both sides to promote mobility of students and faculty, double degree development, joint PhD supervision, other research collaboration exchange, sharing of scientific materials, publications, and information, and other academic and cultural co-operations as agreed.

The panel was also able to confirm that the first expression of this MOU took the form of a visit in 2024 enabling MRU to introduce its psychology BA programme to YHU staff, and to show YHU the experimental laboratory, library and resources available to students in their institution. MRU has taught its bachelors programme in English for more than 15 years and is accompanied by various masters programmes [meetings].

The panel found that YHU's stated purpose for its new bachelor's degree program in psychology is to provide students with theoretical and practical knowledge of psychology, to equip them with the skills and abilities necessary to contribute to the high quality of mental health of individuals and communities, and to pursue further studies in psychological science. To this end the programme is intended to provide a grounding in the 'main theories of psychology' as well as knowledge and skills to enable 'the main features of psychological work', 'conduct psychological scientific research', with an ability to 'understand and analyse research results and make them applicable', to provide psychological services (including 'psychological counselling, psychological assessment, and the implementation of special training programs'), and to do all this in accord with requirements around professional ethics in Armenia and elsewhere. [Psychology Bachelor Program Description. Admission 2024,: file YHU-Psychology_BA.pdf]. Aligned with these purposes, YHU has identified study programme outcomes in terms of knowledge and application, scientific inquiry, research and problem solving, communication, ICT and interpersonal relationships, professional attitudes, and values and societal engagement. Programme learning outcomes are mapped to courses in each semester to ensure coverage. Courses are also structured thematically in five categories: General education and foundation courses, core psychological foundations, biological and neuropsychological bases, research and methodology, applied psychology and practice.

YHU's psychology bachelor's degree is a full-time, four-year programme providing 240 ECTS credits. The panel saw five course curricula and saw no evidence of the specification of course prerequisites. Each course has nominal credits, teaching hours, and hours of individual study associated with it. Syllabi seen by the panel consistently specified the rationale, objectives, outcomes, and methodology for each course along with an overview of the course schedule and required literature, which is split into Armenian and Foreign (English) sources. The panel met with a team of four academic staff, including one newly-appointment Head of Programme who had joined YHU one month prior to the visit. Students of both old and new psychology programmes were found to be generally content with their experience. The panel did not meet with any alumni or employers at this visit.

The panel recognised that the new programme constitutes a significant step towards conformity with international professional standards of psychology curricula, although these have not yet been met in full. The programme description seen by the panel includes the standard sub-disciplines in psychology, paying attention to social, developmental, cognitive, biological, and personality psychology. Some textbooks used internationally that cover the standard areas in English were specified in the limited number of course curricula seen by the panel. The course includes some preparation for students in both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Around this core understanding there are a range of applied, practical, and professional courses. This improvement to the programme can be seen to result from the visit to MRU, which took place as a result of the MOU.

While a significant step has been taken, the panel formed the view that further developments are required to meet international standards in full. The panel heard clearly from staff and students that practical activities and experience are valued parts of the course, but did not hear the same level of engagement with the theoretical underpinnings of core psychological understanding. The panel

formed a view that the newly designed programme must now be embedded in a way that gives sufficient emphasis to these theoretical foundations in core areas, and on research methods and analysis.

The attempt to build effective partnerships with European institutions in this area is bearing fruit and the required further enhancement may be helped significantly by such partnerships. For example, academic staff development that is aligned to programme development is important to ensure that staff competencies are continually developed to deliver newly-specified core material and methods effectively. Such development could be explored through the existing MOU, or a development of it.

The panel observed different perceptions of the MOU between YHU and MRU. While YHU aspires to a double programme with MRU, MRU perceives the relationship as less formal, broad, and active than YHU. However, the panel formed the view that it is important for both parties to keep in mind the formal commitment within the MOU and to show progress in the partnership that flows from these formal commitments, which would be of significant benefit to YHU.

Further enhancement can also be made in the area of research methods teaching. The new programme provides one course in qualitative research methods in the first year and one in quantitative research methods in the second year, accompanied by a single course in statistical analysis. In order to reach international standards, the panel found that the structure and teaching capacity of the programme would need to be strengthened to include a more rigorous research methods preparation. For example, comprehensive training in standard univariate and multivariate data analysis would be expected. Such training would typically require an introductory course as a prerequisite to a further intermediate course. Such methods would also serve to support student research undertaken for the bachelor's thesis. Any introduction of such courses could be under the advisement of an international partner such as MRU, and should also include addressing any needs for academic staff development and training not only in the use of statistical methods themselves, but also in their teaching and supervision of undergraduate students using them in bachelor's thesis work.

The panel also observed that YHU has acquired various books in English to support its courses, with examples seen in the small number of course syllabi provided. Some texts used as standard in international contexts were present, although these were not always up to date and the panel noted that references are not routinely presented in the standard APA format used in the discipline. Nor was it clear to the panel from its discussions that introductory textbooks in standard areas of psychology are routinely used in teaching, since awareness of these was limited [meetings]. The panel considered that this step in the availability and use of standard textbooks in English has yet to be effectively embedded in teaching and there is further work to do in this area to maintain availability and effective use of extensive and up to date library materials for each of the courses.

The panel noted that psychology teaching staff have an awareness of some of the values in their institution and discipline that should underpin their work in teaching, practice, and research [Code of Ethics, file: 07-R01-YHU_Code_of_Ethics-v2025.pdf, meetings]. However, it was not clear to the panel that there exists a process through which all work with human participants, whether in the course of classroom teaching or research by students or staff, must be submitted to an ethics committee prior to any work being undertaken to gain formal approval prior to any activity being undertaken. In order to comply fully with international standards such a policy and process would be expected and might be developed under the advisement of an external partner.

For the MA Law

According to YHU explanation the shortcomings in MA law programme is solved by the new double-degree programme with Italian university of Teramo (UNITE). YHU noted that this new double-degree programme will provide comprehensive legal education integrating foundational, characterising, and specialised components in compliance with European higher education frameworks' academic and professional standards. In the view of YHU the programme is designed to ensure vertical and horizontal coherence of its curriculum, with consideration for evolving requirements of legal education and the international legal market. [Law Programme: file YHU-Law.pdf] YHU documentation indicates that the programme offers training suitable for legal professionals including the acquisition of knowledge of the institutional and organisational aspects of judicial systems, comparative analysis, professional ethics, legal and forensic logic and argumentation, legal sociology, legal IT, and legal terminology in at least one foreign language. [Law Programme: file YHU-Law.pdf]

However, also based on the Agreement between UNITE and YHU [appendix] there remains a question why specifically these courses are chosen in the programme on a MA level studies, for example tax law and law and religion and labour law. As the Panel did not receive any syllabus of MA double degree programme courses and this was neither explained in the visit the Panel could not evaluate their content suitability for the MA level studies and whether the programme ensures the abovementioned knowledge and skills. By UNITE it was explained in a visit discussion that the courses of double degree programme in the UNITE part are the ones which are the courses of the ordinary MA programme in their university. On the YHU part there was no specification why specifically these courses are chosen for the programme. During the visit YHU explained that there will be changes in the UNITE programme to specialize and then YHU will also follow this track, but Panel did not get any explanation why such specialisation is beneficial for Armenian law market.

Regarding the organisation of new double-degree programme the Panel found many uncertainties.

Armenian legislation envisages 4 years for a BA and 2 years for an MA degree – 6 years in total, while students in Italy study 5 years towards the MA degree. According to the memorandum signed by the YHU and UNITE, students from both universities will study for the first four years at their home university, after which YHU students will study the last two years at UNITE, while UNITE students will study for their last, fifth year at YHU. [Law Programme: file YHU-Law.pdf] As such and according to the YHU written explanations [Report, page 23, point 84] students from YHU attend the 4th and 5th years of study in Italy, while students from UNITE will come to YHU for their 5th year of studies.

The curriculum mandates the acquisition of legal terminology and professional fluency in at least two foreign languages. [Law Programme: file YHU-Law.pdf] According to the YHU explanations [Report, page 23, point 83] students in this double degree programme will be taught in English and Italian. Many learning materials are in English [Report, page 23, point 83]. In the interviews the Panel heard different explanations regarding in what language the studies in the SP will be conducted: for example, only in English in both universities, in Italian in UNITE with some courses in English and in Armenian in YHU.

YHU explained that in Armenia, the Ministry of Education allocates a specific, usually small number of students to private universities, but double-degree programme allows universities to admit students at their discretion [Report, page 22, point 82]. From YHU explanation about the numbers of students [e-mail from 21. Sept 2025] in 2025-2026 12 students were enrolled in a master level. In

the interview discussions the Panel heard that this number is a number of students in the ordinary MA programme and not in a double-degree programme. The programme will start in the 2025/26 academic year [Report, page 3]. In the interviews the Panel received different explanations how the double degree programme is organised and whether it has been started already or not, are there already students applied or not, which year master students from YHU can join the studies and how the admission is organised.

Overall, the panel deemed the double-degree arrangement confusing with many operational details still unclear or insufficiently decided. While the initiative is likely to render an enriching exchange experience for students, unless details of language preparation, cultural delivery and employment/professional suitability are addressed the project may prove less beneficial to students than both partners may wish.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis the panel concluded that the requirements of the secondary condition for the BA Psychology programme and the MA Law programme have been **partly met**.

The panel understood that the amount of time that has elapsed since completion of the institutional assessment is limited and that significant work has gone in in the short intervening period to develop a revised psychology programme and to offer a new law programme, with the support of international partnerships sought. Nevertheless a continuation and acceleration of change may be required to ensure that the requirements are fully met in due course and to fully clarify operational details which can resolve the uncertainties and contradictions currently observed, especially for the Law programme.

The programmes were examined as an example of the management of academic programmes at YHU. The panel found that the management of the programmes shows improved preoccupations for international alignment and encourages YHU to implement comparable measures in the ongoing development of the institution's approach to programme management.

Strengths

- *YHU has sought advice from suitable international partners for the development of its psychology programme and the double-degree programme in Law, with relationships established through MOUs with the potential to consolidate curricular improvements at YHU also in the years to come.*

Areas of concern and recommendations

- *More extensive development of the library through acquisition of text books that reflect international curriculum standards and norms, and the embedding of these resources effectively in teaching is required.*
- *The new BA Psychology programme does not yet meet international expectations in full. In skills in research methods and data analysis (especially quantitative) need further development.*
- *The new BA Psychology programme should be supported by evaluating and meeting academic staff development needs to ensure that the staff team can continually enhance its capacity to teach in new and often challenging areas.*
- *The aim of the double degree programme in Law still remains unclear, YHU should clearly define the aim of such a programme – how does this benefit Armenian law or educational market, and communicate the requirements and organisation of the programme more clearly.*

Opportunities for further improvement

- *The BA Psychology and MA Law programmes should seek to develop proactively the full range of opportunities for its programmes, teaching, mobility and research that can flow from the MOUs signed.*

Shortcomings in teaching staff: There is some concern about the sustainability of employing part-time, non-permanent and hourly-paid staff, which could jeopardise the quality of academic programmes. The YHU should limit the scope of hourly paid faculty and employ key faculty on long-term (permanent), full-time contracts. Workload is specified only in terms of teaching hours. YHU should adopt a holistic system that takes into account teaching, research, and administrative workloads and specify all work commitments in employment contracts.

Assessment of the expert panel:
the secondary condition is substantially met

Evidence and analysis

According to the YHU explanations [Report, p 3; template of new employment contract] a new full-time contract for permanent personnel were introduced and signed with primary teachers for each study programme. The new contract template includes teaching, research, and administrative commitments. Also, a new Remuneration Policy has enforced since 26.06.2025 [Report p 3; YHU Remuneration Policy]. It was benchmarked with four Armenian universities, and in developing the policy, YHU consulted with their partner European universities [Report 3].

According to the YHU new Employment Contract Template [5.1.] a teacher's job evaluation is carried out according to: achievement of learning and curriculum outcomes, teaching load, indexed in international databases of published scientific articles, guiding student projects, participating in conferences, performing other work contributions to be implemented of the employer's strategic goals, knowledge of English (at least CERF B2 level) or enrolment and successful attendance at English classes. There is monthly calculation of the workload, considering the hours of lectures, the research carried out, the quality of education, and involvement in developing projects. According to the Remuneration Policy (p 11) a remuneration committee oversees the implementation and conduct regular audits for fulfilment of this act.

The interviews proved that teachers have new employment contracts. Teachers also knew that their contracts consist of teaching, research and leadership but did not clearly know how these tasks are divided by weight. They also did not know clearly how research part is supposed to be fulfilled and how YHU supports them in this. They referred to the access to the databases but couldn't explain what exactly is considered as a research activity and how this is calculated.

During the visit the Panel did not hear any explanation from the heads of the departments how the monthly calculation of the workload was organised.

Conclusion

Overall, there have been positive developments in teaching staff employment relations. The system adopted by YHU can be considered as holistic taking account teaching, research and administrative workload, with still some fine-tuning necessary for consistency. The majority of teaching staff now has full-time contracts. However, it was unclear how the workload will be monitored and how the evaluation system is likely to work. Consequently, the Panel finds this Standard to **substantially confirm** to requirements.

Strengths

- *The responsiveness of YHU in relation to the introduction of full-time employment contracts for the majority of staff members*

Areas of concern and recommendations

- *Better communicate and more thoroughly implement the teachers performance evaluation*

Shortcomings in internationalisation: English language skills are largely lacking. The YHU should continue its efforts to improve the English language skills of its students and staff by offering language courses. International students face many barriers when they begin with their studies in Armenia. The induction process for international students should be adapted to their needs and challenges related to living and studying in a foreign country.

Assessment of the expert panel:
the secondary condition is substantially met

Evidence and analysis

Internationalisation continues to be a high priority for the University. In line with the recommendations of the 2023 report, the University has evaluated its partnerships and has closed off partnerships which were not active or were not rendering any benefits for the University. A new approach has been introduced with MOUs signed for meaningful collaborations, especially in the area of curriculum development.

The University has intensified its English language offering and has been looking much closer at the foreign language requirements for new appointments. Concretely, an English Teaching Centre has been set up, with a newly-recruited director, and the compulsory English language courses for students, part of their programmes, have been doubled. The new partnerships for some of the programmes will also mean that teachers are likely to have more exposure to English communication for which they have confirmed they are actively preparing.

Students confirmed that the induction process is satisfactory and that they have been able to settle into university and Armenian life also with the support of personal connections. The students whom the panel met were unaware of institutional support or a dedicated office for logistical arrangements (such as accommodation, visa etc) for in-coming international students, but this is largely accounted for as they did not need such support as they managed well, otherwise. The panel noted that a new student guide has been put in place with comprehensive information for students and that international students were now being offered medical consultations internally organised by the Medical Dean's Office. Additionally, the University informed the panel that a new accommodation has been secured in a more spacious dormitory which international students can opt for.

Erasmus is still an area for development, with some students indicating they are interested in the experience but this would need to be deferred to later in their studies.

Conclusion

The panel acknowledges the efforts made in this area and judges the secondary condition substantially met. The University needs to continue with the English language development for both

staff and students and will want to continue to closely monitor the support it provides to international students and the activities of the partnerships it has engaged in, for curriculum benchmarking, exchange or research initiatives.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- *Continue to enlist teachers for English language training and monitor performance*

Opportunities for further improvement

- *Develop support systems for Erasmus exchanges*