



*Armenian Coordination Agency “University – Employer”*

## **PC Institutional Survey Report**

### **WP1 Capacity Building**

*April 2013*



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Report written by

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***The ARARAT project. Needs and rationale for the establishment of UMCUs***  
**UNIVERSITY-MARKET COOPERATION UNITS**

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The wider objective of the ARARAT project is to ameliorate the relevance of higher education to ever-changing labor market needs through establishment and operationalization of universities-employers cooperation nexus in Armenia. The specific objectives target the building on capacity of universities to effectively manage the UMCUs promoting university-market cooperation and facilitating an active dialogue between universities and labour market.

The UMCUs will be responsible for bringing in academic staff and employers, the alumni and the students to join the efforts in continual updating and development of learning outcomes necessary to boost the economic development of the country.

Such sectors as economics, engineering and pedagogy will be targeted for pilots, since those are the professions that are most demanding in Armenia and are in urgent need of revision.

Among the main missions of the university-market cooperation is to make the qualifications offered at universities relevant to the market needs. Thus, the UMCUs will consult to design of a methodology and procedure for sectorial qualifications framework development (SQF) -drawing on the \*Armenian National Qualifications Framework (ANQF), the \*CEDEFOP 2010 Methodology and the good practice in EU countries- will take place within the ARARAT PC universities. Sectorial learning outcomes are broad goals that describe *what the learners are supposed to know or be able to do in a specific field of study*, based upon the needs of the society, of the institution of the learner. Drawing on the general concept each PC country will refine it to the specific country needs and produce a national concept for SQFs.

The 8 UMCUs will be coordinated by an ad-hoc established body, the *National University Labor Market Network (NULMN)* - secretariat will be hosted at ASUE. The NULMN will facilitate the activities of the UMCUs, promote interplay between different stakeholders thus, bringing together business representatives, student and professional associations, the RA Government bodies and ANQA, contributing to the improvement of professional education provisions and relevance to the market demand. The students will be well equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge about labor market demands concerning employment and be capable of meeting the demands. The network created will be underpinning an active dialogue between the stakeholders to solve the issues of fragmentation that hinders development of Armenian higher education.

*\*[WP2 Establishment of NULMN].*

The Quality Assurance will pay monitor and support to UMCUs to include in their actions a constant feedback-gathering system from businesses on their cooperation with academics as well as feedback of the stakeholders at large.

Main tool for this purpose will be the development of a database and relevant tools, which will enable input of various stakeholders in the university-market cooperation. The resulting data will be analyzed for further refinement.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A Manual on database management in Armenian and in English will be devised to ensure consistency in its exploitation.

The database will be operationalised at NULMN level through its secretariat at ASUE and at a local level through the UMCUs. Specifications for the database will be designed, developed and piloted to check its functionality, refined and put into on-going practice.

Actions to be undertaken:

- \* questionnaires addressed to the graduates, alumni, employers, students;
- \* questionnaires collecting statistical data on graduates, alumni, employers, students;
- \* focus group templates for academic staff to explore the academic capacities crucial for a given qualification.

*\*[WP3 Development of a database and relevant tools].*

### ***Aims, Methodology and Structure of the Report***

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The aim of the report is to support the capacity building process of the Armenian Universities involved. Consortium members were asked to collaborate during preliminary investigations in view of the production of the training kit for capacity building of the university-market cooperation units' (UMCU) staff. Capacity building at the launch of the project ensures active involvement of the partners and legitimacy of developments of project activities.

The standardized quantitative and qualitative research-planning survey addressed to Armenian partner universities [Link to [INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION SURVEY](#)] was designed so as to gather information about their current administrative and managerial state of the art in form of self-evaluation. The outlook of resources available, performance and assessment criteria and experiences that support the identification of enablers and barriers for sustainable university-market cooperation, will lead to considerations on possibilities of knowledge and resource sharing, inter-project cooperation so to foster and activate the National University Labor Market Network under the ARARAT framework.

The delivery of the Training Kit, through the Capacity Building, will evolve around management principles, approaches, tools and mechanisms for operationalization of such Units. A four-day training for the UMCU staff takes place in Italy at CESIE. 3 trainees per university are selected as potential UMCU staff. The Capacity Building is QA through [pre-evaluation](#) - and post evaluations; the feedback is highly valuable for finalizing the Training Kit to better fit the needs of the target audience. The Training Kit content includes the modules:

- I. Management principles
- II. Operational planning
- III. Regulations, Job responsibilities, decision making
- IV. NULMN: Roles and services to UMCUs
- V. Strategic considerations for sustainable University-Enterprise Cooperation
- VI. Aligning study programmes with labour market needs. Case Study
- VII. University units promoting student employment & business development
- VIII. Stimulating University-Enterprise links through knowledge & technology transfer
- IX. QA – How to evaluate UMCU performance indicators
- X. University-market cooperation, Best practices
- XI. Database and relevant tools

The Training Kit first draft is developed by EU partners, under review of the Armenian partner universities to be relevant for the national context and needs.

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### **Background to the research**

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One of the national priorities in Tempus programme 2012 in the field of higher education and society was development of partnerships with enterprises. To date there is little or no recognition of the tripartite relationship between student, employer and HEI able to challenge conventional educational thinking in Europe and Partner Countries.

Latest literature review on Higher education governance in Armenia expose that

*'(...) In the light of the Bologna Process and with Tempus support, Armenian universities have succeeded in improving their administrative and organisational structures and study programmes. Universities had an opportunity to join the international academic community approaching the European Higher Education Area. They increased their capacities by creating working teams, establishing new contacts and changing their approach, focusing on the younger generation of academics<sup>2</sup>*

Still there are challenges the ARARAT project with its UMCU wants to overcome and keep sustainable:

*'(...) There are almost no horizontal links among various departments and divisions of the institutions. The structure itself is segmented. As a result, the managerial, organizational, professional and financial resources could be used more effectively, which further contributes to the fact that the system needs to centralize the management. Absence of initiatives at the departmental level ends in decision making processes that occur without prior consultation, which later leads to problems in the implementation stage. This situation impedes the emergence of an atmosphere of creativity and innovation, which is required for the modernization of higher education institutions.*

*Cooperation between HEIs, research institutes and private businesses or state enterprises in Armenia is still rare. The situation is due to the lack of a legal system regulating such cooperation activities and also the lack of specialists in HEIs (including fundraising specialists) trained to build these contacts. It is also linked to the lack of industrial demand for the services that research institutes can offer.*

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<sup>2</sup> [Higher education in Armenia, National Tempus Office Armenia, July 2012](#)

Back to 2009 there were only 25 to 50% of institutions involved in joint degrees and the same percentage of those involved in joint programmes. In all cycles (first, second and third) interdisciplinary and flexible training packages that require cross-faculty cooperation were limited in numbers and the overall level of joint degree/programme cooperation was still quite low. Moreover, the lack of experience of academic staff of industry working environments and their often poor ability to link “ideal theoretical” knowledge suitably to reality is also a hindering element.

In 2013, Joint programmes are allowed in the higher education legislation. Partners mention the successful experience of the ‘Tuning Methodology’, that developed a model for designing, implementing and delivering curricula offered within one institution, or, jointly, by two or more institutions as a ‘knowledge alliances’, i.e. ventures designed to bring together business and education/training institutions to develop new curricula to address gaps in skills and improve matching to labour market needs. While Joint degrees are not foreseen in the legislation.

There is much to be gained from a closer collaboration between Universities and Industry as foreseen by the University-Market Cooperation Units (UMCU). This tri-partite relationship makes a powerful collaboration concerning the updating of learning outcomes, bringing in market demands, student placements and preparation for employment. The student is ensured of a qualification that is career relevant and employment focused, the HEI can apply their expertise to ensuring academic rigor to their content and last but not least, the employer can ensure that the delivered collaborative curriculum is focused and relevant for the company development and maximises profit. Employers criticise academia for not adapting to their needs lamenting that departments do not have suitable processes in place to find out industry’s requirements and to respond effectively, and for being inflexible in their teaching approach.<sup>3</sup>

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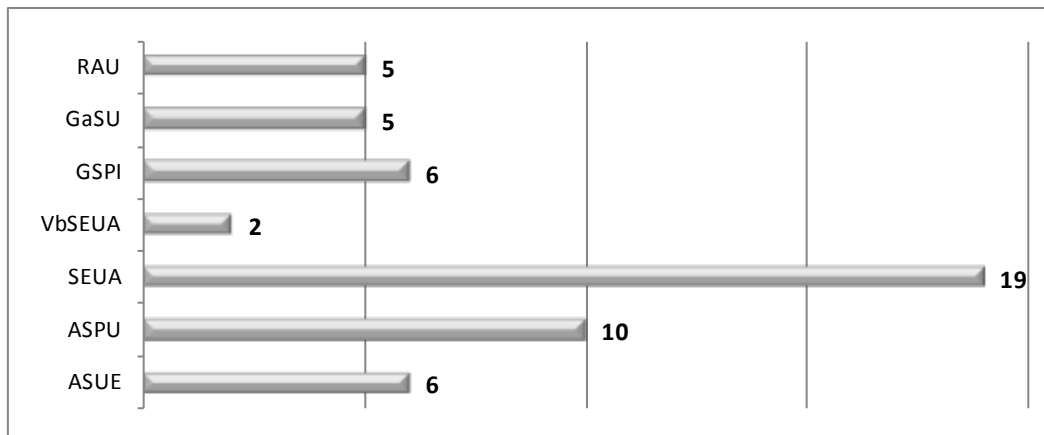
<sup>3</sup> WBLQUAL - An Approach to Qualifications through Negotiated Work Based Learning for the EU. Comparative Report. [EMPLOYERS’ VIEW on WORK BASED LEARNING](http://www.wblqual.com) 2011. Proj.n.: 510022-LLP-1-2010-1-UK-ERASMUS-ECUE [www.wblqual.com](http://www.wblqual.com)

**Responses to on-line survey for representatives of Armenian partner Universities**

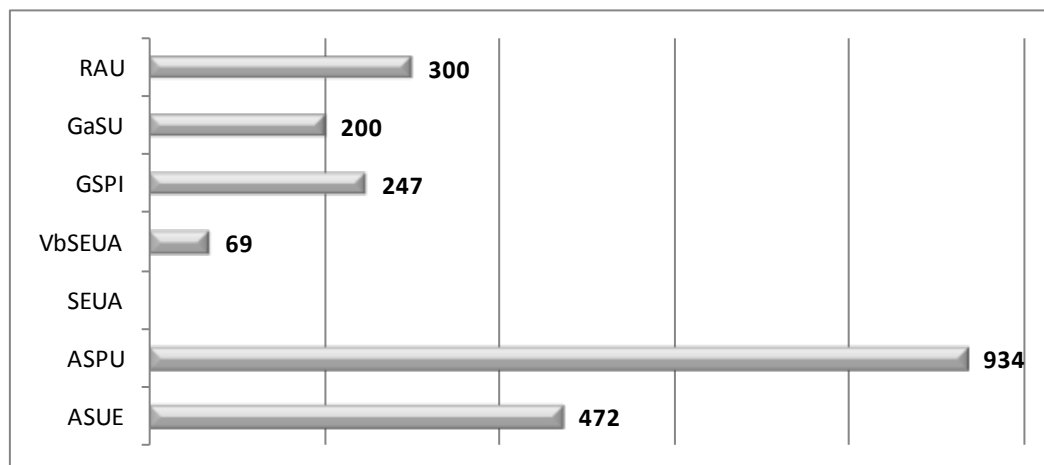
**UNIVERSITY INFORMATION**  
*Establishment details and current internal structure*

Partner n.	Full name	Acronym
P1	Armenian State University of Economics	ASUE
P8	Armenian State Pedagogical University named after Kh. Abovyan	ASPU
P9	Russian- Armenian (Slavonic) University	RAU
P10	State Engineering University of Armenia (Polytechnic)	SEUA
P11	Vanadzor Branch of State Engineering University of Armenia	VbSEUA
P12	Gyumri State Pedagogical Institute named after M. Nalbandyan	GSPI
P13	Gavar State University	GaSU
P14	Goris State University	GSU
P16	Synopsys Armenia CJSC [enterprise]	Synopsys

**Q.1. Number of faculties within the University**

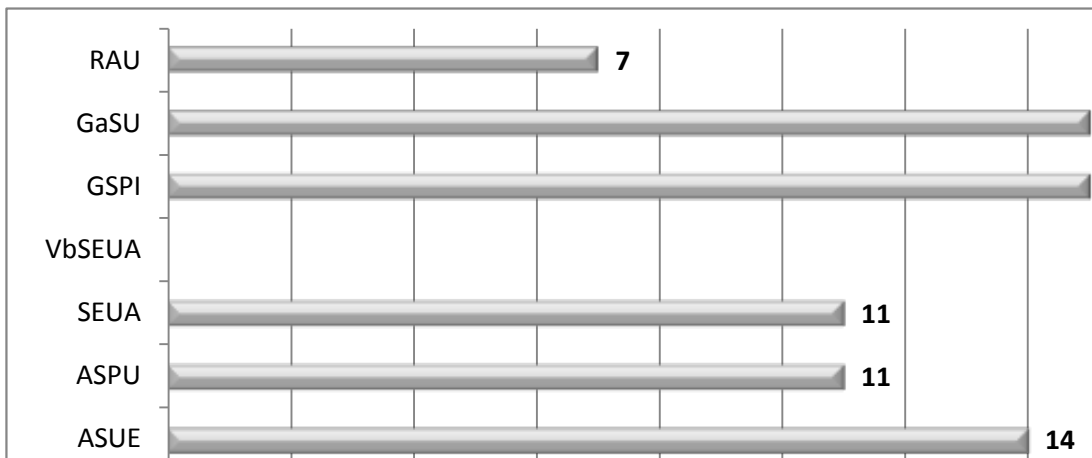


**Q.2. Number of academics on University's payroll**

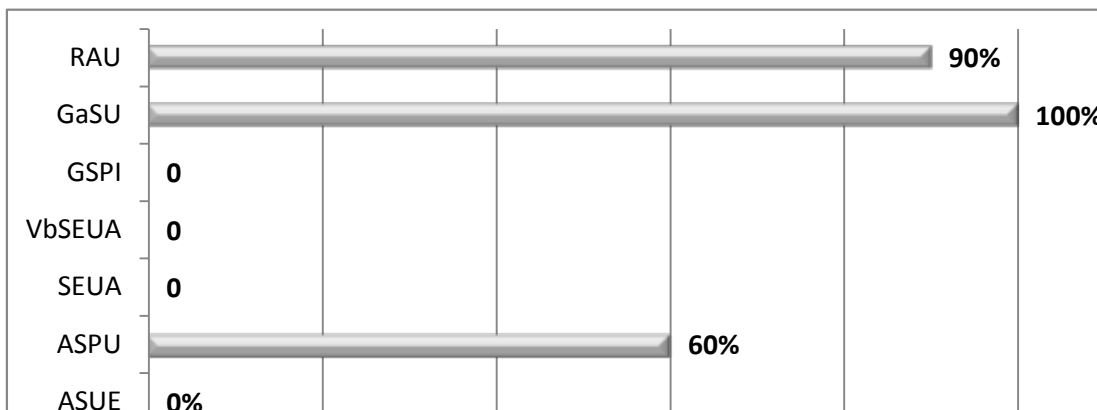




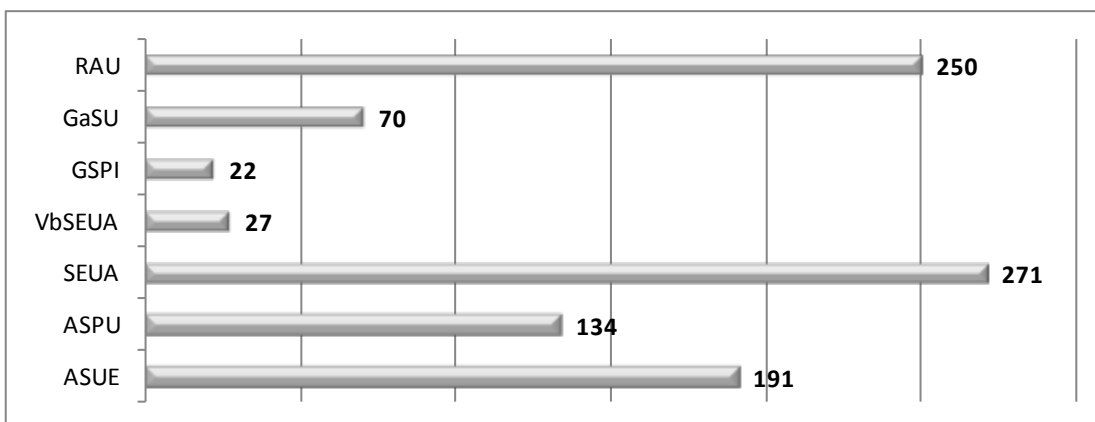
**Q.3. Number of students per one academic teacher**



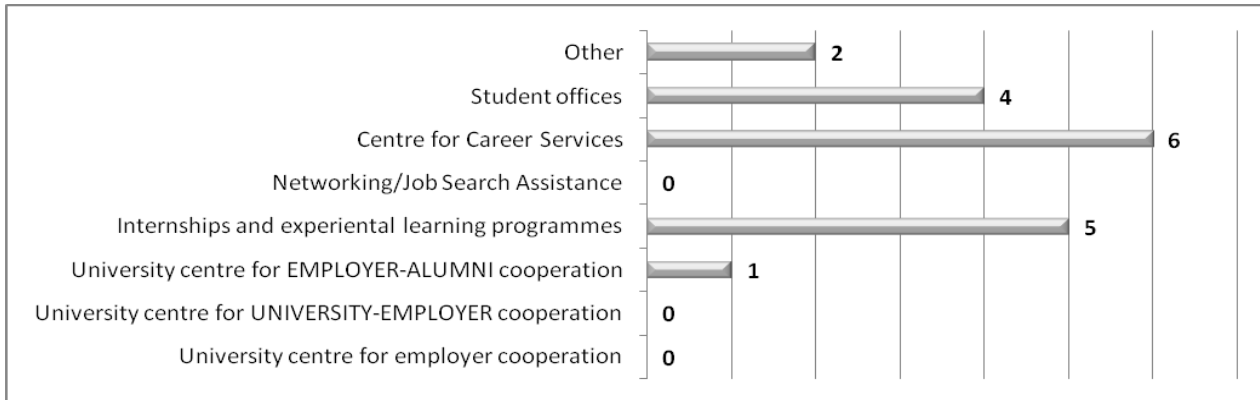
**Q.4. Average number of alumni finding their place in the labour market after max. 5 years from leaving university?**



**Q.5. University's administrative workforce in numbers**



**Q.6. Services offered to the three main project target groups by Armenian partner Universities. (i) University, (ii) Employers, (iii) Students.**



**Q.6. / Q.7. Main aims, responsibilities, tasks**

ASUE	<p><b>University centre for EMPLOYER-ALUMNI cooperation, Centre for Career Services</b></p> <p>Creating network within partner organizations            Organization of Internships            Organization of workshops and trainings for students career development</p>
ASPU	<p><b>Centre for Career Services</b></p> <p>Offering consultation, professional orientation and career development services to the University applicants, students and graduates transferring and developing the necessary skills for their career progress coherent with the current labor market needs. Only one personnel involved.</p>
SEUA	<p><b>Internships and experiential learning programmes, Centre for Career Services, Student offices, YPI-SEUAs` Alumni Association</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Increase students activities and their role in the social life in the perspective of teaching implementation and quality assurance</li> <li>* Support for graduates in business-like and productive activities under current social-economic conditions</li> </ul> <p>Alumni Association's goals are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Favour the University with development and improvement of its image through the implementation of joint projects and cooperation with the university graduates;</li> <li>* Favour the development of engineering community and technological progress of the industry of Armenia.</li> </ul>

VbSEUA	<p><b>Student offices, YPI-SEUAs` Alumni Association Branch</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Students rights protection</li> <li>* Student self-government process managing</li> <li>* Participation in the University administration units</li> <li>* Increase students activities and their role in the social life in the perspective of teaching implementation and quality assurance</li> <li>* Support for graduates in business-like and productive activities under current social-economic conditions</li> <li>* Support the educational process and performance improvement</li> <li>* Student scientific conferences organization.</li> </ul> <p>Alumni Association`s goals are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Secure the University image through the cooperation with the university graduates and joint projects implementation;</li> <li>* Favour the development of engineering community and technological progress of the industry of Armenia.</li> </ul>
GSPI	<p><b>Internships and experiential learning programmes, Centre for Career Services, Student offices, YPI-SEUAs` Alumni Association</b></p> <p>To protect the students' rights and interests, to inform them about new reforms, changes and charters/regulations, to organize and actively involve students in various interdepartmental educational, cultural and sporting events, to participate in all youth, interuniversity events. The main governing body of SC is the congress, which consists of GSPI SC president, faculty presidents and vice-presidents. Each faculty has its delegates in SC delegation.</p>
GaSU	<p><b>Internships and experiential learning programmes, Centre for Career Services, Student offices</b></p> <p>All the learning programmes of our University include internship modules, and during the periods of those internships the students carry out practical job responsibilities at various organizations corresponding to their future qualifications. Recently we have established GSU Alumni and Career Center/personnel: 2 staff involved. We have also Students Scientific Association and Students' Council. The activities of these units are conducted by students according to the regulations approved by the University Council.</p>

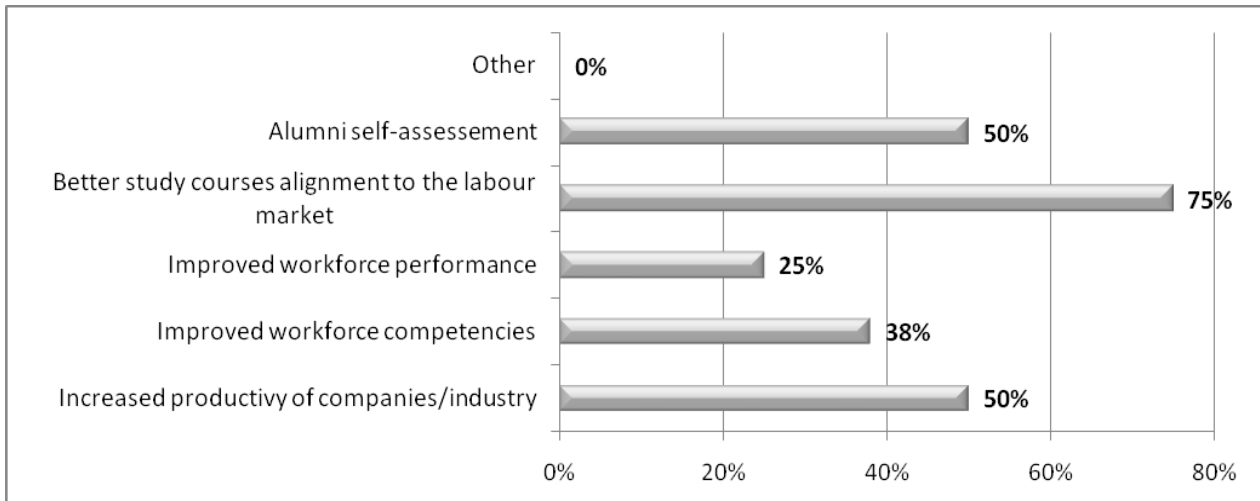
RAU	<p><b>Internships and experiential learning programmes, Centre for Career Services</b></p> <p>Academic and practical internships, integrated into academic programs and included in the academic services provided by RAU to its students are maintained not by a specific department of RAU, but by Institutes in each field of studies. Particularly, academic and pre-diploma internships are arranged for students in different companies and organizations.</p> <p>As for Career center, its main aim is to enforce the establishment of effective university- employer cooperation, placement of RAU students and alumni at the organizations and companies, advising on career opportunities and curriculum modernization. Currently, 2 Career Center Assistants are involved in the activities that are working under the supervision of the Head of RAU Career Center.</p>
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### **QUALITY ASSURANCE AT PARTNER UNIVERSITIES**

ASUE	At our University we have acting Quality Assurance Department, which is doing self-assessment, improvement of educational processes.
ASPU	<p>To cooperate with other subdivisions of the University activities directed towards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* supporting the academic staff development,</li> <li>* enhancing the quality of education process,</li> <li>* Implementing other activities of the center.</li> </ul>
SEUA VbSEUA	<p>In accordance with ESG requirements the University and its branch within the frames of its mission and goals carries out the next activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Design, approval, monitoring and periodical review of the educational programmes;</li> <li>* Competitive recruitment of the teaching staff;</li> <li>* Rating system of students assessment, clear and published criteria for marking,</li> <li>* Providing students with resources for their learning that are adequate and appropriate for each programme offered</li> <li>* Collecting and analysis relevant information for the effective management of programmes offered</li> <li>* Publishing up to date, impartial and objective information about the programmes and awards offered.</li> </ul>
GSPI	In 2011 Quality Assurance Centre was established in GSPI.
GaSU	Quality Assurance Department at GaSU
RAU	RAU is involved in quality assurance processes, which at the moment are limited to monitoring the compliance of accomplished work (dates and results) to the work planning. However, currently the necessary regulations, criteria and mechanisms of quality assurance regarding the work with employers and alumni,

	as well as harmonization of academic programs to the requests of labor market, is being developed at RAU in the context of development and implementation of a complex system of quality assurance.
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**Q.9. Quality Assurance – assessment criteria for quality and success of university's offered services**



**TRENDS AND FEATURES OF UNIVERSITY-INDUSTRY COOPERATION**

**Q.10. Extend of demand-led learning programmes and specifically tailored to the market-related needs of employers and alumni**

ASUE	We have changed our vision and started the improvement of the curricula oriented to the labor market demand.
ASPU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Trying to offer broad educational opportunities, trying to ensure flexibility in pathways.</li> <li>* Supporting a suite of opportunities and experiences to foster key skills and prepare students for future work.</li> <li>* Developing, in appropriate areas of strength, a number of strategically-important collaborative relationships in research and academic training with key national and international organisations.</li> </ul>
SEUA	In accordance with current Strategic Plan`s goals, the University since this year has started reorganization of the educational programmes on the basis of learning outcomes with a direct participation of employers. This is implemented on the results of three pilot programmes and on the basis of the methodological framework also approved by the Academic Council.
VbSEUA	Due to SEUA and Branch`s strategic goals we have started the reorganization of the educational programmes on the basis of learning outcomes taking into

	consideration the stakeholders opinions and proposals.
GSPI	The mentioned activity implementing units in GSPI are currently either non-existing or newly-established. Thus, the demands of Labour market are not quite studied.
GaSU	During the last 3 years, we research the opinions of the staff and directors of the organizations where our students spend their internship periods, and introduce changes into our curricula according to those opinions and suggestions.
RAU	The compliance of academic programs to the need of labor market differs from discipline to discipline. Currently mechanisms of development and revision of academic programs and their content to the need of labor market is being developed.

**Q.11. Expectations of employers on University curricula contents include often teaching multifaceted issues which would require cross-faculty cooperation.**

**Measures to cope with this needs and barriers faced for such cross-faculty cooperation**

ASUE	The cooperation will begin from the market research, creation of data base and improvement of curricula through the definition of outcomes. And the main expectations of the employers will be having such curricula which will include the main knowledge, skills and abilities that are needed by labor market.
ASPU	Faculties' educational programmes are in the process of reviewing, the career requirements to their graduates are also changing, therefore the administrative staff themselves must be ready to meet specific requirements of potential employers.
SEUA	Review of the educational programmes carries out in accordance with the Tuning methodology including those requiring cross-faculty cooperation. This cooperation is formalized, hence, there is no any barrier.
VbSEUA	VbSEUA faculty structure differs from SEUA one, we have 2 faculties – General engineering and Specialised engineering education. In any case, there is no any barrier for this process.
GSPI	There are no barriers to cross-faculty cooperation, but the activities in this field will carried out in the frame of the ARARAT project.
Synopsys	The curricula is periodically update to meet the requirements of employers and the results of the previous teaching.
GaSU	The main barriers to such cross-faculty cooperation is the strict structure of our curricula, and to my mind, the percentage of elective courses is too low and that's why the curricula are not dynamic or flexible.
RAU	Generally, this approach is ensured by including interdisciplinary courses for related disciplines, as well as by maintaining master programs in conjunction with two disciplines, such as IT and Economics, Law and Economics, etc.

**Q.12. University faculties readiness and availability to respond quickly to any inquiry from employers to develop and deliver a customized learning offer to its students**

ASUE	The faculties are flexible and will develop the customize offers according to changes.
ASPU	It depends essentially on the external factors such as the situation in job market and existence of the feedback between the major employers and the faculties.
SEUA	University conducts a clear policy aimed at improving the preparedness of faculties to respond flexibly to the requirements of employers, graduates and students through the process of design, monitoring and periodic review of the programmes offered.
VbSEUA	Branch faculties have to organize and respond in a flexible way any inquiry from employers, graduates, students and other stakeholders, according to Strategic program, developing certain policy for it.
GSPI	Yes, they are prepared, but because of currently either non-existing or newly-established cooperation units, for effective implementing for these activities are expected to be developed and established in the frame of ARARAT project.
GaSU	Yes, they are. Our University is open to such kind of collaboration and the staff is prepared to respond to such inquiries.
RAU	The readiness of Institutes to respond to the needs of labor market are expressed in conduction of extra curriculum short-term and mid-term training and retraining. The main obstacle for maintaining this process are the formal requirements for development and revision of separate components of academic programs.

**Q.13. To what extent the contents of a study course can be more student-oriented instead of teacher/tutor oriented**

ASUE	The study course will be more student-oriented and will be controlled more by employers, when the improved curricula will be learning-outcomes based.
ASPU	The following objectives will be achieved by the faculties: to upgrade the quality of practical training of students, improve the diversity and forms of their practice, develop joint training programmes for graduates together with the partner organisations. The provided courses are more student oriented.
SEUA	Currently, student-oriented content of the programmes comes from their reconstruction on the basis of the Tuning methodology due to which the balance control is shifted to employers.
VbSEUA	Apart from, employers get more opportunities for mentioned control expanding the area of their participation in educational process assessment.
GSPI	In GSPI during the last 5 years the organization and implementation of

	educational process is regularly revised with the aim of enlarging the students' involvement and establishing a more student-oriented system.
Synopsys	The curricula is periodically update to meet the requirements of employers and the results of the previous teaching.
GaSU	The best ratio would be 50/50. But the question is too specific for each University depending on its place of existence. Our University is a regional one, where the number of employers is too low, and agriculture is the main type of activities carried out by the population.
RAU	Up to this moment, mostly teacher oriented teaching methods are maintained. The transition to student-oriented teaching methods that also considers the need of labor market and somewhat involves employers in the control of academic process, assumes a step-by-step approach, as such process envisions development of consequent regulatory documents, revision of current academic plans and retraining of academic staff.

**Q.14. University policies and procedures, such as the validation systems (ANQF), might lead employers to be reluctant to establish cooperation lies with HEIs.**

**In what, and how to become more flexible to be more accessible and transparent for the market.**

ASUE	The process won't be confusing when the employers will be involved in the policy making.
ASPU	Conducting survey related to employers' suggestions about the University programs and passing the results to the appropriate subdivisions for further discussions and implementation.
SEUA	At present, awarded degrees and formed learning outcomes need to be concretized in order to better suit to the requirements of the labour market.
VbSEUA	Currently, degrees and learning outcomes need to be more clear and certain in order to better satisfaction to the labour market requirements.
GSPI	We think the establishment of the corresponding structural unit (UMCU) will be much more effective.
Synopsys	Organization of teaching in employers environment.
GaSU	Such issues must find their proper resolutions at round-table discussions including participants from both parties.
RAU	Flexibility may be obtained only in case of mutual work of government, HEIs and employers in the development of general regulatory documents, standards, national qualification frameworks and other relevant documents.



**ARARAT – UNIVERSITY-MARKET COOPERATION UNITS (UMCU)**

**Q.15 University-Market Cooperation Units [UMCU]  
to facilitate the cooperation process – a winning strategy?**

ASUE	Yes
ASPU	To improve the interface between the University and labor market coherent to the changes of the knowledge based economic environment.
SEUA	The mentioned units are conducting some activities within the framework of the University-Employer cooperation. In accordance with the project planned activities it will be aimed at grouping and enlarging the already offered services (Internships and experiential learning programmes, Centre for Career Services, Student offices, YPI-SEUAs` Alumni Association) taking into account university`s goals, trend in the labor market and the requirements of employers. In the future they will be reflected in the curricula of educational programmes.
VbSEUA	Branch formerly had Career Center on voluntary basis and carried out a few arrangements, e.g. career days, career counseling for students of university and high school, contacts with employers etc. Now within the project we are planning to restore and develop this unit activity as a Division of links with employer and students career support. In accordance with the project the unit will be enlarging taking into account university`s goals, trend in the labor market and the requirements of employers.
GSPI	Yes. We will start the establishment of an UMCU in the frame of ARARAT project
GaSU	Yes, I think that's quite possible and necessary for uncovering nowadays everchanging labour market demands.
RAU	The establishment of UMCU at RAU fully corresponds to the need of the University, since the development of cooperation between employers and university may not be accomplished merely with the efforts of Institutes and Career center.

**Q.16. Planning the UMCU establishment at university level**

*Hypothesis of UMCU structure and actions*

ASUE	It will be established from the scratch in order to start all the actions from the beginning efficiently. UMCU will work as a separate unit and will be the main center where will be the data base of the student and alumni.
ASPU	The project is directly related to the aims and objectives of the new established Career Center. The Data Base and links established with partner organizations of SPUA may be used in the context of the current project. * Providing consultancy aimed an advancement of their future career.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Introducing job search techniques.</li> <li>* Creating database about university graduates and alumni.</li> <li>* Providing consultancy on CV and cover letter writing.</li> <li>* Training for self-assessment and job interviewing.</li> </ul>
SEUA	<p>The new structure will be formed as a result of the reorganization and functional expandability of the existing Career Center taking into account the project specific objectives which were previously implemented by other divisions or not implemented at all.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Formally the unit will include some divisions of above mentioned departments or staff with clear responsibilities.</li> <li>2. To provide interconnected operation of the unit with other university divisions, a Data/Information Analysis portal will be established where university and employers will place data offered and requirements.</li> </ol> <p>On the one hand, it will include an analysis of the labor market and the competency requirements for the job, on the other hand it will be descriptors of educational competencies formed by means of university educational programmes and lifelong programmes offered.</p> <p>Employers will place information about vacancies, as well as requirements on the necessary qualifications and skills, and the University will place quantitative and qualitative data about graduates.</p>
VbSEUA	<p>The new structure will be formed as a result of the reorganization and functional expandability of the former Career Center taking into account the project specific objectives.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The unit will start its activity by official orders and will include staff from different divisions and faculties.</li> <li>2. It will be coordinated the interconnected operation of the unit and other university divisions, a Data/Information Analysis portal will be established where university and employers will place data offered and requirements.</li> </ol> <p>Employers will place information about vacancies, as well as requirements on the necessary qualifications and skills, and the University will placed quantitative and qualitative data about graduates.</p>
GSPI	<p>Perhaps it will be one of the main activities of Career Centre. At the end of ARARAT project when we'll have retrained and informed staff, a separate structural unit is planned to be established in GSPI.</p> <p>We think it will work if trainings and seminars are held, the good practice and experience are disseminated, as well as GSPI's staff, students and other stakeholders are informed.</p>
GaSU	<p>First, the UMCU establishment must be planned expressed step by step and starting with development of regulations for its activities, aims, personnel, and so on. The UMCU must closely cooperate with academic subdivisions of the University and employer's organizations which conduct their activities outside the University. The UMCU must bring them and their opinions together establishing ties between these two parties for the benefit of the students' future</p>

	employability.
RAU	<p>It is assumed that UMCU, at least in the beginning, will be established within an existing Career center, as its separate structural unit.</p> <p>It is expected that the framework and fields of activities of UMCU will be developed during this project, even if not identical for all partners, but significantly similar in the core regulations.</p>

#### Q.17. Expectations referring to university-employer collaboration

ASUE	The involvement of the curricula development processes.
ASPU	It is assumed that the developed interaction with the employers of the University graduates will have innovative influence on the existing curricula and courses. New courses will be established consistent with the trends of labour market.
SEUA	<p>To establish a horizontal mutually beneficial cooperation.</p> <p>To prepare a competitive graduate in accordance with the labor market requirements and the perspective of the development of the field of professional activity.</p>
VbSEUA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* University-employer cooperation network development due to mutual needs and requirements.</li> <li>* Graduates job searching and employment up-to-date environment establishment.</li> </ul>
GSPI	We expect to study Labour market demands, elaborate Curricula and Study Programs in accordance with Labour Market demands and National Qualification Framework standards. With the help of the cooperation with employers the problem of GSPI alumni employability is expected to be solved.
Synopsys	Highly qualified and demanded graduates
GaSU	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. better and better learning programmes</li> <li>2. higher level of employability of our graduates</li> </ol>
RAU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* obtaining information and impacts about the needs of labor market in different fields of studies, which could be used in development and revision on academic programs</li> <li>* readiness of potential employers of our alumni to participate in financing different elements of academic programs, such as, internships, practical placements, short-tem courses of retraining, etc.</li> </ul>

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

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The survey gives a very positive insight into already implemented services and centres within the n.8 involved Armenian partner Universities, currently offered to the three main project target groups [University, Employers, Students]. Clearly shown is the commitment towards the students target: 6 institutions have Centres for Career Services, 5 promote Internships and experiential learning programmes; there are 4 Student offices, and a unique University centre for EMPLOYER-ALUMNI cooperation placed at ASUE.

Asking about what's the average number of alumni finding their place in the labour market after max. 5 years from leaving university, half the answers show a very high short-term impact, while the other half doesn't make statements. The National Report, Armenia (2009)<sup>4</sup> highlighted indeed the lack of tracking systems to follow graduates and their career, showing still the challenging inadequacies between learning outcomes and the demands of the contemporary job market; however, a State Scientific Committee was created for this purpose. The percentage of Armenian students that found job according to their qualifications was in 2009 up to 40% for first cycle graduates, up to 70% of second cycle graduates and up to 80% of third cycle graduates. Besides, Universities lack of personnel that would cover all the students' needs and that would be trained to efficiently perform the activities.

In accordance with the trends, most of the partners have in place processes of reorganization and reforms in the direction of learning outcomes and participation of employers. Inclusion of employers to policy making and decision making processes in University is proposed by partners, in the forms of surveys among employers, round-table discussions and cooperation/consultations during generation of documents, standards, national qualification frameworks etc.

According to partners the establishment of UMCU would correspond to their needs in a way that would restore already existing activities in the framework of Career Centres and other forms of bodies (career counseling, contacts with employers) and also develop new activities. Different hypothesis have been made for its start-up:

- \*UMCU can be established by transforming and reorganizing already existing Career Centres, using their database and links.

- \*UMCU can be a separate structural unit inside existing Career center (Russian-Armenian University) or also as a separate unit (Armenian State University of Economics).

*The universities that lack student career centers and alumni associations will include the missions of the latter into the unit's mission. Likewise, the universities that already have alumni and career centers will enhance them with a substructure or functions effectively handling market-university relationships.*

- \*UMCU are expected to be not identical for all partners, but significantly similar in the core regulations. The set of core regulations might be drafted at go under consultation of all partners

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<sup>4</sup> [National Reports and National Strategies for the Social Dimension after Bologna, Gayane Harutyunyan, Executive Director, ArmENIC2009](#)

\*UMCU to include University staff from different divisions that closely cooperate with stakeholders outside the University, so to establish partnerships and close cooperation between stakeholders and key actors.

\*UMCU collaboration leading to university–employer cooperation network impacting on the readiness of potential employers to participate in financing elements of academic programmes (internships, trainings etc.) towards a highly qualified and demanded graduate profile.

\*UMCU will foster cross-faculty market-research and contribute to the development of knowledge-intensive ‘learning’ organization that shows interest in spreading best practice and knowledge sharing.

To be considered also for the establishment of the Units at University level:

\*Geographical position: Universities placed in rural contexts, regional based. The number of employers is limited, agriculture is the main type of activities carried out by the population and not considered as an entrepreneurial sector.

\*Resources: need for up-skilled administrative staff to meet specific requirements of employers interested in cooperation. Suggested has been the organization of teaching in employers’ environment.

\*Approach: up to this moment, teacher oriented teaching methods are maintained. The transition to student-oriented teaching methods considering labor market needs involves employers in the control of academic process, assumes a step-by-step approach, as such process envisions development of consequent regulatory documents, revision of current academic plans and retraining of academic staff. Transition to student-centered learning is one of the national policy objectives in Armenia.

\*Accreditation<sup>5</sup>: Awarded degrees and formed learning outcomes need to be concretized in order to better suit to the requirements of the labour market.

Consistent steps forwards have been made in Higher Education in Armenia, ARARAT represents a real opportunity for partners to be supported by Consortium members through the UMCUs within the Network becoming a knowledge alliance, encouraging knowledge transfer, innovation and expertise from Academia to Industry and vice versa adapting further to changing demographic profiles and national economic conditions.

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<sup>5</sup> On 8<sup>th</sup> February 2012, Law on Accreditation was adopted by the National Assembly, which defines the rules and regulations on the national HEI accreditation system.



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## ANNEX

**ARARAT**  
**Armenian Coordination Agency “University – Employer”**

Armenian Universities’  
INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION SURVEY

## ARARAT

Armenian Coordination Agency 'University – Employer'

It is accepted that there is a cultural gap between the worlds of academia and industry. Universities can see themselves as set apart from the commercial pressures that industry is accustomed to, and they can consider that their interaction is best kept to the theoretical context and research. However there is much to be gained from a closer collaboration between Universities and Industry as foreseen by the University-Market Cooperation Units (UMCU).

These are briefly:

- Transfer of knowledge, innovation and expertise from Academia to Industry
- Transfer of knowledge, innovation and expertise from Industry to Academia
- Closer alignment of Universities to national economic drivers and the needs of the EU national market
- Workforce development through academic programmes leading to improvements in productivity and performance to make more efficient and sustainable national economic conditions
- Universities adapt to changing demographic profiles and national economic conditions

To date there is little or no recognition of the tri-partite relationship between learner, employer and HEI. Employers have criticised academia for not adapting to their needs, and being inflexible in their approach. Before a more enlightened approach can be encouraged it is essential to explore the issues which concern academic institutions.

For any question related to this survey please refer to Susanna Karakhanyan, [s.karakhanyan@anga.am](mailto:s.karakhanyan@anga.am)

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Thank you for your cooperation

⇒ **UNIVERSITY INFORMATION**

*Establishment details and current internal structure*

1. Number of faculties within your University
2. How many academics are on the university’s payroll?
3. Number of students per one academic teacher (any differences across disciplines?) Number of alumni on the labour market
4. What's the average number of alumni finding their place in the labour market after max. 5 years from leaving university?
5. What’s your Universities administrative workforce in numbers?

6. Which of the following services do you have already in place offered to the three main project target groups? (i) University, (ii) Employers, (iii) Students
- \* University centre for employer cooperation
  - \* University centre for university-employer cooperation
  - \* University centre for employer-alumni cooperation
  - \* Internships and experiential learning programmes
  - \* Networking/Job search assistance
  - \* Centre for career services
  - \* Student offices
  - \* Other: \_\_\_\_\_
7. What's their main aims, responsibilities and tasks? How much personnel is involved in these activities?
8. Do you have any Quality Assurance processes in place?
9. Quality Assurance - How do you assess the quality and success of your university's offered services?
- \* Increased productivity of companies/industry
  - \* Improved workforce competencies
  - \* Improved workforce performance
  - \* Better study courses alignment to the labour market
  - \* Alumni self-assessment
  - \* Other: \_\_\_\_\_

⇒ **TRENDS AND FEATURES OF UNIVERSITY-INDUSTRY COOPERATION**

*Transfer of knowledge, innovation and expertise from academia to industry and viceversa*

10. To what extent are current learning programmes at your faculty demand-led and are tailored specifically to the work-related needs of the employers and the alumni?
11. The expectations of employers from University curricula contents include teaching multifaceted issues which would require cross-faculty cooperation? How would you go with that? What are the barriers to such cross-faculty cooperation?
12. Are faculties prepared to respond quickly to any inquiry from employers to develop and deliver a customized learning offer to its students?
13. To what extent can the contents of a study course be more student-oriented instead of teacher/tutor oriented and control remain more with employers rather than university?
14. Some of university policies and procedures are confusing to employers. For example validation systems (ANQF). In what way do you think these need to become more flexible?

⇒ **ARARAT > UNIVERSITY-MARKET COOPERATION UNITS (UMCU)**

*(...) The wider objective of the project is to ameliorate the relevance of higher education to everchanging labour market needs through establishment and operationalization of universities employers cooperation nexus in Armenia by building on capacity of universities to effectively manage the university-market cooperation units promoting university-market cooperation...*

15. Could you imagine within your university an UMCU to facilitate the cooperation process?  
(considering also industry data analysis and their application into curricula)
16. How do you think the UMCU could work?
17. How do you propose to establish the UMCU in your University?
18. What are your expectations from collaboration with employers?