

## Internationalised higher education

Together with having a good schooling in place, a competitive university education is the next pillar on which a high quality work force is developed for building an advanced economy. In this context, in the post independence period, globalisation of the Armenian HEI system has been one of the mainstream directions aiming for wide international networks, up to date knowledge and localisation of the best global experience.

In the last two decades, a number of international HEIs and other internationally oriented centres have emerged in Armenia enhancing the national higher education platform. The existing system of Armenian, American, European, French and Slavonic universities provide local competitive education, with wide partner networks and effectively match the needs of the Armenian economy.

### The American University of Armenia

The American University of Armenia (AUA) was founded in 1991 with the initiative of US Diaspora academic circles and

The American University of Armenia is a success case of a multi-dimensional HEI in Armenia, which has served different purposes in different phases of Armenian development in the last twenty years.



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financially supported by the Armenian General Benevolent Union and the University of California. The Governments of Armenia and the United States also provided significant support to the initiative.

The idea behind the AUA was to have a top university in Armenia based on a Western education model. In the early years the AUA concentrated on enabling Soviet educated professionals to upgrade their knowledge and skills to match the new requirements of a free economy.

Even though these first years of the AUA coincided with economic turmoil and geopolitical tensions in the region, the university rapidly grew to become a rare centre of Western style higher education in Armenia and the region.

The AUA provides graduate programmes in business and management, economics, law, industrial engineering and systems management, computer and information sciences, health sciences, political science and international affairs, and the teaching of English as a second language. In 2013 AUA expanded and now provides undergraduate programmes in business, computer sciences, and English and communications.

AUA operates research centres affiliated with its graduate programmes. The AUA College of Engineering, in association with Essen University in Germany, leads cutting-edge cryptography research funded by the Volkswagen Foundation. In the area of cryptography, AUA has developed security algorithms for Samsung video devices. In addition, the AUA provides Extension programmes which are the main interface of the university with the community. The AUA Extensions foster individual, organisational and community growth and transformation, through accessible, high-quality training programmes. It enrolls thousands of students annually in non-degree and certificate courses in Yerevan, Gyumri, Dilijan, Stepanakert and other regions of Armenia.

AUA is accredited by the WASC Senior College and University Commission. It is affiliated with the University of California and has largely benefited from the intensive cooperation by getting valuable technical support and educational experience. The association is in the areas of preparing academic staff for the faculties, exchange programmes, etc.

The use of English as the language of instruction at AUA is aimed at facilitating AUA graduates to effectively pursue their educational and career goals in the modern world and to attract an international faculty staff and student body.

Starting from the upgrade of the Soviet -inherited work force it has progressed to prepare a new young generation of competent professionals which have made a difference in the labour market and have contributed to an improved corporate culture in the economy.

In the 2013-2014 academic year, 844 students have enrolled at the American University of which 62% percent are graduate level. Since its establishment, 2,560 students have graduated from AUA.