Final Report on Gori State Teaching University Authorization

Expert Panel Members

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Authorization Report Resume

General information on the educational institution

Gori State Teaching University is located in Shida Kartli and although the institutional roots go far back to the history, it can be said the current institution was established in 2007 as a result of the merger of two higher education institutions, namely LEPL Gori State University and the LEPL Tskhinvali State University. The name Gori State Teaching University (GSTU) was given to the institution in 2012. At the moment, it has three faculties (Faculty of Business, Social Sciences and Law; Faculty of Humanities; and Faculty of Education, Exact and Natural Sciences), and it provides a broad range of bachelor and master degree programs. Also, the GSTU provides vocational education and lifelong learning programs. According to the self-evaluation report (SER), the institution has 1.688 active and 702 suspended students, total number of staff is 337 (including academic, scientific, invited, administrative and support staff). Among them, there are 47 professors and 38 associate professors, 3 assistant professors and 2 assistants. Next to it, there are 81 affiliated staff members. The total institution's budget is 5 082 750 GEL with 305 000 GEL allocated for research and 20 000 GEL for library operation and development.

Brief overview of the authorization site visit

The site visit was conducted on 29-31 May, 2022. It was organized off-line and this way the panel had a chance not only meet representatives of all the stakeholder groups during the days of the visit, but also to see the facilities of the institution. The panel would like to express its thanks to the GSTU staff for their hospitality and readiness to help when needed. Also, the panel is very thankful to the representatives of the NCEQE for their very competent and supportive approach during the whole period of the site visit. And the chair of the panel was very grateful for a very professional interpretation, as arranged by the NCEQE.

Overview of the HEI's compliance with standards

Standard 1……………………………………..substantially complies with the requirements
Standard 2……………………………………..fully complies with the requirements
Standard 3……………………………………..fully complies with the requirements
Standard 4……………………………………..fully complies with the requirements
Standard 5……………………………………..fully complies with the requirements
Standard 6……………………………………..substantially complies with the requirements
Standard 7……………………………………..fully complies with the requirements

Summary of Recommendations

• Consider possibilities to include into the mission statement more explicitly research and third role activities of the institution.
• Consider possibilities to define more concretely distinctive characteristics of the institution in the mission statement.
• Make sure the action plan contains clear definition of the tasks and activities and also clear financial allocations to each of these tasks/activities.
• Make sure management/leadership and governance are clearly allocated in the institutional structure.
• Make sure the organizational structure provides clearer information about inter-relations among different parts of the institution, for instance university and faculties, academic bodies on the

university level and the faculties, support units and their relation to the faculties as well as to the university-level bodies etc.

- Make sure stakeholders are more directly involved in the process of program development.
- Revisit and clearly define qualification requirements for the position of Head of Scientific Research Centre and the Specialist of Scientific Research Centre as well as the delegation of responsibilities on the positions of the Chief Specialist of the Chancellery and a Chief Specialist of HR in 'Job Description and Qualification Requirement' documents.
- Ensure that sufficient finances are considered for internal scientific projects to facilitate effective scientific research.
- Enhance English language proficiency of the academic personnel to facilitate the research capacity and integration into international research environment.
- Free internet connections should be more accessible and of a good quality.
- Learning e-platforms should be strengthened to upload the teaching materials.

Summary of Suggestions

- Consider possibilities to involve students more actively into the processes ensuring academic integrity and developing their relevant skills.
- Consider the voices from those external stakeholders who emphasize the need for more practical elements in the study programs.
- Consider a possibility to modify the programs according to the revised Qualifications Framework and study field classifier approved by the order #69/n of April the 10th 2019 of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia, immediate order, so that you have similar approaches in assessing the quality and setting targets and you can increase your readiness for cluster accreditation, which will start next year.
- Consider a possibility to make available to students some optional subjects across the programs/faculties/university.
- Consider possibilities to include more expliicitly elements of soft skills development into the programs.
- Further support the staff evaluation process; it would be desirable to consider conducting 360-degree feedback survey.
- Further support unhindered functioning of the academic/scientific and teaching activities at Gori State University; expert panel considers that university should raise the awareness of the academic staff members on the requirements set by the institution regarding their workload.
- Diversify international projects in the form of international conferences, workshops and public lectures.
- Consider a possibility to involve in the evaluation of internal project proposals also external experts.
- It is desirable to have a food facility in the area of university.
- Broaden the research area and diversify the research fields to enhance scientific output of the institution.
- Make sure students are well informed about the dormitory and a possibility to use its service.
- Consider a possibility to provide students with more hard copies of the books for their study.

Summary of the Best Practices

- University has elaborated number of social support mechanisms to keep age and gender balance. It grants 183 day paid parental leave to a staff member, in case of complicated child delivery and twins – 200 days of paid parental leave is granted.
- GSTU actively participates in the scientific-research activities of the region to explore the History of Occupied Territories of Shida Kartli.

Summary Table

	Standard	Complies with Requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially Complies with Requirements	Does not Comply with Requirements
1.	**Mission and strategic development of HEI**	☐	☒	☐	☐
1.1	Mission of HEI	☐	☒	☐	☐
1.2	Strategic development	☐	☒	☐	☐
2.	**Organizational structure and management of HEI**	☒	☐	☐	☐
2.1	Organizational structure and management	☐	☒	☐	☐
2.2	Internal quality assurance mechanisms	☒	☐	☐	☐
2.3	Observing principles of ethics and integrity	☒	☐	☐	☐
3.	**Educational Programmes**	☒	☐	☐	☐
3.1	Design and development of educational programmes	☐	☒	☐	☐
3.2	Structure and content of educational programmes	☒	☐	☐	☐
3.3	Assessment of learning outcomes	☒	☐	☐	☐
4	**Staff of the HEI**	☒	☐	☐	☐
4.1	Staff management	☐	☒	☐	☐
4.2	Academic/Scientific and invited Staff workload	☒	☐	☐	☐
5	**Students and their support services**	☒	☐	☐	☐
5.1	The Rule for obtaining and changing student status, the recognition of education, and student rights	☒	☐	☐	☐
5.2	Student support services	☒	☐	☐	☐
6	**Research, development and/or other creative work**	☐	☒	☐	☐
6.1	Research activities	☒	☐	☐	☐
6.2	Research support and internationalization	☐	☒	☐	☐
6.3	Evaluation of research activities	☐	☒	☐	☐
7	**Material, information and financial resources**	☒	☐	☐	☐
7.1	Material resources	☒	☐	☐	☐
7.2	Library resources	☒	☐	☐	☐
7.3	Information resources	☐	☒	☐	☐
7.4	Financial resources	☒	☐	☐	☐

Signature of expert panel members

1. Milan Pol (Chair)

2. Diana Mchedlishvili (Member)

3. Inga Diakonidze (Member)

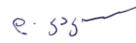4. Ia Mosashvili (Member)

5. Eka Gegeshidze (Member)

6. Davit Kakiashvili (Member)

Compliance of the Authorization Applicant HEI with the Authorization Standard Components

1. Mission and strategic development of HEI

Mission statement of a HEI defines its role and place within higher education area and broader society. Strategic development plan of HEI corresponds with the mission of an institution, is based on the goals of the institution and describe means for achieving these goals.

1.1 Mission of HEI
Mission Statement of the HEI corresponds to Georgia's and European higher education goals, defines its role and place within higher education area and society, both locally and internationally.
Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements The mission of the Gori State Teaching University is formulated on the institution's website as follows: "to prepare competitive specialists equipped with theoretical, methodological and practical knowledge, oriented on the local and international labor market, who, with their life style and successful activities, will promote the transition of the modern society into a highly developed, just, democratic, moral and highly conscious society". No doubt, the mission is positively oriented, and it corresponds with the Georgian and European higher education goals. The mission statement aims at local as well as international level, yet a more

accurate defining of the institution's role and place within the higher education area and the society, as well as more concrete reflection of the institution´s distinctive characteristics is not a part of the mission statement which is – rather – formulated more generally.

The mission statement itself seems to emphasize clearly the teaching process. Considering the fact that Gori State Teaching University is having the ambition to realize doctoral studies, and there are visible and successful research initiatives at the university, the lack of explicit attention to research could be viewed as a room for the development in the mission statement. The same can be said about so-called third role of the university which is also somewhat implicitly stated in the mission statement. The whole mission statement seems to resign on the ambition to contextualize (to take into a consideration a specific position and profile of the institution).

The vision statement, as stated in the Strategic Development Plan (2021-2027), is formulated as follows: "The Teaching University is oriented on constant development and harmonization with European education. The University work will support the country in terms of strategic economic development, prepare successful specialists and integrate them on the competitive labor market." This can be seen in line with the mission statement.

During the interviews, some respondents were confirming their awareness of the mission statement of the institution.

Evidences/indicators
• Self-evaluation report • Webpage of the institution • Strategic Development Plan 2021-2027 • Interviews
Recommendations:
• Consider possibilities to include into the mission statement more explicitly research and third role activities of the institution. • Consider possibilities to define more concretely distinctive characteristics of the institution in the mission statement.
Suggestions:
None
Best Practices (if applicable):
None
Evaluation:
☐ Complies with requirements
☒ Substantially complies with requirements
☐ Partially complies with requirements
☐ Does not comply with requirements
1.2 Strategic Development
o   HEI has a strategic development (7-year) and the action plan (3-year) in place. o   HEI contributes to the development of the society, shares with the society the knowledge gathered in the institution, and facilitates lifelong learning o   HEI evaluates implementation of strategic and action plans, and duly acts on evaluation results.
Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements Gori State Teaching University has its main strategic documents in place. These are namely Strategic Development Plan (2021-2027) and 3-year Action Plan. Both these documents are publicly available at the institution's website. In these documents, five strategic goals are emphasized: (1) Institutional and organizational development; (2) Development of Educational and scientific-research activities; (3). Development of student services; (4) Support of personal development; and (5) Development of material,

informational and financial resources. This can be said that these strategic objectives are in a positive relation with the mission and vision statements of the institution. They are further elaborated into the sets of tasks and activities which is also the case of the 3-year Action Plan where tasks, activities, personal involvement, financial allocations (not in all cases, though) and the timeline for realization are indicated. Some formulations do not seem to be clear enough, however, in these documents (for instance, task 1.5: „strengthen awareness on structural unites involvement in quality of the university, development of art of the quality within the university" – Strategic Development Plan, p. 14) which then raises a question what to expect and how to work with such a task.

Overall, the strategic documents of Gori State Teaching University are vital to the operation of an institution, covering main areas of its operation.

The institution claims it has followed the PDCA cycle while developing its strategic plan, SWOT analysis was developed within this process, too, and PESTEL methodology was also used. It was evidenced during the interviews.

Strategic Development Council is the main body established for the work on strategic documents and their amendments. In the self-evaluation report it is mentioned that this Council informs about its intentions to change/modify some parts of the documents and provides them «at least one week (before the action) to receive the feedback" (SER, p. 14). This does not seem to be much time and the question about effective involvement of a broader public and effective work with the feedback can be raised.

Gori State Teaching University pays in its documents and also in the practical steps attention to monitoring and evaluation of the strategic and action plans and it acts in response to evaluation results, as it was evidenced during the interviews and also mentioned in the SER. Monitoring group is set by the Order of the Rector, and it is supposed to develop monitoring reports annually. During the interviews, there was the evidence that the institution duly acts on the evaluation results, for instance in the connection to some issues of staff development, and more.

Gori State Teaching University declares in its SER that strategic planning is a participatory process in which all main stakeholders take part in some extent. This was also indicated in other documents provided by the institution under the evaluation and proved during the interviews. The level of involvement seems to differ with external partners (employers and alumni) being involved less intensively.

Overall, it needs to be stressed, however, that Gori State Teaching University is an important body in social and cultural development of the region and of the Georgian society. It clearly contributes with its activities to the development of the society; it shares with the society the knowledge gathered in the institution and also it facilitates lifelong learning by providing courses but also some other forms of activities (conferences etc.) within this framework. All this needs to be appreciated.

Evidences/indicators
- Strategic Development Plan (2021-2027)
- 3-year Action Plan
- Self-evaluation Report
- Orders of the Rector
- Interviews

Recommendations:
- Make sure the Action Plan contains clear definition of the tasks and activities and also clear financial allocations to each of these tasks/activities.

Suggestions:

Best Practices (if applicable):

None

Evaluation
☐ Complies with requirements
☒ Substantially complies with requirements
☐ Partially complies with requirements
☐ Does not comply with requirements

2. Organizational Structure and Management of HEI

Organizational structure and management of the HEI is based on best practices of the educational sector, meaning effective use of management and quality assurance mechanisms in the management process. This approach ensures implementation of strategic plan, integration of quality assurance function into management process, and promotes principles of integrity and ethics

2.1 Organizational Structure and Management
o Organizational structure of HEI ensures implementation of goals and activities described in its strategic plan o Procedures for election/appointment of the management bodies of HEI are transparent, equitable, and in line with legislation o HEI's Leadership/Management body ensures effective management of the activities of the institution o Considering the mission and goals of HEI, leadership of the HEI supports international cooperation of the institution and the process of internationalization.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements
Gori State Teaching University is public university, and it is registered as the Legal Entity of Public Law. According to the organization charter there are the main educational units - faculties, library and supporting structural units. There are three faculties at the university: 1. Faculty of Education, Exact and Natural Sciences, 2. Faculty of Humanities, and 3. Faculty of Social Sciences, Business and Law. Besides, there is a Vocational Education Center at the university. Gori State Teaching University has a separate department for the Quality Assurance Service. For administration, the university has the following departments: Finance, Academic Process, Juridical Office, Student Development and Support, International Relations, Public Relations, Material Management, Security Information Technology and Examination Center. There are also functioning the Office of the Rector, the Office of the Head of Administration, the Chancellery, the Secretariat of the Academic Council, and the Secretariat of the Representative Council. University has a scientific research center and scientific centers in the departments. In the presented documents, there is the chart of the organization structure, where connection lines between the structure area missing; also there are unclear connection vectors between structural units. In the organization structure, the Human Resource Department is missing, but during the interviews, the university representatives said that they have two Human Resource Specialists under the Chancellery. The organization structure does not always contain clearly defined inter-links among the different parts of the institution (see the recommendation) which weakens its possible function in clarifying positions, responsibilities, mutual relationships within the institution. According to the SER, management bodies of the University (managing entities) are: a) Academic Council; b) Representative Council; c) The Rector; d) Head of Administration (Chancellor); and e) Quality Assurance Service. The governing bodies of the faculties are the Faculty Council, the Dean and the Faculty Quality Assurance Service. This is somewhat surprising, since typically management/leadership is spread out throughout the institution, both vertically, and horizontally, while governance lays on the top of the institution. The election procedures of the governing bodies are in a detailed way described in the relevant documents, such as the "Rule of Election of the Governing Bodies of LEPL Gori State Teaching University", "The Statute of LEPL Gori State Teaching University", and "The provisions of structural units of Gori State Teaching University".

According to the documentation and interviews carried out during the visit, the authorization team was ensured that transparency of electing/appointing representatives of the management bodies is not an issue. The documents related to these processes are in order and in line with the local legislative requirements.

University has well established effective International Office, its goals and mechanisms are described in the "Internationalization Policy of Gori State Teaching University". The University leadership fosters the participation of the university in various international projects, such as international mobility of students and staff, development / implementation of joint programs / projects and participation in international research. And this can be said the university is actively acting in the different aspects of internationalization, such as international cooperation, joint projects and/or degrees, student and staff mobility.

Internal evaluations and various studies on management effectiveness show good results as for the HEI's Leadership/Management body effectiveness. Students, academic or invited staff seem to be satisfied with the management of the activities of the institution.

Evidences/indicators

• Strategy plan of the LEPL GSTU;
• The Statute of LEPL Gori State Teaching University;
• The provisions of structural units of Gori State Teaching University;
• Rule of Election of Managerial Bodies at LEPL Gori State Teaching University;
• Rule on case-management at LEPL Gori State Teaching University;
• Mechanisms and Evaluation System for Monitoring Management Effectiveness at LEPL Gori State Teaching University;
• Rule of Election of Managerial Bodies at LEPL GSTU;
• Rule for document processing;
• The plan for business processes continuity;
• Internationalization Policy of LEPL GSTU;
• University webpage;
• Interview results.

Recommendations:
• Make sure management/leadership and governance are clearly allocated in the institutional structure.
• Make sure the organizational structure provides clearer information about inter-relations among different parts of the institution, for instance university and faculties, academic bodies on the university level and the faculties, support units and their relation to the faculties as well as to the university-level bodies etc.

Suggestions:
None

Best Practices (if applicable):
None

Evaluation

☐ Complies with requirements

☒ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

2.2   Internal Quality Assurance Mechanisms

o   Institution effectively implements internal quality assurance mechanisms. Leadership of the institution constantly works to strengthen quality assurance function and promotes establishment of quality culture in the institution.

o   HEI has a mechanism for planning student body, which will give each student an opportunity to get a high quality education.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

At Gori State Teaching University, internal quality assurance mechanisms provide a very solid ground for quality issues to be involved in everyday work of the university. At the central level, quality matters are handled by the Centre of Quality Assurance Office, which is then decentralized at the faculty levels. Each faculty has its individual quality assurance specialist. In the Centre of the QA Office, a total of 6 persons are directly involved (one head of the quality assurance department, three heads of faculty quality assurance, and two specialists of the quality assurance department). They are responsible for quality assurance for program and university development and for fulfilment of accreditation and authorization standards. The university has a total of 28 educational programs where it implements internal quality assurance mechanisms.

The QA Office is assessing the performance of the academic personnel, the students' academic performance, and the quality of the university services and material resources. For this purpose, regular surveys are conducted mainly deploying an internal learning process management system. The results of the surveys are submitted to the Academic Board and used for the further development and improvement of services, performance, and educational programs.

University's Quality Assurance Office, along with the other university's structural units, systematically performs the following activities: a) evaluation of the implementation of the educational programs; b) evaluation of the scientific-research work; c) evaluation of the professional development of the personnel; and d) evaluation of the university services and material resources. The quality assurance system operates according to the PDCA cycle.

It seems the institution effectively implements internal quality assurance mechanisms. The leadership of the institution constantly works to strengthen the quality assurance function and consequently promotes establishment of a quality culture in the institution.

The university has a methodology for planning the student body. This is described in detail in a specific document. While planning the student body, the Academic Council considers various factors, such as student retention rate, university resources, situation on the job market etc. The planning of the student body is a dynamic process, and the number of students to be admitted is adjusted annually. An informal contact with local schools and observation of current tendencies are reportedly important precondition for these adjustments.

Evidences/indicators
• The Quality Assurance System of LEPL Gori State Teaching University;
• The Rules for Evaluating the Implementation of an educational program at LEPL - Gori State Teaching University;
• Evaluation Rule for the Academic and Scientific-Research Work of Academic and Invited Staff;
• Rule for the Evaluation of the Work of Administrative and Invited Staff of LEPL Gori State Teaching University;
• Mechanism for monitoring students' academic performance at LEPL Gori State Teaching University;
• Methodology and Mechanism of Planning Student Contingent at LEPL Gori State Teaching University;
• University webpage;
• Interview results.

Recommendations:
None

Suggestions: None	
Best Practices (if applicable): None	
Evaluation ☒ Complies with requirements ☐ Substantially complies with requirements ☐ Partially complies with requirements ☐ Does not comply with requirements	

2.3. Observing Principles of Ethics and Integrity

- o HEI has developed regulations and mechanisms that follow principles of ethics and integrity. Such regulations are publicly accessible.
- o Institution has implemented mechanisms for detecting plagiarism and its prevention.
- o HEI follows the principles of academic freedom.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

Gori State Teaching University has developed regulations and mechanisms that follow principles of ethics and integrity. These are: Internal Regulations of LEPL GSTU; Code of ethics and norms of Disciplinary Liabilities at LEPL GSTU, and Mechanisms for detection, prevention, and response to plagiarism at GSTU.

Students, academic and invited personal and administrative staff are aware of ethical requirements. The Student Career Development and Support Service provides detailed information to first-year students and mobility students at the beginning of each academic year on the rules of the university study process, including ethics and conduct rules, and principles of academic good faith. This information is provided to students when signing the contract with the university, within obligatory courses, and also via email communication.

The institution has implemented mechanisms for detecting plagiarism and its prevention. According to the obtained information, the university is using antiplagiarism program (Urkund). According to some respondents, university is also using the feedback (review) to completed student works, which is elaborated by external experts. It appears, comparing the recent years, some positive moves in the field of ethics and academic integrity have been made.

University respects and follows the principles of academic freedom which was proved during interviews with academics and invited personnel.

Evidences/indicators

- The Internal Regulations of LEPL GSTU.
- Code of ethics and norms of Disciplinary Liabilities at LEPL GSTU https://gu.edu.ge/uploads/other/12/12527.pdf .
- Mechanisms for detection, prevention and response to plagiarism at GSTU https://gu.edu.ge/ge/iuridiuli-nobari/mechanisms-for-the-detection-of-the-plagiarism-prevention-and-counter-measures .
- Interview results.
- University webpage.

Recommendations:

- None

Suggestions:
• Consider possibilities to involve students more actively into the processes ensuring academic integrity and developing their relevant skills.

Best Practices (if applicable):
None

Evaluation
☒ Complies with requirements
☐ Substantially complies with requirements
☐ Partially complies with requirements
☐ Does not comply with requirements

3. Educational Programmes

HEI has procedures for planning, designing, approving, developing and annulling educational programmes. Programme learning outcomes are clearly defined and are in line with the National Qualifications Framework. A programme ensures achievement of its objectives and intended learning outcomes

3.1 Design and Development of Educational Programmes
HEI has a policy for planning, designing, implementing and developing educational programmes.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements
Gori State Teaching University has the methodology of planning, elaborating and developing educational programs. According to the self-evaluation report, the initiative group of the program includes representatives of the academic and invited staff of the field, quality assurance of the faculty, management of the educational process, student career development and support services, as well as representatives of students, graduates (if any) and potential employers. During the interviews it was proved that above mentioned stakeholders contribute to the process of program development. Interviews with students, alumni, and employers have shown that some stakeholders need to be more involved in the program development process. Although alumni and employers periodically participate in surveys, these are general surveys and the involvement of these stakeholders in a particular program requires more concretely focused involvement in program development.
It was proved during the interviews, but also evidenced with relevant institutional documents, that Gori State Teaching University is regularly working on the renewal and development of its programs, trying to ensure their relevance in constantly changing environment. Evaluation of the program implementation is carried out in accordance with the "Rule on Evaluation of the Implementation of an Educational Program of LEPL Gori State Teaching University" and it takes into account the labor market requirements, feedback from the personnel, alumni and employers, surveys result of students, employers and the staff engaged in the program, the results of monitoring the students' academic performance. This seems to be an adequate methodology for a given purpose, main experience and insights can be voiced out and taken into a consideration this way. The interviews with students, as well as alumni, have indicated that perhaps more practical courses are needed to study specific disciplines.
Regulations and procedures for approving, amending and annulment of study programs are in place, and they are in line with existing legislation.

Evidences/indicators
• The instruction for planning, elaboration, development and cancellation of educational programs;
• "The Rules for Evaluating the Implementation of an Educational Program at LEPL - Gori State Teaching University;"
• Interview results.

Recommendations:
• Make sure stakeholders are more directly involved in the process of program development.

Suggestions:

- Consider the voices from those external stakeholders who emphasize the need for more pactical elements in the study programs.

Best Practices (if applicable):

None

Evaluation

☐ Complies with requirements

☒ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

3.2 Structure and Content of Educational Programmes

o   Programme learning outcomes are clearly stated and are in line with higher education level and qualification to be granted

o   With the help of individualized education programmes, HEI takes into consideration various requirements, needs and academic readiness of students, and ensures their unhindered involvement into the educational process.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

Gori State Teaching University has 28 accredited master and bachelor programs, and it is working on PhD program in History now. The University follows the current legislation and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation (ECTS) guidelines while developing and managing educational programs. Some of the programs offered by the university follow the revised National Qualifications Framework and Learning Fields Classifier approved by the Order #69/n of April the 10th 2019 of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia, and they are outlined in accordance to three competencies 1. Knowledge and understanding, 2. Skill, 3. Responsibility and autonomy, for example Mathematics Bachelor Programme that is only authorized.

Learning outcomes for several programs, for example, bachelor programs in Tourism, History, English Philology, the master program in English Studies, are not in line with the revised Qualifications Framework and study field classifier approved by the order #69/n of April the 10th 2019 of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia. In the appendix 1 to the Action Plan, the deadlines are indicated for modification of educational programs of LEPL Gori State Teaching University for bringing them in line with the requirements of the qualification framework. The programs which still need to be modified have deadlines until 2023-2025. The expert panel discussed this issue with the representatives of the university during the on-site interviews. It was confirmed that the institution plans to modify these programs to bring them in line with the qualification framework within the deadlines defined for each program.

The structure of programs provides a logical connection between the components whose volume is defined by their content, learning outcomes and specifics of the program. Prerequisites for the study courses within each program are defined and they are organized in a logical way. Maps of prerequisites are developed, and the information is organized clearly. The programs also provide an opportunity to choose some optional subjects within the program. The availability of optional subjects across the programs/faculties/university was not confirmed by the respondents.

University has regulations for planning, implementation and evaluation of the scientific research components at the master and doctoral levels, the documents are as follows: Rule of preparation and defense of the master thesis, Rules for planning, implementation and evaluation of the scientific research component of the Master of Laws program and The rules of work of the Dissertation Council and the regulations of the doctoral program. The documents are well organized and publicly accessible.

Teaching and learning methods in the programs seem to be program-relevant and they have a potential to support the achievement of the learning outcomes, as defined in the programs. The

information about the program structure and the content is available to the interested parties, e.g. through the university website. The interview with the students showed that upon enrollment once they start their studies program, the coordinators introduce them the specifics of the programs.

The university supports the development of individualized study plans for students with specific learning needs and requirements. During the interviews, students or other university personnel could not recollect any case of students with special educational needs, except for one case when resources were printed in a bigger font size (for a student with vision impairment).

The information about the programs in a sufficient detail is publicly available in the form catalogue, and it is displayed on the institutional website. It appears to be updated regularly.

Evidences/indicators

- Educational programme, syllabi.
- Catalogue for educational programmes.
- rule of preparation and defense of the master thesis.
- Rules for planning, implementation and evaluation of the scientific research component of the Master of Laws program.
- The rules of work of the Dissertation Council and the regulations of the doctoral program.
- The University website.
- Student satisfaction survey.
- Alumni survey.
- Interview results.
- University Web page.

Recommendations:

None

Suggestions:

- Consider a possibility to modify the programs according to the revised Qualifications Framework and study field classifier approved by the order #69/n of April the 10th 2019 of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia, immediate order, so that you have similar approaches in assessing the quality and setting targets and you can increase your readiness for cluster accreditation, which will start next year.
- Consider a possibility to make available to students some optional subjects across the programs/faculties/university.

Best Practices (if applicable):

None

Evaluation

☒ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

3.3 Assessment of Learning Outcomes

HEI has law-compliant, transparent and fair system of learning outcomes assessment, which promotes the improvement of students' academic performance.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

All programs have the assessment system which was developed according to the Minister of Education and Science's Order #3 of January 5th, 2007. The learning outcomes assessment system considers the specificity of the field and includes relevant assessment formats, tools and instruments which enable to measure and assess student performance and achievement. For each course there are prepared syllabuses, in syllabuses are stated learning assessment methods and components. Learning assessment methods and components are relevant to the specific courses. Practical courses

also have separately prepared syllabuses and student assessment methods include assessing different soft skills as well. For example, practical course public administration clinic, in Public Administration (master program) assessing components include purposefulness, operability, taking the initiative, understanding the specifics of the work to be done.

For assessing scientific research components, the university has regulations for the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the scientific research components in master and doctoral level, Rule of preparation and defense of the master thesis, Rules for planning, implementation, and evaluation of the scientific research component of the Master of Laws program, and the Rules of work of the Dissertation Council and the regulations of the doctoral program.

In some programs there is specifically presented the guidance for how to write a master thesis, for example, the program of the Public Administration includes the document "Performing and defending a master thesis".

The university is regularly assessing how the teaching staff is using assessment methods and in case of misconduct it is having a response mechanism. During the interviews, students and alumni stated that the teaching staff uses fair assessment methods in their courses. It seems, GTSU has a transparent and fair system of learning outcomes assessment, which promotes the improvement of students' academic performance.

Soft skills component remained unclear to some of the respondents. It was evidenced that some elements of it are a part of the ethics issue (see ethics and academic integrity – standard 2), some other skills, such as team work, co-operation, and more seem to be rather implicit in the programs.

Evidences/indicators

- Educational programme, syllabuses.
- Catalogue for educational programmes.
- Rule of preparation and defense of the master thesis.
- Rules for planning, implementation, and evaluation of the scientific research component of the Master of Laws program.
- The rules of work of the Dissertation Council and the regulations of the doctoral program.
- The University website.
- Student satisfaction survey.
- Alumni survey.
- Interview results.
- University web-page.

Recommendations:
None

Suggestions:
• Consider possibilities to include more expliicitly elements of soft skills development into the programs.

Best Practices (if applicable):
None

Evaluation
☒ Complies with requirements
☐ Substantially complies with requirements
☐ Partially complies with requirements
☐ Does not comply with requirements

4. Staff of the HEI

HEI ensures that the staff employed in the institution (academic, scientific, invited, administrative, support) are highly qualified, so that they are able to effectively manage educational, scientific and administrative processes and achieve the goals defined by the strategic plan of the institution. On its hand, the institution constantly provides its staff with professional development opportunities and improved work conditions.

4.1. Staff Management

o   HEI has staff management policy and procedures that ensure the implementation of educational process and other activities defined in its strategic plan.

o   HEI ensures the employment of qualified academic/scientific/invited/administrative/ support staff.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

Gori State Teaching University has elaborated the staff management policy, which is based on the mission and strategy of the institution and aims at developing human resources to ensure a successful operation of the University. It is based on the values and principles of transparency and openness, integrity, lawfulness, impartiality, equality, professional development, innovation and initiative and high ethical standards. The policy includes all relevant regulations regarding staff attraction, selection, recruitment, affiliation rule, terms and conditions, professional development mechanisms and implementation results. The submitted documents, as well as onsite interviews proved the high visibility of the 'staff management policy' among different stakeholders of the university. The document is also available on the official website of the university.

The university has elaborated transparent and objective procedures for hiring academic, invited, administrative and support staff, which ensures attracting and hiring a qualified employee: According to SER and the regulations provided by the university, 'administrative (except for the Rector and Deputy Dean) and academic positions may be held only through the open competition, The Deputy Rector is appointed by the Rector upon the recommendation of the Academic Council, and the Deputy Dean of the Faculty is appointed by the Rector of the University upon the recommendation of the Dean of the Faculty. Recruitment of a specialist, teacher and senior teacher invited for the purpose of conducting the educational process is carried out by the Rector based on the nomination of the Faculty Dean… Recruitment of support staff is carried out through competition or appointment by the head of the administration in agreement with the Rector'. (SER, p. 33-34). On-site interviews have also proved that the regulations and procedures regarding staff recruitment developed by the university are successfully implemented in practice.

The academic staff of the university is actively involved in decision making process about educational, research and other issues of strategic importance for the university. By the University Charter, each member of the academic staff is a member of the Faculty Council by which he or she was elected to an academic position. On-site interviews with academic, affiliated and invited staff confirmed that they participate in different surveys and meetings arranged by the university administration regarding the changes/amendments planned by the university at the administrative, as well as program level, for example, academic affiliated, as well as invited staff spoke about their active participation in the development of strategic plan and action plan for the institution. They also confirmed the participation in the elaboration of other principal normative document and regulations of the university.

One of the priorities of the university is the professional developments of its staff, which represents the fourth strategic goal of the university ''Support of staff development'' and includes such tasks as: support the development of the academic and invited staff; development of information and social support mechanisms for human resources; attract and retain highly qualified and successful academic staff; support the professional development of administrative and support staff, support motivation of the administrative and support staff.

It is noteworthy that based on the recommendation received as a result of the previous authorization, the university has assigned the responsible person - HR manager to coordinate professional development of the staff, organize trainings and courses needed for professional development of the staff taking into account their wishes identified via staff satisfaction survey and the needs identified in the process of evaluation of their performance by the corresponding structural bodies of the institution.

Based on the review of the documentation submitted by the university, as well as the results of on-site interviews conducted by the authorization expert panel, it was confirmed that the university has conducted a wide range of professional development courses such as: 'English language course', 'the development of the skills for working with library database'; 'The skills of writing scientific/grant project proposal'; 'the usage of IT technologies in distant learning'; 'Legislative acts and university regulations connected with COVID-19 etc. During the interviews with different stakeholders, it was

confirmed that all these trainings were funded from the university budget. University administration representatives have also mentioned that they are going to continue offering professional development activities as it is planned in the action plan. While getting acquainted with the documents submitted by the university, the expert panel noted that funds allocated to the professional development activities of the staff in 2022 seemed not quite adequate for multiple activities planned by the institution in this direction. During on site interviews with the university administration and corresponding structural unit representatives, expert panel tried to clarify this issue and got the answer that the sum was identified as a result of needs analysis previously conducted by the institution. University representatives have also mentioned that if the necessity for more funding appears in future, university has reserves in the budget and can easily make adaptation to meet the requirements.

The institution provided the panel with the respective rules, normative documents, forms, and the whole procedure with the corresponding documents of academic, scientific, administrative and support staff evaluation. The administrative and support staff evaluation is conducted with the top-down performance appraisal method. Support staff members who hold the position of heads of the structural units of the institution are evaluated by the Head of Administration based on the annual activity report submitted by them. The rest of the support staff members, who do not hold the positions of the Head/Director of the structural units, are evaluated by the head of the relevant structural unit based on the criteria established by the evaluation rule elaborated by the institution. The evaluation of the administrative staff is based on the annual reports of their activities, which they submit to the Academic Council (Rector, Head of the University Quality Assurance Service), Representative Council (Head of Administration), Faculty Council (Faculty Dean, Head of Faculty Quality Assurance Service), Rector (Deputy Rector) Or the Dean of the Faculty (Deputy Dean of the Faculty). To conduct the academic and teaching staff performance evaluation, the institution uses student surveys and forms for the evaluation of both the scientific and teaching activities. During the panel interview it was confirmed that the institution uses peer attendance/evaluation method to evaluate the teaching process. The staff members get the results of their evaluation electronically, via e-mail (on university e-Platform in case of academic staff) and/or personally from the person responsible for the structural unit/program they belong to.

To further support the staff evaluation process, expert panel considers that it would be desirable to consider conducting 360-degree feedback survey, which would give them multilateral feedbacks and more information on improvement areas.

Institution has preliminary defined principles of remuneration and encouragement which is based on staff evaluation results. For example, university has set benchmarks for academic staff performance evaluation and based on the result analysis, may consider raising salary or giving one-time incentives, which also increases the staff retention rate at the university.

University has also elaborated number of social support mechanisms to keep age and gender balance. For example, it grants 183 days of paid parental leave to its staff member, in case of complicated child delivery and twins it grants 200 days of paid parental leave, which can be considered the best practice.

During the site interviews it was confirmed that the staff is well-aware of this remuneration and encouragement system and have frequently benefited from it. Affiliated, non-affiliated as well as invited staff members have mentioned that they get added remuneration for international publications, the lectures delivered abroad and for participation in internal and external grant projects.

Regarding the usage of the staff evaluation results in staff management, it is also noteworthy that if the survey results are undesirable about staff performance, the corresponding unit develops improvement plan to eradicate the problem. During on-site interviews, authorization panel was informed that there was a case when the annual scientific research activity of one professor got negative assessment, university developed the individual plan for the improvement of the scientific research work, moreover, corresponding faculty administration closely monitored the process of improvement.

The institution has the rules and procedures for integration of the new staff member into work environment. Based on personal management system, probational period of 6 months is set for a newcomer. The head of the structural department or the staff member who the newcomer reports to, will guide him/her through this process, help him/her to get efficiently involved into the working environment. During the panel interviews, representative of different structural units confirmed the

existence of such practice, mentioning that, as a rule, probation period of 6 months is not necessary for the new staff to integrate, emphasizing the flexibility of the working environment of the institution.

Gori State Teaching University developed several types of benchmarks for their staff, which are stipulated in the corresponding document provided by the institution "Methodology for Determining the Number of Academic and Invited Staff of an Educational Program at LEPL Gori State Teaching University.'' As it was confirmed during the interviews, the stakeholders are aware of the of target benchmarks for the number of academic and invited staff and the decisive factors for its planning, for example, during the on-site interviews, the university representatives mentioned that at this stage, the increase in number of the academic staff is caused by the fact that university plans to develop new academic programs.

University has elaborated the statutes, job descriptions and qualification requirements for administrative, academic and support staff, however, in several 'job description and qualification requirement documents' few shortcomings are noticed that hinders understanding of allocated responsibilities for different positions in the same structural unit. For example, based on the 'job description and qualification requirement' document, to manage human resources, there are two specialists in chancellery. One of them is a chief specialist for human resource management division, another chief specialist of the chancellery reports to her/him, (i.e., to a chief specialist for human resource management). Expert panel tried to clarify the reason for such subordination during the interviews. University representatives responded that there was some misunderstanding, and they had the duties and responsibilities clearly stated in the statute of the chancellery. The institution additionally presented the document after the session. Presented document does not include the information about the hierarchical subordination between two specialists mentioned above (between the chief specialist of HR resources and a chief specialist of the chancellery). Another question that raised experts' interest, was the compulsory requirement for the head of scientific research center for language proficiency - B1, while the same compulsory requirement for the specialist of the same department is higher - B2. During the on-site interviews with the university representatives, it was revealed that the compulsory requirements for foreign language proficiency for the head of the research department and the specialist of the same department are the same- B1 and not diversified according to their positions.

Based on all information provided above, the expert panel recommends that the delegation of the responsibilities on various positions, as well as qualification requirements should be revised and clearly defined in 'Job Description and Qualification Requirement' documents.

Evidences/Indicators

- The Statute of LEPL Gori State Teaching University.
- Management Policy and System of LEPL Gori State Teaching University
- Job descriptions and staff qualification requirements.
- "Methodology for Determining the Number of Academic and Invited Staff of an Educational Program at LEPL Gori State Teaching University;"
- Methodology and Mechanism of Planning Student Body at LEPL Gori State Teaching University.
- Rule and Terms of Academic Personnel Affiliation at LEPL Gori State Teaching University.
- Rule on Hiring Structural Unit Heads and Support Staff, Amount of Remuneration and Terms at LEPL Gori State Teaching University.
- Evaluation Rule for the Academic and Scientific-Research Work of Academic and Invited Staff of LEPL Gori State Teaching University.
- Rule on Attestation of Professors at LEPL Gori State Teaching University.
- Interview results.
- Rule for the Evaluation of the Work of Administrative and Invited Staff of LEPL Gori State Teaching University.
- Mechanisms and Evaluation System for Monitoring Management Effectiveness at LEPL Gori State Teaching University.
- The University web-page.
- Interview results
- Self-Evaluation Report
- Job Description and Qualification Requirement' documents of the staff

Recommendations:

- Revisit and clearly define qualification requirements for the position of Head of Scientific Research Centre and the Specialist of Scientific Research Centre as well as the delegation of

responsibilities on the positions of the Chief Specialist of the Chancellery and a Chief Specialist of HR in 'Job Description and Qualification Requirement' documents.

Suggestions:

- Further support the staff evaluation process; it would be desirable to consider conducting 360-degree feedback survey.

Best Practices (if applicable):

- University has elaborated number of social support mechanisms to keep age and gender balanced. It grants 183 days of paid parental leave to a staff member, in case of complicated child delivery and twins – 200 days of paid parental leave is granted.

Evaluation

☐ Complies with requirements

☒ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

4.2. Academic/Scientific and Invited Staff Workload

Number and workload of academic/scientific and invited staff is adequate to HEI's educational programmes and scientific-research activities, and also other functions assigned to them

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The university has defined the workload of academic/scientific and invited staff, which is adequate to its educational programs and scientific research activities. The workload scheme is updated every semester. The scheme is reflected in corresponding regulatory document "Unified rule on the amount of remuneration, terms and hiring of respectively qualified invited staff without them taking a position of the academic staff, teachers and academic or teacher's positions, in order to participate in the academic or/and scientific-research process or/and to direct this process at LEPL Gori State Teaching University".

One of the requirements set by the document is that when defining the workload for each teaching staff, the workload in all higher education institutions, they work for on an academic or scientific position should be considered. In particular, the weekly workload of staff in all higher education institutions (including Gori State Teaching University) should not exceed 40 hours. Based on the documents provided by the university additionally upon request of the expert panel, academic and scientific staff workload in all other institutions where they occupy academic or scientific position, does not exceed 40 hours weekly, moreover, the total number of the weekly workload is much lower than that, (not over 28 hours weekly). During the on-site interviews it was revealed that the majority of the academic/invited staff members are well-aware of this regulation developed by the university (maximum number of 40 hours weekly in all HEI), however, there was a case, when academic staff member was not aware of this regulation. Moreover, she considered such requirement, and correspondingly, the question put by the expert panel regarding academic workload illegitimate.

To further support unhindered functioning of the academic/scientific and teaching activities at Gori State University, expert panel considers that university should raise the awareness of the academic staff members on the requirements set by the institution regarding their workload.

Based on the documentation submitted by for authorization purposes, as well as the results of the interviews with university academic and administrative representatives, it was noted that to ensure the program sustainability, while planning the number of the academic/invited staff, the institution considers academic workload of 600 hours annually, which itself depends on the educational programs, the contingent enrolled in the program, the number of existing as well as future students, material and technical resources available at Gori State Teaching University. Taking into the consideration all the factors mentioned above, university sets certain target benchmarks. In particular, 'at least 50% of the responsible lecturers of the compulsory training courses provided by the educational program should be representatives of the academic staff affiliated with the University. In addition, the ratio of the staff involved in the educational program to the number of students in the program is at least 1/40 for the bachelor's Program and at least 1/30 for the master's Program. The ratio of the PhD

student supervisors involved in the implementation of the PhD Educational Program to the PhD students with active status should not be less than 1/3; In addition, the implementation of the PhD Educational Program must involve at least 5 affiliated academic staff, including at least 3 professors'/associate professors who have the necessary qualifications for PhD student supervision' (SER, p. 37).

Gori State Teaching University has developed affiliation rule. Affiliation is voluntary and it is stipulated in written agreements between the institution and the staff member. The Expert panel got acquainted with both documents. The affiliation rule and the agreement signed between the university and the affiliated academic staff member say that the affiliated academic staff member will share knowledge and conduct any scientific work on behalf of only this university. It is noteworthy that according to the rules, regulations and other normative documents provided by the university, as well as the information collected during the interviews with different stakeholders, affiliated staff enjoy full financial support for publishing a textbook/methodological material or scientific paper, for participation in an international scientific conference. As university representatives have noted, it proved to be an effective measure for the rise of scientific activities among academic staff members and the serious incentive to stay affiliated with Gori State University. Currently, 90 people are holding academic positions at the institution, 83 among them are affiliates with Gori State Teaching University.

Gori State Teaching University defines specific target benchmarks for the data related to the academic and research activities of the staff. To effectively manage its activities, the university successfully uses these target benchmarks and takes care to improve them.

Evidence/indicators

- Unified rule of the amount of remuneration, terms and hiring of respectively qualified invited staff without them taking a position of the academic staff, teachers and academic or teacher's positions, to participate in the academic or/and scientific-research process or/and to direct this process at LEPL Gori State Teaching University.
- "Methodology for Determining the Number of Academic and Invited Staff of an Educational Program at LEPL Gori State Teaching University;"
- Rule and Terms of Academic Personnel Affiliation at LEPL Gori State Teaching University.
- Mechanisms and Evaluation System for Monitoring Management Effectiveness at LEPL Gori State Teaching University.
- Interview results.
- Self-Evaluation Report

Recommendations:

None

Suggestions:

- Further support unhindered functioning of the academic/scientific and teaching activities at Gori State University; expert panel considers that university should raise the awareness of the academic staff members on the requirements set by the institution regarding their workload.

Best Practices (if applicable):

None

Evaluation

☒ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

5. Students and Their Support Services

HEI ensures the development of student-centered environment, offers appropriate services, including career support mechanisms; it also ensures maximum awareness of students, implements diverse activities and promotes student involvement in these activities. HEI utilizes student survey results to improve student support services

5.1. The Rule for Obtaining and Changing Student Status, the Recognition of Education, and Student Rights
o   For each of the educational levels, HEI has developed regulations for assignment, suspension and termination of student status, mobility, qualification granting, issuing educational documents as well as recognition of education received during the learning period. o   HEI ensures the protection of student rights and lawful interests.
Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements Gori State Teaching University has regulations for assignment, suspension and termination of student status, mobility, qualification granting and recognition of education. Specifically, "Charter of LEPL Gori State University" and "Regulatory Rule of the Educational Process at LEPL Gori" are transparent and fair, and they are in line with current legislation. Rule of LEPL Gori State Teaching University on Recognition of Credits Received in other Educational Institutions" established by the Academic Council of the University, regulates the recognition of student credits in the internal mobility process. These documents are published on the university website and they are available to all interested parties. During the site visit interviews, students said that they know about regulatory norms, they have the right to use mobility and in case of suspension/termination of student status before completion of the educational program, they can request restoration under the applicable law and regulatory norms. As for the performance of the university in the process of external mobility, Student Satisfaction Survey which was conducted by GSTU, 73 bachelor and master students were involved, representing approximately 34% of the total number of active students transferred to the university by external mobility. Survey results are satisfying: The results of the survey show that the vast majority of respondents, namely 91.8% of them, believe that the process of recognition of education at Gori Teaching University was carried out in a timely manner. Also, 80.8% of respondents are completely satisfied with the credits recognition results, 16.4% are partially satisfied and only 2.8% of respondents unsatisfied. In the previous evaluation, the experts have seen some difficulties in the process of appeal procedures, these were quite complicated for the students and student representatives were not involved in the work of the commission. The institution has taken into account the recommendation and simplified the appeal procedure, representatives of the career development department and the student self-government will be involved in the work of the commission. During the interviews it was evidenced that students are actively using appeal procedures of the intermediate and/or final evaluations received in the components of the educational program. The Student Career Development and Support Service Center provides information to students about various regulations of the university, including ethical norms and academic integrity issues. During the interviews, students mentioned that at the information meetings, they also get information about the details of the agreement between the University and them, which includes the rights and obligations of the student and the university, terms of the relationship and protection of legitimate interests of both parties. Students admitted that they know that in case of violation of the student's rights and legitimate interests by a representative of the university staff they have the right to complain to the university administration through the University Chancellery. Complaints are discussed by the special Appeals Commission established by the Rector's Order.
Evidences/indicators • LEPL GSTU self-evaluation report. • Interview results with students, GSTU staff. • Regulatory Rule on Educational Process at LEPL GSTU. • Charter of LEPL Gori State Teaching University. • "Rule on Recognition of Credits Received in other Educational Institutions at LEPL Gori State Teaching University;" • External mobility Student Satisfaction Survey • University web site https://gu.edu.ge • Sample of the agreement concluded between the University and the student.

Recommendations: None
Suggestions: None
Best Practices (if applicable): None
Evaluation ☒ Complies with requirements ☐ Substantially complies with requirements ☐ Partially complies with requirements ☐ Does not comply with requirements

5.2 Student Support Services

o   HEI has student consulting services in order to plan educational process and improve academic performance

o   HEI has career support service, which provides students with appropriate counselling and support regarding employment and career development

o   HEI ensures students awareness and involvement in various university-level, local and international projects and events, and supports student initiatives

o   HEI has mechanisms, including financial mechanisms to support low SES students

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

In GSTU students have the opportunity to get appropriate consultations and support regarding the planning of the learning process, improvement of academic performance. Newly enrolled students at the beginning of the learning process are given an orientation meeting to learn about key aspects of the learning process, representatives of the university and the faculty administrations, as well as the teaching university structural units. At these meetings, the students are provided with exhaustive information on the university space, the learning environment. The Student Career Development and Support Service develops information materials (guide to the freshmen) at the beginning of each academic year, with information about internal procedures of the teaching university related to the learning process, and various regulations of the university. This information is also available on the website of the university. The staff of the institution, including the persons involved in each educational program, provide students with relevant information about counselling services available at the university. During the site visit interviews, the students mentioned that they can receive a solid guidance from Student Career Development and Support Service.

The Student Career Development and Support Service, which also supports students in their career development, provides information about potential employers and cooperates with them. It facilitates the involvement of employers in the development and implementation of the educational programs, organizes employment forums with the active participation of employers, connects students and employers, as well as promotes internships and practice relevant to the educational programs. During the interviews, students expressed their regret that there are a few companies which offer job opportunities, although they appreciated the university support.

Students and alumni receive various information via social network groups and personal corporate email which they had not in the past years.

It is important that during the interview employers expressed their satisfaction with the level of student qualification and share their experience of cooperation: Gori Municipality representative said that the main source of employment in Gori Municipality is the students of Gori State Teaching University, for example 16 students are in practice in the municipality tourism department. Every year 2-3 students are employed in the Financial Investigation Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Also, almost 40 alumni of GSTU are employed in schools in the region. Also, employers admitted that they would like to see improved practical skills from students.

GSTU provides various activities to involve young scientists in scientific research projects, The university has a research funding program where young researchers can acquire support grants for academic and scientific personal. Every year students have the opportunity to participate in scientific conferences. In the research project competition, the project in which students will be involved is considered a priority. Student scientific circles at the faculties that develop various scientific activities. Students are actively engaged in research projects like: "A Historic Representation of the Occupied Territories of Shida Kartli (Didi Liakhvi Gorge)"; "Archeology with youth near the occupation line"; Study of the biodiversity of the Atenian Valley; The University has a mechanism for supporting student initiatives/projects, which is defined by the "Rule on Submitting and Financing Student Initiatives and Projects at LEPL Gori State Teaching University." This mechanism is used to finance initiatives/projects submitted by the University students in the field of education, science, culture or sports.

Students were involved in a self-evaluation process and have suggestions for organizing free language courses – and it was successfully implemented. Also, alumni had the initiative related certified courses, and it seems to university is developing these courses.

GSTU has international agreements for students which provides additional opportunities to participate in various projects and take part in international mobility. During the interview one of the students shared her experience about participation in the exchange program, She shared the steps that she took: She received information from the International Relations Department, had an examination, and she was chosen for the exchange program. For more involvement of students in various international projects, it is suggested to diversify international projects in the form of international conferences, workshops and public lectures.

GSTU has diverse sports, arts, educational activities and supports student initiatives. Students are involved in various activities like International Art Festival; Intellectual game What? Where? When?; Summer and Winter Student Camps; Domestic Championships in Basketball, Football, Volleyball and act; International Youth Festival in Kars and Rize and many more.

Institution takes into consideration students' socio-economic status (SES) and implements various support services. The teaching university operates a flexible scheme for the payment of tuition fees. One of the mechanisms for supporting socially vulnerable students is granting certain benefits in the payment of tuition fees, which are regulated by a relevant order of the Rector. Funding for the education of socially vulnerable students is regulated by the "Rule on Implementation of the Social program of LEPL Gori State Teaching University" approved by the Resolution of the Academic Council. Under this mechanism, the University funds five socially vulnerable students each semester for a period of one semester. This rule is transparent and objective, it is published on the university website and is available to all interested parties.

During the visit the experts saw a variety of spaces arranged for students. GSTU has the library space where both printed and electronic books are collected, also, computers for electronic books are placed. During the interview students express their worry that there is no food facility in the university, it is desirable to provide students (and the staff) with such a service.

The GSTU team tries to create a comfortable environment for its students and attach local students to the region.

Evidences/indicators

• LEPL GSTU self-evaluation report.
• Interview results with students, GSTU staff.
• Regulatory Rule on Educational Process at LEPL GSTU.
• Charter of LEPL Gori State Teaching University.
• Provision of the Student Career Development and Support Service
• Rule on Submission and Funding of the Students' Initiatives and Projects at LEPL Gori State Teaching University
• The Rule on Implementation of an Educational Programme at LEPL Gori State Teaching University
• International Student Mobility-2011-2022(statistics).

- Student activities(statistics).
- University website https://gu.edu.ge

Recommendations:

None

Suggestions:

- Diversify international projects in the form of international conferences, workshops and public lectures.
- It is desirable to have a food facility in the area of university.

Best Practices (if applicable):

None

Evaluation

☒ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

6. Research, development and/or other creative work

Higher Education Institution, considering its type and specifics of field(s), works on the strengthening of its research function, ensures proper conditions to support research activities and improve the quality of research activities

6.1 Research Activities

o   HEI, based on its type and specifics of its fields, carries out research/creative activities.

o   Ensuring the effectiveness of doctoral research supervision

o   HEI has public, transparent and fair procedures for the assessment and defense of dissertations which are relevant to the specifics of the field

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

Gori State Teaching University (GSTU) facilitates and supports continuous development scientific-research activities, integration of teaching, research and economics by supporting its academic personnel and students, conducting regional projects and active cooperation with local Municipality cultural-educational units, schools and other organizations. Starting from 2015 GSTU has conducted and participated in more than 15 scientific and educational projects, among them those which support integration with local community. As an example, during the interviews, it was mentioned that while the Pandemic, the research was conducted to find out the results of pandemic situation on teachers, students and their families' lives, especially in the border villages. It was revealed that there was a need for technical equipment for those families. The results were shared with the local Municipality. This project was funded by GSTU and conducted by Education, Exact and Natural Sciences Faculty with active participation of students.

GSTU carries out research, development and creative activities by mostly focusing on scientific researches and projects exploring the occupied territories of Shida Kartli and conducting archaeological excavations. In the self-evaluation report it is stated that on the basis of the memorandum with M. Nodia Institute of Geophysics at the Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, the archaeological research of Gori Fortress and the surrounding area was carried out in 2019 with the participation of academic staff. Under another cooperation with M. Nodia Institute of Geophysics at the Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, GSTU also carried out a geo radio location survey along the perimeter of the reinforced concrete platform at the bottom of the Satsurblia karst cave and presented the results at the Ministry of Environmental Protection.

Research results are integrated in the teaching activities of the institution. The results of academic staff research activities are reflected in the materials of student scientific conferences, as well as in

the Master's theses of students. During the interview it was revealed that the publications and books of the academic staff are used in the teaching process as well, f.e. the book "Pandemic distribution history". Also, the specialty courses in Master's program of History are chosen in the connection with research output of the academic personnel. Integration of research results into teaching activities is part of the University's research development policy.

In accordance with the rule of evaluation of the annual activities of the academic staff, the scientific-research work is a mandatory workload for them. The annual academic workload of the academic staff is determined by the "Unified rule of the amount of remuneration, terms and hiring of respectively qualified invited staff without them taking a position of the academic staff, teachers and academic or teacher's positions, in order to participate in the academic or/and scientific-research process or/and to direct this process at LEPL Gori State Teaching University" approved by the decision of the Representative Council and may amount up to 40% of the their workload.

GSTU academic staff participates in local and international scientific research, projects and conferences, conducts fundamental and applied research, contributing to scientific development at regional, national and international levels. The results of the conducted research are reflected in the publications of local and international peer-reviewed journals, including the Clarivate Analytics base (Web of Science), Elsevier databases (ScienceDirect, Scopus) indexed journals, or indexed journals in other similar peer reviewed databases. In the self-evaluation report it is stated that during the last five years 60 scientific papers are published from which 54 papers of 24 representatives of the GSTU staff have been published in the scientific journals indexed in the high-ranking databases.

Several scientific projects were implemented during the last period and some of them are running now. Currently, the academic staff of GSTU is implementing the scientific project "Historical Representation of the Occupied Territory of Shida Kartli, Didi Liakhvi Gorge" (grant N OTG -I -21-593) funded by the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia. In 2019-2021, the academic staff of GSTU implemented the scientific project "Historical Representation of the Occupied Territory of Shida Kartli, Didi Liakhvi Gorge" (grant N OTG -I -19-747) funded by the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia. In accordance with the rule on submission and financing initiatives and projects of the staff at Gori State Teaching University, on February 5, 2021, the project "Lapidary inscriptions of the villages near the occupation line" was funded by the order N5-05 of the Head of Administration of Gori State Teaching University. The project was implemented from March to August and students were involved together with the academic staff. Within the framework of the grant competition "Archeology with Youth" announced by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth of Georgia, the joint project of Gori State Teaching University and the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth of Georgia "Archeology with the youth in the vicinity of the occupation line" was funded by the Ministry Order N9209 of June 14, 2021. The project was conducted from August to December 2021 and the archaeological excavations were carried out in the village of Kvemo Nikozi. 44 academic personnel and students were involved in the implementation of the project. In 2021 based on the Memorandum of Understanding signed between LEPL Gori State Teaching University and NNLE Culture and Tourism Development Promotion Agency of Gori Municipality, in order to study the history of the prominent family of Shida Kartli, the Makarashvilis, a project was implemented - "Study of the ancestral history of the Makarashvilis". In order to integrate research and economics, the University carries out such activities in the field of research and development, that aim at economic, technological, industrial and other innovative development.

During the interviews it was mentioned that students participate in annual university scientific conferences, they participate in GSTU scientific grant projects, publish works together with the academic staff. The integrated joint projects are conducted where professors and students from two or more faculties are involved, f.e. joint project connected to Biology and Education fields. It was also mentioned that 6 foreign professors are involved in several scientific grant projects from Poland and the USA.

It should be also noted that the scientific research is one of the priority activities of GSTU. This aim is stated and supported in the GSTU current Strategic Development and Action Plans. During the interviews it was stated that the current research priority of GSTU is Georgian History. This is confirmed by the published scientific papers, books, monographs, research projects as well. Hence, GSTU is going to open a PhD program in History. At the interview, the students and alumni mentioned that it would be beneficial for GSTU to open other PhD programs as well, f.e. in Law. Besides, to broaden the research fields will help the institution to enhance research output and be integrated in different scientific activities, to attract more international professors, to participate in different international projects, etc.

GSTU Academic Council on February 2022 approved "Dissertation Board and Doctoral Regulation of Faculty of Humanities" (Decision 6-12), where there are clearly defined functions for the supervisors of PhD students (Article 10). PhD student supervisor should have a PhD degree, research experience related with the student's PhD thesis, corresponding publications during the last 10 years. If PhD student has only one supervisor, that should be Associate Professor or Professor of the Faculty of Humanities of GSTU. One person can have no more than three PhD students to supervise at the same

time. The enrolment criteria, preparation, evaluation and defence of dissertation is regulated by the above-mentioned document, are in line with legislature and ensure the high standard through public and transparent procedures and by the involvement of highly qualified academic staff. The PhD student, among required three publications, is obliged to publish at least one scientific paper in peer-reviewed journal indexed by Scopus, Web of Science or ERIH PLUS.

Evidences/indicators

- Mission of GSTU;
- Unified rule of the amount of remuneration, terms and hiring of respectively qualified invited staff without them taking a position of the academic staff, teachers and academic or teacher's positions, in order to participate in the academic or/and scientific-research process or/and to direct this process at LEPL Gori State Teaching University;
- Research Development Policy at LEPL Gori State Teaching University;
- Mechanisms for Assessing the Quality of Research Activities and Scientific Productivity of Staff;
- Dissertation Board and Doctoral Regulation of Faculty of Humanities;
- Strategic Development and Action Plans of GSTU;
- Memorandums of conducted research projects;
- Published books and scientific papers;
- Short description of fulfilled, current and planned projects of GSTU for 2015-2021;
- Self-evaluation report of GSTU;
- Interview results.

Recommendations:

None

Suggestions:

- Broaden the research area and diversify the research fields to enhance scientific output of the institution.

Best Practices (if applicable):

- GSTU actively participates in the scientific-research activities of the region to explore the History of Occupied Territories of Shida Kartli.

Evaluation

☒ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

6.2. Research Support and Internationalization

o   HEI has an effective system in place for supporting research, development and creative activities
o   Attracting new staff and their involvement in research/arts-creative activities.
o   University works on internationalization of research, development and creative activities.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

GSTU has developed the Research Development Policy to support fundamental and applied scientific work and increase the effectiveness of the academic staff research output, to facilitate integration of research activities into the teaching process. The Academic Council of GSTU is responsible for the implementation of the Research Development Policy. The Vice-Rector for scientific affairs coordinates and monitors the scientific-research processes at the institution.

The main priorities of the Research Development Policy are:
- To support the implementation of fundamental and applied scientific research;
- To ensure the integration of teaching, learning and scientific research processes;
- To promote the integration of research in the economy;
- To increase the scientific productivity and quality of research of the academic staff;
- To facilitate the publication of the results of scientific research conducted by the academic staff and students;

• To facilitate cooperation with Georgian and foreign higher education institutions and integration into the European educational and scientific area;

• To implement the joint scientific-research projects together with Georgian and foreign higher education institutions.

The structural unit supporting the scientific-research activities is GSTU Scientific-Research Center, the main responsibilities of which are to promote and implement scientific-research projects, find various funds from diverse sources in order to run planned research activities, improve research infrastructure and attract new grant projects. This structural unit provides assistance in legal issues, helps to prepare and submit grant applications, sign memorandums, and ensure effective administration of scientific grants obtained by the academic staff.

During the last period a number of annual local and international scientific conferences, seminars and trainings are held, the publication of scientific papers, monographs and textbooks of the academic staff is financed; publications of scientific papers of academic staff and their participation in scientific events are financially supported; an open access to the latest scientific literature and scientific databases is ensured.

GSTU issues an international scientific peer-reviewed electronic journal "History, Archeology, Ethnology", the editorial board of which consists of Georgian and foreign researchers in the relevant scientific fields. The journal is indexed in international databases with scientific bibliometrics and international online libraries such as CEEOL (Central and Eastern European Online Library), ERIH PLUS, Sherpa Romeo, EZB, ZDB, RESEARCHBIB, EUROPUB. It is stated that in 2020 the journal was awarded the Impact Factor - 0.723 in the International Scientific Indexing (ISI) database. GSTU intends to integrate this journal into other international databases as well (such as WoS, SCOPUS, EBSCO, DOAJ, SJR (Shimago Journal & Countri Rank)). GSTU also has an international scientific peer-reviewed electronic journal "Philological Studies" indexed in the International Scientific Indexing (ISI) database, which in 2021 obtained the Impact Factor - 0.591. It is planned to index it in the ERIH PLUS database as well. In December 2021, the first issue of the international scientific electronic journal "Economics, Business and Administration" was published.

It is stated in the self-evaluation report that the financial provision of scientific-research activities are carried out from the variety of sources - the budget of the faculty, the budget of GSTU, the funds allocated for grant projects from various scientific foundations, the funds of non-governmental organizations and international organizations. It is indicated that the Budget allocated for research-scientific activities is 305000 lari that is 6% of the total budget, but during the interviews the administration stated that it was increased up to 384000 laris that is 7% of the total budget now.

GSTU supports internal scientific projects, especially with participation of students. For each project at most 3000 lari is considered, which seems not sufficient to fulfil effective scientific research. Moreover, the commission who assesses and makes decision on financing the internal scientific project is not defined and is not clear if it consists of only internal administrative/academic personnel or external experts are invited as well to make the selection process transparent and avoid subjectivism.

During the interviews it was revealed that young researchers are selected to participate in the internal scientific projects based on the competition results. PHD students are obliged to conduct research and have less educational workload as a support. Together with academic staff and students, 6 foreign professors are participating in the scientific projects running now at GSTU. The students were involved in the research conducted under the Law direction – "Definition of Force Majeure" that was finalized with the 2-day-conference. In order to attract and support young researchers, those scientific projects are preferably funded where students are involved. The exchange programs are supported where students and young researchers are sent abroad to fulfil scientific work and study at post-doctoral programs.

Research is funded through public, transparent and fair procedures. The norms of annual academic workload of the academic staff, teachers and invited lecturers at GSTU include scientific research activities as one of the obligatory components (this component is mandatory for the academic staff), which may amount up to 40% of the full academic workload of the staff that equals to 600 hours per one academic year.

One of the main mechanisms to support scientific research activities is the financing of initiatives and projects of the academic staff, which is regulated by "Rule on Submission and Funding of the Initiatives and Projects of the Staff at LEPL Gori State Teaching University". During the last two years, GSTU funded six research projects submitted by the academic staff. The University also has a mechanism for supporting student initiatives/projects, though which 46 initiatives/projects presented by students in educational, scientific, cultural or sports field were financed that is regulated by "Rule

on Submission and Funding Student Initiatives and Projects at the LEPL Gori State Teaching University".

GSTU strives for the internationalization of scientific and research work. It facilitates the cooperation of the academic staff with foreign partners, EU scientific research centers. In particular, the self-evaluation report, submitted documents and interview results say that the academic staff of GSTU carried out post-Doctoral research at the University of Bilbao, the Opole University of Technology, Vilnius Gedimino Technical University and the University of Seville. One of the academic personnel is involved and leads a research project - "European Union Judicial Practice and Georgian Labor Law" (April-November 2020), implemented with the support of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation.

International scientific conferences are held and the conference materials are published on the basis of the reports selected by peer review. Relevant costs are fully funded by GSTU. In 2016, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between LEPL Gori State Teaching University and the Turkish Historical Society, within the framework of which the Second International Symposium was held at the University in 2018. In May 2017, within the framework of the international project (№ 544191 -Tempus 1-2013-1-PT JPCR) ("Elaboration of hotel management training programs for the development of tourism industry at the Bachelor's and Master's levels in Georgia, Azerbaijan and Moldova"), a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the University of Girona (Spain) for 5 years (2017-2022), on the basis of which a joint Master's Degree Program in Hotel Management will be developed and implemented. The joint program envisages the mobility of students of LEPL Gori State Teaching University at Girona University for the realization of the research component of the Master's thesis. In September 2019, LEPL Gori State Teaching University and Federico II University of Naples signed a memorandum of understanding aimed at implementing a number of academic and community projects. Within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding, an agreement has been reached on the implementation of a joint Master's Program in Public Administration. Within the framework of the cooperation with Warsaw University, between 2020-2021, a joint research project "Polish Trophy Books in the Library of Gori State University" was implemented, in which students of GSTU were involved together with professors from Gori and Warsaw Universities. In 2023, Gori State Teaching University, together with partner higher education institutions, plans to establish an international center for education research on the basis of a consortium, which will aim to conduct comparative researches on education (preschool, general, higher and vocational) issues. On the basis of the consortium, it is planned to create an international peer-reviewed scientific journal (Education Issues in Post-Soviet Countries). Higher education institutions of Georgia, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Ukraine, Poland, Turkey, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova and Belarus are participating in the creation of the consortium.

It should be mentioned that in September 2021, the Horizon Europe Grant Office has been opened at GSTU that conducted several activities, facilitates and supports research and will help to integrate GSTU into the international scientific environment and in EU scientific grant competitions.

The affiliated academic staff of GSTU has salary bonuses for fulfilling additional scientific activities not considered in their annual educational and scientific workload. This system encourages staff to enhance their scientific productivity, as a result, GSTU research output is strengthening. The special scheme is elaborated, where points are given for any single scientific activity, considering the importance and the quality of the research.

Evidences/indicators

- Research Development Policy at LEPL Gori State Teaching University, Mechanisms for Assessing the Quality of Research Activities and Scientific Productivity of the Staff;
- Rule on Submission and Funding of the Initiatives and Projects of the Staff at LEPL Gori State Teaching University;
- Rule on Submission and Funding of the Students' Initiatives and Projects at LEPL Gori State Teaching University;
- Rule of publishing staff's scientific papers in the publishing house of LEPL Gori State Teaching University;
- The rule of funding research by the budget;
- "Unified rule of the amount of remuneration, terms and hiring of respectively qualified invited staff without them taking a position of the academic staff, teachers and academic or teacher's positions, in order to participate in the academic or/and scientific-research process or/and to direct this process at LEPL Gori State Teaching University;
- Self-evaluation report of GSTU;
- Interview results.

Recommendations:

- Ensure that sufficient finances are considered for internal scientific projects to facilitate effective scientific research.

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Suggestions:

- Consider a possibility to involve in the evaluation of internal project proposals also external experts.

Best Practices (if applicable):

None

Evaluation

☐ Complies with requirements

☒ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

6.3. Evaluation of Research Activities

HEI has a system for evaluating and analyzing the quality of research/creative-arts activities, and the productivity of scientific-research units and academic/scientific staff.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

GSTU has elaborated "Research Development Policy and Mechanisms for Assessing the Quality of Research Activities and Scientific Productivity of Staff at LEPL Gori State Teaching University" approved by the Academic Council decision #6-34 on May 28, 2020, the aim of which is to facilitate and support research conducted by GSTU academic staff and students, continuous development of research activities and integration of the research in teaching and learning. These procedures allow to assess the quality of research activities carried out at GSTU and the scientific productivity of the staff (number of publications, financial resources attracted by scientific grants, etc.). Evaluation is done once every three years and is based on the analysis of data obtained through quantitative and qualitative indicators. Based on these mechanisms, a monitoring of the academic personnel scientific achievements was conducted for 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 academic years. The aim was to identify weaknesses and strengths, to identify the shortcomings and the needs for the development of the research. The evaluation results were assessed as positive, but anyway the recommendation for the further development of the scientific-research activities of the staff and raise their incentives was given. The academic staff of GSTU submits the annual self-assessment report, where the scientific-research activities conducted during the last year are described. Based on these reports, the evaluation is made by the administration (Faculty Dean and Head of Quality Assurance Department). The assessment results are submitted to the University Quality Assurance Department. On the basis of the analysis of the reports submitted by the faculties, the University Quality Assurance Department, in cooperation with the Educational Management Department and the Human Resources Management Department, submits recommendations to the Academic Council for the further improvement of the academic and scientific-research activity of the academic and invited personnel. The procedures are defined by the "Evaluation rule of academic and scientific-research activities of academic and invited staff" that is approved by the Academic Council. Besides, the evaluation scheme and target benchmarks are defined, which must be achieved in order to be positively evaluated.

The evaluation of the scientific productivity and quality of research activities of the academic staff is carried out by the Scientific-Research Center of the University with the participation of the Quality Assurance Service of the relevant faculty. The evaluation report includes an action plan for future scientific activities, as well as specific measures to address the needs by organizing trainings, workshops, etc. The Vice Rector of GSTU, with the involvement of the heads of the Scientific Research Centers, Quality Assurance and Study Process Management Services, revises the reports submitted by the academic staff and prepares an evaluation report of scientific research activities that is submitted to the Academic Council for the next revision. The Academic Council develops recommendations for adjusting the budget allocated to facilitate research activities of the next year,

if necessary. On the basis of the recommendations, the Rector of GSTU initiates the relevant improvement activities. During the interviews it was revealed that the improvement activities were fulfilled, f.e. the Scientific-Research Center was established in November 2021 to support and enhance research activities, the scientific journal for Education field was established; research grant project writing and usage techniques of international scientific databases trainings were offered to the academic personnel; English language proficiency courses were organized for the academic and invited staff. However, the interviews showed that there is much left to enhance English language proficiency of the academic personnel to facilitate the research capacity and integration into international research environment.

Evidences/indicators

- Evaluation Rule on the Academic and Scientific-Research Work of Academic and Invited Staff;
- Research Development Policy and Mechanisms for Assessing the Quality of Research Activities and Scientific Productivity of Staff at LEPL Gori State Teaching University;
- Assessment Reports on fulfillment of scientific activities by the academic personnel of GSTU for 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 academic years;
- Self-evaluation report of GSTU;
- Interview results.

Recommendations:

- Enhance the English language proficiency of the academic personnel to facilitate the research capacity and integration into the international research environment.

Suggestions:

None

Best Practices (if applicable):

None

Evaluation

☐ Complies with requirements

☒ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

7. Material, Information and Financial Resources

Material, information and financial resources of HEI ensure sustainable, stable, effective and efficient functioning of the institution, and the achievement of goals defined through strategic development plan.

7.1 Material Resources

o The institution possesses or owns material resources (fixed and current assets) that are used for achieving goals stated in the mission statement, adequately responds to the requirements of educational programmes and research activities, and corresponds to the existing number of students and planned enrolment.

o HEI offers environment necessary for implementing educational activities: sanitary units, natural light possibilities, and central heating system.

o Health and safety of students and staff is protected within the institution.

o HEI has adapted environment for people with special needs

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

Gori Teaching State University has its own buildings and material resources for their existing educational programs and research work. They have all conditions to conduct the learning process successfully. There are some programs for which practice they have agreements with practice entities.

Gori State Teaching University owns 5 educational buildings, a dairy factory, sports fields and areas and 2 plots of land in the Ateni Gorge.

GSTU has a plan to build a new library, which plans to be launched in a month with the help of the ministry. There are ramps to enter the first floor of the administrative building. According to the interview with administration of GSTU, in the case of a student with a disability, a study environment will be arranged for him/her on the first floor. GSTU has an assembly hall for 250 people, various auditoriums, including: Horizon Office, where meetings are often held to develop European projects. The office is equipped with all the necessary resources, including the smart board and computer. Also, the Ossetian Language and Culture Center, the Warsaw University Center and etc. The Internet TV "Auditorium 211" has been newly created, where it already runs the broadcasts programs. The studio is equipped with appropriate equipment. Iakob Gogebashvili Conference Hall is designed for 130 people. GSTU has a team work room for 18 students, various student spaces in different buildings. With the support of Gori Municipality and the financing of Zaza Pachulia, GSTU has a basketball court made to modern standards. GSTU has 16 computer classes equipped with appropriate equipment as well as the Innovation Lab is existing.

GSTU has a literary cafe, meeting room, printing house. For educational purposes they have a simulated bank room with all the necessary equipment, as well as a simulated courtroom, a practical law clinic, a tourism resource center, an occupation museum, a Turkish language room, and a teacher professional development center set up under the President's Reserve Fund. Operates a biolaboratory for training purposes.

Evacuation exits are working. Sanitizers are installed. The University has a medical room with appropriate services.

Fire safety systems with its mechanisms are implemented. Fire equipment is installed in all the buildings. The dates of their validity were checked. An evacuation plan and signs are posted. The sanitary units are in working condition. It should be noted that the sanitation facilities have been improved based on surveys. The classrooms have heating and air conditioning systems. The security of the building are safe. The security room is equipped with cameras. Cameras are installed in all buildings, a total of 16 cameras on the inner and outer perimeter in 24-hour recording mode. The data is stored for 1 month and stored on hard drives.

GSTU has a dormitory for 48 students, but at this moment, especially during the pandemic period, there wasn't the need to use it. It was revealed during the interview that the students knew about its existence, although no one from the respondents lives there. During an interview with staff, it was noted that one professor from Tbilisi uses GSTU accommodation.

During the examination period, the examination center fully uses the first building.

Some adaptations for possible students with special education needs have been made in the main building.

Overall, material resources seem to be on an acceptable level, enabling all the necessary processes of institutional operation, appropriate for educational purposes.

Evidences/indicators
- Extracts from Public Registry;
- Survey results;
- Agreements with practice entities;
- Fire prevention and safety, First Aid, and Order mechanisms;
- Interview results.

Recommendations:

None

Suggestions:
- Make sure students are well informed about the dormitory and a possibility to use its service.

Best Practices (if applicable):

None

Evaluation

☒ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

7.2. Library Resources

Library environment, resources and service support effective implementation of educational and research activities, and HEI constantly works for its improvement.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The library resources are located in several buildings of the University. There are reading hall, book depository, spaces for students and staffs. The books are in printed and electronic versions in the library. The library has 440,360 library items, including 308,877 copies of 84,915 titled books, and 132,896 issues of journals. The library in two buildings of the University has reading halls separated from the book depository. Books of the library are processed according to the library regulations. Inventory inspection is regularly carried out in the library. Rules of use in the library are clear and posted for all the users. The reading room is equipped with decent equipment: 6 computers connected to the Internet (3 for students and academic staff and 3 for library staff), wireless internet in the library space, a printer, a copy machine, and a scanner. During the Covid pandemic, students and academic staff are increasingly using electronic manuals and books. E-textbooks, a catalog of e-textbooks are available on the library page of the University website. An electronic catalog is available on the University website. Via the electronic catalog, the user can find the book in the library, both in printed and electronic versions.

The University annually renews its contract with the Consortium 2017 of the Integrated Information Network of Georgian Libraries, on the purchase of electronic library databases. Scientific databases are free accessible from any space. They have the statistics of using the electronic library databases. 6 books were requested by the experts randomly and all of them were at the library. The project for new library building is ready.

In relation to the library, interviews with students have revealed the need for more printed copies of some textbooks. In relation to the users, the number of hard copies should be 110/1, however, if it is not possible to purchase it, they are making e-versions.

The library is served by six librarians, who are assigned the functions of library activities. They are conducting also workshops and training courses. The library administration organizes introductory meetings for freshmen. It was confirmed and positively evaluated by the students, too.

Evidences/indicators

- Mechanisms for the development and renewal of resources and services of the LEPL Gori State Teaching University Library;
- Statistics of using the electronic library databases;
- Book fund inventory materials.
- Interview results.

Recommendations:

None

Suggestions:

- Consider a possibility to provide students with more hard copies of the books for their study.

Best Practices (if applicable):

None

Evaluation

☒ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

7.3 Information Resources
o   HEI has created infrastructure for information technologies and its administration and accessibility are ensured o   Electronic services and electronic management systems are implemented and mechanisms for their constant improvement are in place o   HEI ensures business continuity o   HEI has a functional web-page in Georgian and English languages.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

In GSTU the Information Technology Support Department controls the IT infrastructure. University provides and supports the educational classrooms with computers and special equipment as well as the internet. The infrastructure of IT is quite good at university, but sometimes there is the free WIFI internet problem.

Computer equipment and internet are also available for the university students, served by the university's computer labs. Computer equipment and internet are also available for students and staff in the library space. During the pandemic, the university provided student assistance with computers, as well as their internet access.

Regarding IT security, the university monitors the University information system, updates and optimizes hardware and software security. They have the personal data protection mechanisms. The servers are secured, and backups of servers are regularly maintained. The servers are protected according to SSR certificate.

GSTU Webpage works well and it is providing relevant and up-to-date information in Georgian as well as English language. The university students and staff are provided with a corporate e-mail, which ends with the university domain - @gu.edu.ge

E-platform of learning is done; this platform communicates with students, staff, administration, sends information, including surveys, however, a possibility to upload the teaching materials is not yet integrated in the system. The university does not use MOODLE platform. Rather, teaching staff is sending the materials via the e-mails and is using social networks in this context. This needs to be concluded this is not the most suitable and up-to-date way of working. The university representatives claimed there are plans to add this function to e-platform soon.

Evidences/indicators
- Provision of the Information Technology Support Service of LEPL Gori State Teaching University;
- Information Technology Management Policy of LEPL Gori State Teaching University;
- Personal Data Protection Mechanisms at the LEPL Gori State Teaching University.
- Rule of using computer equipment and internet at Gori State Teaching University;
- Administration rule of LEPL Gori State Teaching University webpage;
- The university webpage;
- Interview results.

Recommendations:

• Free internet connections should be more accessible and of a good quality.

• Learning e-platforms should be strengthened to upload the teaching materials.

Suggestions:

None

Best Practices (if applicable):

None

Evaluation

☐ Fully complies with requirements

☒ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

7.4 Financial Resources

o   Allocation of financial resources described in the budget of HEI is economically achievable
o   Financial standing of HEI ensures performance of activities described in strategic and mid-term action plans
o   HEI financial resources are focused on effective implementation of core activities of the institution
o   HEI budget provides funding for scientific research and library functioning and development
o   HEI has an effective system of accountability, financial management and control

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

University has the incomes from the students as well as other supplementary economic activities. Financial resources of Gori University are reflected in the budget, which is approved by the Academic and Representative Councils of the University. University budget can be considered through three main categories: 1) Revenues from the economic activities, which include income from tuition fees for higher education programs, the University certification programs, and other supplementary economic activities permitted by law. 2) Allocations from the State Budget - State subsidies received by the University from the State Budget, which finance targeted expenditures within the framework of State programs, such as the development of the University infrastructure, scholarships for bachelor degree students, etc. 3) Targeted grants – projects funded by local and international funds.

To manage and control the approved budget efficiently, the university has introduced a financial management and control system.

The university allocates money to all main areas of its operation, and its activities seem to be economically achievable in a longer- as well as mid-term periods.   The budget provides some funding to support also research activities, also for the update of the library resources.

Every year they have the audit. GSTU presented the audit reports of 2017-2020 years. 2017-2018 years reports are done by the relevant companies.

Evidences/indicators
• The Budget of LEPL Gori State Teaching University;
• Dynamics of the last 5 years of funding; current and/or pre-reporting financial reports;
• Document on the introduction of financial management and control system;
• Interview results.

Recommendations:

None

Suggestions:

None

Best Practices (if applicable):

None

Evaluation

☒ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements