



განათლების ხარისხის განვითარების ეროვნული ცენტრი
NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

**Report on
Guram Tavartkiladze Tbilisi Teaching University (GTUNI) Authorization**

Date(s) of Evaluation: 2nd to 5th of July, 2019

First Draft Report Submission Date: 25th of July, 2019

Report Submission Date: 20th of September, 2019

Expert Panel Members

Chair:

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Tbilisi
2019

Authorization Report Resume

General information on the educational institution

GTUNI is a teaching university. The university offers both master's and bachelor's degrees in law. The total number of GTUNI staff is 142, including: academic staff -56. academic staff, affiliated with GTUNI include 22 Professors, Associate 17 Professors, 1 - Assistant Professor and 2 Assistants. GTUNI has two faculties: Business and Social Sciences and Law. GTUNI, as a teaching University, implements 10 accredited programs for the first and the second cycle of education (Bachelor and master's level). GTUNI implements the following bachelor's degree programs: 1. Business Administration (Marketing, Management, Finance); 2. Tourism, 3. Law, 4. Journalism, 4. Psychology. And the following master's degree Programs: 1. International Business Management, 2. Banking, 3. Private law, 4. Criminal law, 5. Mass Communication. These academic programmes provide students with scientific, labour market-oriented knowledge with harmonic integration of theory and practice. The HEI's actual marginal number of students was 2000 (they requested a decrease of the marginal number to 1800)., whereas the actual number of students was 877 with an active status and 608 with suspended status. The total budget of the HEL is 2,036,700 GEL.

Brief overview of the authorization site visit

The visit was quite successful. The expert panel found the staff, especially management, to be very co-operative and were made to feel welcome. However, not all requested documents were produced,¹ and the interview with the student self-government was deeply unsatisfactory. Further, during other interviews, students did not show themselves to be very knowledgeable about the university, its strategy, the appeals system concerning grades, or the university's mission, and some answers received from staff were excessively vague, whether by design or by ignorance. Also during the institutional evaluation, the panel examined the statement N 297747, registered at NCEQE on March 12 on possible violations of authorization standards.

During the visit, the panel met with the university administration, the self-evaluation team, the dean and faculty administration, with the programme directors, with academic staff, with invited staff, with quality assurance management, with employers and other stakeholders, and with students and alumni, as well as the student self-government, and IT staff. The panel also reviewed syllabi, theses, abstracts, and portfolios, as well as a range of other documents.

The panel also undertook a tour of the university's facilities, including the library, the doctor's surgery, the labs, classrooms, and the canteen.

Overview of the HEI's compliance with standards

Serious improvement is needed with regard to practically all areas. Virtually no areas were found to be entirely compliant with the prescribed standards. In particular, the research profile of the university is very limited indeed, with no discernible output in leading internationally ranked journals or monographs of high quality, and there is little effective quality assurance. This area was deemed by the panel to be of special concern, and requires immediate and robust remedial action.

Another area of particular concern is internationalisation, where the university's activities do not reflect its mission or goals. Little has been achieved here, and there is a lot of hard work to do. The monetary amounts allotted to internationalisation are not sufficient to achieve significant progress here at present. Past activities in this area – such

¹ Two examples of this are (1.) Materials of the training activities carried out (or planned) by the LEC, and (2.) Productivity evaluation documentation (individual) of research / scientifically activities of academic staff. These were requested on the last day of the site visit.

as participation in TEMPUS projects – are commendable, but represent exceptions, rather than being standard-bearers for a strong international culture. The fact that the 2019-2025 plan outlines a strategy for improving things in this area is rather positive than negative; however, it cannot influence the fact that little enough has occurred at the time of the evaluation itself. Moreover, the many examples of international co-operation listed by the university in our correspondence with it do not rectify this assessment.

The expert panel was impressed with certain areas, however, such as the practical labs on criminology, radio and television, as well as the links to employers and the provision of student jobs through co-operation initiatives. The general attitude toward students was also praiseworthy, with free buses, a good attitude from staff, and a generally helpful perspective.

Summary of Recommendations

1. It is absolutely essential that the mission statement reflects the strategy development in practice, and the budget allocation to areas that are deemed to be priorities.
2. The area of knowledge creation (via excellent research) requires additional attention.
3. The characteristics of the HEI should reflect the on-the-ground reality and not some abstract perspective.
4. The university's strategy and action plan require significant revision to ensure that the desired outcomes may be achieved within the set time limits.
5. Oversight and evaluation mechanisms must be established to spot faults and non-compliance as they arise.
6. Command and accountability mechanisms must be improved.
7. Additional resources must immediately be committed towards internationalisation.
8. Greater awareness of the university's strategy must be fostered, with buy-in from all stakeholders.
9. A new strategy needs to be put in place to improve the effectiveness and co-ordination of QA mechanisms.
10. Raise students' awareness about the GTUNI Mission and Vision.
11. Better monitoring mechanisms for staff evaluation need to be put in place.
12. Every piece of written work over 5,000 words, or everything to be published (by staff or students), should be checked electronically for plagiarism.
13. A check should be performed to make sure the new anti-plagiarism software meets international standards.
14. Staff and students should be required to sign the code of ethics and conduct on their first day, and should attend a seminar on this topic.
15. The main indicator for developing the educational programmes should be labour market requirements, otherwise it will increase the chances for the students to stay unemployed or to work in different fields from those in which they have qualified
16. Internationalization should be increased with adding new subjects taught in English and other European languages, while the budget for such activities should be substantially increased
17. An alumni tracer study regarding career and academic development should be conducted
18. The programme aims and learning outcome should reflect one another
19. The activities provided by the educational programmes should ensure implementation of the learning outcomes;
20. The labs and other clinics should have strict performance measurement systems.
21. Learning outcomes should be measurable
22. An assessment appeals system should work in practice
23. Performance-related pay should be implemented, based on research excellence, international impact, and other factors
24. Staff professional development must be prioritised.
25. A clearer series of staff benchmarks needs to be set out. These benchmarks need to reflect reality and incentivise staff to use time to research, particularly on international topics.

26. Students' awareness about the appeal procedures related to grades must be increased as well as learning process and encouraging them to use the official letters of complaint instead of face-to-face communication with lecturers
27. Student engagement in the quality enhancement at programme level, as well as in terms of evaluation processes, must be increased.
28. The student self-government should be reformed to support students in all aspect of academic life, not only in extra-curriculum activities; Better schedule lecturers' consultation hours in order to give equal opportunities to all students;
29. Have a better structured, organized database of employers;
30. Diversify and separate the responsibilities of Career Support and students Support Departments, in order to better consult students on their career opportunities as well as communicate with current/future employers;
31. Increase and encourage the internationalization at the institution by providing much equal opportunities and information source to all students;
32. Support students and encourage to participate in a local as well as international scientific conferences
33. Equally give chance all students to use free of charge English classes, not only to students from the student self-government
34. Ensure better adapted environment and learning resources for students with special needs
35. Support all administrative staff being able to consult students in their professional field
36. Strengthen cooperation with economic agents
37. Develop mechanisms to ensure that research also focuses on regional and international dimensions
38. Actually use all prescribed mechanisms to motivate academic staff
39. Align the strategic objectives for improving the quality of research and internationalization with the relevant budget funds
40. Regularly offer professional development activities to academic staff in order to improve their scientific qualification
41. Develop mechanisms to increase the number of publications in high citation index and impact factor journals
42. Develop and implement more effective mechanisms for involving students in scientific activities
43. Strengthen cooperation with European universities, including in the area of joint research
44. Strengthen cooperation with international educational/research foundations
45. Make greater use of mechanisms to attract young qualified academic personnel
46. Focus on qualitative assessment of scientific activities, comprehensive analysis and development of individual recommendations;
47. Carry out assessment and analysis with the active involvement of all responsible structural units
48. Library Personnel should provide more information about international online libraries and how to use them to the students and academic staff. For this purpose, library staff should be trained in this field.
49. The computer bank and the operating systems (Windows 7) need to be updated.
50. The university should increase capital, diversify sources thereof, and change strategic objectives to match capital limits;
51. The institution should increase the research budget.
52. Oversight mechanisms must be improved and reorganised.
53. Greater dissemination and awareness of the mission statement is advisable

Summary of Suggestions

1. Involving stakeholders from other institutions that have been successful in creating and implementing strategic plans akin to what is desired is certainly a good plan of action
2. Ensure that the academic appeals system includes grades to any assessment methods, not only to the examination.
3. The awareness of the students should be raised regarding the possibilities of providing feedback towards the development of educational programmes
4. It is desirable that the university to provide all classrooms with air conditioning systems
5. Replace the current student self-government with a new body.

Summary of Best Practices

1. Student satisfaction with the programmes, and with the courses, is very good. However, this may be because they are not aware of how the programmes could be improved, and it may also be influenced by the fact that very few students fail the programme, which is certainly not ideal, because it indicates low standards and that the programme is too easy.
2. The motivation of teachers and the staff in general is also to be commended.
3. The practical focus of the education is quite striking and should be commended.

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	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.1	Mission of HEI	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2	Strategic development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Organizational structure and management of HEI	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.1	Organizational structure and management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.2	Internal quality assurance mechanisms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.3	Observing principles of ethics and integrity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Educational Programmes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.1	Design and development of educational programmes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.2	Structure and content of educational programmes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.3	Assessment of learning outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Staff of the HEI	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.1	Staff management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2	Academic/Scientific and invited Staff workload	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Students and their support services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.1	The Rule for obtaining and changing student status, the recognition of education, and student rights	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.2	Student support services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Research, development and/or other creative work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.1	Research activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.2	Research support and internationalization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6.3	Evaluation of research activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7	Material, information and financial resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.1	Material resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.2	Library resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.3	Information resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.4	Financial resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signature of expert panel members

1. Ciarán Burke (Chair) 
2. Gocha Tutberidze (Member) 
3. David Maisuradze (Member) 
4. Erekle Chigogidze (Member) 
5. Tinatin Pavliashvili (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

GTUNI's mission statement defines its role locally and internationally (albeit the latter only to a limited extent). However, it should be noted that the panel's research revealed that the entire content of the mission statement was greatly at odds with reality.

The desiderata of creating active members of society, facilitating students' development, and serving the labour market were certainly of relevance. However, knowledge creation can only be achieved through adequate investment in excellent research, and this did not seem to be a priority in reality.

Staff at senior levels seemed to be aware of the university's mission, which was described as having several foci, namely: (1) high quality education based on modern trends in research and teaching; (2) student-oriented, democratic values, allowing everyone to realise their potential; (3) internationalisation (of both the academic staff and the university itself); (4) making a contribution to society in terms of fostering life-long learning; and (5) providing support mechanisms for student-oriented education. However, it is to be noted that there is a strong divergence between some of these mission principles, notably numbers (1) and (3) and the practice of the university, where research and internationalisation do not receive much attention or investment.

The university identifies itself as having a number of unique selling points, both in the documentation submitted and during interviews with staff. These included the fact that it is a small university with good infrastructure; individual attention is paid to each student and they get good contact with staff; they have a practice-oriented teaching process; they employ practitioners; and they provide internships for students. These points undoubtedly reflect reality.

Each faculty works out its education and scientific profile on the basis, principally, of the needs of the labour market. Programmes are elaborated on the basis of the needs set out by the deans, the faculty council, the academic council, and the students.

Priorities for the country (Georgia) are taken into account in assessing changes to existing programmes and new programmes.

Knowledge of the university's mission and strategy was patchy amongst staff, and poor amongst the students. While it was noted in the minutes of the strategic planning group that a small number of students were involved in the elaboration of the mission and strategy of the university, the vast majority of students did not seem to have been involved in their elaboration in practice. This raises concerns of a dissonance between the vast bulk of the students – who were largely ignorant and ill-informed – and a privileged few, who may gain influence and advantages. This perception was born out by interviews with the student self-government, where it seemed as though its members were benefitting from an exaggerated share of international conference activities, to the detriment of other students.

Evidences/indicators

- SER
 - 2019-2025 Strategic development plan
 - 2019-2021 Action plan
 - The mechanisms for supporting scientific and research activities
 - Strategy for development of research activities
 - Competition Statute for funding specific scientific-research project
 - Research of student satisfaction with the support of scientific and creative initiatives
 - Mechanisms of attracting of young employees
 - Internationalization Policy
 - Joint research/creative activities and cooperation with international partners
 - Brief description of current research-scientific activities
 - Reports on research activities
 - Publication lists of scientific staff
- Interviews during the Site visit

Recommendations:

- It is absolutely essential that the mission statement reflects the strategy development in practice, and the budget allocation to areas that are deemed to be priorities.
- The area of knowledge creation (via excellent research) requires additional attention.
- The characteristics of the HEI should reflect the on-the-ground reality and not some abstract perspective.
- Greater dissemination and awareness of the mission statement is advisable.

Suggestions:

- Involving stakeholders from other institutions that have been successful in creating and implementing strategic plans akin to what is desired is certainly a good plan of action

Best Practices (if applicable):

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 an action plans (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

The HEI has a strategic development (7-year) and an action plan (3-year) in place. GTUNI contributes to the development of the society, shares with the society the knowledge gathered in the institution, and facilitates lifelong learning, though only up to a point. The knowledge gathered in the institution is published in for-profit journals requiring subscription, and even payment for article publications, and does not include high-quality internationally rated research.

The GTUNI strategic plan is generally inadequate for the purposes of achieving the HEI's goals, particularly with regard to internationalisation and fostering research. It also reflects something approaching a lack of joined-up thinking in terms of planning. The budgetary allocations for fields such as internationalisation are clearly insufficient to achieve the stated goals. Moreover, in terms of time-bound and measurable outcomes, while GTUNI has elaborated Strategic Development plan 2019-2025, the description of this plan in the SER (pp 11-18) reveals a vague outline, with certain parameters (such as monitoring) quite well elaborated, but others (such as finance) clearly overly optimistic and underdeveloped. Hopefully, regular monitoring will reveal these to be insufficiently developed, but it remains to be seen.

The elaboration of the university's strategy was described by staff as a 'difficult' process by senior staff. For the elaboration of the previous strategy (from 2017 to 2023), a working group was established, including the quality assurance committee, the university administration, the heads of programmes, the students and relevant employers. The outcomes of this working group were submitted to all staff members. However during interviews, certain groups, particularly students, though also some staff, displayed only patchy knowledge of the strategy. This reflects the lack of a clear command structure and strategic plan to involve and inform all stakeholders.

The HEI's goals are clearly based on its mission and the priorities of its activities. However, given the tiny amount of money allocated to staff development, internationalisation and research, they are not likely to be achievable in the time allocated.

The methodology crafted for drafting strategic development and action plans was mixed in nature, relying on a variety of sources and stakeholders, including a frequent use of questionnaires. However, in practice, problems were observed in terms of the implementation, which revealed themselves via interviews, where questions and contradictions that arose in the submitted documentation were revealed.

GTUNI has "Monitoring Mechanisms for Implementation of Strategic Development and Action plans" (the rector's Order No01-01/58 from 06.09.2018), which was submitted for the authorization. However, the panel has concluded that the evaluation mechanisms are insufficient. According to the staff, it was these mechanisms that identified the shortcomings that were envisaged and reflected in 2019-2025 strategy. Interviews placed repeated emphasis on quality enhancement mechanisms, though their workings in practice were somewhat questionable. This is part of an overall and rather confusing monitoring apparatus in place at the university. However, the panel concluded that the monitoring mechanisms in place at the university were wholly ineffective, given that even the panel's short time to evaluate the university revealed that the strategy was not capable of meaningful implementation in key areas, which should have been revealed by the multiple layers of monitoring present at the university. If monitoring is to be effective, it must spot obvious flaws in reasoning, budget, and results. This does not appear to be the case.

Improvement of the management and accountability mechanisms represents a strategic priority of GTUNI and is given in the 2019-2025 Strategic Development Plan (Chapter 7), in particular: Goal 1.

Improvement of quality of institutional development and increase of civil responsibility (23-24pp) and Goal 2. Development of effective system for staff management and professional development (27-30pp). Updated documents of GTUNI "Staff Management Policy" and "Management efficiency monitoring mechanisms and evaluation system" and others serve for the same goal. It is commendable that the university has spotted these issues and has identified them as areas for improvement. However, as things stand at the time of the evaluation, the panel is of the opinion that these mechanisms are not working well. The fact that such a confused picture emerged of overlapping responsibilities from various staff is evidence of same.

The HEI has a 3-year action plan in place, to clearly describe future activities, sets timeframes for their implementation together with performance criteria and recourses needed for implementation. In order to achieve the goals defined by the strategic plan, GTUNI has defined 39 realistic and achievable tasks to be implemented during the following 7 years. Some of these are incorporated into the action plan. It is noted in p. 13 of the SER that on the basis of evaluation of the previous action plan (ending in 2018), a number priorities need to be followed, including that the budget needs to reflect the strategic goals. However, this does not seem to have happened.

Evidences/indicators

- SER
- 2019-2025 Strategic development plan
- 2019-2021 Action plan
- The mechanisms for supporting scientific and research activities
- Strategy for development of research activities
- Competition Statute for funding specific scientific-research project
- Research of student satisfaction with the support of scientific and creative initiatives
- Mechanisms of attracting of young employees
- Internationalization Policy
- Joint research/creative activities and cooperation with international partners
- Brief description of current research-scientific activities
- Reports on research activities
- Publication lists of scientific staff
- Interviews during the Site visit

Recommendations:

- The university's strategy and action plan require significant revision to ensure that the desired outcomes may be achieved within the set time limits.
- Effective oversight and evaluation mechanisms must be established to spot faults and non-compliance as they arise.
- Management and accountability mechanisms must be improved.

Suggestions:

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

The university's organisational structure does not ensure the effective implementation of the goals and activities set out in its strategic plan. This is evidenced by the large gap between strategic objectives and budget allocations for these objectives. This reflects a lack of joined-up thinking and a lack of effective communication between departments.

The functions and responsibilities of structural units of the university are insufficiently clearly defined and divided. Examples include the academic council reviewing (and potentially revising) decisions of the disciplinary commission. Moreover, the interplay between faculty-level quality assurance and university-level quality assurance is unclear, while many staff members seem to have multiple responsibilities and are poorly informed about the university's strategic direction.

The university's action plan is monitored once a year, and the academic council is involved on a quarterly basis, reading and approving quarterly updates. The academic council also monitors teaching programmes.

The SER makes it clear (p. 20) that GTUNI believes that procedures for election/appointment of the management bodies of HEI are transparent, equitable, and in line with legislation. This takes into account expediency, equity, equality and transparency, as well as promoting a competence and merit-based approach. The panel's interviews did not reveal this process to be faulty. It appears to work fairly well.

There is a career development service for students, in which students' suggestions and concerns are taken into account.

The university has a code of conduct, which is on the university's website and on many noticeboards in the university building. The professors are also responsible for sharing it. However, when staff were questioned about the content of the code, they could not reproduce it. As such, the mechanism for creating awareness is not effective.

Each faculty works out its education and scientific profile on the basis, principally, of the needs of the labour market. Programmes are elaborated on the basis of the needs set out by the deans, the faculty council, the academic council, and the students.

Departments are responsible for the attraction of highly qualified personnel as staff. As such, competitions are held to attract individuals from other universities, where doctoral students are active

One of the programmes in the school of business was recently cancelled, as there was only one enrolment in the programme. It was therefore the decision of the faculty council not to present it for accreditation.

Heads of educational programmes receive training to make sure that the programmes reach sectoral benchmarks.

The university management uses modern technologies, and maintains a registry. There are also some measures in place toward risk mitigation, though this does not constitute a risk mitigation registry in line with the highest standards.

The university's efforts to elaborate an internationalisation policy are clear, and have resulted in some agreements with institutions abroad, and participation in some international initiatives (Tempus, et cetera). However, a lack of joined up thinking is evident, since the budget allocation for such activities is so meagre that meaningful achievement of real internationalisation is not achievable. Also, worryingly, certain students seem to receive preferential treatment with regard to opportunities that are available (the head of the student self-government told the panel during interview that he took part in about 10 international activities (conferences, trainings etc) while most students did not partake in any such activities, and were not aware of them.

Evidences/indicators

- SER
- 2019-2025 Strategic development plan
- 2019-2021 Action plan
- The mechanisms for supporting scientific and research activities
- Strategy for development of research activities
- Competition Statute for funding specific scientific-research project
- Research of student satisfaction with the support of scientific and creative initiatives
- Mechanisms of attracting of young employees
- Internationalization Policy
- Joint research/creative activities and cooperation with international partners
- Brief description of current research-scientific activities
- Reports on research activities
- Publication lists of scientific staff
- Interviews during the Site visit

Recommendations:

- Additional resources must immediately be committed towards internationalisation.
- Oversight mechanisms must be improved and reorganised.
- Greater awareness of the university's strategy must be fostered, with buy-in from all stakeholders.

Suggestions:

Best Practices (if applicable):

Evaluation

- Complies with requirements
- Substantially complies with requirements
- Partially complies with requirements
- Does not comply with requirements

2.2 Internal Quality Assurance Mechanisms

- 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.
- 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

While GTUNI has developed an adequate quality assurance apparatus on paper, in reality, there are serious problems with its implementation in practice. The panel's questions revealed that when issues were raised by internal quality assurance with various departments, little happened in practice, and there was little accountability. The only changes seem to have come about as a result of external evaluations.

There are some exceptions to the above; one lecturer was fired as a result of repeated student complaints via questionnaires, but even this is somewhat problematic, as it appears as though these questionnaires were entirely anonymous, denying the individual in question basic principles of natural justice. When the panel asked for additional information, it was not provided.

As noted, the above does not imply that quality assurance measures are not in place, merely that they do not seem to result in concrete action. There are well developed structural measures. However, the communication between the faculty-level QA and university-level QA is sub-par. Leadership at GTUNI is clearly not taking strategic decisions based on regular input by the QA services.

Problems occurred during data analysis for the SER. This was attributed in interviews to the fact that this had never been conducted before; indicators and benchmarks were cited as weaknesses of the previous strategy.

The methodology of the SER involved a combination of direct and indirect methods. A clear attempt was made to outline best practices, and to take an evidence-based approach. Questionnaires were used, with the elaboration of questionnaires being the responsibility of the sub-groups assigned to each standard. Each questionnaire was 'piloted' before being presented. The structure of the questionnaires was based on examples from Tbilisi State University and questionnaires from Lithuania.

However, problems were identified with this process, as the data collection process was not systematic. This is not reflective of an assiduous attention to detail. The university blamed this issue on the fact that they were not afforded sufficient time to prepare.

Another problem relates to the representativeness of the persons chosen to participate in the process. For example, those students who participated seem to have been chosen on the basis of academic excellence. This hardly represents an accurate cross-section of the student body. Also, the evaluation of the academic programmes did not result in any being cancelled. Rather, two were unconditionally accredited, while all have been updated. It was admitted by staff that it was the external factor of impending authorisation – rather than internal factors – that drove the modifications that did occur.

On the basis of the above, it seems that internal evaluation procedures within the university do not have much effect. When this point was made by the panel to staff, we were told "students may not know what is good for them". Rather, the recommendations of prospective employers were prioritised.

The measurement standards used for self-evaluation of staff were somewhat opaque. Multiple criteria seem to be taken into account, including academic output, teaching, research and development, and administrative activities. However, the weighting system was not easily comprehensible. Annex 39 is largely focussed on teaching, for example, though here, the criteria used are different from those used to assess research. It was also slightly unclear whether peer review takes place in practice. There does not seem to be a periodic review of the standards used.

The recommendations of the internal quality assurance personnel are not implemented as a matter of course by the academic council. Rather, there is a discussion. It is not a 'rubber stamp' procedure.

In terms of planning with regard to the student body, at interview, the university revealed itself to be a rather reactive actor, rather than a pro-active one. Declining student numbers had not been addressed,

and were blamed on the economic downturn, while the declining budget was not rectified through income diversification, limiting the choice of services available.

The performance evaluation system for the HEI's staff and monitoring mechanisms for students' academic performance are clearly not up to the highest standards. Most obviously, with regard to staff, the meagre academic output in terms of publication does not seem to count against them, indicating that the monitoring process is not working.

With regard to students, it should be noted that academic performance is monitored regularly, at the end of each semester, it is compared with the Gauss Scheme and the divergences are analyzed. The results of the analysis are reviewed with the academic staff on the individual meetings. The number of students evaluated with non-satisfactory grade equals 10% in each semester. However, the fact that students' academic performance is not properly monitored is evident from the fact that no cases of plagiarism have ever been detected, and that students do not seem to fail courses. Subsequent to the evaluation, the panel was furnished with a document by GTUNI stating that "At the first stage, 77 MA theses were checked for plagiarism [on the basis of software that has been in place since 2018], acceptable limit of plagiarism was exceeded in 10% of cases. The software enables us to confirm the plagiarism, as a result of this, the theses are amended respectively." This completely contradicts what the panel was told at interview. Moreover, the appropriate remedy for plagiarism (beyond a very generous 10% margin) is not rectification. Students should be penalised in such circumstances in order to dissuade others from attempting such chicanery.

During the interview with members of the academic council, the panel could not get a convincing answer regarding procedures in cases of plagiarism: It was said that there is a plagiarism commission that negotiates concrete cases and sends the results to academic council, but with what goal and by whom the final decision is made could not be answered unequivocally. It was also mentioned that before the implementation of URKUND, that the supervisor of the master's thesis was responsible for identifying cases of plagiarism, which is clearly far from ideal.

Furthermore, in an interview with representatives of the quality assurance department, it was emphasized that there have been no plagiarism cases so far: "students know the code of ethics very well and are aware of their responsibility". This sort of self-policing is worrying.

Evidences/indicators

- SER
- 2019-2025 Strategic development plan
- 2019-2021 Action plan
- The mechanisms for supporting scientific and research activities
- Strategy for development of research activities
- Competition Statute for funding specific scientific-research project
- Research of student satisfaction with the support of scientific and creative initiatives
- Mechanisms of attracting of young employees
- Internationalization Policy
- Joint research/creative activities and cooperation with international partners
- Brief description of current research-scientific activities
- Reports on research activities
- Publication lists of scientific staff
- Interviews during the Site visit

<p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new strategy needs to be put in place to improve the effectiveness and co-ordination of QA mechanisms. • Better monitoring mechanisms for staff evaluation need to be put in place.
<p>Suggestions:</p>
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p>
<p>Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements
<p>2.3. Observing Principles of Ethics and Integrity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ HEI has developed regulations and mechanisms that follow principles of ethics and integrity. Such regulations are publicly accessible. ○ Institution has implemented mechanisms for detecting plagiarism and its prevention. ○ HEI follows the principles of academic freedom.
<p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</p> <p>The university has a code of conduct, which is on the university’s website and on many noticeboards in the university building. The professors are also responsible for sharing it. However, when staff were questioned about the content of the code, they could not reproduce it. As such, the mechanism for creating awareness is not effective.</p> <p>A (separate) students’ Code of ethics was introduced to students when they first entered university, which was confirmed by students during the interview with the panel. While observing the facilities, the panel saw that this code of ethics was available for students in every public place, such as the café, the student halls, etc.</p> <p>With regard to plagiarism, it was not fully explained why the academic council is involved in the process as well as the disciplinary commission. This seems like a needless additional layer of complication, as it is not just a rubber stamp, and seems empowered to reverse disciplinary decisions. With regard to plagiarism, it is clear that the process is not working properly in any event, since there do not seem to have been any instances in which individuals were sanctioned for plagiarism. While the university invested in relatively recent software (2018) on this topic, this does not seem to have improved matters.</p> <p>The above is very important, as statistically, plagiarism is likely to have occurred at some point.</p> <p>Students are aware of plagiarism and they understand the sanctions that may be taken in case of plagiarism. However, while plagiarism was mentioned in case of the thesis writing process, students did not mention anything about the learning process, homework or presentations. Further, as noted above, the checking process for plagiarism is plainly ineffective, since no cases have ever been detected.</p> <p>As noted above, with regard to plagiarism, it was not fully explained why the academic council is involved in the process as well as the disciplinary commission. This seems like a needless additional layer of</p>

complication, as it is not just a rubber stamp, and seems empowered to reverse disciplinary decisions. With regard to plagiarism, it is clear that the process is not working properly in any event, since there do not seem to have been any instances in which individuals were sanctioned for plagiarism. While the university invested in relatively recent software (2018) on this topic, this does not seem to have improved matters.

Academic freedom would seem to be largely ensured by the university's internal regulations. However, it is to be noted that some staff are teaching at other universities and seem to publish on the basis of these affiliations rather than those with GTUNI.

Students did not seem familiar with the concept or consequences of academic freedom during interviews.

Evidences/indicators

- SER
- 2019-2025 Strategic development plan
- 2019-2021 Action plan
- The mechanisms for supporting scientific and research activities
- Strategy for development of research activities
- Competition Statute for funding specific scientific-research project
- Research of student satisfaction with the support of scientific and creative initiatives
- Mechanisms of attracting of young employees
- Internationalization Policy
- Joint research/creative activities and cooperation with international partners
- Brief description of current research-scientific activities
- Reports on research activities
- Publication lists of scientific staff
- Interviews during the Site visit
- Document on Finding and Sanctions in Case of Plagiarism
- Code of conduct

Recommendations:

- Every piece of written work over 5,000 words, or everything to be published (by staff or students), should be checked electronically for plagiarism.
- A check should be performed to make sure the new anti-plagiarism software (URKUND) and the way in which it is used by GTUNI meets international standards, including the threshold (percentage), how it is calculated, and the publications against which it is tested, as well as data protection issues.
- Staff and students should be required to sign the code of ethics and conduct on their first day, and should attend a seminar on this topic.

Suggestions:

Best Practices (if applicable):

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 defined policy for planning, designing, implementing and developing educational programmes.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

In order to evaluate the university's compliance with the appropriate requirements, the following documents were analyzed:

- (i) methodology for planning, designing and development of educational programmes;
- (ii) labour market, student, alumni, employer surveys and analysis;
- (iii) detailed notes based on the results of the various interviews undertaken.

According to the current authorization standards, there should be specific procedures for programme approval, amendment and annulment, and the process of programme development should represent a collaborative process, involving the input of different stakeholders based on identified labour market needs. Although GTUNI has elaborated a methodology for the planning, design and development of educational programmes, in practice, many representatives of the university and other relevant stakeholders do not clearly understand, or are not at all familiar with, the procedures illustrated in the methodology, or do not follow those procedures. By way of example, during the interviews conducted by the panel, various representatives of the HEI underlined that they sometimes follow labour market requirements, but also follow educational market requirements. It is worth noting that, on the educational market there might be requirements for certain qualifications that are not useful on the labour market, or that the labor market may become overloaded with specialists who possess the same degree. During interviews, representatives of GTUNI highlighted that they have cancelled the educational programme in Recreational Tourism because the small number of students were selecting it and the programme was not sustaining itself. This is indicative of poor surveying practices concerning demand.

Stakeholders are involved in the development of educational programmes, albeit only to a limited degree. Students were observed to be passive participants, rarely proposing the new ideas, but they did underline that certain ideas that they had initiated were supported by the HEI. By way of example, additional classes were provided in Business English, while in one of the subjects, the lecturer was changed due to the students' repeated complaints. When questioned at interview, their ideas concerning the development of programmes were rudimentary, though they did appreciate the strong practice-based approach prevalent in the university. However, at the same time, the students highlighted the need for a greater degree of internationalization, for more subjects to be taught in English and other foreign languages, and for better organisational learning classes.

Alumni mentioned that they had certain ideas regarding the educational programmes, but that these ideas had not been realised. Invited and academic staff indicated that their ideas had been taken into account, however. Employers mentioned that their ideas are taken into consideration by the HEI. For example, representatives of the Court of Appeal highlighted that the memorandum that exists between the HEI and the Court of Appeals contains provisions regarding cooperation on drafting curricula: the HEI sends curricula to the judges asks them to comment and provide feedback. It seems as though this results in practical improvements. By way of example, one piece of feedback resulted in the creation of a subject dealing with mediation.

During the interview, students and academic staff mentioned that students were able to select basic subjects only after certain prerequisites pertaining to these subjects had been fulfilled. The head of the educational programmes clarified that students who are in arrears concerning their student fees, but who pay in the middle of the semester and restore temporarily cancelled student status will be able to the finish the semester only if there are a sufficient number of weeks left for them to gain the relevant education from the studies. However, what this means in practice was not entirely clear.

Unfortunately, most of the students' initiatives implemented by the HEI were less related to educational activities than to practical issues. For example, elevators were added to the building, food facilities were renovated. Such things are not unimportant, but they do not go to the root of improving the university's educational offerings.

The overall development of the educational programmes is seemingly based on the labour market requirements and on the results of students and alumni satisfaction surveys. Although there is no system of measurement for the purposes of checking the balance of the employment rate against the qualification obtained, students and alumni both mentioned that they received adequate practical experience and are competitive on the labour market. Though some of the employers which were present during the interview gave credits to the students of the HEI for their practice (as it forms part of their studies), others mentioned that they have hired students of HEI as interns and as permanent employees, for instance, Media Holding Kvira, Tbilisi City Court, Tbilisi Court of Appeals, etc.

During the interviews, the representatives of the HEI mentioned that they have plans to implement subjects in the English language and also to create new programmes that will be fully executed in English. Internationalization of the educational programmes is an ongoing challenge for the HEI, and although there are some positive signs (for example, international conferences are held, books are translated from English to Georgian, short classes with participation of foreign professors are held) they do not ensure the relevance of the educational programmes to the constantly changing environment.

In addition, it should be said that the panel viewed many of these new initiatives with some skepticism, since they seem to have been commenced after the point at which it was evident that the authorisation process would take place, with such plans possibly being concocted to impress the panel rather than as part of the university's long-term independent plans. GTUNI replied to this skepticism only by citing initiatives from late 2018 and early 2019, which does not assuage the panel's concerns.

Evidences/indicators

- Methodology for planning, designing and development of educational programmes;
- Labor market analysis;
- Student, alumni, employer satisfaction surveys;
- Interview results

Recommendations:

- The main indicator for developing the educational programme should be labour market requirements, otherwise it will increase the chances for the students to stay unemployed or to work in different fields from those in which they have qualified;
- Internationalization should be increased with adding new subjects taught in English and other European languages, while the budget for such activities should be substantially increased;
- An alumni tracer study regarding career and academic development should be conducted.

Suggestions:

- The awareness of the students should be raised regarding the possibilities of providing feedback towards the development of educational programmes

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

The programme aims and learning outcomes are clearly stated. However, it is to be noted that the programme aims are not consistent with the learning outcomes. The educational programmes should include a specific correlation between programme aims and learning outcomes, in order to ensure that the latter are measurable and achievable. Furthermore, programme aims consist of theoretical, practical and research goals but at the same time these goals should be based on the syllabi and labour market requirements. However, as was mentioned in the previous sub-chapter, it would seem that educational programmes are more concentrated on the requirements of the educational market than on the needs of the labour market. This revealed itself to be the case during interviews, and was notable, particularly in relation to law programmes. This choice of modus operandi will likely affect the acquisition of practical skills by the students.

The HEI has several laboratories and clinics. These include, for example, a Legal Clinics, a Psychology Cabinet, a Tele and Radio Laboratory, and a Criminalistics Lab, which provide students with the relevant practical skills. However, these clinics do not seem to have strict performance assessment measures, and therefore, while the innovation of such initiatives is to be praised, it is difficult to say how the skills obtained in these practical facilities support students' ability to obtain employment or career development. The Legal Clinic provides a free service to the citizens and with this serves the university's broader aim of benefiting the society at large.

At the same time, although GTUNI is a teaching university, after studying the theses submitted for the purposes of obtaining a master's degree, it is apparent that the research aims of the educational programmes are not executed properly. Though there are international conferences held, and although the proceedings of the latter are published, and the university publishes books and various periodicals, the interview results showed that there were almost no examples of publishing the articles in international impact factor journal which would be indexed in SCOPUS or in other highly ranked citation systems. This is a lamentable state of affairs. The HEI has implemented an electronic system of plagiarism detection, which will have a positive affect on the research aims of the educational programmes. However, it is to be noted that no case of plagiarism has ever been detected at the university. This reflects a lack of adequate controls in the past, and it remains to be seen whether the new system will represent an improvement.

The HEI, when creating educational programmes, follows current legislation and ECTS guidelines. The programmes provide students with the opportunities to elect non-compulsory components of the educational programme. Teaching and learning methods in the syllabi reflect specifics of the field and support achievement of learning outcomes of the programme. The catalogue of the educational programmes is published on the web-page and is accessible to all interested parties. However, it does not seem that the learning outcomes are fully in line with the qualifications framework.

The educational programmes provide students with the opportunities to be involved in the individualized programmes with the appropriate formats and conditions with assuming the special educational needs and different academic readiness. Students highlighted that HEI was taking into account all their needs with including their social status and was doing its best to support their studies. This was borne out by interviews, where students repeatedly highlighted the fact that in circumstances in which they required

individualised programmes, accommodations were made to this end. There did not seem to be a procedure in place, but the attitude of staff was clear – they were prepared to be flexible. This results in a de facto situation that is satisfactory. However, having clear procedures in this regard would be preferable.

Evidences/indicators

- Educational programme;
- Syllabi;
- Academic Calendar;
- Catalogue of educational programmes;
- Labor market analysis;
- Student, alumni, employer satisfaction surveys;
- Interview results

Recommendations:

- The programme aims and learning outcome should be in accordance to each other;
- The activities provided by the educational programmes should ensure implementation of the learning outcomes;
- The labs and other clinics should have strict performance measurable systems.

Suggestions:

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

GTUNI has conducted a number of surveys, which aim to assess the learning outcomes of the educational programmes, but there is a weak connection in showing whether students have in fact achieved the learning outcomes attributed to the specific educational programmes. For example, a high number of involvement of students in specific clinics doesn't necessarily mean that they will continue working in the specific direction upon which the clinic is focussed, while working for the Public Service Hall doesn't automatically mean that the students are using their legal skills there.

The assessment system for assessing student learning is transparent and ensures a fair approach overall. It consists of questionnaires, practical cases, essays, debates and other ways for evaluating students' performance. Students are informed regarding the assessment system. It seems to be generally compliant with the relevant legal acts in Georgia.

Though the HEI has an assessment appeals system in place, there is no practical example of it being used. This is surprising fact because students are generally known to occasionally question the grades received. In the panel's opinion, this is likely to signal that the appeals system is available only in theory. In practice, the system is not effective, or appeals are conducted in a more non-formal way.

Other topics concerning the assessment of the learning outcomes (for example, grading) seem broadly consistent with the current legislation.

Evidences/indicators

- Educational programme;
- Syllabi;
- Student, alumni, employer satisfaction surveys;
- Assessment Rule of the Learning Outcomes;
- The Rule on Holding the Exams;
- Interview results;

Recommendations:

- Learning outcomes should be measurable
- Assessment appellation system should work in practice

Suggestions:

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

- HEI has staff management policy and procedures that ensure the implementation of educational process and other activities defined in its strategic plan.
- HEI ensures the employment of qualified academic/scientific/invited/administrative/ support staff.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

Academic staff recruitment seems to comply with all relevant legislative requirements. However, there is no clear legal regime governing the employment of administrative staff, and it is somewhat unclear how this proceeds. There is a new competition procedure for invited personnel, but this seems to be a novelty at the university.

Quality assurance and monitoring concerning staff activities seems to involve the academic council, though the reason for this was not made entirely clear.

Every annual report covers the output of scientific research by the staff, carried out by each chair for each individual staff member, and then aggregated. However, the output is not at an adequate level, and the monitoring does not seem to have resulted in this being rectified.

The internal regulations provide that the staff member in charge of each faculty must be a specialist in this area, and must possess a doctorate.

The criteria cited to assess the scientific output of permanent and temporary staff did not seem to concord with reality. The panel were told during interviews that the permanent staff worked a total of 1800 hours, divided into 70% teaching, 20% research, and 10% administration. However, this would represent 360 hours of research, meaning 9 weeks per year. The output observed was simply not at this level.

The measurement standards used for self-evaluation of staff were somewhat opaque. Multiple criteria seem to be taken into account, including academic output, teaching, research and development, and administrative activities. However, the weighting system was not easily comprehensible. Annex 39 is largely focused on teaching, for example, though here, the criteria used are different from those used to assess research. It was also slightly unclear whether peer review takes place in practice.

Academic staff receive very little encouragement. Although bonuses are foreseen for excellent research, these are not awarded in practice. However, some funding is awarded for participation in international conferences, though this amounts to only 10,000 GEL per year according to the budget.

Staff are provided with money if academic journals request a fee for publishing articles. However, the uptake on this is low. Only about 1% of staff actually do it.

The heads of departments are appointed on the basis of competitive programmes; criteria are pre-defined, and experience and qualifications are necessary in the relevant subject areas.

Departments are responsible for the attraction of highly qualified personnel as staff. As such, competitions are held to attract individuals from other universities, where doctoral students are active.

Professional development of staff does not seem to be a priority. Little time and resources have been spent on this area. While a seminar on scientific skills was held in the past year, it was a brief event, and seems to have been a one-off.

Staff satisfaction surveys seem to occur, albeit infrequently.

GTUNI considers affiliation as one of the instruments for loyalty and encouragement of the academic staff. It is a constituting element of staff policy and HR management. Its aim is to create internal university competitive atmosphere, increase academic staff motivation and activeness. The affiliation of the academic staff to the university is voluntary. GTUNI has elaborated the rule on affiliation for the academic staff. Affiliated individuals are privileged by the university in the following way: University funds the textbooks/methodological materials and articles/publications; GTUNI covers the expenses for (fully or partially) participation in international forums/conferences for GTUNI students supervised by the affiliated academic staff (however, the uptake is meagre and the budget insufficient); GTUNI applies financial mechanism to encourage affiliated staff: one-time cash award, bonus, extra payments etc (however, in reality, such payments are not made); University funds (fully or partially) scientific/research work implemented by the affiliated individual (however, high quality journals do not generally operate on a pay-to-publish basis) (see SER p.51). On the basis of the foregoing, it may be said that the affiliation system does not work well in practice at GTUNI.

Evidences/indicators

- SER
- Syllabi
- Academic calendar
- 2019-2025 Strategic development plan
- 2019-2021 Action plan

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mechanisms for supporting scientific and research activities • Strategy for development of research activities • Competition Statute for funding specific scientific-research project • Research of student satisfaction with the support of scientific and creative initiatives • Mechanisms of attracting of young employees • Internationalization Policy • Joint research/creative activities and cooperation with international partners • Brief description of current research-scientific activities • Reports on research activities • Publication lists of scientific staff • Interviews during the Site visit
<p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance-related pay should be implemented, based on research excellence, international impact, and other factors • Staff professional development must be prioritised.
<p>Suggestions:</p>
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p>
<p>Evaluation</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Complies with requirements</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Substantially complies with requirements</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">X Partially complies with requirements</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Does not comply with requirements</p>
<p>4.2. Academic/Scientific and Invited Staff Workload</p>
<p>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</p>
<p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</p> <p>There seems to be a significant overlap between academic and administrative work, with many staff members fulfilling dual roles (such as the head of the computing service, who is also an academic). This raises questions about their ability to complete all tenets of multiple jobs to a high standard.</p> <p>It is not clear that GTUNI has a regularly (every semester) updated workload scheme including teaching/scientific/research/creative/performing and other workload. Rather, procedures and workload seem to be put in place and to endure for longer periods without much significant change.</p> <p>Every annual report covers the output of scientific research by the staff, carried out by each chair for each individual staff member, and then aggregated. However, the output is not at an adequate level, and the monitoring does not seem to have resulted in this being rectified.</p> <p>Although the current retention rate for academic staff is 96%, the target benchmark is 90%. This implies that the university wants to reduce the current retention rate. This was explained to the panel at interview. It was stated that the university would like to attract young personnel, because many of the staff are close to retirement age.</p>

Affiliated staff are obliged to work 9-5. This is unusual for academic staff, and may limit flexibility to conduct research. However, it also lessens their ability to teach in other universities. Affiliated staff are, however, allowed one day off per week, and are given a higher salary, and priority in financing their work. However, non-affiliated staff seem to publish just as much.

The criteria cited to assess the scientific output of permanent and temporary staff did not seem to concord with reality. The panel were told during interviews that the permanent staff worked a total of 1800 hours, divided into 70% teaching, 20% research, and 10% administration. However, this would represent 360 hours of research, meaning 9 weeks per year. The output observed was simply not at this level.

The measurement standards used for self-evaluation of staff were somewhat opaque. Multiple criteria seem to be taken into account, including academic output, teaching, research and development, and administrative activities. However, the weighting system was not easily comprehensible. Annex 39 is largely focussed on teaching, for example, though here, the criteria used are different from those used to assess research. It was also slightly unclear whether peer review takes place in practice.

While internationalisation is listed as amongst the university's priorities, staff mobility to international partners on a long-term basis is effectively unknown. The longest the panel heard of was one staff member who had spent one month in the Netherlands. Foreign language knowledge is optional.

Affiliation – or the prospect of affiliation – seems to serve as one of the principal mechanisms for support of academic personnel. Many non-affiliated and affiliated staff are also teaching in other universities, and they seem to publish work on the basis of this affiliation.

Staff/student ratios seem to fall within the limits prescribed by law.

Evidences/indicators

- SER
- Syllabi
- Academic calendar
- 2019-2025 Strategic development plan
- 2019-2021 Action plan
- The mechanisms for supporting scientific and research activities
- Strategy for development of research activities
- Competition Statute for funding specific scientific-research project
- Research of student satisfaction with the support of scientific and creative initiatives
- Mechanisms of attracting of young employees
- Internationalization Policy
- Joint research/creative activities and cooperation with international partners
- Brief description of current research-scientific activities
- Reports on research activities
- Publication lists of scientific staff
- Interviews during the Site visit

Recommendations:

- A clearer series of staff benchmarks needs to be set out. These benchmarks need to reflect reality and incentivise staff to use time to research, particularly on international topics.

Suggestions:
Best Practices (if applicable):
Evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements

5. Students and Their Support Services

HEI ensures the development of student-centred 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

The HEI has adopted regulations for the assignment, termination, suspension and mobility of students, which are written in a proper and clear way, as well as information concerning the granting scholarships and financial support. These documents are made publicly available on the university website, and most of the students confirmed having information about these documents and policies. Some students confirmed during the interview that they were aware of students having monthly scholarships. During the interviews, students mentioned having no problems obtaining recognition for past subjects while using mobility, while no instances were reported of being obliged to study a subject simultaneously with its prerequisite.

The agreement between students and the university is up-to-date and in accordance with the current legislation on education in Georgia. Students claimed to have had the opportunity to read their agreements, but they did not remember details and components thereof clearly.

A students' Code of ethics was introduced to students when they first entered university, which was confirmed by students during the interview with the panel. While observing the facilities, the panel saw that this code of ethics was available for students in every public place, such as the café, the student halls, etc.

The written appeals system provides regulations relating to examination grades and learning/academic process. In a document "Mechanism for the protection of students rights and lawful interest", it is indicated that the HEI's lawyer, together with the Dean, the Rector and the Pro-Rector, takes care of students' rights and their complaint letters, though during the interview, students never mentioned having communication with the lawyer or the Rector; they stated that they usually communicate with Dean's office in an unofficial way. According to the meetings conducted by the panel, only the academic staff were aware of the grades' appeal procedure. As noted above, this seems to indicate a serious gap between theory and practice.

If a student disagrees with their examination grade, they have three days to write a letter to the dean's office indicating the reasons of their appeal. However, when the panel asked students if they knew about the appeal system, one of students said they should write complaint letters to the Rector, which is not the correct answer. Other students did not disagree with the answer. Further, the appeal system does

not cover the grades on other assessments such as quizzes or presentations. Also during the interview, academic staff as well as students admitted that if a student is not satisfied with his/her grade, he/she usually addresses the teacher directly and negotiates on their grading. Due to this practice, both sides say they have never had official complaint. However, this procedure is not transparent and does not reflect best practices.

Two students from the student self-government are members of the Faculty Academic Council, representing a means through which they can contribute to promoting the students' rights and lawful interest. According to the members of the Council, student representatives are always welcome to raise any issue related to educational as well as extracurricular activities. However, the meetings conducted by the expert panel revealed that students are not involved in matters related to programme development (other than filling out a survey, the content of which students did not remember during the interview). During the interview sessions, the self-evaluation team and Academic Council confirmed that students were involved in the process of development of the mission and vision of the university. Two students from the student self-government should have made a survey among students, evaluated the results and delivered them to the self-evaluation team. However, when the panel asked students and other self-government members if they were involved in this process and survey, the answer was negative. Again, this reflects a worrying divergence between theory and practice.

The panel asked the student representatives of the student self-government to give examples of the last initiatives or points they raised; the answers indicated that the student representation at GTUNI is only focused on extracurricular activities. Also, there is a substantial problem of engagement and communication between students and their elected representatives: there is hardly any communication in order for the elected representatives to regularly gather information from students about their complaints and drawbacks in the learning process in order to create a better educational environment. University has high number (42% of total amount) of suspended students, though self-government did not take any steps in talking this problem generally, or supporting students.

More worrying still was the fact that a lot of the best opportunities open to students (participation at international conferences) seemed to be being monopolised by the student self-government. While most students had never attended an international conference, the president of the student self-government had attended ten of them. There was a visible lack of transparency with this body, and its representatives were dishonest and evasive during interviews.

Students are aware of plagiarism and they understand the sanctions that may be taken in case of plagiarism. However, while plagiarism was mentioned in case of the thesis writing process, students did not mention anything about the learning process, homework or presentations. Further, as noted above, the checking process for plagiarism is plainly ineffective, since no cases have ever been detected.

Evidences/indicators

- GTUNI Self-Evaluation Report;
- GTUNI document on Terms and Conditions for Learning/Education Process;
- GTUNI Mechanism for the Protection of Students Rights and Lawful Interest;
- GTUNI web-page;
- Terms and Conditions for conducting exams;
- Document on Finding and Sanctions in Case of Plagiarism;
- Interviews Conducted by the Expert Panel

Recommendations:

- Raise Students' awareness about the appeal procedures related to grades as well as learning process and encourage them to use the official letters of complaint instead of face-to-face communication with lecturers;
- Increase student engagement in the quality enhancement at program level, as well as in terms of evaluation process;
- Encourage self-government representatives to support students in all aspect of academic life, not only in extra-curriculum activities
- Raise students' awareness about the GTUNI Mission and Vision.

Suggestions:

- Ensure that the academic appeals system includes grades to any assessment methods, not only to the examination;
- Replace the current student self-government with a new body.

Best Practices (if applicable):

Practices, which prove to be exceptionally effective and which may become a benchmark or a model for other higher education institutions

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

The university has a student support service department, together with a career development department, which aims at helping students in planning their learning process and also organizes several extra-curricular activities. However, during the interview sessions, when panel asked students about the consultation on learning process, they answered that they usually go directly to the faculty Dean's Office to ask about any assistance in the learning and consultation process. During the interview sessions, the expert panel has learned that GTUNI used to have one student from prison with an individual learning programme and that the Dean's Office was organizing the whole process, while a course in Constitutional Law was planned individually for specific student. Hence, some of responsibilities of Career and Consultation support Department and Faculty Dean's office might be seen to overlap.

Consultation hours are published in the faculty Dean's office and are indicated in the syllabus. Students also mentioned when they want to see if professor/lecturer is available for the consultation, they go to the Dean's office, but they did not mention consultation schedule being negotiated with them. Concerning Master's programmes, in the Subject "Judicial Regulations for Banking", consultation hours were on Monday/Wednesday 14:00-16:00 PM, whereas lectures in this subject were on Mondays at 18:00 PM. It is to be noted that almost all masters students have jobs and are unlikely to be able to use these hours for consultation. This reflects a lack of proper planning.

The institution's policy states that they provide students' career support advice via a Careers and Students' Consultation Department. However, the obligations for Career Support and Consultation on Learning Processes are not structurally diversified. The university has career development activities, such as signing memorandums with different employers, such as the Georgian Bar Association, "Nikora Supermarkets", the House of Justice, the Appeals Court etc. During the interview sessions, bachelor students in Business Administration mentioned having meeting with representatives of "Nikora Supermarkets" and having participated in several Job fairs organized at GTUNI. Students also talked positively about the Institution being supportive and helping them to secure obligatory practice courses.

During the interview, the Career Support Service claimed to have constant communication with employers. They also mentioned having practice in gathering information about the future employers in a non-structured and unofficial way, via private connections and communication. On the other hand, when conducting interviews, employers admitted having intense communication concerning students' practice with the Faculty office, and not with the Career Support Department. Also, the University does not have a structured Database on current employers. The expert panel asked the HEI to provide such a database after the HEI confirmed having one; however, when GTUNI provided this data, it only consisted of the list of employers' official names. This reflects a glaring lacuna.

According to the meetings conducted by the panel, students occasionally receive news concerning available vacancies via mobile messages, Facebook pages and their University email. Students also confirmed receiving information about the meetings with employers and concerning internships. While

employers and stakeholders are engaged with the university in terms of internship opportunities and practice, the panel has learned during the site visit that the external partners are not engaged in programme development in a more holistic way. Only in the Journalism Programme, was one specialized course in Journalism added due to the employers' demands. The panel is therefore unsure to what extent the institution integrates the employers or their graduates in the process of designing and revising study programs in order to ensure that they continue to respond to the needs of the labour market and to be fit for employment requirements. Also, while University Administrative staff claimed that they conducted frequent surveys among employers, during the interview sessions, most employers could not recall participating in any surveys. The representative of Appeal Court remembered getting one but did not fill it out.

GTUNI alumni who attended interviews had relevant jobs to their university training. The HEI to have conducted intensive surveys among their students and alumni. GTUNI also provided the survey results for Alumni for the academic year 2018-2019, but during the interview session, alumni admitted being very passive in university surveys. One student, who graduated several years ago, had not participated in any survey. During the interview with alumni representatives, the panel found that in previous years, the University has adapted and developed English Language Classes in Business administration. The university also terminated the employment of one lecturer, due to anonymous complaints from the students.

GTUNI's mission states that it shall support internalization and the scientific potential for all students. However, this area is grossly underdeveloped. The HEI has an internalization policy and has participated in a very limited number of international projects such as ERASMUS +, VISEGRAD, and the Tempus programme. The university organizes internal scientific conferences and participates in external conferences organized by other HEIs, such as the 19th International Conference in Americanism held on 22th of May, 2018. Students receive information about conferences and exchange programmes via email and mobile messages, though during the interview session when the panel inquired whether any of the students present participated in any kind of exchange programme and scientific conference, the panel learned that none of the students present took part in any kind of international or local activity. Not one student from the group had participated in GTUNI's internal conference or International Exchange courses. The main reason which students provided was lack of English Language skills and they stated that they would like to have a higher level of English. To this end, the university has a Foreign Language Centre and one student from the student self-government is taking English Language classes free of charge. This case raises questions about the University's main mission giving democratic and equal opportunities to all students. During the interview, the self-government president presented information about his participation in 10 International Conferences and courses. This does not demonstrate an equal distribution of opportunities.

As gleaned during the interviews, the institution and the student self-government support students' involvement in extracurricular activities and initiatives, with which students are generally satisfied. These kinds of activities usually include different kind of sport and art competitions, intellectual games and site-visits to different regions for public lectures.

The Institution has a variety of forms of financial support in place. There are specific written criteria and step-by-step procedures to describe how the university evaluates students for the purposes of granting different kinds of scholarships and financial support, and the criteria that students have to meet in order to maintain their scholarships. GTUNI has two kinds of monthly scholarships, one for students who attain high academic results and another for special activities, such as outstanding sportspersons, etc. The university has a flexible payment method for all students, including low SES students. The university implemented a new initiative for students who suspended their status because of financial crises. The HEI provided a 30% discount on tuition fees for one year starting in September 2019. The university has structured scholarships/support mechanism for especially low SES students. The document "Support Mechanism for Low SES students" outlines four different support services, such as: 1. Discount for enrolled students with National Grants; 2. Discount for students who has high academic results/grades; 3. Different discounts for low SES students and 4. Other individual discounts. However, during the panel sessions, students were aware only about the monthly scholarships. Further, this document was developed and approved on 31st of December 2018. This is indicative of the fact that it may have been developed with authorisation in mind, rather than forming part of the university's broader long-term plans.

The university is only partially adapted to students with special needs. It does have an elevator and ramp for people with walking disabilities. However, the environment and learning resources are not adapted for people with hearing and visual impairments.

The university has an electronic system for centralizing grades and uploading learning materials. The HEI also has EBSCO electronic base, which is accessible on University's territory as well as outside it. Students and staff were informed, trained and given the passcode to the database, but during the site visit, the panel noticed that not all library staff could navigate and work with the EBSCO database, and that the staff were not professionally able to teach students how to use electronic journals.

Evidences/indicators

- SER;
- GTUNI Mechanism for the Protection of Students Rights and Lawful Interest;
- University Structure;
- Document on Career Support Service;
- Survey of Alumni of the year 2018-2019;
- GTUNI Internalization Policy;
- GTUNI web-page;
- Document on supporting of low SES students;
- Document on Granting Scholarships
- Excel document provided by GTUNI indicating the number of active & suspended students;
- List of Employers provided by GTUNI;
- Lecture Schedule of Master Course: "Judicial Regulations of Banking";
- Syllabus of the Master Course: "Judicial Regulations of Banking";
- Interview conducted by the Expert Panel.

Recommendations:

- Better schedule for lecturer's consultation hours in order to give equal opportunities to all students;
- Have better structured, organized database of employers;
- Diversify and separate responsibilities of Career Support and students Support Departments, in order to better consult students on their career opportunities as well as communicate with current/future employers;
- Increase and encourage the internationalization at the institution by providing much equal opportunities and information source to all students;
- Support students and encourage to participate in a local as well as international scientific conferences;
- Equally give chance all students to use free of charge English classes, not only to students from self-government;
- Ensure better adapted environment and learning resources for students with special needs;
- Support all administrative staff being able to consult students in their professional field;

Suggestions:

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

- HEI, based on its type and specifics of its fields, carries out research/creative activities.
- Ensuring the effectiveness of doctoral research supervision
- 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

GTUNI is a teaching university and does not conduct doctoral education programmes. However, one of the strategic goals of the university is "Educational and scientific work quality enhancement and internationalization". This includes continuous implementation of activities, such as: Planning and implementing scientific activities (conferences, seminars, round table); Supporting the publication of scientific proceedings monographs, scientific journal; Informing academic staff about planned scientific activities and support them with consultations on those activities as well as on the programs /projects offered by national and international scientific foundations; Increasing administrative and financial support of the academic staff to implement scientific activities (support the preparation of programs/projects).

Since 2011, GTUNI has been issuing Annual International Scientific Proceedings and an International scientific and practical journal 'Life and Law'. Every year, the university organizes scientific conferences, in which both academic and invited staff participate, while student conferences are also held. Materials of the conferences are published in the corresponding editions.

The university has developed a "Strategy for the development of research activities". All persons / structural units responsible for appropriate procedures are defined. The main implementors of GTUNI's scientific work are departments/programme directions, which, besides educational activities, carry out scientific work, and the academic staff. The scientific workload of the academic staff should compose a minimum of 20 % of his/her work activities carried out at the university. It means 360/8 hours to total hourly workload. However, during interviews, it became clear that many staff had little meaningful research output; it is therefore to be doubted whether this is being carried out in practice.

The university carries out fundamental, applied and operational research, the nature of which corresponds to the profile of GTUNI educational programs. The results of the research carried out are mainly integrated into the educational process of the university.

However, despite the fact, that according to the "Strategy for development of research activities" GTUNI is committed to "cooperate with other higher education institutions, research institutions, private and public organizations" to increase the efficiency of scientific activities, the direction of joint researches is relatively underrepresented: The GTUNI plans to conduct individual research activities with 4 concrete economic agents and one target group (general education schools), but the university could not provide evidence for planned concrete joint research activities with them. During the interviews, it was noted that agreements existed, but so far only at the oral level. Some documents were presented, but it is not clear that they are being followed in practice.

It should also be noted, that the university has memoranda of understanding with these economic agents, but only one of them (the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia) contains a clause providing for cooperation in the field of research.

According to the University's „Brief description of research-scientific activities“, the GTUNI is conducting individual research projects (according to the specifics of the chairs / faculties). At GTUNI there are two faculties, in 2017-2018 and 2018-2019, the two faculties want to have realized 8 research projects (which the university also emphasizes in this Argumentative Position), that is 2 research projects per year per faculty.. This is confirmed in Annex 53. It turns out that only a narrow circle of academic staff is involved in this area. This was confirmed during interviews. GTUNI has responded that the panel's conclusion "represents incorrect interpretation of the information provided in this document, in particular, we would like to explain that, firstly, the document describes not

individual research projects, but annual scientific researches of the academic department, which involve the entire academic staff of the department the second column of the document provides the data on project (topic of the year) head/heads. Due to the short description format, the document does not indicate the staff engaged in the research." However, this does not bear out either the strong impressions created during interviews or the typical practice of such research activities. The idea that "the entire academic staff of the department" are involved in every research project is misleading. It reinforces the panel's concern that they are not being supplied with entirely accurate information.

This assumption is also reinforced by the fact that number of the ongoing or planned annual scientific research of the departments identified as having priority for 2017-2019 (Annex 53) can also be found in other documents.

For example: according to Annex 53, topic "Innovative indicators for quality of life and their implementation perspectives in Georgia" is a project for 2018-2019. Project leader is Prof. D. Chagelishvili-Agladze. However:

- In "The Report of Scientific Activity and Professional Development of 2013-2014" among annual topics is among others "Innovative indicators for quality of life and their implementation perspectives in Georgia", project leader Prof. L. Chagelishvili and Prof. S. Tavartkiladze;
- In "The Report of Scientific Activity and Professional Development of 2014-2015" under annual topics is among others "Innovative indicators for quality of life and their implementation perspectives in Georgia", project leader Prof. K. Chagelishvili. In the same document are listed priority topics such as: "Innovative understanding for quality of life and their evaluation Indicators", project leader D. Kbiladze, and "Innovative indicators for quality of life and their implementation perspectives in Georgia - Macroeconomic Analysis", project leader L. Totladze;
- In "The Report of Scientific Activity and Professional Development of 2015-2016", In the field "Participation in International Grant Projects," among other things is to find: L. Totladze, "Innovative indicators for quality of life and their implementation Problems in Georgia," GTSU, 2014-2015. In the same document, in the field of Published Articles: D. Kbiladze, "Innovative understanding for quality of life and their evaluation Indicators", 2016.

The situation is similar for the following topics which, according to Annex 53, have priority for 2017-2019:

- "Forensic and Criminal Law aspects of international terrorism" – priority for 2018-2019 (also in Reports of 2013-2014 and 2014-2015)
- Tort law liabilities – priority for 2018-2019 (also in Reports of 2013-2014 and 2014-2015)
- Psychological aspects of student's personal values – priority for 2018-2019 (also in Reports of 2013-2014 and 2014-2015)
- Correspondence of media market with media education – priority for 2018-2019, project leader M. Vekua (also in Reports of 2013-2014 and 2014-2015, in Report of 2015-2016 Project with the title: "Aspects of Correspondence of media market with media education", project leader L. Kutubidze. Published as an article in 2015 in collection of scientific articles of GTUNI)

Furthermore, based on the reports on research activities and the publication lists of academic staff, we can conclude that the scientific researches are mainly oriented on national dimension and mostly do not provide contribution to scientific, social, economic, cultural development on regional or international level.

<p>Evidences/indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SER • 2019-2025 Strategic development plan • 2019-2021 Action plan • Strategy for development of research activities • Brief description of current research-scientific activities • Reports on research activities • Publication lists of scientific staff • Interviews during the Site visit
<p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen cooperation with economic agents • Develop mechanisms to ensure that research also focuses on regional and international dimensions
<p>Suggestions:</p>
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p>
<p>Evaluation</p> <p>Complies with requirements</p> <p>X Substantially complies with requirements</p> <p>Partially complies with requirements</p> <p>Does not comply with requirements</p>
<p>6.2. Research Support and Internationalization</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ HEI has an effective system in place for supporting research, development and creative activities ○ Attracting new staff and their involvement in research/arts-creative activities. ○ University works on internationalisation of research, development and creative activities.

GTUNI has developed „The mechanisms for supporting scientific and research activities “, in which all relevant directions are defined and described. According to this document, all structural units of the university are responsible for supporting scientific and research activities. To achieve this goal measures such as are envisaged: Motivating academic personnel for the implementation of scientific activities and the use of these activities in the educational process; Revealing, motivating and supporting students interested in research activities; Facilitate the enhancement of scientific qualifications of academic personnel; Gradual integration into international scientific-educational space.

However, it was discovered that even though, according to the documentation provided, one way of motivating staff (affiliated academic staff) is through a financial incentive mechanism, this has never been used. The main tool for supporting research activities was the possibility to publish articles in the university scientific journal and participate in conferences organized by the university.

Students' involvement in scientific and research activities is very low: "Research of student satisfaction with the support of scientific and creative initiatives" shows that only 50% of students are informed about scientific and creative activities, and the number of participants in scientific-practical events is 23%. the students surveyed, mainly, do not see the need to participate in these events, although they note that they know about both the university research book and conferences.

During the intervention, it was found that so far, the university has not offered any training for academic staff in order to improve their scientific qualifications. The document „GTUNI Lifelong Education Center's", „GT-TCC Training and Consulting Activities", describes the activities planned, implemented and to be implemented by the center, which was submitted to the expert commission together with the „GTUNI Lifelong Education Center's „GT-TCC Training and Consulting" provision". However, this document does not seem to provide evidence that training for academic staff to improve their scientific qualifications has taken place. This was also evident during the interviews., with both academic and invited staff. In this respect, the question was even put to the Rector, who replied the training courses for academic staff were "mainly of a general nature".

While it was noted that the university supported the participation of academic staff in various professional development activities, it was found that participation in such activities, both locally and internationally, was individual and largely not institutionalized.

GTUNI cooperates with such universities as Inholland University of Applied Sciences (the Netherlands); Paderborn University (Germany); Varna Free University (Bulgaria); Bremerhaven University (Germany); Baden-Württemberg Teaching University (Germany); Ovidius University of Constanta (Romania), Banska-Bystrica Matej Bel University (Slovakia); Ventspils University (Latvia); Birmingham College (UK); Ingolstadt University (Germany); Pecs University (Hungary); Ulster University (Ireland); St George University (US); EURAC (Italy); Ljubljana University (Slovakia); Riga Technical University (Latvia). Although the memoranda of understanding with these universities imply cooperation in research, the number of joint research projects is far below average. Although the University is involved in a number of international scientific activities (conferences, guest lecturer courses, internships), joint research projects with European partner universities is limited to only one (TEMPUS Project No. 543681-TEMPUS-1-2013-1-DE- TEMPUSJPHEs – CruiseT' 'Network of competence centres for the development of cruise tourism in the Black sea region (Georgian und Ukraine) 2013-2017), the institutionalization of engagement in international conferences by academic staff is low. The number of scientific articles published by academic staff in foreign scientific journals is low. According to the information provided, the university plans joint researches with 5 international partner universities (Inholland University, Ventspils University, Ingolstadt University, EURAC, Mendel University Brno). However, as evidence were presented only memoranda of understanding, in which cooperation in the field of joint research is one of many areas and does not contain any specifics. Other documentary evidence to support the initiative of specific joint research was not provided.

The university does not have joint educational (MA) programs, and there is no practice of joint supervision of research activities of students.

According to „The mechanisms for supporting scientific and research activities “, the latter should be realised through effective, economical and targeted usage of financial resources, which envisages achieving the objectives within the planned budget. Furthermore, the university should provide facilitation of the academic staff and faculties in such directions, for example: to conduct planned surveys and improvement of infrastructure; Establishing relevant contacts for the development of scientific research; Conducting trainings in legal issues, preparation and submission of grant

applications etc. However, at the time of the intervention, no specific initiatives were found to have been implemented in these directions. This reflects a divergence between theory and practice.

GTUNI has developed „Regulations of the internal competition for funding research projects “. The goal of this document, *inter alia*, is: Encouraging and supporting research, innovations and creativity; Implementation of advanced and / or interdisciplinary researches of modern high standards and dissemination of results; Facilitate the development of young university researchers, as well as student motivation and scientific potential; Increased number of publications in international review, high impact-factor magazines. The document describes all the procedures of the competition as well as all the details related to the project progress. However, these regulations came into force at the end of February this year and no applications for funding of scientific projects have been submitted yet.

The financial support of the University in the direction of scientific activities involves 21 different activities that are fully or partly financed from the university budget: Prepare specific scientific project (fully funded by the university grant); Organize scientific conference, publish conference proceedings (fully funded by the university grant); Preparation and publication of monograph papers (fully or partially funded by the university grant); Participation in regional and/or international scientific conferences (symposia, seminars) (fully or partially funded by the university grant) etc. Besides that, for individual scientific projects, a 3000 - 5000 GEL contribution is foreseen. And yet the university's budget allocated for research and scientific activities is 43 000 GEL (2,11% of total budget), It includes among other things 10 000 GEL for rise of quality and efficiency of scientific activities and 7 000 GEL for internationalization of educational and scientific activities. This financial framework will not be able to achieve all those objectives that are designed to support and develop scientific activities and increase internationalization.

The financial support for scientific activities is planned within the overall framework of the university budget, as well as from different scientific and grant-projects, non-governmental organizations and international organizations. However, the efficiency of the university's work in raising funds from various international funds and organizations is below average. Internationalization in general and in the field of research in particular, for the entire university community (students, academic staff, administration) is one of the most problematic areas for GTUNI.

For GTUNI, affiliation (achieving permanent status) is one of the principal instruments for encouragement of loyalty and performance from academic staff. However, there are no significant quantitative or qualitative differences between the scientific and research activities carried out by the affiliated and not affiliated academic personnel. In addition, for both categories, the ratio of publications in high citation index and impact factor journals is very low (in 2018 - 1% of all publications).

According to the SER, since 2015, GTUNI organizes its work oriented not only towards the individual activities and scientific interest of its professors, but towards the involvement of the whole team of the academic units, departments, as well as students, in preparation of one annual scientific theme. The annual scientific theme priorities are defined by the departments, are planned in accord with main directions of GTUNI educational activities, and serve their further development, in order to integrate research outcomes into the educational process.

However, the interviews with students showed, that students are not informed about annual scientific theme priorities. There were no students in the group the panel met, who had participated in scientific conferences organized by the university, but it was noted that they possessed general information that the university was conducting such activities. However, the head of the student self government indicated that he himself regularly participates in scientific conferences organized by the university and that the government provides information to all students of the university.

The new / young academic staffing rate at the university is lower than average. The university has developed mechanisms for attracting and promoting young qualified staff, which include the following activities: Organizing meetings with doctorate students from various universities to provide them with information about GTUNI, offering mentoring and professional development programmes, as well as administrative and material-technical support. However, none of these mechanisms have actually been used before. According to the information provided, concrete steps in this direction are planned in the near future. However, here, again, there is a worrying gap between theory and practice.

It should be noted that the university is aware of the need to improve the situation regarding scientific activities, first of all, in the sense of internationalization. A document entitled „Internationalization

Policy“ provides short- and long-term perceived goals, to eliminate weaknesses in the field of Internationalization. Planned activities include: Supporting the growth of academic mobility; Increase the activities for the involvement in international projects and programs; To carry out the systematic activities for sharing information on modern, international achievements, trends and vision; Increase and enhance scientific cooperation within the framework of research projects; Support GTUNI academic staff participation in international conferences, internships and seminars; Support new international partnership establishment/maintenance for the purpose of implementation of joint scientific projects; Ensure foreign experts', scientists' better involvement in GTUNI scientific activities; Support the implementation of joint research projects; Increase of scientific publication, electronic database and ensure better access to them; Increase the ratio of the publications in high citation index and impact factor journals. However, as noted above, the funds available in the university budget to achieve these objectives are not commensurate with their scale and nature. Furthermore, this document is rather new, and it is not clear whether it forms part of the university's long-term policy or whether it was merely crafted to deal with the challenge of the Authorisation procedure.

<p>Evidences/indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SER • 2019-2025 Strategic development plan • 2019-2021 Action plan • The mechanisms for supporting scientific and research activities • Strategy for development of research activities • Competition Statute for funding specific scientific-research project • Research of student satisfaction with the support of scientific and creative initiatives • Mechanisms of attracting of young employees • Internationalization Policy • Joint research/creative activities and cooperation with international partners • Brief description of current research-scientific activities • Reports on research activities • Publication lists of scientific staff • Interviews during the Site visit
<p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actually use all prescribed mechanisms to motivate academic staff • Align the strategic objectives for improving the quality of research and internationalization with the relevant budget funds • Regularly offer professional development activities to academic staff in order to improve their scientific qualification • Develop mechanisms to increase the number of publications in high citation index and impact factor journals • Develop and implement more effective mechanisms for involving students in scientific activities • Strengthen cooperation with European universities, including in the area of joint research • Strengthen cooperation with international educational/research foundations • Make greater use of mechanisms to attract young qualified academic personnel
<p>Suggestions:</p>
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p>
<p>Evaluation</p> <p>Complies with requirements</p> <p>Substantially complies with requirements</p> <p>Partially complies with requirements</p> <p>X Does not comply with requirements</p>
<p>6.3. Evaluation of Research Activities</p>

HEI has a system for evaluating and analysing 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

GTUNI has developed mechanisms for evaluating the quality and scientific productivity of research activities, defined by appropriate mechanisms, criteria and indicators. The evaluation process is coordinated by the Deputy Rector, and conducted by the Quality Assurance Service. As a purpose of this process, the university defines the following directions: Identify the strengths and weaknesses; Determining the shortcomings and problems for their prevention; Identification of priority directions of development and planning of future research; Internal funding management.

According to the documentation provided ("Mechanisms for assessing the productivity and quality of research work") for the evaluation, GTUNI uses: Reports submitted by the faculties/departments; Primary data resources: Web of Science / Book Citation Index, Scopus, Google Scholar, Clarivate Analytics; Corresponding data and reports of the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia (SRNSFG); Colleagues' as well as independent scholars' evaluations.

Scientific activities should be evaluated at least once a year based on the prescribed forms and methods. Three indicators are used: bibliometric indicators, personnel indicators, and financial and material-technical indicators.

The evaluation criteria for research / scientific work are clearly outlined, and the quantitative margin of satisfactory criteria is defined. The results of evaluation of scientific-research activities are introduced to each evaluated chair and to the academic personnel. The structural unit responsible for this process is the quality assurance service.

According to the SER: "Mechanisms for evaluating scientific activities foresees evaluating and analysing results and making decisions for their further improvement. Research activity evaluation system can be used to assess not only staff's scientific productivity, but quality as well. The evaluation is conducted periodically, based on quantitative and qualitative indicators". However, all documentation provided by the university on the evaluation of scientific work is purely quantitative and represents mostly statistics on publication, participation in scientific events, and international and national grant projects. According to the information provided by the GTUNI during the site-visit, no qualitative assessment of scientific work has been carried out until now, though such a tool will be used annually starting from the end of 2019. Qualitative evaluation is mentioned in a document entitled "Strategy Development for Scientific Activity", its chapter II Article 5 paragraph 5.1 states 13 criteria and target benchmarks for evaluation of scientific paper's quality, which are planned to be implemented. However, thus far, nothing has been done. In this regard it should be noted, that the strategy came into force on 26 February 2019. and the mechanisms for evaluating quality and scientific productivity of research activities only concern those activities which have been in progress since 2019.

There is no evidence to support the fact that the university has ever conducted a productivity analysis of scientific-research units and academic/scientific staff, although it was stated during interviews with the members of academic council that such an analysis is regularly conducted.

GTUNI has developed the mechanisms for evaluating quality and scientific productivity of research activities (the document: 'Mechanisms for evaluating quality and scientific productivity of research activities', Scientific activity development strategy, part II). However, the panel found that this is deeply ineffective. While one of the criteria for assessment was the number of SCOPUS citations, the relevant staff could not tell the panel how many SCOPUS citations there had been in the foregoing years. Article impact was not sufficiently assessed, and the meagre output did not seem to have been identified as a serious problem. While the PDCA cycle is mentioned, the timeframe for analysis does not seem to be clear.

<p>Evidences/indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SER • 2019-2025 Strategic development plan • 2019-2021 Action plan • The mechanisms for supporting scientific and research activities • Strategy for development of research activities • Competition Statute for funding specific scientific-research project • Research of student satisfaction with the support of scientific and creative initiatives • Mechanisms of attracting of young employees • Internationalization Policy • Joint research/creative activities and cooperation with international partners • Brief description of current research-scientific activities • Reports on research activities • Publication lists of scientific staff • Interviews during the Site visit
<p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on qualitative assessment of scientific activities, comprehensive analysis and development of individual recommendations; • Carry out assessment and analysis with the active involvement of all responsible structural units
<p>Suggestions:</p>
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p>
<p>Evaluation</p> <p>Complies with requirements</p> <p>Substantially complies with requirements</p> <p>X Partially complies with requirements</p> <p>Does not comply with requirements</p>

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

- 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.
- 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

GTUNI has decent material resources, which provide an adequate teaching and educational environment for 1800 students. GTUNI's educational process building has separated classrooms, teaching cabinets, teaching and research laboratories, spaces for group work, storing facilities, conference hall, rooms for archived material, administrative and support staff offices. Each floor has foyers. The university has recreation spaces, while a library, equipped with corresponding inventory is located in a separate building. During the past 6 years, classrooms and foyers were repaired, teaching and research laboratories were reequipped and updated. The building, classrooms are adapted to conduct modern lectures. Most contain projectors that can be attached to laptop computers. Classrooms and laboratories are adequate with sufficient inventory and equipment, though some computers seem slightly out-of-date and are running old software (Windows 7). The strategic plan considers conducting the repairing works of the building, of the classrooms, teaching cabinets, teaching and research laboratories and installing all necessary equipment during 2019. GTUNI has its own power supply system that can provide enough electricity for whole building in case the municipal power supply is interrupted.

All necessary documents, agreements or/and the acts of ownership on all assets exist.

The HEI, according to the description of January 1, 2018, has in lawful possession a non-agricultural site (7081square meters), were 2 buildings and sport stadium (478 square meters) are located. The first building (4682 square meters) is used for educational process and the second one (434 square meters) for the library. Both buildings are registered in Public Register database and are assigned corresponding cadastre codes. The measurement drawings are prepared, where educational and auxiliary spaces are separated; the educational space is the space that is used for teaching/learning purposes, namely: classroom, conference hall, professors' common room, where students are counselled by professors, teaching/scientific research laboratories, library (except for book depository), and other and other spaces based on the specifics of an educational programme; teaching space is 3098.82 square meters, auxiliary space is 2 496.09 square meters. Material resource (fixed and liquid assets) belonging to GTUNI serves the implementation of the educational goals of GTUNI, corresponds to university mission and satisfies the needs of the existing number of students and planned enrolment.

The university provided documentation confirming possession of real estate, extraction from public registry (Annex 66); documents certifying possession of current assets/ inventory records (Annex 67); memorandums of cooperation with economic agents and planned, ongoing and implemented research projects (Annex 51); the survey results of staff and students regarding material resources (Annex 69); a document certifying orderly operation of heating and ventilation systems, and timeframe for their validity (Annex 70); a document certifying compliance with sanitary norms (Annex 71); fire prevention and safety, first aid, and order mechanisms; (Annex 72); a report on building safety(Annex73); and a report on fire safety(Annex74).

The sanitary system, water supply and heating systems are in appropriate condition. However, the toilets are antiquated.

GTUNI conducts a video control CCTV system around the perimeter. It seems to project both within and outside the perimeter in accordance with the evaluation criterion.

The university has developed a system for providing first aid and medical treatment. On the ground floor of the university, there is doctor's cabinet, which is equipped with medicines and inventory that are essential for first aid. The rules defined by the law for the storage of medicines are strictly observed in the cabinet. In order to provide first aid to students and staff, the university has a highly qualified doctor, with whom the university has signed a contract. In doctor's cabinet, the doctor provides first aid and in case of necessity, she calls the emergency services. The university budget allocates expenses for the purposes of purchasing the medicines and necessary equipment.

GTUNI has adapted its environment for people with special needs. An elevator and other facilities promote free circulation for persons with special needs. Special sanitary facilities for persons with physical handicaps are provided.

For the purpose of satisfying general standard for adapted environment, GTUNI for recent 5 years has elaborated and implemented the plan taking into the consideration the interests of the individuals with special needs. Taking into the consideration the works implemented, in the university space, the individuals with special needs were provided the following services in an unhindered way: Access to classrooms; To the labs corresponding to the specification of the educational program; Computer classes; Student services; Library; Administration and corresponding service units.

Per the evaluation criteria, students with special educational needs should have access to learning resources considered by a program or individual teaching plan. When the panel visited, there were no such students to talk to. However, given the ad hoc accommodations made for students with individual requirements, noted earlier in this report, it is highly likely that students with special educational needs would be properly accommodated. However, clearer procedures in this regard are certainly desirable.

Visual inspection revealed that in some classrooms there are no air conditioning systems. Therefore, in the expert group's opinion, it is desirable that the University should provide all classrooms with a cooling system.

The HEI has a well-developed fire prevention and safety inventory in place, based on the site-visit at GTUNI. Also, fire equipment was on each floor of the building in a visible area with instructions and evacuation plans. The building also had multiple emergency exits, where doors open inside out.

Evidences/indicators

- Extract from Public Registry;
- Measuring drawings;
- Documents confirming payment of utility service fees;
- Assessment Acts on condition of building-facilities;
- Documents certifying possession of liquid assets;
- Document of possession of diesel generator;
- Agreement - on Fire Safety;
- Orders on determining persons responsible for safety (including firefighting);
- Order of the person responsible for medical assistance;

Recommendations:

Suggestions:

It is desirable that the university to provide all classrooms with air conditioning systems.

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

There are adequate library resources to meet the demands of learning outcomes, but not for the purposes of conducting research. Students have easy access on online library catalogue where everyone can search for books or other learning materials. GTUNI has an agreement with the national library and

<p>in case they do not have materials in their library, the national library may send them by post. The university library joined the Library Association of Georgia in 2013.</p> <p>The university has access to a variety of international online libraries. All relevant links are on the library web-page. During interviews, it was plain that the students were aware of the databases. The library is equipped with computers connected to the internet and with a combined scanner and printer which was available both for the staff and for the students.</p> <p>Not all library staff are trained how to use the internet databases or the electronic resources. This became evident during the site visit, because librarians were unable to open and use online databases.</p> <p>The Library includes the following spaces: Book archive, reading hall, library staff office space, IT equipment space. However, there does not seem to be a meeting and group workspace.</p> <p>The HEI has regulations for using library, informative instructions and reading hall equipped with appropriate inventory. The Main literature listed in the syllabi is available in the library of the institution; however, for some works, there are not enough copies. The books of the library are processed in accordance with the library regulations. However, the library is only available to students and staff for 6 days a week, for a total of 51 hours. Working hours: from Monday-Friday _ 09:30-17:30; Saturday - 10:00-16:00.</p>
<p>Evidences/indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SER • 2019-2025 Strategic development plan • 2019-2021 Action plan • The mechanisms for supporting scientific and research activities • Strategy for development of research activities • Competition Statute for funding specific scientific-research project • Research of student satisfaction with the support of scientific and creative initiatives • Mechanisms of attracting of young employees • Internationalization Policy • Joint research/creative activities and cooperation with international partners • Brief description of current research-scientific activities • Reports on research activities • Publication lists of scientific staff • Interviews during the Site visit • http://openbiblio.gttu.edu.ge/home/index.php
<p>Recommendations:</p> <p>Library Personnel should provide more information about international online libraries and how to use them to the students and academic staff. For this purpose, library staff should be trained in this field.</p>
<p>Suggestions:</p>
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p>
<p>Evaluation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements</p>

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

GTUNI has sufficient IT infrastructure. There is special Information technologies service, which is responsible and able to deal with related issues and problems as for web site and internet (WI-FI) as well as computer software and data bases (servers).

The whole perimeter of buildings is covered with Wi-Fi internet which is open for everyone. The university has two internet service providers – ‘Silknet’ and New Networks (akhali kselebi)’. They provide internet via high optical fiber channels.

GTUNI has Learning Managements System, where students can register, they can see the schedule of lectures (the time, the lecturer’s name, and the room number), see their assessment and progress, evaluate academic staff and administration and procure study materials. Academic staff use this software to plan their lectures, and when needed have communication with students and to make assessment. During visit experts could check software. Since 2015 GTUNI has been cooperating with Microsoft and uses their licensed operative systems and other program, services. GTUNI offers its students and staff over 200 licensed services and programs with 3-year guarantee.

The web-site is fully functional in Georgian and English languages and there is updated information which is needed for students, academy staff and stakeholders (like employers, school graduates etc.).

The website includes information in Georgian and English languages, including mission of HEI, its activities, structure, catalogue of educational programmes, programmes and enrolment criteria. However expected learning outcomes are not clear.

The qualifications to be granted, procedures for teaching-learning and assessment are clearly set out in both Georgian and English. The list of administrative/academic/scientific staff is not set out in full. The library electronic catalogue does not seem to presently be accessible. Other documents such as the regulation documents, strategic development plans, annual reports, financial reports, ongoing and implemented research (results), basic statistics, accessible services, employment opportunities, do not seem to be available, at least in English, at present.

GTUNI has servers for data bases which is making mirror back-up, which means in case of emergency University can recover data from another hard drive and they will not lose all information.

GTUNI has a business continuity plan, where are indicated possible risks and correction action if needed. This was provided to the panel via Annex 11 of the SER, and seems reasonably well developed, using basic risk assessment and mitigation tools.

It was noted during the site visit that some computers are outdated and need to be updated, the operating systems also need to be updated (Windows 7).

Evidences/indicators

- Contract with an internet provider;

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certifying document regarding possessing domain and hosting (Annex 85). • SER • 2019-2025 Strategic development plan • 2019-2021 Action plan • The mechanisms for supporting scientific and research activities • Strategy for development of research activities • Competition Statute for funding specific scientific-research project • Research of student satisfaction with the support of scientific and creative initiatives • Mechanisms of attracting of young employees • Internationalization Policy • Joint research/creative activities and cooperation with international partners • Brief description of current research-scientific activities • Reports on research activities • Publication lists of scientific staff • Website http://www.gttu.edu.ge/ge/about-us/legal-directory/debulebebi-instruqtsiebi • Interviews during the Site visit
<p>Evaluation</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Fully complies with requirements <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements </p>
<p>Recommendations:</p> <p>The computer bank and the operating systems (Windows 7) need to be updated.</p>
<p>Suggestions:</p>
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p>
<p>7.4 Financial Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Allocation of financial resources described in the budget of HEI is economically achievable ○ Financial standing of HEI ensures performance of activities described in strategic and mid-term action plans ○ HEI financial resources are focused on effective implementation of core activities of the institution ○ HEI budget provides funding for scientific research and library functioning and development ○ HEI has an effective system of accountability, financial management and control
<p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</p> <p>The budget is formulated from the following sources: Educational program Tuition fee, national and international foundation grants, and other legal income received from economic activities. The main source of funding for GTUNI is the income gained from tuition fees of bachelor and master's degree programmes. In the past 5 years, GTUNI budget has been reduced, for the following reasons: 1. Tuition fees for bachelor's degree programs was reduced from 2990 to 2250 GEL; In the past 4 years the number of graduating students exceed the number of enrolments.</p>

The heads of the structural units acting in the university are involved in the budget formation. They will submit information in the financial department, which, on the basis of the information received, determines the budget project according to the priorities. The draft budget will be submitted to the academic council.

The budget funds of the University are directed towards providing educational output. However, as was revealed during the interviews, the main part of the budget is used for infrastructure development and administrative functions or educational provision. Funding of academic activities, internationalization and research is not currently a budget priority. This needs to be urgently addressed

The Budget resources are insufficient for the implementation of strategic tasks. Financial resources are mainly directed to the current salary payments to staff in the amount of 80%, and the remaining 20% of the budget is insufficient to carry other important activities, notably internationalization, program development, staff development etc. The funds allocated for research are insignificant, and the institution should increase the research budget.

It is not clear that HEI conducts financial audit by eligible auditor/audit company and the reports with relevant financial statements are publicly assessible. While financial reports for current/previous reporting periods were provided to the panel (Annex 88a), a full auditor's report was not presented.

Evidences/indicators

- HEI budget
- Strategic Plan 2019-2025
- Interview

Recommendations:

- University should increase capital, diversify sources thereof, and change strategic objectives to match capital limits;
- The institution should increase the research budget.

Suggestions:

Best Practices (if applicable):

Evaluation

- Complies with requirements
- Substantially complies with requirements
- Partially complies with requirements
- Does not comply with requirements