Higher Education Institution Authorisation Experts' Report Template

Batumi Art State Teaching University

Expert Panel Members

Chair: Helen McVey, Director of Business Development. The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, UK.

Members:

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Mariam Zaldastanishvili, Graphic Designer and Book Illustrator, Free University of Tbilisi, Georgia

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Tbilisi

2019

General information on the educational institution

On September 29, 1995 by the Decision of the Government of Georgia, Batumi Art State Teaching University (BATU) was founded in Batumi, primarily servicing the Western region of Georgia. Throughout its recent history, BATU underwent various structures and re-organizations[1].

The current Legal Entity of Public Law (LEPL) Batumi State Art Teaching University (Regulation N 180 issued by the Governemnt of Georgia) was established on October 9, 2009.

Batumi State of Art Teaching University has **397** students, employs up to **282** staff members (including invited personnel). 40 of the aforementioned staff members occupy academic positions comprising: 13 are Professors; 21 are Associate Professors; 3 are Assistant Professor; and 3 are Assistants.

With the support and funding of the Government of Ajara Autonomous Republic, BATU entered a new Building of Art Teaching University designed to modern requirements of the higher artistic education. The Building comprises rehearsal halls, creative workshops, video-audio facilities, musical instruments, big and small size study rooms, teaching theatre, small concert hall, conference spaces, exhibition halls, library and computer study rooms. The building has fire-resistant heating, air-conditioning and the full building has been adapted to meet the needs of any students with limited abilities. BATU moved premises in September 2019.

BATU has three Faculties – Faculty of Fine Arts, Stage and Cinematographic-TV Art; Faculty of Music; Faculty of Education, Humanitarian and Social Sciences;

Since 2012 Art Teaching State University has been a full member of the European Art Institutes. The University is involved in various International Projects, having established partnership relationships with more than 32 Universities from 15 countries.

Current provision comprises:

Bachelor's Programmes:

- Architecture and Design (Architecture of building and premises; interior design);
- Fine Arts (lathe fine arts, lather graphics);
- Design (textile design; cloth design);
- Audio-Visual Art (Cinema Directing, TV Directing);
- Performance and Creative Art (Drama and Cinematographic);

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[1] On September 29, 1995 by the Decision of the Government of Georgia, Batumi Art State Teaching University was founded in Batumi. In 1996, a Ballet Studio was opened at the Art Teaching Institute. In 1999, the Ballet Studio was seperated from the Art Teaching University with the Status of Ballet Teaching Institute. In 1998 at the basis of the Faculty of Music Disciplines, the Art Teaching Institute, Batumi State Musical Convervatory after Zakaria Paliashvili was opened.With the Regulation upon "Re-organization of the Higher Educational, Art and General Scientific-Research Insitutions functioning on the Administrative Terittory of Ajara Autonomous Republic" N137 of February 23, 2006 issued by the Government of Georgia Batumi State Art Teaching Institute and Batumi State Conservatory were merged with Legal Entity of Public Law – Shota Rustaveli State University, with the status of an Art Faculty. By the Decision of the Governemnt of Georgia N 146 issued on August 14, 2009, Shota Rustaveli State University(LEPL)– Batumi Art Institute was founded, Batumi State Art Teaching University with the Regulation N 180 issued by the Governemnt of Georgia on October 9, 2009.

- Puppet Theatre - Acting;
- Culture Management;
- Art Studies;
- Cultural Tourism;
- TV-Radio Journalism;
- Music Performance (Forte Piano, Academic Singing, Directing an Academic Choir, Orchestral);

Masters level Programmes:

- Design (Textile Design, Fashion Design);
- Art History and Theory (Art Studies);
- Audio Visual Art (Artistic Cinema Directing);
- Performance-Creative Art (Drama directing, puppet theatre directing);
- Art Management;
- Music Theory/Ethnomusicology;
- Performance Art (Forte Piano, Academic Singing, Orchestral).

Teacher Training (60-credit Programmes)

- for preparing the teacher of Fine and Applied Arts;
- for preparing music teacher (prepared for accreditation);

The building of the Art Teaching University as a multifunctional area is used for urban and regional workshops, exhibitions, conferences, competitions, cultural activities of various form, which together with the popularity of the University support involvement of the personnel and students in these activities, as well as integration of the educational creative processes with non-university education and cultural activities.

Further information is available on the website: http://batu.edu.ge/index.html?lang=ge (in Georgian)

http://batu.edu.ge/index.html?lang=en (and English)

Brief overview of the evaluation process for authorisation: Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and Site visit

In accordance with the published "Guidelines for Experts" (National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement, Georgia), this report has been authored in good faith. All panel members were briefed regarding the appropriate processes, roles and responsibilities. The panel members contributed to the preparatory steps comprising the desk-study of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and annexed documents. Each panel member was assigned standards, enabling appropriate planning for the site visit.

The panel met for a preparatory meeting (p10, Guidelines for experts) and ensured that all required topics were discussed. The mapping grid was finalized to ensure all panel members were in agreement for the agenda of the site visit. A list of questions of key areas of enquiry was compiled and the agenda for the site visit was confirmed.

During the site visit the panel verified information, clarified areas as required and ensured that all information required was collated to enable the panel to complete the expert evaluation report

accurately. The following timetable was adhered to. The panel are most grateful for the full, transparent and detailed engagement with the process from all students and staff we interviewed. The panel underwent a buildings tour and examined online resources in consultation with staff members.

Finally, the Review Panel produced the present report which is structured according to the Standards mentioned above.

The Review Panel would like to express its sincere gratitude to the Rector and their team for the hospitality, the quality of the documentation submitted, and for the collegiate manner in which all students, staff, alumni and employers evidence throughout their engagement with this process.

The Review Panel hopes that this report will be helpful to BATU, not soley for the purposes of obtaining an authorization decision by NCEQE but also as useful and constructive document to support its ongoing development as it continues to work towards its defined goals.

Summary:
1. BATU prepared a Self-Evaluation Report (SER) in English based on the NCEQE Authorization Standards for Higher Education Institutions.
2. The Review Panel, including an international chair, studied the SER and other documentation which was submitted in Georgian (with some documents translated into English).
3. The Review Panel conducted a site visit over three days (1-3 October 2019) and held meetings with staff, students, alumni and employers, as follows:

Overview of the HEI's compliance with standards

It is the view of the Review Panel, in accordance with the published criteria that Batumi Art Teaching University meets the following Standards as summarised below:

1. Mission and strategic development of HEI:	**Fully compliant**
2. Organizational structure and management of HEI:	Partially compliant
3. Educational programmes:	Substantially compliant
4. Staff of the HEI:	Substantially compliant
5. Students and their support services:	**Fully compliant**
6. Research, development and/or other creative work:	Substantially compliant
7. Material, information and financial resources:	Substantially compliant

Summary of Recommendations

1. Create a three-year plan which is SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and targetted. Specifically, consider the inclusion of more detail *how and when* objectives will be achieved supported by a mechanism for evaluting priorities for implementation
2. Create lifelong learning programmes which are rooted in market research and aligns with regional arts/educational priorities.
3. BATU should ensure full involvment of all relevant management bodies (AC and representative council) to realise the effective management of the activities of the institution
4. BATU should strive more strongly towards an institutional approach that relies less on the strength of personalities.
5. BATU should improve its analytical capacity in undertaking regular self-evaluations to be able to use these as effective tools for monitoring its activities and to guide follow-up actions.
6. BATU should provide the survey results, assessments and recommendations to increase transparency for the stakeholders.
7. BATU should take active steps to promote a culture of self-reflection and critical analysis of its work
8. All students and staff should be appraised of the Code of Ethics
9. All students and staff should have a shared understanding of the principles of academic freedom and what this means in practice
10. Effective use of the anti-plagiarism programme should be implemented, including clear communication among students
11. BATU should consider and adopt assessment practices which ensure marking errors such as the example above is detected and corrected.
12. BATU should seek best practice in the sector to consider assessment practices which ensure unconscious bias is not present.
13. BATU should define the specific needs of pedagogical skills and organize relevant professional training for its academic/invited (as well as administrative and support staff) when advertising for new staff.
14. BATU should put a greater emphasis on English language learning strategy for students and staff, hire highly qualified teachers and regularly control the learning outcomes and quality, ensuring this is appropriately planned for financially.
15. Age diversification of academic staff is highly recommended in order to make the educational process more dynamic and effective.
16. BATU should review the status and workload data of each affiliated academic staff in order to maintain a fair and sustainable proportion of reward/responsibilities and to enable academic staff to be fully involved in everyday life of the HEI.
17. Workload of BATU academic staff within the framework of the institution itself should be better defined and monitored in order to enhance the teaching/research quality within the institution.
18. Formally include language requirements as part of ongoing professional development activities
19. Implement a clear training programme for the supervision of Masters level work
20. Within the context of a Teaching University, design and implement a strategy to showcase/embed research within the teaching activities of the University
21. Ensure an understanding of plagiarism is better cascaded across the student body, supported by enhanced detection methods

22. BATU should design and adopt a clear strategy for implementing internationalisation through research activities with the aim of enhancing the staff and student experience and raising the standard of research activity
23. BATU should ensure an appropriate structured English langugae development plan is designed and implemented
24. Finish all the necessary installations for accessible toilet facilities (staff and students with disabilities)
25. Review noise bleed levels: consider the installation of appropriate acoustic treatments
26. EMIS platform needs to be fully integrated.
27. E-flow needs to be fully integrated.
28. University webpage needs to be updated regularly inclusive of a full audit of what must be available in English as well as Georgian.
29. Cycle of systems backups and cyber-security must be planned and maintained.

Summary of Suggestions

1. In response to the following extract of the mission statement: "*supporting development of the creative and research activity*" BATU may wish to consider ways to further support the development of establishing a firmly embedded research culture in the institution – further detail is given under standard 6.
2. In creating the mission and operational plans for implementing the plan, BATU may wish to consider alternative organsiational effectiveness planning tools such as PESTEL analysis; Porters 5-forces and Ansoff Growth matrix to better evalute the SWOT statements.
3. Consider the departmentalization of Marketing/PR/International Relations
4. Develop a data processing schedule including retention of records
5. Ensure the faculty level action plans articulate clearly with the 3-year action plans – either through undertaking clearly defined, delegated actions or through providing input based on the evidence of the faculty level plans.
6. Consider formalising the delegation of decision-making to truly enable a full participatory management style.
7. Consider more in-depth risk assessment to help focus develoment priorities for the current three-year cycle.
8. BATU should ensure all employees are aware of the performance evaluation system of BATU's staff
9. The University should ensure that staff within the Quality Assurance Service possess the expertise that is necessary for the design and administration of questionnaire and the interpretation of survey results.
10. A more formal process for keeping in regular contact with alumni should be designed and implemented
11. BATU may wish to engage with developing a culture of critical reflection to enhance staff and student experience
12. The panel encourages BATU to consider ways to inculcate a culture of experimentation to further develop a leadership role in shaping the arts sector in Georgia and internationally.
13. The panel found some small errors such as: syllabus of the Module Master Thesis needs to be revised relative to the Master Program (there are some typos that are only relevant to BA program). An audit of documentation would be useful to ensure consistency across levels.
14. BATU may wish to consider further supporting the lifelong learning center in its work to integrate its function as a staff development center.
15. In order to enhance the internationalization process, English language knowledge should be set as one of the criteria when hiring academic/invited staff.
16. Consider growing investment in Academic Staff to enhance learning results.
17. It would be beneficial for everyone if University includes in the contract a paragraph regarding copyright and Law on the property right over the student's work.
18. The following documents should be available in English: Regulations for assignment, suspension and termination of student status, mobility, qualification granting and recognition of education and Code of Ethics.
19. The students' guideline documents would benefit from being described in plain language to ensure the key messages are effectively disseminated
20. Formalisation of student support practices
21. Consider a student centred welcome week or induction followed up by key all-student activities throughout the year
22. Utilise additional income generation to offer further student scholarship or financial support
23. Ensure ongoing website development to disseminate key information for students

24. Additional fundraising practice to be implemented in order to obtain more financial independence.
25. Self-service copying facilities
26. Student-led development of modernization of library facilities such as relaxed, comfortable study pods; consultation spaces for group work and/or good IT connectivity
27. The creation of a student guide/handbook which is comprehensive and accessible online
28. Consider continuing to seek to diversify income to better enhance the student experience

Summary of Best Practice

1. The panel welcomed the inclusion of "moral and conscious civic spirit" in the mission statement.
2. Faculty level action plans which are monitored regularly.
3. The inclusion of budget sums in the development plan.
4. Excellent communication between academic staff and students that facilitates the learning process well.
5. Excellent intercommunication between the faculty deans, programme heads and academic staff of different faculties, enabling useful exchange and multidisciplinary experience.
6. The gender balance among the academic staff is appropriate.
7. Bibliographical references stated in Syllabi's are all to be found in the Library archive.

Summary Table of Compliance of HEI with Standards and Standard Components

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

Signature of expert panel members
1. Helen McVey (Chair)
2. Mariam Zaldastanishvili (Member)
3. Lela Iosava (Member)
4. Ketevan Aptarashvili (Member)
5. Giorgi Kurdiani (Student Member)

Compliance of the Applicant HEI with the Authorisation 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.
The HEI clearly articulates the planning process for constructing and implementing the Mission and Strategic Development plans for the institution. The mission statement of BATU defines its role within both its current operational context and articulates future development intent. It is clearly articulated and student-focused. The panel sought to evaluate the effectiveness of the dissemination of the mission and associated operational plans through a series of questions in targeted interview meetings. The panel noted a broad consensus across senior management, academic and administrative staff. Furthermore, students were well aware of the mission and could identify the mission being deployed through their personal reflections upon their student experience. The mission statement was appropriately shared by the community of the organisation.

Evidences/indicators:
- SER Part 1, Part 2 sections 1 and 2
- Annex 1.1 E
- Interview results: meetings with the Self-evaluation team; Deans of Faculty and Alumni

Recommendations:

None – not applicable

Suggestions:
- In response to the following extract of the mission statement: "*supporting development of the creative and research activity*" BATU may wish to consider ways to further support the development of establishing a firmly embedded research culture in the institution – further detail is given under standard 6.
- In creating the mission and operational plans for implementing the plan, BATU may wish to consider alternative organsiational effectiveness planning tools such as PESTEL analysis; Porters 5-forces and Ansoff Growth matrix to better evalute the SWOT statements.

Best Practices (if applicable):

The panel welcomed the inclusion of "moral and conscious civic spirit" in the mission statement.

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.

The institution presented both strategic development plans (7-year) and 3-year action plans. The 7-year plan articulated with the overarching mission, was appropriate in the level of detail offered and evidenced some methodology for evaluating development priorities. The plan details elements which evidences contribution to the development of society and clearly articulates the intention to facilitate lifelong learning. The action plan was deficit in detail, for example 1.3.3 (3-year plan) states: "*Formation of joint programs /courses for involvement in the exchange programs together with foreign partners*." There is no detail regarding timeline aside from this being stated a priority for all three years. The risk assessment states "language barrier" – how then can this be addressed within the academic year 2019? A more detailed operational plan may help the institution critically reflect, prioritize and therefore become more effective in the implementation of strategic development plans and align with the evaluation criteria: "*HEI's goals are… [] achievable, time-bound and measurable*".

However, good practice was noted in the inclusion of budgetary sums for the implementation of each development objective. Furthermore, this is supported by Faculty level action plans. These were appropriate within the scope of the institution.

Appendices provided included details of the rule for monitoring elaboration of the Mission, Strategic Development and Actions Plans of LEPL - Batumi Art State Teaching University
LEPL - Batumi Art State Teaching University (hereinafter referred to as "University") (27.03.2019, №04-01/70)

A participatory management style was evidenced in part although it was clear that there was little formal delegation of decision-making.

Evidences/indicators:
- SER Part 1, Part 2 sections 1 and 2
- Annex 1.2 E: comprising 7 year and 3 year plans separately
- Annex 1.2 E (3-year plan) 1.1.6 (Lifelong learning development)
- Annex 1.3 1.5 Monitoring rule
- Additional material provided on site-visit: Faculty level action plans
- Interview results – meetings with Rector; the Self-evaluation team; Deans of Faculty; Students and Alumni

Recommendations:
1. Create a three-year plan which is SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and targetted. Specifically, consider the inclusion of more detail *how and when* objectives will be achieved supported by a mechanism for evaluting priorities for implementation
2. Create lifelong learning programmes which are rooted in market research and aligns with regional arts/educational priorities.

Suggestions:
- Ensure the faculty level action plans articulate clearly with the 3-year action plans – either through undertaking clearly defined, delegated actions or through providing input based on the evidence of the faculty level plans.
- Consider formalising the delegation of decision-making to truly enable a full participatory management style.
- Consider more in-depth risk assessment to help focus develement priorities for the current three-year cycle.

Best Practices (if applicable):
- Faculty level action plans which are monitored regularly   - The inclusion of budget sums in the development plan

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

2.   Organisational Structure and Management of HEI

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

The panel was satisfied that the functions and responsibilities of organisational units of BATU are clearly defined. The activities of management bodies are regulated by the University Charter: the provisions of the relevant structural units, legal-normative acts. The BATU management structure comprise: The Academic Council, the Council of Representatives, the Rector, the Head of Administration and the Quality Assurance Service.

The Representative Council includes membership of students and head of library. During the site-visit, the interviews evidenced the representative council was not well informed about some of the documents they had created and approved (for example Rule of selection/hiring of staff, Disciplinary Responsibility Standards etc.) Furthermore, student active participation seems lacking. For example, during the meeting between the panel of experts and the Representative Council, the students could not provide any examples of recent council business.

The Academic Council is the supreme governing representative body. Interview results showed that The Academic Council does not seem to exercise actual influence over the strategic development of the institution. The interaction between the AC and the top management takes place informally. The decision-making remains between the group of Rector, Heads of Quality Assurance, and Administration.

The organizational structure formally allows the implementation of activities defined in its strategic plan, and achievement of its goals. The panel noted that some departments were omitted from the structure: for example, Marketing, PR (role, importance and characteristics of a web-page are misunderstood in terms of strategic importance by HEI based mainly on the self-evaluation team

meeting) and/or International Relations departments. To achieve the strategic goals relating to Internationalization, these functions would require additional investment and/or discrete departmentalization as acknowledged by staff interviewed.

The procedure for election/appointment of the management bodies of BATU is in line with relevant legislation. All management bodies are elective. Election/ appointment in management bodies is ensured by pre-determined requirements.

The Academic and Representative Councils are elected by the faculties, the Rector by the Academic Council by a majority of votes of the nominal list. The Head of Administration and the Head of the Quality Assurance Service is elected by the Academic Council by a majority of votes of the nominal list and submits to the Representative Council for approval. Faculties elect the Dean and the Head of the Faculty Quality Service. But staff in other administrative positions was not selected by competition and the institute plans to make changes. Academic positions are elective as well, which are elected by competition. During the interview expert panel found out that academic council did not possess information or understanding of the relevant criteria/process of electing members of the Academic Council.

BATU provided the panel with a well-scoped Business Continuity plan. There was not a clear policy regarding document processing/retention and/or IT based solutions. The university has updated data in official registry of educational institution on the basis of the Regulation approved by the National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement on Registry and other relevant legal acts. This is the obligatory procedure for all educational institutions operating in Georgia.

BATU has a clear perspective on internationalization. It has developed an internalization policy and supports the international mobility of students and staff. For implementation of the internationalization policy, the University uses various partnership mechanisms (signing memoranda; participation in scientific and creative projects; supporting services of students and academic staff; inviting foreign specialists and sharing practical experience etc.). In 2013-2019 BATU has signed memoranda of cooperation with 32 higher education arts institutions of Arts in 15 countries. BATU is involved in the Erasmus international exchange programme together with the higher education institutions of Riga (Latvia) and Giresun (Turkey). The Leadership team clearly acknowledged the importance of internationalizaion to raise standards of attainment, enrich the learning environment and assist the professional development of staff. Public lectures were conducted by the professors invited from foreign and Georgian HEIs. Internationalization is an important part of the BATU Strategic Development Plan. During the site-visit, this was a common theme across many meetings with different stakeholders. Specifically, the language barrier of a low threshold of English institutionally hinders the ability to work with in-depth with a range of networks. This leads to low activity such as international mobility of students (inward and outward) and the ability for academic and administrative staff to work in other languages. There are foreign language courses available at the University.

Evidences/indicators:
- The BATU charter
- Provisions of Structural Units of BATU
- University's Record Management Instruction
- The internal regulations of BATU
- The structure of BATU

	• The BATU Rule of conducting an open competition for holding academic positions • BATU Business Continuity Plan • The Rule of monitoring of management effectiveness • Internationalization policy • Interview results – meetings with Rector; the Self-evaluation team; Academic Councils; Representative Council; Students and Alumni

Recommendations:

1. BATU should ensure full involvment of all relevant management bodies (AC and representative council) to realise the effective management of the activities of the institution
2. BATU should strive more strongly towards an institutional approach that relies less on the strength of personalities.

Suggestions:
- Consider the departmentalization of Marketing/PR/International Relations
- Develop a data processing schedule including retention of records

Best Practices (if applicable):

None - not 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.

BATU undertook the self-evaluation according to the main requirements. Overall, the SER was not overly analytical but it is still possible to use the results as an action-planning and monitoring device. The institution bases decisions on QA results, but this is not the case everywhere throughout the organization.

HEI has developed and introduced survey electronic forms:
- The satisfaction questionnaire of the academic and administrative staff;
- The satisfaction questionnaire of the Employer;
- The satisfaction questionnaire of potential employer;
- The satisfaction questionnaire of Graduates;
- Academic course assessment questionnaire;
- The satisfaction research of Students

Students, academic and administrative staff, employers and alumni are involved in quality assurance processes – specifically they provide data, but meetings during the site visit evidenced less engagement of visiting lecturers in core quality assurance mechanisms. It was observed that staff may feel constrained in providing feedback about their satisfaction, and about possible individual improvement initiatives or ideas.

BATU has developed a Lecture observation form and Self-assessment form for teaching staff - the aim of which is to research the opinion of different categories of employees about the functioning of the University. It was not clear how widely adopted these self-reflective tools are being encouraged or implemented to enhance the quality of learning and teaching.

The panel was informed that QA staff have not received any specific training in research methods, and that there is limited input from outside the Service to the design of questionnaires.

ICT support system to the QA system across the organisation seems to be not well coordinated and efficient yet. Prior to the introduction of a unified electronic database in the University, the department developed an electronic questionnaire for student data (on google drive). After fully developing of the e-learning programme BATU will be able to provide obtaining information on academic progress, improve the quality of communication between students and professors – see section 7 of report.

The BATU Academic Council has approved "Quality Assurance Policy". In accordance with this policy, Quality Assurance Service has elaborated the procedure for evaluating the activities of academic and invited staff. It envisages evaluation of staff participation in pedagogical/creative/scientific and other university activities. Interview results showed that staff do not possess knowledge of evaluation criteria yet the SER states that this system is activated.

BATU has mechanisms for planning the student body - HEI takes into account the Learning and supporting spaces; Material-technical base; Human (academic) resource; Dynamics of educational program demand; Student's placement indicator (mobility, status suspension, termination, recovery) indicator; Analysis of the learning process; Graduates employment indicator and employment market research.

Evidences/indicators

- The Provision of University Quality Assurance Service;
- Quality assurance policy;
- The Evaluation Rule for the University Academic and Invited Staff Activity;
- Assessment Rule of Satisfaction Survey;
- Survey forms - samples of questionnaires;
- The rule for determination of student contingent of Batumi Art Teaching University
- The Rule of monitoring of management effectiveness;
- Interview results
- The rule of regulating the learning process;
- monitoring mechanisms for students' academic performance
- Analysis of Employer Survey Results

Recommendations:

1. BATU should improve its analytical capacity in undertaking regular self-evaluations to be able to use these as effective tools for monitoring its activities and to guide follow-up actions.
2. BATU should provide the survey results, assessments and recommendations to increase transparency for the stakeholders.

3. BATU should take active steps to promote a culture of self-reflection and critical analysis of its work

Suggestions:

- BATU should ensure all employees are aware of the performance evaluation system of BATU's staff
- The University should ensure that staff within the Quality Assurance Service possess the expertise that is necessary for the design and administration of questionnaire and the interpretation of survey results.

Best Practices (if applicable):

None – not applicable

Evaluation

☐ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

☒ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

2.3. Observing Principles of Ethics and Integrity

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

The panel was satisfied that BATU has developed an appropriate Code of Ethics for students and staff. The Code establishes the rules of conduct of the community of learners involved in the learning and teaching environment, including possible ways of solving ethical problems raised. The Code of Ethics is posted on the BATU website: (http://www.batu.edu.ge/sub-7/laws/2/index.html) Further awareness raising of the code could be implemented through displays such as printed versions put in the library, at information desks, on appropriate walls, etc.

Should there be a violation of the Code of Ethics by students and by persons employed at the University, the measures provided by the Internal regulations will apply. Norms of disciplinary proceedings and disciplinary measures define the grounds of disciplinary responsibilities, types of disciplinary fines, commencing disciplinary persecution, performing disciplinary proceedings and imposing liabilities of the staff and students. Considering the gravity of the violation, the sanction may be: *in case of staff - warning, reprimand, termination of labor relations, in case of student - admonition, reprimand, termination of status.* Responsibility increases in case of repeated violations.

During the site-visit, there was no indication suggesting cases of violation of ethical principles. Interview results evidenced that the representative council and academic staff are not well informed about their disciplinary responsibilities.

The HEI supports the prevention of plagiarism by using appropriate regulations. BATU has a developed special document about prevention and detecting plagiarism, followed by procedures for appropriate responses should plagiarism arise. There are indicated definitions of several types of plagiarism and standards for prohibiting it.

To prevent plagiarism, BATU has developed the anti-plagiarism programme (BATU has signed N40 Agreement on State Procurement (June 2019) with the NAPR "the Integrated Information Network Consortium of Georgian Libraries 2017".) This programme has been in use since June - two Master's theses were checked with the anti-plagiarism programme. Academic staff mentioned that they know about this programme confirmed that preventing plagiarism is taught within the following learning courses: Academic Writing, Legal Acts in the Field of Culture, Copyright and Adjoining Rights, Law of Culture.

The academic freedom of the academic staff and students is declared in the University Charter, as one of the principles of University management. According to the BATU regulations, academic staff are entitled to conduct teaching, research, creative work or publishing scientific work without interference.

BATU provides students with opportunities to elect non-compulsory academic components and to plan their education themselves. Academic personnel consider that the university follows the principles of academic freedom, as no obstruction to academic freedom of the university community was detected. Interviews with students evidenced they could not articulate the definition of academic freedom, however after an explanation was offered, they concurred that BATU follows the principles of academic freedom.

Evidences/indicators
- The website of BATU;
- The BATU Code of Ethics;
- The Rule of Plagiarism prevention and response;
- State procurement agreement N 40 (June 2019)
- The rule for regulating the learning process at the BATU
- The Provision of the Faculties
- Interview results – meetings with the Academic Councils; Representative Council; invited Staff and Students

Recommendations:
1. All students and staff should be appraised of the Code of Ethics
2. All students and staff should have a shared understanding of the principles of academic freedom and what this means in practice
3. Effective use of the anti-plagiarism programme should be implemented, including clear communication among students

Suggestions:
None – not applicable

Best Practices (if applicable):
None – not 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 has a policy for planning, designing, implementing and developing educational programmes.

Through the analysis of the relevant SER sections, further supported by information collated during the site visit, the panel were reassured that strategic implementation of the principles stated in the SER were apparent. It was evident that the HEI considers the relevance of the local and national labour markets, specifically through ongoing engagement with recent graduates and employers. There is evidence of appropriate methodologies for planning, designing and delivering their educational programmes.

There is evidence of a participatory approach to the development of educational programmes and quality enhancement. Programme development firmly relies on active input not only from the staff and students, but also recommendations and suggestions of the alumni and employers from respective markets. During the site-visit interviews with Programme Heads and Teaching Process Managers confirmed a shared understanding of the methodology (document provided before the visit Doc. 3.1.): before the elaboration of a programme, each Faculty convenes a self-evaluation team who conducts meetings internally to ensure the fitness of a new programme with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). New programmes are generally initiated at Departmental level – the Head of the Department normally leads this process. When making decisions on development of a programme, BATU considers feedback from alumni, students and employers. This was evidenced by interviews with the Programme Heads, alumni and employers. One example of such evidence is changes in student assessment upon re-accreditation of the Musical Performance programme.

BATU conducts frequent analysis of the labour market and employer needs, develops and sends out satisfaction surveys to students, alumni and employers. Inteviews with stakeholders confirmed the accuracy of information provided before the visit: alumni participated in tracer study regarding careers, unanimously endorsing the respective programmes as meeting the requirements of labour market needs. The staff recognize that the present methodology of planning and developing educational programmes is effective. The fact that the programs are re-accredited with very good results and some with monitoring is viewed as an indicator of quality. Partnership with other institutions, such as Tbilisi State Conservatoire (joint partnership in the project on Modernising Music Education) is also viewed as quality marker.

Given the specificity of the programmes, follow-up and recognition by the public/audience is largely seen as a key indicator of the external quality assurance. Despite a high level of consensus regarding the public recognition being a key driver of effectiveness of the programmes, there is a good practice of

external endorsement: 3 of the BATU programmes were evaluated by "Association of Georgian Universities".

BATU uses student surveys, academic staff surveys, course evaluations, monitoring and attendance form as a means to improve its educational programmes. During the interviews as part of the site-visit some participants mentioned that feedback from students and staff is usually taken into consideration, but there was no evidence of divergent thinking or contradiction with a few minor exceptions. In general, the panel found it highly unusual that there was a lack of critical analysis/reflective improvements regarding individual programmes, particularly among the programme heads, faculty and staff.

Evidences/indicators
- SER Chapter 3
- Annex 3.1 E
- Methodology for planning, designing and developing educational programmes
- Satisfaction surveys
- Regulatory Mechanism for Teaching Process
- Interviews with program heads and teaching process managers, faculty and invited staff
- Interviews with students, alumni and employers

Recommendations:
None - not applicable

Suggestions:
- A more formal process for keeping in regular contact with alumni should be designed and implemented
- BATU may wish to engage with developing a culture of critical reflection to enhance staff and student experience

Best Practices (if applicable):
None - not 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.

The programmes were evaluated (within the context of the authorization criteria) and found to be in line with higher education level. The information provided regarding course completion rates raised questions of suspension however the panel were satisfied that students attained average academic performance within reasonable timeframes.

Programmes enhance the development of field specific competences, creative and practical skills through employed teaching methodology. Teaching and learning at BATU involves a combination of theoretical and practical experiences that are relevant to the individual specialties. Apart from professional competences, programmes largely enable the formation of common cultural and social as well as personal and vocational competences needed for successful entry to the labour market. The combination of academic staff and visiting specialists helps to ensure that the range of skills required within the specialist nature of each discipline is appropriately supported.

The programmes provide students with opportunities to elect non-compulsory components, providing highly individualized learning experiences for their students.

Again, BATU relies heavily upon the range of internal and external surveys to ensure that the programmes achieve their stated aims and objectives. The panel would've welcomed some evidence of progressive thinking within the context of developing their programmes, content or learning methodologies.

Evidences/indicators
- SER Chapter 3   - Methodology for planning, designing and developing educational programmes   - Satisfaction surveys   - Regulatory Mechanism for Teaching Process   - Interviews with program heads and teaching process managers, faculty and invited staff   - Interviews with students, alumni and employers
Recommendations:
None – not applicable
Suggestions:
The panel encourages BATU to consider ways to inculcate a culture of experimentation to further develop a leadership role in shaping the arts sector in Georgia and internationally.
Best Practices (if applicable):
None – not applicable
Evaluation   ☒ Complies with requirements   ☐ Substantially complies with requirements   ☐ Partially complies with requirements   o ☐ 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.

Overall, the panel was satisfied that the assessment of learning outcomes, and the institutional understanding of this methodology was widely understood and embedded as assessment practice. The panel noted that discipline specific practices were appropriately enacted. The annexes provided detailed their approach to Quality assurance monitoring mechanisms (2.13 – Procedure for applying

Quality Evaluation Results). The panel was satisfied that the procedures are understood and embedded into organisational practice. During the site-visit however, the panel did discover an error in grading as follows:

The Programme description of History and Theory of Art states that the Master Thesis is assessed with maximum 100 points, however, in a randomly selected Assessment Report from 2017 the expert panel discovered erroneous distribution of points in summative assessment that resulted in a higher overall grade. To illustrate the case, midterm assessment grades were distributed as follows:

First midterm exam- 20/ 30,
Second midterm exam- 33/30
Summary of midterm assessment- 53.

On the other hand, Master Thesis Defense point was distributed as follows: Assessor 1- 39points, Assessor 2 – 38points, Assessor 3 – 38 points. Final Exam GPA- 38 points. Final Assessment of the module: 91 points.

This suggests that the second midterm exam grade was adjusted to result in a higher overall midterm grade which ultimately resulted in a higher final grade. Experts were promptly provided with a sample assessment rubric for MA Thesis (Clothing Design), where no major incongruence or gaps were discovered. Nevertheless, the panel concluded that the assessment criteria for the Master's Thesis are not quite transparent and does not ensure equal and fair approach in practice.

Whilst there was no further evidence to support that this was common practice – it was verbally stated that the student was an "A" student. This commentary is somewhat alarming, as there should be no unconscious bias present when completing marking protocols. BATU may wish consider steps such as enhanced marking training to assure themselves that marking is fair and transparent overall, adopting the principles of a fair and transparent system which promotes the improvement of student's academic performance.

The panel was satisfied through student consultation that students are clear about their responsibilities, systems and regulations relating to assessment. Students understood they have the right of appeal – the panel observed that this was not commonly enacted. The panel received examples of syllabi, feedback provided to students and were satisfied that students are informed in their learning, their assessments and were supported in their learning overall.

Evidences/indicators
- SER Chapter 3   - Regulatory Mechanism for Teaching Process   - Interviews with programme heads and teaching process managers, faculty and invited staff   - Exemplar submissions and marking outcomes provided upon request (site-visit)

Recommendations:
1. BATU should consider and adopt assessment practices which ensure marking errors such as the example above is detected and corrected.
2. BATU should seek best practice in the sector to consider assessment practices which ensure unconscious bias is not present.

Suggestions:
• The panel found some small errors such as: syllabus of the Module Master Thesis needs to be revised relative to the Master Program (there are some typos that are only relevant to BA program). An audit of documentation would be useful to ensure consistency across levels.

Best Practices (if applicable):
None – not applicable

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

4. Staff of the HEI

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

4.1. Staff Management
o HEI has staff management policy and procedures that ensure the implementation of educational process and other activities defined in its strategic plan.   o HEI ensures the employment of qualified academic/scientific/invited/administrative/ support staff.
Academic and administrative staff are appointed through an open competition every 6 years. The number of staff representatives appointed by the faculty council is based upon the needs of programmes taught in the faculty. The panel were satisfied that procedures were objective and appropriate to attract suitably qualified staff. However, the procedure of hiring staff at BATU would attract more highly-qualified employees if criteria such as knowledge of English language, active engagement in a relevant professional field (in addition to the educational requirements of the post) were clearly emphasized during the recruitment process.   The panel could not clearly observe benchmarks set by BATU for its staff in order to effectively carry out its educational/research/creative/performing activities.   Academic staff makes quite an effort to be involved in educational, research, creative, performing and other important decision-making processes. For example, thanks to cooperative contacts of BATU academic staff with local field professionals and colleagues outside the HEI, they constantly strive to keep connection between student activities and real time working environment.   Based amongst others on questionnaires worked out by BATU Quality Assurance department it was evidenced that a staff evaluation system is in place, and that staff were aware of the system. The

quality or effectiveness of implementing training or enhancement activities for staff was unclear. The reason therefor might be the fact that the training programs don't really target the specific needs defined to improve specific pedagogical skills and qualification of academic staff. The system utilized a range of methods, including staff surveys and feedback to evaluate staff on each structural unit. Administrative and academic staff were aware of this system. The need for the professional development of staff is defined by the faculty quality assurance representatives however it was cited that for further training which is sector-leading, often knowledge of English language is required.

The academic/invited staff of BATU participate in exchange programmes, international and other cultural or field specific activities organized by the institution or generated by the Ministry of Culture of the region. However, the panel of experts could not observe an elaborated approach and strategy for the professional development of the staff, or any aspiration to focus exclusively on specific pedagogical needs and to improve relevant professional skills.

BATU Strategy Development Plan evidences the prioritization of internationalization. However, different groups of BATU representatives confirmed that the institution is not ready to receive visiting international staff and students, nor to adequately prepare local staff and students to fully benefit from such visits. Specific plans are not in place to train staff to facilitate international developments although this was identified as an issue in the self-evaluation report. This is one area whereby staff qualifications do not substantively align with the strategic direction of BATU, however it is recognised that staff qualifications are broadly in line with HEI qualification requirements.

Though most of the issues and factors to be improved are stated in the self-evaluation document and emphasized by the management and administration representatives of BATU, the same self-critical position is clearly missing in verbal statements of academic staff and students.

Evidences/indicators

- Self-evaluation report;
- Meetings with Head of Human Resources Management and Office Work, Law Department, academic staff, invited staff, university quality assurance representatives, lifelong learning center.

Recommendations:

1. BATU should define the specific needs of pedagogical skills and organize relevant professional training for its academic/invited (as well as administrative and support staff) when advertising for new staff.
2. BATU should put a greater emphasis on English language learning strategy for students and staff, hire highly qualified teachers and regularly control the learning outcomes and quality, ensuring this is appropriately planned for financially.
3. Age diversification of academic staff is highly recommended in order to make the educational process more dynamic and effective.
4. BATU should clearly define benchmarks for its staff in order to effectively carry out its educational/research/creative/performing activities.

Suggestions:

- BATU may wish to consider further supporting the lifelong learning center in its work to integrate its function as a staff development center.

- In order to enhance the internationalization process, English language knowledge should be set as one of the criteria when hiring academic/invited staff.

Best Practices (if applicable):
- Excellent communication between academic staff and students that facilitates the learning process well.
- Excellent intercommunication between the faculty deans, programme heads and academic staff of different faculties, enabling useful exchange and multidisciplinary experience.
- The gender balance among the academic staff is appropriate.

Evaluation

☐ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

☒ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

4.2. Academic/Scientific and Invited Staff Workload

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

The self-evaluation document states that 100 percent of academic staff of BATU have primary affiliation to the institution, which is a positive and notable practice ensuring implementation of educational programmes and proper fulfilment of creative/performing activities and function/duties assigned to them. This statement was reviewed by the panel of experts whilst meeting with academic representatives of the institution. The Panel found the abovementioned affiliation statistic was due to the fact that BATU is the only HEI in the region operating in creative and performing field causing a lack of competition amongst the academic staff. As a result of this circumstance, the Panel came to the conclusion that the affiliation criteria are not fully considered and maintained by the HEI.

The majority of academic staff, including affiliated personnel, are additionally employed on an external basis, which in fact is an accepted practice if all rules according to Georgian legislation are correctly met/fulfilled: only part-time working schedule in specific type of institution, with specific status and specific maximum of working hours is permitted. From this perspective the panel identified a potential risk in relation to staff retention. Human Resources and Law Department representatives mentioned that the growth of academic staff is a target benchmark of the HEI.

Alongside the external contracts, panel of experts could observe minor transgression regarding workload rules (according to Georgian legislation) within the Institution. In several cases the sum of legally admissible working hours (on permanent plus on hourly bases) is exaggerated. The panel found six specific examples however will not attributed named staff members in this report.

Evidences/indicators
- Self-evaluation report; section 4
- Affiliation document
- Academic/invited staff load circuits
- Meetings with: Head of Human Resources Management and Office Work, Law Department, academic staff, faculty deans.

Recommendations:

1. BATU should review the status and workload data of each affiliated academic staff in order to maintain a fair and sustainable proportion of reward/responsibilities and to enable academic staff to be fully involved in everyday life of the HEI.
2. Workload of BATU academic staff within the framework of the institution itself should be better defined and monitored in order to enhance the teaching/research quality within the institution.
3. Formally include language requirements as part of ongoing professional development activities

Suggestions:

- Consider growing investment in Academic Staff to enhance learning results.

Best Practices (if applicable):

None - not applicable

Evaluation

☐ Complies with requirements

☒ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

5. Students and Their Support Services

HEI ensures the development of student-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.

Prior to the site-visit, the panel received a vast amount of information as Annexes to the Self Evaluation Report (SER) – all of which checked by the panel of experts. It was noted that specific regulatory student documents must be available in English language as well, furthermore benefiting their internationalization plans. All regulations accorded with the criteria above were observed through the documentation provided by BATU.

All documents are in line with current legislation. The panel specifically noted the appropriateness of 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. Current students (whom the panel met) were aware of the rights and obligations within the student contract, albeit that some detail was not necessarily easily recalled at the time of questioning. BATU has all abovementioned documents available in Georgian language which is in accordance to their mission. Information regarding these documents is public and is easily accessible to

everyone – whilst noting that the university Web-page is at present incomplete, the aforementioned documents could be found on the following links:

http://batu.edu.ge/main/page/2-32/index.html Specifically, the students' guideline documents would benefit from being described in plain language to ensure the key messages are effectively disseminated.

Furthermore, additional documents were requested on-site. All requested documents were promptly provided, and a responsible person helped experts to understand the priorities that EMIS platform (see section 7) will have after its successful implementation. This will be a valuable factor for student support in the future.

After reviewing student contract sample (provided prior to site visit) - it is justified to point out that it is in line with legislation however BATU may wish to seek best practice to ensure the contract is effective in setting out student expectations – specifically clarifying intellectual property rights whilst enrolled as a student.

Evidences/indicators

- Interviews with: members of Internal Quality Assurance office; meeting with the faculty deans; Representative Council; meeting with the heads of the teaching process Managers; Law Department; The Information Technology Service; Academic stuff; Creative Project Management and Student Career Support Departments; Lifelong Learning Center; Meeting with students; meeting with members of SSG; Alumni; Head of the Library; Department of Economic support; Employers; Head of Administrations
- BATU Website
- EMIS PLATFORM (Nonoperational mode)

Recommendations:

None – not applicable

Suggestions:

- It would be beneficial for everyone if University includes in the contract a paragraph regarding copyright and Law on the property right over the student's work.
- The following documents should be available in English: Regulations for assignment, suspension and termination of student status, mobility, qualification granting and recognition of education and Code of Ethics.
- The students' guideline documents would benefit from being described in plain language to ensure the key messages are effectively disseminated

Best Practices (if applicable):

None – not applicable

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

It was evident during the site-visit that BATU has a rich student-centred environment which makes it easy for students to reach out to the Dean, the Head of the Programme or, in some circumstances, the Rector or Vice-Rector. The panel noted that student support at this stage has been largely reliant on informal interactions between students themselves and between students and academic staff. The panel observed that students are loyal to the institution and its staff are dedicated and eager to provide students with the assistance they require. The fact that BATU is art oriented and almost every faculty has a curriculum where students have a lot of group work simplifies the matter and allows constant verbal interaction between academics and students. On the other hand, this is an environment in which responsibilities relating to student support are not always clearly understood. The panel were satisfied with the support provided (consulting services to plan educational and academic performance) however a formalization of this work may result in better equity/parity of student support.

Whilst Student Self Government (SSG) is responsible for student support services - there is also a department for Career support responsible for liaising with employers, conducting surveys, assisting students in finding internships and helping them with their portfolios and/or CVs. The panel observed that whilst elements of this function are relatively new to BATU that this system received consistently high feedback from staff and students and therefore can be assumed to be functioning efficiently.

Representatives of SSG demonstrated that they had a clear understanding of the SER, and of the institution's internal quality assurance arrangements (on-site meeting with the panel). By contrast, the wider group of students lacked a full understanding of such matters as the internal structure of the institution, and its policies and procedures with (for example, plagiarism). During the interviews, it was superficially mentioned that BATU engages with first year students during first week of enrolment and provides them all necessary information through large auditorium meetings. The panel concluded that the institution should conduct similar events on a more frequent basis thereby ensuring that key information is provided not only to newly admitted students but also those who transfer to the institution through the mobility scheme.

Students often use SSG as the first point of contact. SSG is also the main point of contact for questions concerning extracurricular activities, as well such matters as scholarships, regulations, the student contract or other academic matters. It is important, therefore, that on receipt of an enquiry SSG directs students to the relevant member of staff or department; and, in the event of a dispute between a student and the institution it would be the right, but not a responsibility of a Lawyer, or a department of Law to brief the student on his or her legal rights and explain the institution's internal regulations and procedures that they will need to follow. Unusually, there were no cases so far when student had any issues in regard to code of ethics or Plagiarism, and it was noted that the function of the Law department is not clear to the most of students. They do not consider it a support service for them.

Operating within such a small institution, SSG maintains close contact with students and its representatives displayed a high level of commitment to their work.

Websites are an important source of information for students, ensuring that they can access the range of support services provided by an institution. BATU's website is in need of updating, and it has been

noted already that it does not publish English language versions of key documents. The website is, nevertheless a useful resource. In particular, it provides relevant information directly to students. It would have been better if webpage could provide weekly schedules and/or programme descriptions, or if it could allow students to register online for their subjects and electives (further detail in section 7 of the report).

The SER and the documentation supplied to the panel provided little evidence of the involvement of alumni in such academic matters, yet during the site visit and interviews they all proved to be involved in improving the quality of the institution through some recommendations and participating in different surveys but they were not involved in creating SER.

It was noted in Section 5.1 that almost 50% of BATU's students have suspended status and that the panel was told that this is mainly due to students' financial, personal or domestic circumstances. The panel concluded that the provision of scholarships for students could lead to a reduction in the number of suspended students and result in a corresponding increase in completion rates. despite the fact that on the meeting it was stated that Since this document was prepared the rate of students with suspended status has decreased to bare minimum of 20 %, as they have administered some changes in the methodology for paying the fee. Which was delegated to be separated in three stages rather then as one whole amount payed at the beginning of the study period. BATU does provide some minor scholarships, which are a definitive for increase in student motivation and support. BATU also offers other forms of financial encouragement which include reductions in the fee charged to students. For example, students who are part of the orchestra are allowed to study for free.

Evidences/indicators
- Interviews with: members of Internal Quality Assurance office; meeting with the faculty deans; Representative Council; meeting with the heads of the teaching process Managers; Law Department; The Information Technology Service; Academic stuff; Creative PRoject Management and Student Career Support Departments; Lifelong Learning Center;Meeting with students; meeting with members of SSG; Alumni; Head of the Library; Department of Economic support; Employers; Head of Administration   - BATU Website   - EMIS PLATFORM (Nonoperational mode)   - SER – section 5

Recommendations:
None – not applicable

Suggestions:
- Formalisation of student support practices including student/alumni ambassador   - Consider a student centred welcome week or induction followed up by key all-student activities throughout the year   - Utilise additional income generation to offer further student scholarship or financial support   - Ensure ongoing website development to disseminate key information for students

Best Practices (if applicable):
None – not 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
o HEI, based on its type and specifics of its fields, carries out research/creative activities. o Ensuring the effectiveness of doctoral research supervision o HEI has public, transparent and fair procedures for the assessment and defense of dissertations which are relevant to the specifics of the field

Given the specificity of the institution's type, research activities are not at the core of the institutional mission, yet the mission comes to reflect research as an integral part of BATU's educational and creative activities. It is evident from both the documentary analysis and group interviews that development of creative and research work is stimulated by organizing conferences, public lecture series, masterclasses, local and international projects. Academic staff and students participate in local and international conferences and culture and art festivals such as Folk and Church Music International Festival and Conference, Academic Staff International Conference about culture and art themes, workshops and masterclasses from foreign and Georgian artist and area specialists, Student Local and International Conferences. Funding for these activities are almost exclusively provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Adjara. Although the interviewees confirm that the funding for such activities are almost always readily available, experts believe this to be an institutional risk. The limited number of institutionally driven international projects and international consortia minimize the potential for obtaining extramural funding which is essential for realizing the university's research mission and professional growth of students and staff.

BATU occupies a specific niche in the Adjara region with respect to arts education programs. SER and the document on Development Strategy of the University as an Institution Conducting Fundamental and Applied Researches, Creative and Performing Activities states that in accordance to its mission the university strives to obtain a status of a regional hub of culture and art, "supporting the development of creative and research activities; creating the environment equipped with the latest techniques necessary for educational, creative and scientific activities, providing with methods and information." The panel agree that these are important and ambitious goals noting this aspiration requires substantial amount of funding. However, institutional funds for research is scarce. It is therefore, not quite clear at this point from the strategic plan or from the interviews how the institution plans to obtain money for the ample amount of advancement activities planned, which undoubtedly has a potential to strengthen research and creative mission of BATU.

Within the context of a Teaching Arts University, the panel inquired about the supervision of Master Thesis. Although supervision is a responsibility of academic staff and bound by contract, in reality it is largely misunderstood. Discussions with academic staff members revealed that many are not aware of

their supervisory functions and have little or no role in assisting a student through the process of preparing an MA thesis. When asked what they understand of supervision, they placed focus on what the student does, how the work is selected and not how they themselves critically view or understand their function. Unfortunately, we didn't have an opportunity to interview master students therefore this observation is largely based on interviews with academics during the site-visit.

The Master Thesis for creative programmes is evaluated on the basis of two components: performance of the material (i.e. theatrical performance, or musical piece) and critical analysis of the performed material. MA thesis at the Faculty of Music, for instance, consists of 20-25 page analytical writing, which is not a research project, but rather a critique of the musical piece, however it is obligatory for a student to follow the principles of academic writing as such. According to the study programme, students are introduced to the concept of Plagiarism within the course of Academic Writing in the first semester of BA programme. The panel observed that this one course during the year one is simply not sufficient to produce a high quality Master Thesis 5 years later. Even if we consider the specificities of the programmes, a refresher course or at least some form of a training is recommended for production of quality MA project during the first year of Masters so that the student can produce a structured piece of analytical writing or classical research work (depending on the profile of the programme).

Documentary analysis of provided abstracts of MA projects revealed a diversity of research projects. Analysis of one random master thesis suggests the need for more detailed assessment rubric for Master Thesis.

Evidences/indicators

- BATU Mission and Strategic Development Plan (2019-2025)
- BATU Action Plan (2019-2021)
- Teaching Process Regulatory Rule
- Research Regulatory Rule
- Rule for Regulating Publishing
- BSU publications – conference materials, research abstracts
- Planned research projects
- Development Strategy of the University as an Institution Conducting Fundamental and Applied Researches, Creative and Performing Activities
- Interview results

Recommendations:

1. Implement a clear training programme for the supervision of Masters level work
2. Within the context of a Teaching University, design and implement a strategy to showcase/embed research within the teaching activities of the University
3. Ensure an understanding of plagiarism is better cascaded across the student body, supported by enhanced detection methods

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Suggestions:

None – not applicable

Best Practices (if applicable):

None – not applicable

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

6.2. Research Support and Internationalisation

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

BATU 's strategic plan emphasizes the institution's aspiration towards stronger and more vibrant research culture. Strategic Objectives 2 and 3 focus on creative work and research and publishing activity respectively. A variety of planned activities listed under these objectives attest that the institution takes scientific research seriously in the next seven years. Although BATU is not exclusively a research institution and no plans are made for doctoral programs at this stage, the promotion of research and international collaborations are an appropriate means to participate internationally. This aspiration is communicated both in the strategic plan and emphasized during the interviews. During the site-visit, interviewees concluded that the key obstacle in this process is the language barrier, which significantly reduces the chances for building stronger, outward oriented research culture.

The panel observed that the University leadership team supports and encourages scientific-research activity and creative work of the academic staff. There is a support system for research, development and creative work in place. The support system is not only institutional, but also state-wide. Regarding funding, experts noted that funding for research constitutes less than 0.2 % (5200 GEL) of the institution's budget- 2 623 762,72 GEL. This was further discussed during the interviews with the leadership. The justification was as follows: this small institutional budget is only used to sponsor conferences and scientific proceedings. When there is a need for additional funds, external funding is almost always readily available from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport of Autonomous Republic of Adjara. In addition, Batumi City Hall and Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation are main donors for research grants. Overall, BATU is immensely privileged to have a full state support in all of its educational, research and creative activity.

BATU operates fair and transparent procedures for funding research. Regulatory Mechanism for Funding Scientific-Research activities is a key document governing selection and operation of research activities. Funds are allocated for student research and creative projects as required. Whilst most of the research related activities are still in the planning stage, it is not possible at this stage to evaluate the effectiveness of this mechanism. As stated, 2019-2025 Strategic development plan considers creation of Ethno Music Research Laboratory with a focus on field-specific research activities. The panel observed an institutional appetite for developing a research culture however much work requires to be undertaken to fully realise this aspiration.

Institution occasionally allocates funds for workshops and conferences for foreign and Georgian professionals and sponsors experts' travel and accommodation. Research and creative work is regarded as a key driver for effective internationalisation and an opportunity for sharing knowledge, professional development, partnerships, etc. In addition to the commitment to its institutional mission, BATU strives to attract new professionals to research and creative activities: there is a plan to support involvement of

young professionals in research and scientific conferences. For example, academics (who are enrolled in doctoral programs at other universities and teach at BATU at the same time), have full institutional support for their professional development. They are privileged to receive funding for their participation in local and international conferences. Creative work is largely conducted within the program of Performing Arts with participation of affiliated and invited staff through their individual creative performances. Early career professionals are mainly selected on the basis of their innovative approaches, creative work, expertise and communication skills. In addition to attracting early career professionals, the university also plans to train them. One initiative in planning is creation of Ethno music Laboratory, collection of material and preparation for performance.

BATU has its own Publishing Department which operates under the auspices of the Vice Rector for Educational and Scientific Affairs and in conjunction with Scientific Department (structurally this is one unit). The Department coordinates university-wide scientific publishing plan as per established priorities of the involved academic departments (Faculties). University publishes Scientific Journal- "Studies in Arts Criticism" (The next issue is planned in 2020) and occasionally sponsors the visit of foreign colleagues to Batumi. For example, International expert in culture Tim Williams who participated in developing Georgia's Culture Strategy was invited to give a series of public lectures.

The relationship between teaching/learning and research projects/ creative work is regulated by Article 5 of Regulatory Mechanism of Scientific and Research activities. The link between teaching and creative work is well understood by leadership, staff and students and is reflected in the content of educational programs. However, the panel concludes, that internationalization of teaching and learning activities should not be sporadic and practiced only in forms of masterclasses, workshops and conferences, but a more structured approach is advisable through bilateral exchanges of students and staff. Furthermore, this will offer opportunities for staff to engage with a wider range of experimentation through diverse and inter-disciplinary research fields thus enhancing reputation, outputs and enhancing the student experience.

It is widely understood in the institution that a substantial work needs to be done for internationalization of the programmes and creative research activity. Partnerships with European institutions, training of academic staff in scientific-databases and their application, training for publishing in international peer –reviewed journals is vital for internationalization. There are plans to develop joint master programmes with foreign universities however this will require academic staff and early career professionals to acquire appropriate English language skills. Recent partnerships with National Science Library of Georgia has enabled access to international scientific databases, but those databases are mostly used by the academic staff and rarely or almost never by students.

Evidences/indicators
- Research and creative activities of the academic staff
- BATU strategic plan
- Scientific journals and conference programs
- Budget allocated for research and creative work
- Memoranda and partnerships with foreign institutions
- Self-evaluation report (section 6)
- Interview results: selected staff members; Quality Assurance team

Recommendations:

1. BATU should design and adopt a clear strategy for implementing internationalisation through research activities with the aim of enhancing the staff and student experience and raising the standard of research activity 2. BATU should ensure an appropriate structured English langugae development plan is designed and implemented
Suggestions: • BATU may wish to consider ways to develop and embed a research culture within the institution – through creative outputs and knowledge exchange activity in addition to more traditional forms of scientific research.
Best Practices (if applicable):
None – not applicable
Evaluation ☐ Complies with requirements ☐ Substantially complies with requirements ☒ Partially complies with requirements ☐ Does not comply with requirements
6.3. Evaluation of Research Activities
HEI has a system for evaluating and analysing the quality of research/creative-arts activities, and the productivity of scientific-research units and academic/scientific staff.
Following BATU's Rule of Evaluation of the Activity of the Academic and Invited Staff approved by the board on July 31, 2018 the scientific-research work is evaluated according to several components: participation in conferences, winning scientific grant projects/receiving high evaluation on non-winning grant proposals, inclusion of master students in scientific research projects, supervision, scientific articles or book publications. These activities are evaluated by the head of Scientific and Publishing Department who ensures that the academic and invited staff have access to adequate information and that they complete the tasks. The evaluation conducted between 2013-2019 positively assessed BATU as conducive to scientific research, however it also revealed the lack of initiative from the academic staff. This is well understood by the university leadership and the head of Scientific and Publishing department. There is a system of incentives in place – one time financial award for those academics turning 60, which is certainly positive practice, but does not incentivize enhanced quality of outputs. Further analysis is needed to find out why the current mechanism is not working in the institution where 100 % of the academic staff is affiliated. Feedback needs to be enhanced if the current mechanism of performance incentives is not working. Fragmented practice of professional development schemes was also highlighted during the interviews during the site-visit. It is important that these opportunities lead to efficient outcomes and effective policies and that the evaluation of produced scientific work is not merely of formal nature.
Evidences/indicators 1. Rule of Evaluating the work of Academic and Scientific Personnel; 2. Workload of the academic staff 3. Rule of Affiliation

| 4. SER (section 6) |
| 5. Interviews results |

Recommendations:
1. BATU reviews policy to incalcate the behaviours required to enhance staff research outputs
2. BATU adopts a reviewed approach to staff professional development to enhance research outputs

Suggestions:

None – not applicable

Best Practices (if applicable):

None – not applicable

Evaluation

☐ Complies with requirements

☒ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

7. Material, Information and Financial Resources

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

7.1 Material Resources

- o The institution possesses or owns material resources (fixed and current assets) that are used for achieving goals stated in the mission statement, adequately responds to the requirements of educational programmes and research activities, and corresponds to the existing number of students and planned enrolment.
- o HEI offers environment necessary for implementing educational activities: sanitary units, natural light possibilities, and central heating system.
- o Health and safety of students and staff is protected within the institution.
- o HEI has adapted environment for people with special needs

The resources assessment took place during the site visit at the BATU From 1st till 3rd of October. Land Plot of the university is 4671,20 m², within a Four Floor building. All spaces with natural and artificial lighting. Electricity, HVAC, etc. The Building belongs to the Cultural Heritage of Batumi. It has underwent appropriate renovations. Visually, its structural conditions seems fine. Each Floor has a number of Classrooms, of all different shapes and function. The building has other facilities such as Library, Administration (office rooms) Theatre, Practice halls, Computer Classrooms, bigger lecture hall, etc. The estate is further complemented by a student centered foyer and recreation space. The students are given autonomy in designing and utilizing these key spaces. During the site-visit, the panel was satisfied that a café facility was well underway in its delivery. There is also small Doctors office on the ground floor closer to the green rooms of theatre. The central Administration and teacher's rooms are allocated on all floors, each serving different functions.

According to Self-Evaluation Report and according to the University Leadership, they currently have 397 students planning to increase up to 900 students.(which is 400 students less then what they originally had – due to new survey of the market, student demand, and new building with revised

material resources). Following the site-visit, it has become evident that University has clearly defined its own material Resources and considered them while creating the new student body calculations.

According to the site visit, judging from visual observations, Building has Two internal staircases, one Elevator which services all floors. The building has been recently remodeled and is planned in accordance with new regulations (decree 41 on Architecture – Fire Safety) and they have provided proof of expertise of the project by შპს „ზაისი და კომპანია "A ტიპის ინსპექტირების ორგანოს აჭარის ფილიალი. dated August 13th 2019.

It was observed that the building is adapted for people with movement disabilities. The Accessible Toilet was located on the Ground Floor, yet during the visit it was observed to be incomplete, as it lacked appropriate railings for handicapped use to be fixed next to the toilet seat, and the toilet itself has to be adjusted for the handicapped use. (University has shown that this will be completed shortly)

All Material Resources are under the lawful possession of the institution, and they correspond to the requirements for implementing educational programs and creative activities for existing and for planned student body. The panel was satisfied that the lawful possession of fixed assets is based on appropriate written agreements.

As Stated in the presented Documents, BATU integrates many programmes from the faculty of music, together with other art programs such as Architecture, and Visual Arts. Due to the newly renovated building Acoustics travel quite vastly in the building and it creates a problem for other classes to be conducted without interruptions. This was stated many times during interviews with students, Alumni, employers, etc. at some point this even caused some minor problems for interviewees during the visit. Panel of Experts, recommends University to Consider Creating Acoustic Barriers between Classrooms to enhance the learning experience for staff and students alike.

In regard to the Document titled: "მე-7 სტანდარტის განმარტება" which was presented to the Panel and to the National Center of Educational Quality Enhancement, Panel Of Experts has identified, that University has Completed the procedures and is now in compliance to this standard.

Evidences/indicators
- Interviews with: members of Internal Quality Assurance office; meeting with the faculty deans; Law Department; Academic stuff; Meeting with students and SSG; Head of the Library; Department of Economic support; Employers; Head of Administrations; Rector   - BATU Website   - Site visit – tour of buildings and on-site resources

Recommendations:
1. Finish all the necessary installations for accessible toilet facilities (staff and students with disabilities) 2. Review noise bleed levels: consider the installation of appropriate acoustic treatments

Suggestions:
Additional fundraising practice to be implemented in order to obtain more financial independence.

Best Practices (if applicable):
None - not 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

The Library at BATU is well equipped. The main space is located on Ground Floor and is separated into two spaces. The main Library and reading Hall is equipped with computers, natural light and bookshelves that include all relevant books and CDs for all accredited programs. The second spaces is used for storage, and is easily accessible. All randomly selected books by the panel of experts have been identified to be documented and/or archived in the Library system in accordance to regulations. Library has a potential to grow, and in the three-year action plan the University has allocated substantial sums of money (approximately 5 000 gel per year) to develop the library stock. Library Informational Service includes access to Library Catalogues from the webpage, or from private PC's which will have access from within University boundaries, (University WIFI). Through utilizing the search system, it is possible to see only the availability of the books themselves and where can these books, or CDs - be found, but it will be impossible to have access to the text (content) of the book or the content of the CD. Students are also capable to search on EBSCO for any needed material for their private research or creative work from any computer.

It was noted that there were no possibilities for students to access printers, copying, scanners etc. – except through requesting the permission of the library staff. The panel noted that this was not necessarily an effective use of staff time and the self-service facilitates could be considered. Furthermore, BATU may wish to look at other library facilities at world-leading creative institutions. The lack of informal, comfortable and IT connected spaces limits the scope of work of students in the library. It was noted that a rather traditional approach to the provision of library services prevailed.

During the site visit, the Panel of Experts randomly selected books from different syllabi and searched them through the system. They were all evidently present in the system and in the Library. These books were:

- *B11g5* საქართველოს ეთნოგრაფია/ეთნოლოგია, თბ., 2010 – Bachelor programme
- *B8b16* ჰერბ სტოველი. რისკისთვის მზადყოფნა: მსოფლიო კულტურული მემკვიდრეობის მენეჯმენტის სახელმძღვანელო, - Bachelor programme
- M5b8-13.ბელერი. „ კინომონტაჟის ასპექტები". გამომც.„კენტავრი" -2006 წ - Master programme
- M8b2-2 ე.ჰ. გომბრიხი. ხელოვნების ამბავი. თბ. , 2012 -Master programme

- თ. გოგიჩაიშვილი. „ განვითარების ფსიქოლოგია", 2005
- ა. კლდიაშვილი, ნ დადანიძე „ სახვითი და გამოყენებითი ხელოვნება". (მასწავლებლის წიგნი. ელ ვერსია). თბილისი, 2018

The three-year action plan clearly states the Library needs to be developed on a yearly basis. As well there were some issues regarding money spent on the access to the EBSCO. According to the Document 7.8.12, University has only one-year long contract with access to EBSCO, and yearly expenditure sums up to 3412,72 gel. These expenses were not visible in the provided documents. The panel requested additional documents for clarification, which were promptly provided. Thanks to the detailed overview over the budget onsite, experts have identified that university has resources for the upcoming years. HEI has allocated over 11 000 gel, for the Service in informational technologies, and another 4000 gel for Programme package for Library for upcoming year.

Evidences/indicators
- Interviews with: members of Internal Quality Assurance office; meeting with the faculty deans; Law Department; Academic stuff; Meeting with students and SSG; Head of the Library; Department of Economic support; Employers; Head of Administrations; Rector
- BATU Website
- Site Visit additional documents requested (budget detail)

Recommendations:

None -not applicable

Suggestions:
- Self-service copying facilities
- Student-led development of modernization of library facilities such as relaxed, comfortable study pods; consultation spaces for group work and/or good IT connectivity

Best Practices (if applicable):

Bibliographical references stated in Syllabi's are all to be find in the Library archive.

Evaluation

☒ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

7.3 Information Resources

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

BATU is currently in the implementation stage of new informational services for the future benefit of the institution. Experts witnessed specific information programmes in place (and the functions that they will provide in the future), yet this does not mean that these programmes are fully introduced and shared between entire stuff and students. The Panel concluded that this topic is hard to evaluate as according to PDCA (Plan, Do, Check, Act,) scheme, BATU is at the stages between "Planning" and "Do"-ing.

BATU has planned to roll out two new informational platforms: EMIS and e-flow systems. EMIS will be used to manage multiple services and student information including student feedback; registrations for extracurricular activities; registration for electives; choosing programmes; seeing expenses through private (personal) window, as well as providing simplified e-mail communication between students and staff. It is a programme which will unite all functions for the benefit the university and once fully utilized it will have full potential to be considered as a best practice identified for the authorization visit. Due to the timeline of implementation, students and staff are not yet aware of it. Furthermore, not all functions have been initiated. During the site-visit, a personal demonstration was given upon request. This demonstration enabled the Panel to better understand the different functions planned. It was also evidenced (through budget documentation) that BATU is committed to have EMIS completely embedded within its environment during next one-year timeline.

The e-flow informational exchange platform also needs to be fully introduced in the university.

It was observed that the University Website needs to be updated more regularly and information on the webpage needs to be equal in both Languages. It has considerably less information available in English than in Georgian. This is necessary to realise internationalization ambitions as stated throughout the documents provided to the panel. Specifics include a more comprehensive student guide - on the webpage it only shows information regarding evaluation criteria; regulations for Assessment appeal; internal mobility regulations; Code of Ethics; etc. - none of which is meant to act as a student guide for incoming students. The page for Erasmus+ needs to have more information regarding memoranda, exchange possibilities, criteria and student experience information.

Business continuity plans were provided as part of the SER and annexes. Information regarding back-up processes was discussed with the Head of IT however it was stated that there was currently no cycle of protection for information on IT systems. This should be addressed.

Evidences/indicators
- Interviews with: members of Internal Quality Assurance office; meeting with the faculty deans; Law Department; Academic stuff; Meeting with students and SSG; Head of the Library; Department of Economic support; Employers; Head of Administrations; Rector
- BATU Website
- Site Visit – demonstration of systems
- Additional documentation provided upon request

Evaluation

☐ Fully complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

☒ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

Recommendations:
1. EMIS platform needs to be fully integrated.
2. E-flow needs to be fully integrated.
3. University webpage needs to be updated regularly inclusive of a full audit of what must be available in English as well as Georgian.
4. Cycle of systems backups and cyber-security must be planned and maintained.

Suggestions:
• The creation of a student guide/handbook which is comprehensive and accessible online

Best Practices (if applicable):
None – not applicable

7.4 Financial Resources

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

BATU is fortunate to be sponsored by local government. Its budget comprises core activity and specific developmental improvements. Its stability is supported by incoming students and the amount received from their annual payments. It is evident that University has spent a large sum of money for material resources and yet it still plans to increase theses expenses in the direction of creative research activities, internationalization focusing on self-improvement. BATU has diversified its financial sources which ensures adequate risk management - the revenue of the university mainly incorporates tuition fee added to the grant from the state. The existing structural units such as the Financial service answers directly to the Vice Chancellor and Rector. The Vice chancellor coordinates the activities and increase in budget for any particular projects.

All budgetary information requested and analyzed were within the scope of the expectations of the panel.

Evidences/indicators
• SER and annexes relating to budgetary control
• Site-visit meetings with senior management and accountants

Recommendations:
None - not applicable

Suggestions:
Consider continuing to seek to diversify income to better enhance the student experience

Best Practices (if applicable):
None - not applicable

Evaluation

☒ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements