



მანათლების ხარისხის განვითარების ეროვნული ცენტრი
NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

Accreditation Expert Group Report on Higher Education Programme

Doctoral programme in Educational Sciences
International Black Sea University

Date(s) of Evaluation 18 September 2019

Report Submission Date

15 November 2019

Tbilisi
2019

HEI's Information Profile

Name of Institution Indicating its Organizational Legal Form	International Black Sea University Legal Entity of Public Law
HEI's Identification Code	229275405
Type of Institution	University

Higher Education Programme Information Profile

Name of the Programme	Doctoral programme in Educational Sciences
Level of Education	Doctoral Studies
Qualification Granted Indicating Qualification Code	0301
Language of Instruction	English
Number of Credits	180
Programme Status (Authorized/Accredited/New)	New

Expert Panel Members

Chair (Name, Surname, University/organization/Country)	Cathal de Paor, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, Ireland
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Member (Name, Surname, University/organization/Country)	

Accreditation Report Executive Summary

- **General information on the education programme**

The Doctor in Education Sciences is a full-time programme taught in English with a minimum duration of three years offered in the Faculty of Education and Humanities. The programme comprises a core taught component with modules worth 50 ECTS, an elective component worth 10 ECTS, and a dissertation component worth 120 ECTS. The programme was first accredited in 2012. It offers two options – English Language Teaching and educational administration (i.e., leadership/management).

Brief overview of the accreditation site-visit

The site visit was conducted on Wednesday 18 September. It included meetings with the senior management in the university, quality office personnel, programme management, self-evaluation team, students, teaching staff, employers, alumni and other stakeholders.

- **Summary of education programme's compliance with the standards**

The programme is compliant with Standard 3, 4 and 5, and substantially compliant with Standards 1 and 2.

Summary of Recommendations

The programme team should continue the ongoing work of seeking optimum alignment between programme objectives, programme outcomes, and the module learning outcomes taking into account the research options it offers (English Language Teaching and Educational Administration).

The programme team should review the extent to which such the programme can satisfactorily enable students from a diverse range of academic disciplines at Master's level achieve doctoral-level outcomes in Education. It should also deepen the programme's objectives with regard to the mastery of disciplinary knowledge in the academic field of Education and in the use of educational research methods

The taught component should be further developed so that students' have acquired knowledge and skills in undertaking educational research at an advanced level. This would enable a more advanced treatment of research paradigms, epistemological issues, philosophical underpinnings, axiology and ethics, as well as the technical aspects of a broader range of methods (quantitative, qualitative and mixed), thereby supporting the more advanced research expertise and leadership qualities that the programme seeks to cultivate. Further provision for academic writing given the diversity in student intake is also recommended.

Greater awareness and access to a range of sources (books and journals) should be pursued so that students are fully equipped to perform as researchers in an international educational context. The importance of using empirical journals should be emphasised in the supervision process. The programme team has benchmarked various doctoral programmes in other countries, and has also sought the input of international experts. This work should continue on an on-going basis, and also involve students, and should include opportunities to consult and compare dissertations produced by students on other doctoral programmes

The programme team should further develop its partnership with educational partners in Georgia, and beyond, including national bodies involved in teacher professional development. The programme team already undertakes a range of monitoring and review activities. However, in general terms, further work should be undertaken to ensure that the results from such work are fully exploited and applied for the benefit of the programme.

The process of benchmarking, already commenced with six programmes in the submission, should be continued to further exploit what can be learned and applied from practice elsewhere. A record should be kept of how the benchmarking process has led to programme enhancement. In the same vein, the programme team should conduct a more detailed study of similar programmes available at foreign universities, showing how the proposed doctoral programme and finished student dissertation work corresponds and compares.

▪ **Summary of Suggestions**

The programme team should consider ways in which it can review the extent to which the programme can satisfactorily enable students from a diverse range of academic disciplines at Master's level achieve doctoral-level outcomes in Education. Currently, the programme is offered to students with a Master's degree in education, English (e.g. literature, philology), and educational psychology or a Master's level teacher's qualification. This makes the programme more appealing for a wider pool of candidates, but on the other hand, can mean the programme may not advance the students' knowledge of Education disciplinary knowledge and educational research to the required extent. The programme team should also consider its use of the term 'administration' to refer to one of the two options within the programme. Such a term may have different significance depending on the context, i.e., on the one hand, leadership/management, including the body of scholarly work in this areas, and on the other, administration of a more procedural nature.

The programme offers two options for students to choose from: English Language Teaching and educational administration (i.e., leadership/management). Consideration should be given to developing the Faculty's offering at Master level, for example, a Master's degree in Education which focuses on subject didactics. Such knowledge could be addressed effectively at this level, and leave the doctoral programme to focus on the development of graduates with advanced competence in educational research. The team could also consider adding additional elective courses to make the programme more tailored to the students' interests and prior

knowledge, and also consider ways to ensure that all students derive optimum benefit from the Professor's assistance congruent with programme outcomes at doctoral level.

The programme team could also usefully continue to review the alignment between programme objectives, programme outcomes and content. In line with the principles of constructive alignment, staff would present a more customised presentation of teaching methods in course documentation. Rubrics have been presented but these could also be further developed, so that they provide the kind of detail required to differentiate between levels of attainment, especially exemplary or outstanding performance and to guide students.

While some electives courses are provided, additional elective courses could make the programme more tailored to the students' interests and prior knowledge, and deepen their knowledge in Education. Core courses could also be reviewed on an ongoing basis with this in mind, for example, ensuring that all students derive optimum benefit from the Professor's assistance congruent with programme outcomes at doctoral level

Further opportunities for students to support their participation in the academic community in Education would also be advantageous, including student participation in international projects and international mobility. A further suggestion relates to the professional development of staff, for example, webinars and seminars by experts on the scholarship of teaching and learning in higher education, peer-observation.

As for quality assurance, there is a possibility to elaborate in greater detail the system of programme review, including detail on how the work of a programme board might contribute to the quality assurance. This could draw on feedback from stakeholders in relation to its design and delivery. As noted above, curriculum mapping can also be used to support programme quality and enhancement.

- **Summary of best practices (If Applicable)**

Students were complementary of the responsiveness of the programme co-ordinator and other staff in supporting them in their studies. The Faculty provides enhanced publication opportunities through its own peer-reviewed Journal of Education in Black Sea Region, thereby enabling students to contribute to the development of Education as a discipline. It also organizes annual conferences of young scholars in which students can also participate and disseminate their research. The system of co-supervision involving academic staff from foreign universities also adds to the student learning experience.

In case of accredited programme, summary of significant accomplishments and/or progress (If Applicable)

The programme has attracted students from neighbouring countries as well as from Georgia itself. Key programme staff have successfully used European projects as the basis for research in the past, providing doctoral students with valuable learning opportunities. The good practice observed and documented (such as the best practice outlines above) underlines the commitment of the programme team to developing graduates who are research active and provides the basis for an important contribution to the body of educational knowledge.

Compliance of the Programme with Accreditation Standards

1. Educational programme objectives, learning outcomes and their compliance with the programme

A programme has clearly established objectives and learning outcomes, which are logically connected to each other. Programme objectives are consistent with the mission, objectives and strategic plan of the institution. Programme learning outcomes are assessed on a regular basis in order to improve the programme.

1.1 Programme Objectives

Programme objectives define the set of knowledge, skills and competences the programme aims to develop in graduate students. They also illustrate the contribution to the development of the field and the society.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with standard requirements

The programme objectives define the set of knowledge, skills and competences and are linked to important needs in the development of the field of Educational Sciences and of society. As illustrated by the core and elective modules, while there is a focus on developing students as researchers, there is also an emphasis on developing the students as teachers (e.g., didactics), as well as leaders/administrators in higher education.

The programme objectives are presented in the form of a paragraph of text in the early part of the SER (Section 1.1), but elsewhere (p. 12, PhD Program-Eng Word document), they are presented in the four goals (beginning, ‘To educate highly-qualified education staff, who are aware of...’).

Overall, this shows that there is more than one focus, i.e., developing students as researchers, but also preparing students for work in teaching and leading in higher education. While this may help broaden the pool of interested applicants, given that students are eligible to the programme without a Master’s degree in the field of Educational Sciences, and while it may broaden the possible career options of the students, there is a need to ensure that the programme is ambitious in terms of the level of educational research expected. The development of educational researchers was a key issue raised during interviews. For example, programme leadership and management emphasised the importance of developing research capacity in the education sector, while employers also referred to the need for graduates having the advanced skills to carry out and critique research. This would be important for supporting the national education agenda in Georgia in an increasingly globalized and competitive educational landscape.

The programme is offered to students with a Master’s degree in education, English (e.g. literature, philology), and educational psychology or a Master’s level teacher’s qualification. Catering for these diverse needs makes the programme more appealing for a wider pool of candidates, and can enrich classroom interaction between students, but on the other hand, can mean the programme has more to do in order to advance the students’ knowledge of Education disciplinary knowledge and educational research to the required extent.

Given the programme goals with regard to educational research, and in line with good practice in doctoral education, this offering needs to be developed. This would enable

students to develop a sophisticated understanding and mastery of the knowledge skills and competences required at doctoral level, while pursuing an individualized pathway in line with their own academic plan. Otherwise the programme will not be well placed to realise its objectives.

Evidences/indicators

- Interviews with the representatives of the university, programme team, quality assurance office, academic staff, students; employers, alumni
- University website: <https://www.ibsu.edu.ge/en>
- Programme curriculum
- Self-Evaluation Report
- Programme External Expert Evaluation Report
- Syllabi of the courses

Recommendations:

- Extend and deepen the programme's objectives with regard to the mastery of disciplinary knowledge in the academic field of Education and in the use of educational research methods that graduates are expected to have developed by the end of the programme.

Suggestions for programme development:

- Review the extent to which such the programme can satisfactorily enable students from a diverse range of academic disciplines at Master's level achieve doctoral-level outcomes in Education
- With regard to the development of other programmes, (i.e., separately from the doctoral programme being reviewed here), consideration could also be given to developing the Faculty's offering at Master level, for example, a Master's degree in Education which focuses on areas such as didactics (one of the goals identified for the doctoral programme) or educational administration. Such knowledge could be addressed effectively at this level, and appeal to a wider range of candidates from various other disciplines. This would leave the doctoral programme focused more coherently on developing students' advanced skills in educational research and catering more exclusively for those candidates with a prior qualification in Education or cognate area.
- The programme team should also consider how it presents the programme in terms of nomenclature, particularly its use of the term 'administration' to refer to one of the two options within the programme. Such a term may have different significance depending on the context. Given that the programme team uses it to refer to leadership/management, including the body of scholarly work in this areas (as opposed to administration of a more procedural nature), it may be worthwhile emphasising this fact in all relevant situations, documentation, etc. This is particularly important where the programme is seeking to appeal to applicants from abroad who may have a different understanding of 'administration.'

- Continue to review the alignment between programme objectives, programme outcomes and content.

Best Practices (if applicable):

In case of accredited programme, significant accomplishments and/or progress

Evaluation

o Please mark the checkbox which mostly describes your position related to the programmes compliance with this specific component of the standard

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

1.2. Programme Learning Outcomes

- Programme learning outcomes describe knowledge, skills, and/or the sense of responsibility and autonomy, students gain upon completion of the programme;
- Programme learning outcomes assessment cycle consists of defining, collecting and analysing data;
- Programme learning outcomes assessment results are utilized for the improvement of the programme.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with standard requirements

The programme outcomes are listed according to the essential knowledge and understanding, skills and capacities, responsibility and autonomy that graduates of the programme will have developed. Consideration has therefore been given to outcomes which mobilise the affective or attitudinal domain, i.e., not just cognitive. This relates to developing student values and commitment as future leaders in the education community.

However, there is scope for further developing and refining these, resulting possibly in shorter outcomes, making them more precise, thereby ensuring that the mapping exercise can be more successful in identifying where in the programme particular knowledge skills and competences are being addressed.

It is also worth considering the extent to which the outcomes are supported by the individual modules. For example, one of the outcomes, ‘The student has the ability to work on one’s own research platform...’ is matched with the activity in the seminar on professional development (‘helping a BA student prepare a conference paper, co-authoring it’). The

match between both of these is not sufficiently apparent. A curriculum mapping exercise offers potential to help in achieving and maintaining a more complete alignment.

Evidences/indicators

- Interviews with the academic staff;
- Self-Evaluation Report
- Programme Curriculum
- Programme Learning Outcomes
- Benchmarking Document
- Programme external Evaluation Report
- Syllabi of the courses

Recommendations:

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Suggestions for programme development:

- A curriculum mapping exercise should be developed and undertaken on a routine and continuous basis involving all members of the programme team to ensure that the programme is addressing doctoral level outcomes in Education in an optimum manner. Such a curriculum map and the accompanying narrative should be more explicit in showing the correspondence between the overall programme outcomes and the design of particular components/modules (outcomes and content).

Best Practices (if applicable):

In case of accredited programme, significant accomplishments and/or progress

Evaluation

o Please mark the checkbox which mostly describes your position related to the programmes compliance with this specific component of the standard

- Complies with requirements
 Substantially complies with requirements
 Partially complies with requirements

Does not comply with requirements

Programme's Compliance with Standard

Standard	Complies with Requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially Complies with Requirements	Does not Comply with Requirements
Educational programme objectives, learning outcomes and their compliance with the programme	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			

2. Teaching methodology and organization, adequate evaluation of programme mastering

Programme admission preconditions, programme structure, content, teaching and learning methods, and student assessment ensure the achievement of programme objectives and intended learning outcomes.

2.1. Programme Admission Preconditions

Higher education institution has relevant, transparent, fair, public and accessible programme admission preconditions.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with standard requirements

Admission preconditions are defined in accordance with the Georgian legislation and take into consideration the specifics of the programme. Admission requires a Master's degree in Education, Psychology, or English Philology, or a 60-credit teacher training programme certificate. As stated previously, this adds to the diversity of the group, and has the potential to enhance the student learning experience and class discussion, exchange of experience, etc. However, it also presents a challenge in terms of enabling all students to achieve doctoral level outcomes in Education, where students are expected to operate at the forefront of Education as a discipline.

The candidates are expected to submit a published article, and also, a dissertation proposal at application stage. This requirement ensures that candidates already possess some research skills, and is logically related to the programme content, learning outcomes. All candidates are required to have a C1 level in English, and must take the university internal exams (unless they have a relevant international certificate). The information presented in the self-assessment document was confirmed during the interview with University administration. Admissions preconditions and procedures are fair, public and accessible on the University webpage.

Evidences/indicators

- Preconditions for admission to the Education Sciences Doctoral programme;
- University website: www.ibsu.edu.ge
- Interview results.

Recommendations:

- Establish a review mechanism that can be undertaken over a period of time, examining the extent to which students from a diverse range of academic disciplines at Master's level are enabled to achieve doctoral-level outcomes in Education
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Suggestions for programme development:

- Establish a review mechanism that can be undertaken over a period of time, examining the extent to which students from a diverse range of academic disciplines at Master's level are enabled to achieve doctoral-level outcomes in Education

Best Practices (if applicable):**In case of accredited programme, significant accomplishments and/or progress****Evaluation**

- Please mark the checkbox which mostly describes your position related to the programmes compliance with this specific component of the standard

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

2.2 Educational Programme Structure and Content

Programme is designed according to HEI's methodology for planning, designing and developing of educational programmes. Programme content takes programme admission preconditions and programme learning outcomes into account. Programme structure is consistent and logical. Programme content and structure ensure the achievement of programme learning outcomes. Qualification to be granted is consistent with programme content and learning outcomes.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with standard requirements

The programme is developed according to the methodology of planning and developing educational programmes at the International Black Sea University. It spans a minimum of 3 academic years, or 6 semesters, and comprises 180 credits, with the participation of the relevant academic staff. The study component (worth 60 ECTS) comprises 12 courses, consisting of 7 compulsory (50 credits) and 5 elective (student must take 10 credits from these) courses. This component includes the Professor's assistance module which is compulsory for students with no prior work experience in higher education institutions.

The research component (120 credits) is consistently and logically integrated into the whole programme structure. Students begin work on this from the 3rd semester and are scheduled to defend it in the 6th semester, but may seek an extension.

The overall programme content corresponds to the qualification level, and to the intended learning outcomes. However, as noted already, there is scope for a greater emphasis on the development of research expertise. The Advanced Research Methods course provides an introduction to research methods, and could be complemented to provide students with more in-depth expertise in research methods. Provision for the development of academic writing is also an area that could be further developed. While the programme does offer students the possibility to specialise in either of two options, meetings with staff and students, as well as a perusal of dissertation titles, suggest that most students opt for research

in English Language teaching and learning. Adding additional elective courses would also help make the programme more tailored to the students' interests and prior knowledge and to deepen their knowledge in line with doctoral level study in Education.

Evidences/indicators

- Education Sciences Doctorate (English) program;
- IBSU instruction for programme design, planning and development;
- Curriculum map;
- University website: www.ibsu.edu.ge;
- Interview results.

Recommendations:

- Increase provision in research methods, for example, an extended research methods course or additional specific and more advanced courses.
- Include further provision for academic writing given the diversity in student intake, with some students having varying levels of prior competence in this area.

Suggestions for programme development:

- Consider adding additional elective courses to make the programme more tailored to the students' interests and prior knowledge.

Best Practices (if applicable):**In case of accredited programme, significant accomplishments and/or progress****Evaluation**

o Please mark the checkbox which mostly describes your position related to the programmes compliance with this specific component of the standard

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

2.3 Course

- Student learning outcomes of each compulsory course are in line with programme learning outcomes; Moreover, each course content and number of credits correspond to course learning outcomes;
- Teaching materials listed in syllabi are based on the core achievements in the field and ensure the achievement of intended programme learning outcomes.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with standard requirements

Apart from the need to bolster provision in research methods, the courses syllabi and the credit allocation correspond to the achievement of the programme learning outcomes. These learning outcomes are in turn aligned with the overall programme learning outcomes. The courses are focused on developing the required competences and the ability to apply theoretical knowledge in practice. The programme has also developed a mechanism for the evaluation of learning outcomes.

The content of the courses is mainly consistent to the overall programme learning outcomes. However, while some individual courses include a research component, as noted above, students' knowledge and skills need further work in the use of advanced research methods, as well as conducting systematic literature reviews and working with research databases. For example, it was noteworthy that during the interview only one student could identify one research database. An examination of some dissertation showed that in some cases, the work relied unduly on books and rather dated journals, instead of referring to empirical studies published in more recent journals. While references to books is essential, being foundational or classic, there is also a need for greater use of journals. This is necessary if students are to operate at the forefront of Education as a discipline. In most cases, the credits specified for each course correspond to the course content and intended results. However, in some courses there is the potential to explore in greater details key concepts, rather than covering a broad range in a more general way.

The programme is taught through English, and students are required to read a range of literature in English as part of their studies, as illustrated for example in the sample of dissertation consulted during the site visit, and the course syllabi. However, there is the possibility to further develop students' own exploration of the literature, by referring to a

broader range of literature, rather than an undue emphasis on a more limited set of textbooks and handouts, as currently itemised in the syllabi. This would develop students' knowledge of the literature itself, and also develop a sense of responsibility among students for deepening and extending their own independent scholarly activity. As noted above, apart from the key foundational texts, the use of peer-reviewed journals are essential for this purpose, given that they provide great insight into the latest advances in educational research.

Evidences/indicators

- Education Sciences Doctorate (English) program;
- Programme learning outcomes map;
- Learning outcomes evaluation mechanism;
- Course syllabi;
- Interview results;
- Visit to the library.

Recommendations:

- Develop greater awareness and knowledge about the need to use research databases (in the library as well as off-campus) for accessing journal and other sources
- Support students in developing more extensive reading practices, especially peer-reviewed journals, rather than an over-reliance on more general synoptic textbooks.
- Deepen the examination of specific topics within courses (rather than covering a wider range of topics to a more superficial extent) in order to introduce a greater level of challenge for students, arouse their intellectual curiosity, and prepare them for the advanced scholarly work expected later on when they begin their dissertation

Suggestions for programme development:

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Best Practices (if applicable):

In case of accredited programme, significant accomplishments and/or progress

Evaluation

o Please mark the checkbox which mostly describes your position related to the programmes compliance with this specific component of the standard

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

2.4 The Development of practical, scientific/research/creative/performance and transferable skills

Programme ensures the development of students' practical, scientific/research/creative/performance and transferable skills and/or their involvement in research projects, in accordance with the programme learning outcomes.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with standard requirements

The university support students' academic development in various ways. For example, Young Scholars' conferences, and subsequent publication opportunities in conference proceedings, but also in other peer-reviewed journals, including the Faculty's own Journal of Education in Black Sea Region. A system of international dissertation supervision has also been introduced which should help to broaden students' intellectual horizons in the field of Education, and introduces students to alternative perspectives on educational issues. During interviews, students reported that they often participate in conferences held in Georgia and abroad, and they are supported with this.

The courses syllabi includes a combination of lectures, seminars, and practical tasks, which is conducive to developing disciplinary and transferable knowledge and skills according to the learning outcomes. The Professor's Assistance is also designed to transfer students' knowledge into practical activities, although further attempts could be made to ensure that all students can benefit equally from participation in this activity.

Meetings during the site visit suggest that the typical employers for the programme graduates are schools and universities. During the site visit, various stakeholders reported a very high level of satisfaction with the programme. One employer explained that the

recruitment of graduates was a positive outcome for his own university due to their knowledge of subject matter and good command of English.

Evidences/indicators

- PhD Programme learning outcomes map;
- Engagement of students in research projects (student conference papers presented by the university, “The Journal of Education in Black Sea Region”);
- Interview results;
- Memoranda with universities and schools.

Recommendations:

Suggestions for programme development:

- Consider further ways to ensure that all students derive optimum benefit form the Professor’s assistance congruent with programme outcomes at doctoral level
- Continue to identify and propose opportunities for students to support their participation in the academic community in Education
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Best Practices (if applicable):

The Faculty provides enhanced publication opportunities through its own peer-reviewed, Journal of Education in Black Sea Region, thereby enabling students to contribute to the development of Education as a discipline. It also organizes annual conferences of young scholars in which students can also participate.

In case of accredited programme, significant accomplishments and/or progress

Evaluation

o Please mark the checkbox which mostly describes your position related to the programmes compliance with this specific component of the standard

- Complies with requirements
- Substantially complies with requirements
- Partially complies with requirements

Does not comply with requirements

2.5 Teaching and learning methods

Programme is implemented using student centred teaching and learning (SCL) methods. Teaching and learning methods correspond to the level of education, course content, student learning outcomes and ensure their achievement.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with standard requirements

The teaching and learning methods of each course corresponds to the content and the intended learning outcomes, and conducive to student engagement and to the achievement of the learning outcomes. Each of the syllabi lists a variety of teaching / learning methods (e.g., discussion, debate, demonstration, induction, deduction, analysis, synthesis, brainstorming, problem-based teaching, case studies), although a more differentiated indication as to how particular methods will be used for particular course content would be useful. During the interviews, both professors and students referred to their use of student-centred and interactive teaching methods.

Evidences/indicators

- Courses syllabi;
- Teaching and learning methods;
- Interview results.

Recommendations:

Suggestions for programme development:

- In line with the principles of constructive alignment, support staff in presenting a more customised presentation of teaching methods in course documentation.

Best Practices (if applicable):

In case of accredited programme, significant accomplishments and/or progress

Evaluation

o Please mark the checkbox which mostly describes your position related to the programmes compliance with this specific component of the standard

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

2.6. Student Evaluation

Student evaluation is conducted in accordance with established procedures. It is transparent and complies with existing legislation.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with standard requirements

Students' knowledge is assessed in accordance with ministerial order and relevant rules. A minimal passing grade is set for midterm and final assessments. Credit may be awarded only after the student has achieved the course learning outcomes, subject to certain requirements. Assessment components include participation in discussions, literature review, essay, presentation, project, research plan, midterm and final exam. Among the assessment criteria, depending on the specifics of the course, are correctness, accuracy, completeness, adequacy of theoretical justification and practical examples, adequacy of the use of terminology, involvement in discussion, logical reasoning. However, there is potential for developing some of the assessment criteria so that students have greater clarity about what is expected in terms of exemplar performance, and so that they are motivated to pursue the achievement of excellence. The programme team has benchmarked various doctoral programmes in other countries, and has also sought the input of international experts. This work should continue on an on-going basis, and also involve students, and should include opportunities to consult and compare dissertations produced by students on other doctoral programmes.

The defence of dissertation is assessed by a Jury, and an assessment rubric for the doctorate dissertations is also available. In all courses, students are informed of the assessment method prior to the course. All syllabi have a detailed grading system, including grading components

and grading rubrics, although in some cases, assessment criteria lack the kind of detail required to differentiate between levels of attainment and to guide students. Interviews with students and graduates confirmed that students are regularly assessed in each of the assignments, and receive feedback regarding strengths and weaknesses.

Evidences/indicators

- Education Sciences Doctorate (English) program;
- Syllabi;
- University website: www.ibsu.edu.ge;
- Interview results.

Recommendations:

-

Suggestions for programme development:

- Further develop the use of rubrics, so that they provide the kind of detail required to differentiate between levels of attainment, especially exemplary or outstanding performance and to guide students.

Best Practices (if applicable):

In case of accredited programme, significant accomplishments and/or progress

Evaluation

o Please mark the checkbox which mostly describes your position related to the programmes compliance with this specific component of the standard

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

Programme's Compliance with Standard

Standard	Complies with Requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially Complies with Requirements	Does not Comply with Requirements
Teaching methodology and organization, adequate evaluation of programme mastering		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

3. Student achievements and individual work with them

HEI creates student-centered environment by providing students with relevant services; programme staff ensures students' familiarity with the named services, organizes various events and fosters students' involvement in local and/or international projects.

3.1. Student support services
Students receive appropriate consultations and support regarding the planning of learning process, improvement of academic achievement, employment and professional development.
Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with standard requirements
<p>During the site visit, staff, students and alumni confirmed that students are provided with relevant individual consultation and support services. Students are supported in career planning, and using their achievement for career advancement. During the site visit, students mentioned that academic staff were approachable, and available to discuss work on the thesis and other assignments. Students reported that they have sufficient opportunity to interact with their supervisors and receive appropriate guidance with their work.</p> <p>Midterm assessments are used to provide students with formative feedback indicating the achievement against criteria as well as possibilities for improvement. Both students and academic staff declare that sufficient time is available for this during lectures or individual meetings. There is a supportive and student-friendly environment in place at the university.</p> <p>There are opportunities for mobility abroad, although there is a very low take-up of these opportunities. The university encourages students to participate in conferences and many students and alumni interviewed had already participated in research conferences, both at local and international level. There is also a need to promote greater use of international mobility by students. This is hampered given that many students have existing commitments at home in Georgia. Students also have a range of publication opportunities, as noted earlier, including the Faculty journal.</p>

Evidences/indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Self-evaluation report. ○ Interview with HEI administration, academic and invited staff. ○ Interview with HEI students and graduate students.
Recommendations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●
Suggestions for programme development:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore opportunities for accessing more financial resources in order to facilitate students' participation in international projects ● Promote greater use of international mobility by students
Best Practices (if applicable):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Practices, which prove to be exceptionally effective and which may become a benchmark or a model for other higher education programmes
In case of accredited programme, significant accomplishments and/or progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Significant accomplishment and/or progress made by the programme after previous accreditation (If Applicable)
Evaluation
<p>○ Please mark the checkbox which mostly describes your position related to the programmes compliance with this specific component of the standard</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements</p>

3.2. Master's and Doctoral Student supervision

Master's and Doctoral students have qualified thesis supervisors.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with standard requirements

A system of international co-supervision has been introduced which means each student has an IBSU supervisor and also a supervisor based in another country. Students and alumni

noted that supervisors conduct consultations very frequently. Students are involved in various academic and research activities. As noted already, an examination of some dissertation suggest that there is a need for supervisors to emphasize the importance of journals as sources for literature reviews, theoretical frameworks and research methodology. Some dissertations would also have benefited from a more thorough analysis (particularly in the studies using qualitative methods) and discussion of results with regard to the existing literature, e.g., the extent to which they add to the body of educational knowledge, counter, extend, contradict, etc. The benchmarking exercise already commenced (involving six programmes in Europe and US) would provide the programme team with opportunities to compare the work of students with their international peers on similar programmes. Applying the learning from the benchmarking process could also help in developing the ethics dimension in the research process, whereby students submit an ethics approval application for consideration by an independent panel prior to commencement, including philosophical issues in ethics as well as the more operational issues (informed consent, data storage, etc).

Evidences/indicators

- Copies of theses
- Self-evaluation report
- Interview with HEI administration, academic staff, students and graduates
- Skype meeting with experts and expert reports
-

Recommendations:

- Further develop the awareness among students about the use of journals as a source in dissertation writing, so that students are more explicit about how their own research contributes in an original way to the body of knowledge in Education
- Use the benchmarking process already commenced to identify other ways to enhance the quality of the dissertation, e.g. theoretical framework, methodology, analysis, discussion of results

Suggestions for programme development:

- Further develop the ethics approval process

Best Practices (if applicable):

- The programme has introduced a system of co-supervision, involving a supervisor from a university outside Georgia. This provides additional learning opportunities for all concerned, including supervisors and students.

In case of accredited programme, significant accomplishments and/or progress

- Significant accomplishment and/or progress made by the programme after previous accreditation (If Applicable)

Evaluation

Please mark the checkbox which mostly describes your position related to the programmes compliance with this specific component of the standard

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

Programme's Compliance with Standard

Standard	Complies with Requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially Complies with Requirements	Does not Comply with Requirements
Student achievements and individual work with them	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			

4. Providing teaching resources

Programme human, material, information and financial resources ensure programme sustainability, its effective and efficient functioning, and achievement of intended objectives.

4.1 Human Resources

- Programme staff consists of qualified people who have necessary competences in order to help students achieve programme learning outcomes;
- The number and workload of programme academic/scientific and invited staff ensures the sustainable running of the educational process and also, proper execution of their research/creative/performance activities and other assigned duties. Balance between academic and invited staff ensures programme sustainability;

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Head of the Programme possesses necessary knowledge and experience required for programme elaboration. He/she is personally involved in programme implementation; ➤ Programme students are provided with an adequate number of administrative and support staff of appropriate competence. |
|---|

There is an appropriate provision of academic staff, with the requisite expertise and experience to service the programme and help students achieve the learning outcomes. The expertise of the staff is confirmed by their academic degrees, research publications and teaching experience. The ratio of Academic to invited staff (9:2) enables the programme to run on a sustainable basis. Students are supported by an adequate number of administrative and support staff with appropriate competence. The ratio of Administrative personnel to students on the programme is also appropriate (38:12). The Programme co-ordinator demonstrates the necessary knowledge, teaching and research experience and commitment to lead programme delivery as well as ongoing programme development and enhancement. She has lead the programme since its beginning and her leadership and dedication was commended numerous times in interviews with students and alumni during the site visit.

Evidences/indicators

- Self -evaluation report
- Job descriptions;
- Internal regulations;
- Statutes of structural unites
- Personnel files and CVs
- Interviews with the academic staff and administration
- Interviews with the students

Recommendations:

Suggestions for programme development:

Best Practices (if applicable):
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- The commitment of programme staff to providing an enjoyable and fulfilling learning experience

In case of accredited programme, significant accomplishments and/or progress

Evaluation

- | |
|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements |
|--|

Substantially complies with requirements

Partially complies with requirements

Does not comply with requirements

4.2 Professional development of academic, scientific and invited staff

- HEI conducts the evaluation of programme academic, scientific and invited staff and analysis evaluation results on a regular basis;
- HEI fosters professional development of the academic, scientific and invited staff. Moreover, it fosters their scientific and research work.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with standard requirements

The university carries out regular evaluation of the academic, scientific and invited staff. Professional development is carried out using a variety of mechanisms including staff engagement in international programmes / projects, exchange/mobility through EU programmes (e.g., Tempus and Erasmus+), cross-border Cooperation, Fulbright Scholarship, TESOL exchange programme, etc. Staff also have opportunities to participate in training (e.g., training for MA and PhD supervisors, seminars on plagiarism issues). Staff publications are further incentivized using a financial reward system, and their participation in scholarly activity (conferences, publications) is also supported financially. Monitoring of professors' scholarly activity by the university is also undertaken, e.g., scientific-research activities, student assessment. At the end of each year staff submit a report of scientific activity to the Quality Service.

As a way of further extending the support for staff professional development, peer-observation of teaching (where one lecturer observes another and provides feedback) could also be considered.

Evidences/indicators

- Self-evaluation report
- University Internal regulation
- The facilities of the IBSU
- Interview results
- Travel payment receipts

Recommendations:

Suggestions for programme development:

- Further develop mechanisms for the professional development of staff, for example, webinars and seminars by experts on the scholarship of teaching and learning in higher education, peer-observation

Best Practices (if applicable):

In case of accredited programme, significant accomplishments and/or progress
<p>Evaluation</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements</p>

4.3. Material Resources
<p>Programme is provided by necessary infrastructure and technical equipment required for achieving programme learning outcomes.</p> <p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with standard requirements</p> <p>The university physical infrastructure (including classrooms, library, computer resource center and other technical equipment) are in line with the programme objectives and enables the achievement of programme learning outcomes. Classrooms used for lectures and seminars, are equipped with all necessary equipment for teaching, e.g., computer, overhead projector, interactive white board, etc. Computer laboratories are also available for student use. An extensive library catalogue is available to university students and staff, although provision for certain areas such as research methods could be further extended. The tour of the library showed the extent to which the literature cited in the programme syllabi is readily available for students, although one of the synoptic research methods books was available in photocopy only, rather than also being available as an original.</p>
<p>As for journals, meetings with students and staff, as well, as the tour of the library facilities, would suggest that there is a need for greater awareness (including among library staff) about the full extent of what is available in terms of databases. There was also a certain lack of awareness with regard to what was accessible to students when off-campus (as opposed to being on campus in the library).</p>

Evidences/indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit IBS University material resources • Visit IBS University library • Interview with University Administration • Self-Assessment Report
Recommendations:

- Increase access to a more extensive range of databases and journals for producing high-quality work.

- Raise awareness among staff and students with regard to what the library offers in terms of databases.
- Enhance provision of reading literature for each of the courses, so that students have access to an extensive and up-to-date range of literature

Suggestions for programme development:

- Extend use of the existing online learning management system, e.g., interactive activities, forums, collaboration.

Best Practices (if applicable):

In case of accredited programme, significant accomplishments and/or progress

Evaluation

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

4.4.Programme/faculty/school budget and programme financial sustainability

The allocation of financial resources stipulated in programme/faculty/school budget is economically feasible and corresponds to programme needs.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with standard requirements

Financial resources for the programme are envisaged in the university/faculty budget and are appropriate for the needs of the programme. Accounts for 2018/19 show a substantial budget surplus. Programme costs are calculated appropriately, indicating financial feasibility and sustainability. About half of the budget is set aside for supporting and scientific and research expenses, with incentives for staff to encourage research productivity. Financial resources are also used in other ways to support the appeal of the programme and the Faculty's standing in the Education community, for example, the Faculty journal, and the use of co-supervision involving supervisors from other countries.

Evidences/indicators

- Interview with University Administration
- Self-Assessment Report
- Programme budget

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IBSU budget
Recommendations:
Suggestions for programme development:
Best Practices (if applicable):
In case of accredited programme, significant accomplishments and/or progress <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○
Evaluation <p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements </p>

Programme's Compliance with Standard

Standard	Complies with Requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially Complies with Requirements	Does not Comply with Requirements
Providing teaching resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			

5. Teaching quality enhancement opportunities

In order to enhance teaching quality, programme utilizes internal and external quality assurance services and also periodically conducts programme monitoring and programme review. Relevant data is collected, analysed and utilized for informed decision making and programme development on a regular basis.

5.1 Internal quality

Programme staff collaborates with internal quality assurance service(s) available at the higher education institution when planning the process of programme quality assurance, creating

assessment instruments, and analysing assessment results. Programme staff utilizes quality assurance results for programme improvement.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with standard requirements

There is a system of internal quality assurance in place at an institutional level which supports quality enhancement at programme level. The SER (Section 5.1) indicates that the internal quality assurance of the university is aligned with the principle of the PDCA cycle (Plan, Do, Check, Act) and this supports programme implementation. It also outlines the sequence of events involved in the internal quality assurance process, including preparation of a programme report by the programme co-ordinator and its submission to the Faculty Board.

As noted earlier, further developing the use of curriculum mapping (identifying the extent to which the learning outcomes are being addressed, making the programme design more coherent and streamlined) offers much potential for supporting this fifth standard, enabling the team to promote transparency for students and staff; programme balance and coherence; efficiency in teaching, learning and assessment approaches; and ensuring key institutional priorities are reflected in the programme. The pursuit of ‘constructive alignment’ in ongoing programme review can help the programme team consider the extent to which students are actively involved in the learning process. The second element, ‘alignment’ refers to the correspondence or match between the intended learning outcomes, the teaching and learning activities, and the assessment tasks used to verify that the intended outcomes have been achieved.

The Quality Assurance Service of the University conducts surveys on the satisfaction of students twice a year. Other exercises have also been carried out such as a SWOT analysis and a benchmarking of six other doctoral programmes. However, while there is a high level of collaboration between the programme staff and the internal quality assurance service, there is potential to further develop the level of critical reflection taking place. While the SER documentation does provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the programme, there is a need to further develop the critical nature of such analysis so that the programme team seek out on a continuous basis, ways in which the programme can be enhanced.

Evidences/indicators

- Interview results
- Benchmarking
- Stakeholders’ reports

Recommendations:

-

Suggestions for programme development:

- Further develop and exploit feedback from stakeholders on the quality of the programme in relation to its design and delivery
- Use curriculum mapping, and other ways for the internal quality assurance and enhancement

•
Best Practices (if applicable):
In case of accredited programme, significant accomplishments and/or progress
<p>Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Please mark the checkbox which mostly describes your position related to the programmes compliance with this specific component of the standard <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements</p>

5.2 External quality

Programme utilizes the results of external quality assurance on a regular basis

The programme utilize the results of external quality assurance on a regular basis. It has been recently reviewed by three external experts, including one expert whom the review panel met by Skype during the site visit.

While a relationship has been established with key stakeholders external to the university, there is the potential to further develop this, including national bodies involved in teacher professional development and assessment, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and schools. These partnerships and networks can inform the work of the programme and provide valuable source of external quality assurance.

While the programme submission to the National Centre was informative and clear, there is a need for greater detail and criticality in the process of self-evaluation. This would show in much greater detail how available policy and research literature has been used to guide the work of the programme team, i.e., research literature on doctoral education. It would also provide a much stronger justification for choices made and show that the programme was informed by the most advanced ideas and practice in doctoral education on a global basis. For example, in a European context, there are many publications available from the European Universities Association which indicate good practice in the design and delivery of high quality doctoral programmes, while the Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN) also publishes relevant and cutting-edge reports on a regular basis. There are also academic journals dedicated to many of the issues encountered in programme design and delivery at

doctoral level, e.g., credit allocation, supervision modalities, ethics approval. All of this preparatory work would be a further indicator of rigour in the quality assurance of the programme, and the extent to which the programme team is guided by a critical awareness of current and emerging trends and standards.

Evidences/indicators

- Interview results
- Benchmarking
- Stakeholders' reports

Recommendations:

-

Suggestions for programme development:

- Provide more elaborate documentation on certain programme procedures in order to support quality assurance
- It is noteworthy that the minimum duration of the doctoral programmes benchmarked by the programme team is four years. The possibility of introducing such a duration at IBSU should be considered especially given the benefits that would accrue for further enhancing the quality and impact of the research dissertations.

Best Practices (if applicable):

-

In case of accredited programme, significant accomplishments and/or progress

- Significant accomplishment and/or progress made by the programme after previous accreditation (If Applicable)

Evaluation

○ Please mark the checkbox which mostly describes your position related to the programmes compliance with this specific component of the standard

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

5.3. Programme monitoring and periodic review

Programme monitoring and periodic review is conducted with the involvement of academic, scientific, invited, administrative staff, students, graduates, employers and other stakeholders through systematically collecting and analysing information. Assessment results are utilized for programme improvement.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with standard requirements

The programme team already undertakes a range of monitoring and review activities. The programme board meets routinely to discuss programme review and presents to Faculty on a regular basis. As already noted, there is also a need to provide more elaborate documentation on certain programme procedures in order to support quality assurance, e.g., ethics approval. This should include, for example, more comprehensive guidelines on the research supervision process, or on the recruitment of students, so that internal and external stakeholders (e.g., programme board and all other external bodies) have a reference with which to judge the effectiveness of programme implementation.

The programme has been benchmarked against six PhD programmes in other countries, e.g., Finland, Luxembourg. However, such benchmarking could be taken a step further by identifying what the lessons are for the IBSU programme and what actions should be taken. The assessment of other standards has already referred to ways in which the benchmarking process could be further exploited, e.g., comparing student work, particularly the scope, quality and nature of the dissertations produced in IBSU compared to the other six programmes. The system of international supervision introduced is also testament to the commitment of the programme co-ordinator and team to enhancing the student experience.

As noted above, the curriculum mapping exercise prepared as part of the submission to the Centre, could also be developed and used as part of the routine periodic programme review in identifying the extent to which the learning outcomes are being addressed, and to make programme design more coherent and streamlined.

Evidences/indicators

- Interview results
- Doctoral programme
- Evaluation results
-

Recommendations:

- Maintain the process of benchmarking (already commenced with six programmes) to further exploit what can be learned and applied from practice elsewhere, and document how the benchmarking process has led to programme enhancement.
- In the same vein, conduct a more detailed study of similar programmes available at foreign universities, showing how the proposed doctoral programme and finished student dissertation work corresponds and compares

-

Suggestions for programme development:

- Elaborate in greater detail the system that has been put in place for programme review, including detail on how the work of a programme board might contribute to the quality assurance

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

In case of accredited programme, significant accomplishments and/or progress

- Significant accomplishment and/or progress made by the programme after previous accreditation (If Applicable)

Evaluation

○ Please mark the checkbox which mostly describes your position related to the programmes compliance with this specific component of the standard

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

Programme's Compliance with Standard

Standard	Complies with Requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially Complies with Requirements	Does not Comply with Requirements
Teaching quality enhancement opportunities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			

Enclosed Documentation (If Applicable)

HEI's Name: International Black Sea University

Higher Education Programme Name: Doctor in Educational Sciences

Number of Pages of the Report: 35

Programme's Compliance with the Standard

Standard	Complies with Requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially Complies with Requirements	Does not Comply with Requirements
1. Programme objectives are clearly defined and achievable; they are consistent with the mission of the HEI and take into consideration labour market demands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
2. Teaching methodology and organization, adequate evaluation of programme mastering		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
3. Student achievements and individual work with them	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
4. Providing teaching resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
5. Teaching quality enhancement opportunities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			

Expert Panel Chair's
Name, last name, signature

Cathal de Paor

Cathal de Paor.

Expert Panel Members'
Name, last name, signature

Prof. Ketevan Todadze



Ms. Lali berishvili



Ms. Anzhela Abuladze

