

Decision of the FIBAA Accreditation and Certification Committee



FIBAA

21st Meeting on March 27, 2026

PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Project Number: | 25/001 |
| Higher Education Institution: | Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University |
| Location: | Tbilisi, Georgia |
| Study programme: | Governance and Administration in Education and Science (PhD in Education Science) Vocational Education (PhD in Education Science) |
| Type of accreditation: | initial accreditation |

The FIBAA Accreditation and Certification Committee has taken the following decision:

Accreditation

According to § 7 (6) in conjunction with § 9 (1) of the FIBAA General Terms and Conditions within the framework of procedures for the award of the FIBAA Quality Seal for Programmes from January 1, 2021, the study programmes are accredited with one condition.

- **Condition 1** (see chapter 3.1.2):

TSU revises the wording of the programme learning objectives so that they are formulated in accordance with an internationally used theoretical foundation. For instance, this might be the taxonomies by Bloom et al. or by Manzano & Kendall.

Proof of meeting the condition is to be submitted by December 26, 2026.

Period of Accreditation: March 27, 2026, to March 26, 2031.

The FIBAA Quality Seal is awarded.

Assessment Report

Higher Education Institution (HEI):

Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Georgia

Doctoral programmes:

1. Governance and Administration in Education and Science
2. Vocational Education

Degree awarding institutions:

For 1: Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, in cooperation with National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

For 2: Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

Qualification awarded on completion:

PhD in Education Science

General Information on the Study Programme

Governance and Administration in Education and Science

The doctoral programme in Governance and Administration in Education and Science is an international joint PhD initiative by TSU and NKUA, designed to develop high-level research and policy expertise in the governance of education and science systems. It integrates advanced coursework in research methodology, policy analysis, and governance theory with independent dissertation research conducted under a joint supervision model. The programme prepares graduates for academic, governmental, and international leadership roles by equipping them with analytical, ethical, and interdisciplinary competencies aligned with European doctoral standards.

Vocational Education

The doctoral programme in Vocational Education at TSU is an internationally developed PhD programme, created in cooperation with Otto von Guericke University Magdeburg, that prepares researchers and professionals to advance vocational education through original research, policy analysis, and leadership. The curriculum combines structured methodological and theoretical coursework with independent dissertation research, ensuring the development of high-level competencies in vocational pedagogy, Vocational Education policy, empirical research, and academic communication. Graduates are equipped for academic, governmental, and international roles in Vocational Education and workforce-development sectors, supported by international mobility and collaboration networks.

Projected study time and number of ECTS credits (ECTS credits are the national system) assigned to the study programmes:

1. Governance and Administration in Education and Science: teaching component 55 ECTS credits, three years duration
2. Vocational Education: three years, teaching component 35 ECTS credits, three years duration

Mode of study:

Both programmes: part-time

Didactic approach:

Both programmes: study programme with obligatory class attendance

Double/Joint Degree programme:

1. Governance and Administration in Education and Science: yes
2. Vocational Education: no

Scope (planned number of parallel classes) and enrolment capacity:

1. Governance and Administration in Education and Science: 10 students per year
2. Vocational Education: 6 students per year

Programme cycle starts in:

both winter and summer semester

Initial start of the programme:

1. Governance and Administration in Education and Science: 2025
 2. Vocational Education: 2023
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Type of accreditation:

initial accreditation

Accreditation in one cluster (cluster 25/001) with:

1. Master in Vocational Education and Human Resources Development
2. Master in Education Sciences

Procedure:

A contract for the initial accreditation of the PhD programmes “Governance and Administration in Education and Science” and “Vocational Education (PhD in Education Science) was concluded between FIBAA and Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Georgia on January 16, 2025. On November 17, 2025, the HEI submitted a self-evaluation report, which included a detailed description of the programme and further documents in order to prove that the criteria for programme accreditation are met.

At the same time, FIBAA appointed a review panel¹. The HEI has agreed with the chosen experts. The panel consisted of:

Prof. Dr. Hermann Josef Abs

University of Duisburg-Essen
Professor for Education Research

Simone Campanella

University of Macerata
PhD Student - Teaching and Learning Science

Affiliated Prof. Dr. Maia Chkotua

International Black Sea University
Affiliated Professor in Education Sciences, Head of the Teacher Training Educational Programme

Prof. Dr. Karl-Heinz Gerholz

University of Bamberg
Professor for Business and Human Resource

Prof. Dr. Marcus Pietsch

Leuphana University of Lüneburg
Professor of Educational Management and Quality Development

Iman Andrea Reimann

Kita Regenbogen-Kidz Berlin-Charlottenburg
Chairperson and Educational Director

FIBAA project manager:
Dr Rebekka Welker

The assessment is based on the self-evaluation report, amended by further documents, as requested by the panel, and an on-site visit. The on-site visit took place January 21–22, 2026 at the HEI’s premises in Tbilisi, Georgia. The same cluster included an appraisal of the Master’s programmes “Vocational Education and Human Resources Development” and “Master in Education Sciences” (Master in Education Science). At the end of the on-site visit, the panel has given a short feedback on its first impressions to representatives of the HEI.

¹ The panel is presented in alphabetical order.

The assessment report based on this was delivered to the HEI for comment on March 9, 2026. The statement on the report was given up on March 17, 2026. It has been taken into account in the report at hand.

Summary

The PhD in “Governance and Administration in Education and Science” and “Vocational Education” offered by Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University fulfils the FIBAA quality requirements for PhD programmes and can be accredited by the Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation (FIBAA) for five years starting on March 27, 2026 and finishing on March 26, 2031 under one condition. The programme is in accordance with the national and the European Qualification Frameworks and the European Standards and Guidelines in their applicable version valid as of the time of the opening of the procedure, and in accordance with the Bologna Declaration.

The panel members identified need for improvement regarding the following aspects² Doctoral Degree Regulations due to a misalignment between how the learning objectives are worded and established taxonomies. They recommend the accreditation on condition of meeting the following requirements:

- **Condition 1** (see chapter 3.1.2):

TSU revises the wording of the programme learning objectives so that they are formulated in accordance with an internationally used theoretical foundation. For instance, this might be the taxonomies by Bloom et al. or by Manzano & Kendall.

Proof of meeting these conditions is to be submitted by December 26, 2026.

The panel members identified also several areas where the programmes could be further developed and **recommend**:

- further developing and clearly documenting its measures to promote gender equality and uphold general prohibitions on discrimination (see chapter 1.5);
- ensuring that doctoral candidates are also granted access to the research infrastructure and academic facilities available at the partner universities in Magdeburg and Stuttgart, as the PhD programme in Educational Governance could serve as a model for the PhD programme in Vocational Education (see chapter 3.2.4);
- discussing with employers which options could allow PhD students to dedicate more time to writing their thesis, such as reducing their workload (e.g., to 80%) or allocating a certain portion of working hours specifically for doctoral research (e.g., 10% of paid work time) (see chapter 4.5.2).

In addition to the Doctoral Programme in Vocational Education, the panel members **recommend**:

- further strengthening the PhD in VET—for example, by establishing contracts with Magdeburg similar to those with Athens and by further institutionalising the cooperation (see chapter 4.1.4);
- establishing formal agreements with the international partner universities (e.g., Mainz, Magdeburg) to ensure that doctoral students receive full access to their library resources (see chapter 4.4.2).

² These aspects are asterisk criteria which means that they are essential for the study programme.

The measures that the HEI takes in order to implement the recommendations of the panel members will have to be considered during the re-accreditation.

There are many criteria in which the programme exceeds the quality requirements:

- Objectives of the Doctoral Programme (see chapter 1.1)
- Positioning of the Doctoral Programme in the education market (see chapter 1.2)
- The positioning of the Doctoral Programme in the Strategic Concept of the Higher Education Institution (see chapter 1.4)
- Admission conditions and procedures (see chapter 2.1)
- Selection procedure (see chapter 2.2)
- Logic and Conceptual Consistency procedure (see chapter 3.2.1)
- Science and Research Based Teaching (see chapter 3.2.2)
- Focus of the Curriculum on Qualification and Competency Development (see chapter 3.2.3)
- Multidisciplinary Qualifications (see chapter 3.2.5)
- Examination (see chapter 3.3.1)
- Logic and Comprehensibility of the Didactic Concept (see chapter 3.4.1)
- Diversity of the Teaching Methods (see chapter 3.4.2)
- Networking of the Doctoral Students (see chapter 3.4.3)
- Scientific Supervision (see chapter 3.4.4)
- Structure and Number of Teaching Staff (see chapter 4.1.1)
- Scientific Qualification of the Teaching Staff (see chapter 4.1.2)
- Internationality of the Teaching Staff (see chapter 4.1.4)
- Internal Cooperation within the Faculty (see chapter 4.1.5)
- Networking the Scientists (see chapter 4.2.2)

Doctoral Programme in Governance and Administration in Education and Science

- Technical Offers (see chapter 3.2.4)
- Equipment (Literature, Magazines, Databases) for the library (see chapter 4.4.2)

Doctoral Programme in Vocational Education

- Outside the research fields (see chapter 1.3.2)
- Professional Competencies/Employability (see chapter 3.5)

For the overall assessment of the programme, please refer to the quality profile at the end of this report.

Information

Information on the Institution

Ivane Javakishvili Tbilisi State University (TSU), established in 1918 as the first public university and research-intensive institution in the Caucasus, serves as the foundation of modern higher education in Georgia. Throughout its more than century-long history, TSU has played a role in shaping the country's intellectual and scientific development. Today, TSU stands as the largest and most influential higher education institution in Georgia, uniting seven faculties: Law, Economics and Business, Humanities, Medicine, Social and Political Sciences, Exact and Natural Sciences, and Psychology and Educational Sciences; along with sixteen independent scientific research institutes and numerous affiliated centres and laboratories. The University implements 221 local and international academic and research programmes in cooperation with partner universities, research institutions, and development organisations across the world. TSU is continuously ranked in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings and is a national leader in Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility (ICM) projects. Currently, approximately 26,000 students are enrolled in undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programmes, benefiting from TSU's broad academic and research environment.

Within the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, TSU offers a distinguished cluster of programmes oriented toward advancing education systems, human resource development, and governance in science and education. These include the PhD in Vocational Education and the PhD in Governance and Administration in Education and Science (Joint Programme). These programmes form an integral part of TSU's strategic mission to enhance the quality and relevance of teacher education and educational leadership studies within the university's academic portfolio. They complement other degree programmes of the Faculty by addressing the specific professional preparation and research needs of the education sector, vocational training system, and science governance fields. Designed in alignment with European standards, they combine theoretical depth with applied orientation and reflect TSU's institutional commitment to teaching, research, and innovation. Students benefit from TSU's interdisciplinary setting, extensive mobility opportunities, and access to its broad academic and professional community. Both programmes have gone through national accreditation in 2024-2025 under the leadership of international experts by National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement in Georgia.

Further development of the programme, statistical data

Governance and Administration in Education and Science

The International Joint Doctoral Education Programme in Governance and Administration in Education and Science (abbreviations in tables: Gov) was officially accredited in spring 2025 by National Center of Educational Quality Enhancement following a comprehensive institutional and external evaluation process. The programme was jointly developed by TSU and the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA) within the framework of the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of Georgia's Innovation, Inclusion, and Quality (I2Q) Project, supported by the World Bank. It was designed during 2023-2024 and formally approved by the TSU Academic

Council prior to submission for accreditation. The first cohort of doctoral candidates was enrolled in the fall semester of the 2025-2026 academic year, and statistical data is not yet available.

The programme was established to address Georgia's national strategic priorities outlined in the Unified National Strategy of Education and Science 2022-2030, particularly the development of internationally oriented and research-intensive doctoral education. It embodies a long-term institutional partnership between TSU and NKUA, combining academic expertise, methodological resources, and research capacity in the fields of educational governance, policy, and science management. The curriculum integrates theoretical foundations, comparative policy analysis, and applied research components, supported by dual supervision, seasonal schools, and collaborative research projects. This design ensures alignment with the Salzburg Principles, ESG 2015, and EUA-CDE recommendations for doctoral education.

| | | 1. Cohort - 2025.2026 Fall |
|--|---|----------------------------|
| # Study Places offered by HEI | | 10 |
| # Applicants | Σ | 35 |
| | f | |
| | m | |
| Application rate | | 350.00% |
| # First-Year Students (accepted applicants) | Σ | 10 |
| | f | |
| | m | |
| Rate of female students | | 9 |
| # Foreign Students | Σ | 0 |
| | f | |
| | m | |
| Rate of foreign students | | 0 |
| Percentage of occupied study places | | 100.00% |
| # Graduates | Σ | 0 |
| | f | |
| | m | |
| Success rate (students who finished their studies) | | N/A |
| Dropout rate (students who dropped their studies) | | 0.00% |
| Average duration of study | | 6 semester |

The Joint programme started in the fall semester of 2025/2026. 35 applications were received. The programme offered 10 study places and accepted 10 students in the first year. Nine students were female and no foreign student was part of the cohort.

Vocational Education

The doctoral programme in Vocational Education (abbreviations in tables: VET) was first accredited in 2023 and underwent its second accreditation in summer 2025 by the National Center of Educational Quality Enhancement, Georgia. It remains the only structured doctoral programme in Georgia dedicated exclusively to vocational education, serving as a cornerstone for developing research-based knowledge and national expertise in this field. The programme continues to operate in accordance with European standards for doctoral education, as outlined in the Salzburg Principles and the ESG 2015 framework. Since accreditation, the programme has demonstrated stability in its academic design and implementation, maintaining its core structure, learning outcomes, and research orientation while continuously strengthening its international and research dimensions.

No major changes were introduced to the programme content or structure following the 2023 accreditation and 2025 re-accreditation, as the curriculum and overall framework were positively assessed during the external evaluation. The programme focuses on theoretical foundations and research methodology and dissertation work. Nevertheless, the internationalisation component was notably enhanced. Partnerships with Otto von Guericke University Magdeburg, the University of Limerick, Malmö University, and other European institutions were expanded to include co-supervision, visiting lectureships, and doctoral research exchanges. Doctoral candidates now have increased access to short-term research residencies, participation in international postgraduate schools, and involvement in comparative studies within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

| | 1. Cohort - 2022-2023 Spr | Cohort - 2023-2024 Fa | 3. Cohort - 2024-2025 Spring | Cohort - 2025-2026 Fa |
|--|---------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| # Study Places offered by HEI | 5 | 5 | 2 | 2 |
| # Applicants | Σ | 4 | 5 | 3 |
| | f | | | |
| | m | | | |
| Application rate | 80,00% | 100,00% | 150,00% | 150,00% |
| # First-Year Students (accepted applicants) | Σ | 4 | 5 | 2 |
| | f | | | |
| | m | | | |
| Rate of female students | 3 | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| # Foreign Students | Σ | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | f | | | |
| | m | | | |
| Rate of foreign students | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0,5 |
| Percentage of occupied study places | 80,00% | 100,00% | 100,00% | 100,00% |
| # Graduates | Σ | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| | f | | | |
| | m | | | |
| Success rate (students who finished their studies) | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Dropout rate (students who dropped their studies) | | | | |
| Average duration of study | 6 semesters | 6 semesters | 6 semesters | 6 semesters |

Since its establishment, VET has demonstrated stable enrolment dynamics, balanced gender representation, and a high student success rate. During the first cohort (2022-2023, spring semester), four doctoral candidates were admitted (three female and one male), two of whom currently hold suspended status due to professional commitments abroad. The second cohort (2023-2024, fall semester) included five doctoral candidates (4 female and one male), of whom one was temporarily suspended. The 3rd cohort (2024-2025, spring semester) consists of two active female doctoral candidates, while the 4th cohort (2025-2026, spring semester) includes two active candidates (one female and one male). The most recent male candidate in the fourth cohort is an

international doctoral student from China, further strengthening the programme's internationalisation component and fostering cross-cultural academic exchange. In total, 13 doctoral candidates have been admitted since the programme's launch, of whom eight remain active, three have suspended status, and two are projected to graduate in 2026, marking the completion of the programme's first full doctoral cycle.

The gender distribution across all cohorts includes ten female and three male candidates, reflecting the representation of women in education and social science disciplines. The student success rate, based on course completion, milestone attainment, and progression to the dissertation phase, currently stands at 92%, with all active doctoral candidates meeting annual progress evaluations. The average final grade for completed coursework and milestone assessments is 3.75 out of 4.0 (94%), exceeding institutional and programme benchmarks. The average duration of study is projected at 3-4 years, consistent with European standards for doctoral education. The expected graduation rate for the first and second cohorts combined is approximately 50% by mid-2026, with additional completions anticipated in 2027 following dissertation defences. Importantly, no student withdrawals or academic dropouts have occurred since the programme's establishment.

This steady pattern of small, selective admissions, typically 2-5 candidates per cohort, ensures a balanced supervision workload and promotes intensive, individualised mentoring.

Description and Appraisals in Detail

1. Goals and Strategy

1.1 Objectives of the Doctoral Programme

Governance and Administration in Education and Science

The doctoral programme in Governance and Administration in Education and Science (Gov) is a joint international PhD programme jointly offered by TSU and NKUA. It is positioned at Level 8 of the National Qualifications Framework of Georgia (NQF), corresponding to the third cycle of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The programme's central aim is to develop researchers, policy specialists, and institutional leaders capable of generating original knowledge and advancing innovation in the governance and administration of education and science systems.

The qualification objectives were jointly determined by the academic boards of TSU and NKUA following consultations with the Ministry of Education, Science, and Youth of Georgia, external experts, and stakeholders from higher education institutions and research organisations. The programme is designed in accordance with the Salzburg I and II Recommendations, the EUA Council for Doctoral Education (EUA-CDE) Guidelines, and Georgia's Unified Strategy for Education and Science 2022-2030. These frameworks ensure that the programme's objectives respond to both national reform priorities and international research standards.

The programme seeks to prepare scholars who can conduct original research addressing the governance of education and science systems, lead institutional and national reforms, and evaluate education and innovation policies. It aims to strengthen Georgia's international research capacity by fostering cross-border academic cooperation and developing a new generation of leaders capable of bridging academia, government, and research sectors.

Upon completion of the programme, the PhD graduate has:

- Profound knowledge of the principles, theories, historical perspectives, and innovations in education and science administration.
- A thorough understanding of professional and research ethics.

Upon the completion of the programme, the PhD graduate is able to:

- Provide critical analysis, assessment, and synthesis of new and complex ideas.
- Develop innovative thinking and problem-solving skills to address contemporary challenges in education, research, and science administration on a global level.
- Communicate, both in writing and verbally, and disseminate their research findings.

Upon completion of the programme, the PhD graduate has the ability to:

- Autonomously design and conduct research in their area of specialisation.
- Be committed to ethical research conduct and responsible science administration practices, ensuring the integrity and credibility of academic and administrative pursuits.

Graduates earn the qualification of PhD in Education Science and are prepared for advanced roles as professors, researchers, and supervisors in higher education institutions; policy advisors

in ministries and quality assurance agencies; senior managers in research and innovation organisations; and consultants for international bodies such as UNESCO, OECD, the European Union, and the World Bank. Their employability is strengthened through joint supervision, international mobility, and participation in doctoral schools, ensuring integration into international academic and professional networks.

Doctoral graduates acquire advanced academic and research skills, including the ability to design complex research projects, apply mixed-method approaches, critically evaluate evidence, and publish in peer-reviewed journals. They also develop leadership, teamwork, intercultural communication, and ethical decision-making skills, competencies essential for international and interdisciplinary environments.

The doctoral level is justified by the programme's focus on generating new knowledge and fostering innovation, consistent with NQF Level 8 and EHEA third-cycle descriptors. The curriculum combines coursework in research methodology, policy analysis, and governance theory with independent dissertation research under joint supervision.

Qualification objectives are formally defined in the Programme Description and communicated through official websites, academic catalogues, and orientation sessions. Dedicated supervisory committees and Quality Assurance Units ensure consistent implementation. As a newly launched programme, its objectives will be periodically reviewed by the Joint Academic Board and quality assurance structures at both universities, with integration of feedback from students, graduates, and international partners. Regular benchmarking against European doctoral schools guarantees alignment with best practices and innovation in doctoral education.

The qualification objectives, graduate profiles, and programme structure are publicly available on the TSU website, ensuring transparency and accessibility for all stakeholders.

Doctoral Programme in Vocational Education

The PhD Programme in Vocational Education prepares highly qualified researchers and professionals capable of advancing vocational education through original research, policy analysis, and leadership. Developed jointly by TSU and Otto von Guericke University Magdeburg within the BMBF-funded VoCasian Project (2020-2023), the programme supports the internationalisation of doctoral education and the development of national research capacity. Its qualification objectives were defined through consultations with the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE), GIZ, DVV International, and stakeholders from vocational institutions. The programme aligns with UNESCO-UNEVOC, EHEA, and ESG 2015 standards and complies with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF Level 8) and the EQF Cycle 3.

Graduates earn a PhD in Education Science, confirming their ability to conduct independent, innovative, and methodologically sound research in vocational education. They are prepared to formulate education policy, design and evaluate VET programmes, and participate in international academic and professional networks. Employment opportunities include academic and research posts, leadership positions in ministries and quality-assurance agencies, institutional management in VET and HRD sectors, and consultancy roles with international organisations such as UNESCO, OECD, and the World Bank. Active doctoral students already engage in international

research mobility and conferences, reflecting the programme's integration into the global scientific community.

Upon the completion of the program, the PhD graduate will have:

- Complex professional knowledge built on the latest scientific achievements in the field of education sciences, including research methodology developments in the sector;
- Knowledge of the theories of pedagogical sciences and the VET;
- Didactics of general and relevant specific fields - learning principles, methods, technologies, forms of assessment - knowledge based on the best international practices in the area of education and VET;
- Ability to analyse and evaluate the main trends in the country's VET policy - historical perspective and modernity.

Upon the completion of the program, the PhD student will be able to:

- Critically analyse, synthesise and evaluate recent scientific findings or approaches in the field of education sciences;
- Analyse complex problems in the area of VET and conduct research independently to solve them, while also maintaining academic ethics and integrity;
- Create new knowledge in relation to the scientific knowledge accumulated in the field of education sciences, and communicate such knowledge to professionals and broad public;
- Use modern approaches to teaching, methods/techniques and technologies in the process of pedagogical activities, self-reflection, and modification of student-centred teaching approaches;
- Ability to participate in the professional analysis and planning of the country's education and VET policy.

Upon the completion of the programme, the PhD student will have the ability to:

- initiate research projects in the area of education and VET and lead them independently;
- solve complex problems in the area of education and VET using creative approaches.

The programme cultivates advanced academic and research competencies. Doctoral candidates gain a theoretical foundation in vocational pedagogy, curriculum development, and workforce-development policy. They design and analyse empirical studies using both qualitative and quantitative methods, mastering data analysis and scholarly communication. Emphasis is placed on synthesising international research, applying comparative perspectives, and publishing in indexed journals. Through assistantships, seminars, and collaborative projects, candidates refine the teaching, supervision, and academic presentation skills essential for independent scholarship.

Beyond research expertise, the programme fosters analytical, strategic, and leadership capacities required for managing educational change. Ethical and responsible research practice is central to ensuring adherence to the principles of integrity and transparency. International mobility and joint seminars develop intercultural competence, teamwork, and project-management skills. Doctoral candidates learn to plan and implement long-term research independently, demonstrating autonomy, resilience, and reflective practice-competencies essential for academic and policy leadership.

The doctoral level is justified by its focus on creating new knowledge and contributing to theory and practice. The curriculum includes 35 ECTS credits of structured coursework complemented by extensive dissertation research, consistent with NQF Level 8 descriptors.

Qualification objectives are documented in the Programme Description and published on the TSU website. They are communicated through orientation sessions, supervision meetings, and workshops organised by the programme and TSU’s Quality Assurance Office, ensuring shared understanding among faculty and candidates. Objectives are reviewed every three years or following accreditation, integrating feedback from students, alumni, and partners. The programme’s flexibility allows new themes, digital transformation, artificial intelligence in VET, and green-skills development, to be incorporated into dissertation research. Benchmarking with doctoral schools at Magdeburg and the University of Limerick, and participation in international projects, ensures continuous alignment with European best practice. Transparency and dissemination are reinforced through TSU’s publications, conferences, and international collaborations, confirming the programme’s quality, relevance, and international recognition.

Appraisal:

The panel applauds the doctoral programmes, which correspond to the goals of the European and national qualification frameworks. The doctoral programmes and their pursued qualifications and competency goals are matched. Furthermore, the subject-related and multidisciplinary possibilities to achieve the objectives have been systematically discussed. The pursued qualification and competency goals are being continuously further developed by taking into account the international research developments. The Governance and Administration in Education and Science programme, jointly developed with NKUA, is aligned with international standards (Salzburg Principles, EUA-CDE) and is designed to foster high-level policy innovation. Likewise, VET demonstrates a strong research profile that clearly meets European standards.

| Quality Ratings | | Excellent | Exceeds quality requirements | Meets quality requirements | Does not meet quality requirements | not relevant |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. | STRATEGY AND OBJECTIVES | | | | | |
| 1.1 | Objectives of the Doctoral Programme | VET | Gov | | | |

1.2 Positioning of the Doctoral Programme in the education market

Governance and Administration in Education and Science

The programme holds a unique position within Georgia and the broader region as the first and only transnational PhD programme. Unlike traditional doctoral programmes, it provides dual supervision, shared research infrastructure, and international academic recognition within the EHEA. Students choose this programme because it combines global academic standards with contextual expertise in educational governance and science management. Its main competitors are doctoral programmes in education offered by regional universities in Georgia and EU institutions specialising in higher education policy. However, none offer a comparable joint-degree model with dual academic governance and English-language instruction. The programme’s

strengths lie in its cross-border structure, integration of international doctoral schools, and relevance to global policy frameworks. Admission is selective, with three to four highly qualified candidates per year, ensuring quality supervision.

Doctoral Programme in Vocational Education

The PhD in Vocational Education is the only structured doctoral programme in Georgia dedicated exclusively to vocational education research, positioning TSU as the national leader in this field. Regionally, only a few universities in Eastern Europe offer comparable doctoral-level specialisation, making this programme distinctive within the South Caucasus. Students choose TSU’s programme for its international collaboration, notably with Otto von Guericke University Magdeburg under the VoCasian project, which ensures access to European expertise and research networks. Competitors include doctoral programmes in education at Tbilisi State University itself and at Ilia State University, though none match the programme’s research depth or policy orientation. Its advantages include an international curriculum, personalised supervision, and integration with Erasmus+ doctoral networks. Each year, two to five candidates are admitted from diverse professional and academic backgrounds, ensuring selective entry and high completion rates. The programme’s applied research orientation and participation in international policy dialogues enhance its reputation both nationally and within the EHEA.

Appraisal:

The panel commends the University for convincingly positioning two programmes in the postgraduate education market, given the described profile and the pursued qualification and competency goals. Furthermore, the positioning in the education market was analysed, and the attractiveness of the programmes with regard to the pursued qualifications and competency goals is demonstrated convincingly. The panel highlighted that the VET programme demonstrates a strong alignment with national research priorities. At the same time, the panel encourages the programme to strengthen its international research orientation further, such as through increased participation in international conferences or publications in internationally recognised journals. The Governance and Administration in Education and Science programme shows strong alignment with national research priorities; however, as it is still newly established, research output from students has not yet emerged. The University should further clarify and articulate the programme’s unique profile.

| Quality Ratings | | Excellent | Exceeds quality requirements | Meets quality requirements | Does not meet quality requirements | not relevant |
|-----------------|---|-----------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. | STRATEGY AND OBJECTIVES | | | | | |
| 1.2 | Positioning of the Doctoral Programme in the educational market | VET | Gov | | | |

1.3 Positioning of the Doctoral Programmes in the Job Market for Graduates

1.3.1/1.3.2 In and outside the research fields

Governance and Administration in Education and Science

Graduates of the Gov are expected to qualify for senior-level positions in universities, ministries, quality-assurance agencies, research councils, and international organisations. Typical future career paths include professorships, policy analysis, higher-education management, and strategic planning within education and science governance systems. As a joint programme between TSU and NKUA, it awards a credential recognised across the EHEA, ensuring graduates' employability both nationally and internationally.

Since the programme was launched recently and the first cohort is still in progress, graduate employment data are not yet available. Nevertheless, the qualification objectives and research-based competencies embedded in the curriculum, analytical expertise, governance knowledge, and policy innovation are closely aligned with labour-market demands in education governance and research administration. TSU and NKUA plan to monitor graduate employability through alumni networks, joint surveys, and employer consultations following the completion of the initial cohort. The Advisory Board, comprising representatives from ministries, QA bodies, and international partner institutions, will regularly review the programme's relevance to professional needs and recommend adjustments to ensure continuous alignment between doctoral outcomes and evolving job-market expectations.

Doctoral Programme in Vocational Education

Graduates of VET are expected to pursue careers as academic researchers, policymakers, institutional leaders, and consultants within Georgia's and Europe's vocational education and lifelong-learning systems. Future graduates will be prepared for positions in universities, research centres, ministries, development agencies (such as GIZ and DVV International), and international organisations, including UNESCO-UNEVOC and the OECD. The programme's emphasis on empirical research, system evaluation, and policy innovation equips doctoral candidates with the competencies required to design, implement, and assess education and workforce-development reforms.

As the programme's first cohorts are still in progress, systematic graduate employability monitoring will begin after the initial cycle concludes in 2026. Nevertheless, mechanisms for tracking and evaluating employment outcomes have already been established. TSU will apply tracer surveys, alumni follow-up interviews, and employer consultations to assess the professional integration of graduates. Key stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Education and Science, the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE), and partner VET institutions, are involved in programme evaluation and will continue to provide structured feedback on graduates' competencies and labour-market relevance.

Appraisal:

The doctoral programmes with a special focus on professional qualifications in science and research are positioned convincingly by the described profile and the pursued research focus. The programme in Governance and Administration in Education and Science meets quality requirements for Positioning of the Doctoral Programme in the Job Market for Graduates outside the research fields, because it is strongly positioned outside the science and research field by taking into account the professional qualification for employment due to the described profile and the pursued focus of research. The VET programme, however, was considered exceedingly good,

because the position outside the research field was analysed. The competitiveness of the programme with regard to the pursued qualification and competency goals for employment outside the science and research fields is stated due to graduate profiles as policymakers, institutional leaders, and consultants within Georgia’s and Europe’s vocational education and lifelong-learning systems. The interview session with graduate employers convincingly demonstrated this.

| Quality Ratings | | Excellent | Exceeds quality requirements | Meets quality requirements | Does not meet quality requirements | not relevant |
|-----------------|---|-----------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1.3 | Positioning of the Doctoral Programme in the Job Market for Graduates | | | | | |
| 1.3.1 | in the research fields | | | X | | |
| 1.3.2 | outside the research fields | | VET | Gov | | |

1.4 Positioning of the Doctoral Programmes in the Strategic Concept of the Higher Education Institution

Governance and Administration in Education and Science

Gov is fully aligned with the TSU Strategic Development Plan (2024-2030) and the Unified National Strategy for Education and Science of Georgia (2022-2030). Both strategies emphasise the internationalisation of doctoral education, the development of research capacity, and the strengthening of institutional governance and academic leadership as key national and institutional priorities.

The programme was launched in direct response to the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia’s policy objective to enhance the quality and international competitiveness of doctoral studies and to build national expertise in education and science management. Reflecting its strategic importance, the first student cohort is fully funded by the Ministry, underlining the programme’s role in advancing Georgia’s research and innovation ecosystem.

Within TSU’s mission framework, the programme contributes to the University’s goal of expanding internationally accredited, research-oriented joint programmes and deepening cooperation with European partners, particularly through collaboration with NKUA. It is positioned within the Faculty of Education and Psychology, where it serves as a model for transnational doctoral education by integrating dual supervision and shared research infrastructure.

Although the Joint Academic Board overseeing governance and quality assurance is not yet formally established, its creation is planned for the next implementation phase. Once operational, it will include representatives from TSU, NKUA, and the Ministry to guide academic coordination, review progress, and ensure strategic alignment with both national and institutional objectives. Through this initiative, TSU demonstrates its leadership in fostering international doctoral collaboration, advancing evidence-based education governance, and supporting Georgia’s integration into the European Higher Education and Research Area.

Vocational Education

VET aligns with TSU’s strategic objective to enhance the competitiveness and quality of educational programmes while fostering lifelong learning and workforce development. Developed under the VoCasian Project with Otto von Guericke University Magdeburg, the programme reflects TSU’s aims at producing research that addresses national labour-market needs and supports educational modernisation. It fits within the Faculty of Education and Psychology as a cornerstone of doctoral research in applied education sciences. TSU decided to offer this programme in response to stakeholder demand from the Ministry of Education and Science, NCEQE, and GIZ for doctoral-level expertise in vocational education. The programme benefits from university-level investment in research infrastructure, supervision training, and international cooperation mechanisms. Its relevance to TSU’s mission is underscored by its focus on generating evidence-based policy insights, supporting educational innovation, and contributing to Georgia’s socio-economic development through advanced scientific inquiry and workforce competitiveness.

Appraisal:

The panel commends the University for their goal oriented integration of the two programmes in the strategic concept of the TSU, which is described and presented in a comprehensive manner. Furthermore, the integration of the programmes in the strategic concept was convincingly substantiated. The programmes present a consequent continuation of the higher education strategy in the focus of research. The corresponding setting of priorities of the higher education institutions are verified.

| Quality Ratings | | Excellent | Exceeds quality requirements | Meets quality requirements | Does not meet quality requirements | not relevant |
|------------------------|--|-----------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1.4 | The Positioning of the Doctoral Programme in the Strategic Concept of the Higher Education Institution | | X | | | |

1.5 Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities

TSU ensures equality of opportunity for all students through an institutional culture of fairness, inclusiveness, and respect. Principles of equal treatment are embedded across university regulations, academic procedures, and student support mechanisms, and are communicated through official documents governing educational programmes, faculty regulations, information sessions, and the university website. These frameworks guarantee that students are treated equally regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, age, religion, or socio-economic background.

Equal access begins with transparent admission procedures and continues throughout the study period through standardised assessment rules, unified evaluation criteria, and clear academic requirements. Questions or concerns related to fairness or discrimination may be addressed to the Faculty Administration, Quality Assurance Office, or Ethics Commission, which ensure that all academic processes adhere to ethical and professional standards. TSU provides comprehensive support for students with disabilities or special educational needs. Students may request individual accommodations such as adapted learning materials, technical aids, accessible learning environments, extended examination time, or alternative forms of assessment. These adjustments

are coordinated through the faculty administration to ensure equitable learning and examination conditions. Through these combined mechanisms, TSU ensures that all students enrolled in the International Joint Doctoral Programme Governance and Administration in Education and Science and VET benefit from an inclusive learning environment that prioritises fairness, accessibility, and equal participation.

Appraisal:

The TSU fulfils its tasks in these doctoral programmes by promoting gender equality and enforcing general prohibitions on discrimination. A claim for disadvantage compensation for disabled students in terms of temporal and formal requirements in the programmes, as well as for all concluding or accompanying certificates of achievement, and within the framework of aptitude testing procedures, is ensured. The panel **recommends** further developing and clearly documenting its measures to promote gender equality and uphold general prohibitions on discrimination within the doctoral programmes. While the institution fulfils its responsibilities in principle, the implementation of these commitments would benefit from more explicit articulation, structured processes, and systematic monitoring.

| Quality Ratings | | Excellent | Exceeds quality requirements | Meets quality requirements | Does not meet quality requirements | not relevant |
|-----------------|---|-----------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| | | | | X | | |
| 1.5 | Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities | | | X | | |

2. Admission

2.1 Admission conditions and procedures (Asterisk Criterion)

Governance and Administration in Education and Science

Admission requirements are defined in the joint programme regulations approved by the Academic Council of TSU. They are reviewed during each accreditation cycle or when national policy or institutional frameworks change. These include:

- Completed Master's degree with thesis.
- Master's degree in education or work experience in education (formal or informal), public sector, NGO, or education institution setting for at least three years.
- English proficiency (C1) (TOEFL iBT 110; IELTS 7,0) or the university examination. Applicants can be exempt from submitting the language proficiency test report if they earned an undergraduate and/or graduate degree in a programme that was officially taught in English.
- Prospective candidates must possess a minimum of ten ECTS credits/or equivalent in the fields of research and pedagogy at a Master's degree level, or equivalent.
- Research proposal outlining the research topic the candidate would like to pursue in the programme (1500-2000 words).

TSU and NKUA jointly administer the selection procedure in accordance with Georgian legislation (Order No. 224/N, 2011) and the Innovation, Inclusion, and Quality Project (I2Q) framework. The first cohort (2025-2026) was admitted through a fully funded national scholarship by the Ministry.

Information on admission criteria and deadlines is published on the official website and during information meetings and open days. All decisions are approved and recorded by the Joint Academic Board, which also oversees periodic review of admission procedures and alignment with EHEA standards.

Professional experience serves as an important but flexible prerequisite for Gov. Applicants are required to demonstrate a minimum of 3 years of professional experience in the education sector, public administration, NGOs, or other organisations linked to educational policy and science governance, if they do not hold an MA in Education. The programme's rationale for this requirement lies in its focus on applied research and evidence-based policy development, which presupposes prior familiarity with institutional, regulatory, and managerial processes in education and science.

Relevant experience includes leadership, research, administrative, or consulting roles in universities, ministries, quality-assurance agencies, or development projects. Such backgrounds ensure that doctoral candidates possess contextual insight and the capacity to link theoretical frameworks with practical governance challenges.

The Joint Admission Board assesses applicants' professional experience through the evaluation of CVs, recommendation letters, and structured interviews. The assessment criteria emphasise the relevance, scope, and analytical depth of prior professional activities, as well as their contribution to the applicant's proposed doctoral research topic. Although formal employment is preferred, project-based or research-oriented experience demonstrating equivalent competence may be recognised.

This programme builds substantively upon participants' professional backgrounds by integrating their field-based expertise into transnational research, comparative governance studies, and doctoral supervision structures. Students' professional trajectories thus serve as both a foundation for scholarly inquiry and a medium through which research outcomes can inform institutional reform and policy innovation across the European Higher Education Area. Notably, all applicants enrolled to date possess relevant professional expertise, whether or not they have an MA in Education, and engage in programme implementation.

Vocational Education

Admission requirements for the PhD in Vocational Education are officially defined in the programme regulation approved by the TSU Academic Council. They comply with national legal frameworks regulating doctoral education (Order No. 224/N, 2011) and are reviewed periodically by the Faculty Doctoral Committee and the Quality Assurance Office.

Applicants must possess a Master's degree in any field. Those without an MA degree in education must demonstrate at least three years of work experience in vocational education or training. Admission also requires proof of English proficiency at the C1 level, verified by an internationally recognised certificate (TOEFL iBT ≥ 110 or IELTS ≥ 7.0) or a university-administered exam. Candidates must submit a written research prospectus, the consent of a potential supervisor, and participate in an interview assessing the feasibility and innovation of the proposed topic.

The Selection Committee reviews all applications, applying transparent and merit-based procedures. The entire process is documented and periodically revised to reflect evolving academic

standards and national priorities for research capacity building. Information about admission requirements and procedures is available on the TSU website, at open days, and on social media. Foreign applicants may apply under the same conditions, with credential recognition administered by NCEQE.

Professional experience is an important but flexible prerequisite for VET at TSU. Applicants must hold a Master's degree in any discipline, accompanied, when the degree is not in education, by a minimum of three years of professional experience in the field of vocational education and training. Relevant professional backgrounds include teaching, curriculum design, management of VET institutions, policy development, or participation in donor-funded education and workforce-development projects. This prerequisite ensures that doctoral candidates possess an applied understanding of vocational-learning systems, labour-market relations, and institutional governance prior to entering advanced research training.

Applicants' professional experience is evaluated during the two-stage selection process, which includes document review and a structured interview. The Selection Committee assesses the relevance, scope, and reflective depth of professional practice based on the submitted CV and the interview. While the programme recognises alternative forms of engagement, such as project work or consultancy, formal professional experience is preferred. The curriculum explicitly builds on candidates' occupational expertise: their workplaces frequently serve as research sites, allowing doctoral students to translate professional knowledge into academic inquiry and contribute to innovation within Georgia's VET system and broader European practice. Notably, all applicants enrolled to date possess relevant professional expertise, whether or not they have an MA in Education, and engage in programme implementation.

2.2 Selection procedure

Governance and Administration in Education and Science

The selection procedure for Gov is jointly regulated by TSU and NKUA in accordance with Georgian and European academic standards. Admission is highly competitive and merit based. The Joint Admission Board, consisting of academic representatives from both TSU and NKUA, evaluates submitted documents and conducts structured interviews to assess research competence, methodological awareness, and alignment with the programme's objectives. When the number of qualified applicants exceeds the available study places, candidates are ranked according to the quality of their proposals, academic record, and interview performance. All interviews follow a pre-approved format, are documented in evaluation forms, and the final results are shared with the candidates.

Vocational Education

The admission and selection process for VET is defined by TSU's Regulation on Doctoral Studies (Resolution No. 77/2011) and supervised by the Faculty of Education and Psychology. Applicants must possess a master's degree in education or a related social science field and demonstrate research competence relevant to vocational education and training. The selection consists of two main stages: document evaluation and a structured interview. Candidates submit the application. The Selection Committee, composed of programme faculty and experts from TSU and Magdeburg University, reviews the academic portfolio and the alignment of the proposed research topic with the programme's thematic scope. Those shortlisted are invited to an interview assessing research readiness, motivation, and the feasibility of their research plan. When the number of

qualified applicants exceeds the available study places, candidates are ranked according to the quality of their proposals, academic record, and interview performance. All interviews follow a pre-approved format, are documented in evaluation forms, and the final results are shared with the candidates.

2.3 Transparency of the Decision on Admission

The admission procedures and decision-making processes are officially regulated by the University Regulation on Educational Programmes and the Statute on Admission and Student Status, both approved by the Academic Council and in full compliance with the national standards. These documents define eligibility requirements, selection procedures, and evaluation criteria for all degree levels.

Comprehensive information about admission requirements, deadlines, and procedures is publicly available through multiple sources. For all study levels, details are provided on the TSU official website (www.tsu.ge), faculty webpages, and public announcements. In addition, for master's programmes, full admission information, including eligibility criteria, is published in the official catalogue of the National Center of Assessment and Examination, which is updated annually.

Applicants are notified of their admission status via official email communication and publication of results on the TSU website. For programmes that include selection procedures (interviews or ranking), applicants are informed of their individual results. TSU ensures clear, transparent communication through standardised templates, consistent terminology, and pre-approved public notices. Updates or changes to admission rules are disseminated promptly to internal stakeholders and the public through university orders, official statements, and catalogue updates.

Applicants who are not admitted may request formal feedback from the Selection Committee and have the right to appeal within five working days. Appeals are reviewed by the Appeal Board in accordance with institutional regulations, ensuring fairness and accountability in the admission process.

Appraisal:

The admission requirements and procedures are appropriately articulated and demonstrate a high level of transparency. They also align with the strategic profile and developmental objectives of the higher education institution, as reflected in the mandatory submission of a research proposal as part of the application process.

The selection procedure not only meets the legal requirements but is also well aligned with the programmes' objectives. This is demonstrated by the involvement of the Joint Admission Board, which ensures consistent and targeted decision-making. Additionally, the requirement to submit a research proposal establishes a clear link between applicants' academic interests and the focus of the programme. The decision on admission is based on transparent criteria and it is clearly communicated; rejections are reasoned. The responsibilities are clearly regulated.

| Quality Ratings | | Excellent | Exceeds quality requirements | Meets quality requirements | Does not meet quality requirements | not relevant |
|-----------------|---|-----------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| 2. | ADMISSION | | | | | |
| 2.1 | Admission conditions and procedures | | X | | | |
| 2.2 | Selection Procedure | | X | | | |
| 2.3 | Transparency of the Decision on Admission | | | X | | |

3. Implementation

3.1 Structure

3.1.1 Structural Setup of the Doctoral Programme (Asterisk Criterion)

Governance and Administration in Education and Science

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Projected study time | Governance and Administration in Education and Science: three years, 55 ECTS credits. |
| Number of Credit Points (CP) | Teaching component (55 ECTS credits) Research component (three years) |
| Workload per CP | 25 hours per one ECTS credit, aligned with TSU regulations and the ECTS Users' Guide. |
| Number of courses | The teaching component includes 10 mandatory modules (50 ECTS credits) and one elective course (5 ECTS credits). |
| Number of contact hours | 2475 hours |

PhD programmes in Georgia are measured by the ECTS credits for the study component and the duration of the research component.

The curriculum of Gov is built on a coherent and research-intensive structure that ensures the progressive development of competencies aligned with the qualification objectives. It combines a teaching component (55 ECTS credits) and a research component (three years), following a six-semester model jointly implemented by TSU and NKUA.

The teaching component comprises 10 mandatory modules (50 ECTS credits) and 1 elective course (5 ECTS credits), covering advanced research methodology, leadership and administration, global research innovations, and sustainable development. Courses such as Advanced Research Methodology and Tools I & II, Leadership and Administration for Research Practice and Policy, and Education for Sustainable Development enable students to acquire the theoretical and methodological knowledge required for independent research and policy analysis.

The programme's research component, comprising Research Projects I & II, Conference Participation and Publications, and the Doctoral Dissertation, translates qualification objectives into research practice, ensuring graduates produce original contributions to the fields of education and science governance. Doctorate Seminars, Assistantships, and Summer/Winter Schools further

operationalise learning outcomes through peer interaction, applied practice, and supervision from both Georgian and Greek Faculty.

The curriculum’s design aligns precisely with NQF Level 8 descriptors: it fosters autonomy, innovation, and ethical responsibility in research. The logical sequence from methodological foundations to applied governance and dissertation defense ensures conceptual coherence between course content and programme objectives. Through co-teaching, international collaboration, and comparative research, students gain the analytical and leadership skills required to shape education and science policy at national and global levels.

Vocational Education

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Projected study time | Vocational Education: three years, 35 ECTS credits |
| Number of Credit Points (CP) | Teaching component (35 ECTS credits) Research component (three years) |
| Workload per CP | 25 hours per one ECTS credit, aligned with TSU regulations and the ECTS Users’ Guide. |
| Number of courses | 7 courses |
| Number of contact hours | 1575 |

VET follows a clear and structured design that ensures logical progression from foundational theoretical study to advanced research and dissertation work. The curriculum consists of 35 ECTS credits of coursework and three years worth of dissertation research, spanning six semesters. The programme contains 25 ECTS credits of mandatory courses, which begin with theoretical modules such as Scientific Genesis and Theories of Vocational Education (5 ECTS credits), establishing a conceptual understanding of vocational pedagogy, lifelong learning, and policy frameworks. This foundation is followed by Research Methodology I & II (10 ECTS credits), which train students in qualitative and quantitative methods, ensuring methodological rigor and research independence.

The programme aligns directly with its qualification objectives: developing researchers and experts capable of advancing workforce development and educational innovation. Doctoral seminars, assistantships, and Scientific Research Work (10 ECTS credits) integrate theoretical analysis with practical inquiry, enabling candidates to apply concepts in real institutional contexts. The sequence from theory to applied research guarantees that students acquire both academic and professional competencies aligned with NQF Level 8 descriptors. This coherent structure culminating in the dissertation ensures a balance between depth of study and independence in research, preparing graduates to generate original knowledge and contribute to the modernisation of Georgia’s vocational education and training system.

3.1.2 Doctoral Degree Regulations (Asterisk Criterion)

The conditions of study for all four programmes are officially regulated by TSU through a set of institutional documents: the TSU Rule for Educational Programmes, Rule for Doctoral Studies, the Statute of the Faculty, and the approved Programme Descriptions. For the International Joint Doctoral Programme, study and exam regulations are additionally defined by the Joint Programme Description, ensuring harmonised academic standards across both institutions.

Students can access information on programme requirements, structure, course components, and examination rules through the TSU official website, faculty webpages, programme catalogues, syllabi, and orientation sessions organised at the beginning of each academic year. Doctoral students also receive programme-specific guidelines through the Quality Assurance (QA) Units and supervisors.

Study and examination regulations are reviewed periodically-typically every three years or during accreditation cycles. Revisions are initiated by programme committees and QA units, consulted within Faculty Councils (and joint governance bodies for the Joint PhD), and formally approved by the rector's or dean's decrees. Updates are communicated to students and faculty via official announcements, email notifications, and academic information meetings.

All programmes allow students to interrupt their studies, take academic leave, or participate in international mobility, consistent with TSU regulations. TSU recognises periods of study abroad under the Lisbon Recognition Convention, and all credits are fully transferable through the ECTS credits system. Students receive final grades based on the national 0-100 grading scale, which can be converted into relative ECTS grades according to institutional grading tables. Upon completion, all graduates receive an official Diploma Supplement, detailing qualification level, learning outcomes, grading scales, and relative grade distribution.

TSU ensures academic integrity through its Code of Ethics, anti-plagiarism policy, and mandatory plagiarism detection for theses and dissertations. Cases of academic misconduct are reviewed by faculty-level or university-level disciplinary committees, and sanctions follow established procedures. Students who do not pass an examination may resit assessments in accordance with university regulations. If the total assessment remains 0-50 points, an "F" grade is awarded, and the credit must be retaken. Formal appeal procedures exist for all programmes and allow students to challenge examination results or procedural issues through Faculty Appeals Commissions and, if needed, university-level bodies, ensuring fairness, transparency, and alignment with programme objectives.

3.1.3 Status of the Doctoral Students

Doctoral students at the TSU, like all doctoral students in Georgia, are legally recognised as students within the third cycle of higher education, as defined by the Law of Georgia on Higher Education. They must hold at least a master's degree to enrol and acquire full student status with associated rights such as academic freedom and academic mobility. Although they receive academic rights and may access funding opportunities, doctoral students are not considered employees of public universities.

3.1.4 Module/Course Description (Asterisk Criterion)

Curricula and syllabi are documented in official programme catalogues and published online through the faculty webpage and the TSU electronic learning platform (Moodle/UNIS). These documents include module descriptions, credit distribution, assessment principles, and qualification requirements. Updated versions of syllabi are uploaded each semester by course instructors, in accordance with TSU's internal regulations. Responsibility for ensuring accuracy and up-to-date information is shared among several units: the Programme Heads, the Faculty Quality As-

surance Office, and the Faculty Administration. Programme Heads ensure the correctness of academic content; the QA Office verifies compliance with national standards and accreditation requirements; and the Faculty Administration updates information on official platforms. In cases where changes are made to curricula, admission criteria, or organisational procedures, updates are communicated immediately through the TSU website, faculty announcements, email notifications, and student information meetings. This multi-layered system ensures that prospective students, current students, academic staff, and external stakeholders always have access to current programme information.

Appraisal:

The respective structure corresponds with the objectives of the doctoral programmes and it properly connects the range of courses with the research tasks of the doctoral students. The structural requirements of the doctoral programmes are addressed in a doctoral degree regulation that takes into account national and higher education-specific requirements. In both law and fact, the status is properly regulated. However, the two Doctoral programmes have so far not aligned their learning objectives with any of the internationally recognised taxonomies, which is understandable given that advanced programmes at Doctoral level are often challenging to map neatly onto such frameworks. Nevertheless, internationally accepted standards exist to support transparency, comparability, and academic coherence, and the programmes are expected to take these into account. Therefore, the panel states the following condition:

TSU revises the wording of the programme learning objectives so that they are formulated in accordance with an internationally used theoretical foundation. For instance, this might be the taxonomies by Bloom et al. or by Manzano & Kendall.

The range of courses/modules is described according to content, scope/duration, requirements, required reading, degree, and the qualifications/competencies (outcome-oriented) to be achieved.

| Quality Ratings | | Excellent | Exceeds quality requirements | Meets quality requirements | Does not meet quality requirements | not relevant |
|-----------------|--|-----------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| 3. | PROGRAMME DESIGN | | | | | |
| 3.1 | Structure | | | | | |
| 3.1.1 | Structural Setup of the Doctoral Programme | | | X | | |
| 3.1.2 | Doctoral Degree Regulations | | | | Con | |
| 3.1.3 | Status of the Doctoral Students | | | X | | |
| 3.1.4 | Module Description | | | X | | |

3.2 Content

3.2.1 Logic and Conceptual Consistency (Asterisk Criterion)

Governance and Administration in Education and Science

The curriculum of Gov follows a coherent, research-intensive structure that supports the gradual development of competencies aligned with the qualification objectives. It consists of a teaching component (55 ECTS credits) and a research component (three years), delivered over six semesters by TSU and NKUA.

The teaching component comprises ten compulsory modules and one elective, covering advanced research methodologies, leadership and administration, global research developments, and sustainable governance. These courses equip students with the theoretical and methodological foundations necessary for independent research and policy work.

The research component—including Research Projects I & II, Conference Participation and Publications, and the Doctoral Dissertation—ensures students apply these competencies through original research in education and science governance. Doctorate Seminars, Assistantships, and seasonal schools further strengthen applied learning and provide joint supervision from Georgian and Greek faculty.

The programme aligns with NQF Level 8 descriptors by fostering autonomy, innovation, and ethical responsibility. Its progression from methodological preparation to dissertation defence ensures coherence between course content and programme aims. Through co-teaching, international collaboration, and comparative research, students develop the analytical and leadership skills required to contribute to education and science policy at both national and international levels.

| 1. Semester | Course Name | ECTS |
|-------------------|---|--|
| | <i>Please insert the course titles here</i> Compulsory Introduction to Advanced Research Methods Advanced Research Methodology and Tools I – Case Studies Leadership and Administration for research practice and policy in Education and beyond Education for Sustainable Development Winter School | (5 ECTS) (5 ECTS) (5 ECTS) (5 ECTS) (5 ECTS) |
| | Total ECTS in the 1. semester: | 25 ECTS) |
| 2. Semester | <i>Please insert the course titles here</i> Compulsory Advanced Research Methodology and Tools II: Action Research Global research innovations in education and beyond Summer School | (5 ECTS) (5 ECTS) (5 ECTS) |
| | Total ECTS in the 2. semester: | 15 (ECTS) |
| 3. Semester | <i>Please insert the course titles here</i> Compulsory Doctorate Seminar | (5 ECTS) |
| | Total ECTS in the 3. semester: | |
| 4. Semester | <i>Please insert the course titles here</i> Compulsory Assistantship to the professor | (5 ECTS) |
| | Electives (<i>please state the number of electives students must take in that semester</i>) 5 ECTS credits offered based on students' needs | (5 ECTS) |
| | Total ECTS in the 4. semester: | |
| 5. Semester | <i>Please insert the course titles here</i> Compulsory | |
| | Electives (<i>please state the number of electives students must take in that semester</i>) | |
| | Total ECTS in the 5. semester: | |
| 6. Semester | <i>Please insert the course titles here</i> Compulsory | |
| | Electives (<i>please state the number of electives students must take in that semester</i>) | |
| | Total ECTS in the 6. semester: | |
| Electives: | <i>Please insert the course titles here if electives can be chosen in several semesters or in which semester they should be taken</i> | |
| | | |

Vocational Education

VET follows a clear structure that progresses from theoretical foundations to advanced research and dissertation work. It comprises 35 ECTS credits of coursework and three years worth of dissertation research across six semesters. The mandatory modules (25 ECTS credits) begin with Scientific Genesis and Theories of Vocational Education, which establishes core concepts in vocational pedagogy, lifelong learning, and policy. This is followed by Research Methodology I & II,

which provide training in qualitative and quantitative methods and support research autonomy. The programme is closely aligned with its qualification objectives, preparing researchers and specialists capable of contributing to workforce development and educational innovation. Doctoral seminars, assistantships, and Scientific Research Work integrate theory with applied inquiry, allowing students to engage with real institutional challenges.

The curriculum's progression from conceptual study to independent research meets NQF Level 8 expectations, ensuring both academic depth and professional competence. Its coherent structure, culminating in the dissertation, equips graduates to produce original research and support the modernisation of Georgia's vocational education and training system.

| 1. Semester | Course Name | ECTS |
|--------------------------------|---|---------------|
| | <i>Please insert the course titles here</i> Compulsory VET Scientific Genesis and Theories | (5 ECTS) |
| | Electives (<i>please state the number of electives students must take in that semester</i>) | (0-5-10 ECTS) |
| Total ECTS in the 1. semester: | | |
| 2. Semester | <i>Please insert the course titles here</i> Compulsory Research Methods and Methodology in VET Education I Seminar | (5 ECTS) |
| | Electives (<i>please state the number of electives students must take in that semester</i>) | (5 ECTS) |
| | | (0-5-10 ECTS) |
| Total ECTS in the 2. semester: | | |
| 3. Semester | <i>Please insert the course titles here</i> Compulsory Research Methods and Methodology in VET Education II | (5 ECTS) |
| | Electives (<i>please state the number of electives students must take in that semester</i>) | (0-5-10 ECTS) |
| Total ECTS in the 3. semester: | | |
| 4. Semester | <i>Please insert the course titles here</i> Compulsory | |
| | Electives (<i>please state the number of electives students must take in that semester</i>) | |
| Total ECTS in the 4. semester: | | |
| 5. Semester | <i>Please insert the course titles here</i> Compulsory | |
| | Electives (<i>please state the number of electives students must take in that semester</i>) | |
| Total ECTS in the 5. semester: | | |
| 6. Semester | <i>Please insert the course titles here</i> Compulsory | |
| | Electives (<i>please state the number of electives students must take in that semester</i>) | |
| Total ECTS in the 6. semester: | | |
| 7. Semester | <i>Please insert the course titles here</i> Compulsory | |
| | Electives (<i>please state the number of electives students must take in that semester</i>) | |
| Total ECTS in the 7. semester: | | |

| | | |
|--------------------|---|----------|
| 8. Semester | <i>Please insert the course titles here</i> Compulsory | |
| | <i>Electives (please state the number of electives students must take in that semester)</i> | |
| | Total ECTS in the 8. semester: | |
| Electives: | <i>Please insert the course titles here if electives can be chosen in several semesters or in which semester they should be taken</i> | |
| | Leadership and administration for research practice and policy in education and beyond | (5 ECTS) |
| | Vocational Education for Sustainable Development | (5 ECTS) |
| | Teaching and Learning in Natural and Virtual Learning Environments | (5 ECTS) |
| | VET Teaching and Learning Methods | (5 ECTS) |

3.2.2 Science and Research Based Teaching (Asterisk Criterion)

Governance and Administration in Education and Science

The programme ensures the systematic development of methodological competences and scientific research skills through a structured and progressive approach to doctoral education. Students are guided in scientific inquiry from their first semester through methodology courses, individual supervision, and continuous research engagement. Core modules such as Advanced Research Methodology and Tools I & II, and Research Projects I & II, explicitly train students in designing and implementing complex qualitative and quantitative studies, interpreting data, and academic writing. These courses also introduce advanced analytical software, research ethics, and publication standards aligned with European academic norms.

Project-based assignments and doctoral seminars encourage the application of theory to empirical research, fostering independent problem-solving and methodological precision. Students develop and refine their research proposals early in the programme and receive feedback from both Georgian and Greek supervisors, ensuring high standards of scientific rigor.

Preparation for dissertation writing is embedded throughout the curriculum. Regular progress presentations, doctoral colloquia, and research workshops strengthen scholarly communication and peer review skills. Methodological competencies are assessed through written assignments, project reports, conference presentations, and ultimately the defense of a doctoral dissertation. The programme guarantees doctoral-level scientific quality consistent with NQF Level 8 descriptors emphasising originality, analytical rigor, and contribution to the advancement of knowledge in governance, education, and science administration.

Vocational Education

The programme systematically develops methodological and scientific competencies to prepare doctoral candidates for independent research and scholarly publication. Courses such as Research Methodology I & II introduce advanced qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method approaches, emphasising methodological triangulation, validity, and reliability. Students gain practical research experience through Scientific Research Work and Doctoral Seminars, where they design and pilot their own studies, collect data, and present findings for feedback. Supervisors guide students in academic writing, citation ethics, and research design refinement. Project-based learning and continuous supervision ensure that candidates develop proficiency in critical analy-

sis, synthesis, and argumentation, core doctoral-level competencies under NQF Level 8. Methodological competence is evaluated through proposal defense, seminar presentations, and dissertation work. Regular progress reviews and international workshops (IDEG, VoCaSian) ensure adherence to global research standards. This systematic approach ensures that graduates are capable of conducting independent, high-quality research that contributes new knowledge to the field of vocational education.

3.2.2 Focus of the Curriculum on Qualification and Competency Development (Asterisk Criterion)

The two doctoral programmes present curricula that include the disciplinary requirements necessary for the development of research competencies among doctoral candidates. The programmes' structures reflect the research areas of the academic staff and the doctoral candidates involved, thereby aligning ongoing research activities with the thematic focus of the doctoral projects. The curricula also contain courses dedicated to research methods and approaches to scientific inquiry, offering structured training in a range of methodological tools.

In addition to the core curricular elements, both programmes incorporate further activities that extend the thematic and methodological framework available to doctoral candidates. These include supplementary events and opportunities such as seminars, workshops, assistantships, conference participation, and other academic formats. These elements provide additional spaces for engagement with research topics, methodological practice, and academic exchange. They also allow doctoral candidates to pursue individual interests within their research fields and to connect these with the programme's academic resources. Through the combination of structured coursework, alignment with institutional research activities, and the availability of supplementary academic opportunities, the programmes offer a broad framework that supports the development of research skills and thematic specialisation among the doctoral candidates.

3.2.4 Technical Offers

Governance and Administration in Education and Science

The doctoral programme includes the disciplinary components required to develop the intended research competencies and is aligned with the research interests of the academic staff and doctoral candidates. The curriculum contains modules on various research methods and scientific approaches, providing structured methodological preparation. In addition to these core elements, the programme incorporates further academic opportunities that extend and complement the curricular content, allowing doctoral candidates to deepen individual areas of interest and support the attainment of the intended qualification and competence objectives. These additional opportunities are strengthened through the IDEG Project – Internationalisation of Doctoral Education in Georgian Universities (2024–2026), implemented under the Competitive Innovation Fund of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia. The project has contributed to establishing and sustaining the joint programme between TSU and NKUA by supporting the development of international infrastructure and by ensuring long-term viability through staff and student exchanges, jointly organised summer and winter schools, and collaboration workshops with international partners. The project's scope extends beyond curriculum development and encompasses the full doctoral lifecycle from programme design to delivery and quality assurance, thereby providing a broad framework within which doctoral candidates can develop their individual research profiles.

Vocational Education

VET incorporates the key disciplinary elements needed to develop the research competencies targeted by the programme. Its curriculum includes theoretical modules that introduce the scientific foundations, conceptual frameworks, and central debates in vocational pedagogy, lifelong learning, and educational policy, providing candidates with the disciplinary grounding needed for research in this field. The programme's structure reflects the research areas pursued by the academic staff and doctoral candidates. The thematic alignment between coursework, supervision, and the ongoing research activities of faculty members ensures coherence between programme content and doctoral projects, giving candidates access to relevant expertise for their dissertation topics.

In addition, the curriculum includes methodological training in both qualitative and quantitative research. These courses provide candidates with the scientific approaches necessary for planning and conducting independent research, supporting the development of methodological competence appropriate for doctoral-level study.

3.2.5 Multidisciplinary Qualifications (Asterisk Criterion)

Governance and Administration in Education and Science

Gov incorporates a wide range of activities that support the acquisition of multidisciplinary qualifications and ensure that these are communicated in a manner appropriate to the programme's target group. Throughout the curriculum, doctoral candidates engage in formats such as Doctoral Seminars, Comparative Education Governance, and Research Methodology in International Contexts, where they present research progress, articulate methodological decisions, and participate in structured academic discussions with Georgian and Greek Faculty. These activities provide continuous opportunities for students to communicate specialised knowledge to peers, academic audiences, and non-specialists. The Assistantship component further contributes to the development of teamwork, leadership, and conflict-handling skills, as students take responsibility for facilitating learning processes, supporting teaching activities, and coordinating small academic groups. Joint supervision arrangements and cross-national cooperation with NKUA additionally expose candidates to intercultural communication settings and collaborative problem-solving processes.

Multidisciplinary work is integrated throughout the programme through group projects, peer-review formats, and collaborative research assignments that mirror real governance and policy-analysis environments. Interactive teaching formats, such as roundtables, case analyses, and policy simulations enable students to connect theoretical perspectives with applied problem-solving. These activities are complemented by participation in international workshops, summer and winter schools, and joint events organised within the IDEG Project (*Internationalisation of Doctoral Education in Georgian Universities, 2024–2026*). Implemented under the Competitive Innovation Fund of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, the IDEG project provides a structured framework for staff and student exchanges, collaborative academic events, and joint capacity-building activities. Its contributions span the full doctoral lifecycle, from programme design to delivery and quality assurance, and further expand the range of opportunities to strengthen multidisciplinary competencies. Support structures such as faculty mentoring, individual feedback sessions, and university resources for academic writing and project-based teamwork reinforce these elements. Across these components, the programme provides a broad and systematic framework for developing and practicing multidisciplinary qualifications throughout the duration of doctoral study.

Vocational Education

VET encompasses a range of activities that enable doctoral candidates to acquire multidisciplinary qualifications and communicate them in academic and professional contexts. Core modules such as Research Methods I & II, Scientific Genesis in VET, Doctoral Seminars, and VET Policy Analysis require candidates to present research proposals, engage in methodological discussions, and participate in peer-feedback processes. These formats provide structured opportunities for students to articulate specialised knowledge to colleagues, academic audiences, and non-specialists. The Assistantship component further develops leadership, teamwork, and conflict-handling skills, as candidates assist teaching staff with seminar facilitation, instructional tasks, and academic administration, gaining insight into institutional communication and decision-making processes typical of vocational education settings.

Multidisciplinary and collaborative work is integrated throughout the programme. Group projects, comparative case studies, Erasmus+ collaborative assignments, and joint research seminars with European partner universities require candidates to work in teams and engage in intercultural communication. Applied formats such as role-plays, policy-evaluation simulations, and research workshops connect theoretical perspectives with practical problem-solving. International mobility opportunities within IDEG and Erasmus+—including summer schools, workshops, and research residencies—expose students to cross-cultural environments, negotiation settings, and international presentation formats, thereby expanding the range of contexts in which communication and leadership competencies are practised.

Ongoing supervision structures, including personalised mentoring, structured feedback sessions, and research coaching, further support the development of these skills. University resources such as writing consultations and methodological workshops complement these activities.

Appraisal:

The panel applauds the two programmes for their concept, like their profile elements and unique selling points: Gov is the first and only transnational PhD programme and the VET is the only structured doctoral programme in Georgia dedicated exclusively to vocational education research (see chapter 1.2). The concrete implementation of the learning objective is matched with each other. The competency of enhanced participation in the research field is at the heart of implementation in both programmes. Furthermore, the implementation enables the integration of actual research developments into the curriculum and appropriately involves the individual priorities of the doctoral students. The implementation allows current research developments to be directly integrated into the curriculum. This ensures that teaching content remains aligned with the latest scientific progress. It also enables doctoral students to set individual research priorities and incorporates them meaningfully into their studies.

The panel commends the doctoral programmes for the teaching, which presents the current status of scientific knowledge in accordance with the objectives. It takes into account the associated relevant research. Furthermore, the current research status is being discussed in suitable lecture forms and pushed ahead through the interaction of doctoral students and scientists.

The panel was impressed by the curriculum's focus on qualification and competency development. The programmes include the essential disciplinary components that doctoral candidates need to develop the intended research competencies. Its structure reflects the research foci of the academic staff and the doctoral candidates involved. Courses addressing various research methods and scientific approaches are integrated into the curriculum. In addition, the programmes offer further activities and opportunities that complement the curricular content and support the development of the intended qualification and competency objectives.

VET provides the necessary discipline to achieve the research competencies pursued by doctoral students. It corresponds to the research focus of the scientists and doctoral students involved in the programme. The courses on different research methods and approaches to science are part of the curriculum.

The panel applauds the doctoral programme in Gov for offering additional events and opportunities, which individually enhance the contents to achieve the pursued qualification and competency objectives. The panel further **recommends** ensuring that doctoral candidates are also granted access to the research infrastructure and academic facilities available at the partner universities in Magdeburg and Stuttgart, as the PhD programme in Educational Governance could serve as a model for the PhD programme in Vocational Education.

The panel praises the multidisciplinary qualifications in the doctoral programmes, which are communicated in a target appropriate manner. It especially enables the doctoral students to discuss the knowledge gained in the specialised fields with their colleagues, to present it in front of an academic audience and to communicate it to laymen. It promotes the ability to manage a team and to carry forward the social, scientific or cultural progress in their respective professional environment. Furthermore, the promotion of multidisciplinary qualifications is systematically practiced throughout the overall courses of the doctoral programmes.

| Quality Ratings | | Excellent | Exceeds quality requirements | Meets quality requirements | Does not meet quality requirements | not relevant |
|-----------------|---|-----------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| 3. | PROGRAMME DESIGN | | | | | |
| 3.2 | Content | | | | | |
| 3.2.1 | Logic and Conceptual Consistency | | X | | | |
| 3.2.2 | Science and Research Based Teaching | | X | | | |
| 3.2.3 | Focus of the Curriculum on Qualification and Competency Development | | X | | | |
| 3.2.4 | Technical Offers | Gov | | VET | | |
| 3.2.5 | Multidisciplinary Qualifications | | X | | | |

3.3 Examination Procedures

3.3.1 Examinations (Asterisk Criterion)

Governance and Administration in Education and Science

Gov applies diverse examination methods to ensure that doctoral candidates achieve the intended learning outcomes and demonstrate research excellence consistent with NQF Level 8 standards.

Assessment forms include written exams, oral presentations, analytical essays, project reports, and research proposals. These formats assess theoretical knowledge, methodological competence, and critical analysis. Examination methods are selected to match course objectives, for instance, Advanced Research Methodology and Tools I & II employ project-based assessments, while Leadership and Administration for Research Practice and Policy includes applied case analyses and oral presentations. The level of difficulty is determined by the doctoral committee and supervisors to ensure that expectations progressively increase across semesters, culminating in independent research competence. Students are supported through research workshops, methodological seminars, and supervision meetings, as well as access to study materials, sample proposals, and writing guides.

The doctoral dissertation represents the core component of assessment (145 ECTS credits). It must constitute an original and methodologically sound contribution to education and science governance, typically ranging between 60,000-80,000 words. All procedures, evaluation criteria, and ethical standards are defined in the Programme Handbook and Institutional Regulations, publicly available through TSU and NKUA websites.

Dissertation supervision is managed jointly by Georgian and Greek Faculty, ensuring bi-institutional academic oversight. The defense includes a formal public presentation before an international evaluation committee. Assessment fairness and transparency are guaranteed through double evaluation, cross-institutional review, and adherence to institutional codes of ethics.

Vocational Education

Assessment in VET employs diverse formats, including written examinations, research reports, oral presentations, and progress reviews. Coursework assessment focuses on theoretical understanding, methodological skills, and application to vocational education systems. The doctoral dissertation represents the culmination of study and must present original research that contributes to theory and practice in vocational pedagogy, workforce development, or education policy. Dissertations typically range from 60,000-80,000 words, include empirical analysis, and adhere to institutional formatting and ethical standards.

All assessment procedures are transparent and regulated by TSU's Doctoral Study Regulations. The dissertation process includes supervisor evaluation, external peer review, and a formal public defense before an academic committee. Students receive continuous academic support through research methodology workshops, feedback sessions, and publication seminars. Assessment criteria focus on originality, coherence, methodological rigor, and contribution to the field. The programme maintains a record of student success, with all enrolled candidates meeting milestone evaluations and progressing toward timely completion, ensuring fairness, consistency, and academic excellence in doctoral assessment.

3.3.2 Organisation of the Examination Procedure

Examinations within the programme are appropriately organised in terms of their number, distribution, procedures, formats, and registration processes.

Appraisal:

The panel applauds the programmes for their examinations, which are designed so that the achieved qualifications and competencies can be determined and assessed. This includes, above all, that the certificates of achievement aim for a systematic understanding of the research discipline and the control of the research methods applied in this field. In addition, the certificates of achievement are intended to contribute to research that expands the frontiers of knowledge and withstands national/international assessment by scientists. Furthermore, the certificates of achievement take into account enhanced participation in the research fields, with a special focus on form and content.

The examinations are properly organised in terms of number, distribution, process, form registration etc. The compensation for the disadvantage is regulated.

| Quality Ratings | | Excellent | Exceeds quality requirements | Meets quality requirements | Does not meet quality requirements | not relevant |
|-----------------|---|-----------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| 3. | PROGRAMME DESIGN | | | | | |
| 3.3 | Examination Procedures | | | | | |
| 3.3.1 | Examinations | | X | | | |
| 3.3.2 | Organisation of the Examination Procedure | | | X | | |

3.4 Didactic Concept

3.4.1 Logic and Comprehensibility of the Didactic Concept (Asterisk Criterion)

Governance and Administration in Education and Science

The didactical concept of the Joint Doctoral Programme is grounded in research-based learning, interdisciplinary inquiry, and international co-supervision. Teaching is organised around doctoral seminars, research colloquia, advanced methodological workshops, and individualised supervision, jointly provided by TSU and NKUA academic staff. Learning is driven by active participation, academic dialogue, and the progressive development of an independent dissertation project.

Teaching methods include seminars, case analyses on European governance systems, policy labs, literature synthesis sessions, presentations of dissertation chapters, and structured feedback rounds. These methods directly support the programme's learning outcomes, which emphasize critical analysis, advanced research competence, and the ability to operate in international academic and policy environments.

Assessment methods involve research papers, seminar presentations, milestone evaluations, and the dissertation with an oral defense. These forms align with the programme's emphasis on original research and evidence-based policy analysis. Blended learning is used extensively: online joint seminars with NKUA, virtual supervision, and digital research workshops.

Renewal and innovation in teaching are ensured through joint academic board meetings, quality assurance monitoring, and the integration of European doctoral education standards. Resources include access to TSU and NKUA libraries, research centers, Erasmus+ mobility, and digital infrastructure supporting hybrid doctoral training.

Vocational Education

The didactical concept is based on research-based learning, reflective practice, and progressive development from theoretical foundations to independent doctoral research. Courses are designed to build methodological competence, deepen understanding of vocational education systems, and prepare candidates for scholarly and policy-oriented careers.

Teaching and learning methods include seminars, workshops, research methodology courses (qualitative and quantitative), case studies from European VET systems, project-based assignments, peer review, and presentation of dissertation components. Supervisory meetings and co-supervision with international partners reinforce individualised academic development. These methods directly support learning outcomes related to critical inquiry, methodological rigor, and original knowledge creation.

Assessment formats include research papers, methodological assignments, oral presentations, progress reviews, and the final doctoral dissertation with defense. These measures align closely with the programme's research orientation. Blended learning is used where appropriate: online seminars, hybrid consultations, and participation in international events under Erasmus+ and IDEG. Technology is integrated through digital platforms, Turnitin, SPSS, NVivo, and virtual collaboration tools used in joint supervision and research dissemination. Innovation in teaching is driven by quality assurance reviews, benchmarking with European doctoral schools, and continuous input from international partners.

3.4.2 Diversity of the Teaching Methods

As mentioned in chapter 3.4.1 (Logic and Comprehensibility of the Didactic Concept), the teaching methods include seminars, case analyses on European governance systems, policy labs, literature synthesis sessions, presentations of dissertation chapters, and structured feedback rounds for the Doctoral Programme in Gov. In VET the diversity of teaching methods is visible through the use of seminars, workshops, research methodology courses (qualitative and quantitative), case studies from European VET systems, project-based assignments, peer review, and presentation of dissertation components.

3.4.3 Networking of the Doctoral Students

The programmes provide appropriate structures and opportunities for the exchange of experiences and research results among the doctoral candidates. This exchange is aligned with the programme's objectives and contributes to the systematic expansion of research-based

knowledge within the cohort. The formats offered (see chapter 3.4.2. on the diversity of teaching methods or chapter 3.2.2 on Science and Research Based teaching) support continuous academic dialogue and ensure that candidates are able to engage with diverse perspectives relevant to their research fields. Furthermore, the thematic organisation of interactions among doctoral candidates was visible through the interviews conducted on site. By structuring exchanges around clearly defined research themes, the programme enhances the academic coherence of peer interaction and supports targeted, content-oriented collaboration. This approach strengthens the alignment between individual research activities and collective academic development, thereby surpassing the expected standard.

3.4.4 Scientific Supervision

Governance and Administration in Education and Science

The programme assigned each doctoral candidate a supervisor or assessor, both in fact and in law. This ensures continuous and substantive professional, methodological, and scientific supervision throughout the doctoral phase. In addition, appropriate time and resources are allocated to supervisory activities, enabling structured academic guidance and sustained support for the candidate's research progress. As outlined in Chapter 3.4.1, the didactical concept of the Joint Doctoral Programme is grounded in research-based learning, interdisciplinary inquiry, and international co-supervision. Teaching is delivered through doctoral seminars, research colloquia, advanced methodological workshops, and individualised supervision jointly provided by academic staff from TSU and NKUA. Learning processes are driven by active participation, structured academic dialogue, and the continuous development of an independent dissertation project.

The programme regulates individual supervision through a formal agreement between the higher education institutions, the supervisors, and the doctoral candidates. This structured framework provides clarity regarding supervisory roles and responsibilities and strengthens the reliability of the supervisory relationship. Furthermore, the supervision process is subject to ongoing enhancement through established quality assurance measures, ensuring continuous improvement and maintaining high standards of academic support.

Blended learning is employed extensively, including online joint seminars with NKUA, virtual supervision formats, and digital research workshops. Shared supervision folders ensure consistent accessibility and coordination across institutions. As described in Chapter 3.3.1 regarding examinations, dissertation supervision is jointly managed by Georgian and Greek Faculty members, thereby ensuring bi-institutional academic oversight. The dissertation defence involves a formal public presentation before an international evaluation committee. Fairness and transparency of assessment are secured through double evaluation, cross-institutional review procedures, and strict adherence to institutional codes of ethics.

Doctoral Programme in Vocational Education

Each doctoral candidate is assigned a supervisor or assessor, both in fact and in law, ensuring continuous and substantive professional, methodological, and scientific supervision. Appropriate time resources for supervisory activities are allocated, enabling sustained academic guidance throughout the doctoral phase. In VET, this supervisory structure is complemented by regular supervision meetings, doctoral seminars, consultations with the programme coordinator and the Quality Assurance Office, as well as access to library resources, methodological workshops, and international mobility support. Furthermore, evaluation findings, student feedback, and statistical

data on enrolment, progression, and suspension are systematically considered in internal reviews and are used to adjust course sequencing, expectations, and support measures where necessary.

Appraisal:

The panel applauds the didactic concept of the doctoral programmes, which is developed in accordance with the programme objectives. It is particularly aimed at enabling doctoral students to be able to carry out critical analyses, evaluations and syntheses of new and complex ideas. Furthermore, it is particularly characterised by the systematic derivation from the qualification objectives. The panel commends the programmes for the mix of methods, which greatly enhances participation in research fields. The panel was impressed by the networking opportunities of the doctoral students. In accordance with the objectives, the programme promotes the exchange of experiences and research results among doctoral students and contributes to the broadening of research-based knowledge. Furthermore, the interaction among the doctoral students is organised around themes.

The panel finds that a diverse mix of teaching methods is consistently employed across the modules and courses. Irrespective of specific teaching objectives or curricular requirements, all instructional units are delivered in accordance with the established didactic concept. This ensures coherence in pedagogical practice and supports the systematic alignment of teaching methods with the programme's overarching educational approach.

The panel is impressed by the organisation of Scientific Supervision in the doctoral programme in Gov. Being allocated to a supervisor/assessor, both in fact and in law, secures continual and intensive professional, methodological, and scientific supervision of the doctoral students. A corresponding plan in the time budget is ensured. Individual supervision is regulated by an agreement between higher education institutions, supervisors, and doctoral students. The supervision is continuously further developed through quality assurance measures. For VET, it can be stated that the allocation of each doctoral candidate to a supervisor or assessor, both de jure and de facto, ensures continuous and intensive professional, methodological, and scientific supervision. Appropriate time planning is secured accordingly.

| Quality Ratings | | Excellent | Exceeds quality requirements | Meets quality requirements | Does not meet quality requirements | not relevant |
|-----------------|---|-----------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| 3. | PROGRAMME DESIGN | | | | | |
| 3.4 | Didactic Concept | | | | | |
| 3.4.1 | Logic and Comprehensibility of the Didactic Concept | | X | | | |
| 3.4.2 | Diversity of the Teaching Methods | | X | | | |
| 3.4.3 | Networking of the Doctoral Students | | X | | | |
| 3.4.4 | Scientific Supervision | Gov | VET | | | |

3.5 Professional Competencies/Employability

Governance and Administration in Education and Science

The joint doctoral programme ensures graduates' employability by equipping them with advanced research, policy analysis, governance, and leadership competencies directly aligned with national and international labour-market demands. The curriculum integrates theoretical foundations with applied governance practice through modules such as Comparative Education Governance, European Science and Innovation Policy, and Research Methodology in International Contexts, all of which reflect contemporary reforms outlined in the Unified Strategy for Education and Science (2022–2030). Joint supervision with NKUA and engagement with UCLan Cyprus and Middlesex University experts strengthen students' international research competencies and prepare them for careers in higher-education governance, quality assurance, education ministries, and international organisations.

Graduates benefit most from skills in research design, strategic management, cross-cultural communication, academic writing in English, and evidence-based policy evaluation. Although the first cohort has not yet graduated, employability tracking is planned through TSU's Alumni Office, supervisor follow-up, and the future Joint Programme Advisory Board. The programme expects high employment outcomes due to labour-market demand for doctoral-level governance specialists and its transnational design. While internships are not mandatory, applied governance tasks, institutional research projects, assistantship roles, and international mobility under IDEG serve as practical, employment-oriented components that strengthen career readiness.

Vocational Education

Employability is ensured through a curriculum that directly reflects the needs of Georgia's and Europe's VET, adult-learning, and workforce-development sectors. Courses such as Scientific Genesis in VET, Research Methods I & II, and VET Systems and Policies provide graduates with competencies in empirical research, system evaluation, and policy analysis-skills identified as critical in the national VET sector by the VoCasian and IDEG project reports. The integration of assistantship, doctoral seminars, and international research mobility ensures that students gain applied experience relevant to VET institutions, ministries, NGOs, and international organisations. The skillsets for employability include advanced research methodology, curriculum development, evaluation of vocational programmes, comparative system analysis, and leadership in educational reform. Doctoral students also gain practical exposure through co-teaching with German and Georgian professors, contributions to faculty research projects, and participation in international workshops, which collectively prepare them for academic and policy roles.

As the programme is in its early cycles, formal employment-tracking data will be established once graduates complete the degree. TSU's internal monitoring system and Quality Assurance Office will track employability and employer feedback. No formal internships are required; however, applied research, assistantship responsibilities, and mobility periods serve as practical components that directly enhance job-market readiness.

Appraisal:

The doctoral programme in Gov is intended to provide doctoral students with professional qualifications in the scientific and research-oriented fields of activity. In doing so, the professional qualification is aimed both at a research-oriented activity (including teaching) as well as a practical vocational activity.

VET programme offers individual options that allow doctoral candidates to set specific priorities for their professional qualification. The curriculum enables such specialisation through diverse components, such as assistantships, international mobility, co-teaching opportunities, and participation in faculty research projects that allow students to focus either on academic research, policy development, curriculum design, or applied VET system evaluation.

| Quality Ratings | | Excellent | Exceeds quality requirements | Meets quality requirements | Does not meet quality requirements | not relevant |
|-----------------|---|-----------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| 3. | PROGRAMME DESIGN | | | | | |
| 3.5 | Professional Competencies / Employability | | VET | Gov | | |

4. Scientific Environment and Framework conditions

4.1 Teaching Staff

4.1.1 Structure and Number of Teaching Staff (Asterisk Criterion)

| | Governance and Administration in Education and Science | Vocational Education |
|--|--|----------------------|
| Full-time teaching staff | 7 | 5 |
| Part-time teaching staff incl. visiting/adjunct lecturers | 5 | 2 |
| Total number of teaching staff | 12 | 7 |
| Among them: | | |
| Teaching staff with professional experience | 12 | 7 |
| Teaching staff with international experience | 12 | 7 |
| Number of professors | 4 | 5 |
| Number of associate professors | 6 | |
| Number of assistant professors | | |
| Number of senior lecturers | | |
| Number of lecturers | 2 | 2 |
| PhD holders | 12 | 7 |
| Master degree holders | | |
| Guest lecturers | | |

| | Governance and Administration in Education and Science | Vocational Education |
|--|---|-----------------------------|
| Total number of supporting administrative staff | 6 | 6 |

Governance and Administration in Education and Science

The Joint Doctoral Programme is supported by a binational faculty structure shared between TSU and the NKUA. A total of 12 academic staff members contribute to the programme, combining Georgian and Greek expertise with international scholars' perspectives. Among them, seven are full-time faculty members who hold primary responsibility for teaching core modules, supervising doctoral research, and participating in programme governance. These include senior professors and associate professors at TSU and NKUA with extensive academic and research experience in education governance, research methodology, leadership studies, and related fields.

The programme also engages five part-time or invited international lecturers, including distinguished scholars, who contribute to specialised thematic modules, research workshops, and international doctoral schools. Their involvement strengthens the programme's global orientation and ensures exposure to diverse research traditions.

Full-time faculty members undertake teaching, supervision, doctoral seminars, quality assurance duties, and administrative responsibilities. Part-time and invited lecturers provide advanced thematic instruction and enrich the international dimension, but are not involved in day-to-day administrative processes. This structure ensures that the programme maintains academic oversight while benefiting from high-level international expertise aligned with European doctoral standards.

Vocational Education

VET is delivered by a team of seven lecturers. Five of them are TSU associate professors (affiliated staff). These five associate professors are full-time academic staff of the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences and carry the main responsibility for core courses, doctoral supervision, participation in programme governance, and quality assurance.

They are complemented by two part-time invited lecturers, one from Otto-von-Guericke University Magdeburg, an international invited lecturer and one invited lecturer from Georgia. The invited lecturers primarily contribute to specialised methodological and leadership modules and strengthen the programme's international and practice-oriented profile.

In total, the programme is thus implemented by five associate professors and two invited lecturers, of whom five are full-time affiliated TSU staff and two are part-time. Full-time faculty ensure continuity in teaching, supervision, and administration, while invited lecturers provide targeted expertise, international perspectives, and supplementary teaching in selected modules. This distribution of roles and workloads guarantees both sustainability and high academic quality in the implementation of the doctoral curriculum.

4.1.2 Scientific Qualification of the Teaching Staff (Asterisk Criterion)

Governance and Administration in Education and Science

The academic qualifications of the faculty teaching in the Joint Doctoral Programme in Gov fully meet the requirements established by the Law of Georgia on Higher Education, which regulates academic positions, recruitment, promotion, and responsibilities. According to Article 2 of the Law, academic staff includes professors, associate professors, assistant professors, and assistants, all of whom must hold advanced academic qualifications and demonstrate competence in scientific research and teaching. Professorial and associate professorial positions require a doctoral degree (PhD) or an equivalent qualification and documented research achievements, while assistant professors and assistants must demonstrate academic potential and engagement in scholarly work. Recruitment is carried out through public, transparent, open competition, ensuring merit-based selection and institutional autonomy, as mandated by Articles 2 and 35 of the Law.

At TSU and NKUA, the hiring process includes:

1. Public announcement of academic vacancies;
2. Submission of academic portfolios, including CV, publications, research projects, and teaching experience;
3. Evaluation by a faculty-level academic commission, which assesses scientific achievements, pedagogical competence, and alignment with programme needs;
4. Approval by Academic Councils or Senates, ensuring compliance with national and institutional criteria.

Becoming a professor requires demonstrated excellence in research (e.g., publication in peer-reviewed journals, authorship of monographs, participation in international research projects), substantial teaching experience, and contribution to academic development. Faculty at both institutions possess extensive academic qualifications, often exceeding minimum national standards. For example, Greek and Georgian professors involved in the programme have publication records in Scopus and Web of Science journals, books in international publishing houses, and leadership roles in European research networks (e.g., EUA-CDE, European Educational Research Association). Their expertise covers research methodology, educational leadership, governance, psychology, and STEM education.

Both TSU and NKUA support continuous academic development. Faculty regularly participate in Erasmus+ teaching mobility, IDEG and EDiTE doctoral education projects, international conferences, capacity-building workshops, and joint research consortia. Participation in international summer/winter schools and collaborative publications demonstrates the programme's research culture and interdisciplinary expertise.

Vocational Education

Academic staff of VET are selected and evaluated in line with the Law of Georgia on Higher Education and TSU internal regulations. Professors, and associate professors must hold a PhD or equivalent degree; professors require at least six years and associate professors at least three years of scientific-pedagogical experience. Particular attention is paid to publications in peer-reviewed/impact journals, citation indices, conference activity, participation in grant and contract projects, and international cooperation.

TSU's Academic Council resolutions define unified rules for recruitment via open competition, staff evaluation, and affiliation; affiliated academic staff commit their main teaching and research activities to TSU and are involved in supervision and decision-making. Within the doctoral programme, core faculty come from the Department of Education and related units, many with long-

standing expertise in vocational education research, quality assurance, and higher education policy, evidenced by monographs, international journal articles, and leadership in Erasmus+ and national projects.

The programme thus relies on a stable group of highly qualified scholars with proven research records in VET and doctoral education, ensuring that supervision and teaching meet both national legislative requirements and contemporary European standards for third-cycle programmes.

4.1.3 Pedagogical Qualification of the Teaching Staff (Asterisk Criterion)

Governance and Administration in Education and Science

The pedagogical and didactical qualifications of the Faculty involved in the Joint Doctoral Programme in Gov meet both national requirements and institutional standards of TSU and NKUA. According to the Law of Georgia on Higher Education, academic staff must demonstrate not only research credentials but also the capacity to deliver high-quality teaching. At both universities, candidates for academic positions must present evidence of didactical competence, including prior teaching experience, syllabi development, supervision experience, and engagement with contemporary higher-education pedagogies. Professors and associate professors must also demonstrate experience in leading seminars, supervising dissertations, and applying student-centred and research-oriented teaching strategies.

Most faculty members hold long-term teaching experience at the master's and doctoral levels, and many have completed specialised training in higher-education pedagogy. Several professors from NKUA have extensive experience in supervising doctoral theses, conducting methodological workshops, and teaching advanced research courses internationally. TSU Faculty likewise regularly participate in national and international training in curriculum design, doctoral supervision quality, and innovative teaching methodologies (e.g., workshops under Erasmus+, IDEG, and institutional QA-led seminars).

The universities provide continuous opportunities for professional development through structured programmes on digital pedagogy, assessment strategies, project-based learning, and doctoral supervision standards. Faculty regularly attend international training weeks, online certification programmes, and seminars organised within IDEG and other European projects. Integration of technology is a standard requirement. The Faculty is trained to use Moodle, MS Teams, Zoom, Turnitin, SPSS, NVivo, R-based tools, and digital research platforms. Many lecturers also incorporate interactive digital resources, virtual mobility components, and blended-learning formats into their courses.

These combined measures ensure that teaching in the joint doctoral programme is academically, pedagogically modern, and aligned with international doctoral-education standards.

Vocational Education

In recruitment and promotion, teaching experience, course development, teaching-methodological publications and innovation in learning design are explicitly evaluated alongside research. For this doctoral programme, TSU and Otto von Guericke University Magdeburg have invested in targeted training on doctoral supervision quality. In October 2022, academic staff participated in a workshop led by Professor Philipp Pohlentz on supervision and implementation of doctoral

programmes, followed in February 2024 by intensive training with Professor Pirjo Nikander (University of Tampere, EUA-CDE) on effective supervision, role negotiation, and supporting publication processes. These activities strengthened staff capacity to mentor doctoral candidates, manage supervision processes, and use formative feedback. Faculty routinely integrate active learning, research-based teaching and digital tools (Moodle, videoconferencing, online collaboration platforms) into seminars and colloquia. TSU provides ongoing professional development through teaching-and-learning workshops, participation in Erasmus+ capacity-building projects on soft skills and higher education pedagogy, and international forums on doctoral education and learning design. As a result, the didactical profile of the faculty supports the programme's aim to socialise candidates into academic and professional research communities through interactive, inquiry-driven and reflective pedagogies rather than purely transmissive teaching.

4.1.4 Internationality of the Teaching Staff

Governance and Administration in Education and Science

The programme regularly involves Greek professors, including senior academics from NKUA's School of Education, who co-teach courses, participate in doctoral seminars, and supervise dissertations. Additionally, professor from Middlesex University (UK) contributed to the programme's design and early development, strengthening its academic alignment with European standards. While most international lecturers participate part-time, their engagement is continuous through co-supervision, online seminars, and joint research activities.

Many Georgian faculty members teaching in the programme also possess extensive international experience through Fulbright scholarships, Erasmus+ mobility, postdoctoral fellowships, and participation in global research networks. Students benefit from this expertise through exposure to comparative governance models, cross-country policy analysis, and European science-innovation frameworks integrated into course content. TSU and NKUA maintain active faculty-exchange pathways through Erasmus+ ICM, enabling lecturers to teach or conduct research abroad. Recent exchanges include joint workshops in Athens and Tbilisi, collaborative doctoral schools, and research residencies supported by IDEG.

Vocational Education

The PhD in Vocational Education has a highly internationalised faculty profile shaped by long-term cooperation with Otto von Guericke University Magdeburg (Germany). German professors have taught in the programme since its launch, providing joint seminars, research methodology workshops, and dissertation supervision. These contributions are part-time but regular, integrated through blended delivery and coordinated doctoral schools. In addition, visiting experts from European universities participate in summer/winter schools organised within the IDEG project. Several TSU faculty members bring substantial international experience from Germany, Ireland, Austria, and the Czech Republic through Erasmus+ mobility, research fellowships, and academic exchanges. Students directly benefit from these global insights through exposure to European VET reforms, comparative system analysis, and international research methodologies embedded in the curriculum.

Faculty mobility is supported through IDEG and Erasmus+ ICM. Recent examples include staff teaching visits to NKUA (2026), Mary Immaculate College Limerick (2025), and research collaboration with Magdeburg partners. These exchanges ensure continuous updating of course content and supervision standards. TSU's broader internationalisation strategy encourages hiring and engaging international academics through project-based teaching, visiting-scholar schemes,

and joint research initiatives. This ensures that doctoral candidates develop an international academic identity aligned with global VET research.

4.1.5 Internal Cooperation within the Faculty (Asterisk Criterion)

Governance and Administration in Education and Science

Internal cooperation among faculty members of Gov is structured, systematic, and integral to the programme's operation. Faculty from TSU and NKUA engage in continuous academic exchange through formal and informal mechanisms, ensuring coherence of teaching, supervision, and research guidance. Regular coordination meetings—held at least twice per semester—bring together course coordinators, supervisors, and administrative staff to discuss curriculum content, student progress, assessment strategies, and programme-wide developments.

To avoid overlapping content, module leaders review course syllabi collaboratively during annual curriculum revision workshops. Joint programme committees examine learning outcomes, reading lists, and assessment tasks to ensure clear differentiation between modules and coherence with the overall qualification objectives. The cross-institutional Academic Board (to be fully operationalised in the next phase of programme development) provides an additional platform for harmonising academic standards, reviewing changes, and integrating feedback from both universities.

Lecturers from TSU and NKUA jointly participate in Erasmus+, IDEG, and national research projects. Several interdisciplinary initiatives focus on evidence-based governance, scientific innovation systems, and comparative studies in higher education administration. These collaborations frequently extend to doctoral students, who join research clusters and international seminars co-hosted by both institutions. Team teaching is a core feature of the programme. Courses such as Comparative Education Governance, Advanced Research Methods, and Global Trends in Education and Science Policy are delivered through shared instruction by Georgian and Greek professors, allowing students to benefit from complementary academic traditions and diverse methodological expertise. Joint supervision and co-examining practices further strengthen coordinated academic interaction.

Vocational Education

The programme is managed within the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, with cooperation between the Department of Education, other TSU units and international partners. Regular programme meetings involve the head of the programme, supervisors, and faculty teaching core and elective modules. These meetings review admission results, supervision loads, course evaluations, and progress of doctoral projects, helping to avoid content overlap and ensure coherent sequencing of research and theory modules. Course descriptions and syllabi are coordinated through the Faculty's Quality Assurance Office; learning outcomes and assessment forms are cross-checked against the programme map to ensure each component clearly contributes to research, theoretical, and transferable-skills objectives.

Cooperation extends to joint research and project activity. Faculty collaborate on national policy studies, World Bank and Erasmus+ projects, and research on doctoral education and VET reform, often involving doctoral candidates as junior researchers. Co-supervision arrangements with colleagues from Magdeburg and other partner universities further strengthen interdisciplinary dialogue and shared supervision cultures. Team-teaching is used in selected modules and doctoral

seminars, where two or more lecturers combine expertise in methodology, VET policy and labour-market analysis, modelling the collaborative research practices expected from doctoral candidates.

Appraisal:

The structure and number of teaching staff correspond with the requirements of the doctoral programmes. The necessary professional breadth and depth in scientific education and the research sponsorship of the doctoral students is ensured. The contractual situation of the teaching staff guarantees a continuous execution of the doctoral programme. A balanced gender ratio is pursued among the teaching staff. Furthermore, the panel applauds the two programmes for their integration of researchers and guest lecturers from other institutes and institutions are systematically established.

The scientific qualification of the teaching staff corresponds to the national requirements. The scientific qualifications are consistent with the focal points of this programme and the strategic planning of higher education institutions. The research activities correspond with the orientation of the doctoral programmes, and they support the scientific education of the doctoral students.

Furthermore, the scientific qualification of the teaching goes beyond this, because higher education teachers characterise themselves through a specific, animated publication activity as well as activities in professionally relevant scientific organisations and they enjoy their high-level of recognition in the science sector. The pedagogical qualification of the teaching staff corresponds to the task and it has been proven.

The panel applauds the programmes for the considerable number of teachers who have relevant experience in international research and teaching abroad. Furthermore, the TSU provides regular supervision of the teaching staff, and it places great value on several years of supervisory experience. International, qualified teaching staff from different countries and institutions regularly give lectures and act as supervisors. However, for the **VET programme** the panel **recommends** further strengthening the PhD in VET—for example, by establishing contracts with Magdeburg similar to those with Athens and by further institutionalising the cooperation.

The panel commends the two programmes for their Internal Cooperation within the Faculty. There are regular events concerning programme coordination in the faculty which take place. An integrative approach exists through diverse joint events and numerous research or practical projects, which are cooperatively carried out.

| Quality Ratings | | Excellent | Exceeds quality requirements | Meets quality requirements | Does not meet quality requirements | not relevant |
|-----------------|--|-----------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| 4. | ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT AND FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS | | | | | |
| 4.1 | Teaching Staff | | | | | |
| 4.1.1 | Structure and Number of Teaching Staff | | X | | | |
| 4.1.2 | Scientific Qualification of the Teaching Staff | | X | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|-------|---|-----|-----|---|--|--|
| 4.1.3 | Pedagogical Qualification of the Teaching Staff | | | X | | |
| 4.1.4 | Internationality of the Teaching Staff | Vet | Gov | | | |
| 4.1.5 | Internal Cooperation within the Faculty | | X | | | |

4.2 Cooperation and Partnership

Scientific Integration of the Doctoral Students (Asterisk Criterion) and Networking of the Scientists

Governance and Administration in Education and Science

Doctoral candidates are integrated into cross-institutional research environments and have access to scientific events and conference participation as part of their academic development, ensuring regular involvement of students and academic staff in inter-university research activities. These structures are further complemented by additional academic opportunities that extend beyond the core curriculum and support the attainment of the intended qualification and competence objectives. This enhancement is substantially reinforced through the IDEG Project – Internationalisation of Doctoral Education in Georgian Universities (2024–2026), funded by the Competitive Innovation Fund of the Ministry, which strengthens the joint programme by developing international research infrastructure and supporting long-term cooperation through staff and student exchanges, jointly organised summer and winter schools, and collaboration workshops with international partners. The project’s scope covers the full doctoral lifecycle—from programme design to delivery and quality assurance—thereby providing an expanded framework for doctoral candidates to develop their individual research profiles.

Vocational Education

VET was developed jointly by TSU and Otto von Guericke University Magdeburg within the BMBF-funded VoCasian Project (2020–2023) to support the internationalisation of doctoral education and strengthen national research capacity. The programme’s applied-research orientation and structured collaboration with external partners ensure the regular participation of doctoral candidates and academic staff in inter-university and cross-sectoral research activities. In addition, the programme has expanded opportunities for international engagement through increased access to Erasmus+ mobility funding, institutional support for conference participation and research stays abroad, periodic international doctoral seminars with partner universities, and enhanced dissemination channels encouraging publication in indexed journals and participation in European VET and lifelong learning conferences.

Appraisal:

Cooperation with higher education institutions and other scientific establishments is integral to both study programmes. The doctoral students are encouraged to participate in relevant conferences or to take part in other scientific events and establishments. Furthermore, the scientific networking is institutionally secured.

| Quality Ratings | | Excellent | Exceeds quality requirements | Meets quality requirements | Does not meet quality requirements | not relevant |
|-----------------|--|-----------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| 4. | ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT AND FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS | | | | | |
| 4.2 | Cooperation and Partnership | | | | | |
| 4.2.1 | Scientific Integration of the Doctoral Students | | | X | | |
| 4.2.2 | Networking the Scientists | | X | | | |

4.3 Programme Management

4.3.1 Structural Organisation (Asterisk Criterion)

Governance and Administration in Education and Science

Gov is jointly led by programme directors appointed by each partner institution. At TSU, the Head of the Department of Education currently holds the position and has extensive academic and administrative experience in higher education governance, teacher education, and curriculum development. The leadership background includes coordinating departmental academic processes, supervising postgraduate research, and contributing to national policy initiatives in education science. At the NKUA, the programme is led by a senior scholar with established expertise in educational psychology, student assessment, and postgraduate programme management. The heads long-standing involvement in European research collaborations and doctoral supervision ensures academic and international governance on behalf of NKUA.

The programme directors are responsible for the overall academic leadership and operational coordination of the joint doctoral programme. Their tasks include supervising curriculum implementation, ensuring alignment with qualification objectives, coordinating the joint supervision model, approving individual research plans, and monitoring doctoral candidates' annual progress. They oversee the admissions and interview processes, verify compliance with institutional and national regulations, and prepare documentation for internal quality assurance, accreditation, and joint committee reviews.

Operational responsibilities include organising joint seminars, doctoral schools, supervisor meetings, and mobility activities; maintaining communication between TSU and NKUA; and coordinating examination procedures and dissertation evaluations. Both directors receive administrative support from TSU's Doctoral School, NKUA's postgraduate administration, and the international relations offices of both institutions. Collaboration is maintained through regular coordination meetings, shared supervision committees, and continuous communication with faculty and doctoral candidates. This joint leadership structure ensures coherent programme implementation, transparent decision-making, and consistent academic standards across both universities.

Vocational Education

VET is jointly led by an Associate Professor, who is head of the vocational-education cluster at TSU's Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, and a professor from Otto von Guericke University Magdeburg, who is an internationally recognised expert in VET and teacher education.

The programme directors are responsible for academic leadership, including strategic development of the curriculum, coordination of supervision, admission decisions (together with the selection commission), and quality assurance at the programme level. They chair programme meetings, oversee annual monitoring, coordinate external partnerships and represent the programme in faculty and university bodies. Organisationally, they are supported by the Faculty administration, Quality Assurance Office, and International Relations units, which manage scheduling, documentation, student records and mobility. Collaboration with faculty occurs through regular meetings and email consultations on curriculum updates, supervision capacity, and candidate progress. Doctoral students are involved through representation in faculty councils and feedback processes (surveys, interviews), allowing the directors to respond to student needs and integrate suggestions into programme improvements.

4.3.2 Management Support

Governance and Administration in Education and Science

Management support for the Joint Doctoral Programme in Gov is provided through the existing structures of TSU and NKUA, ensuring coordinated assistance to both students and faculty. At TSU, doctoral students receive administrative guidance from the Faculty of Education and Psychology's academic office, where staff assist with enrolment procedures, academic records, exam registration, documentation for internal and external mobility, and preparation of official papers. Similar support is offered at NKUA through the administrative office responsible for postgraduate programmes. Students are informed of available services during orientation meetings and through the universities' official websites, email communication, and faculty bulletin boards, ensuring clarity on where to seek academic, procedural, or technical assistance.

For lecturers, administrative units organise classroom schedules, allocate teaching facilities, ensure the availability of necessary technical equipment, and assist with printing or uploading academic materials to institutional platforms. Communication with administrative staff is typically conducted via email, in-person consultations, and scheduled coordination meetings. Each institution designates specific contact persons for academic, international, and technical matters, ensuring streamlined support and avoiding duplication of responsibilities.

Both universities invest in the continuous development of administrative personnel through internal training activities, including IT courses, training on digital learning platforms, data management systems, and, where relevant, foreign language courses. These measures enhance staff capacity to support international academic cooperation and increasingly digitalised administrative processes. Assistance for research activities, such as grant management, conference documentation, and international mobility, is provided through international relations offices and relevant faculty units.

Vocational Education

The Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences primarily provide management support for doctoral candidates. Faculty services manage admission procedures, enrolment, exam registration, archiving of progress reports, and preparation of official transcripts, certificates and orders related to study status.

Programme-level administration is coordinated by the programme head and the faculty's academic office, which supports timetable planning for taught components, room allocation, and communication of deadlines and regulations. The International Relations Office assists candidates and supervisors in planning Erasmus+ and other mobility, preparing learning agreements, and recognising credits or research stays abroad.

Students and lecturers know where to seek support through information on the TSU and faculty websites, orientation meetings, and email contacts indicated in syllabi and programme documents. TSU regularly offers further training for administrative staff (IT skills, foreign languages, project management) to strengthen their ability to support international projects, doctoral processes and digital learning environments. Specialised support, for example, for students with disabilities, international students or those applying for research grants, is coordinated with central TSU services, including legal, financial, and student support units, ensuring that doctoral candidates receive coherent guidance across all administrative aspects of their studies.

4.3.3 Documentation of the Doctoral Programme (Asterisk Criterion)

Both doctoral programmes meet the benchmark regarding transparency of content, structure, design, duration, study process, and examinations. All essential programme components are formally documented in comprehensive Programme Descriptions, which specify learning outcomes, qualification objectives, curriculum structure, supervision arrangements, admission requirements, and assessment regulations. These documents are publicly available on the TSU website in electronic form, ensuring unrestricted access for applicants, enrolled students, academic staff, and external stakeholders.

In addition, information is systematically communicated through academic catalogues, orientation sessions, doctoral handbooks, and quality-assurance documents published by TSU and its international partner universities. The joint nature of the Gov programme further strengthens transparency, as programme structures, mobility requirements, and examination procedures are coordinated and recorded through inter-institutional agreements with partner institutions such as NKUA, Magdeburg, and Mainz.

The study process, including coursework requirements, supervisory responsibilities, doctoral milestones, and dissertation evaluation criteria, is clearly regulated and disseminated through online platforms, supervisory committees, and doctoral seminars. Regular updates following accreditation processes ensure that the published information remains current, accurate, and aligned with national and international standards.

Appraisal:

The structural organisation, the decision-making processes, competencies and responsibilities are established and implemented accordingly. Those involved are included in the decision-making process. Management support concerning the allocation of tasks and persons are transparent and efficiently guaranteed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The requirements in terms of content, structure, design, duration, study process and examinations are recognised through suitable documentation and publication. The interested parties also have access to the documentation in electronic form, which provides transparency.

| Quality Ratings | | Excellent | Exceeds quality requirements | Meets quality requirements | Does not meet quality requirements | not relevant |
|-----------------|--|-----------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| 4. | ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT AND FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS | | | | | |
| 4.3 | Programme Management | | | | | |
| 4.3.1 | Structural Organisation | | | X | | |
| 4.3.2 | Management Support | | | X | | |
| 4.3.3 | Documentation of the Doctoral Programme | | | X | | |

4.4 Material Resources

4.4.1 Quality of the Classrooms and Working Places (Asterisk Criterion)

Governance and Administration in Education and Science

The study programmes are delivered using the teaching and learning facilities of TSU and the NKUA. Both universities provide an adequate number of lecture rooms, seminar rooms, and group-work spaces that meet the size and pedagogical needs of small postgraduate cohorts. At TSU, the programmes primarily use medium-sized seminar rooms (20–35 seats), larger lecture rooms (40–80 seats), and specialised computer classrooms equipped with desktop computers, projectors, and high-speed internet. NKUA provides similar facilities for the joint programme, including modern seminar halls, computer rooms, and research laboratories for methodological training and doctoral seminars.

Classrooms are equipped with standard teaching technologies, including projectors, whiteboards, audio systems, and internet-enabled computers. Many rooms are also equipped with smartboards and hybrid-teaching technology, enabling online participation in international seminars, co-teaching sessions, and guest lectures. The capacity of rooms fully accommodates the programmes' class sizes, which are generally small and seminar-based, ensuring an interactive and research-oriented learning environment.

Both universities ensure barrier-free access to core academic facilities. TSU and NKUA buildings used by the programmes are equipped with ramps, lifts, and accessible restrooms, enabling participation of students with mobility needs. All students have access to Wi-Fi across campuses, computer labs, printing services, and e-learning platforms such as Moodle, MS Teams, and institutional online libraries. TSU's central IT infrastructure provides licensed software, institutional email, cloud services and access to digital research tools.

Vocational Education

Teaching for the doctoral programme takes place primarily in the facilities of the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences at TSU, which includes the same facilities as mentioned above.

4.4.2 Equipment (Literature, Magazines, Databases) for the Library (Asterisk Criterion)

Both programmes

Doctoral candidates have full access to TSU's central library system and the library of the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, which together provide extensive holdings in education, social sciences, research methodology and vocational education. TSU's library is open on weekdays and weekends, offering access to reading rooms, computers, and study spaces. Students may use international databases such as EBSCO, JSTOR, ScienceDirect, ERIC, Web of Science, SCOPUS, and e-book collections through remote login. These resources are available both on campus and off-site.

Library collections are regularly updated through annual acquisitions, donations, and subscription renewals. Subject librarians support students through research consultations, bibliographic assistance, and training sessions on the use of online databases and citation tools. Workshops on digital literacy, academic writing, and reference management (e.g., Zotero or Mendeley training) are offered at the beginning of each academic year. These combined services ensure timely, comprehensive, and high-quality access to the literature required for doctoral research and coursework.

The library cooperates with the National Parliamentary Library and other Georgian university libraries, enabling inter-library loan and document delivery for specialised literature. Collections are continuously updated based on faculty requests, course syllabi and new research trends. Library staff offer research consultations, user training and workshops on database use, citation management and information literacy, helping doctoral candidates to design search strategies and manage references for their dissertations and publications.

Governance and Administration in Education and Science

The students in the Joint Doctoral Programme profit additionally from access to NKUA's comprehensive library systems. Both universities maintain extensive collections of monographs, academic journals, and reference texts in education, governance, social sciences, and research methodology. Digital access is a core component of the programme. NKUA's libraries provide similarly extended hours, including evening access for postgraduate students. TSU and NKUA also have interlibrary cooperation agreements, including with the National Parliamentary Library of Georgia, enabling students to request additional materials when needed.

Appraisal:

The quantity, quality and IT equipment of the classrooms correspond to the necessities described for the programme. The requirements for disabled students are adequately taken into account. A sufficient number of workplaces are available for the doctoral students. The technical equipment corresponds to the requirements.

For both programmes, a reference library is available. Literature, magazines and databases are up-to-date and current in terms of the study contents and research activities of the doctoral students. Online access to technical literature is guaranteed. Outside the University, the doctoral students have digital access to a large portion of the technical literature. The most important databases are accessible totally free of charge.

The panel applauds the programme in Gov for its library equipment. In the course of the visitation, it became clear that the financial means made available, and the present personnel permanently guarantee the useful development of the portfolio. The research interests of the doctoral students are taken into account. There are specific consulting and research opportunities. All databases which are relevant for the doctoral programme are free of charge and are even accessible online outside the University. In the doctoral programme in Vocational Education, it can be stated that a reference library is available. Literature, magazines, and databases are up-to-date with the study content and research activities of the doctoral students. Online access to technical literature is guaranteed. Outside the HEI, the doctoral students have digital access to a large section of the technical literature. The most important databases are accessible totally free of charge. However, the panel **recommends** the Doctoral programme in Vocational Education establishing formal agreements with the international partner universities (e.g., Mainz, Magdeburg) to ensure that doctoral students receive full access to their library resources.

| Quality Ratings | | Excellent | Exceeds quality requirements | Meets quality requirements | Does not meet quality requirements | not relevant |
|-----------------|--|-----------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| 4. | ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT AND FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS | | | | | |
| 4.4 | Material Resources | | | | | |
| 4.4.1 | Quality of the Classrooms and Working Places | | | X | | |
| 4.4.2 | Equipment (Literature, Magazines, Databases) for the Library | | Gov | VET | | |

4.5 Finance Planning and Financing

4.5.1 Finance Planning and Financing of the Doctoral Programme (Asterisk Criterion)

Governance and Administration in Education and Science

The financing of Gov relies on a combined model of state funding, institutional resources, and student tuition fees, ensuring financial stability and equitable access. For the first cohort, the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of Georgia fully funds ten doctoral students, covering their tuition fees at TSU and supporting the launch and early consolidation of the joint degree.

For self-funded students, the tuition fee is EUR 10,000 per academic year, set in accordance with national regulations for joint doctoral programmes and distributed through TSU's financial system. NKUA receives its institutional share under the cooperation agreement.

Financial oversight is shared between TSU's Faculty of Education and Psychology, NKUA's School of Education administrative units, and both universities' financial departments, ensuring accountability and compliance with national and institutional regulations.

Equity and support mechanisms include Ministry-funded places, Erasmus+ mobility grants, institutional travel and research scholarships, and opportunities for doctoral students to apply for national and international research funding. Students and staff are informed about available financial opportunities through university websites, joint programme meetings, email communication, and academic advisors.

Vocational Education

VET is financed primarily through student tuition fees, which ensures a stable and predictable revenue stream to support the programme's long-term sustainability. The tuition fee is determined in accordance with TSU's internal financial regulations and national legal requirements for doctoral programmes. Since the programme does not receive external or governmental funding, cost-recovery is ensured through budget planning aligned with institutional priorities.

The programme budget is allocated across key areas of academic delivery and student support. Approximately 50% of tuition income is dedicated to faculty salaries and academic supervision, ensuring that experienced scholars provide high-quality mentorship. Around 20% supports research activities, doctoral seminars, and academic events. A further 15% covers administrative support, including programme coordination and quality assurance activities. The remaining 15% supports library resources, IT infrastructure, digital tools, and learning facilities used by doctoral students.

Tuition fees for Georgian citizens are 2,250 GEL/around 719 €, for international citizens – 8,010 GEL/ around 2,562 €, or a fixed rate of 3,000 USD. Financial oversight is exercised by the TSU Faculty of Education and Psychology in cooperation with the University's Financial Department. All expenditures follow annual budget cycles, internal audit procedures, and state regulatory frameworks.

Although the programme is funded solely through tuition, TSU provides university-wide opportunities that doctoral students may access, such as internal research grants, travel funding for conferences, and Erasmus+ mobility grants (when available through institutional or project-based partnerships). These opportunities are communicated through faculty websites, email announcements, and academic advisors.

4.5.2 Financial Support and Scholarship Programmes

Both programmes

To ensure equitable access, TSU provides need-based and merit-based scholarships at the university level, and students may also apply for state grants, employer co-funding schemes, and external scholarship programmes. Information on financing opportunities is communicated via the university website, programme briefings, email announcements, and student advisors. This financing model ensures programme stability while maintaining high academic quality and supporting continuous improvement.

Governance and Administration in Education and Science

As mentioned above, the first cohort (2025-2026) was admitted through a fully funded national scholarship by the Ministry.

Vocational Education

TSU offers graduate assistantships that provide financial support through teaching or research duties. The Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation provides research grants that support doctoral students' academic projects within Georgia. Erasmus+ offers mobility funding that enables Georgian PhD students to conduct short-term research or training abroad within the vocational education sector. The DAAD provides short-term research scholarships that allow Georgian doctoral candidates enrolled at TSU to undertake research stays in Germany.

Appraisal:

In accordance with the objectives, financial planning takes into account staff planning for scientific employees/doctoral positions. The necessary financial basic equipment and financing security are guaranteed for the period of accreditation. In accordance with the objectives, the higher education institution guarantees the financial protection of the doctoral students. However, the experts saw room for improvement. The panel **recommends** discussing with employers which options could allow PhD students to dedicate more time to writing their thesis, such as reducing their workload (e.g., to 80%) or allocating a certain portion of working hours specifically for doctoral research (e.g., 10% of paid work time)."

| Quality Ratings | | Excellent | Exceeds quality requirements | Meets quality requirements | Does not meet quality requirements | not relevant |
|-----------------|--|-----------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| 4. | ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT AND FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS | | | | | |
| 4.5 | Finance Planning and Financing | | | | | |
| 4.5.1 | Finance Planning and Financing of the Doctoral Programme | | | X | | |
| 4.5.2 | Financial Support and Scholarship Programmes | | | X | | |

5. Quality Assurance

5.1 Quality Assurance in terms of Contents, Processes and Results (Asterisk Criterion)

Governance and Administration in Education and Science

Quality assurance for the Joint Doctoral Programme is implemented through the coordinated QA systems of TSU and NKUA, in accordance with the ESG 2015 standards, TSU's internal QA regulations, and each university's doctoral education procedures. Quality development is carried out through a structured cycle involving planning, monitoring, evaluation, and improvement. Programme quality is overseen by the Faculty Quality Assurance Office at TSU, the Quality Assurance Unit at NKUA, and the Joint Academic Board, which jointly monitor academic standards, supervision quality, and research progress.

Multiple evaluation tools are used: student surveys, supervisor evaluations, annual progress reports, dissertation committee assessments, and feedback from international partners. Statistical data, including enrolment, progression, completion rates, and student workload indicators, are regularly analysed. Course workload and credit allocations are reviewed through student questionnaires, supervisor feedback, and the annual programme review. The QA bodies ensure that credits accurately reflect the number of learning hours, research demands, and the intensity of supervision.

Curriculum updates are informed by evaluation findings, external expert input, and feedback received through Erasmus+ mobility experiences, joint summer schools, and international peer collaboration. Any changes are discussed by the Joint Academic Board, reviewed by the QA Units, and approved through university governance procedures. Responsibility lies with the TSU Faculty Quality Assurance Office, the NKUA QA Office, and the Joint Academic Board, ensuring continuous alignment with European doctoral education standards.

Vocational Education

Quality assurance for VET is organised within TSU's institutional QA framework and is aligned with national legislation and ESG standards. The TSU Faculty of Education and Psychology Quality Assurance Office ensures systematic monitoring of programme content, processes, and expected learning outcomes. Annual reviews include analysis of course evaluations, supervisor reports, dissertation progress, and statistical indicators such as completion rates, student workload, and research productivity.

Evaluation tools include student satisfaction surveys, focus groups, interim research presentations, and structured supervisor feedback. Workload and credit allocation for each course are assessed through student surveys conducted at the end of every semester, where candidates evaluate the correspondence between planned credits and actual effort. Dissertation and supervision processes are monitored through annual progress reports and doctoral research colloquia. Curriculum development is driven by evaluation findings, external expert recommendations, and feedback received through international collaboration, including Erasmus+ mobilities and the IDEG project. The QA process ensures that programme content remains aligned with current trends in VET research, labour-market needs, and European doctoral education standards.

Primary responsibility for QA lies with the Faculty Quality Assurance Office, working in coordination with the Programme Director and Dissertation Committee. Evaluation results are used to update syllabi, improve supervision procedures, and enhance research-support activities.

5.2 Inclusion of Quality Assurance in a Superordinate Quality Concept (Asterisk Criterion)

The panel found that quality assurance for both doctoral programmes is systematically anchored in the Faculty's and the University's overarching research quality framework. Each programme is integrated into institutional procedures for monitoring research progress, supervisor performance, and doctoral milestones, ensuring consistency with the faculty's research strategy. Regular evaluations, including annual progress reports, structured supervision agreements, and periodic programme reviews, demonstrate that both programmes follow the same institutional quality cycle. Additionally, the programmes benefit from faculty-wide research committees (like the Faculty

Doctoral Committee) that oversee academic standards, provide methodological support, and ensure that feedback loops—from data collection to the implementation of improvements—are consistently applied. Through this embedded system, the doctoral programmes contribute to and are continuously aligned with the University’s broader research quality concept.

5.3 Evaluation by Doctoral Students

TSU conducts systematic and multi-layered student evaluation processes to ensure continuous enhancement of teaching quality and programme effectiveness across all study levels. Course and programme evaluations are coordinated by the TSU Quality Assurance (QA) Office in cooperation with faculty QA units. Students complete anonymous electronic evaluation surveys at the end of every semester for each course and lecturer. These surveys include quantitative ratings and qualitative commentary regarding teaching effectiveness, course content, assessment fairness, workload, and alignment with intended learning outcomes. In addition, periodic programme-level surveys are administered at key stages of study (e.g., mid-programme and before graduation), enabling broader feedback on curriculum design, academic support services, and overall learning experience.

The faculty QA Office is responsible for analysing the results and preparing summary reports, which are then discussed with programme directors and relevant academic staff. Where necessary, action plans are developed, such as revising course content, adjusting workload, introducing new teaching methods, or improving assessment practices. Examples of implemented changes include the refinement of learning materials and the introduction of additional consultation hours in response to student feedback.

Students are informed of evaluation outcomes and subsequent measures through faculty meetings, Moodle announcements, and programme information sessions, in accordance with TSU’s internal QA communication guidelines. Anonymity is guaranteed through the digital evaluation system, which prevents the identification of individual respondents and ensures that results are accessible only in an aggregated form. This encourages open and honest feedback and reinforces a student-centred culture of continuous improvement.

Evaluation findings are incorporated into annual programme monitoring reports and contribute directly to curriculum revision, teaching improvement strategies, and faculty professional development planning, ensuring alignment between student needs, learning outcomes, and programme quality.

5.4 Evaluation by Supervisors

Supervisors regularly evaluate the implementation of the programmes using a predefined procedure that covers key dimensions such as curriculum coherence, content relevance, and alignment with labour-market and research trends, as well as assessment formats, workload distribution, and credit adequacy. These evaluations also review administrative processes—including scheduling, examination organisation, and communication—alongside student academic performance, learning challenges, and progression, as well as the sufficiency of resources. The results are then discussed within the relevant academic bodies, ensuring that the findings feed directly into ongoing quality development and continuous improvement of both programmes.

5.5 Evaluation by Third Parties (Graduates, external Peers, Stakeholders, etc.)

TSU systematically integrates feedback from external stakeholders-alumni, employers, professional associations, partner organisations, and field experts-into the continuous improvement of all academic programmes. External evaluation is conducted regularly through structured tools such as online surveys, semi-structured interviews, tracer studies, employer consultations, focus groups, and participation in advisory bodies. The TSU Quality Assurance Office coordinates these mechanisms in collaboration with programme directors and faculty councils. Stakeholder feedback is analysed by the programme-level QA coordinators and Faculty Quality Assurance Service, who determine follow-up actions, propose modifications, and present recommendations to the Faculty Council for approval. Evaluations with alumni and employers are typically conducted annually or biannually, depending on programme needs, strategic priorities, and ongoing accreditation cycles. Tracer studies include questions on graduate preparedness, relevance of competencies, employability, labour-market alignment, and satisfaction with programme outcomes. Employers evaluate curriculum relevance, practical skills, research competencies, digital skills, and the ability of graduates to work independently and in teams.

External stakeholders are informed about results and improvements through public reports, targeted communication, follow-up meetings, and partnership activities. Though TSU does not have a formal written policy governing communication with external evaluators, established QA procedures ensure that stakeholders receive feedback on actions taken and remain engaged in future cycles.

Programme improvements based directly on employer and alumni feedback include updating course syllabi, expanding practice-oriented components, strengthening research methodology modules and enhancing digital and soft-skills components. Employers' recommendations have also influenced the integration of contemporary labour-market themes, the introduction of new elective components, and adjustments to workload balance to improve feasibility and relevance.

Appraisal:

There is a quality assurance procedure in place which is systematically used for continuous monitoring and the further development of quality in terms of content, processes and results. The responsibilities are clearly defined. The quality assurance of the doctoral programmes is systematically embedded in the quality concept for the faculty's research and the higher education institution. There is a regular evaluation concerning the implementation of the programme carried out by the doctoral students according to a predefined procedure; the results are discussed internally and find their way into the process of quality development. There is a regular evaluation of the implementation of the programme carried out by supervisors according to a predefined procedure; the results are discussed internally and find their way into the process of quality development. There is a regular external evaluation according to a predefined procedure; the results are discussed internally and find their way into the process of quality development.

Quality Ratings

| | | | | |
|-----------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| Excellent | Exceeds quality requirements | Meets quality requirements | Does not meet quality requirements | not relevant |
|-----------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|

| 5. | QUALITY ASSURANCE | | | | | |
|-----|---|--|--|---|--|--|
| 5.1 | Quality Assurance in terms of Contents, Processes and Results | | | X | | |
| 5.2 | Inclusion of Quality Assurance in a Superordinate Quality Concept | | | X | | |
| 5.3 | Evaluation by Doctoral Students | | | X | | |
| 5.4 | Evaluation by Supervisors | | | X | | |
| 5.5 | Evaluation by Third Parties (Graduates, external Peers, Stakeholders) | | | X | | |

Quality Profile



Institution: Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Georgia

Doctoral programmes:

1. Governance and Administration in Education and Science
2. Vocational Education

| Quality Ratings | | Excellent | Exceeds quality requirements | Meets quality requirements | Does not meet quality requirements | not relevant |
|-----------------|--|-----------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. | STRATEGY AND OBJECTIVES | | | | | |
| 1.1 | Objectives of the Doctoral Programme | VET | Gov | | | |
| 1.2 | Positioning of the Doctoral Programme in the education market | VET | Gov | | | |
| 1.3 | Positioning of the Doctoral Programme in the Job Market for Graduates | | | | | |
| 1.3.1 | In the research fields | | | X | | |
| 1.3.2 | Outside the research fields | | VET | Gov | | |
| 1.4 | The positioning of the Doctoral Programme in the Strategic Concept of the Higher Education Institution | | X | | | |
| 1.5 | Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities | | | X | | |
| 2. | ADMISSION | | | | | |
| 2.1 | Admission conditions and procedures | | X | | | |
| 2.2 | Selection procedure | | X | | | |
| 2.3 | Transparency of the Decision on Admission | | | X | | |
| 3. | IMPLEMENTATION | | | | | |
| 3.1 | Structure | | | | | |
| 3.1.1 | Structural Setup of the Doctoral Programme | | | X | | |
| 3.1.2 | Doctoral Degree Regulation | | | | Con | |
| 3.1.3 | Status of the Doctoral Students | | | X | | |
| 3.1.4 | Module Description | | | X | | |
| 3.2 | Contents | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|-----|-----|-----|--|--|
| 3.2.1 | Logic and Conceptual Consistency | | X | | | |
| 3.2.2 | Science and Research Based Teaching | | X | | | |
| 3.2.3 | Focus of the Curriculum on Qualification and Competency Development | | X | | | |
| 3.2.4 | Technical Offers | Gov | | VET | | |
| 3.2.5 | Multidisciplinary Qualifications | | X | | | |
| 3.3 | Examination Procedures | | | | | |
| 3.3.1 | Examination | | X | | | |
| 3.3.2 | Organisation of the Examination Procedure | | | X | | |
| 3.4 | Didactic Concept | | | | | |
| 3.4.1 | Logic and Comprehensibility of the Didactic Concept | | X | | | |
| 3.4.2 | Diversity of the Teaching Methods | | X | | | |
| 3.4.3 | Networking of the Doctoral Students | | X | | | |
| 3.4.4 | Scientific Supervision | Gov | VET | | | |
| 3.5 | Professional Competencies/Employability | | VET | Gov | | |
| 4. | SCIENTIFIC ENVIRONMENT AND FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS | | | | | |
| 4.1 | Teaching Staff | | | | | |
| 4.1.1 | Structure and Number of Teaching Staff | | X | | | |
| 4.1.2 | Scientific Qualification of the Teaching Staff | | X | | | |
| 4.1.3 | Pedagogical Qualification of the Teaching Staff | | | X | | |
| 4.1.4 | Internationality of the Teaching Staff | VET | Gov | | | |
| 4.1.5 | Internal Cooperation within the Faculty | | X | | | |
| 4.2 | Cooperation and Partnership | | | | | |
| 4.2.1 | Scientific Integration of the Doctoral Students | | | X | | |
| 4.2.2 | Networking the Scientists | | X | | | |
| 4.3 | Programme Management | | | | | |
| 4.3.1 | Structural Organisation | | | X | | |

| | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|--|-----|-----|--|--|
| 4.3.2 | Management Support | | | X | | |
| 4.3.3 | Documentation of the Doctoral Programme | | | X | | |
| 4.4 | Material Resources | | | | | |
| 4.4.1 | Quality of the Classrooms and Working Places | | | X | | |
| 4.4.2 | Equipment (Literature, Magazines, Databases) for the Library | | Gov | VET | | |
| 4.5 | Finance Planning and Financing | | | | | |
| 4.5.1 | Finance Planning and Financing of the Doctoral Programm | | | X | | |
| 4.5.2 | Financial Support and Scholarship Programms | | | X | | |
| 5. | QUALITY ASSURANCE | | | | | |
| 5.1 | Quality Assurance in terms of Contents, Processes and Results | | | X | | |
| 5.2 | Inclusion of Quality Assurance in a Superordinate Quality Concept | | | X | | |
| 5.3 | Evaluation by Doctoral Students | | | X | | |
| 5.4 | Evaluation by Supervisors | | | X | | |
| 5.5 | Evaluation by Third Parties (Graduates, external Peers, Stakeholders) | | | X | | |