



განათლების ხარისხის განვითარების ეროვნული ცენტრი
NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

**Accreditation Expert Group Final Report on Higher Education
Programme**

**Higher Education Programme
PhD Programme “Political
Sciences”
University of Georgia**

Date of Evaluation
31-10-2019

Report Submission Date
03-12-2019

Tbilisi
2019

HEI's Information Profile

Name of Institution Indicating its Organizational Legal Form	University of Georgia (in short "UG") LTD
HEI's Identification Code	205037137
Type of Institution	University

Higher Education Programme Information Profile

Name of the Programme	Political Science
Level of Education	PhD
Qualification Granted Indicating Code	0312
Language of Instruction	Georgian
Number of Credits	180
Programme Status	Accredited

Expert Panel Members

Chair (Name, Surname, University/organization/Country)	REISNER, Oliver Ilia State University, Georgia
Member (Name, Surname, University/organization/Country)	MACHITIDZE, Ivanna International Black Sea University, Georgia
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Member (Name, Surname, University/organization/Country)	

Accreditation Report Executive Summary

▪ **General information on the education programme**

The PhD programme in the subject “Political Science” at the **University of Georgia (UG)** has been accredited on 24 December 2014 (Decision #297) for the first time for a period of five years. The programme covers a teaching programme of 60 ECTS (33%) and a research component of 120 ECTS (67%). The PhD programme is oriented to prepare highly qualified and competitive researchers in the field of political science, who upon completion should be able to successfully carry out their individual research and other work in various scientific-research and educational institutions in accordance with ethical principles and international standards. These objectives should guide the mandatory training courses in the programme. Now three students are enrolled in the programme, another one finished it and no one has suspended his/her PhD studies. The self-assessment report was finalized on 25.07.2019 and the programme adopted by UG Academic Council on 02.08.2019.

▪ **Brief overview of the accreditation site-visit**

The accreditation site visit was conducted on Thursday, 31 October 2019, from 10:00 until 19:30. The experts’ team carried out the interviews in line with the Accreditation Visit Agenda provided by the University of Georgia in advance. The experts’ team led by Dr. Oliver Reisner talked to all relevant stakeholders. Among them were the Dean of the School of Social Sciences, the head of the PhD programme, the two doctoral students’ supervisors, only one out of three active PhD students and one graduate, Quality Assurance staff from UG and the School, several staff from the faculty and invited lecturers, as well as prospective employers. We also visited the library sites, canteen, IT Lab, and one classroom (see schedule of our site visit). The discussions with major stakeholders demonstrated a high commitment to continue and further improve the programme as recently introduced changes. The written self- assessment however, was sometimes copied and pasted from original documents and did often not provide insights into critical self-reflection. Therefore, we had to ask for several additional documents (list of PhD students, list of publications, external program evaluation report and PhD thesis. The remaining documentation was available in print.

The management of UG can rely on a very experienced quality assurance team, qualified lecturers and scholars (some of them did not have a degree in political science, but in history and gained sufficient expertise in political analysis later).

▪ **Summary of education programme’s compliance with the standards**

The PhD programme in political science is compliant with Standards 1, 4 and 5, it is substantially compliant with Standards 2 and 3. The general courses are on a high level and provide for the development of important skills needed beyond the field of political science (e.g. the elective course on research project management). UG continues a well elaborated, but isolated and self-reliant research in political science. The main problem is the whole field of internationalization. Rarely supervisors and none of the PhD students have published in international, peer-reviewed journals. There is no active research cooperation with international partners so far, which does not comply with disciplinary developments of the 21st century. The only finalized PhD thesis applies an international Multiculturalism Index to Georgia, but a critical research question based on international research, concepts and approaches is missing. However, since the change in the management of the programme early in 2018 so far pro-active measures for the improvement of internationalisation of research practice are planned (esp. publications, conferences, research consortia).

▪ **Summary of Recommendations**

- 1.1.1 The internationalisation of the PhD programme should be the main effort in the future. This covers the involvement of scholars from abroad in the supervision as well as required publications in international, peer-reviewed journals. Without this experience, graduates of this PhD programme will not be competitive on the international level (e.g. in applying for international post-doc grants).
- 1.1.2 The programme should strengthen research capacities of potential supervisors measured in publications in international peer-reviewed journals and success in winning research grants that could provide employment for potential PhD students.
- 2.1.1 In order to strengthen UGs academic local and international reputation the PhD students should be very carefully selected according to their REAL commitment to academic excellence and integrated in their supervisor's research projects, ideally with some scholarship or employment.
- 2.4.1 Programmers, involved supervisors and lecturers should assure that the students are adequately trained, developed and assessed during their research practice in an international context from the very beginning (presentation of research at international conferences, publication in peer-reviewed academic journal, contributions to HE textbook, (co-)teaching lessons at university, etc.).
- 2.5.1 The university and programme management should assist the lecturers and supervisors in establishing more diverse methods of teaching and learning methods in line with the profile of the PhD students. For this purpose they can rely on their specialists in modern teaching methods for to student-centred approaches.
- 3.1.1 Establish new and strengthen existing international partnerships, so that graduate students may get experience of international research exchange on the PhD level, which also comprises involvement in local and international scientific collaborations and/or research projects.
- 3.2.1 UG should reflect together with supervisors to clarify necessary qualifications of supervising and evaluation of their work.
- 3.2.2 The introduction of PhD students to international academic research practice must be secured e.g. through internationalisation like co-tutelage.
- 4.1.1 All academic staff from the program development should try hard to get their research published in international peer-reviewed journals. Without their own practical experience, they will not be able to guide their students to international academic excellence.
- 4.1.2 The programme management should look for a more active involvement of international scholars in teaching and research at UG. Thus, it will expose PhD students to available international research literature and exchange programmes in order to gather experience in their respective directions.
- 5.2.1 External evaluation by international experts in the field themselves involved in academia abroad (Europe and US) would contribute to Program's sophisticated design, find avenues for building the community of doctoral students and supervisors working on research themes through continuous process of collaboration and interaction. This would assist in benchmarking process and building the Research Development Strategy for the School/University.

▪ **Summary of Suggestions**

- 1.1.3 For a sustainable and successful implementation of the PhD in political science it is advisable that UG elaborates about the role of the programme (next to others) for the School as well as the university and its research agenda as a whole. Such a strategic document can help to identify research priorities in order to strengthen its position as a private university committed to improve academic excellence in the humanities.
- 1.2.2 Outcomes of the PhD programme could be formulated in a way that the achievement can be measured as objective as possible (e.g. publication of articles in international peer-reviewed journals, publication of book reviews in academic journals, involvement in research projects or associations, etc.).
- 1.2.3 Outcomes of the PhD programme could also include more collaborative forms into its list as peer-reviews, participation in national and international research clusters, public discussions, and structured collaboration with institutional partners.
- 2.1.2 The programme responsible is advised to consider of how the introduced Academic and Supervisory Council could be involved also for the selection of prospective PhD students.
- 2.3.1 UG might consider making more use of international exchange programmes (ERASMUS+, DAAD, Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia) to invite foreign guest lecturers or Georgian graduates from abroad teaching courses in the programme.
- 2.3.2 The quantitative Methods course if transferred to the core component of the Program would add to the Program's strengths and graduates' excellence in employing the variety of methods of research. As Georgia's academia (BA and MA Programs) still suffers of focusing mainly on qualitative methods due to lack of expertise among the MA programs graduates in methods and research design, additional attention towards a quantitative methods course would widen the scope of research tools to be applied by students throughout dissertation writing and other research.
- 2.3.3 The Program courses content would benefit from the clear-cut benchmarking strategy, which allows to take into account the best practices in terms of course design and program content as well as put the Doctoral Program into the local and international context, reveal its weaknesses and strengths.
- 2.3.4 The assessment criteria could be diversified and more focused on specific skills outcomes, not only presentations, but teaching samples, academic book reviews, practical application of digital tools, etc.
- 2.3.5 Management, lecturers, former and current PhD students could jointly reflect on introducing more collaborative approaches and thus encourage more interaction with other PhD students beyond the individual research projects, preparing them for interacting with international scholars.
- 2.4.2 The PhD programme could provide for active involvement of PhD students in the research collaboration with national and international partner institutions.
- 2.6.1 So far, the PhD students are mainly working alone with their supervisor. The UG infrastructure also allows for the establishment of work in peer groups of young researchers, where they can support each other and thus learn essentials of modern academic collaboration.
- 3.1.2 Establish partnerships with the business and public sectors as potential employers.
- 3.2.3 Establish the practice of a Consultation schedule between student and supervisor.
- 4.1.3 The available international staff in the field of political science should actively be involved in the programme and its development.
- 4.1.4 The programme staff should actively use the UG's "Caucasus Journal of Social Sciences" to practice with their PhD students getting English articles published in a peer-reviewed journal. This

would certainly be an asset.

- 4.3.1 The UG PhD programme staff could more actively use these databases themselves and encourage PhD students to do so as well. Securing the assessment of the latest debates in political science are only retrieved through international academic journals (not policy papers or blogs). This might happen through introducing regular literature reviews by the PhD students themselves.
- 4.4.1 If the programme is serious about producing high quality academic research results, it should offer PhD students the opportunity to commit themselves solely to their PhD research through scholarships included in research grants from RUSTAVELI or other funding institutions applied for by the academic staff.
- 5.3.1 It might be considered to allow for a student representation in all relevant bodies of the programme esp. the Academic and Supervisory Council.

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

The existence of a research support structure introduced in 2018-19 with a grant scheme for concrete research efforts encourages PhD students to progress in their research. PhD students should pro-actively be encouraged to use this opportunity.

The introduction of the Scientific and Advisory Council for each individual PhD student represents an innovation to improve supervision as teamwork. With only three students enrolled in the PhD program, this provides a structural environment for tailor made supervision.

If needed, supervisors can mobilise individualised support for their Phd students (special language tuition) and small grants for conducting field research, what will allow the PhD students to focus more on their research and to conduct field studies.

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

None.

Compliance of the Programme with Accreditation Standards

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

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

<h3>1.1 Programme Objectives</h3>
<p>Programme objectives define the set of knowledge, skills and competences the programme aims to develop in graduate students. They also illustrate the contribution to the development of the field and the society.</p>
<p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with standard requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Describe, analyze and evaluate programme's compliance <u>with the standard component requirements</u> based on the information collected through programme Self-evaluation Report, relevant enclosed documents and Site Visit; the analysis has to reflect problematic issues (if applicable) <p>The programmes stated objectives are to prepare “highly-qualified specialists” in all sub-fields of political science. It intends to develop skills in order to conduct independent scientific research, and contribute to the production of new knowledge in Georgia, its internationalization and integration to international academic circles. It also aims to prepare and teach separate disciplines of the field in higher education institutions and to be competitive at the labour market.</p> <p>The programme objectives are clear, realistic and achievable. They are in line with the University mission, (accessible at the University of Georgia web page) aiming at contributing towards liberal and democratic values in Georgian society and academia in particular. The PhD programme teaches necessary skills and knowledge for taking up employment in research entities or HEIs. In its self-assessment, the programme leaders identify a need for improvements in the internationalisation of the programme. However, the HEI does not capitalize on its existing institutional units (e.g. Centre for Multi-Ethnic Studies) or international partnerships. UG did not elaborate a specific research agenda. Thus, beyond the provision of third level HE, the role of the PhD programme for the institutional development of UG or its interdisciplinary research efforts is not clear. Since UG is ambitious to contribute to the international research in the field of political science, there are obvious limitations to the international outreach of its research in form of conference participation, international publications and collaborative projects. However, it is planned to establish them during the coming cycle.</p>
<p>Evidences/indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Component evidences/indicators including relevant documents and interview results <p>Self-Assessment report, PhD programme, interviews with Dean, management, teaching and quality assurance staff, Labour market research, University web page</p>
<p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Proposal(s), which should be considered by the institution to comply with requirements of the standards <p>1.1.1 The internationalisation of the PhD programme should be the main effort in the future. This covers the involvement of scholars from abroad in the supervision as well as required publications in international, peer-reviewed journals. Without this experience, graduates of this PhD programme will not be competitive on the international level (e.g. in applying for international post-docgrants).</p> <p>1.1.2 The programme should strengthen research capacities of potential supervisors measured in publications in international peer-reviewed journals and success in winning research grants that could provide employment for potential PhD students.</p>
<p>Suggestions for programme development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Non-binding suggestions for programme development <p>1.1.3 For a sustainable and successful implementation of the PhD in political science it is advisable that UG elaborates about the role of the programme (next to others) for the School as well as the university and its research agenda as a whole. Such a strategic document can help to identify research priorities in order to strengthen its position as a private university committed to improve academic excellence in the humanities.</p>

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

Certainly, the introduction of the Scientific and Advisory Council for each individual PhD student is a very innovative approach to improve supervision as team work. Since there are only three students enrolled in the PhD program, this provides a structural environment for tailor made supervision. However, its proper implementation needs to be secured.

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

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

For the re-accreditation the structure of the PhD programme was improved in terms of lessons learned during the first five years after accreditation (introduction of Scientific Council, research project management and IT courses). In addition, an incentive structure of research funding was introduced to allow PhD students to get funding for required field missions, literature or publications. Given the financial stress for the PhD students this is certainly an improvement for original research.

Evaluation

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

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

1.2. Programme Learning Outcomes

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with standard requirements

- o Describe, analyze and evaluate programme's compliance with the standard component requirements based on the information collected through programme Self-evaluation Report, relevant enclosed documents and Site Visit; the analysis has to reflect problematic issues (if applicable)

The programme outcomes are measurable, achievable and realistic. They correspond to the qualification and degree requirements and are in compliance with the market requirements. The core courses of the program equip doctoral students with the modern standards of academic writing, teaching and research – the three pillars of an utmost importance for any doctoral program graduates. The core courses build the foundation for producing the new knowledge. The programme rightly states that the PhD student upon completion of the programme will have obtained the ability to apply standards of international research. This objective is adequately addressed in the implemented teaching and research components. An emphasis on research methodologies related to political science put into the context of philosophy of social sciences is well established in the programme, allowing for the complex understanding of the political science development, major debates and approaches. The syllabi of the core courses in political science do provide an introduction into the essentials of disciplinary methodology. This is necessary to sustain an internationally competitive PhD programme in political science. Certainly, it will be impossible to cover the whole range of global developments in political science, but there is a need for a prioritisation in research among the supervisors.

Interestingly during the interviews neither the academic staff, nor the PhD students mentioned that they have used the available international online databases that UG offers to its students for their research. In the only

PhD theses that we assessed, the author applied international research literature only to frame her topics in the multi-ethnicity studies, but has chosen almost no articles from leading peer-reviewed journals.

The Learning Outcomes Map designating the correspondence of the Program Goals and Program's Learning Outcomes was not provided among the files and was provided to the experts' team on the day of the Accreditation Visit.

Evidences/indicators

- Component evidences/indicators including relevant documents and interview results

UG PhD Programme; interview with programme staff during site visit, one PhD thesis; **Market Research 2019**

Recommendations:

Proposal(s), which should be considered by the institution to comply with requirements of the standards

None.

Suggestions for programme development:

Non-binding suggestions for programme development

1.2.2 Outcomes of the PhD programme could be formulated in a way that the achievement can be measured as objective as possible (e.g. publication of articles in international peer-reviewed journals, publication of book reviews in academic journals, involvement in research projects or associations, etc.).

1.2.3 Outcomes of the PhD programme could also include more collaborative forms into its list as peer-reviews, participation in national and international research clusters, public discussions, and structured collaboration with institutional partners.

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

Not observed.

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

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

Not observed.

Evaluation

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

Complies with requirements

Substantially complies with requirements

Partially complies with requirements

Does not comply with requirements

Programme's Compliance with Standard

Standard	Complies with Requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially Complies with Requirements	Does not Comply with Requirements
Educational programme objectives, learning outcomes and their compliance with the programme	X			

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

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

<p>2.1. Programme Admission Preconditions</p> <p>Higher education institution has relevant, transparent, fair, public and accessible programme admission preconditions.</p>
<p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with standard requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe, analyze and evaluate programme's compliance <u>with the standard component requirements</u> based on the information collected through programme Self-evaluation Report, relevant enclosed documents and Site Visit; the analysis has to reflect problematic issues (if applicable) <p>The requirements for admission to the programme are well elaborated covering previous diploma studies in political science on the BA, MA levels only. There is no explicit reference to the PhD student's commitment to academic research. However, the research proposal is part of the application, which allows assessing the maturity of the potential doctoral student. The knowledge of a foreign language is required (English B2 level). During our visit, the dean and head of the programme stated that PhD students mainly come from their own university. As we realized during the interview with PhD student and alumna, the reasons for taking up a PhD research are not all related to academic excellence. This often results in a double burden or workload of academic and professional obligations, which have an impact on the quality of the research. Obviously, It was not checked, how serious the academic commitments are in fact.</p>
<p>Evidences/indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Component evidences/indicators including relevant documents and interview results <p>PhD Programme; interviews with dean & programme leaders.</p>
<p>Recommendations:</p> <p>Proposal(s), which should be considered by the institution to comply with requirements of the standards</p> <p>2.1.1 In order to strengthen UGs academic local and international reputation the PhD students should be very carefully selected according to their REAL commitment to academic excellence and integrated in their supervisor's research projects, ideally with some scholarship or employment.</p>
<p>Suggestions for programme development:</p> <p>Non-binding suggestions for programme development</p> <p>2.1.2 The programme responsible is advised to consider of how the introduced Academic and Supervisory Council could be involved also for the selection of prospective PhD students.</p>
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practices, which prove to be exceptionally effective and which may become a benchmark or a model for other higher education programmes <p>Not observed.</p>
<p>In case of accredited programme, significant accomplishments and/or progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant accomplishment and/or progress made by the programme after previous accreditation (If Applicable) <p>More than the self-assessment the interviews with different stakeholders demonstrated that there is a general commitment to improve the programme with the available resources.</p>
<p>Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please mark the checkbox which mostly describes your position related to the programmes compliance with this specific component of the standard <p><input type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements</p>

2.2 Educational Programme Structure and Content

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with standard requirements

- Describe, analyse and evaluate programme's compliance with the standard component requirements based on the information collected through programme Self-evaluation Report, relevant enclosed documents and Site Visit; the analysis has to reflect problematic issues (if applicable)

The PhD Programme in Political Science is designed in accordance with the University's Internal Regulation on the Continuous Quality Assurance, where the algorithm for introducing the changes into the Program is specified. The Program content envisages the adequate Admission Preconditions to the program and to each of the courses in particular. The Program design is the outcome of the regular and systematic contribution of all major stakeholders (students, alumni, academic personnel, employers etc.) The information on the PhD Program content and structure is public and accessible at the UG web page. In general, the educational programme is in line with the required standards and provides for an effective PhD study. The program has been implemented since 2015. After the initial accreditation it has been modified, in particular the curriculum module was differentiated into mandatory and elective subjects. The two disciplinary courses on methods in political science are sufficient for producing academic research on the international level. The weight of the teaching component with one third (60 ECTS) and the research component with two thirds (120 ECTS) is justified. The Program does not envisage the free credits, required by the Accreditation standards, which allows students to take part in exchange programs or develop additional expertise in the courses of their interest, especially if the PhD Program is of interdisciplinary character.

Evidences/indicators

- Component evidences/indicators including relevant documents and interview results

Programming document, talks with teaching staff, one former and one PhD student; Surveys – doctoral students, alumni, academic personnel, potential employers; UG web page.

Recommendations:

None

Suggestions for programme development:

Non-binding suggestions for programme development

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

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

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

So far, just one out of four PhD studies are finalized (another one is suspended for economic reasons), three are ongoing. We assessed only one with entries of int. research literature, theoretical or conceptual approaches.

Evaluation

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

Complies with requirements

Substantially complies with requirements

Partially complies with requirements

Does not comply with requirements

2.3 Course

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with standard requirements

- Describe, analyze and evaluate programme's compliance with the standard component requirements based on the information collected through programme Self-evaluation Report, relevant enclosed documents and Site Visit; the analysis has to reflect problematic issues (if applicable)

Before all courses were mandatory. Mandatory courses of the teaching component amount to 30 ECTS: 1. Philosophy of science (10 ECTS) – (lecturer information is not provided in the syllabus), which gives a very good and relevant introduction to the epistemology of academic research in general, political science is only partly covered. 2. Methods of Qualitative Study (10 ECTS) is very necessary and helpful (addressed in the Program as the Research Methods and Design with different lecturers teaching the course). The research design course adds to conceptual and methodological maturity of a doctoral student, building on the knowledge gained throughout the Philosophy of Science course. Upon passing the Research Design course, students are able to decide themselves on a specific method application stemming from the goals of research; make an informed choice on whether qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods are used. Finally, doctoral students are equipped with understanding of the complex character of methodological approaches and theoretical debates in political science. The Political Science Specialty Module offers doctoral students the chance to review and critically address the major themes in the field, based on the readings addressing the latest scholarly discussions in the field. 3. Modern Strategies of Teaching and Evaluation (5 ECTS) is necessary to prepare for academic teaching. 4. Doctoral Seminar I in specialty (5 ECTS), 5. Doctoral seminar II (5 ESTS) cover essentials of research methodology in political science.

The following elective courses with a total of 20-25 ECTS are on offer: 6. Assisting a professor (teaching practice, 5 ECTS) for all PhD students, who do not already teach at a HEI. 7. Academic writing for scientific publications (10 ECTS) is a general introduction into this skill, but does not cover the specifics of publishing in political science journals. 8. Text review and translation (5 ECTS), certainly interesting, but of very specific relevance. 9. Managing research projects (10 ECTS) is very helpful to prepare the PhD students to think of research as a manageable process. This course is also helpful to prepare research project applications at scientific foundations or institutions. 10. Methods of quantitative research (10 ECTS) is relevant for social or economic research and therefore well placed as an elective. 11. Management systems of electronic learning (5 ECTS) covers mainly MOODLE as a teaching tool, but leaves the whole developments of digital humanities out, which make more and more research as well as sources easily accessible through online databases, which PhD students should be aware of. With 60 ECTS the teaching component comprises one third of the whole programme.

With 120 ECTS the research component with two thirds represents the main part of the programme (77%). It mainly relies on regular consultations with supervisors. The newly introduced Academic and Supervisory Council will be helpful in further structuring this component. There are no regular doctoral seminars to share ongoing research with supervisors and other peers. There are no collaborative forms allowing for some interaction among PhD students (group work, self-organised small conferences or workshops, peer-reviews, contacts and interaction with international scholars working on similar topics abroad, etc.). There is no reflection on the structure of the research component that the PhD students will be enabled to perform their assignments in a timely manner (even if in Georgia many of them are working full time and conduct research only afterwards). This represents a serious structural problem hampering the overall quality of research output. Collaborative structures can help PhD students to overcome writing blockades and other problems, if they cannot be addressed directly during the interaction with their personal supervisor. Overall, the course syllabi as well as Program itself lack a coherent and similar format.

Evidences/indicators

- Component evidences/indicators including relevant documents and interview results

Syllabi, lecturers' CVs, programming document, website

Recommendations:

<p>Proposal(s), which should be considered by the institution to comply with requirements of the standards</p> <p>None.</p>
<p>Suggestions for programme development:</p> <p>Non-binding suggestions for programme development</p> <p>2.3.1 UG might consider making more use of international exchange programmes (ERASMUS+, DAAD, Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia) to invite foreign guest lecturers or Georgian graduates from abroad teaching courses in the programme.</p> <p>2.3.2 The quantitative Methods course if transferred to the core component of the Program would add to the Program's strengths and graduates' excellence in employing the variety of methods of research. As Georgia's academia (BA and MA Programs) still suffers of focusing mainly on qualitative methods due to lack of expertise among the MA programs graduates in methods and research design, additional attention towards a quantitative methods course would widen the scope of research tools to be applied by students throughout dissertation writing and other research.</p> <p>2.3.3 The Program courses content would benefit from the clear-cut benchmarking strategy, which allows to take into account the best practices in terms of course design and program content as well as put the Doctoral Program into the local and international context, reveal its weaknesses and strengths.</p> <p>2.3.4 The assessment criteria could be diversified and more focussed on specific skills outcomes, not only presentations, but teaching samples, academic book reviews, practical application of digital tools, etc.</p> <p>2.3.5 Management, lecturers, former and current PhD students could jointly reflect on introducing more collaborative approaches and thus encourage more interaction with other PhD students beyond the individual research projects, preparing them for interacting with international scholars.</p>
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Practices, which prove to be exceptionally effective and which may become a benchmark or a model for other higher education programmes <p>Not observed, since there was no opportunity to attend classes.</p>
<p>In case of accredited programme, significant accomplishments and/or progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Significant accomplishment and/or progress made by the programme after previous accreditation (If Applicable)
<p>Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Please mark the checkbox which mostly describes your position related to the programmes compliance with this specific component of the standard <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements</p>

<p>2.4 Development of practical, scientific/research/creative/performance and transferable skills</p>
<p>Programme ensures the development of students' practical, scientific/research/creative/performance and transferable skills and/or their involvement in research projects, in accordance with the programme learning outcomes.</p>
<p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with standard requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Describe, analyze and evaluate programme's compliance <u>with the standard component requirements</u> based on the information collected through programme Self-evaluation Report, relevant enclosed documents and Site Visit; the analysis has to reflect problematic issues (if applicable) <p>The broad range of political science research skills is only partly covered with the assessment criteria, which mostly focuses on presentations or written assignments envisaging application of the methodological approaches to particular cases. While this type of assessment allows to evaluate students' comprehension of the materials learned, it leaves out all the "little tools of knowledge" as referencing, reviewing books, preparing public lectures and short "web documentaries" for non-academic audiences, assuring ethical standards of research. As we could learn during the site visit, the only graduate so far is working, where she was working</p>

before. She indicated that she would like to continue research and would be gladly involved into teaching as part of the program, but it was not offered her. The introduction to and practice of research skills is mainly referring to the research component, which leaves this important part to the supervisors that only partly are actively involved in international research practice and publication. It turned out that for the given supervisor the alumni was his first PhD student.

The Doctoral Program's Plan on the events to be carried out in 2019-2022 specify certain topics as hybrid warfare, the Russia's tactics to increase its influence over the media in Georgia, strategic communications and role of political freedom etc. however, none of the doctoral students seems to be actively involved in any of the themes mentioned.

Evidences/indicators

- Component evidences/indicators including relevant documents and interview results

Syllabi, interviews with supervisors, lecturers, alumni and ongoing PhD students; Plan of Events to be carried out for Professional Development – PhD Program in Political Science

Recommendations:

Proposal(s), which should be considered by the institution to comply with requirements of the standards

2.4.1 Programmers, involved supervisors and lecturers should assure that the students are adequately trained, developed and assessed during their research practice in an international context from the very beginning (presentation of research at international conferences, publication in peer-reviewed academic journal, contributions to HE textbook, (co-)teaching lessons at university, etc.).

Suggestions for programme development:

Non-binding suggestions for programme development

2.4.2 The PhD programme could provide for active involvement of PhD students in the research collaboration with national and international partner institutions.

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

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

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

Evaluation

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

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

2.5 Teaching and learning methods

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with standard requirements

- Describe, analyse and evaluate programme's compliance with the standard component requirements based on the information collected through programme Self-evaluation Report, relevant enclosed documents and Site Visit; the analysis has to reflect problematic issues (if applicable)

Since the PhD programme is a third level HE programme the teaching component is focussed not only on the transfer of knowledge, but also on the reflection of disciplinary and epistemological issues. The self-assessment states accordingly to adapt to the individual needs of the PhD student. However, it seems that the applied methods are relying on traditional lecturing and individual conversations between supervisor and PhD student. Other, more collaborative forms are not envisioned (e.g. working groups of PhD students).

The University's/School's membership in European Consortium for Political Research (joined in 2018) has still limited effect on diversifying the teaching methods. It is not following the innovations in the field in Europe and US (as virtual-learning environments, allowing for the distant discussion of relevant topics throughout the course, especially in case students work full time and have limited capacity to attend collaborative workshops apart from the regular meetings with the course instructor). The teaching methods in the framework of the course do not employ the problem-based learning, the approach that enhances students' mastering of building analytical narratives, making predictions, forecasts, develop analytical thinking.

Evidences/indicators

- Component evidences/indicators including relevant documents and interview results

Self-assessment, programming document, interviews with doctoral dissertation supervisors and students.

Recommendations:

Proposal(s), which should be considered by the institution to comply with requirements of the standards

2.5.1 The university and programme management should assist the lecturers and supervisors in establishing more diverse methods of teaching and learning methods in line with the profile of the PhD students. For this purpose they can rely on their specialists in modern teaching methods for to student-centred approaches.

Suggestions for programme development:

- Non-binding suggestions for programme development

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

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

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

So far, only one out of four enrolled PhD students concluded the programme.

Evaluation

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

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

2.6 Student Evaluation

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with standard requirements

- Describe, analyze and evaluate programme's compliance with the standard component requirements based on the information collected through programme Self-evaluation Report, relevant enclosed documents and Site Visit; the analysis has to reflect problematic issues (if applicable)

The system of assessment of students' knowledge within the framework of the Doctoral Program is in accordance with the Georgian legislation. A general framework is set out to regulate the teaching process at the University of Georgia. The student assessment in the program has multi-component, objective and provides an assessment of specific course goals and learning outcomes. The assessment criteria are written for each syllabus individually. Intermediate and final evaluation forms are used in the evaluation of both the study and the research component of the program, most of them are generally at the doctoral level, such as abstracts, research projects, presentations, and so on.

Periodical monitoring of doctoral research is also carried out by the Scientific Advisory Board and the PhD supervisor (Board might consist of 4 members instead of 3, if the dissertation has Co-supervisor), who is member to all three existing boards. During the teaching process, the PhD student constantly receives feedback from the professors about the research and improvement of the results. Students may appeal the assessment, which is governed by the UG for Student Assessment, Credits and Additional / Repetitive Courses / Components

The dissertation is prepared in accordance with the specified rules and includes several stages, such as pre-application, research seminar, colloquium, qualification thesis. The thesis preparation and protection is defined in the doctoral thesis, where the evaluation criteria are also specified. The dissertation Board (comprising of minimum 5 and maximum 7 members, including the members of the Scientific Advisory Board apart from the Supervisor/Co-Supervisor) is the body responsible for carrying out the final defence of the Doctoral dissertation. The doctoral dissertation defence procedure envisages an expert in the field not affiliated with UG, in order to carry out an external evaluation of the doctoral thesis. Doctoral papers produced at UG are checked for plagiarism by the program "Turnitin". However, the interview with only one out of three students and the absence of the others for professional reasons demonstrated that the real practice does not coincide with the strive for academic excellence.

Evidences/indicators

- Component evidences/indicators including relevant documents and interview results

Interview with students and alumni; Syllabi of the PhD Program; Doctorate Provision; Rules of operation of the Scientific -Advisory Council; Evaluation of lectures conducted by a PhD student

Recommendations:

Proposal(s), which should be considered by the institution to comply with requirements of the standards

Suggestions for programme development:

- Non-binding suggestions for programme development

2.6.1 So far, the PhD students are mainly working alone with their supervisor. The UG infrastructure also allows for the establishment of work in peer groups of young researchers, where they can support each other and thus learn essentials of modern academic collaboration.

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

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

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

Evaluation

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

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

Programme's Compliance with Standard

Standard	Complies with Requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially Complies with Requirements	Does not Comply with Requirements
Teaching methodology and organization, adequate evaluation of programme mastering		X		

3. Student achievements and individual work with them

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

3.1. Student support services

Students receive appropriate consultations and support regarding the planning of learning process, improvement of academic achievement, employment and professional development.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with standard requirements

- Describe, analyze and evaluate programme's compliance with the standard component requirements based on the information collected through programme Self-evaluation Report, relevant enclosed documents and Site Visit; the analysis has to reflect problematic issues (if applicable)

The description of the doctoral program of Political science at the University of Georgia is available on the university's official site and on Student System "My UG". It contains detailed information on the university program, study goals and outcomes, qualifications awarded, credits, and assessments. However, detailed information can be obtained at orientation meetings attended by program representatives. These facilities provide students with information on issues of interest. The doctoral student receives advice and assistance about planning the study process from the Director, Head of Department, Program Officer, or Assistant at the School of Social Sciences;

The Ph.D. student is also supported by the Academic Advisory Board. This is a collegial structure that aims to support the Ph.D. student in the successful implementation of a scientific / research component. Interviews revealed that students are actively working with the supervisors of the research and are also actively assisted by the Scientific Advisory Board.

University has signed memoranda with local and international institutions, organizations and universities, so it is possible to engage in local and international projects, events, exchange programs, conferences, and research fellowships, but unfortunately, UG does not use these opportunities actively to improve internationalization.

The program is in close contact with employers, though only with NGOs. Students have the opportunity to have a practice with partner organizations and get involved in various projects, but most initiatives are led by partners, not the university.

Evidences/indicators

- Component evidences/indicators including relevant documents and interview results

Interviews with students and alumni; workload, functions, responsibilities and job descriptions of people conducting student support services (academic/scientific/invited/administrative/ support staff, faculty/school coordinators, tutors, etc.); planned and completed student support services; UG's website and student system; Student system "My UG"; University website

Recommendations:

Proposal(s), which should be considered by the institution to comply with requirements of the standards

3.1.1 Establish new and strengthen existing international partnerships, so that graduate students may get experience of international research exchange on the PhD level, which also comprises involvement in local and international scientific collaborations and/or research projects.

Suggestions for programme development:

- Non-binding suggestions for programme development

3.1.2 Establish partnerships with the business and public sectors as potential employers.

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

Academic Advisory Board, a collegial structure that aims to support the Ph.D. student in the successful implementation of a scientific / research component.

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

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

Evaluation

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

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

3.2. Master's and Doctoral Student supervision

Master's and Doctoral students have qualified thesis supervisors.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with standard requirements

- Describe, analyse and evaluate programme's compliance with the standard component requirements based on the information collected through programme Self-evaluation Report, relevant enclosed documents and Site Visit; the analysis has to reflect problematic issues (if applicable)

All procedures for preparing and defending a doctoral thesis at the UG are set out in its Doctoral Regulations. UG has published them on their Web site. The Head of the Doctoral Program is involved in all Academic Advisory Boards. On the national level the scholars are well established in their field, and therefore have sufficient knowledge and experience to assist qualified PhD students. However, the academic staff involved in the program does not identify sufficient international expertise in their research (publications, academic conferences). Some supervisors are only gathering their first experience in supervising PhD students.

Based on the personal files of the academic staff and interviews, we can say that doctoral students have qualified supervisors, who have scientific-research experience relevant to the topic of the thesis. The Head of the Doctoral Program, in total two associate professors, are supervising current students. They conduct consultations with Doctoral students on a regular basis. The frequency of consultations depends on the specifications of the programme and research topic. Students mentioned that during the research process, supervisor actively advises them on different topics of research.

During interviews with academic and invited staff, several professors have indicated that they are negotiating with the university and that if the student chooses a topic appropriate to their specialty, they are ready to provide guidance and supervise them.

Evidences/indicators

- Component evidences/indicators including relevant documents and interview results

Interview with academic staff, students and alumni; Places announced for the Doctoral Program and research topics; CVs of the program supervisors.

Recommendations:

Proposal(s), which should be considered by the institution to comply with requirements of the standards

3.2.1 UG should reflect together with supervisors to clarify necessary qualifications of supervising and evaluation of their work.

3.2.2 The introduction of PhD students to international academic research practice must be secured e.g. through internationalisation like co-tutelage.

Suggestions for programme development:

3.2.3 Establish the practice of a Consultation schedule between student and supervisor.

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

From the interviews with the supervisors, we learned about the individualised support that can be mobilised, if needed and the small grants for conducting research, what will allow them solely to focus on their research and to conduct field research.

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

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

Evaluation

- Please mark the checkbox which mostly describes your position related to the programme's compliance with this specific component of the standard
- Complies with requirements
- Substantially complies with requirements**
- Partially complies with requirements
- Does not comply with requirements

Programme's Compliance with Standard

Standard	Complies with Requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially Complies with Requirements	Does not Comply with Requirements
Student achievements and individual work with them		X		

4. Providing teaching resources

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

4.1 Human Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Programme staff consists of qualified people who have necessary competences in order to help students achieve programme learning outcomes;➤ The number and workload of programme academic/scientific and invited staff ensures the sustainable running of the educational process and also, proper execution of their research/creative/performance activities and other assigned duties. Balance between academic and invited staff ensures programme sustainability;➤ The Head of the Programme possesses necessary knowledge and experience required for programme elaboration. He/she is personally involved in programme implementation;➤ Programme students are provided with an adequate number of administrative and support staff of appropriate competence.
Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with standard requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Describe, analyse and evaluate programme's compliance <u>with the standard component requirements</u> based on the information collected through programme Self-evaluation Report, relevant enclosed documents and Site Visit; the analysis has to reflect problematic issues (if applicable) <p>Program staff consists of the qualified academic personnel. There are 11 professors and associate professors who are involved in the program as a teaching staff and supervisors. They are competent in their fields and, as a rule, possess a degree and/or professional experience in the course(s) they teach. Although some of them are not graduated political scientists, but historians. Meanwhile, during the visit we realized that the only international staff, Ms Sandra J. Johnson, is actually not involved in the programme at all, but working on the BA programme in political science and not teaching at the PhD level. There are several qualified invited lecturers involved in program. The heads of the program possesses the necessary knowledge, experience and vision - based on having earned a PhD in Germany - for its successful implementation. The administrative and support staff have appropriate competence and their number is adequate to the students' needs. However, none of the core staff has published in international peer-reviewed journals as we realized upon demanding a list of all the publications that was provided to us at the end of the site visits. This list shows that the major international publications stem from the IT professor and not from political scientists.</p> <p>Out of the 13 lecturers, on whom the information is provided by the Program (excel file, list of lecturers), three are not involved in the program development and are not mentioned in the Program content (obligatory / elective courses). During the visit, out of the invited lecturers included in the agenda as part the PhD Program, the experts' group had the chance to talk to the ones, who were not involved in the program. Hence, the interview outcomes are not relevant for assessing their involvement or satisfaction with the program/administration support. Furthermore, at the interview, two lecturers were present, who were mentioned neither in the program, or the lecturers' list (Excel file, პოლ.მეც.სადოქტორო პერსონალის სია)</p>
Evidences/indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Component evidences/indicators including relevant documents and interview results <p>Self-Assessment; CVs, interviews with university staff (academic personnel and invited lecturers), heads of the program, students, list of academic publications; the List of the Political Sciences Doctoral Personnel – Excel)</p>
Recommendations: <p>Proposal(s), which should be considered by the institution to comply with requirements of the standards</p> <p>4.1.1 All academic staff from the program development should try hard to get their research published in international peer-reviewed journals. Without their own practical experience, they will not be able to guide their students to international academic excellence.</p> <p>4.1.2 The programme management should look for a more active involvement of international scholars in teaching and research at UG. Thus, it will expose PhD students to available international research literature and exchange programmes in order to gather experience in their respective directions.</p>

Suggestions for programme development:

- Non-binding suggestions for programme development

4.1.3 The available international staff in the field of political science should actively be involved in the programme and its development.

4.1.4 Programme staff should actively use the UG's "Caucasus Journal of Social Sciences" to practice with their PhD students how to publish English articles in a peer-reviewed journal. This would certainly be an asset.

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

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

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

Evaluation

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

Complies with requirements

Substantially complies with requirements

Partially complies with requirements

Does not comply with requirements

4.2 Professional development of academic, scientific and invited staff

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with standard requirements

- o Describe, analyse and evaluate programme's compliance with the standard component requirements based on the information collected through programme Self-evaluation Report, relevant enclosed documents and Site Visit; the analysis has to reflect problematic issues (if applicable)

UG conducts the evaluation of its academic staff on a regular basis. This also applies to invited lecturers involved in the program. The evaluation of the staff is based on their teaching and research activities. The doctoral students also evaluate them at the end of semester according to special questionnaires developed by the School of Arts and Humanities of UG. UG has a Center for life-long professional development for the coordination of professional education of professors and doctoral students. It has also introduced financial bonuses for publications the internationally recognized journals based on their rankings in scientific databases. There is also a funding mechanism for the participation in international conferences. UG also holds an annual conference and publishes the "Caucasus Journal of Social Sciences", but so far no PhD student from the PhD programme has published there. Only in 2018 UG management introduced these improvements. It is not clear, why so far the staff has made only very limited use of this new opportunity structure. There might be other factors hampering the professional development of all staff. We could not observe or identify any collegial structure of sharing experience (best practices) among the staff or inviting qualified trainers for example to strengthen the supervisory capacities of the programme staff. The employed US scholar was working on the BA level only and not active included in the PhD programme.

Evidences/indicators

- o Component evidences/indicators including relevant documents and interview results

Self-Assessment; interviews with UG staff; Appendix to Provisions on the Rule of Awarding Bonuses; "მიმდინარე წლებში განხორციელებული სამეცნიერო-კვლევითი და პროფესიული განვითარების აქტივობები"

<p>Recommendations:</p> <p>Proposal(s), which should be considered by the institution to comply with requirements of the standards</p>
<p>Suggestions for programme development:</p> <p>Non-binding suggestions for programme development</p>
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Practices, which prove to be exceptionally effective and which may become a benchmark or a model for other higher education programmes
<p>In case of accredited programme, significant accomplishments and/or progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Significant accomplishment and/or progress made by the programme after previous accreditation (IfApplicable)
<p>Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Please mark the checkbox which mostly describes your position related to the programmes compliance with this specific component of the standard <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements</p>

<p>4.3. Material Resources</p>
<p>Programme is provided by necessary infrastructure and technical equipment required for achieving programme learning outcomes.</p>
<p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with standard requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Describe, analyse and evaluate programme’s compliance <u>with the standard component requirements</u> based on the information collected through programme Self-evaluation Report, relevant enclosed documents and Site Visit; the analysis has to reflect problematic issues (if applicable) <p>The library holdings in the field of political science, which covered essential literature in Georgian and English. We also found specialised international research literature, which were available in the rented space of the Mikheil Saakashvili Presidential Library together with a whole range of additional holdings there as well as working places. Online databases for using up-to-date research is still rare. The infrastructure of the university seemed to be well developed. All the literature mentioned in the syllabi was found in the library at least in digital form. UG has restricted subscriptions to some international journal databases (JSTOR, HeinOnline, Hinari, SABA.com.ge), which the professors and students – to some degree - to stay in tune with the latest achievements in the field, if they are using them at all. However, during the interviews nobody mentioned having used them. The one “active” PhD student, we talked to, did not use them as well. The alumni’s thesis did contain only a few reference to articles from international journals. The dean assured us of the regular purchase of actual literature relevant for the discipline of political science as well as on student demand.</p> <p>UG has a modern computer lab with all the necessary attributes. All study rooms are equipped with projectors and computers, but chairs were mainly organized in front of the lecturer, not allowing for much interaction among the students during class.</p>
<p>Evidences/indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Component evidences/indicators including relevant documents and interview results <p>Site visit to the library, computer lab, and study rooms.</p>
<p>Recommendations:</p> <p>Proposal(s), which should be considered by the institution to comply with requirements of the standards</p> <p>None</p>

Suggestions for programme development:

- Non-binding suggestions for programme development

4.3.1 The UG PhD programme staff could more actively use these databases themselves and encourage PhD students to do so as well. Securing the assessment of the latest debates in political science are only retrieved through international academic journals (not policy papers or blogs). This might happen through introducing regular literature reviews by the PhD students themselves.

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

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

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

Evaluation

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

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

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

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with standard requirements

- o Describe, analyse and evaluate programme’s compliance with the standard component requirements based on the information collected through programme Self-evaluation Report, relevant enclosed documents and Site Visit; the analysis has to reflect problematic issues (if applicable)

The programme has its own financial plan, which mainly covers the costs for the lecturers’ salaries and other issues. The annual income from the program is divided between the School of Social Sciences (40%) and the University (60%). The main income is the tuition fee of 3.000 GEL per year. This creates an additional burden for PhD students, who have to work during their PhD research period, which negatively influences either the duration of studies or the quality of the PhD thesis (courses to this programme as conducted from 19:00 to 21:00). However, a system of demand-driven research grants allows the PhD students to get funding for conducting their own research of up to 2.000 GEL. This is a good exercise to get accustomed to research project proposal writing. The UG provides financial support in strengthening its research output, although the share of the program’s annual budget aimed for research funding or organizing events for professional development of doctoral students is not explicitly pointed out in the Financial Report.

Evidences/indicators

- o Component evidences/indicators including relevant documents and interview results

Self-assessment, Financial Report of the program, Interview with the University Management

Recommendations:

Proposal(s), which should be considered by the institution to comply with requirements of the standards

Suggestions for programme development:

- Non-binding suggestions for programme development

4.4.1 If the programme is serious about producing high quality academic research results, it should offer PhD students the opportunity to commit themselves solely to their PhD research through scholarships included in research grants from RUSTAVELI or other funding institutions applied for by the academic staff.

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

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

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

Evaluation

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

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

Programme’s Compliance with Standard

Standard	Complies with Requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially Complies with Requirements	Does not Comply with Requirements
Providing teaching resources	X			

5. Teaching quality enhancement opportunities

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

5.1 Internal quality

Programme staff collaborates with internal quality assurance service(s) available at the higher education institution when planning the process of programme quality assurance, creating assessment instruments, and analysing assessment results. Programme staff utilizes quality assurance results for programme improvement.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with standard requirements

- Describe, analyze and evaluate programme's compliance with the standard component requirements based on the information collected through programme Self-evaluation Report, relevant enclosed documents and Site Visit; the analysis has to reflect problematic issues (if applicable)

The program is conducted according to the UG instruction on the continuous quality enhancement. Internal quality assurance service is the essential part of the program's self-evaluation process. The self-evaluation team includes the members of quality assurance service, academic, administrative, and support staff. The quality evaluation process consists of the following steps: gathering the program-related documents; the plan for program quality evaluation; analysis of academic performance; survey of student satisfaction with the program; evaluating the academic staff implementing the program; feedback on the program by the potential employers.

The students as well as academic and invited staff are involved in the program development, as specified in the Self-evaluation report, the program internal quality assurance process occurs based on bottom-up approach. The School is responsible for the content of the Program, being entitled to designating the team tasked with the goal of introducing the Program Changes/initiating a New Program design. The responsible team led by the Program Coordinator is assigned the task of carrying out research on the program's relevance, content, hiring academic personnel and invited staff. At the next stage, with the academic staff of the program consulted first on the program's design and desired requirements, whereas the measures on improving the program's performance are planned as a result; the self-evaluation team then receives feedback on behalf of the quality assurance office, as the final stage, the program is submitted in its final version to the Academic Board for the approval.

At the same time, methodology (especially the sample of respondents, systematic character of research) has to be specified more clearly in the report based on feedback given by students, academic staff and potential employers. However, the Self-Evaluation Report contained several flaws (reference to "veterinary programme", international staff mentioned was not actively involved in programme, high number of publications was inflated and not specific for the programme as we discovered after demanding a list with all academic literature). The report left an impression of "copy and paste" from the programme document and did not specify the process of reflection of the assessment team.

Evidences/indicators

- Self-assessment, UG instruction on continuous quality enhancement, interviews with self-evaluation team, academic staff, students; Survey - Satisfaction with Program- Doctoral students; Survey – Academic Staff; Survey – potential employers.

Recommendations:

Proposal(s), which should be considered by the institution to comply with requirements of the standards

None.

<p>Suggestions for programme development:</p> <p>Non-binding suggestions for programme development</p>
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Practices, which prove to be exceptionally effective and which may become a benchmark or a model for other higher education programmes
<p>In case of accredited programme, significant accomplishments and/or progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Significant accomplishment and/or progress made by the programme after previous accreditation (If Applicable)
<p>Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Please mark the checkbox which mostly describes your position related to the programmes compliance with this specific component of the standard <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements</p>

<p>5.2 External quality</p>
<p>Programme utilizes the results of external quality assurance on a regular basis.</p>
<p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with standard requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Describe, analyze and evaluate programme's compliance <u>with the standard component requirements</u> based on the information collected through programme Self-evaluation Report, relevant enclosed documents and Site Visit; the analysis has to reflect problematic issues (if applicable) <p>The program went through the EQE accreditation process five years ago. Before starting the re-accreditation process, the program was sent to an expert, Giorgi Gvalia, from Ilia State University. All experts gave their detailed answers to the questionnaire with some advice. All of them appraised the program and considered the program goals and results as achievable. The program was also sent to the potential employers mainly from the NGO sector. All institutions filled up the questionnaire and liked the program. The interview with the potential employers confirmed that the questionnaires were sent and filled. As for the foreign evaluation, there were none. However, the analysis of the provided assessments left the impression of a very formal approach and not a deeper analysis of the programme.</p>
<p>Evidences/indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Self-assessment, analysis of the external expert evaluations, analysis of the potential employers evaluations, interviews with potential employers
<p>Recommendations:</p> <p>5.2.1 External evaluation by international experts in the field themselves involved in academia abroad (Europe and US) would contribute to Program's sophisticated design, find avenues for building the community of doctoral students and supervisors working on research themes through continuous process of collaboration and interaction. This would also assist in benchmarking process as well as building the Research Development Strategy for the School/University.</p>
<p>Suggestions for programme development:</p> <p>Non-binding suggestions for programme development</p>

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

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

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

Evaluation

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

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

5.3. Programme monitoring and periodic review

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with standard requirements

- Describe, analyze and evaluate programme’s compliance with the standard component requirements based on the information collected through programme Self-evaluation Report, relevant enclosed documents and Site Visit; the analysis has to reflect problematic issues (if applicable)

UG systematically conducts program monitoring. Students evaluate the courses at the end of the semester, while the personnel give recommendations regarding the program curriculum. Special questionnaires were filled by the students and graduates before the beginning of the re-accreditation process. Based on their results some optional courses were introduced in the program. Also, students and personnel can state their opinions on current issues via “My UG” (students) or “Online UG” (personnel). The potential employers also had been asked to fill the questionnaires and make some recommendations, although as it can be found from the program, their advices were considered irrelevant by the staff, therefore no changes have been made on that account.

For a PhD programme with only a limited number of students a formalized procedure with questionnaires is rather bureaucratic. We could not observe other, more participatory forms on the feedback. The PhD students – also due to their extracurricular – non-academic working obligations do have only limited time for getting more actively involved in the improvement of the programme. The alumna told us that she was interested in continuing her research upon completion of the programme, but did not receive a response. This should not have happened, if the strife for academic excellence and improvement of research at UG is taken seriously. It puts the monitoring system that the quality assurance team elaborated, under question.

Evidences/indicators

- Self-assessment, interviews with management, students, staff and professors

Recommendations:

Proposal(s), which should be considered by the institution to comply with requirements of the standards

Suggestions for programme development:

Non-binding suggestions for programme development

5.3.1 It might be considered to allow for a student representation in all relevant bodies of the programme esp. the Academic and Supervisory Council.

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

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

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

Evaluation

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

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

Programme’s Compliance with Standard

Standard	Complies with Requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially Complies with Requirements	Does not Comply with Requirements
Teaching quality enhancement opportunities	X			

Enclosed Documentation (If Applicable)

HEI's Name: Ltd. University of Georgia

Higher Education Programme Name: PhD programme Political

Science Number of Pages of the Report: 27

Programme's Compliance with the Standard

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

Expert Panel Chair's

Oliver REISNER,

signature



Expert Panel Members'

Ivanna MACHITIDZE, signature



Mariam BURDILADZE, signature

