Report of Authorisation Evaluation of International Black Sea University

Expert Panel Members

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Tbilisi

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Authorisation Report Resume

General information on the educational institution

The International Black Sea University (IBSU) mission focuses on professionally-oriented high-quality education and applied research emphasizing innovation, internationalization and lifelong learning. IBSU strives to promote intercultural dialogue, sustain a high employment rate of graduates in domestic and international labour market and contribute to the development of a democratic civil society.

IBSU has the vision to take strides in becoming an internationally recognized university for its educational excellence, management efficiency, research output, and societal engagement, having the necessary environment for its students and staff to be advocates of global human values, and lifelong learning. International Black Sea University serves the following areas of education for BA, MA, PhD degrees.[4]

- Faculty of Business Management
- Faculty of Social Sciences
- Faculty of Education and Humanities
- Faculty of Computer Technology and Engineering
- Faculty of Law

Brief overview of the evaluation procedure for authorisation: SER and site visit

The evaluation procedure for authorisation of IBSU was conducted in line with the process described by the National Centre for Educational Enhancement (NCEE). The panel was appointed in March 2018.

The SER and related documents was sent to panel members on 3rd April 2018. Panel members had regular email exchanges regarding the organisation of the review. Following a proposal by the chair, specific standards were allocated to the panel members as specific focus points for their attention. Panel members identified a proposed time schedule for the site visit, preliminary impressions and any requests for additional documents were discussed. At that time special points for further investigation were brought together in a mapping grid for panel members. On 23rd April 2018, the panel met before the start of the site visit, to discuss the topics and consider the authorisation standards in detail. It was decided that, while an individual panel member would have a first responsibility for bringing up topics related to 'his or her standard' in specific sessions, other panel members could join in in the discussions whenever suitable. Thus, there would be no specific lead-person per session, apart from the chair. The site visit was conducted between 24th and 27th April 2018.

The SER was well prepared, and the meetings and interviews were conducted in a collegiate way. At the conclusion of the site visit, brief feedback was given firstly to the University management and then to staff of the University. Following the site visit the panel provided detailed comments on each of the standards and a draft report was compiled and edited by the Chair. The report was prepared submitted to NCEE on 8th May 2018 and finalised on 8th July 2018.

Overview of the HEI's compliance with standards

Summary of Recommendations

- Include measurable performance indicators in the action plan
- Commence structured monitoring of the action plan
- To enhance students involvement in University decision-making, provide students with greater awareness regarding students' involvement opportunities in structural units
- Involve all alternatives related to risks in the business continuity plan, with relevant justification and reference to resources available at university to solve the problems
- Encourage more focus on the involvement of academic staff in quality assurance surveys
- Refine the methodology of students body planning in the University and improve the awareness of the staff (related with the students body planning process) about existing methodology of students body planning
- Foreign language proficiency level shall be clearly defined in admission preconditions of the programme and thoroughly executed
- Mandatory internship results shall be carefully evaluated by supervisors in view of the internship learning outcomes and the relevant programme goals
- The university should ensure that students have clear understanding of learning outcomes evaluation scheme in order to avoid misinterpretation and confusion among students;
- Academic staff and lecturers are suggested to better communicate the learning outcomes and the evaluation system with students.
- Ensure that affiliated academic staff fully understand rules of affiliation
- Establish clear strategies for the professional development of the staff, to measure their participation in the offered trainings and workshops and to measure effect of the professional development on their performance
- Staff evaluation system need to be developed in more systematic way
- Set specific benchmarks for the academic and administrative staff and to measure how the performance is improved
- Develop more formal procedures to make sure that all the academic staff is fully involved in decision-making processes
- Staff satisfaction surveys should be filled in by each academic and administrative personnel;
- Improve procedures for integrating new employees into work environment and informing them on quality assurance requirements;
- Include in the workload calculation the time necessary for grading, material preparation, research, office hours for each course, supervising education program. Total workload calculation also should include other jobs of professors at administrative or industry positions
- After total workload calculation, HEI needs to reconsider the workload for professors to ensure implementation of educational programmes and proper fulfillment of research and other activities
- Consider how to Involve more international students at job fairs
- Develop clear policy and distinction of who is responsible to manage and resolve student problems
- Regulate "Open Door Policy" in order to regulate and manage staff workload
- Utilise the evaluation for the students clubs and self government office, as they are official bodies of the University
- Promote the perception of student self-government as a change maker among students, that is focussed on students needs and engages in University life and decision making

- Focus on securing external funding opportunities for the implementation of research projects
- Provide Support for academic staff with grant writing and project proposals
- Accelerate implementation of planned joint programs aiming at joint or double degrees
- Publish outcomes of outcomes of academic staff research output evaluation
- Make all buildings fully accessible for people with special needs
- More cooperation between academic staff and library with regard to delivery of main literature listed in the syllabi

Summary of Suggestions

- Introduce centralised co-ordination of strategic planning to ensure coherence of activities
- Refine the methodology of students body planning in the University and improve the awareness of the staff (related with the students body planning process) about existing methodology of students body planning
- Formalise consultation processes with external stakeholders
- Introduce centralised co-ordination to ensure coherence of activities
- Develop an effective marketing platform at the international level and strengthen PR activities internationally
- Encourage more focus on the involvement of academic staff in quality assurance surveys
- Systematically review the mechanisms for anti-plagiarism and permanently support academic honesty
- Improve the quality of market research by using effective methods and problem-based analysis in order to increase reliability of conducted research
- Design of questionnaires shall give a more space to students to comment on practical and scientific-research components of the educational programmes
- Elaborate educational programme periodic review on existing programmes so that it is clearly described with more emphasis on formal engagement of all stakeholders
- Foreign language proficiency level could be more clearly stated in admission preconditions of the programme and thoroughly executed
- Elaborate educational programme periodic review on existing programmes so that it is clearly described with more emphasis on formal engagement of all stakeholders
- Consider programme specification in each field while selecting the fourth subject at the national unified examination, aiming at students' better academic achievements.
- Mandatory internship results shall be carefully evaluated by supervisors in view of the internship learning outcomes and the relevant programme goals
- Law faculty students participation in international moot court competitions would be asset , such as CEEMC (Central and Eastern European Moot Court), JESSUP (Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition), VIS MOOT (Vis International Commercial Arbitration Moot).
- Utilise international activities to internationalise the curriculum for the benefit of non mobile students
- Increase awareness of plaigiarism and anti plaigiarism amongst MA students
- Develop more international project opportunities (social and/ or academic) for students
- Create student model space for Architecture programme
- More cooperation between academic staff and library with regard to delivery of main literature listed in the syllabi
- Greater clarity with regards to statistical analysis of database usage
- Train the relevant administrative staff on cyber-security and IT management related issues
- Continue efforts to diversify income streams to ensure long-term financial stability for the university

Summary of the Best Practices

- The participatory approach to mission statement development has created good awareness and ownership amongst staff
- Reporting on development of educational programs is good practice that faculties share within the University
- Team congratulates the university on having such as vibrant, comfortable and multifunctional campus.
- The SMART system is student oriented
- Intership programs based at IBSU is regarded as a good starting point for further development

Summary Table of Compliance of HEI with Standards and Standard Components

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

7	**Material, information and financial resources**	☐	☒	☐	☐
7.1	Material resources	☐	☒	☐	☐
7.2	Library resources	☐	☒	☐	☐
7.3	Information resources	☒	☐	☐	☐
7.4	Financial resources	☒	☐	☐	☐

Signature of expert panel members

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Compliance of the Applicant HEI with the Authorisation Standard Components

1. Mission and strategic development of HEI

Mission statement of a HEI defines its role and place within higher education area and broader society. Strategic development plan of HEI corresponds with the mission of an institution, is based on the goals of the institution and describe means for achieving these goals.

1.1 Mission of HEI
Mission Statement of the HEI corresponds to Georgia's and European higher education goals, defines its role and place within higher education area and society, both locally and internationally.
Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements
The International Black Sea University (IBSU) mission focuses on professionally-oriented high-quality education and applied research emphasizing innovation, internationalisation and lifelong learning. IBSU strives to promote intercultural dialogue, sustain a high employment rate of graduates in domestic and international labour market and contribute to the development of a democratic civil society.
The statement corresponds to both European and Georgian higher education goals, with particular focus on lifelong learning, internationalisation and employability. The methodology for developing the mission statement was inclusive of all staff and created following extensive discussion and dialogue. The mission clearly reflects the goals of the university as exemplified in their teaching and learning, research and other activities as well as strategic planning.
Differing groups of staff were asked about the mission statement during site visit interviews. All staff showed good awareness of the university mission and their role in contributing to its realisation.
Evidences/indicators
IBSU Mission statement
IBSU Vision statement
IBSU strategy documents
Interviews

Recommendations:
Suggestions:
Best Practices (if applicable):
The participatory approach to mission statement development has created good awareness and ownership amongst staff
Evaluation
⊠ Complies with requirements
☐ Substantially complies with requirements
☐ Partially complies with requirements
☐ Does not comply with requirements

1.2 Strategic Development

- o HEI has a strategic development (7-year) and an action plans (3-year) in place.
- o HEI contributes to the development of the society, shares with the society the knowledge gathered in the institution, and facilitates lifelong learning
- o HEI evaluates implementation of strategic and action plans, and duly acts on evaluation results.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

IBSU has a comprehensive strategic plan which runs to over 60 pages. The plan is subdivided into sections which clearly state actions, performance indicators, timelines and functional units responsible for implementation and monitoring. The plan is supported by internal quality assurance processes and internal regulations which will ensure regular monitoring of the plan, however at this stage structured monitoring had not commenced. The plan would even more closely meet the required standard with the inclusion of measurable performance indicators

The plan was developed with a bottom up approach to ensure that it reflected the views of all personnel in the university. Additionally, the views of stakeholders were gathered to input to the development of the plan. These stakeholders included, students, alumni and employers. The process of stakeholder involvement was rather informal, and a more formalized systematic approach may ensure that all those who wish to contribute can do so.

The plan generally contributes to the development of society and has a clear focus on lifelong learning. A number of areas, including internationalisation and research activity would benefit from greater centralised co-ordination to ensure coherence and complementarity of activity and to prevent the growth of diverse unmanageable activities.

Evidences/indicators

IBSU Mission statement

IBSU Vision statement

IBSU strategy documents

Interviews

Recommendations:

Include measurable performance indicators in the action plan

Commence structured monitoring of the action plan

Suggestions:

Formalise consultation processes with external stakeholders

Introduce centralised co-ordination to ensure coherence of activities

Best Practices (if applicable):

The participatory approach to strategic planning and development has created good awareness and ownership amongst staff

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

2. Organizational Structure and Management of HEI

Organizational structure and management of the HEI is based on best practices of the educational sector, meaning effective use of management and quality assurance mechanisms in the management process. This approach ensures implementation of strategic plan, integration of quality assurance function into management process, and promotes principles of integrity and ethics

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

Based on the analysis of the self-assessment report and the submitted documents, the team concluded that the International Black Sea University (IBSU) has and operates the organisational structure relevant to the legislation of Georgia. On all levels of the University management, functions and responsibilities are defined that provide effective implementation of the activities described in the strategic development plan and ensure the achievement of goals set by the University. From interviews with representatives of structural units, it is clear that these representatives know and practice the functions and duties defined in the University's regulatory documents. University staff are well aware of their obligations and responsibilities, and have a clear understanding of their role in the university management system. From interviews with students and staff, it is clear that decisions made by the management bodies are timely.

From the interview with the staff, and from presented documents, it is clear that the University has a rule of selection and appointment in the management bodies which is transparent and compliant with the requirements of the legislation of Georgia. The documents show that students have the opportunity to be members of decision-making bodies (Basic Educational Unit (Faculty) Board; Academic Board). However, from interviews with students, it is clear that the quality of their awareness of the above-mentioned possibilities is low.

During the meetings with structural units, it was observed that employees of the University are listening to each other and working well together. During the visit, it was apparent that communication between structural units is well structured. Due to the small scale of the university, both formal and informal channels of communication are successfully used between staff members, as well as between staff and students. It is also a welcoming fact that governing structures and employees are open for innovations regardless of where or how new ideas come from. From the review teams point of view, this approach is a good example for students of IBSU.

In order to ensure continuity of business processes, IBSU has developed a business continuity plan. The plan reflects all the major risks, as well as possible preventive measures, timing periods and measures to be implemented. However, the plan does not fully reflect all the possibilities and resources that the IBSU actually has in order to ensure of business continuity. During the interview with the university management, it was revealed that, for example, in the case of risks connected with fines and penalties or

taxes the University has many more alternatives of solution than it is presented in the business continuity plan. For example, the university has a court case for several years, which is still in progress. In spite of the fact that the university has alternatives of action in accordance with any decision of the Court (information from interviews), it is not reflected in the business continuity plan. Furthermore, the University informed the team that transfer of ownership may at some time be a possibility and this should also be accounted for in continuity plans.

The University has experience in internationalisation and plans to conduct activities in different directions of internationalisation (mobility, joint programmes, international student recruitment). Accordingly, the University uses various PR technologies and marketing approaches. However, in order to further deepen internationalisation, it is necessary to focus on the international markets, and develop a clearly defined marketing strategy.

Evidences/indicators

Regulations of Structural Units

Internal Regulation of IBSU

Organisational chart

Regulation for Qualification Requirements and Rules for Appointing on Administrative Position

Correspondence Rules

Business Continuity Plan

Monitoring mechanisms of effective governing and assessment system

Internationalisation Policy (2018-2025)

Interview administrative and academic staff

Interview with the Rector, Vice Rectors and the chancellor

Interview with the representatives of the Academic Board

Interview with the administration PR Office and Alumni Office

Interview with the representatives of the International Relations Office and Lifelong Learning Office, School of Languages

Interview with the Deans

Recommendations:

To enhance students involvement in University decision-making, provide students with greater awareness regarding students' involvement opportunities in structural units

Involve all alternatives related to risks in the business continuity plan, with relevant justification and reference to resources available at university to solve the problems

Suggestions:

Develop an effective marketing platform at the international level and strengthen PR activities internationally

Best Practices (if applicable):

Evaluation

☐ Complies with requirements

☒ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

o ☐ Does not comply with requirements

2.2 Internal quality assurance mechanisms

- Institution effectively implements internal quality assurance mechanisms. Leadership of the institution constantly works to strengthen quality assurance function and promotes establishment of quality culture in the institution.
- HEI has a mechanism for planning student body, which will give each student an opportunity to get a high-quality education.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

There is an independent structural unit of Quality Assurance Service at IBSU. The University has a provision of Quality Assurance Service and Quality Assurance Internal Mechanisms (Manual). The Head of Quality Assurance Service at the University is appointed by the University Rector. In the management structure of the university, the quality service reports to the rector and accountable to him. Faculty quality assurance managers provide coordination of quality service within the faculties.

From analysis of the documents presented and interviews during the site visit it was apparent that the quality assurance service of the University is based on the "Plan - Do – Check – Act" (PDCA) cycle principles. The University has conducted: assessment of academic and invited staff; monitoring and evaluation of the ongoing processes at the University; monitoring of the academic performance results of the University students and the implementation of the monitoring results to improve the learning process; Assessment and development of current and new educational programs; Elaboration of individual curriculum and so on. All basic structural units are involved in the implementation of the University quality assurance mechanism. Effective implementation of the quality assurance mechanism is provided with appropriate resources.

Interviews with university graduates, students, employers and personnel reveal that they are involved in the evaluation and improvement of educational programs.

The presented documents and interviews show that the university is conducting surveys and research in many directions. Research is conducted regularly, special forms have been developed and uses appropriate methods for research. It also becomes clear that the University uses the results of survey and research to improve activities in different directions. However, at the meeting with academic staff, some of the participants noted that they did not have the opportunity to complete, for example, forms connected with employee satisfaction survey.

The interviews show that the University Quality Assurance Service plans to improve the mechanisms of evaluation of various structural units. Information on improvement assessment mechanism is also reflected in the strategic and strategic plans of the University (Strategic Plan. Sub-goal 4.2.10.).

The University has a methodology for students body planing, which states: "For planning student contingent for each educational program, existence of relevant material and human resources, requirements of the labour market, dynamics of students enrollment to the program, mobility, status termination/withdrawal/commencement, program completion and employability (including with speciality) should be considered". In addition, the formula for determining the number of students has been developed at the University. However, the methodology is to some extent general. Also, the staff related to the planning of students' body were not fully aware of the existing methodology.

Evidences/indicators

  Internal Regulation
  Internal Mechanisms of Quality Assurance and its appendices
  Reports compiled by Quality Assurance Office
  Evaluation results conducted by Quality Assurance Office
  Regulation of Quality Assurance Office
  Instruction for Designing Educational Programs
  Interview with the representatives of the Quality Assurance Office
  Meeting with the Heads of Programs
  Monitoring mechanisms of effective governing and assessment system
  Interview administrative and academic staff
  Interview with the Deans
  Interview with Alumni and Employers

Recommendations:

Encourage more focus on the involvement of academic staff in quality assurance surveys

Refine the methodology of students body planning in the University and improve the awareness of the staff (related with the students body planning process) about existing methodology of students body planning

Suggestions:

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

2.3. Observing principles of ethics and integrity

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The University has developed a code of ethics that determines the principles of the code of conduct and the consequences of violation thereof. The code of conduct applies to academic, administrative personnel, invited lecturers, teachers and students. From interviews with students and staff, it became clear that they are familiar with the code of ethics and are aware of the expected consequences of violation of the rules defined by the Code of Ethics. Interviews also show that the University is taking various measures for students and staff to raise awareness about academic honesty.

Analysis of the presented documents and interviews shows that academic honesty is recognised as the most important factor in scientific research in the University. In 2018, the Black Sea International University acquired the right to use Turnitin. According to the University administration, the University intends not only to examine similarities to detect plagiarism in students' work, but also to examine scientific articles prepared by affiliated staff.

In the internal regulations of the University the principles of academic freedom are declared. Interviews with academic and administrative staff reveal that they are independent in the teaching process. The university does not interfere with teaching, research, discussions and publications. According to the students, they have freedom in the learning process and the University has managed to protect the students from the needless impact that can damage their academic freedom.

Evidences/indicators

Code of Ethics
Doctoral Studies and Dissertation Board Regulation
Regulation for Master's Education
Disciplinary Regulation for Students
Staff management policy
Internal Regulation

Interview with students Interview with academic and administrative staff
Recommendations:
Suggestions: Systematically review the mechanisms for anti-plagiarism and permanently support academic honesty
Best Practices (if applicable):
Evaluation ☒ Complies with requirements ☐ Substantially complies with requirements ☐ Partially complies with requirements ☐ Does not comply with requirements

3.   Educational Programmes

HEI has procedures for planning, designing, approving, developing and annulling educational programmes. Programme learning outcomes are clearly defined and are in line with the National Qualifications Framework. A programme ensures achievement of its objectives and intended learning outcomes

3.1 Design and Development of Educational Programmes
HEI has a policy for planning, designing, implementing and developing educational programmes.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

IBSU has elaborated Instruction for Designing Educational Programmes, describing the methodology of planning, designing and developing of educational programmes at all three levels of higher education. The document is approved by the Academic Board on January 18, 2018.

Currently, IBSU runs 40 educational programmes, out of them 39 are accredited programmes and teacher training programme (60 ECTS). Additionally, one programme is submitted to the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement for accreditation.

Educational programs developed by IBSU serve the advancement of the university mission through providing respective academic knowledge to the students, equipping them with the relevant theoretical knowledge and the practical skills for the professional development and employability.

Program planning, designing and development is a participatory process and all stakeholders are involved in it in order to the development of high quality and market-oriented educational programs.

University representatives mentioned that international field-related experts were involved in educational programme review process that contributed to the programme development in a way to meet the international market needs. However, the evidences of those benefits mainly were demonstrated as adding some new learning courses to the programmes.

Based on analysis of educational programme assessment results, IBSU has renewed programmes in order to meet market and stakeholder needs. 10 educational programs were closed due to the insufficient outcomes, out of them two were Doctoral programmes.

In order to study demand on educational programmes, IBSU conducted market research in the academic year of 2017-2018. The following data were obtained and analyzed: the number of places announced by the university on educational programs (since 2013), the statistics of admissions in the relevant years, external and internal mobility data, which implies the number of students either moved from or enrolled in the educational programs. In addition, observation of employment statistics for graduates of educational

programs was conducted. Also, employment portals were studied (5 the most actively used portals were selected and studied: www.cv.ge, www.jobs.ge, www.myjobs.ge, www.hr.ge, www.hr.gov.ge). However, the way how the results of the data analysis were converted in decision-making (including student body planning per programme) seems blurred.

Questionnaires for programme evaluation targeted at different stakeholders (students, alumni, employers) are elaborated. Student's questionnaire aims to collect and analyze data on learning outcomes in general, assessment criteria, programme flexibility, programme coordinator and lecturers, programme resources and overall quality of the educational programme, however there is a limited opportunity to comment on practical component, e.g. internship. It has to be mentioned that the regardless the fact the questionnaire is for students at all three levels, opportunities to assess scientific-research component at MA and PhD levels are also missing. The questionnaire designed for employers considers to collect feedback on both newly elaborated as well as existing programmes.

University has developed regulations and procedures for approving, amending and annulment of educational programmes, which are in compliance with current legislative requirements.

Evidences/indicators
- Methodology of planning, designing and developing of educational programmes;
- Market research
- Questionnaires for different stakeholders
- Rules and Regulations for Educational Process
- Interview results

Recommendations:

Suggestions:

Improve the quality of market research by using effective methods and problem-based analysis in order to increase reliability of conducted research

Design of questionnaires shall give a more space to students to comment on practical and scientific-research components of the educational programmes

Elaborate educational programme periodic review on existing programmes so that it is clearly described with more emphasis on formal engagement of all stakeholders

Best Practices (if applicable):
Reporting on development of educational programs is good practice that faculties share within the University

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

3.2 Structure and Content of Educational Programmes
- o Programme learning outcomes are clearly stated and are in line with higher education level and qualification to be granted
- o With the help of individualized education programmes, HEI takes into consideration various requirements, needs and academic readiness of students, and ensures their unhindered involvement into the educational process.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements
Programme learning outcomes are clearly stated and are in line with the higher education level and qualification to be granted. Programme structure and content are constructed based on logical connection and consequence between the components. Attainment of learning outcomes is defined within the

reasonable timeframe, considering the specifics of the field. Teaching and learning methods applied within the educational programme are targeted at to ensure achievement of learning outcomes.

Catalogue of IBSU educational programmes provides interested parties with information about educational activities of the university.

Applicants can be enrolled in programmes according to the Georgian legislation and internal regulations of IBSU. Rules for enrollment in Master's programme include Unified Master's Examination results and also University's internal examination results (foreign language and specialty). Applicants willing to be admitted to Master's programme, shall prove the foreign language proficiency that is equivalent to B2 level, at PhD level – the level of which is defined by each program and the relevance is approved by the internal exam. Exemption cases for the applicants are clearly prescribed by the IBSU regulations. Applicants can be enrolled in Bachelors' programmes based on the results of the Unified National Examination results. It also indicates that admission to the educational program without passing Unified National exams may be allowed only in cases considered by the Georgian law.

The selection of the fourth subject by the University does not seem always logical for all study programmes. For example, the fourth subject – "civic education" is defined as one of the admission precondition for study programmes in Marketing, Accounting, Management, Finances, Tourism, Economics, Law, International Relations, Journalism.

Minimum level of English language proficiency is not defined in BA programmes. Admission precondition for enrollment in Bachelor's programmes delivered in English requires only passing the Unified National Exams. The university representatives explained that the applicants are obliged to overcome 40 per cent in English language exam at the national examination and provided document No MES 51800093212 issued on 30/01/2018 by the National Assessment and Examinations Center indicating that the level of national examination in English is equal to B1 and applicants satisfy this level only if they pass 80-90 scores. After students' admission, the University also proposes English language learning courses for these students. However, it is not sufficient, when all courses within the programme are delivered in English from the first year of studies. In addition to this, some MA students during the interview could not speak in English regardless the fact that they take studies on MA programmes delivered in English.

The programmes provide students with opportunities to elect non-compulsory components;

Mandatory internship is offered to students within the educational programmes. Internship is carried out in accordance with the programme requirements. Memorandums with partner organizations are signed. Student has two supervisors – at organization and at the faculty/university level. Both supervisors are obliged to make an assessment of student's performance against the learning outcomes. The assessment results shall be reflected in internship reports signed by both supervisors. The study of the submitted internship reports showed that in some cases the assessment by the faculty supervisor was not done and no evidence for the final evaluation was presented at all.

Students' academic achievement monitoring is carried out per semester by each faculty and the results are discussed at the faculty board, as stated by the faculty board members during the interview session.

The university regulates the preparation of an individual study plans for students with different requirements, special educational needs and academic preparation level. Upon the faculty board decision, when required by student and/or performer of the relevant component, Individual study plan is prepared by the program coordinator in coordination with the Quality Assurance Office.

Evidences/indicators
- Educational programme catalogue
- Syllabi
- Rules and Regulations for Educational Process
- Regulation for Master's Education;
- Regulation for Doctoral Studies and Dissertation Board
- Internship reports
- Memorandums on internship
- Interview results

Recommendations:

- Foreign language proficiency level shall be clearly defined in admission preconditions of the programme and thoroughly executed
- Mandatory internship results shall be carefully evaluated by supervisors in view of the internship learning outcomes and the relevant programme goals

Suggestions:

Consider programme specification in each field while selecting the fourth subject at the national unified examination, aiming at students' better academic achievements.

Best Practices (if applicable):

Evaluation

- ☐ Complies with requirements
- ☒ Substantially complies with requirements
- ☐ Partially complies with requirements
- ○ ☐ Does not comply with requirements

3.3 Assessment of Learning Outcomes

HEI has law-compliant, transparent and fair system of learning outcomes assessment, which promotes the improvement of students' academic performance.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

A student's knowledge and skills are assessed through 100 points grading system. It consists of midterm and final evaluations. In order to pass the relevant learning course, student shall accumulate 51 points out of 100. This grade shall consist of the points of the midterm and final evaluation(s). For the midterm and final evaluations minimal passing grade is set. The final evaluation minimal passing grade must not exceed 60% of final evaluation grade. The assessment form, components, method and criteria given to each evaluation component is outlined in the related syllabus, which is uploaded to SMART (learning process management system).

Learning outcomes evaluation system for programmes is described and accessible for all interested parties and in general is in line with the Order #3 of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia on approval of the Rules for Calculation of Higher Educational Program Credits.

In the submitted syllabi the points between midterm and final evaluations, as well as minimal passing grades in both evaluations are defined by each lecturer. As a result, distribution of 100 points between midterm and final evaluation forms are 60/40 or 70/30. Minimal passing grade in midterm evaluation differ per learning course and can be: 20, 21, 25, 31 points; Minimal threshold also vary in final evaluation and can be: 10, 15, 16, 20. Application of the different evaluation schemes in the same type of courses is lacking clearness (e.g. in English language courses minimal passing points in midterm evaluation: at A2 is 21 points out of 70; at B1 is 31 out of 70; At B2 is 20 points out of 70).

Many different approaches are applied for the evaluation of students' learning outcomes per courses and this creates a complex system which does not seem to have overall logic and coherence. At the interview with students during the site-visit, students faced difficulties to describe the evaluation system within the university. The order of Minister allows to give freedom to lecturers to decide by themselves minimal threshold for each course. If the standard requirements are complied with however suggestions are made for improvement.

Analysis of students' academic performance is undertaken each semester and discussed at the faculty board.

University has a mechanism of assessment appeal in place. The relevant faculty board sets a commission composed by field specialists and Quality Enhancement Office manager. Commission makes decision based on a majority vote.

Evidences/indicators

Educational Programmes

Syllabi

Rules and Regulations for Educational Process

Examination Instructions

Recommendations:
- The university should ensure that students have clear understanding of learning outcomes evaluation scheme in order to avoid misinterpretation and confusion among students;
- Academic staff and lecturers are suggested to better communicate the learning outcomes and the evaluation system with students.

Suggestions:

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

4. Staff of the HEI

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

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

IBSU has elaborated general principles and rules of staff management that are transparent and fair. Administrative and support staff is hired by transparent and objective procedures. IBSUs procedures for hiring professors and invited lecturers are fair and is aimed on hiring qualified employees. Affiliation procedures and rules are recently established in HEI and during interviews a few professors were not aware of affiliation rules of HEI;

IBSU conducts academic staff evaluation through student satisfaction surveys, as well as by directly attending lectures and academic staff receive feedback on their performance based on these evaluations. Also, HEI utilizes staff satisfaction surveys, however, during the interview most of the professors confirmed that they didn't take this survey during past academic year. Some new professors do not quite understand the quality assurance methods for teaching. According to the opinion of the university, student satisfaction surveys are sufficient for their evaluation. It shows that integration procedures of new employees into work environment is not fully realized.

There are general requirements for academic staff to have certain number of papers and participation in conferences to become assistant, associate or full professor and most of the academic staff know these requirements. IBSU claims that every year professors are writing yearly report to show their achievements or professional development throughout the year, though during interviews some professors said that they haven't written such report for the last year. Professors are not required to write their planned activities for the coming years.

IBSU does not have a well-established strategy for professional development of its academic and administrative staff; IBSU provides various trainings and workshops for academic, as well as administrative staff, though participation rate in these trainings are low. There are no measurements of who took part in these trainings and workshops and how it improved staff performance. HEI doesn't define specific benchmarks to measure staff development throughout years.

IBSU has policies for encouraging professional development of the affiliated staff, providing financial incentive every year for publishing papers, books, participating in the conferences. IBSU uses preliminary defined principles of remuneration, that are well-known for employees, though there are not any salary increase procedures that depend on employee performance evaluation results. According to Staff management policy, IBSU might use the following incentives for exemplary and good performance of the employee:

      a) Announcement of Thanks;
      b) Rewarding with a valuable gift;
      c) Gratuity;

Academic staff is involved in decision-making processes at HEI through the faculty meetings and academic council meetings, however the involvement procedures need to be formalised to ensure full participation of the academic staff in the HEI development processes. Currently academic staff is more involved with curriculum development and improvement of the educational programs.

Evidences/indicators

Self-study report

Staff management policy

Affiliation Rules

Academic contracts

Personal files of administrative staff

Personal files of academic staff

Staff satisfaction results

Staff evaluation results

Job descriptions

Academic competition documents

Interviews with academic affiliated staff

Interviews with invited lecturers

Interviews with administrative staff

Recommendations: Ensure that affiliated academic staff fully understand rules of affiliation Establish clear strategies for the professional development of the staff, to measure their participation in the offered trainings and workshops and to measure effect of the professional development on their performance Staff evaluation system need to be developed in more systematic way Set specific benchmarks for the academic and administrative staff and to measure how the performance is improved Develop more formal procedures to make sure that all the academic staff is fully involved in decision-making processes Staff satisfaction surveys should be filled in by each academic and administrative personnel; Improve procedures for integrating new employees into work environment and informing them on quality assurance requirements

Suggestions:

Best Practices (if applicable):

Evaluation

☐ Complies with requirements

☒ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

○☐ Does not comply with requirements

4.2. Academic/Scientific and Invited Staff Workload

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

HEI has regulations for the maximum contact hours professor can hold during a week, including consultation hours for students. The total teaching workload of university's lecturer (professor, associate professor, assistant professor, assistant, invited lecturer) is defined as 18 hours per week. Obligatory consultation hours for university's lecturer (professor, associate professor, assistant professor, assistant, invited lecturer) is 2 hours per week for each component. While determining the academic workload of the lecturer, university considers his/her workload in other HEIs, where the lecturer holds academic and/or scientific position. Lecturers' maximal workload in all HEIs should not exceed 40 hours per week. For the purposes of defining the maximal workload, at the beginning of the semester, lecturer submits the certificate proving his/her academic and/or scientific position in other HEI(s) (if any). If the lecturer exceeds the weekly workload (40 hours), university is entitled to diminish lecturer's weekly academic workload for next semester. In spite of this, there are examples of exceeding workload regulations. Affiliated professors and invited lecturers often work in the several universities simultaneously at academic positions or invited lecturer. Also, when HEI calculates total workload, it does not contain office hours or time necessary for grading tests, preparation of office hours, time necessary for research at other universities (if professor is affiliated there), or if professor has full-time jobs at companies or consultant job not related to teaching.

Examples of cases where HEI needs to reduce workload, are:

- Merab Abdaladze works as professor and associate professor in two other universities and has total workload of 109.5 hours per week, averaged from the whole year;

- Azer Dilanchiev has 87 hours a week total workload in all universities he works;
- Shorena Kuchukidze has 38 hours a week contact hours in two universities;
- Ekaterine Bagishvili has 30 hours a week including 3 other universities;

Excessive workload is also in the cases when the professor is a head of several education programs. Supervising and developing education program requires time that is not covered in the contact hours.

- Avtandil Gagnidze is a head of 17 education programs in IBSU, is an invited lecturer in two other universities and has 22 contact hours in Spring semester;

HEI fully understand the issues of excessive workload and aims to increase number of affiliated professors, as well as to combine some educational programs to overcome this problem. However, it also requires thorough calculation of the workload other than contact hours at other jobs that professors work. In case when affiliated professors also have administrative duties at HEI, it needs to be included in the total workload calculation.

Evidences/indicators

Affiliation Rules

Academic contracts

Affiliation contracts

Regulation of academic workload

Excel sheets of Individual Academic Workload

Personal files of academic staff

Educational Programs

Interviews with academic affiliated staff

Interviews with invited lecturers

Recommendations:

Include in the workload calculation the time necessary for grading, material preparation, research, office hours for each course, supervising education program. Total workload calculation also should include other jobs of professors at administrative or industry positions

After total workload calculation, HEI needs to reconsider the workload for professors to ensure implementation of educational programmes and proper fulfillment of research and other activities.

Suggestions:

Best Practices (if applicable):

Evaluation

☐ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

☒ Partially complies with requirements

○ ☐ Does not comply with requirements

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5. Students and Their Support Services

HEI ensures the development of student-centred environment, offers appropriate services, including career support mechanisms; it also ensures maximum awareness of students, implements diverse activities and promotes student involvement in these activities. HEI utilizes student survey results to improve student support services

5.1. The Rule for Obtaining and Changing Student Status, the Recognition of Education, and Student Rights

- o For each of the educational levels, HEI has developed regulations for assignment, suspension and termination of student status, mobility, qualification granting, issuing educational documents as well as recognition of education received during the learning period.
- o HEI ensures the protection of student rights and lawful interests.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

Through the evaluation of the documents and interviewing various representatives from the administrative departments, it was seen that the University has an effective, well applied policy when it comes to suspension, termination, mobility, student status, rights and duties. Documents are accessible both in English and in Georgian. Legal office has stated that once the students are enrolled at IBSU, they participate in orientation programme, where detailed information is provided for the students to make them aware of the regulations. Apart the orientation, they provide the printed documents such as "Quick Start Guide" and disseminate these among the students to keep them informed. During the meetings with both International and Georgian students, they all stated that they are very much informed and read all contracts before signing. Therefore, team is satisfied that university has made efforts to keep all stakeholders updated, thereby ensuring the protection of student rights and lawful interests.

Evidences/indicators

Contract (For BA, Master, Doctoral levels),

Rules and Regulations for Educational process,

Regulations of structural Units,

University website

Interviews with staff and students

Recommendations:

Suggestions:

Best Practices (if applicable):

Evaluation

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

5.2 Student Support Services

- o HEI has student consulting services in order to plan educational process and improve academic performance
- o HEI has career support service, which provides students with appropriate counselling and support regarding employment and career development
- o HEI ensures students awareness and involvement in various university-level, local and international projects and events, and supports student initiatives
- o HEI has mechanisms, including financial mechanisms to support low SES students

In analysis of documents and interviews, the team found that each program has coordinators and/or heads of the programs who support students with their academic performance. They also analyse surveys and meet with students on based on student request. Students told the team that in case of problems regarding the academic process, they would directly approach coordinators, but generally it depends on

the issue itself. Besides the coordinators, lectures and professors are involved in assessing students' academic performance via their own evaluation.

The University has a Career Planning Office, which is responsible for student employment. University provided list of memorandums among the various companies with whom they have links. The Career Planning Office also researches the employment market and its demands. A representative from the Career Planning Office explained, they used to organize jobs fair once per year, however, they have assessed that it was not enough and have decided to organize them more often. In meetings with students, they said that they get information through posters, mails, sometimes via SMS, Facebook(social media). They would like to have more opportunities to get internships and jobs. Additionally, when team met alumni, they stated that they are still receiving vacancies from career planning office. However, based on conversations with students, the team formed the view that international students are less engaged in career planning activities and thus, further steps should be taken forward to include international students as well.

When it comes to social and academic extra-curriculum events at university, the team found that there are different bodies which tackles these issues: student self-government, students clubs and faculties itself. Each of them organise various social or academic events for the students on university level, national or international levels. The ideas for clubs and events often come from the students and sometimes from the staff or academic personnel. The University is open for the initiatives and suggestions. President of Self-government mentioned that students on a daily basis, approach them with different problems and they try to play the mediator among the administration and students. While having the meeting with the students, team formed the opinion that during the strategic development preparation, students who are relatively more affiliated with self-government got involved. As for the international students, their involvement in this process was minimal.

The University has got several scholarships and methods of payment to help out students with SES students, students also have knowledge and using the opportunity of discounts. The selection criteria is mainly based on GPA.

Evidences/indicators
- Regulation for Structural Units;
- Internal Regulations;
- Employement rate of students and alumnis including considering their qualifications;
- Statistical data analysis;
- Interview results

Recommendations:

Consider how to Involve more international students at job fairs

Develop clear policy and distinction of who is responsible to manage and resolve student problems

Regulate "Open Door Policy" in order to regulate and manage staff workload

Utilise the evaluation for the students clubs and self government office, as they are official bodies of the University

Promote the perception of student self-government as a change maker among students, that is focussed on students needs and engages in University life and decision making

Suggestions:

Law faculty students participation in international moot court competitions would be asset , such as: CEEMC (Central and Eastern European Moot Court), JESSUP (Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition), VIS MOOT (Vis International Commercial Arbitration Moot).

Utilise international activities to internationalise the curriculum for the benefit of non mobile students

Develop more international project opportunities (social and/ or academic) for students

Best Practices (if applicable):
Team congratulates the university on having such as vibrant, comfortable and multifunctional campus.
Also, the SMART system is student oriented
Intership programs based at IBSU is regarded as a good starting point for further development

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

6. Research, development and/or other creative work

Higher Education Institution, considering its type and specifics of field(s), works on the strengthening of its research function, ensures proper conditions to support research activities and improve the quality of research activities

6.1 Research Activities
• HEI, based on its type and specifics of its fields, carries out research/creative activities.
• Ensuring the effectiveness of doctoral research supervision
• HEI has public, transparent and fair procedures for the assessment and defense of dissertations which are relevant to the specifics of the field

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements
IBSU focuses on applied research, which is considered from two main goals, 1) as an opportunity to accumulate knowledge with regards *"raising in quality of education and generalization of learned experience"* and, 2) as a possibility to resolve problems *"faced by the society, entrepreneurship or business"*.
With regard to the first, IBSU organized two research centres (Centre for International Studies promotes cooperation at the local and international levels in the fields of geopolitics, American Studies, EU studies and China studies and Centre for Interdisciplinary Research promoting integration of research activities in the process of teaching and learning of different fields), but according to the interview results, the functioning of these two centres has only begun recently and generally is proceeding under the financial support of IBSU.
Secondly, IBSU provides publication of articles, books etc. and allocates funds per faculties for the implementation of these activities in accordance with Regulation for Academic Incentives. The materials produced through these activities are generally used in teaching processes.
Finally, IBSU develops the university scientific journals (e.g. Journal of Education in Black Sea Region, Journal of Technical Science and Technologies etc.), provides their availability online and reviewing of content and conducts negotiations regarding their inclusion into the international scientific databases (e.g. The Journal of Education in Black Sea Region is indexed by INDEX COPERNICUS, Academic Resource Index etc. and during the interview, there was revealed information on negotiations with SCOPUS, the Journal of Technical Science and Technology is indexed by SIS, while other journals are not presented in any scientific databases). At the same time according to the Regulation for Doctoral Studies and Dissertation Board, the articles published in the above-mentioned journals are accepted as a publication in international citation indexed journal and the journals are generally used by PhD students, who are obliged to meet the pre-defence criteria of IBSU. Thus, taking into account that some journals are not indexed by appropriate databases, it is difficult to meet the criteria regarding the publication in international citation indexed journal.
With regard to the second, the key indicators are memoranda on cooperation with business sector in the field of law, economics, social sciences etc. At the same time, the interview results revealed that the number of studies aiming at economic, technological, industrial or other innovative development is small, and income to support these activities is too low to support sustainability but the university is working in this direction and is looking for funding opportunities. Additionally, greater co-operation with scientific foundations and business sector with regards to the development of research activities

aiming at economic, industrial and other innovative development, which is limited at the moment, would increase potential.

In accordance with the action plans of the faculties, IBSU carries out small-scale research projects like "Solving Tree Regular Equations", "Higher Order Term Rewriting with Regular Types" etc. implemented by its invited staff under the financial support of the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation (the main staff is not, generally, involved in such kind of activities and the quantity of the projects with external funding is small, but it is explained by the fact that there is not any organizational structure providing support for academic personnel in grant application) and participated in the international projects TEMPUS, Black Sea Basin and Visegrad aiming at the improvement of capacities of the university. Also, the university systematically provides organization of conferences (e.g. American Studies Annual International Research Conference, International Research Conference on Education, Language and Literature etc.) and other scientific events (e.g. The Silk Road Symposia etc.), which, generally, contribute to educational development on regional level.

The institution has elaborated vision on the activities of research centers aiming "to improve the quality of research activities through the seminars, workshops and round table format discussions, in which the academic personnel of the university and the invited lecturers will be involved together with the Master and Doctorate students of the University". This vision like activities can be considered as educational one. Also, according to interviews, books and articles published under the financial support of IBSU, especially, in the field of humanities and social sciences are used by lecturers for teaching processes.

The University has clearly defined functions for the supervisors of PhD students/researchers, which are described in the Regulation for doctoral studies. The supervisor should be an Associate Professor or Professor of IBSU or another HEI, which means that generally the supervisor is involved in teaching activities (e.g. the workload of one supervisor is equal to 400 teaching hours etc.) as well. At the same time since 2017, some programmes (e.g. PhD in Computer Sciences, PhD in American Studies etc.) give is a possibility for PhD students to have an international co-supervisor of their research, although the use of co supervisors is not yet activated, it is unclear how IBSU will define the workload of an international co-supervisor or a professor, who belongs to other HEI.

The effectiveness of doctoral research supervision is assessed on the basis of questionnaires filled by PhD students and generally, students reveal satisfaction with the level of supervision. The main claim is regarding the contact hours and effectiveness of international supervisors/co-supervisors, but it is explained from one point by the fact that the majority of students don't have international supervisors/co-supervisors yet and from another by the fact that the real quantity of international co-supervisors is not very high (e.g. starting from 2017 there are 3 co-supervisors for the PhD in Computer Sciences, 2 co-supervisors for PhD in American Studies etc.).

All procedures are described in the Regulation for doctoral studies and dissertation board, but as it was revealed during the interviews, students generally need additional information on pre-defense period, which requires at least three publications (two in a reviewed scientific journal and one in international citation indexed journal) and a list on SSI or SOC indexed journals accepted by the Academic Board in addition to IBSU Journals.

Evidences/indicators

Research Policy, Strategic Plan, Action Plan

Regulation for Recruitment and Selection of Academic and Invited Personnel, Regulation for Academic Incentives

Research centers

Research related IBSU websites

Regulation for Doctoral Studies and Dissertation Board and additional forms

Memoranda of cooperation

Implemented, current and planned activities for scientific-research projects and list of dissertations

Doctorate-Supervisor Ratio

Doctorates Online Survey

Relevant publications

Interview results

Recommendations:

Focus on securing external funding opportunities for the implementation of research projects

Develop greater cooperation with scientific foundations and business sector with regards to the development of research activities aiming at economic, industrial and other innovative development

Provide clarity on staff workload and contact hours in case of international co-supervisors of PhD thesis

Enhance clarity on pre-defense period, especially, from the viewpoint of accessibility of a list of SSI or SOC indexed journals

Suggestions:

Best Practices (if applicable):

Evaluation
- ☐ Complies with requirements
- ☐ Substantially complies with requirements
- ☒ xPartially complies with requirements
- ☐ Does not comply with requirements

6.2. Research support and internationalization

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

IBSU is, generally, oriented on the acquiring of new knowledge with regards to research skills and methods and intensive cooperation with similar educational organizations from the viewpoint of exchange opportunities.

The research activities at IBSU are directed by the Office of Vice Rector for Science and Research. In accordance with the regulation for Academic Incentive, the university supports affiliated staff in payment costs for publishing articles, books, participation in conferences. Also, the Vice Rectorate for Science and Research looks for funding opportunities for research and provides templates for internal administrative processes related to projects, but there doesn't exist any structure or university unit, which supports staff members in grant writing or proposal submission. As it was revealed during the interviews, staff members neither get consultations regarding drafting grant proposals, their evaluation or submission, nor help with administration grants or reporting process.

The research centers of IBSU have started their functioning some years ago. At the same time, about three years ago the Shota Rustaveli National Science foundation supporting the development of Science, Technology and Innovation allowed limited liability companies (LLC)-s to participate in scientific calls. So, the functioning of research centres and recent activities of IBSU can be considered as a challenge to develop effective research activities.

IBSU allows MA and PhD students to be involved in teaching processes and strives to support them for doing research. Also, at the educational level it offers students from various faculties a series of trainings on project writing, research design etc., which can be considered as a base for future involvement of students into scientific activities. Also, IBSU stimulates students to participate in exchange programs, but at the same time students ask for more exchange opportunities;

The regulations for doctoral programs of IBSU allow for submissions in Georgian, Turkish and English however are only conducted in English. There were no joint research programs aiming at joint or double degrees. At the same time, IBSU has international contacts confirmed by memoranda with higher educational institutions abroad (e.g. with Instituto Superior do Porto, Polytechnic Institute of Braganca

etc.) and there are negotiations with Krakow University with regarding organization of joint program but as yet no outcomes from this activity.

In spite of the fact that IBSU doesn't implement joint MA and PhD programs, since 2017 it supports possibility of joint supervision by international and local professors. And, some articles are published in co-authorship with foreign specialists (e.g. Giorgi Bagaturia, Margaret Johnson; "The Impact of Social Media in Marketing Management", Journal of Business, Volume 3, Issue 1, 2014 etc.)

Evidences/indicators

Regulation for Academic workload and salary determination

Regulation for Recruitment and Selection of Academic and Invited Personnel, Regulation for Academic Incentives

Regulation for Doctoral Studies and Dissertation Board and additional forms

Implemented, current and planned activities for scientific-research projects and list of dissertations

Doctorate supervisor ratio

Analysis of supervision efficiency

Interview results

Recommendations:

Provide Support for academic staff with grant writing and project proposals

Accelerate implementation of planned joint programs aiming at joint or double degrees

Suggestions:

Best Practices (if applicable):

Evaluation

☐ Complies with requirements

☒ xSubstantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

6.3. Evaluation of Research Activities

o   HEI has a system for evaluating and analysing the quality of research/creative-arts activities, and the productivity of scientific-research units and academic/scientific staff.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

In accordance with the Evaluation of Academic Staff Performance Form, IBSU has started to evaluate the academic staff's research output in accordance with annual report on scientific & academic work at the end of each year. Output collected from academic staff includes information on recently published articles and books, scientific events and projects already implemented etc., but the results of the evaluation were not completely accessible to the review team as the information provided differed per faculties and some faculty folders did not include this information at all.

The quality of research and research centres are evaluated on the basis of data collected at the end of each year as well. Taking in mind that the that functioning of research centres has begun recently there are represented only two Activity Reports for 2016-2017 years, especially, the Activity Report of staff members and the Activity Report of Research Centres for 2016-2017). Also, the research activities are represented in the following documents:

a)   Publications per faculties, which includes information on the quantity of published articles since 2012;

b)   Survey efficiency scientific supervisor includes statistic data about the efficiency of scientific supervisors;

c)   A general report on scientific activities covers articles and conference papers published with foreign specialists since 2013;

d)   List of International conferences organized by IBSU;

e)   Also, the document on Current Planned Scientific activities includes information on the past, future

and ongoing projects per faculties

IBSU regularly publishes reports on implemented activities and uses the evaluation results of research output for further development of research activities by updating its regulations and policies.

To avoid plagiarism the IBSU launched Turnitin system, which is generally used by staff. During the Site-Visit the MA students said that generally they do not use Turnitin, while PhD students said that they have complete information on plagiarism and Turnitin system.

Evidences/indicators

Evaluation of Academic Staff Performance Form

General report on scientific activities

Annual report on scientific and academic work

Academic Incentives

Personnel who provides review for IBSU journals

Turnitin

Review results

Recommendations:

Publish outcomes of academic staff research output evaluation

Suggestions:

Increase awareness of plaigiarism and anti plaigiarism amongst MA students

Best Practices (if applicable):

Evaluation

☐ Complies with requirements

☐x Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

7. Material, Information and Financial Resources

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

7.1 Material resources

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

IBSU owns material resources that correspond to the mission statement and requirements for implementing educational programmes. The campus building contains foyer, recreation spaces, classrooms, administrative offices, space for group work, library, computer laboratories, student and staff canteens, gym, stadium. Safety regulations are observed in the building, IBSU has fire alarms, fire extinguishers and evacuation plan at every necessary point of the building. IBSU provides first aid, has medical staff appointed to this duty and medical cabinet equipped with first aid tools. The University

has security video recording and storage facilities throughout the premises; Security is also maintained through card access system, so no outsider can enter the premises, and through security staff.

Buildings have proper sanitary units, some of them adapted for special needs. People with special needs can freely navigate only one building of HEI that is equipped with ramps, there is special parking space inside the HEI premises for people with special needs. Educational program in Architecture will require student model space that is foreseen by the program development, as the programme is recently accredited and HEI works on it. Development of the new campus is mentioned in Actin Plan and is planned before 2021, but it is not specified when HEI plans to move there and if they will keep the current campus too.

Evidences/indicators

Self-evaluation report

Tour of facilities

Interview results

Recommendations:

Make all buildings fully accessible for people with special needs

Suggestions:

Create student model space for Architecture programme

Best Practices (if applicable):

Evaluation

☐ Complies with requirements

☒ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

7.2. Library Resources

Library environment, resources and service support effective implementation of educational and research activities, and HEI constantly works for its improvement.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The university library is equipped with reading hall, meeting and group workspace, IT equipment space, book stocks, reading desks, chairs, computers with internet access etc.

IBSU has elaborated regulations for development of library resources, its function and usage.

Library consists of both printed and electronic materials necessary for implementing educational programs and regularly updated on demands, but at the same time, there is needed more coordination between academic staff and library staff to provide constant availability of main literature listed in the syllabi, as sometimes literature on reading lists is unavailable. Generally, materials are available for students and lecturers for at least 60 hours a week and the library staff assists students and staff in finding them.

The books are arranged according to the field of study and registered in electronic catalogue. There are two type of catalogues: one for printed materials and one for electronic materials. IBSU provides access to electronic library databases like Clarivate, JStor, EBSCO etc. As it was revealed Polpred subscription has been launched since 27 February 2018, JStor subscription - since 23 February 2018 and will continue for a year. At the same time, it should be mentioned that time of usage as well as type of subscriptions doesn't allow continuous tracking of database usage.

Evidences/indicators

Catalogues for printed and electronic materials

Educational programs and syllabi

Access to international electronic library databases (EBSCO, Clarivate etc.)

Library equipment with appropriate documents

Library Regulation

Budget allocated on the development of library resources;

Interview Results

| **Recommendations:** |
| More cooperation between academic staff and library with regard to delivery of main literature listed in the syllabi |

| **Suggestions:** |
| Greater clarity with regards to statistical analysis of database usage |

| **Best Practices (if applicable):** |
| |

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

7.3 Information Resources

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

University's information technology infrastructure and its administration is in compliance with business processes implemented in the institution. IBSU has elaborated a Regulation for Management Information Technologies, which regulates the issues related to information technologies management, data protection and electronic services. The regulation also defines the rules of accountability related to the management of information technologies and responsibilities related to data disclosure.

Strategic plan stresses the importance of developing IT infrastructure and contributes towards it by detailed action plan.

Possible risks within the category of information technologies are identified and evaluated by the Business Continuity Plan of the University.

IT infrastructure (computer equipment, software provision, internet) is constantly accessible to students and staff.

University uses a set of electronic services (Student Information System (SIS), IBSU's Moodle based LMS (Learning Management System), university web-page) and electronic management systems (electronic documentation platform, e-mail, registry of educational institutions).

Whilst awareness of cyber security was demonstrated by staff directly maintaining the system, such awareness was not demonstrated by administrative staff. Whilst this lack of awareness does not pose a risk to the system greater awareness could provide a greater level of security.

The information system is used for academic and administrative registration processes, regulation of student status, registering academic evaluation data. Communication and exchange of information relevant to educational programs between students and lecturers is carried out by additional system "Smart". Application of SIS and Smart systems were highly appreciated by students and personnel during the site-visit. In addition, there is an electronic system/platform in university, on which is placed

documents regulating the university activities and samples of documents used in working processes (tqm.ibsu.edu.ge). The access to this system has university personnel and students (depending on the content of document).

IBSU web-page serves communication and information functions, contains contact and other useful information in Georgian and English languages, including the University mission, strategic plan, organizational structure, catalogue of educational programmes, procedures of teaching, learning and assessment, staff, library electronic catalogue, annual reports, financial reports, research activities, employment opportunities and other available services. Information on the web-page is updated on a regular basis. Each faculty is responsible for the relevant information update on the web.

Evidences/indicators

Regulation for Management Information Technologies

Business Continuity Plan

Strategic Plan

Action Plan

Contract on electronic communication service

University web-page

Interview results

Evaluation

☒ Fully complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

Recommendations:

Suggestions:

Train the relevant administrative staff on cyber-security and IT management related issues

Best Practices (if applicable):

7.4 Financial Resources

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

According to the presented documents, the total budgeted revenue of the University 2017-2018 is 7,603,750 GEL, while the total planned expenditures is GEL 7,341,344. The main source of the University's incomes are: tuition fee; state grants; TOEFL examination center; IBSU training center / Lifelong Learning Programs; Conferences – participation fee collected through international conferences; International and national projects and scientific grants. The budget of the same

academic year includes the following main expenses: staff salary expenses; Affiliated academic personnel scientific and research activity expenses; educational programs research component expenses; promoting scientific publications expenses; students' scientific activity expenses; purchasing books, magazines, newspaper expenses; the cost of printing books; marketing expenses and so on.

The Black Sea International University has the relevant financial resources for implementing activities under the Strategic Development Plan.

The meeting with the administration revealed that the University plans to reduce administrative costs. Current period ratio of administrative expenses to the total budget is 57 %, by 2021, however, it is expected to reduce the ratio up to 55 percent. The University also intends to increase the total amount of funds allocated for research, development and creative activities from 3% to 5% of the total budget by 2021.

The University has internal and external mechanisms of financial control. The financial management and control regulation has been developed, where it is set out regulation and format for the distribution of responsibilities, delegation, and accountability. Every year, audit company hired by IBSU examines the legitimacy of financial activities carried out by the accountancy unit, conforms its compliance with the expenditure portion of the central / structural units' budgets, and prepares relevant report. In the presented documents is a consultation company's conclusion on financial analysis of the University 2013-2017. In addition, the university has hired advisor in tax issues.

The revenue dynamics of the University in 2013-2017 years and the number of students enrolled according to years provides the basis for the activities in strategic and operational plans to be effectively accomplished.

With regard to the outstanding court case mentioned in 2.1 the university demonstrated that it has sufficient funds and contingency to pay the disputed amount. The university explained that the defence of the case rests on principle rather than inability to pay.

Evidences/indicators

University budget

Financial reports and the dynamics according to years.

Regulation for Financial Control

Meeting about the Material and Financial Resources with the Accountancy and Special Headquarters, chancellor

Meeting with the Rector, Vice Rectors and the chancellor

Recommendations:

Suggestions:

Continue efforts to diversify income streams to ensure long-term financial stability for the university

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Best Practices (if applicable):

Evaluation

    ☒ Complies with requirements

    ☐ Substantially complies with requirements

    ☐ Partially complies with requirements

    ☐ Does not comply with requirements