



განათლების ხარისხის განვითარების ეროვნული ცენტრი
NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

Final Report on the LEPL - Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University Authorization

Expert Panel Members

Chair:

Professor Milan Pol, Masaryk University, Czech Republic (expert)

Co-Chair:

Professor Olwyn Westwood, Queen Mary, University of London (expert)

Members:

Dr Ivane Abiatari, Associate Professor, Ilia State University, Georgia (expert)

Professor Tsitsino Turkadze, Akaki Tsereteli State University, Georgia (expert)

Professor Nikoloz Parjanadze, International Black Sea University, Georgia (expert)

Professor Nikoloz Kavelashvili, Professor, Ilia State University, Tbilisi, Georgia (employer expert)

Ms. Ana Gvritishvili, Tbilisi State University, Tbilisi, Georgia (student expert)

Authorization Report Resume

General information on the educational institution

LEPL - Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University (BSU) has an 83-year history, evolving from the 2-year Teacher's Institute with 4 faculties (Georgian Language and Literature, Physics-Mathematics, History, Natural Sciences-Geography). The State University was founded in 1990 on the basis of Batumi Shota Rustaveli Pedagogical Institute. In 2006, BSU expanded, having attracted 4 Institutes, i.e. Batumi Zakaria Paliashvili State Conservatory, Batumi Institute of Aviation, the Institute of Agrarian Biotechnologies and Business of Batumi, Research Institute of Membrane Technologies, Batumi Polytechnic Institute and Agricultural Institute of Batumi –“Legal Entity of Public Law-Shota Rustaveli State University”.

The BSU is in train to merge some of the current 9 faculties into 7 faculties from academic year 2018-19. Currently the 9 faculties are:

- Humanities,
- Education,
- Economics and Business,
- Law,
- Social and Political Sciences,
- Natural Sciences and Health Care,
- Physics-Mathematics and Computer Sciences,
- Technologies,
- Tourism.

There are 3 research institutes:

- Niko Berdzenishvili Institute,
- Institute of Agrarian and Membrane Technologies,
- Institute of Phytopathology and Biodiversity.

There are more than 6000 students registered on the 15 vocational, 39 bachelor, 27 masters and 14 doctoral programmes, as well as 3 one-cycle and 3 short-term accredited programmes. Academic personnel involved in education and research include:

- 271 Academic Staff,
- 68 Research Staff,
- 462 Invited Staff.

The BSU has international as well as national collaborations, with colleagues actively participate in exchange programmes, presenting at international conferences and symposia, within predominant research foci of:

- Natural Sciences,
- Humanities,
- Social Sciences,
- Law,
- Mathematics and Computer Sciences,

- Engineering,
- Technologies,
- Business,
- Health Care,
- Agriculture.

Brief overview of the authorization site visit

The visiting team on behalf of the NCEQE, met and had helpful discussions with the many different colleagues within the BSU. Areas of the university's work were appraised to ascertain compliance with the 7 standards required by the NCEQE. The visiting team met with the following members:

- Senior officers of BSU, Quality Assurance Service, and colleagues who wrote the self-evaluation report,
- Representatives of:
 - Academic Board
 - Senate
 - Department of Strategic Development and International Relations
 - Quality Assurance Service,
 - Human Resources Management Office and Legal Department

The team had helpful dialogue with academic colleagues, including:

- Faculty Deans,
- Head of Programs,
- Academic staffs within the different faculties,
- Teaching staff within the different faculties

We were delighted to meet the following stakeholders in education and research:

- Undergraduate and newly graduated students from the 9 faculties,
- Representatives of the Research Institutes:
 - Niko Berdzenishvili Institute,
 - Institute of Agrarian and Membrane Technologies,
 - Institute of Phytopathology and Biodiversity.
- Doctoral students,
- Employers who collaborate with the BSU,
- BSU Alumni.

The visiting team had discussions with representatives from the following professional services areas of BSU:

- Students' Career Development,
- Culture and Sports Service,
- Department of the Study Process,
- Lifelong Learning Centre,
- Research Service Office,
- Library,
- IT Service Office,
- Publishing House,
- Financial Resources / Procurement Services / Accounts,
- Material Resources.

The visiting team was given the opportunity to visit the various facilities of BSU, i.e. the learning resources and infrastructure, the laboratories, clinics and the social spaces. In addition, the reviewer team was provided with a selection of theses, dissertations and relevant contracts.

Overview of the HEI's compliance with standards

In general, the panel considers BSU as the university that is solid in many aspects of its operation. In our report, we have tried to point at positive sides as well as the sides that – as panel believes - deserve attention. Most importantly, it needs to be said that the panel found the BSU “in move” – some significant and relevant changes have already taken place recently, some others are “just in the process” and yet some others are planned for the near future. This all by all gave the panel a positive impression of the university, its management and its development.

Standard 1: Complies with requirements

Standard 2: Substantially complies with requirements

Standard 3: Substantially complies with requirements

Standard 4: Complies with requirements

Standard 5: Complies with requirements

Standard 6: Partially complies with requirements

Standard 7: Complies with requirements

Summary of Recommendations

Standard 2:

- Internationalization: To achieve mission and goals of BSU, leadership of University will need to be proactive in their support for:
 - a) Active participation of academics, researchers and students in the exchange programmes;
 - b) Internationalization of educational programmes;
 - c) Availability of foreign literature;
 - d) Active cooperation between BSU and foreign universities and research centres;
 - e) Research support services: to support the work of research support service through synergies between the leadership of BSU and researchers with policies to support their work.
- Rector's Council would be advised to look into ways in which they can ensure that any work there is closing of feedback loops and ensuring that any issues relating to the education and research are not only addressed but the outcomes are shared with appropriate stakeholders.
- Formulate and consolidate QA processes for BSU administration and life-long learning.
- Install anti-plagiarism software as a significant means of preventing plagiarism.
- Establish Research Ethics Council to review ethical dimensions of research projects where appropriate.

Standard 3:

- For the BSU medicine program to be able to demonstrate compliance with new National standards for medicine

- For there to be investment in, and faculty development for academics to be able to
 - a) To be able to introduce and use the modern methods in medical curriculum
 - b) To demonstrate that they are able to write OSCE stations and be competence OSCE examiners
- Define and expand the assessment criteria so that it is clear and accessible to students.
- Be explicit to ensure that students are fully aware of what exactly is expected of them in assessments.
- Assessment criteria described in the syllabi should be refined so that the whole process of assessment is clear, and students understand how each individual point is linked to certain level of performance.
- Make necessary amendments in the regulation on drafting and assessing education programmes so that PhD programme credit distribution is in line with current education legislation.

Standard 4:

- Introduce and support research skills training to increase the pool of academics involved in research and their chances to conduct quality research.
- Introduce training of supervisors for enhancing the pool of research students.
- Develop recruitment strategies to enhance the quality and number of new and younger vibrant individuals as academics.

Standard 5:

- Ensure that ECTS credit recognition is equivalent across the different disciplines of BSU.
- Ensure the newly designed careers portal is linked effectively with learning, teaching and research, and is effective in student support and counselling.
- Increase student-participation in extracurricular activities and exchange programmes.
- Make sure there is access to the electronic career portal in English language.
- Make sure that any new program development have as a pre-requisite the issues around employability and the needs of the labor market.

Standard 6:

- Strengthen the requirements for research performance of academics who are outside the main research institutes.
- Consider the nature of research undertaken in relation to financial constraints and infrastructure and critical mass of researchers.
- Identify, prioritize and optimize the research activities to avoid fragmentation of the research effort and thus strengthen the vital feature of a good university.
- Formulate research directions, priorities and the focus of research.
- Increase quality and productivity of research outputs.
- Promote the research skills development of the academic and invited staff.
- A more complex system of evaluation of research should be developed considering, individual academics and the outputs and performance of research institutes and other units.
- To evaluate the internationalization of research in areas which would be of interest to foreign universities.

- Be proactive in collaborations with international researchers.
- Encourage PhD student engagement with international collaborators.
- Strengthen the Research Support Unit.

Standard 7:

- Enhance the use and availability of the electronic resources and the training of both staff and students in their use.
- Increase the accessibility to scientific databases.
- Work on developing the links between newly designed career/employment portal and the electronic journals.
- Ensure English translations of e-platforms where appropriate.
- Ensure that planned external audit is conducted and auditor recommendations are implemented.
- Continue the efforts for establishing the Internal Audit Office, reporting to the representative council in an effective and timely manner.

Summary of Suggestions

Standard 1:

- Diversify the sources of income to ensure sustainability of developments within Strategic Plan.
- Consider more realistic timelines than proposed to monitor the Strategic Plan to ensure effectiveness, with reporting to Academic Council.

Standard 2:

- Ensure that mechanisms for closing feedback loops on student evaluations are in place and transparent.
- Discuss with other universities as to how they go about assuring their continuous improvement.
- Major procedures (for example: the evaluation of the academic and invited Staff) are in the process of piloting. It is desirable to define deadlines for all procedures and the active work of the Quality Assurance Service using their PDCA cycle for their improvement.
- Work on eliminating problems with study literature – by means of translations / copies from other language sources.
- Assure that students are aware of, and compliant with, copyright laws of Georgia.

Standard 3:

- Continue the work on
 - Updating the learning and assessment methodologies,
 - Personalized learning plans for students,
 - Revising education programmes so that ECTS allocation is streamlined and logical,
 - Student requests for increasing practice elements of the curriculum where appropriate,
 - Integrating the learning, teaching and research focus of BSU.

- Continue collaborations with employers and alumni, so that students are equipped with the knowledge and skills for the labor market, and to share this information with students.
- Refine and define the consultation hours for student-staff (academic/invited) interactions.
- Consider a possibility to modify regulations concerning students attendance – attending at least 50% of lectures to be admitted to final exams. More relevant teaching-learning approach is advisable to be used to ensure students' involvement and motivation, e.g. assessing participation, giving homework, projects etc.

Standard 4:

- Consider the potential for having an institute of emeritus professors.
- Work on development of a more dynamic and socially sensitive human resources policy.
- Work on development of clearer induction programme for non-academic staff.
- Ensure clarity of affiliation of academics.

Standard 5:

- Develop stipends for best achieving students,
- Encourage broader participation of students with disabilities and make sure this is possible by providing these students with specific support.
- Ensure mobility exchange does not mean slower/more complicated way to complete studies at BSU.

Standard 6:

- Encourage research collaboration within the BSU to grow the critical mass of researchers and collaborations external to the university.

Standard 7:

- Investigate finding external funding for the Medical Clinic.
- Clarity needed around the library budget allocations to the faculties with a more transparent system in the selection and allocation of resources
- Decentralize strongly the faculty financial budget allocations to give great autonomy to the faculties.
- Encourage library staff to provide training opportunities for the use of databases.
- Digital materials are provided but should be expanded.

Summary of the best practices

Standard 1:

- We commend the BSU and their capacity to transform, focus on the future and in being proactive in continuing their reforms, and, the dedication of the BSU senior management team.
- Plans to merge faculties to make the BSU more cost-efficient.

Standard 3:

- The researchers and the programme teams are working in collaboration towards adopting best practice in research-informed curricula.

Standard 4:

- Induction of new academic staff.

Standard 5:

- Funding for student engagement in research projects

Standard 6:

- Chromatographic Centre of West Georgia, which contributes to educational, scientific - research and development projects.

Standard 7:

- The proactive and innovative approaches to expanding the laboratory facilities and dental clinics.

Summary table

	Standard	Complies with Requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially Complies with Requirements	Does not Comply with Requirements
1.	Mission and strategic development of HEI	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.1	Mission of HEI	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2	Strategic development	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Organizational structure and management of HEI	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.1	Organizational structure and management	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.2	Internal quality assurance mechanisms	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.3	Observing principles of ethics and integrity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Educational Programmes	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.1	Design and development of educational programmes	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.2	Structure and content of educational programmes	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.3	Assessment of learning outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	☒
4	Staff of the HEI	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.1.	Staff management	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2.	Academic/Scientific and invited Staff workload	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Students and their support services	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.1.	The Rule for obtaining and changing student status, the recognition of education, and student rights	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5.2	Student support services	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Research, development and/or other creative work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.1.	Research activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.2.	Research support and internationalization	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.3.	Evaluation of research activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Material, information and financial resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.1	Material resources	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.2.	Library resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.3	Information resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.4	Financial resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Compliance of the Authorization Applicant HEI with the Authorization 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. Directions for strategic development of HEI corresponds with the mission of an institution, are 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.
<p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</p> <p>The mission of BSU is acceptably written. It is based on the needs analysis and it clearly formulates BSU role and ambitions for both regional, national as well as international contexts. The mission is balanced in its focus, with some priorities enlisted which have been articulated. These priorities relate to some research areas (Black Sea biology and ecology, phytopathological research, agrarian direction, and tourism).</p> <p>The mission explicitly refers to fundamental principles of the Great Charter of the European Universities, emphasizing principles of humanism, openness, accountability, and the like in teaching, research as well as management processes.</p> <p>The mission is a result of a wider discussion within the BSU and beyond. The draft was elaborated by specially established working group and this draft was made public by allocating the text on university website with a possibility to comment on it. Also, structural units of the university, faculty boards, academics as well as researchers were invited to discuss the draft. The final version was later elaborated with regard to these discussions. This way, one can appreciate the effort to make the process open and transparent.</p> <p>The mission is clearly linked with other strategic development materials of BSU.</p>

During the interviews BSU has demonstrated clearly that are open to change and best practice in higher education.

Evidences/indicators

- Structure of BSU approved by Decision of the BSU Representative Board (July 27 2017).
- BSU Charter
- Functions of structural units of the institution;
- Student and staff survey results;
- Rules for document processing
- Mechanisms for monitoring management effectiveness and evaluation system;
- Functions of structural units of the institution;
- Documents received and self-evaluation report
- Interviews with stakeholders
- <https://www.bsu.edu.ge/sub-34/page/2-202/index.html>
- <https://www.bsu.edu.ge/sub-34/page/2-202/index.html>
- <https://www.bsu.edu.ge/sub-23/page/3-180/index.html>

Recommendations:

Suggestions:

Best Practices (if applicable):

Evaluation

Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI'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

1.2 Strategic Development

- HEI has a strategic development (7-year) and an action plans (3-year) in place.
- HEI contributes to the social development of the country, shares with the society the knowledge gathered in the institution, and facilitates lifelong learning
- 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

The BSU has developed both Strategic Plan, and Action Plan and they serve as a very solid basis for institutional development in all main areas of BSU operation. The plans are clearly and logically linked to the BSU mission.

The strategic and action documents were elaborated with the use of methodology that was approved by the Academic Board of BSU and this methodology seems to be a good tool to achieve the aims. Current strategic and action plans are based on critical analysis of the previous plans – these current plans seem to be more attainable within the constraints of finances and infrastructure. The strategic and action plans were widely discussed within the BSU and also in some extend beyond - with involving think tank, using website, adopting broader dialogue within the staff and students from the senate, and also with alumni and employers.

The main focus is on preparation of specialists who would be able to meet current standards, highly qualified graduates successfully operating in the labor market. The main focus is rightly put on learning, teaching, research, but it also includes emphasize on the need of having appropriate infrastructure as well as administration support for these areas.

The aims are relatively complex, formulated in a sufficient detail and clearly, their implementation is now in its very beginnings but there can already be seen some positive developments (for instance in planning study programmes, in the construction of a new building and in the reconstruction of the old one etc.).

The mechanisms of internal monitoring of the progress with regards to the plans were developed at the BSU, too, and it can be expected they will be in use in the course of time. These mechanisms are very concrete and clear, containing explicit tasks, deadlines, executive structures, performance indicators as well as expected outcomes.

These development and action plans have the special potential to contribute to the country, and in particular the region within Georgia, both in formal higher education, and in life-long learning, and also in other areas of university operation.

Evidences/indicators

- Structure of BSU approved by Decision of the BSU Representative Board (July 27 2017).
- BSU Charter
- Functions of structural units of the institution;
- Rules for document processing
- Mechanisms for monitoring management effectiveness and evaluation system;
- Functions of structural units of the institution;
- Documents received and self-evaluation report
- Interviews with stakeholders

Recommendations:

Suggestions:

- Diversify the sources of income in order to ensure sustainability of developments within Strategic plan.
- Consider more realistic timelines than proposed to monitor the Strategic plan to ensure effectiveness, with reporting to Academic Council.

Best Practices (if applicable):

- We commend the BSU and their capacity to transform, focus on the future and in being proactive in continuing their reforms, and in particular, the dedication of the BSU senior management team.
- Plans to merge faculties to make the BSU more cost-efficient.

Evaluation

Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI'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

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

In order to analyze and evaluate how Organizational structure of BSU ensures effective implementation of activities defined in its strategic plan by the Expert Panel Members studied self-assessment and relevant documents presented by the university and held meetings with representatives of different levels of university management.

Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University is a legal entity of public law - higher educational institution. The functions and organizational structure of the university in accordance with the university charter and the regulations approved by the representative council that is supervised by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia.

Governing bodies at the university level are: Academic Council, Representative Council, Rector, Head of Administration, and Quality Assurance Service.

The Academic Board makes decisions concerning the education and research directions of the University and controls the performance of the University Rector and the management of quality of the education process. The Academic Board is comprised of equal number of representatives from the structural units of the faculties and the research institutes. The Academic Board periodically approves programmes related to the education process, elaborates the management policy for the academic and the Research Staff, approves the research projects as well as periodically hears the reports on the performance, evaluates it and provides recommendations for improvement and further development.

The Representative Council takes decisions related to the management of the University as well as define the effective usage of the property, formation and effective application of budget resources, hears the report of the administration on the activities implemented. At present there are 26 members on the list elected in the BSU representative council, among them 9 students. The head of the university library is also the member of the council.

New Structure of BSU is approved by Decision of the BSU Representative Board, dated July 27 2017.

Nowadays BSU has 9 faculties:

1. Faculty of Education,
2. Faculty of Economics and Business,
3. Faculty of Law,
4. Faculty of Natural Sciences and Health Care,
5. Faculty of Social and Political Sciences,
6. Faculty of Technologies,
7. Faculty of Physics-Mathematics and Computer Sciences,
8. Faculty of Humanities,
9. Faculty of Tourism.

and three independent research institutions:

1. Niko Berdzenishvili Institute,
2. Institute of Agrarian and Membrane Technologies,
3. Institute of Phytopathology and Biodiversity.

Faculties are the main educational, scientific and administrative structural units of the university.

From 2018-2019 academic year based on elaborated recommendations by “Synergy Group in Georgia-Organizational Structures” and the BSU Academic Board Decision four faculties (Faculty of Education, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Faculty of Physics-Mathematics and Computer Sciences) will be merged into two: 1. Faculty of Law and Social Sciences; 2. Faculty of Exact science and Education.

The Rector is chair of the academic council and represents the University in the academic and research academia inside the country as well as beyond its borders. The Rector, within his competences, takes the decisions that support in terms of organizing the education process at the University, attracting and involving the staff, implementing the research activities in a stepwise and effective manner.

The Head of Administration of the University is the top administrative body in managing human and financial resources and property. He prepares the budget of the University and presents it to the Representative Board for approval. Moreover, he approves the procurement plan, carries out the procurement process, manages the University finances, material-technical base and monitors the security and safety system of the University.

Quality Assurance Service is in charge of evaluate the current study and research processes, the related material and technical base and the student services as well as prepare the relevant recommendations and monitor their implementation the University has a functioning.

The University management is carried out in coordination, where the structural units of the Rector, the Deputy Rector, the Head of the Quality Assurance Service and the Head of Administration, are clearly separated.

Administrative and academic positions at the University, coming out from the requirements of the Law, are the subject of election. More concretely, the members of the Academic and Representative Boards are elected by the faculties and research institutes.

Rector is elected by the majority of votes of the Academic Board members while the Head of Administration as well as the Head of Quality Assurance Service –by the majority of votes of the Academic and Representative Board members .

Head of the administrative and supporting structural unit is appointed by the Head of Administration in agreement with the Rector.

Faculty Dean and the Head of the Quality Assurance Service of the Faculty are elected independently by the faculties. Similarly, the Director of the Institute is elected by the institute independently.

Procedures for election/appointment of the management bodies of BSU are transparent, equitable, and in line with legislation.

BSU strategic plan (Approved by Academic Council, Decree N45, 28.08.2017) defines 8 Goals:

1. The university should play an important social role in the public life of the region and country;
2. Education received at the University should be of modern standards, higher academic quality and employment-oriented;
3. The research carried out at the University should be valuable, fundamental and of practical importance;
4. Internationalization should include learning, teaching and research processes;
5. The relationship between the employer, the student, the professor-teacher and the researcher shall be based on each other's support, exchange of information and exchange of experiences;
6. The university should have strategic partners in academic and other fields.
7. The university infrastructure should be developed according to the requirements of study, teaching, research and student life.
8. Academic and administrative management processes should be well organized and effective.

In order to ensures effective implementation of activities defined in its strategic plan BSU optimized the management of the University, and updated research and administrative-support

structural units, consequently the competences were clearly separated to exclude duplication of functions in different structural units, and Separate services became integrated. In 2017 was established and developed: unified “Public Relation Service”, “Student Career Development, Culture and Sport Service”, “Department of Study Process”, “Research Service”, “Strategic Development and International Relations Department”.

In order to make the University function and achieve the goals defined by the Strategic Development Plan, the University operates with structural units: Chancellery, Library, Exam Centre, Legal Department, Financial-economic Department, Department of Management of Material Resources, IT Service, Publishing House, Dental Clinic “BSU Dent” and Lifelong Learning Centre. The listed services ensure the following: document circulation in accordance with active regulations, management of the budget, procurement and human resources, upgrading of the material-technical base and elaboration of proposals and projects for creation of a new base as well as preparation of draft projects for legal acts, etc.

Functions and responsibilities of structural units of the institution are clearly defined and divided. Structural units implement their functions effectively and in a coordinated manner.

University has the internalization policy that is declared in document “Ways and tactic schemes of achieving goals set by the Strategic Development Plan (objectives, implementation terms, responsible parties, indicators and expected results)” Approved by the Decree N45 of 28 June, 2017 of the BSU Academic Council.

Considering the mission and goals of BSU, leadership of University supports international cooperation of the institution and internationalization of learning, teaching and research process. To ensure this the following tasks are defined:

- Task 1. Active participation of professors, researchers and students in the exchange programmes;
- Task 2. Internationalization of educational programmes;
- Task 3. Availability of foreign literature;
- Task 4. Active cooperation with foreign universities and research centers.

Internationalization: University has the internalization policy, see document “Ways and tactic schemes of achieving goals set by the Strategic Development Plan (objectives, implementation terms, responsible parties, indicators and expected results)” Approved by the Decree N45 of 28 June, 2017 of the BSU Academic Council, with structures to support these goals.

One of the key structural unit supporting of internationalization is Department of Strategic Development and International Relations.

The department deals with the establishment of relations with foreign universities and relevant scientific-research institutions and educational centers. It has to spread the information about the exchange programs and put them into practice. The Department is also in charge of the minutes (protocols); arrangement of hosting the delegations of foreign universities and organizations; development of collaboration with the higher educational institutions of the countries involved in Bologna Process; serving foreign students; supporting mobility process of students and other relevant services.

BSU is involved in „ERASMUS+“ CAPACITY BUILDING Grant projects:

1. HERITAG – 2015 - Higher Education interdisciplinary Reform In Tourism management and Applied Geoinformation curricula. Project coordinator: Universitat Politècnica de València;
2. CURE – 2016 - Curriculum Reform for Promoting Civic Education and Democratic Principles in Israel and in Georgia. Project coordinator: GORDON ACADEMIC COLLEGE OF EDUCATION;
3. ARTIST – 2016 - Action Research To Innovate Science Teaching & Career Orientation. Project coordinator: UNIVERSITAET BREMEN;

4. ABC – 2016 - Assisting Better Communication. Project coordinator: ILIA STATE UNIVERSITY;

5. InoCENS – 2016 - Enhancing innovation competences and entrepreneurial skills in engineering education. Project coordinator: KUNGLIGA TEKNISKA HOEGSKOLAN;

6. PAWER – 2016 - Paving the way to interregional mobility and ensuring relevance, quality and equity of access; Project coordinator: UNIVERSITA DEGLI STUDI DELL'AQUILA;

7. INTEGRITY – 2017 - Academic Integrity for Quality Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Institutions in Georgia; Project coordinator: ILIA STATE UNIVERSITY.

Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility supports mobility of students and staff from BSU to the higher education institutions in the EU. BSU also hosts incoming students and staff from the partner universities of the programme countries. One of the main strategy's for BSU is to increase the number of exchange students from 500 to 1500. BSU offers for foreigners applicants the educational programme in English languages or the services of Georgian Language Preparatory Center.

In accordance with the Strategic Development Plan, to expend the scope of internationalization, the allocation of GEL 100 thousand from the University budget has been approved with the aim to co-finance English language classes for the academic as well as the administrative staff of the University. The classes started from February 2018. Today there are 7 group for stage A1; 4 – for stage A2, 2 - for stage B1, 3 - for stage B2, 1- for stage C1. The group consists of 7-8 people.

University should have the mechanisms for monitoring management effectiveness and evaluation system. One of the way of monitoring and evolution management effectiveness is annual reporting of the administration of BSU. The Academic Council periodically hears BSU Rector's annual report, the reports on the performance, evaluates it and provides recommendations for improvement and further development. The Representative Council hears the report of the administration on the activities implemented.

Based on the Order of the Head of Administration of the University, "the Rule of Monitoring of the Effectiveness of the University management" was approved (Order N02-05/101 of July the 18th 2017). The Rule concerns the administrative and support staff of the University.

University used the form that reflects the questionnaire for the evaluation of the staff employed at the University together with the total score showing the result of evaluation. The form also shows the measures to be carried out and the recommendations. Questionnaires help to get general information on the performance of the staff. This method is just in the process of becoming established at the University followed with elaboration of the specific questionnaires of the evaluation for the top and the middle management and specialists employed by the University.

One of the mechanism for monitoring and evolution management effectiveness was project with "Synergy Group in Georgia-Organizational Structures", according this from 2018-2019 academic year the BSU Academic Board Decision on optimization of faculties and administrative units will come into force.

Evidences/indicators

- Structure of BSU approved by Decision of the BSU Representative Board, dated July 27 2017;
- BSU Charter;
- Functions of structural units of the institution;
- System for evaluation of the effectiveness of quality assurance mechanisms, which ensures garnering reliable and necessary information using appropriate methods and instruments;
- Procedures and practice of using assessment results;
- Students and stakeholders survey results;
- Student body planning mechanism, methodology, and benchmarks;
- Interviews with stakeholders
- <https://www.bsu.edu.ge/sub-34/page/2-202/index.html>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.bsu.edu.ge/sub-34/page/2-202/index.html • https://www.bsu.edu.ge/sub-23/page/3-180/index.html
<p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To achieve mission and goals of BSU, leadership of BSU will need to be proactive in their support for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Active participation of academics, researchers and students in the exchange programmes; b) Internationalization of educational programmes; c) Availability of foreign literature; d) Active cooperation between BSU and foreign universities and research centers; <p>Research support services: to support the work of research support service through synergies between the leadership of BSU and researchers with policies to support their work.</p>
<p>Suggestions:</p>
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p>
<p>Evaluation</p> <p>Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements </p>
<p>2.2 Internal quality assurance mechanisms</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</p> <p>Institution effectively implements internal quality assurance mechanisms.</p> <p>The Policy of the BSU Quality Assurance Service reflects the main directions of the development of the University quality and appears to be the manual of the BSU structural units and the staff.</p> <p>the main principles of the Quality Assurance Policy are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality of the student-oriented study and research; • Involvement of the interested parties in the process of implementation and development of the educational programmes; • Highly-qualified staff; • High Quality of the study resources and the services; • Internationalization of teaching and research; • Periodic and effective monitoring, evaluation and feedback. <p>The below given are considered to be the mechanisms of the realization of the mentioned principles by BSU:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedures of the monitoring, evaluation and improvement of the educational process; • Procedures of the elaboration, evaluation and development of the educational programmes; • Procedures of the evaluation and development of the BSU staff performance; • Procedures of the evaluation and perfection of the study resources and services; • Procedures that support learning, teaching and research internationalization;

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the periodic research and elaboration of recommendations; <p>To evaluate the study process, Quality Assurance Service has been conducting the student survey for years. On basis of the survey's analysis was elaborated the recommendations on 2012, 2014, 2015 and 2017 that were presented to the Academic Board for approval.</p> <p>The student survey only partially considers the questions for evaluation in the regard of the material-technical base, learning environment, services as well as the supporting and the administrative staff. From 2017 the survey of the alumni and the employers have been conducting electronically.</p> <p>BSU plans to improve the electronic system for processing the data from the student survey and the academic achievements for the evaluation of the Educational programmes and the Academic Staff. The information and software support of the system will be provided by the IT Service of BSU.</p> <p>BSU allocates appropriate human, information and material resources for effective implementation of internal quality assurance mechanism. Leadership of the institution constantly works to strengthen quality assurance function and promotes establishment of quality culture in the institution. Every unit of the institution is effectively involved in the implementation of internal quality assurance mechanisms.</p> <p>There is the Working Group including BSU Chancellor, Deputy Rectors, the Head of the Human Resources Service together with the Head of the Quality Assurance Service, in order to improve and put into operation the mechanism of realization of the main principles of the quality assurance policy.</p> <p>In last years the main work of quality assurance service of BSU has developed the mechanism for evaluation and improvement of educational programmes and try developing to actively involving Academic/invited/scientific staff, together with students and external stakeholders (employers, alumni, etc.) in their implementation.</p> <p>BSU has a mechanism for planning student body, which will give each student an opportunity to get a high quality education.</p> <p>The quota/number of students used to be defined by the Academic Board of BSU without application of the specially elaborated methodology based on the data presented by the faculty boards. These applications were based on the possibilities of accredited programs of the faculty, the number of academic staff and the number of learning space. Nowadays the new regulation of defining the quota of the students has been approved that is based on the following criteria: human resources, material-technical base, dynamics of the demand on the educational programme, the index of the student outflow (mobility, status suspension, status termination, regaining of the students status), analysis of the educational process, alumni employment rate and investigation of the labor market.</p>	<p>Evidences/indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System for evaluation of the effectiveness of quality assurance mechanisms, which ensures garnering reliable and necessary information using appropriate methods and instruments; • Procedures and practice of using assessment results; • Student body planning mechanism, methodology, and benchmarks. • Functions of structural units of the institution; • Documents received and self-evaluation report • Interviews with stakeholders <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rector's Council would be advised to look into ways in which they can ensure that any work there is closing of feedback loops and ensuring that any issues relating to the education and research are not only addressed but the outcomes are shared with appropriate stakeholders. • Formulate and consolidate the quality assurance processes for BSU administration and life-long learning. <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that mechanisms for closing feedback loops on student evaluations are in place and transparent.
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major procedures (for example: evaluation of the academic and invited staff) are in the process of piloting. It is desirable to define deadlines for all procedures and the active work of the Quality Assurance Service using their PDCA cycle for their improvement. Discuss with other universities as to how they go about assuring their continuous improvement.
Best Practices (if applicable):
Evaluation Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements
2.3. Observing principles of ethics and integrity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 Academic freedom is in place at BSU. The university has the University Code of Ethics which covers of the main principle of the staff and students' academic freedom, and defines the guideline principles for the scientific research ethics that is publicly available to all members of the academic community through the BSU website. According to the amendments to the Code of Ethics and the Regulations of the University made in 2016, following actions by the professors/teaching staff will be considered as a gross violation of the University Code of Ethics: a) Plagiarism; B) to use the student's abilities for personal benefits; C) receive a gift/money from the student, University employer or other interested person in exchange for the benefit or vice versa. Detection and prevention of plagiarism is not in evidence albeit they have claimed that other measures. Nowadays BSU is participant of the project of „ERASMUS+“– „Academic Integrity for Quality Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Institutions in Georgia” - INTEGRITY, as a result of which in the near future the BSU will be equipped with plagiarism detection program. There are some problems of study literature at BSU and the university tries to solve it by translations/copies from other language sources. The question of copyrights requires to be dealt with consistently. Ethical issues related to research were not defined explicitly, so we were not aware of the general focus, e.g. working with animals, and medical research.
Evidences/indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Codes of ethics and conduct; Procedures for addressing violations;

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities around introducing the codes of ethic and conduct, and promote compliance; • Access to relevant regulations; • Interview results; • Procedures and mechanisms for the detection and prevention of plagiarism and for the due response procedures in case of its occurrence; • Functions of structural units of the institution; • Documents received and self-evaluation report; • Interviews with stakeholders.
Recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install anti-plagiarism software as a significant means of preventing plagiarism. • Establish Research Ethics Council to review ethical dimensions of research projects where appropriate. Thus having a transparent mechanism for review ethical dimensions of research projects where appropriate.
Suggestions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on eliminating problems with study literature – by means of translations/copies from other language sources. • Assure that students are aware of, and compliant with, copyright laws of Georgia.
Best Practices (if applicable): Practices, which prove to be exceptionally effective and which may become a benchmark or a model for other higher education institutions
Evaluation Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements </div>

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

At policy level and in practice, the BSU policies and procedures for design and development of education programmes are in place and working well and this involves academic and professional colleagues at all levels, e.g. professor, affiliated and invited staff. This includes regular meetings to discuss issues around curriculum planning, development and enhancement, then out of these meetings emerges plans for making changes

Design and development of study programmes is participatory, involving main stakeholders (internal and external) with employer engagement at curriculum meetings to assure curriculum meets the educational standards and labor market requirements.

All programmes are compliant with the goals and objectives stated with the BSU Mission Statement and Strategic Plan.

The programme leaders are aware and working, where appropriate, towards the revised National standards for named programmes, e.g. Medicine.

Some programmes have been re-assessed and programme portfolios adjust accordingly, e.g. optimization of PhD programmes. At the same time, students' legal interests are respected and they get the opportunity to smoothly complete educational programmes.

Evidences/indicators

- Codes of ethics and conduct;
- Procedures for addressing violations;
- Activities to introduce the codes of ethic and conduct, and promote compliance;
- Access to relevant regulations;
- Procedures and mechanisms for the detection and prevention of plagiarism and for the due response procedures in case of its occurrence;
- BSU rules and regulations;
- Functions of structural units of the institution;
- Documents received and self-evaluation report;
- Interviews with stakeholders;
- Regulations for drafting, assessing and developing educational programmes (June 15, 2017, decision n. 37).

Recommendations:

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

Suggestions:

Non-binding suggestions for further development

Best Practices (if applicable):

- The researchers and the programme teams are working in collaboration towards adopting best practice in research-informed curricula.

Evaluation

Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI'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

3.2 Structure and content of educational programmes

- Programme learning outcomes are clearly stated and are in line with higher education level and qualification to be granted
- 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

The catalogue of study programmes that is BSU offering is placed at the website of the university and it shows very clearly and in sufficient level of the necessary information to the public.

The structure of programmes follows Georgian legislation and in majority of cases they also follow ECTS regulations for allocation of credits. Learning outcomes are in line with the level of higher education as well as with the qualification framework. Also, learning objectives and learning outcomes are mostly stated clearly in the curriculum and syllabi.

In total, the panel agreed that study programmes have clear and acceptable structure and their individual components are in principle well-built and interrelated, creating a complex and logical whole.

However, like many universities there are various issues which affect students' ability to complete their studies, one being financial and the ability to pay fees, although BSU does have policies in place to assist students, it was clear that there were significant numbers of student who had suspended their studies. The BSU monitors this process and makes certain steps to reduce the dropouts.

The learning and teaching methodologies mostly ensure the achievement of learning outcomes and are in line with learning objectives. Two examples can be stated here.

With respect to the medicine program, it is known that there are revised standards for medicine for which all universities must be compliant by January 2019. The BSU assured us that they were working towards compliance. Some areas that the BSU require consideration are in:

- Methods of learning and teaching, e.g. the use of problem-based learning and a more integrated approach to the study of medicine
- The assessment of clinical competence, not only in the clinics, but also summative ly by using Objective Structured Clinical Examination

To this end for the development of integrated approach to the study or medicine and for the assessment of student competence to practice, there will need to be considerable investment in staff development for the writing and delivery of these aspect of the curriculum.

In case of education programmes, the university explicitly declares an emphasize on student-centered learning methodologies. And one can see that there is an effort of some staff to make this paradigm shift in their work, although it is a long and complex process and it will need a permanent and critical attention of the staff with the use of quality assurance procedures.

Students are offered optional courses as well as the compulsory courses for their named programme. BSU ensures that all stakeholders have access to the information regarding the educational programmes. Opportunities for student mobility differed across programmes and in general were not very high.

BSU takes an effort to offer individualized study plans to students in case of necessity and conditions of teaching-learning and assessment of students with different requirements and special needs are ensured. It seems, the approach to this students is partly based on overall BSU rules, and partly also involves ad hoc solutions.

Evidences/indicators

- Procedures for addressing violations;
- Activities to introduce the codes of ethic and conduct, and promote compliance;
- Access to relevant regulations;
- Procedures and mechanisms for the detection and prevention of plagiarism and for the due response procedures in case of its occurrence;
- BSU rules and regulations;
- Accessibility of BSU rules and regulations;
- Functions of structural units of the institution;
- Documents received and self-evaluation report;
- Interviews with stakeholders;
- BSU programmes and syllabi;
- Regulations for drafting, assessing and developing educational programmes (June 15, 2017 decision #37).

Recommendations:

- For the BSU medicine program to be able to demonstrate compliance with new National standards for medicine
- For there to be investment in, and faculty development for academics to be able to
 - To be able to introduce and use the modern methods in medical curriculum
 - To demonstrate that they are able to write OSCE stations and be competence OSCE examiner

Suggestions:

- Continue the work on:
 - a) Updating the learning and assessment methodologies;
 - b) Personalized learning plans for students;
 - c) Revising education programmes so that ECTS allocation is streamlined and logical;
 - d) Student requests for increasing practice elements of the curriculum where appropriate;
 - e) Integrating the learning, teaching and research focus of BSU.
- Continue collaborations with employers and alumni, so that students are equipped with the knowledge and skills for the labor market, and to share this information with students.

Best Practices (if applicable):

Evaluation

Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI'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

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

Assessment of learning outcomes mainly takes into consideration the skills-set required by industry and potential employers.

In general the assessment methods used are aligned with testing of learning outcomes.

Assessment criteria are objective, but clear explanation of these criteria are needed for students. Assessment criteria of students learning provided in the syllabi are not always clear and transparent; syllabi do provide the categories and components according to which students are assessed, but how each point is allocated to for each completed task is not clear enough; e.g. syllabus for the study course in Psychology delivered in primary education programme at BA level, includes components to assess e.g. colloquium, where the level of knowledge is worth 2 points, and judgment skills are similarly worth 2 points; however, syllabus does not specify what particular performance will be awarded 2 points; similar approach in assessment can be observed in many other faculty programmes at different levels; however, there are certain syllabi, where assessment of each component is clear and objective; e.g. a syllabus for the study course 'Mathematics for Engineers' delivered in BA programme in Architecture; the syllabus does provide a detailed and objective explanation how each individual point is distributed and awarded;

The university has a policy to provide additional consultation hours to students in cases of necessity upon students' request; however, the most syllabi do not contain information about the amount of individual consultation hours with students.

Credit allocations in doctoral programmes are logical and in line with current education legislation, e.g. the distribution of study (60 ECTS) and research component (120 ECTS); however, the university regulation on drafting and assessing educational programmes defines that study component should not be allotted more than 40% out of 180 ECTS allocated for doctoral studies, which means that at study component can be least 40%, which makes 72 ECTS credits; this does not comply with current law on higher education.

BSU has a university-wide approach in defining one of the student assessment components at all three levels of studies (Bachelor, Master, PhD): students have to attend at least 50% lectures to be admitted to final exams. Making attendance obligatory does not seem to be a very efficient approach to ensure effective teaching and learning, especially at master and PhD levels as students might need a more flexible schedules as many of them might be working.

Evidences/indicators

- Procedures for addressing violations;
- Activities to introduce the codes of ethic and conduct, and promote compliance;
- Access to relevant regulations;
- Documents received and self-evaluation report;
- Interviews with stakeholders;
- Accessibility of BSU rules and regulations.

Recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Define and expand the assessment criteria so that it is clear and accessible to students. ● Be explicit to ensure that students are fully aware of what exactly is expected of them in assessments. ● Make necessary amendments in the regulation on drafting and assessing education programmes so that PhD programme credit distribution is in line with current education legislation. ● Assessment criteria described in the syllabi should be refined so that the whole process of assessment is clear and students understand how each individual point is linked to certain level of performance.
Suggestions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Refine and define the consultation hours for student-staff (academic/invited) interactions. ● Consider a possibility to modify regulations concerning students attendance – attending at least 50% of lectures to be admitted to final exams. More relevant teaching-learning approach is advisable to be used to ensure students' involvement and motivation, e.g. assessing participation, giving homework, projects etc.
Best Practices (if applicable):
Evaluation Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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.
Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements BSU has defined a staff management policy and procedures and these make it possible to implement learning, teaching and other areas of university operation. There are differentiated contracts which define workload and expectations of the respective levels of academic staffing including affiliation with the BSU. Also, the BSU uses indicators for evaluation of key activities of the academic staff (teaching, research in particular). This evaluation seems to be taking place periodically and is a part of academic staff management. The benchmarks as set nowadays seem to be appropriate and sufficient to effectively manage academic staff activities. Perhaps for the future more stress on quality research and publication would be desirable (see the section research). Less explicitly the panel has seen such strategy to be used on case of nonacademic staff management. There are established some training opportunities for academic and non-academic staff at BSU (e.g. English language, learning and teaching methodologies) as a response to identified needs of BSU staff development.

Since the closing of feedback loops in quality assurance was unclear, the visiting team were unable to identify whether the evaluation surveys have a staff management process whereby academics received development opportunities. This will be addressed by the recommendation suggested in section 2. Opportunities for staff to go to conferences and symposia are available in some extent. Recruitment of administrative staff is based on open competition.

Policy and practice of hiring (electing/appointing) academic, scientific, invited and support staff are transparent and objective.

Affiliation terms and conditions and how it is offered to academic staff are in principle objective and transparent. The qualifications for academics (having the different types of contract) are appropriate for their role in teaching, and are a pre-requisite for employment. The ratio between academic to students seems to be well acceptable and it ensures successful functioning of the programmes.

Evidences/indicators

- Functions of structural units of the institution;
- Documents received and self-evaluation report;
- Interviews with stakeholders.

Recommendations:

- Introduce and support research skills training to increase the pool of academics involved in research and their chances to conduct quality research.
- Introduce training of supervisors for enhancing the pool of research students.
- Develop recruitment strategies to enhance the quality and number of new and younger vibrant individuals as academics.

Suggestions:

- Consider the potential for having an institute of emeritus professors.
- Work on development of a more dynamic and socially sensitive human resources policy.
- Work on development of clearer induction programme for non-academic staff.
- Ensure clarity of affiliation of academics.

Best Practices (if applicable):

- Induction of new academic staff.

Evaluation

Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI'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

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The workload rules and expectations for academic staff are clearly defined and rewarded, and are in line with the BSU Mission Statement and development plans. The workload seems to be adequate as for number of hours and the academic positions as defined. The workload contains teaching part as well as research and organization parts, and there is a certain amount of flexibility available in dealing with these parts.

The ratio between the affiliated staff and non-affiliated staff seems to be acceptable to ensure sustainability of the study programmes.
Evidences/indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functions of structural units of the institution; • Documents received and self-evaluation report • Interviews with stakeholders
Recommendations:
Suggestions:
Best Practices (if applicable):
Evaluation Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements

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

- 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.
- HEI ensures the protection of student rights and lawful interests.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements BSU has developed rules and regulations related to obtaining and changing student status, the recognition of education as well as students' rights. These rules and regulations are developed in relation to all three levels of university education (bachelor, master, doctoral). These rules and regulations are explicit and accessible for all, and they cover all the main aspects of student life at the BSU. Information about these documents are available on the web-page and during the interview with students it was clear that they are aware of them. During the interview, it was mentioned that the coordinator introduces students their obligations regarding the contracts. The student contract make it transparent as to the obligations of the BSU and the obligations of the students for their studies. Also, in the beginning of every academic year deans provide meetings with students explaining rules and regulations. There is student engagement at all levels of the BSU, incl. student representation at the Representative council of BSU. Students have equal rights with other senate members. Student representatives forms 1/3 of the senate. BSU ensures that student rights are protected and there is a relatively good communication across the university. University has two portals, one for connection students-alumni-employers and another one for learning process. On these portals students can write their complains. Also, students approved that in case of any problem they can approach teaching and administrative staff. Students informed the panel about several examples of such a practice (slight changes in the study programme, for instance).
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The student surveys are completed and reports prepared by the quality assurance team, however, it was unclear as to how these reports were: (a) shared with the different stakeholders, (b) what was done in response to student surveys, (c) how students realized that their voice had been heard and acted upon.

With respect to the appeals process when student disagree with the marks awarded for their assessments, there is a mechanism by which students can discuss the issues they are concerned about, but it was unclear as to whether marks could be amended in response to the appeal.

There were opportunities to be part of an exchange process for their studies, but naturally there were financial implications for the International exchange schemes, so for some students this was not possible. Likewise, for those who go on exchange programs for part of their degree, it did not seem to be totally clear how the credit system worked to ensure they were awarded the credits gained for studying at another university.

Evidences/indicators

- Functions of structural units of the institution;
- Interviews with stakeholders;
- Interviews with students;
- Documents received and self-evaluation report .

Recommendations:

- Ensure that ECTS credit recognition is equivalent across the different disciplines of BSU.

Suggestions:

- Ensure mobility exchange does not mean slower/more complicated way to complete studies at BSU.

Best Practices (if applicable):

Evaluation

Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI'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

5.2 Student support services

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

Processes of consultations are available for all students at BSU. Consultation hours between students and the staff are a part of the practice contracts for staff. Recently, a new portal emphasizing career and employment development for students has been launched and it seems to have a good potential for linking studies and work of students (incl. alumni).

Information about different projects are available on the university's web-page, and students receive information via electronic journal and newly established career development portal. These electronic resources are available in Georgian language at the moment, and BSU is planning to translate them into English where appropriate (regard to foreign students). It was evident that the BSU realizes their obligations to students regarding their future careers, hence the new careers portal. What needed clarification was the link between the development of degree programs and employability. Nonetheless in current programs we could see that employers and Alumni were involved in the program development, offering internships and some students ultimately finding work with them after they had been awarded their degree.

During the interviews it was proved that HEI supports students' initiatives. Students are participating in excursions, conferences, and sport activities.

BSU provides some funds (in the form of scholarships) to students. Some forms of such a support can be mentioned and appreciated: scholarships for low-income students, and also funding to student projects. Also, active students can get the fee allowances.

Students confirmed that university conducts surveys focused mainly on quality of teaching and student satisfaction regularly. BSU communicates their results with the students in some extent.

HEI has exchange programmes for students, but still they need to find ways of increasing number of students effectively using mobility. During the interviews it was mentioned that one of the reasons for low participation of students in international mobility was lack of their language competence. University declares it is currently in the process of emphasize English language teaching.

Evidences/indicators

- Functions of structural units of the institution;
- Student and staff survey results;
- Interviews with stakeholders;
- Interviews with students;
- Mechanisms for monitoring management effectiveness and evaluation system.

Recommendations:

- Make sure there is access to the electronic career portal in English language.
- Make sure that any new program development have as a pre-requisite the issues around employability and the needs of the labor market

Suggestions:

- Develop scholarships for best achieving students.
- Encourage broader participation of students with special education needs and make sure BSU not only identifies these students but also provides them with effective support.

Best Practices (if applicable):

- Funding for student engagement in research projects.

Evaluation

Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI'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

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

BSU has clear vision of the necessity to integrating teaching, research and economics, and also appears to perceive the scientific research as being the most prestigious. Some research priorities are explicitly mentioned already in strategic documents of the BSU and they mostly refer to the agenda of research institutes. It is clear that the research especially in sciences is very expensive, and therefore BSU might like to consider the disciplines which are not as expensive to promote in order to, in turn, aid BSU reputation. Clearly, research directions, priorities and focus are to be discussed at the BSU permanently and with regard to all the fields.

The BSU has introduced some procedures of monitoring and evaluation of research activities of the staff, for the future they would need explicit requirements reflecting quality of publications and productivity of research that would be in line with international standards in all the fields.

There are some areas of research which are of good quality and these are linked mainly with the research institutes, it seems to be important to link good research with study programmes more explicitly. A mentorship program for researcher would assist the BSU in creating a critical mass of supervisors, and thus expand their research capability. Likewise, to create a research culture through journal clubs for active discussion on recent papers (international and national) and encourage greater involvement in conferences to avoid intellectual isolation. Nonetheless it is acknowledged that BSU is constrained by finances but they have allocated 4 million GEL to infrastructure, building and improving labs, building research facilities in Kobuleti (adjacent town).

With reference to suggestions in Standard 4.1. for training of research supervisors, we highlight the need for quality of doctoral studies.

There are some funds available for:

- Colleagues to attend conferences, symposiums;
- Providing university internal grants to PhD students and academic and scientific personnel.

The functions of PhD supervisors are defined by the university documents, a systematic training of supervisors is not an explicit part of the daily practice, it seems. The ratio between supervisors and

doctoral students seems to be acceptable. The procedures for the assessment and defense of dissertations are public, transparent and fair, and they seem to be relevant to the specifics of the field.

Evidences/indicators

- Functions of structural units of the institution;
- Mission statement of the institution;
- Scientific/creative activities of academic, scientific and invited staff of teaching university;
- Memorandum of cooperation with economic agents and research projects implemented, ongoing, and planned in collaboration with these agents;
- Implemented, current and/or planned activities for scientific-research/ creative projects;
- Workload and functions of academic and scientific staff;
- Supervisor-PhD student ratio;
- Student survey results;
- Regulations for the assessment and defense of PhD dissertations;
- Public, transparent and fair procedures;
- Dissertation defense indicator;
- Interviews with stakeholders;
- Documentation and self-evaluation report.

Recommendations:

- Strengthen the requirements for research performance of academics who are outside the main research institutes.
- Consider the nature of research undertaken in relation to financial constraints and infrastructure and critical mass of researchers.
- Identify, prioritize and optimize the research activities to avoid fragmentation of the research effort and thus strengthen the vital feature of a good university.
- Formulate research directions, priorities and the focus of research.
- Increase quality and productivity of research outputs.
- Promote the research skills development of the academic and invited staff.

Suggestions:

- Encourage research collaboration within the BSU to grow the critical mass of researchers and collaborations external to the university.
-

Best Practices (if applicable):

Evaluation

Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI'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

6.2. Research support and internationalization

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

BSU has a system for awarding funds for research and a strategy to accelerate this work.

A Research Support Unit has been established and it stated to provide services that should enable the staff to get better oriented in the research opportunities and how to succeed in the competition for these resources. Some activities are to be recognized as the steps towards a desired end (organization of scientific events, raising awareness of the staff about granting schemes), some others could also help (focus on research methodology skills, on the skills of writing the research projects, help in networking for instance).

There remain some issues around attracting international researchers to collaborate, thus internationalization is weak. As discussed in previous section, the visiting team acknowledged that research is expensive and the BSU is constrained by finances. Nonetheless it is praiseworthy that they have allocated 4 million GEL to infrastructure, building and improving labs, building research facilities in Kobuleti (adjacent town).

There have been concerted efforts to involve all levels of researchers in new projects. An explicit and sounding strategy of attracting and involving young researchers is still to be elaborated, though.

It is good that BSU allocates some money from its own budget to support research-related activities of the staff and this amount of finances has been growing last years. This should not, however, divert attention from the vital importance of external funding of research. The competition for external funding is fierce, and therefore if BSU wants to expand their research profile, they would be advised to facilitate international collaborations, so that BSU researcher get known on the international circuit – in being known they will have great chance of success in research bids.

We are aware that this area is time-consuming, and that work is in progress to improve the research performance and its management at BSU. At the moment, we can see that leadership of BSU supports international cooperation of the institution and internationalization of learning, teaching and research process. Following can be stated to prove this - to improve the international collaborations with research BSU has the followed Task:

Professors Exchange: The University will facilitate the appointment of academic persons selected at the partner universities; It will host foreign lecturers, both within the framework of donors' financed programs, as well as within the existing Universities (target benchmarks: The amount of business-trips will increase by 3-5% annually; Each department will host at least 1 foreign lecturer annually).

Exchange of researchers: The university will facilitate scholarships to conduct research in partner universities and scientific research institutions; It will host foreign researchers, both within the donor funded programs, as well as on the basis of existing agreements between universities (target benchmarks: At least 1 person from every Department will leave for abroad to carry out the research/participate in research related activities annually; At least 1 foreign person will be hosted at each Department with the purpose to carry out the research work/participate in the research related activity annually).

Students exchange: The University will facilitate the selection of students selected in the transparent process based on the competition, in the partner universities, to develop the educational component; It will host foreign students, both within the framework of donors' financing programs, as well as

from existing universities (target benchmarks: At least one Programme will be operated at the faculty in the frame of which the students will leave abroad to cover the Study Component on annual basis).

Joint Educational Programs: The university will help to create and implement joint educational programs together with partner universities (target benchmarks: At least one joint Educational Programme will be prepared and presented for accreditation every two years).

Educational Programs in Foreign Languages: The University will facilitate the creation and implementation of educational programs in foreign languages (target benchmarks: At least one Educational Programme implemented in foreign language will be prepared and presented for accreditation).

Exchange component in Bachelor, Master and PhD programs: The university will encourage the research component of Bachelor, Master and Doctoral Programs for our students in foreign partner universities and for foreign students at our university. (target benchmarks: implementation of the research component at the partner international University for at least 20% of the Educational Programmes will be achieved).

International Forums: The University will hold international conferences in different fields of study and teaching; Facilitate participation of students, researchers and academic staff in conferences (target benchmarks: Participation of the Academic Staff, the Researchers and the students in international forums will increase by 3-5% annually).

Evidences/indicators

- Functions of structural units of the institution;
- Student and staff survey results;
- Interviews with stakeholders;
- Documents received and self-evaluation report;
- Topics regarding research, development and creative activities are depicted in regulatory document(s);
- The dynamic of funding allocated for research, development and creative/performing activities during last 5 years;
- Public, transparent and fair procedures for research funding are in place;
- Support mechanisms for research and creative activities;
- Strategy for attracting and involving young staff in scientific research/arts-creative activities of the university;
- Initiatives of young researchers (MA, PhD, post-doctoral students, etc.) that are supported by the university;
- Joint research/arts-creative activities with international partners;
- Institutional cooperation with international research units;
- The involvement of staff and students into international scientific/arts-creative activities;
- Joint MA and PhD programmes and an action plan for finding partners for their implementation;
- Statistics of joint supervision practices by international and Georgian professors;

Recommendations:

- Emphasize internationalization of research in areas which would be of interest to overseas universities.
- Be proactive in collaborations with international researchers.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage PhD student engagement with international collaborators. ● Strengthen the Research Support Unit.
Suggestions:
Best Practices (if applicable): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chromatographic Centre of West Georgia, which contributes to implement educational, scientific - research and development projects.
Evaluation Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements
6.3. Evaluation of Research Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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 BSU started to work more systematically on evaluation and analysis of research activities and their productivity. At the moment, basic procedures of evaluating and analyzing the quality of research are in place and these procedures can be a basis for further development of research activities provided they will become more complex, focused on research quality and internationalization of research activity. The BSU is regularly publishing reports on implemented research activities. As a consequence, some explicit expectations have been put in place, with minimum standards for expectations of the academics developed. Also, there are minimum standards for research outputs according the academic contracts which is appropriate and in line with European universities.
Evidences/indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Quality evaluation mechanism for research/creative-arts activities and evaluation results; ● System of evaluation of scientific productivity of staff; ● Reports on implemented research activities (taking into consideration the affiliation of academic staff); ● Analysis and utilization of evaluation results; ● Interviews with stakeholders; ● Documents received and self-evaluation report.
Recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A more complex system of evaluation of research should be developed taking into account individual academics and the outputs and performance of research institutes and other units. ● Evaluate the internationalization of research in areas which would be of interest to foreign universities.
Suggestions:
Best Practices (if applicable):

Evaluation

Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI'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

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

- 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.
- HEI offers environment necessary for implementing educational activities: sanitary units, natural light possibilities, and central heating system.
- Health and safety of students and staff is protected within the institution.
- HEI has adapted environment for people with special needs

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The BSU has in its disposal material resources that seem to serve well for achieving goals as they are stated in the mission statement and in other strategic documents. These material resources seem to serve well for study programmes and also – within the limits of possible – for research activities.

Also, the BSU offers environment that is suitable for educational activities – sanitary units, natural light possibilities as well as central heating system are in place.

The panel agreed that health and safety of students and staff is protected within the institution.

As for the environment for people with special needs, there seems to be a need for improvement despite to the fact (or maybe because of this fact!) that BSU declares an extremely low number of students with special needs. It must be said that moves towards this direction already started – the panel have seen ongoing reconstruction work in the main building which included new elevator for disabled people.

The Dental clinic was visited and considered to be a good facility for students' practice-based education in knowledge and skills development.

BSU would like to invest in a medical clinic, but naturally this is going to require significant investment and the rector's council need to consider the different priorities of the BSU.

Investing in infrastructure to be adapted for students with special needs are underway.

Adjara government allocated to BSU this year additional 2 million GEL (total 4.4 million GEL) and expectation is that university will receive same amount of financing next year. Purpose of this funding is mainly to support infrastructure projects and research institutions. We received assurances that government funding of BSU will continue in future, furthermore according to the recent changes in the Georgian legislation direct funding of regional universities from regional budgets is allowed.

Evidences/indicators Self-evaluation report Strategic Plan, Action Plan Interviews Site-visit
Recommendations:
Suggestions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate finding external funding for the Medical Clinic.
Best Practices (if applicable): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proactive and innovative approaches to expanding the laboratory facilities and dental clinic.
Evaluation Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements
7.2. Library resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 There is one central library and several branches within some faculties and research institutes. Libraries have some new literature. Some electronic databases providing access to current international journals (some full-texts, some abstracts only) are available, but they do not seem to be largely used by many. Libraries are available 7 days per week and they have a potential to serve as a resource for students and academics, library main reading hall is equipped with computers, printers and scanners, too. Randomly asked literature resources from the syllabi were proved to be available in the library upon the request of the panel members. Library staff seems to be sufficiently qualified. The panel was informed about some recent improvements in the library services (further electronisation of some services). With respect to the library resources, the students have access to learning materials (books and journals, databases) using their user name and password. However, whilst there is access to up to date literature in the arts, sciences, medicine and other disciplines through databases, some of the journal articles are not freely available. Therefore, the academics would be wise to ensure that any reading materials recommended to students are available so as not to worry students. The visiting team were informed that some books were photocopied to be available for loan or use in the library. Although assured that there were violation of no copyright issues, this is an area for investigation to ensure compliance with International Copyright Law. It was agreed that the library facilities in terms of books and access to journal, was in need of review to assure longevity and fit for purpose. Whilst it is appreciated by the visiting team that some reading materials are very expensive, e.g. medical and dental textbooks and journal, nonetheless review is vital for the reputation of the BSU.
Evidences/indicators Self-evaluation report

Strategic Plan, Action Plan Interviews Site visit
Recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance the use and availability of the electronic resources and the training of both staff and students in their use. Increase the accessibility and effective use of scientific databases.
Suggestions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage library staff to provide training opportunities for the use of databases. Digital materials are provided but should be expanded. Clarity needed around the library budget allocations to the faculties with a more transparent system in the selection and allocation of resources
Best Practices (if applicable):
Evaluation Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements
7.3 Information Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HEI has created infrastructure for information technologies and its administration and accessibility are ensured Electronic services and electronic management systems are implemented and mechanisms for their constant improvement are in place HEI ensures business continuity HEI has a functional web-page in Georgian and English languages.
Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements IT management policy is clearly an important part of the development policy of the BSU. There has been considerable work in this area and this is acknowledged and appreciated. The website of BSU is very well functioning and it provides all the necessary information about the university and its main areas of operation (study, research, and more), both in Georgian, and in English languages. Currently there are several platforms at the BSU that are gradually being improved in terms of their quality and service. Some of them are focused on learning management and its support, some others on career development and relations between BSU and the labor market. They can well serve both to students, and to alumni and employers. Two aspects seem to be crucial for the effectiveness of these platforms: (1) English translations of all relevant parts of these platforms, and (2) Communication between these platforms so that in the near future a relative complex and unified information system is available at BSU. We acknowledge that work for the BSU platforms to interact is in progress. As for the infrastructure of information technologies, this is administered with growing attention (the panel as seen the presentation of IT people in charge). This way, BSU ensures business continuity.
Evidences/indicators: Self-evaluation report

Strategic Plan, Action Plan, Webpage of BSU Interviews Site visit
Recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work on developing the links between newly designed career/employment portal and the electronic journal. ○ Ensure English translations of e-platforms where appropriate.
Suggestions:
Best Practices (if applicable):
Evaluation Please mark the checkbox which mostly describes your position related to the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Fully complies with requirements <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements
7.4 Financial resources
Allocation of financial resources described in the budget of HEI is economically achievable. Financial standing of HEI ensures performance of activities described in strategic and mid-term action plans HEI financial resources are focused on effective implementation of core activities of the institution HEI budget provides funding for scientific research and library functioning and development HEI has an effective system of accountability, financial management and control
Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements The university budget has several main resources, apart from student fees and state grants there are some commercial activities (rental of buildings and dental clinic). BSU enjoy also co-funding by Adjara government. The budget is set by the Rector's Council according to priorities of the university, then faculties provide details to the financial departments of requirements for the academic year. The Faculties budgets are based on the buoyancy of student recruitment (Georgian and International). Given that the full details regarding how financial resources are allocated and the high numbers of students with suspended status, it remains unclear as to whether the in the budget of BSU is effective in being able to implement the core activities of the institution as laid out in the strategic plans, albeit it claims to have an effective system of accountability, financial management and control. The strategic plan is not accompanied by a financial evaluation on how proposed actions affect the university financially and whether the university has enough financial resources to implement the planned activities (only year 2018 budget was presented). Administration claims that they will have sufficient resources to finance strategic plan. Revenue growth dynamic from previous years and commitment from regional government to continue financing makes them confident. The BSU budget provides funding of all main activities of the university, study programmes, research (in an increasing way during last years, and support and infrastructure, including the library). This way, it seems to be acceptable.

<p>One apparently significant reform relates to centralization-decentralization of the budget at BSU. BSU plans to allocate 60% of its own revenues to faculties. Accounting of faculties as well as research institutes will remain under central administration. Administration understands that there are financially inefficient faculties and plans support them for few years. In the last few months BSU merged some unprofitable faculties to reduce admin costs and increase efficiency.</p> <p>Currently university is investing heavily in the infrastructure. Construction of new campus on 7 hectares of university land is underway. 2 buildings will be finalized this year. At the same time university acknowledges importance of increasing financing of other activities and expects that this financing will increase dramatically after completion of main infrastructural projects</p> <p>BSU has a solid financial management system and control. Nevertheless, BSU is planning external audit which is advisable. For 2018, 100,000 GEL is allocated for this purpose.</p> <p>Financial reporting of BSU has a feature of correctness.</p>
<p>Evidences/indicators</p> <p>Self-evaluation report</p> <p>Strategic Plan, Action Plan,</p> <p>Webpage of BSU</p> <p>Interviews</p> <p>Site visit</p>
<p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that planned external audit is conducted and auditors' recommendations are implemented. • Continue the efforts for establishing the Internal Audit Office, reporting to the representative council in an effective and timely manner.
<p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decentralize strongly the faculty financial budget allocations to give great autonomy to the faculties.
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p>
<p>Evaluation</p> <p>Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard</p> <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>

Appendixes