Final Report on the LEPL – Shota Rustaveli University of Theatre and Film Georgia State University Authorization

Expert Panel Members

Chair: Professor Anthony Dean, University of Winchester, UK

Members:

Professor Nino Chikovani, Tbilisi State University, Georgia

Nana Mzhavanadze, Ilia State University, Georgia (Student expert)

Dr. Irine Darchia, Tbilisi State University, Georgia

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Professor Zaza Skhirtladze, Tbilisi State University, Georgia

Tbilisi

2018

Authorization Report Resume

General information on the educational institution

The Shota Rustaveli Theatre and Film Georgia State University LEPL is an autonomous higher education institution, the precursor of which was originally established (as the *Institute of Stage Arts*) in 1923. It was named as the Theatre and Film State Institution in 1992 and was transformed into a university in 2002. In 2005 the Ekvtime Takaishvili Culture and Art State University joined Theatre and Film University. The university plays a key role in the training actors of drama and film, musical theater, puppetry and pantomime, directors of drama, film and television, cinematographers, theatre and film critics, art historians, specialists of television and other media, choreographers, managers of tourism and experts of the culturaleducational sector.

The University's current mission is to develop and research the field of arts, preparing highly qualified specialists and professionals. University has faculties of Drama; Film and TV; Arts sciences, Media and Management, where students obtain Bachelor, Master and Doctoral degrees.

Brief overview of the authorization site visit

The Self-Evaluation Report (SER) together with a range of other University documentation was sent to panel members on 8th May 2018. The expert panel members individually reviewed the SER (and related documentation) and prepared comments and questions based on their review. The panel met on 21st May 2018 and undertook a briefing on the evaluation methodology. They then compared notes and agreed the lines of enquiry they wished to pursue during the site-visit.

The programme for the site visit was negotiated during the period 26th April-14th May, 2018. The agreed programme can be found at Annex A. The site visit took place on 22nd-24th May 2018. The University provided access to all documents that were requested. The University provided relevant staff and others for all meetings. During the site visit the expert panel requested access to further documents, which were provided. At the conclusion of the site visit an oral feedback session was conducted with the Rector and key personnel of the University. Following this a further open meeting took place where the oral feedback was shared with staff of the University.

The Expert Panel prepared the report following the site visit.

Overview of the HEI's compliance with standards

Standards	
1. Mission and Strategic Development	
1.1	Complies with requirements
1.2	Substantially complies with requirements
2. Organizational structure and management of HEI	
2.1	Complies with requirements
2.2	Complies with requirements
2.3	Complies with requirements
3. Educational Programmes	
3.1	Complies with requirements

3.2	Complies with requirements
3.3	Substantially complies with requirements
4. Staff of the HEI	
4.1	Complies with requirements
4.2	Complies with requirements
5. Students and their Support Services	
5.1	Complies with requirements
5.2	Complies with requirements
6. Research, Development and/or Other Creative Work	
6.1	Complies with requirements
6.2	Substantially complies with requirements
6.3	Complies with requirements
7. Material, Information and Financial Resources	
7.1	Substantially complies with requirements
7.2	Complies with requirements
7.3	Substantially complies with requirements
7.4	Complies with requirements

Summary of Recommendations

- The Panel recommends that, in order for the University to accurately monitor its progress towards the achievement of its strategic goals, its formal monitoring processes need to be significantly strengthened through each of its key activities being (and other key strategic policies) re-expressed to include a set of more finely tuned specific, measurable, achievable, reasonable and time-based (in other words SMART) targets with associated annual key performance indicators (KPI's).

- The Panel recommends that, in order to fulfil its mission and vision, the University should seek to significantly increase the quality of its research and publishing activities to ensure that it fully corresponds with international standards.

- The Panel recommends that the University ensures that all its programmes (where appropriate) include a formal component that informs students, at an appropriate point in their programme, about the specific health and safety matters, and safe working practices, within the practical components of their programmes and (where appropriate) in respect to their intended fields of professional employment.

- The Panel recommends that the University seeks to redress any outstanding matters of disabled access within its campus, to ensure that all areas that students need to access are appropriately modified. The Panel believes that these matters need to be attended to as quickly as possible while also recognizing the resource constraints within which it operates.

- The Panel recommends that the University populates the English language version of its web-site with significantly more content, particularly in relation to its academic provision so that the University can better meet its targets in relation to international student recruitment.

Summary of Suggestions

- The Panel suggests that, in order to meet its own objectives (as set out within its Development Strategy 2018-2024) of developing '*a culture of quality*' it should ensure that all staff clearly understand and appreciate their individual role and responsibilities within the institutional quality assurance system.

- The Panel suggest that it would be of benefit to both staff and students' of the University, if the process of determining the ethical aspect of research activities were to be formalised through establishing a written record that deliberately assessed the ethical implications of research activities, to be co-signed by both student and supervisor at the outset of the research process – this would enable the institution to more readily maintain an overview of the Code in operation.

- The Panel suggests that the University gives attention to the aspects of its Human Resourses Management Policy which deal with staff development and career development activities, to ensure that these are more clearly differentiated and that the associated benchmark criteria are more clearly formulated, in such a way to as make them readily measurable, easier to evaluate and understandable for staff.

- The Panel suggests that the University give consideration to developing a clear and user-friendly handbook that sets out the rights of students and includes a step-bystep guide to the formal procedures available to them if they wish to make a formal complaint to the institution. This will ensure that students are very clear about what formal processes they need to follow to seek redress if they encounter problem that gives grounds for a formal complaint.

- The Panel suggests that the University gives consideration to the production of an integrated careers advice system, that brings together all the current distributed resources under one electronic entry-point that could form part of the iLearning System that the institution is currently developing.

- The Panel suggests that the Finance Office develop an alternative summary format specifically for its presentation of budgetary information to the Representative Council that is more 'user-friendly' to non-expert readers.

Summary of the best practices

- The Panel commends the institution on its evident commitment to making a dynamic contribution to the development of its related fields of creative practice at both national and international levels.

- The Panel commends the institution on the clarity, scope and aspirations of the University Development Plan that fully elaborates the institutional mission and responds positively to current national priorities.
- The Panel commend the institution on the significant achievement University represented by the steps it has taken to develop, endorse and implement its current range of statutes, regulations, processes and systems which are set out clearly in the documentation seen by the panel. In acknowledging this achievement, we also recognise the quality of institutional leadership required to successfully complete this process.

- The panel commends the University for its strong commitment to the process of internationalisation of curricula and the student learning experience – a commitment that was very highly appreciated by the stakeholders that the Panel met with.

- The Panel commends the University for its willingness to enable its faculties to regulate student numbers with the purpose of both enhancing the quality of the student learning experience and the employment prospects of graduates.

- The panel commends the University for the "*flexible approach to learning*" that it has developed, which responds constructively to feedback from the students, alumni and external stakeholders.

- The panel commends the institution on maintaining its current profile of academic staff so as to enable the fostering a successful integration of traditional and contemporary approaches to its fields and subjects of study.

- The panel commends the University's approach to the development of staff working in the areas of Learning Support and the Practical Learning Facilities so as to ensure that they are able to make a full contribution to the support and enhancement of the student learning experience.

- The Panel commends the institution for the close alignment of the fields of academic staff research and creative practice that it maintains with the specificity of the University curricula.

- The Panel commends the institution for the high level of quality and utility of the physical resources that the University is providing for its students, which it viewed as comparable to those of leading European conservatoires.

- The Panel commend the institution for the careful way in which specialist Learning resources (such as the learning studio) are integrated into curriculum activity as a key aspect of student learning
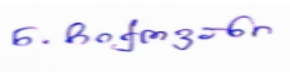
Summary table

	Standard	Complies with Requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially Complies with Requirements	Does not Comply with Requirements
1.	**Mission and strategic development of HEI**	☑	☐	☐	☐
1.1	Mission of HEI	☑	☐	☐	☐
1.2	Strategic development	☐	☑	☐	☐
2.	**Organizational structure and management of HEI**	☑	☐	☐	☐
2.1	Organizational structure and management	☑	☐	☐	☐
2.2	Internal quality assurance mechanisms	☑	☐	☐	☐
2.3	Observing principles of ethics and integrity	☑	☐	☐	☐
3.	**Educational Programmes**	☑	☐	☐	☐
3.1	Design and development of educational programmes	☑	☐	☐	☐

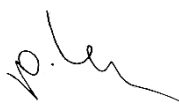|					
3.2	Structure and content of educational programmes	☑	☐	☐	☐
3.3	Assessment of learning outcomes	☐	☑	☐	☐
4	**Staff of the HEI**	☑	☐	☐	☐
4.1.	Staff management	☑	☐	☐	☐
4.2.	Academic/Scientific and invited Staff workload	☑	☐	☐	☐
5	**Students and their support services**	☑	☐	☐	☐
5.1.	The Rule for obtaining and changing student status, the recognition of education, and student rights	☑	☐	☐	☐
5.2	Student support services	☑	☐	☐	☐
6	**Research, development and/or other creative work**	☑	☐	☐	☐
6.1.	Research activities	☑	☐	☐	☐
6.2.	Research support and internationalization	☐	☑	☐	☐
6.3.	Evaluation of research activities	☑	☐	☐	☐
7	**Material, information and financial resources**	☐	☑	☐	☐
7.1	Material resources	☐	☑	☐	☐
7.2.	Library resources	☑	☐	☐	☐
7.3	Information resources	☐	☑	☐	☐
7.4	Financial resources	☑	☐	☐	☐

Anthony Dean (Chair)

Irina Darchia (Expert)

Zaza Skhirtladze (Expert)

Nino Chikovani (Expert)

Nana Mzhavanadze (Expert student)

David Sakvarelidze (Expert employer)

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.
Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements The University has formulated a Mission and Vision Statement that clearly defines its role both nationally and internationally, and the specific characteristics and direction of its educational provision. Together, these Statements provide a succinct summary of the University's approach to developing its students as active members of society within its related fields of professional practice, and define its broader responsibilities to the field of art in terms of creative development and scientific research. The mission statement is publicly available on the University website (including a translation into English) and in its Development Strategy (strategic plan). Through its interactions with staff, students and graduates of the University during the various meetings that took place during the site visit, the Panel formed a clear impression that the key elements of the Mission and Vision Statements were widely understood and shared across the institution. The strong commitment, expressed in the University's Mission Statement, to provide a '*solid ground for the development of the fields of art (theatre, audiovisual, choreographic and music) within the borders of the country and beyond*' was particularly welcomed by the representative group of employers and other external stakeholders that the Panel met with. In the view of the Panel, this aspect fully complies with requirements.

Evidences/indicators ☐ Self-Evaluation Report ☐ Meeting with the Rector ☐ University Website ☐ Development Strategy ☐ Meeting with Employers and other Stakeholders ☐ Meetings (various) with University Staff and Students
Recommendations: No recommendations

Suggestions:

No suggestions for further development

Best Practices (if applicable):

Not applicable

Evaluation

☑ 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 University has recently adopted a new Development Strategy (Path to the Art 20182024) that constitutes its formal strategic plan. This Strategy is comprehensive, covering the University's strategic approach to all the key aspects of its operation – including institutional development, quality assurance, the planning and implementation of educational programmes, the planning of the student body, research and other creative activities, human and material resources, student services and institutional infrastructure. The Strategy Includes the University's Mission and Vision Statements and a list of key institutional priorities that it seeks to achieve over the current planning period. The scope of these priorities includes the social, cultural, economic and pedagogical developments that are fully aligned to the University's mission, and elaborates the ways in which the university contributes to social development, shares its knowledge with society, and facilitates life long learning. The Panel commends the institution on its evident commitment to making a dynamic contribution to the development of its related fields of creative practice at both national and international levels.

The 7-year Development Strategy includes a 3-year action plan that lists a range of realistic and achievable targets that touch on all the aspects of activity outlined by the list of institutional priorities. It was evident to the panel that, through its meetings with staff,

students and employers, that the planning processes of the University are very inclusive and that both formal and informal opportunities are provided for both internal and external stakeholders to make a full contribution to institutional strategic planning.

The University regularly monitors the progress that it is making against the priorities that it has set out within its Development Strategy and the associated Action Plan through its formal committee structure. Regular reports from the Faculties (via Faculty Councils), the Quality assurance Office and the non-academic departments (under the purview of the Representative Council) are received, and deliberated upon at Academic Council. Any feedback on these progress reports, or any further identified and agreed actions, are subsequently reported back to the relevant body. Therefore, the Panel was able to confirm that the University regularly evaluates the implementation of its strategic goals and action plans, and duly acts on evaluation results. In the view of the Panel, the University's current Development Plan provides a model of clarity and the scope of its priorities and aspirations fully reflect and elaborate the institutional Mission and Vision Statements while also responding positively to current national priorities. The Panel commends the institution on the clarity, scope and aspirations of the University Development Plan that fully elaborates the institutional mission and responds positively to current national priorities.

While University's Development Strategy (strategic plan) is likely to ensure the overall achievement of its strategic goals the Panel noted that though the Action Plan sets out a coherent set of achievable and time-bound targets fully in line with ambitions of the University Mission and Vision, the Panel noted that in the case of each individual target there was a lack of granulated performance criteria ('milestones' or key performance indicators) that would enable the University to accurately measure its progress – on an annual basis – towards the completion of its strategic targets. The Panel noted that a similar lack of identified and pre-defined progress indicators was also evident in other institutional strategic documents (for example its Internationalization Policy and IT Policy). The Panel recommends that, in order for the University to accurately monitor its progress towards the achievement of its strategic goals, its formal monitoring processes need to be significantly strengthened through each of its key activities being (and other key strategic policies) reexpressed to include a set of more finely tuned specific, measurable, achievable, reasonable and time-based (in other words SMART) targets with associated annual key performance indicators (KPI's).

In the view of the Panel, this aspect substantially complies with requirements.

Evidences/indicators

- ☐ Self-Evaluation Report
- ☐ Meeting with the Rector
- ☐ Development Strategy
- ☐ Meeting with Employers and other Stakeholders
- ☐ Meetings (various) with University Staff and Students

Recommendations:

The Panel recommends that, in order for the University to accurately monitor its progress towards the achievement of its strategic goals, its formal monitoring processes need to be significantly strengthened through each of its key activities being (and other key strategic policies) re-expressed to include a set of more finely tuned specific, measurable, achievable, reasonable and time-based (in other words SMART) targets with associated annual key performance indicators (KPI's).

Suggestions:
No suggestions for further development

Best Practices (if applicable):
The Panel commends the institution on its evident commitment to making a dynamic contribution to the development of its related fields of creative practice at both national and international levels.
The Panel commends the institution on the clarity, scope and aspirations of the University Development Plan that fully elaborates the institutional mission and responds positively to current national priorities.

Evaluation

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

2. Organizational Structure and Management of HEI

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

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

Descriptive summary & analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The University has organised its management and committee structure to be in line with the national requirements. The three faculties each have Faculty Councils that report either directly to the Academic Council or (in respect of some areas of activity) via the Quality Assurance Office, Dissertation Council or the Scientific-Research Institution (as appropriate). Non-academic departments (such as the Financial-Economic Office, Chancellery and HR Office, Procurement and Logistics Office, etc.), report either directly to the Representative Council or via the Head of Administration. Through its discussions with various staff groups during the site-visit, the Panel formed the view that decisions made by the management body, relating to academic, scientific and administrative issues, are made in an effective and timely manner.

The functions and responsibilities of each of the University's structural units are clearly defined and described within the statues ratified by the Council of Representatives. The statues set out in detail the scope, purpose and internal structure of each unit. The Panel viewed a number of such statutes (as they applied to a variety of individual structural units) and found them to provide clear, concise and comprehensive information about their role, compass of responsibility and reporting lines within the overall management and committee structure. The significant majority of these statutes had relatively recently been fully revised and then ratified (2017) by the Representative Council and the Panel was highly impressed by the University's commitment and diligence in completing this significant task. The Panel commend the institution on the significant achievement University represented by the steps it has taken to develop, endorse and implement its current range of statutes, regulations, processes and

systems which are set out clearly in the documentation seen by the panel. In acknowledging this achievement, we also recognise the quality of institutional leadership required to successfully complete this process.

Through its meetings with staff and students during the site-visit, and its reading of documentation supplied by the University, the Panel formed the view that the current organisational structure of the institution ensures the effective implementation of the activities set out within its Development Strategy and the associated strategic goals. The Panel also viewed the clarity and thoroughness of the documentation produced by the University, designed to ensure that each of the institutions structural units implements their functions in an effective and co-ordinated manner, represents a significant achievement that will both support and strengthen its future development.

The elections of the University Rector, Deputy Rector, Head of administration, Head of University Quality Assurance Office, Faculty Dean and Head of Faculty Quality Assurance Department are managed in accordance with the University's Charter and defined in accordance with national Higher Education law. The election of members to the Academic Council and Representative Council is by open and transparent ballot voting. The provision open, transparent, and fair elections is stated in the SER as being one of the most important and fundamental principles of University.

The University's Development Strategy (strategic plan) includes the implementation and development of a '*united centralized electronic system for case proceedings and documentation*' as an activity within its current Action Plan. This forms a key part of a wider IT strategy, and it is scheduled to be completed incrementally over the current planning period. At present the University has the capacity for the shared storage and retrieval of work files and it utilises the ORIS accountancy system for its financial management and reporting. The Panel appreciated that the University was working diligently, within its current financial resource constraints, to harness modern technologies to improve and extend its management capabilities and was impressed by the plans set out in its current IT strategy to address this.

In line with its stated mission, which posits the University as an '*international centre of sharing experience, creative relations and dialogue of cultures*', an Internationalization Policy has been developed and is currently being implemented. This policy outlines the ways in which the institution plans to enhance and increase its strategic partnerships with internationally-based institutions and organisations, develop international programmes (delivered in English), encourage the international mobility of both students and staff (in line with the Bologna process) and increase active participation – by both students and staff in international festivals and research conferences. The Policy provides a clear set of aims for each of these areas of activity, which fully reflect the University's Mission and Vision Statements and the associated Action Plan. The institution is currently engaged in all of the above listed fields of international activity (with the exception of a current offering international programmes) and the University's Internationalization Policy seeks to positively build on this experience. The panel commends the University for its strong commitment to the process of internationalisation of curricula and the student learning experience – a commitment that was very highly appreciated by the stakeholders that the Panel met with*.*

In the view of the Panel, this aspect fully complies with requirements.

Evidences/indicators

☐   Self-Evaluation Report ☐ Development Strategy
☐   Meeting with Students (BA & MA)
☐   Meeting with Doctoral Students
☐   Meeting with Rector
☐   Meeting with Deans of Faculty, Heads of Department and Programme Supervisors ☐
Internationalization Policy
☐   Meeting with Employers and other Stakeholders

Recommendations:

No recommendations

Suggestions:

No suggestions for further development

Best Practices (if applicable):

The Panel commend the institution on the significant achievement University represented by the steps it has taken to develop, endorse and implement its current range of statutes, regulations, processes and systems which are set out clearly in the documentation seen by the panel. In acknowledging this achievement, we also recognise the quality of institutional leadership required to successfully complete this process.

The panel commends the University for its strong commitment to the process of internationalisation of curricula and the student learning experience – a commitment that was very highly appreciated by the stakeholders that the Panel met with.

Evaluation:

☑ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

2.2 Internal quality assurance mechanisms

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The institutions internal quality assurance system is organised and monitored by the Quality Assurance Office (QAO). In addition to this responsibility, the QAO also evaluates – and has a mandate to enhance – the institutions learning and teaching, creative and scientific-research activities and international co-operation. Two key aspects of its quality assurance role is the organization of the self-evaluation processes for University authorization and programme accreditation, and the evaluation of the quality of the University's teaching, creative and research activity. The main means of gathering feedback on these aspects of University provision is through the gathering and analysis of statistical data, and the analysis of feedback questionnaires completed by students, graduate students, potential employers, academic and administrative staff, and information and datasets provided by each Faculty and administrative departments. In this respect, every unit of the institution is actively involved in the implementation of the internal quality assurance mechanism. While the data gathered through this methodology is predominantly quantitative in nature, it enables the QAO to prepare appropriate recommendations for any necessary actions that need to be agreed by the Academic Council or by each of the Faculty Councils, or any other competent unit of the University. Through this process the institution makes decisions based on the results of its quality assurance process, including the monitoring of students' academic performance and the allocation of human, informational and material resources.

Through its meetings with current students, staff, alumni and external stakeholders, the Panel formed the view that the University has developed effective mechanisms for the evaluation and enhancement of its programmes. The Panel heard a range of examples, from each of these constituencies, as to how the institution had responded to matters raised through both the formal and informal feedback processes, leading to appropriate concrete improvement measures being taken in a timely manner. It was clear to the Panel, from its meetings with each of the constituent groups, with which it met, that an active dialogue was being maintained with the University. In its meeting with Deans of Faculty, Heads of Department and Programme Supervisors, the Panel heard the example of a programme, that is highly popular with applicants to the University, where it had been decided to deliberately reduce student numbers through the admissions process in order to ensure that the students enrolling on the programme were able to be provided with the optimum learning experience in terms of cohort size, access to teaching staff and physical resources. The Panel commends the University for its willingness to enable its faculties to regulate student numbers with the purpose of both enhancing the quality of the student learning experience and the employment prospects of graduates.

In addition to the quantitative feedback gathered on an annual basis through questionnaires (outlined above), qualitative feedback is captured by the University's formal quality assurance process in a number of ways. Students provide feedback on their learning experience through faculty-level Student Self-Government and through the student membership of faculty councils. The quality assurance processes at Faculty level are overseen by a faculty Chief of Quality Assurance Department and any issues raised that can not be dealt with by faculties are referred to either the University's Quality Assurance Office and/or Academic Council. External stakeholders are routinely involved in the process of the final assessments of student work at the end of each academic year. This process includes a review of programme delivery and the opportunity to reflect on the fitness-for-purpose of curricula.

While, in the view of the Panel, the formal internal quality assurance processes currently operating within the University ensure the on-going assessment and development of its activities and resources – many of the processes border on being mechanistic and overly centralised. In the view of the Panel, some aspects of this approach, though effective, are somewhat monolithic in nature and may, therefore, risk the full engagement of staff in the process of assuring the quality of their individual contributions. When the Panel asked the group of Academic Staff, it met with during the site-visit, who was responsible for the quality assurance of their own programmes, they were not immediately able to identify their own individual role in this process. The Panel suggests that, in order to meet its own objectives

(as set out within its Development Strategy 2018-2024) of developing '*a culture of quality*' it should ensure that all staff clearly understand and appreciate their individual role and responsibilities within the institutional quality assurance system.

The University has formal mechanisms for evaluating the performance of its staff, these are set out in its Human Resource Management Policy (as approved by the Representative Council, December 2017). This Policy also covers the process of staff recruitment and on-going professional development and career management. The formal evaluation of staff, both academic and administrative takes place on an annual basis and follows prescribed processes. There are additional formal processes that apply to the evaluation of the creative and/or scientific-research activities of staff (set out in the Rule of Assessment of Teaching, Creative and Scientific-Research Activity). At its meetings with both Academic Staff (including invited teaching staff) and Senior Administrative Managers, it was confirmed by the participants that the evaluation system is operating effectively and, in both cases, the Panel were given examples of the kind of staff development activities identified through this process.

The University has a formal framework for planning and regulating the size of the student body, this methodology is set out in the Rule of Planning Contingent of Students (ratified by Academic Council, December 2017). This Rule relates the regulation of the student body to the scope and capacity of the learning facilities available, and also takes into account the number of academic staff, the availability and accessibility of information technology and library resources and external circumstances – such as the requirements of the field of employment, etc. In its meeting with Deans of Faculty, Heads of Department and Programme Supervisors, the Panel were given an example of how the regulation of the student body (in one particular programme) was used as a means of enhancing the quality of the education

provided. In this case, the number of available student places was reduced so as to deliberately ensure that all students were provided with the optimum learning experience, by ensuring that the available resources (human and physical) were appropriately matched to the size and demands of the student cohort.

In the view of the Panel, this aspect fully complies with requirements.

Evidences/indicators:

☐ Self-Evaluation Report ☐ Development Strategy
☐ Statute of the Quality Assurance Office
☐ Meeting with the representatives of Academic Council and Representative Council
☐ Meeting with Deans of Faculty, Heads of Department and Programme Supervisors
☐ Meeting with Academic Staff (including representatives of Invited Teaching Staff)
☐ Meeting with staff of the Quality Assurance Office ☐ Meeting with Senior Management (academic)

Recommendations:

No recommendations

Suggestions:

The Panel suggests that, in order to meet its own objectives (as set out within its Development Strategy 2018-2024) of developing '*a culture of quality*' it should ensure that all staff clearly understand and appreciate their individual role and responsibilities within the institutional quality assurance system.

Best Practices (if applicable):

The Panel commends the University for its willingness to enable its faculties to regulate student numbers with the purpose of both enhancing the quality of the student learning experience and the employment prospects of graduates.

Evaluation

☑ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

2.3. Observing principles of ethics and integrity

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The Institution has an approved Code of Ethics (approved by the Representative Council, December 2017) that sets out a framework of regulations and mechanisms that apply to the work and conduct of both staff and students, and defines procedures for responding to any violation of these regulations. These regulations are based upon relevant national legislation and are publicly available. However, the panel learned (in its meeting with representatives of the University's Scientific-Research Institution) that, at present, students were not required to complete and sign an ethical statement in relation to their research processes towards their

individual dissertations. This is currently managed through discussion with their academic supervisors, who carry the responsibility for ensuring that the student works within the approved ethical standards and processes as set out within the Code of Ethics. The Panel suggest that it would be of benefit to both staff and students' of the University, if this process were to be formalised through establishing a written record that deliberately assessed the ethical implications of such research activities, to be co-signed by both student and supervisor at the outset of the research process – this would enable the institution to more readily maintain an overview of the Code in operation.

The University has also developed a set of measures for defending against, and detecting, plagiarism. This is largely preventative in its approach, firstly through ensuring that students are made fully aware of what constitutes plagiarism in the context of their academic activities. This is achieved through the inclusion of an 'Academic Writing' course as part of all bachelor programmes, which emphasises the avoidance of plagiarism and poor academic practice. Secondly, through the vigilance of teaching staff in their supervision of individual students written work at early draft stage. Students are also required to submit a signed plagiarism form when they submit their dissertation for assessment. The regulations of the University include appropriate mechanisms for responding to identified cases of plagiarism.

The Panel learned, from its meetings with staff, that University does not currently have the financial resources to invest in plagiarism detecting software. However, the panel was informed that it had applied for external funding for this purpose, but this matter was still outstanding at the time of the site-visit. The University's regulations pertaining to issues of plagiarism are currently distributed across a range of institutional charters, codes and statements. While, together, these form a comprehensive set of guidelines for the prevention, detection and penalties of plagiarism, the Panel suggest that it would be helpful to both students and staff if these could be brought together in a single reference document.

The SER states that the University follows the principals of academic freedom and this commitment is re-stated within several institutional documents, such as the institutional Code of Ethics, Standards for Written Work and the objectives of Student Self-Government. The Panel formed the view, during the site-visit, that the community of staff and students of the University are both familiar with, and share, the principles of academic freedom.

In the view of the Panel, this aspect fully complies with requirements.

Evidences/indicators:

☐ Self-Evaluation Report ☐ Code of Ethics
☐ Meeting with the Scientific-Research Institution, Dissertation Council & Publishing House

Recommendations:

No recommendations

Suggestions:

The Panel suggest that it would be of benefit to both staff and students' of the University, if the process of determining the ethical aspect of research activities were to be formalised through establishing a written record that deliberately assessed the ethical implications of research activities, to be co-signed by both student and supervisor at the outset of the research process – this would enable the institution to more readily maintain an overview of the Code in operation.

Best Practices (if applicable):

Not applicable

Evaluation:

☑ Complies with requirements
☐ Substantially complies with requirements
☐ Partially complies with requirements
☐ Does not comply with requirements

3. Educational Programmes

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

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The University has developed and implemented a set of rules and regulations for the planning, design and development of study programmes. These are principally set out in the University's *Instruction and procedure for approval of Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral Educational programmes.* It has also developed and implemented regulations for the annulment of study programmes, the *Regulatory Rule of Diminishment of an Educational Programme,* in which the legal interests and rights of the students are taken into consideration and which assures the smooth completion of studies or mobility to another HEI. From its reading of the University's Self-Evaluation Report, the above-mentioned documentation, and its meetings with academic and administrative staff, students, alumni and external stakeholders, the Panel formed the view that the process of program planning and design, as well as approval, amendment and annulment corresponds to all the requirements of National legislation on Higher Education and the Authorization Standards for Higher Education Institutions (it should be noted that these regulations were established in 2011 but have been updated to meet the revised authorization standards in 2017). From its reading of the documentation provided by the University and the meetings that it carried out during the site-visit, the Panel can confirm that the processes and procedures by which the University plans, designs and develops its programmes are well structured, transparent and open to the full range of internal and external stakeholders. The panel was impressed by the "flexible approach to learning" that the University has developed, which clearly responds constructively to feedback from the students, alumni and external stakeholders. For example; the practical component/internship has been added or increased in some study programmes, and the hours for practical skills development have been added or increased in some courses in response to student feedback. The lecturers highlighted the flexibility of the library/university administration in purchasing the new books not only in Georgian, but also in English, which supports teaching and learning using updated handbooks. External stakeholders (e.g. director from Vaso Abashidze Music and Drama Theatre, representatives of Public Broadcasting company) referred to their positive experience in assessing the learning outcomes of the students while taking part in reviewing master and PhD theses, and in their viewing of course work (performances, short films, TV productions) as external examiners.

During its meetings with students, alumni, academic staff and employers, the Panel heard many examples as to how each of these constituent groups had been provided with opportunity to provide feedback on programme provision through meetings, surveys and online consultation, etc. In the process of developing and renewing its study programs the University takes deliberate steps to consider the requirements of the contemporary labour market and the challenges presented by the rapid development of the professional landscapes which the programmes serve. In its meeting with Alumni, graduates confirmed that the University's curricula were keeping pace with industry developments and in its meeting with External Stakeholders, employers confirmed that the University was regulating its student numbers according to the demands of the labour market and keeps pace with contemporary developments. The employers and external stakeholders were also particularly appreciative of the opportunities that the University provided for students to participate in international exchanges during their studies, recognizing that the knowledge and insights that they gained through these experiences feeds back positively into the fields of professional practice when the students graduate.

Evidences/indicators

☐ Self-Evaluation Report
☐ Instruction and procedure for approval of Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral Educational programmes
☐ Regulatory Rule of Diminishment of an Educational Programme
☐ Meeting with Students (BA & MA)
☐ Meeting with Doctoral Students
☐ Meeting with Alumni
☐ Meeting with Deans of Faculty, Heads of Department and Programme Supervisors
☐ Meeting with Academic Staff
☐ Meeting with Employers and other Stakeholders

Recommendations:

No recommendations

Suggestions:

No suggestions for further development

Best Practices (if applicable):

The panel commends the University for the "*flexible approach to learning*" that it has developed, which responds constructively to feedback from the students, alumni and external stakeholders.

Evaluation

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

3.2 Structure and content of educational programmes

- 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 University offers 15 accredited study programs on 3 study levels. As part of the Authorization process the Panel studied and analyzed part of the syllabi of all study programmes, all of which are fully in-line with the University's Mission and Vision, and the Development Strategy (Strategic Plan). The Study Programs correspond to the following legislative framework; the Law on Higher Education of Georgia, Authorization Standards, Decree N3 by the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia on the "Rule of Study Programs Credits Calculation", Decree N120 by the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia on the "Approval of National Qualifications Framework", etc.

The programs in performing arts (at doctoral level) with their specific content and wide range of specializations provided by the University are nationally unique, making it a strategically important institution within the National higher education system and placing a specific responsibility upon it to provide wider society with high level teaching and learning, as well as scientific-research and creative practice in some specific fields. While there are no National subject specific benchmarks for the University's study fields, the learning outcomes do fully comply with the National Qualification Framework and they are described according to the six criteria (Knowledge and Understanding, Applying Knowledge, Making Judgements, Communication Skills, Learning Skills, Values). All study programs award qualification/academic degree according to the qualifications list approved by the Ministerial Decree N 120/n.

As most of the University's curricula each provide several study concentrations, the programs have a complex structure which consists of compulsory and elective – as well as '*main and supportive*' – courses (modules) for each concentration. Despite the somewhat complex structure of curricula, there is a strong logical connection between each of different structural components. The pre-requisites of each compulsory or elective (main or supportive) course is clearly defined and builds logically on the students' knowledge and skills achieved at the conclusion of the previous course. The study programme descriptors set out the ECTS credits awarded to each component of the curricula based on students' workload, which is monitored and formally assessed. In its scrutiny of the curricula and through its discussions with both staff and students during the site-visit, the panel came to the view that the University achieves a very successful balance of, and integration between, theory and practice within the student learning experience it offers.

Various teaching and learning methodologies are employed by the academic and adjunct staff, each of which are described in the syllabi and the program descriptors. These include; discussions/debates, group work, case studies, role-play, demonstrations, action-oriented teaching, e-learning, performances, studio-based teaching and learning, and individual work with each student. The Panel appreciated the process by which teaching and learning methodologies are selected, through which the needs of the University's different fields and subjects of study are taken into account. Information about each of the University's study programs is available on the university website in the form of a catalogue of programmes as exemplified by the following links:

http://www.tafu.edu.ge/wm.php?page=drama_catalogs&parent=drama
http://www.tafu.edu.ge/wm.php?page=kinotele_catalogs&parent=kinotele
http://www.tafu.edu.ge/wm.php?page=hum_catalogs&parent=hum

The University has developed and approved the methodology of for individualized study programmes and it offers individual study programs to the students with special needs. The *Rule of Students and Graduates GPA's Calculation* sets out specific guidance for the calculation of the GPA of students with special needs.

The University plans to start monitoring of programme completion and dropout rates from the 2018-2019 academic year, but the institution currently analyses students' academic achievement in different subjects and implements the monitoring results in curricula development and, during the Panel's interviews with Deans of Faculty, Heads of Department and Program Supervisors and Staff of the Quality Assurance Office, several examples of changes to course syllabi following on from the analysis of monitoring results were cited.

Evidences/indicators
- Self-Evaluation Report
- Development Strategy (Strategic Plan)
- A range of Study Programmme Descriptors/Syllabi
- University Website
- Rule of Students and Graduates GPA's Calculation
- Meeting with Staff of the Quality Assurance Office
- Meeting with Deans of Faculty, Heads of Department and Programme Supervisors
- Meeting with Academic Staff
- Meeting with Students (BA & MA)
- Meeting with Doctoral Students

Recommendations:

No recommendations

Suggestions:

No suggestions for further development

Best Practices (if applicable):

Not applicable

Evaluation

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

3.3 Assessment of learning outcomes

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The University's assessment systems comply with the National legislative requirements, of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia, as set out in the '*Rule of Study Programs Credits Calculation*' (Decree N3). The processes and criteria (grades distribution, assessment forms and assessment criteria) by which student work and achievement of planned learning

outcomes is assessed, and is clearly formulated and set out within the descriptors of each study program and each syllabus. In the view of the Panel, the students' assessment system (that is, assessment of students learning outcomes) is fair, transparent and easily accessible. The assessment methodologies vary accordingly from subject to subject, taking into consideration the specificity of not only performing arts, but also of other study fields taught at the University. Differentiated criteria are used for, the assessment of, for example; seminars, examination papers, course work, presentations, discussion, practical–creative work. There is a special regulation approved by the Academic Council, which provides the general framework for assessment system and assessment criteria of theoretical courses. Creative projects, such as performances or films, are assessed taking into consideration their specificity and each Faculty has its own regulation for assessment of creative projects, which are approved by the respective Faculty Council.

The Programs Descriptors and Syllabi analyzed by the Panel revealed that clear links exist between the expected learning outcomes, the teaching and learning methodologies employed, and the assessment methods to form a constructive alignment that ensures that the achievement of the learning outcomes can be accurately measured. The meetings with student groups, undertaken by the Panel during the site-visit, revealed that they felt well informed about the assessment system; about grade distribution, assessment methods, and about the assessment criteria. Students were content with the transparency of the assessment system, and the availability of feedback about their respective strengths and weaknesses, they cited the collaborative and friendly atmosphere that existed between students and lecturers as providing a positive and productive learning environment.

The Panel noted that neither the SER or the supporting documentation provided information about an appeals system available to the student body. At the request of the Panel, the University's Quality Assurance Office provided a copy of the document '*Instruction to Appeal on Examination Processes and Results*', which clarified that the institution has a formally approved assessment appellation system – though this had only relatively recently approved by the Academic Council. Through its meetings with student groups during the site-visit, the Panel came to the view that students did not appear to be sufficiently well informed about, or aware of, this process. While, in general, the Panel found the written documentation; such as statutes, regulations and processes to be clear and detailed, it recommends that more specific attention could be given to how student-facing information is both presented to, and accessed by, the student body. Besides, the panel reccommends to monitor the effectiveness of the newly established aasessment appelation system in the end of the coming academic year through students surveys and focus groups, as well as by analyzing the results of the appelation.

Evidences/indicators

- ☐ Self-Evaluation Report
- ☐ Minutes of the Meeting of the Academic Council (11.12.2017)
- ☐ Decree by the Rector '*Instruction to Appeal on Examination Processes and Results*'
- ☐ Meeting with Staff of the Quality Assurance Office
- ☐ Meeting with Students (BA & MA)
- ☐ Meeting with Doctoral Students

Recommendations:
While, in general, the Panel found the written documentation; such as statutes, regulations and processes to be clear and detailed, it recommends that more specific attention could be given to how student-facing information is both presented to, and accessed by, the student body. In addition, the panel recommends that the University monitor, through student surveys and focus group consultations, the effectiveness of the newly established assessment appellation system at the end of the next academic year, as well as by analyzing the results of the appellation.
Suggestions:
No suggestions for further development
Best Practices (if applicable):
Not applicable
Evaluation ☐ Complies with requirements ☒ Substantially complies with requirements ☐ Partially complies with requirements ☐ Does not comply with requirements

4. Staff of the HEI

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

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

Descriptive summary & analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The University has a staff management policy and associated procedures that are designed to ensure the implementation of the educational process and other activities as defined in its Development Strategy (strategic plan). This policy is set out within its Human Resourses Management Policy, which defines the ways that the institution monitors its staff, supports their professional development and motivates individual career enhancement.

The Panel noted, from its reading of the Self-Evaluation Report, that the number of the staff is defined in accordance with high-priority fields, and the specificity and content of its educational programmes. The University has a range of approaches to staff recruitment; including internal selection (the promotion or re-deployment of existing employees), an open and competitive application process to attract competent and experienced candidates, and internship opportunities. The appointment criteria, qualification requirements and job descriptions are clearly defined and available to all candidates applying for academic and research, administrative, and support staff positions. Candidates for established academic and research posts, selected through a process of open competition, are appointed by the decisions of the University Competition Committee, the Academic Council and relevant administrative orders. Invited staff, visiting specialists and teachers, as well as support staff (such as accompanists, concert masters, etc.) are selected according to relevant professional criteria. The panel commends the institution on maintaining its current profile of academic

staff so as to enable the fostering a successful integration of traditional and contemporary approaches to its fields and subjects of study.

Employment procedures and processes are clear and transparent, and announcements of the open competitions for both academic and administrative positions are publicly accessible on the University website and other appropriate portals (such as Jobs.ge). As a result of the careful application of its recruitment procedures, the qualifications of teaching staff, invited staff and researchers are in line with the Universities stated qualification requirements as they apply to each respective position. From the documentation seen, the Panel formed the view that the University has established, and currently operates, an equitable, open and transparent approach to staff recruitment that is in line with national guidelines.

The rules and terms of staff affiliation is approved by the University's Council of Representatives and the primary affiliation Academic staff is determined on the basis of the contract signed between the staff member and the University.

The evaluation of staff performance is undertaken through formal staff evaluation processes and staff satisfaction surveys, which are conducted on a regular (normally annual) basis. The results of these evaluative methods are used in the process of staff management, to ensure that their knowledge and skills are fully utilized and further enhanced. The outcomes of performance evaluation inform the principles of remuneration and the application of staff development. The panel commends the University's approach to the development of staff working in the areas of Learning Support and the Practical Learning Facilities so as to ensure that they are able to make a full contribution to the support and enhancement of the student learning experience.

According to the Self-Evaluation Report, professional development programs are developed by the Quality Assurance Department (for academic and research staff) and the Human Resources Management Department (for administrative and support staff) and the results of professional development activities are used to inform the general Human Resources Management Policy. This Policy sets out the principles of the institutional approach to professional development and career management. However, the Panel formed the view that the benchmark criteria currently applied to both professional and career development are rather general in nature and may not be readily measurable – in their current formulation, it is not necessarily clear what is expected to be achieved or in within what timeframe. There is also little to distinguish between what constitutes staff development and what should be considered as career development. The Panel suggests that the University gives attention to this matter, to ensure that staff development and career development activities are clearly differentiated and that associated benchmark criteria are clearly formulated, in such a way to as make them readily measurable, easier to evaluate and more clearly understandable for staff.
In the view of the Panel, this aspect fully complies with requirements.

Evidences/indicators:

- ☐ Self-Evaluation Report
- ☐ Human Resourses Management Policy
- ☐ Rule of hiring support staff
- ☐ Samples of labor contracts
- ☐ Samples of staff CV's
- ☐ Criteria for the evaluation of a candidate for holding academic position
- ☐ Rule of holding scientific position at the scientific-research institution
- ☐ Meeting with Academic Staff and Invited Teaching Staff
- ☐ Affiliation Rules
- ☐ Questionnaire Templates (including Evaluation of Employees)
- ☐ Decrees of the Rector on the announcement of the competitions, their results and appointments to academic and administrative positions for 2011-2017

Recommendations:

No recommendations

Suggestions:

The Panel suggests that the University gives attention to the aspects of its Human Resourses Management Policy which deal with staff development and career development activities, to ensure that these are more clearly differentiated and that the associated benchmark criteria are more clearly formulated, in such a way to as make them readily measurable, easier to evaluate and understandable for staff.

Best Practices (if applicable):

The panel commends the institution on maintaining its current profile of academic staff so as to enable the fostering a successful integration of traditional and contemporary approaches to its fields and subjects of study.

The panel commends the University's approach to the development of staff working in the areas of Learning Support and the Practical Learning Facilities so as to ensure that they are able to make a full contribution to the support and enhancement of the student learning experience.

Evaluation

☑ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

4.2. Academic/Scientific and Invited Staff Workload

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

Descriptive summary & analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

On the basis of its reading of the available documentation and its meeting with several groups of staff during the site-visit, the Panel formed the view that number and workload of academic/scientific and invited staff is adequate to support the educational programs, scientific-research and creative activities and other functions assigned to them.

The *Rule of Assessment of Teaching, Creative and Scientific-Research Activity* (approved by the Academic Council of University) sets out the principles for the defining of workloads for academic and invited staff. Workloads are inclusive of all the activities accorded to the functions and duties of staff, as defined by the specific nature of their contract. The number of academic and scientific staff, and their agreed workload, ensures the successful functioning of educational programs, research and performing activities. The scheme of individual staff workloads is updated for each semester of the academic year.

The number of academic, scientific and invited staff is modulated from year to year by the University, taking into consideration the existing and planned number of students on different programs, the requirements of the labor market and the specific nature of each program. This, in turn, assists the institution in planning the quota of the student intake for the succeeding academic year.

The above-mentioned *Rule of Assessment of Teaching, Creative and Scientific-Research Activity* provides a basis for the evaluation procedures for assessing the University's teaching and research activities; its main purpose being the enhancement of the quality of teaching, creative and scientific-research activities and the continued successful functioning of its educational programs. The evaluation processes and the associated benchmark criteria are defined and managed by the Quality Assurance Office with the participation of the relevant faculties, departments responsible for the educational programs and other relevant structural units and are approved by the Academic Council.

The evaluation of teaching, creative and scientific-research activities is based on selfassessment reports, collated statistical data on the implementation of activities, reports of faculty council meetings, documentation of the Dissertation Council (including dissertation reports, reviews, expert conclusions, reports of artistic councils, etc.) As a result of the annual analysis of the evaluation data, recommendations, regarding the improvement of teaching, creative and scientific-research activities and educational programs, are formulated by the Quality Assurance Office and put before the Academic Council for deliberation and decision-making.

In the view of the Panel, this aspect fully complies with requirements.

Evidences/indicators:

☐ Self-Evaluation Report
☐ Human Resourses Management Policy
☐ Meeting with Senior Academic Management
☐ Meeting with Academic Stuff and Invited Teaching Staff
☐ Meeting with Scientific-Research Institution
☐ Rule of Assessment of Teaching, Creative and Scientific-Research Activity

Recommendations:

No recommendations

Suggestions:
No suggestions for further development

Best Practices (if applicable):
Not applicable

Evaluation

☑ Complies with requirements
        ☐ Substantially complies with requirements
        ☐ Partially complies with requirements
        ☐ 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 & analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The University has developed a set of internal regulations – the *Rules for Earning, Pausing and Terminating Student Status, Mobility, Granting Qualifications and Issuing Educational Documents* that govern the learning process at each educational level. In the view of the Panel, these regulations are transparent and fair, and are in line with current national legislation. The above-mentioned documentation is publicly available and can be easily accessed by both internal and external stakeholders on the University's website. The layout of the website is very clear and the user interface makes it easy to locate all the necessary information on different topics in a without any difficulty.

This same *Rule* also sets out the status, rights and duties of students, ensuring the protection of student rights and lawful interests through the University's formal documentation. Through its meetings with students during the site-visit, the Panel heard examples of how, within the framework of its internal regulations, the institution was also able to respond to the individual needs of student when required. At its meetings with both undergraduate and postgraduate students, the Panel asked the students about their level of awareness of their rights and if they knew where they could access information on this topic. The immediate response of the students was to cite recourse to informal rather than formal processes for dealing with any such matters, re-affirming the good relationship that they maintained with staff as their reason for preferring this approach. However, the students did not appear to be aware of the formal procedures of the protection of their rights and interests and potentially sensitive issues (such as a formal complaint against the conduct of a member of staff) seemed to be addressed based on personal communication and the good will of academic and administrative staff members. In the view of the Panel, it is desirable that all students have a clear understanding of the mechanisms and procedures available to them so that, when needed, a student can follow these formal procedures and not have to rely on personal relationship with academic/administrative staff members. In light of this, the Panel suggests that the University give consideration to developing a clear and user-friendly handbook that sets out the rights of students and includes a step-by-step guide to the formal procedures available to them if they wish to make a formal complaint to the institution. This will ensure that students are very clear about what formal processes they need to follow to seek redress if they encounter problem that gives grounds for a formal complaint.

In the view of the Panel, this aspect fully complies with requirements.

Evidences/indicators

- Self-Evaluation Report
- Rules for Earning, Pausing and Terminating Student Status, Mobility, Granting Qualifications and Issuing Educational Documents
- Meeting with Students (BA & MA)
- Meeting with Doctoral Students
- Statute of the Student Self-governance body
- Students' Guide
- Samples of contracts between the University and its students

Recommendations:

No Recommendations

Suggestions:

The Panel suggests that the University give consideration to developing a clear and userfriendly handbook that sets out the rights of students and includes a step-by-step guide to the formal procedures available to them if they wish to make a formal complaint to the institution. This will ensure that students are very clear about what formal processes they need to follow to seek redress if they encounter problem that gives grounds for a formal complaint.

Best Practices (if applicable):

Not applicable

Evaluation

☑ 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 counseling 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.

The University sees '*the process of individual creative development*' as a key characteristic of higher art education, seeing its main purpose being '*the development of individual creative potentials and professional skills*'. In its Self-Evaluation Report, the University states that '*during the process of teaching* [the] *University is naturally focused on separate individual creative potentials, respectively, the learning process is oriented towards the development of these potentials and revelation of creative possibilities of a student*'. A key aspect of the student learning experience at the University is the development and confirmation of an individual learning plan for each student '*takes into consideration various requirements, needs and academic readiness of students*'. Each individual learning plan is planned on a semester-long basis and the student is able to take an active role in this planning process.

The students that the Panel met with during the site-visit expressed a very high level of satisfaction with the learning experience offered by their programmes and spoke positively of the '*co-operative relationship*' that they enjoyed with teaching staff and the '*enabling enviroment*' offered by their programmes. The Panel noticed, in its reading of the SelfEvaluation Report, a reference to one of the strengths of the University's provision being '*flexible educational programmes*'. When asked about this, the staff talked of their openness to curriculum change, one of the key aspects of this being their responsiveness to student feedback on their learning experience. The students, met with by the Panel, were able to confirm that this 'flexible' approach was indeed active and they were readily able to cite a range of examples of how their feedback had been positively and constructively responded to in relation to the development of curricula. As noted above (Section 2.2: Internal Quality Assurance Mechanisms), the University regularly and extensively conducts surveys of its

students and alumni regarding their personal, professional and academic development and the Panel was satisfied that the outcomes of these processes were properly interrogated and responded to by the institution.

The University offers students a range of support services, information on each of which is available on the relevant University web pages, including a student consulting service (which helps student to improve their academic performance), support for low SES students, an service that provided information on various University-level, local and international projects and events (that students can apply to participate in – including international mobility) and can support student initiatives, and a career support service. However, when the Panel asked the staff it met with to describe the scope and functions of the career support service, it emerged that this referred to a range of distributed information sources that students could be directed to as appropriate rather than a cohesive service. When the Panel asked students about what careers advice was available to them, they spoke very positively about the information and support that they received from their professors and teachers in this respect, and also the information that they received from alumni – who were often asked by staff to come and talk to students about their individual career paths.

The range of employers, with which the University enjoys a close working relationship, are also actively involved in supporting the students career building process, often through the offer of casual work opportunities, placements or internships – which often lead to employment opportunities. The Panel also noted that the employment rate for graduates has been maintained at a uniformly high level over the period of reporting. Although the University seems to be efficient in support of students' needs related to career development, the Panel suggests that the University give consideration to the production of an integrated careers advice system, that brings together all the current distributed resources under one electronic entry-point that could form part of the iLearning System that the institution is currently developing.

Supporting the free mobility of students and pedagogues is stated as a key institutional priority in the University's Self-Evaluation Report. These processes are jointly overseen by the Public Relations and International Programs Office and the Learning Process Management Department. It is the former of these two internal bodies that has the responsibility for establishing the formal links with international partners and ensuring that information about mobility opportunities are widely disseminated to both students and staff across the University. The University currently has either memorandums of understanding (MoU's) and/or bi-lateral agreements with circa 30 international organizations and HEI's. It is an active member of The European League of Institutes of the Arts (ELIA), the International Association of Film and Television Schools (CILECT), the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM) and the recently established World Theatre Education Alliance (WTEA). The University works within the frame of the Fulbright and Erasmus+ exchange programmes. In addition, the University is a highly active participant in a international festivals, creative projects, conferences and research activites. All of these activities offer students opportunities to participate in international activities of some kind. The students that the Panel met with during the site-visit were aware of such possibilities and were appreciative of the opportunities they afforded.

The University has mechanisms that support socially vulnerable students, including the allocation of financial support. In its provision of support, the University takes into consideration the relevant national acts and international standards that pertain to such students. The University offers a number free places to socially vulnerable students (that attract no tuition fees) and postpones tuition fee payments for a number of others – enabling them to meet the costs of their tuition through a series phased payments. Since the beginning of 2017, the University has supported circa 35 students in these ways. Furthermore, the university has launched and realized a project/program on special teaching

methodologies for inclusive learning, aimed at teaching students with different physical disabilities. The University states, in its Self-Evaluation Report, that it is ready develop

further support mechanisms for socially vulnerable students, and is actively seeking collaborative partners with the purpose of identifying the key issues that need to be addressed in order to design and implement additional measures.

In the view of the Panel, this aspect fully complies with requirements.

Evidences/indicators

☐ Self-Evaluation Report
☐ Development Strategy (2018-2024)
☐ Meeting with Students (BA & MA)
☐ Meeting with Doctoral Students
☐ Meeting with Senior Managers (academic)
☐ Statute of the Student Self-Governance Body
☐ Statute of the Quality Assurance Office
☐ Statute of the Learning Process Management Department
☐ Statute Public Relations and International Programs Office

Recommendations:

No recommendations

Suggestions:

The Panel suggests that the University gives consideration to the production of an integrated careers advice system, that brings together all the current distributed resources under one electronic entry-point that could form part of the iLearning System that the institution is currently developing.

Best Practices (if applicable):

Not applicable

Evaluation

☑ Complies with requirements
☐ Substantially complies with requirements
☐ Partially complies with requirements
☐ Does not comply with requirements

6. Research, development and/or other creative work

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

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The University's Vision Statement, as set out in its Development Strategy, emphasises its leading role as a generator of creative advancement, arts sciences and research in its subject fields at a national and international level – encouraging both practical experiment and theoretical research oriented towards creative practice. The development of scientificresearch activity at the University is led by the Dimitri Janelidze Scientific-Research Institute, which was established in 2017. The Institute is an independent structural unit of the University and is not aligned to the work of any one Faculty, but is constituted to complement the scientific-research taking place within faculties and to further enhance the scientific-research output of the University. The Institute has a mandate to independently search for external funding and scholarships in order to support its scientific-research activity – from the state budget as well as from other alternate sources.

Through collaboration with the Councils of each Faculty and the Academic Council, the Institute has developed activity plan of both short-term and long-term projects. These include; collaboration with relevant external specialists as well as eminent international colleagues, co-operation with national and extra-national higher educational institutions, and host international scientific-research conferences. Within the University, the Institute has a mandate to; participate in the process of developing, preparing and implementing new study programmes, participate in preparation of qualification works by bachelors and masters students, as well as dissertation thesis by doctoral students, and involve students in scientific scholarships, regional, national and international conferences, and scientificresearch events. Through these means, the Scientific-Research Institute integrates its work within the teaching activities of the institution.

In addition to the work of the Institute, outlined above, the three faculties of the University are also very active in terms of both scientific-research and artistic-creative activities. The Faculties of Drama and of Film and Television are mainly concerned with artistic-creative activity, while scientific-research activity is more of a focus for the Faculty of Art Sciences, Media and Management. The Self-Evaluation Report provides an impressive list containing many examples of the activities undertaken by each of the three faculties at regional, national and international levels. It was clear to the Panel that, together with the work of the Scientific-Research Institute, the range and quality of such activities makes a significant contribution to the learning experiences of the Universities students. The Panel commends the institution for the close alignment of the fields of academic staff research and creative practice that it maintains with the specificity of the University curricula.

The University has normative document – *Rules of Assessment of Teaching, Creative and Scientific-Research Activity* – that regulates the quality of research and artistic-creative activity, in relation to the workload of academic or scientific staff, including those working within the frame of the Scientific-Research Institution. The University has clearly defined the functions of the PhD supervisors in their oversight of the work of Doctoral students. These are clearly set out, in considerable detail, within the Statute of the Dissertation Council. Aside from defining the functions of a supervisor, the Statute also defines the possible number of supervisees that in turn helps to define the supervisors' workload. In its meeting with Representatives of the Scientific-Research Institute, Dissertation Council and Publishing House, the Panel was assured by staff that the current arrangements for determining the workload of academic and scientific staff enables them to effectively supervise PhD works.

The standards for the evaluation and defence of dissertation are clearly set out in the Statute of the Dissertation Council. The Statute sets out a detailed set of transparent and fair procedures which are available on the University website. From the level of qualifications, expertise and experience set out within the staff profiles submitted to the Panel as part of the Authorization process, the Panel is assured that PhD supervisory processes are undertaken by highly qualified academic and scientific staff.

In the view of the Panel, this aspect fully complies with requirements.

Evidences/indicators

☐ Rules of Assessment of Teaching, Creative and Scientific-Research Activity
☐ Self-Evaluation Report ☐ Development Strategy
☐ Statute of the Dimitri Janelidze Scientific-Research Institute
☐ Statute of the Dissertation Council
☐ Meeting with Representatives of the Scientific-Research Institution, Dissertation Council and Publishing House
☐ Meeting with Academic Staff (including invited teaching staff)

Recommendations:

No recommendations

Suggestions:

No suggestions for further development

Best Practices (if applicable):

The Panel commends the institution for the close alignment of the fields of academic staff research and creative practice that it maintains with the specificity of the University curricula.

Evaluation

☑ 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

The University considers itself to be an important national institution, with its major vector of its activity being in '*the development and research of* [the] *various fields of art*'. This statement is further qualified within the institutional mission that characterizes the University as a site for '*creative development and scientific research*' which provides a '*solid ground for development of* [the] *fields of art (theatre, audio-visual, choreographic, music) within the boarders of the country and beyond*'. The recent (2017) establishment of the Dimitri Janelidze Scientific-Research Institute, with a mandate to improve scientific-research activities and to ensure they meet international standards, attests to the University's focus on the continuous development and effectiveness in relation to research and development. In the view of the Panel, based on the information provided in the Self-Assessment Report, the Faculty of Drama and the Faculty of Film and Television are routinely engaged in creative development activities that meet international standards.

The Self-Assessment Report lists a wide range of scientific-research and creative activities that have been conducted between 2011-2017 years. These include; invitations to

professors to participate in workshops, master classes and keynote lectures in international research centers, the involvement of staff in international Projects, forums and festivals as experts, judges and delegates, International projects, public lectures, master classes and seminars conducted by invited foreign Professors; memoranda of understanding – and collaborations – with international Foundations, universities and institutions, connecting doctoral studies programmes with international research centers and professors, and the participation of invited international Students and arts institutions to participate in University-organized festivals and projects. The Panel viewed this range of activity as ample evidence of its engagement in, and implementation of, joint research, creative-arts activities with international partners. Though the University does not currently have any joint MA or PhD programmes, it does support joint supervision practices by international and external professors.

Another means by which the University makes a contribution to both the learning experience offered by the institution and the wider scientific-research and creative arts community is through the output of its Publishing House (Kentavri), which was established in 2007. It is closely tied to the University's education process and co-operates intensively with each of the three faculties. The key functions of the Publishing House include; the publishing of textbooks and auxiliary textbooks in Georgian in different fields of art, to facilitate the research activities of doctoral students, graduate students and professors and on various processes in art, and to support young people working in the field of culture and in related professional occupations. The Publishing House produces and publishes special teachingscientific literature created at University (monographs and textbooks) composed by professor-tutors. In addition the Publishing House produces and publishes a free newspaper (Duruji) and a research journal (The Search of Art Sciences) that collates together a collection of scientific-research papers – which is published four times a year on a quarterly basis. Once a year, the Publishing House publishing house prints one targeted collection of scientific works which contains speeches held at conferences. The University's Publishing House published more than 90 text books and books and works by outstanding artists.
Outputs produced are regularly sent to British National Library, transferred to the National Library of Georgia for a scholarship purposes, and are promoted at regional, national and international book festivals. During the reporting period, the Publishing House has published 327 works including; 28 collections of scientific-research works, 56 books (including 4 electronic books, 15 textbooks, 9 guidebooks and 4 monographs, and 6 special collections of annual conference reports.

While the Panel were impressed with the volume of activity and the range of outputs of the Publishing House, it was somewhat less persuaded that the content and quality of its publications, aimed at the scientific-research community, were consistent in meeting the required standards of international of research, or were sufficiently well enough focused upon the topics which were likely to attract the interest of the international research community. The Panel recommends that, in order to fulfill its mission and vision, the University should seek to significantly increase the quality of its research and publishing activities to ensure that it fully corresponds with international standards.

On the basis of the evidence seen by the panel and the statements made in the SelfEvaluation Report, the University's processes and procedures for funding research are accessible, transparent and fair, this was affirmed by staff in the meeting that the Panel held with Academic Staff during the site-visit. The University has a set of formal processes for recruiting new academic staff, this includes open competition for new or vacant posts. Recruitment to roles that include research responsibilities on the basis of a competition overseen by the University Competition Committee and the Academic Council, and external experts of the relevant field are involved in this process in order to ensure the objectivity and impartiality of this process. The University offers peer support from established and experienced scientific-research and artistic-creative staff to new researchers and disseminates information about external funding opportunities for research activities and the improvement of research infrastructure. The University also offers researchers help with

the administration of grants and in the submission of reports. The University's ScientificResearch Institute has an explicit role in fostering the involvement of students in scientific

scholarships, local and international conferences, scientific-research events and, additionally, to search for funds and/or scholarships for scientific-research activities.

In the view of the Panel, this aspect substantially complies with requirements.

Evidences/indicators

 Self-Evaluation Report

 Rules of Assessment of Teaching, Creative and Scientific-Research Activity

 Statutes of the Dimitri Janelidze Scientific-Research Institute

 Meeting with Scientific-Research Institution, Dissertation Council and Publishing House Meeting with Academic Staff (including invited teaching staff)

Recommendations:

The Panel recommends that, in order to fulfil its mission and vision, the University should seek to significantly increase the quality of its research and publishing activities to ensure that it fully corresponds with international standards.

Suggestions:

No suggestions for further improvement

Best Practices (if applicable):

Not applicable

Evaluation

☐ Complies with requirements

☑ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

6.3. Evaluation of Research Activities

 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 The evaluation and analysis of the effectiveness and quality of scientific-research and creative-arts is the responsibility of the Quality Assurance Office that, in turn, reports to, and prepares recommendations for, the Academic Council. In doing so, the Quality Assurance office collects, collates and analyses data on the range of scientific-research and creative-arts activities on an annual basis. Through the deliberative function of the Academic Council and its consideration of the recommendations made by the Quality Assurance Office, the evaluation results are used for the further development of the University's scientificresearch and creative activities. In the view of the Panel, this aspect substantially complies with requirements.
Evidences/indicators ⬚ Self-Evaluation Report
⬚ Statue of the Quality Assurance Office
Recommendations: No recommendations
Suggestions: No suggestions for further improvement
Best Practices (if applicable): Not applicable
Evaluation ☑ 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 institution owns two large buildings in the center of the capital of Tbilisi. The main building, which houses the main administrative units of the University together with a range of learning and teaching facilities, was originally constructed in the 19th century and has national cultural heritage status. Inside the building, an elegant foyer provides for direct access to one of the University's two performance, so the entrance to the University creates a welcoming theatrical atmosphere. The building houses two theatre auditoria, one with a seating capacity of 170 and a larger one that has a capacity of 300. Both of these theatres are in a very good state of repair and are fully equipped to a high standard of specification. A comprehensive renovation of the entire building has been recently completed to a high standard. The classrooms, teaching studios and rehearsal spaces contained with the building provide sizable and comfortable spaces for learning and teaching and (as appropriate) for practical sessions. There are also storage facilities for props, costumes and scenery. Administrative offices are separated by function. The fully renovated sanitary and hygienic units are new and fully comply with contemporary requirements. From its meeting with Technical and Learning Support Staff, the Panel learned about the ways in which learning support facilities (such as the Learning Studio) were managed and fully integrated into the curricula. The Panel were impressed with both the quality and utility of these resources but

also appreciated the careful planning that was undertaken on an annual basis to ensure that the needs of all students could be fully met by the resources, and the associated instruction and technical support required. The Panel commend the institution for the careful way in which specialist Learning resources (such as the learning studio) are integrated into curriculum activity as a key aspect of student learning. The Panel commends the institution for the high level of quality and utility of the physical resources that the University is providing for its students, which it viewed as comparable to those of leading European conservatoires.

The second building is also furbished to a high standard and houses a range of facilities for film and television production, including film studios, sound studios and editing suites. These facilities are also fitted out to a high standard of specification and respond to students' needs. All necessary documents, seen by the panel, are in full compliance with national legislation. Because of the historical status of the main building, the renovation was undertaken under the control of several Governmental Agencies. The Monument Protection Agency was in charge of drawings and reconstruction process that has ensured that the necessary drawings and certifications are completed to prepared to a high level of competence. In addition the University provided the Panel with all the necessary financial documents for the maintenance of the building. These documents are strictly controlled by various Governmental agencies. In the view of the Panel, the facilities provided by the University enable it to achieve the goals stated in its mission statement and more than adequately responds to the requirements of its educational programmes and research activities, its existing number of students and planned future enrolment. Likewise, the Panel is satisfied that standards of the sanitary units, the availability of natural light, and the central heating system are all conducive to the operation of the institution.

The building has an uninterruptible power supply, water supply and centralized ventilation and air heating–conditioning system. The two buildings have several emergencies exits, with artificial light and all the necessary emergency signs. Evacuation plans are clearly displayed on each floor of the building, which provide a clear diagram of the emergency exit process. The medicine cabinet is also regularly re-stocked and updated and has all of the medicines, materials and equipment required by first aid procedures. Fire prevention is fully computerized and is controlled on a 24 hour-basis by a fire protection department. The security staff, employed by the University, are highly professional and though many parts of the campus (externally and internally) are covered by security video recording, this is currently in a process of development (following on from the significant refurbishment of the main building). Currently, not every area of the campus is visible to security cameras, this is an on-going process that is scheduled to be completed in the near future. The Panel is satisfied that health and safety of students and staff is adequately protected within the institution.

However, given the nature of the practical training that forms a significant part of the institutions provision, the Panel was also mindful of the health and safety issues that are related directly to the student learning experience and, by extension, to the professional environments into which the students seek to enter following graduation. From its meeting with Technical and Learning Support Staff, the Panel formed the view that, currently, there may be insufficient attention being paid to issues of health and safety within the formal curricula – either in respect to routinely informing students about safe working practices within the practical components of their programmes or in respect to their future fields of professional employment. The Panel recommends that the University pay particular attention to this matter.

While recognizing the significant improvements that have recently been made in the main building of the University, including the fully compliant sanitary units, there are still some aspects of the building that are problematical in terms of access, these include moving between different floors of the building and access to some classrooms, laboratories and

administrative facilities. The Panel recommends that the University seeks to redress these matters as quickly as possible within the resource constraints within which it operates.

In the view of the Panel, this aspect substantially complies with requirements.

Evidences/indicators

- ☐ Self-Evaluation Report
- ☐ Tour of Facilities
- ☐ Meeting with Technical and Learning Support Staff
- ☐ Statute of the Security Department
- ☐ Cultural Heritage Certificate
- ☐ Fire Safety Certificate
- ☐ Extracts from the Public Registry
- ☐ Government Resolution on Building Repair
- ☐ Architectural plans and drawings

Recommendations:

The Panel recommends that the University ensures that all its programmes (where appropriate) include a formal component that informs students, at an appropriate point in their programme, about the specific health and safety matters, and safe working practices, within the practical components of their programmes and (where appropriate) in respect to their intended fields of professional employment.

The Panel recommends that the University seeks to redress any outstanding matters of disabled access within its campus, to ensure that all areas that students need to access are appropriately modified. The Panel believes that these matters need to be attended to as quickly as possible while also recognizing the resource constraints within which it operates.

Suggestions:

No suggestions for further improvement

Best Practices (if applicable):

The Panel commends the institution for the high level of quality and utility of the physical resources that the University is providing for its students, which it viewed as comparable to those of leading European conservatoires.

The Panel commend the institution for the careful way in which specialist Learning resources (such as the learning studio) are integrated into curriculum activity as a key aspect of student learning.

Evaluation

☐ Complies with requirements

☑ Substantially complies with requirements

☐Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

7.2. Library resources

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The reference materials held by the University Library is housed and accessed within two locations; the Study-Scientific Library, which is housed within the main University building, and the Video Centre, which is housed within the second building – where the film and television programmes are mainly located. The main library of the University the StudyScientific Library. It contains an extensive collection of books and journals and is adjoined by a reading/study room. The reading room is large, brightly lit and is equipped with 12 computer workstations (with internet connection). The library catalogue is fully computerized. The Video Centre library collection houses recordings (DVD and VHS) of performing and audio-visual arts (film and television recordings). These reference materials are organized in a thematic way, representing the lives and creative works of famous artists, plays, films, television shows, teaching methodological and illustration materials. The total number of items held by the main library and the audio-visual library (as of 2017) comprises 91,545 units. Including books (74,635) other works, including diplomas, dissertations, and journals (8,616), non-book items, including microfilms, DVD, and VHS cassettes, etc., (4,334) and textbooks, relevant to the syllabi of educational programmes (27,936).

The University's Statute of the Library sets out its general regulations and its purposes and functions, etc. The Library resources are constantly updated and are closely tied to the learning needs of each programme. Students and staff are provided with access to international databases. Library staff are appropriately qualified and the students that the Panel met with during the site-visit were unanimous in their praise of both the helpfulness and expertise of the Library staff. The Library is integrated into international library networks and students and staff also have access to a range of other public and academic libraries in Tbilisi, including the National Library. The Library is also responsible for the translation of foreign language textbooks into the Georgian language and issuing them as reference books, the Library works closely with academic staff to identify which books should be prioritized for translation. The Library also organizes and conducts training other events related to library activity, including the induction of new students into library usage. The Library also conducts its own research into the satisfaction of the users with the quality of services provided by the Library, the utility of the reading halls and subscriptions to journals and databases, from its analysis of this feedback proposals are developed regarding service enhancement and these are presented it to the library administration.

In the view of the Panel, this aspect complies with requirements

Evidences/indicators

- Self-Evaluation Report
- Statute of the Library
- Meeting with Head of Library and Head of IT Department
- Meeting with Students (BA & MA)
- Meeting with Doctoral Students
- Meeting with Scientific-Research Institute, Dissertation Council and Publishing House

Recommendations:

No recommendations

Suggestions:

No suggestions for further development

Best Practices (if applicable):

Not applicable

Evaluation

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

7.3 Information Resources

- 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

Information resources and internet services at the University are managed by the IT and Software Department. The Department reports to the Rector of University and the Head of Administration. It is charged with maintaining the of functioning of University web page, networks, internet access and servers, as well as to provide support to staff in relation to IT issues. Within its raft of responsibilities, is the '*flawless functioning of University information servers is one of the necessary conditions for continuous process of business*'. The University has recently developed an Information Technology Strategy, in partnership with an external IT company. Based upon a university-wide consultation process, the strategy has been developed with a vision to improve the connectivity of discrete IT systems and to improve and expand student-facing information resources, including the development of a virtual learning environment (VLE) provisionally titled 'iLearn'. The Panel were very impressed with the scope and purposes of the Strategy, which includes the development of; an electronic system for the management of the student learning process, a united centralized electronic system for case proceedings and documentation, virtual lectures, computer-based exams for theoretical courses and other features of blended learning.

One further aspect of the Information Technology Strategy, is the '*fundamental reconstruction and permanent renewal of the [University] web page*'. The current web page is comprehensive in terms of the information that it publicly provides in respect of the University's management structure, key committees and processes as well as information regarding its study programmes. However, the Panel noted that, at present, only a limited amount of this information is translated into English. The institutions seven-year action-plan envisage that the complete renewal of the web-site will continue throughout the planning period. The Panel recommends that the University populates the English language version of its web-site with significantly more content, particularly in relation to its academic provision so that the University can better meet its targets in relation to international student recruitment.

In the view of the Panel, this aspect substantially complies with requirements.

Evidences/indicators

- ☐ Self-Evaluation Report
- ☐ Meeting with Head of Library and IT Department

☐ Development Strategy

Evaluation

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

Recommendations:

The Panel recommends that the University populates the English language version of its web-site with significantly more content, particularly in relation to its academic provision so that the University can better meet its targets in relation to international student recruitment.

Suggestions:

No suggestions for further improvement

Best Practices (if applicable):

Not applicable

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 requirement.

The main financial resource of the University is derived from the budget allocation from the Ministry of Culture and Sport and student tuition fees. The overall annual budget of the University for the year 2018 is GEL 4,825,000, over the last five years the University budget has remained stable. However, there was a significant one-off increase in the University's budget in 2016 due to an addition grant being made for the refurbishment of the main university building. Within the framework of its anticipated annual budget the University develops a three-year action plan. The University's seven-year action plan assumes some increase in financial resource based upon its own income from a variety of sources. The Panel took the view that the current financial plans of the University were realistic and achievable.

In terms of financial planning, the University has a defined set of financial regulations. Draft budgets are prepared by faculties, and all other budgetary units of the institution, and agreed by the Representative Council and submitted to the Ministry of Culture and Sport in August, the University receives its confirmed budget in the following November – a year in advance of the budget year – which allows time for any adjustments to be made in the institutions detailed financial planning as a result of any decreases or increases in the requested budget. Financial reporting within the University in undertaken on a monthly basis and all budget holders are required to attend these meetings in order to comment on any variations in planned spending and receive updated information on the progress of their own budget. In the distribution of its budget to faculties, the University takes into account the actual and varying actual costs of tuition and individual faculty budgets are weighted accordingly. The budget also takes account – over a longer period – of the depreciation of the technical

equipment used within the educational process, including computer equipment. The budget also provides ring-fenced funding for scientific research and library resources. During its meeting with Representatives of the Finance Office, the Panel learned that training was provided for new budget holders and they were also invited to sit-in on the monthly financial reporting meetings prior to them taking up their new responsibility.

The Finance Office uses the ORIS accountancy software (as required by the Ministry) to manage its finances. Regular updates on the Universities financial position are provided to, and considered by, the Representative Council. The Panel asked to see an example of the way in which this information was presented to the Council. While the information provided was detailed and exhaustive it was presented in the format that is produced by the software, in the format required by the Ministry. While the Panel were confident that the information provided in this way was detailed and accurate it did not think that that the format of presentation was appropriate to non-expert readers, such as the staff and student members of the Representative Council. The Panel suggests that the Finance Office develop an alternative summary format for its presentation of budget information to the Representative Council that is more 'user-friendly' to non-expert readers. Overall, the Panel were satisfied that the University has an effective system of accountability, financial management and control.

In the view of the Panel, this aspect complies with requirements.

Evidences/indicators

☐ Self-Evaluation Report
☐ Meeting with Representatives of the Finance Office
☐ Summary spreadsheet of the University budget for 2016 and 2017
☐

Recommendations:

No recommendation

Suggestions:

The Panel suggests that the Finance Office develop an alternative summary format specifically for its presentation of budgetary information to the Representative Council that is more 'user-friendly' to non-expert readers.

Best Practices (if applicable):

Not applicable.

Evaluation

☑ Complies with requirements
☐ Substantially complies with requirements
☐ Partially complies with requirements
☐ Does not comply with requirements

Appendixes