



განათლების ხარისხის განვითარების ეროვნული ცენტრი
NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

Report on Grigol Robakidze University Authorization

Expert Panel Members

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Tbilisi
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Authorization Report Resume

General information on the educational institution

Grigol Robakidze University (GRUNI) is a private university established in 1992, first in the name of “Alma Mater”. It is focused mainly on the social sciences and runs a dentistry programme. GRUNI has about 1.500 students at the Bachelor, Master and PhD level in 21 educational programmes. It employs about 450 staff, out of which 160 are academic. 130 academics have decided to be affiliated with GRUNI. There are three campuses: in Didi Dighomi, Saburtalo and Batumi.

Brief overview of the authorization site visit

The panel spent about five days with the university. The first two days were conducted on the Batumi campus, the subsequent days in Tbilisi. Both Tbilisi campuses were physically inspected.

The panel conducted interviews with the university leadership, deans, programme managers and the administration. Conversations were held with professors, students, alumni and employers. The infrastructure, including IT, electronic resources and library was inspected.

The panel held an additional meeting with the senior management to clear up final questions.

The site visits were well organized and GRUNI was helpful throughout the entire process. The SER provided a good on-paper assessment of the organization.

Overview of the HEI's compliance with standards

Out of the seven standards, GRUNI is in full compliance with three standards, in substantial compliance with a further three and in partial compliance with one standard (research). A dissenting opinion considering the evaluation of standard 6 is expressed by expert L. Shatberashvili, who considers GRUNI in substantial compliance 6.1

Summary of Recommendations

GRUNI needs to become more aware of its strategic direction and the use of the Batumi campus. It is developing a quality culture, but should work more strongly towards involvement of all stakeholders and transparency. The teaching materials should fall more in line with the National Qualification Framework, but they should likewise be developed more strongly by the teaching staff. GRUNI needs to strengthen its research culture.

These are in particular:

- GRUNI should become clearer on the role of satellite campuses and the profile of the university.

- GRUNI must submit a credible plan for its further development. In particular, the opening of a medical programme needs to be part of a meaningful strategic plan.
- GRUNI should more visibly involve all structural units (including Batumi Representation) into the QA including evaluation and improvement of educational programmes.
- The planning of student numbers has to be done separately for each programme and location as much as possible without infringing flexibility to address changing demand patterns.
- Data collection and analysis has to differentiate more strongly between regional and local units.
- GRUNI should provide the survey results, assessments and recommendations to increase transparency for the stakeholders.
- GRUNI should devise a more participatory policy for a regular updating of programmes.
- There should be trainings for the academic personnel to learn the design of syllabi in line with the National Qualification Framework, in particular with respect to learning outcomes.
- GRUNI should update teaching materials in some syllabi.
- GRUNI must strive more strongly to transfer the staff management processes into the Batumi representation.
- The Batumi representation must be brought to the Tbilisi levels with respect to the provision of information on international exchanges.
- GRUNI needs to be more stringent on its research priorities and needs a policy for their promotion.
- GRUNI needs to broaden the international connections in (at least some) fields of its research.
- Together with the implementation of research productivity evaluation system, the university should also develop and implement the system to monitor and ensure the quality of research.
- With respect to the international databases, GRUNI has to establish more and better training formats, which should simultaneously address the awareness amongst students and staff of these databases.
- It is desirable that the IT infrastructure (in particular, computer hardware and software) were upgraded at Batumi campus.

Summary of Suggestions

The panel has made a number of smaller suggestions to improve the overall well-functioning areas of GRUNI. One bigger suggestion is an improvement to the staff training to catch up fully on the training needs; the other set of suggestions revolves around student support services – these are generally good but can improve even further.

These are in particular:

- A sharpening of the mission may help its usage as an effective guide for planning.
- The mission statement should be clearer about the main directions of GRUNI's work.
- GRUNI should become more active in sharing the mission throughout the organisation.
- GRUNI should use the PDCA-framework more systematically.
- There should be a stronger separation of functions, for instance, QA and programme leadership must be separated.
- GRUNI should strive more strongly towards an institutional approach that relies less on the strength of personalities.
- GRUNI should ensure to improve that the content of the questionnaire with the taking into consideration of the Batumi representation and they should analyze results of survey separately according to the region.
- The role of the QA should be reviewed with respect to its involvement in the planning process.
- Awareness about ethics at the university should be raised among students.
- Each professor should create the syllabus of the discipline they lead.
- GRUNI should encourage the use of the anti-plagiarism programme "Turnitin" in every courses; and this programme should be popularized among students (maybe by conducting more trainings).
- GRUNI should develop more detailed methodologies for creating individualized education programmes regarding each type of special educational need separately.
- GRUNI should consider to have an appeal submitted through the electronic base "Nexus", in order to simplify the procedure.
- The institution should elaborate a better thought-out plan for the training of the academic and administrative staff offering more possibilities for staff improvement.
- Initiating of more international project in order to involve the university's staff in international cooperation and exchange programmes.
- GRUNI should develop a strategy to ensure students' overall involvement in extracurricular activities; to figure out more "passive" students and implement mechanisms for their

increasing participation in the different educational, sport or cultural activities.

- The HEI needs to implement more services for Batumi students (such as sport, cultural); and it needs to increase their participation in the international mobility programmes. This holds true for all locations and programmes.
- For more transparency GRUNI should ensure that sanctions imposed for the violation of the tuition fee schedule as well as criteria for obtaining scholarships for high academic performance are visibly recorded in the relevant document(s).
- GRUNI should define types of project proposals. Such a distinction may increase the diversity of projects. The importance of encouraging mechanisms for increasing students' initiatives and participation in additional activities should also be emphasized in the politic and strategic development of student support service.
- GRUNI should measure the number of students who have participated in the events/projects. The student support service should have precise information if most of the projects are initiated by the similar groups of students or the number of involved students really represent the whole student population of GRUNI.
- GRUNI should develop policy to support students with academic difficulties.
- GRUNI could make more use of its linkages with the crime research lab and the website, which links into local administrative bodies. This could be widened into field (action) research activities.
- GRUNI should introduce a mandatory membership of external experts in the Certification-Expert Committee in order to improve the quality of the dissertations.
- GRUNI should increase the hours devoted to teaching methods in the PhD programme.
- GRUNI needs to emphasize the need for research more strongly, for instance by committing greater resources into the research fund or by incentivizing research activities more strongly.
- It would be beneficial if research units publicly presented/published annual activity reports of their activities and obtained results.
- Financial support of research units and institutes should be associated to productivity and effective output.
- It is desirable that GRUNI provides more practical training-courses on the use of electronic databases for the personnel of the library and for the improvement of their overall technical skills.
- GRUNI should provide an addition of the module for the students' and staff's electronic survey and statistical data procession to the Nexus base.

Summary of the Best Practices

The panel has observed a good number of best practices. They arise from the high involvement of professors and staff. ECTS coordinators regularly monitor workloads. Students receive regular feedback through a digital system. Employees are well integrated into the organisation, and are offered trainings according to revealed needs. An ombudsman system takes up students' grievances. In general, GRUNI takes good care of its students and considers special needs and extenuating social circumstances. GRUNI has excellent ideas to fulfil the third mission of a university, by linking into schools, communities and local administration.

These are in particular:

- Establishing of ECTS coordinators at the university level as well as at the level of the academic schools.
- GRUNI has a good mechanism to provide the feedback on evaluations through the "Nexus" and/or special section of the examination notebook, the student receives information about the essence of the error that she/he has made, which facilitates her/his academic progress.
- The HEI has established a very good procedure for adaptation of new employees, which provides an optimal incorporation of new colleagues into the area of the university.
- GRUNI has established an ECTS coordinator at the university and at the faculty level, who regularly checks academic workloads for student and staff.
- GRUNI intends to establish the position of students' ombudsman. Such an institution will allow a better protected communication between aggrieved students and the personnel.
- The law faculty has a practice of promoting students' participation in voluntary activities (such as helping old people), which aims to foster moral and social values, also to develop the sense of national identity.
- GRUNI has implemented the project "TEEN ACADEMY" - students are carrying out different activities in collaboration with school pupils, which contributes to a better linkage between two educational stages (school and university). This may also increase pupils' awareness about university life and importance of getting high education.
- The law faculty also has a project "Become a politician" - which is carried out by students of GRUNI together with school pupils. They are visiting parliamentary committees and become acquainted with the parliament's work. On the one hand, it is a good opportunity for law students to get more practical knowledge, on the other hand, it increases the civic education of pupils and students about public office.
- The regulations for the PhD programme are very detailed and thought out.

- GRUNI is a member of library consortium and requires information about citation index and h index of its academic personnel.
- There is an internet consulting portal for advising civil servants, which is created on the base of the school of Public Management and Politics. The portal has two main goals: serve the public – invest its knowledge in the society, gives the students the possibility to apply practically their theoretical knowledge and generates new research ideas.
- The Forensic Teaching and Expertise Centre is equipped with modern technology and intensively engaged in expert activities and practical/applied research. During seven years the Centre received 89 orders for conducting expertise. This is a good example of economic using of the university teaching and research resources for supporting the investigative procedures in Georgia.
- As health and safety are minimum regulations, GRUNI can only be commended for achieving very high standards in these fields and having their observation in the institution's DNA.
- Practices, which prove to be exceptionally effective and which may become a benchmark or a model for other higher education institutions

Summary Table

	Standard	Compl ies wit h Req uire me nts	Subs tanti ally com plies with requi reme nts	Parti ally Com plies with Req uire ments	Does not Compl y with Req uire ment s
1.	Mission and strategic development of HEI	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.1	Mission of HEI	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2	Strategic development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Organizational structure and management of HEI	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.1	Organizational structure and management	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.2	Internal quality assurance mechanisms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.3	Observing principles of ethics and integrity	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Educational Programmes	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.1	Design and development of educational programmes	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.2	Structure and content of educational programmes	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.3	Assessment of learning outcomes	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Staff of the HEI	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.1	Staff management	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2	Academic/Scientific and invited Staff workload	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Students and their support services	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.1	The Rule for obtaining and changing student status, the recognition of education, and student rights	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.2	Student support services	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Research, development and/or other creative work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.1	Research activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.2	Research support and internationalization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
In6.3	Evaluation of research activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Material, information and financial resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.1	Material resources	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.2	Library resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.3	Information resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.4	Financial resources	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signature of expert panel members

1. Jochen Zimmermann (Chair)
2. Zurab Alkhanishvili
3. Ketevan Aptarashvili
4. Lily Shatberashvili
5. Natia Tchigvaria
6. Nazi Pharsadanishvili

Handwritten signatures of the expert panel members, including Jochen Zimmermann, Zurab Alkhanishvili, Ketevan Aptarashvili, Lily Shatberashvili, Natia Tchigvaria, and Nazi Pharsadanishvili.

Compliance of the Authorization Applicant HEI with the Authorization Standard Components

1. Mission and strategic development of GRUNI

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

1.1 Mission of GRUNI
Mission Statement of the HEI corresponds to Georgia's and European higher education goals, defines its role and place within higher education area and society, both locally and internationally.
<p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</p> <p><i>GRUNI's mission statement defines its role locally and internationally as a catalyst for the formation of a new Georgian and worldwide public profile; it addresses the role of higher education in developing active members of the society, knowledge creation and dissemination, facilitating students personal development and ensuring their competitiveness on the labour market as it clearly focuses on a student-centred learning culture. As an academic institution, it defines appropriate outcomes, but it remains weak on characterizing a general academic profile. However, the mission statement keeps quiet on the integration of the different campuses, and it remains too vague with respect to the study programmes of the university. It therefore defines the characteristics of the type of the institution but the main directions of its work need to be characterized more precisely.</i></p> <p><i>The mission statement is shared in parts by the community of the institution. The middle management and the administration is aware of the mission; academic and administrative staff as well as students are not overly familiar with the precise document but its essence. Therefore, they are in general support of the overall objectives framed in the mission statement.</i></p>
<p>Evidences/indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mission Statement of the institution • Interviews
<p>Recommendations:</p> <p>GRUNI should become clearer on the role of satellite campuses and the profile of the university.</p>
<p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sharpening of the mission may help its usage as an effective guide for planning; • The mission statement should be clearer about the main directions of GRUNI's work; • GRUNI should become more active in sharing the mission throughout the organisation.
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p> <p>./.</p>
<p>Evaluation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements</p>

1.2 Strategic Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ HEI has a strategic development (7-year) and an action plans (3-year) in place. ○ HEI contributes to the development of the society, 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.
<p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</p> <p><i>GRUNI's submitted strategic plan is in line with the goals formulated by the organization. The goals flow from GRUNI's mission and formulated priorities. The strategic plan could be a touch more detailed on the goals and their time frame, but action plan outlines in very detailed form achievable, time-bound, and measurable goals. GRUNI uses a recognizable process for drafting its strategic development and action plans. While strategic planning is somewhat by its very nature rather top-down, GRUNI ensures that the process actively involves staff, students, employers and other stakeholders. During the interviews with staff, outside stakeholders and students confirmed that they were consulted in the strategic process.</i></p> <p><i>The written strategic development plan and an action plan cover most aspects vital to GRUNI's operation: They include, inter alia, its institutional development, quality assurance, planning and implementation of educational programmes. The action plan clearly describes future activities, sets timeframes for their implementation together with resources needed for their implementation.</i></p> <p><i>However, in the interviews with the deans, the quality assurance and the international function it has become evident that GRUNI also pursues initiatives beyond the planning documents, namely opening a medical programme in addition to its dentistry programme. The interviewees saw this as a logical addition to the medical profile of the university. However, the panel feels that establishing a medical programme is a major undertaking that should have been addressed in the planning documents. The mismatch of the submitted documents with the stated intentions reduces the value of the otherwise well drafted documentation.</i></p> <p><i>GRUNI implements social, cultural, economic, environmental and other programmes and events. The submitted strategic and action plans cover the vital aspects of a broader socio-economic setting including lifelong learning, social issues, and research.</i></p> <p><i>There is a planning cycle, in which GRUNI proposes to monitor the implementation of the strategic and action plans. The interviews have shown a commitment to the PDCA-framework; there is, though little evidence that this has been systematically used.</i></p>
<p>Evidences/indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interview results ● Strategic development (7-year) and action (3-year) plans;
<p>Recommendations:</p> <p>GRUNI must submit a credible plan for its further development. In particular, the opening of a medical programme needs to be part of a meaningful strategic plan.</p>
<p>Suggestions:</p> <p>GRUNI should use the PDCA-framework more systematically.</p>
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p> <p>./.</p>

Evaluation

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

2. Organizational Structure and Management of HEI

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

2.1 Organizational Structure and Management

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

GRUNI ensures the effective implementation of its activities. The results are very much driven by the personality and acumen of its rector. The formal structures lag substantially. This is also due to the fact that some people (e.g. in the medical school) fulfil roles that serve as 'checks and balances' such as head of QA and programme head. The organizational structure formally allows the effective implementation of activities defined in its strategic plan, and achievement of its goals. All main university functions are recognizable in the organization. In the practiced setting the organization might not withstand the loss of its key personnel.

The HR function has started to apply IT to measure the productivity of GRUNI's administrative staff. While a systematic collection of activities takes places, GRUNI is only at the starting point to turn this data into a productivity analysis. This holds for the functional units in research and administration (such as QA...) as well as for teaching. It needs emphasizing that this assessment of an input-output-relationship remains a difficult task throughout the higher education system.

Since the University is a Ltd firm, according to the Law of Georgia on Entrepreneurs, the authority and management of the institution belongs to the director (rector). The procedures concerning election of the management of GRUNI are regulated by several documents: by University Internal Regulations (Art. 4.1-4.4), by Statute on Regulation of Educational-Scientific Activities, by the Regulations of the Academic Committee (Art. 2), by Statute of Dissertation Board and Doctoral Studies (Chapter V, Art. 22). The procedures are very clearly defined, are transparent and corresponding with law. The Academic Committee includes apart from representatives of academic staff also students. The members of the Academic Committee that represent academic staff are elected by the Assembly of academic schools, and the representatives of students by the student self-government. The head of the Quality Assurance Service is appointed by the Rector; the Dissertation Board consists of the full and associated professors of the school, the chairperson of the Dissertation Board is the Rector of the University.

The interviews showed that the representatives of management bodies are well informed about the

procedure of election / appointment to the management bodies, and they know the respective requirements and are implementing them in line with legislation.

The Strategic Development and Marketing Research Service is a newly established unit. During the interviews, it became clear that GRUNI does not yet have an employee in the marketing direction at this stage, but they plan to strengthen this direction from September.

HEI has personnel management policy and procedures that ensure the implementation of educational process and other activities defined in its strategic plan. It should be mentioned, the overtime work practice was not actively utilized in the university. Staff were content to have their overtime work covered by bonuses.

Administration trainings are held at least twice a year and are planned according to preliminary surveys. The administration's activity is monitored by the HR using a specialized software. GRUNI uses financial/material incentives as well as social motivations.

With respect to the E-documents flow, it was established in March and since then has been tested, but from the interviews it seemed that its use is not really established. GRUNI has approved an Instruction on Rules of Proceedings (11 pages), which defines rules of processing for all documents circulated within the institution. We could convince ourselves that both administrative and academic personnel and the students know about this new electronic document processing system.

The university carried out the official registry of educational institution on the basis of the Regulation approved by the National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement on Registry and other relevant legal acts. This is the obligatory procedure for all educational institutions operating in Georgia.

GRUNI's action plan includes a risk assessment. It has a plan -- in a reasonable limitation -- to ensure its functioning in the case of adverse events. The action plan considers the usually discussed risks.

GRUNI has a clear perspective on internationalization. It has developed an internalization policy and supports international mobility of students and staff. It does not distinguish clearly enough between ad hoc activities (such as excursions and short term lecturer stays) and more structural measures (such as long term exchanges). On the latter, the results are rather spasmodic and not yet systematic. Financial constraints hem the international expansion in the dentistry programme. GRUNI seems to place high weight on the international expansion for a medical programme, which the panel views critically (see Standard I).

There are activities for the implementation of joint projects, such as summer schools. Very laudable are the activities in Batumi in the field of law. The SER documents some participation in international research activities. They remain limited, and they are not the result of a systematically planned activity.

Evidences/indicators

- Functions of structural units of the institution;
- International student and staff attraction and recruitment plan;
- Interview results;
- Mechanisms for monitoring management effectiveness and evaluation system;
- Mechanisms for international cooperation and internationalization and assessment of their effectiveness;
- Relevant statistical data;
- Structure of the HEI;
- Student and staff survey results.

Recommendations:
./.
Suggestions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be a stronger separation of functions, for instance, QA and programme leadership must be separated. • GRUNI should strive more strongly towards an institutional approach that relies less on the strength of personalities.
Best Practices (if applicable):
./.
Evaluation
<input type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements
2.2 Internal Quality Assurance Mechanisms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Institution effectively implements internal quality assurance mechanisms. Leadership of the institution constantly works to strengthen quality assurance function and promotes establishment of quality culture in the institution. ○ HEI has a mechanism for planning student body, which will give each student an opportunity to get a high quality education.
<p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</p> <p><i>GRUNI undertook the self-evaluation according to the main requirements. Overall, the SER was not overly analytical but it is still possible to use the results as an action-planning and monitoring device. The institution bases decisions on QA results, but this is not the case everywhere throughout the organisation.</i></p> <p><i>The institution is effectively involved in the implementation of internal quality assurance mechanisms with the following main structural units:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Employment Coordinator,</i> • <i>Financial Services,</i> • <i>Human Resources Management,</i> • <i>IT centre,</i> • <i>Quality Assurance Service,</i> • <i>Scientific Research Management Centre,</i> • <i>Strategic Development and Marketing Research Services,</i> • <i>Student Service and Support Services</i> <p><i>Interviews have shown an active and eager administration but less engagement of students, librarians, visiting lecturers, other academic personnel and employers in core quality assurance mechanisms. It is of concern that evaluation results and recommendations are sometimes not even shared. For example, students are involved in quality assurance processes and provide data. However, they are hardly involved in the analysis of the QA cycle. The panel acknowledges, though, that channels of transferring information (such as evaluations) exist. They can serve as functional equivalents. Part of the staff is constricted in providing feedback about their satisfaction, and about possible individual improvement initiatives or ideas.</i></p> <p><i>It is noteworthy that the surveys conducted for quality assessment and the obtained results are not analyzed separately in Batumi and, consequently, there are no specific recommendations forthcoming. Despite the fact that the Batumi branches confirms that they receive recommendations for further development from the quality assurance service and they also send written reports about their needs, the representatives find it difficult to provide the specific examples of the abovementioned. Also, the</i></p>

visiting lecturers and the academic staff of Batumi branch are less involved in the process of programme and syllabus development and improvement.

ICT support system to the QA system across the organisation seems to be well coordinated and efficient. Specifically, the e-learning programme - "Nexus", which provides obtaining information on academic progress, improves the quality of communication between students and professors (within the electronic programme).

Quality Assurance Service has planned activities, trainings for continuous assessment and development of educational processes and resources. Individual projects such as introducing English language teaching across courses and improving the methodological quality of teaching are beginning to show positive effects. However, it should be noted that GRUNI will need further efforts in the direction of continuous development of personnel and their increased engagement. For example, there is a mechanism for certification of personnel to increase academic engagement, though the interviews showed that involvement is at times low.

There are not yet wider data based analyses relating to market demands, dynamics or employment data that are taken into account for study programme relevance. Targets, in terms of student numbers, for individual programmes are not clearly set, and seem not to be based on labour market data. In terms of strategic planning decisions, the institution overly depends on generally known or assumed academic programme trends and competition analyses, which might pose serious risks for realistically devising quotas for individual programmes, as well as new programme planning strategies and investment.

A more ambitious international and research orientation will demand a robust and stable as well as overall comprehensive internal quality assurance system.

In order to encourage students to improve their academic achievements, GRUNI assists in their involvement in international conferences, international mobility and financing. Also, there are arrangements such as a Dean's hour, individual plans, etc., which are used to improve academic performance.

There are further regulations such as the creation of an expert committee, which can comprise academic personnel representatives of the University, as well as, outside persons including foreign experts. The effectiveness of such a committee can only be assessed after it has become operational in the future.

GRUNI has mechanisms for planning the student body, in which the QA is involved. In the process of planning the student contingent, the quality assurance service takes into account the University mission, academic, material-technical resources, and determines the target marks. When planning a student contingency, GRUNI reasonably determines a target benchmark. During the day sessions, GRUNI intends to conduct 3.7 streams, for which there is a sufficient number of affiliated staff. However, the university will need appropriate resource for preserving and attracting academic personnel (including from foreign countries), in order to exclude the risks of existing personnel's departing to other HEIs.

Besides, in the case of increased student contingency, the peculiarities of the programme should be considered (laboratory, rooms). Labour market research, involving students in practical courses, internship or international exchange programmes, in case of almost doubling of students. The university should have a better overview of quality maintenance in the case of doubling of the number of students.

Evidences/indicators

- Interview results;
- Quality Assurance Mechanisms;
- Report on the results of the survey of students and staff;
- Student body planning mechanism, methodology, and benchmarks.

<p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GRUNI should more visibly involve all structural units (including Batumi Representation) into the QA including evaluation and improvement of educational programmes; The planning of student numbers has to be done separately for each programme and location as much as possible without infringing flexibility to address changing demand patterns; Data collection and analysis has to differentiate more strongly between regional and local units. GRUNI should provide the survey results, assessments and recommendations to increase transparency for the stakeholders.
<p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GRUNI should ensure to improve that the content of the questionnaire with the taking into consideration of the Batumi representation and they should analyze results of survey separately according to the region; The role of the QA should be reviewed with respect to its involvement in the planning process.
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p> <p>./.</p>
<p>Evaluation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements</p>
<p>2.3. Observing Principles of Ethics and Integrity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HEI has developed regulations and mechanisms that follow principles of ethics and integrity. Such regulations are publicly accessible. Institution has implemented mechanisms for detecting plagiarism and its prevention. HEI follows the principles of academic freedom.
<p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</p> <p><i>GRUNI has developed codes of ethics for students and staff. The first part of ethical code is focused on the ethical standards for university staff. It consists of eight sections: Preamble, main definitions, the goal of codes of ethics, the main ethical principles and collegial relationships, the member of academic network and students, academic/research ethics, the violation of these regulations, concluding statements.</i></p> <p><i>The second part of ethical code is centred on students' ethical responsibilities. There is a special sub-section for BA students and separate sub-section of codes of ethics is written for MA/PhD students. However, the content of codes of ethics for BA and MA/PhD students are very similar. As a result, because of the lack of logical differences between them, it is not clear what were the necessities and reasons of development codes of ethics separately for those two groups of students. Student codes of ethics contain information about behavioural ethics and academic ethics of students (plagiarism, falsification). But it also covers information about student rights and responsibilities regarding tuition fees, non-attendance, the rules of usage university resources, etc. Combining these general rules with academic and behavioural ethics seems to be logical and useful for students.</i></p> <p><i>In all parts of codes of ethics, the procedures/sanctions for responding to the violation of these regulations are clearly indicated. As a result, GRUNI meets the Requirement of having developed codes of ethics and procedures for responding to violations of these regulations. When someone violates codes of ethics, academic committee reviews the case and special warning will be addressed toward this person. In the case of repeated unethical behaviours, there are more strict sanctions such as</i></p>

administrative ones (quitting contract with the employee or quitting student status).

Students and university staff members were not indicating the existence of violation of ethical principles in the HEI during the interviews. Only one case of unethical behaviour was indicated by the members of academic committee. There was conflict (verbal insulting) between two professors which was discussed in the academic committee and members of it made relevant decision to this fact.

GRUNI constantly promotes ethical code and conducting norms. The staff and students are reading and signing the codes of ethics. Besides this, printed versions of codes of ethics are put in the library, at the information desks located in the university buildings, on the walls, etc. So, these kind of prevention mechanisms against violation codes of ethics are permanently provided by the university.

The HEI supports the prevention of plagiarism by using appropriate regulations. GRUNI has a developed special document about detecting plagiarism, prevention it and procedures for appropriate responses to the cases of plagiarism. There are indicated definitions of several types of plagiarism and standards for prohibiting it. It is defined what is included to be plagiarism and what kind standards should be followed not to be violated indicated ethical issue. University has developed the anti-plagiarism programme "Turnitin" which is widespread, but only at Master and Doctoral levels. This programme has been in use since January. Academic staff and PhD students mentioned that they know about this programme and participated in the trainings which were organized by the university aimed to provide information about this anti-plagiarism Programme. One lecturer from Batumi has even indicated that already used "Turnitin" for her articles.

While the University promotes information against plagiarism – the printed versions of above mentioned plagiarism document are widespread in the library and at the information desks –, some of the MA students who participated in the interviews did not know about the existence of an anti-plagiarism software. Most of the academic staff and students were saying that lecturer herself/himself was checking if students were using appropriate standards not to have plagiarism in their articles, BA/MA thesis, etc.

Information about Academic freedom is a part of university regulations. Here it is mentioned that representatives of academic personnel are guaranteed to carry out educational and research activities independently, based on professional ethics, without the intervention of the administration. "They define the thematics of the discipline, select the teaching-learning and evaluation methods, and take into consideration the context of the educational programme and, as a result of the discussions in the collegial community, adjust themselves certain components in the syllabus". In this context it is not relevant that in all syllabus teaching methods and evaluation criteria are absolutely the same, and in addition the academic personnel of Batumi branch mentioned during the interviews that they are not responsible for creating the syllabus of the course they lead. Syllabus are sent to them from university administration or they use syllabus of the previous course, and they consider this adequate.

GRUNI provides students with opportunities to elect non-compulsory academic components and to plan their education themselves. This holds true for all programmes closely inspected.

Academic personnel as well as students consider that the university follows the principles of academic freedom, as no obstruction to academic freedom of the university community was detected.

Evidences/indicators

- Access to relevant regulations;
- Accessibility of these rules and regulations;
- Activities carried out in order to introduce the codes of ethic and conduct, and promote

compliance; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Codes of ethics and conduct; • HEI's rules and regulations; • Interview results; • Procedures for addressing violations; • Procedures and mechanisms for the detection and prevention of plagiarism and for the due response procedures in case of its occurrence.
Recommendations: ./
Suggestions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness about ethics at the university should be raised among students; • Each professor should create the syllabus of the discipline they lead; • GRUNI should encourage the use of the anti-plagiarism programme "Turnitin" in every courses; and this programme should be popularized among students (maybe by conducting more trainings).
Best Practices (if applicable): ./
Evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X Complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements

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.
<i>GRUNI, when creating a programme, follows current Georgian legislation and European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) guidelines. The development of educational programmes in the University is regulated by the document - "Educational Program Standard".</i>
<i>Procedures of planning, designing and development of the programmes are presented in the document. The educational programme is developed by the Program Committee, which is established within the school. The programme head, who is also the Chairman of the Program Committee, is responsible for management and further development of the programme. The Quality Assurance service is involved in the curriculum development and approval process at study programme level. However, programme planning, designing, and development is not a participatory process. Employers and graduates are considered important stakeholders for curriculum development, although this does not lead to their active inclusion. Only academic personnel is involved in the development process. Launching a new programme lacks a stringent market-oriented approach. GRUNI is aware that the study programmes should be continuously updated and developed, but regarding to programmes, GRUNI does not have precise policy for the renewal and further development of its programmes according constantly changing environment.</i>

The university acknowledges that some study programmes have a very low number of enrolled students and considers their annulment; the institution has developed regulations and procedures for approving, amending, and annulment of educational programmes in line with current legislation, details about these procedures could be found in the documents about programme standards and about students status and learning process (articles 20-22). In case of annulling the programme university grants students with opportunity to use internal or external mobility to complete their studies.

In the methodology document for the development of an individual curriculum, it is mentioned that students with disabilities can have online lectures or online consultations from lecturers. However, the methodology and mechanism of developing individualized education programmes needs to be clarified. Online lecture format may be acceptable for students who have transportation problems, but other formats of teaching may be more suitable in case of other special educational needs. It is also necessary to be indicated where it is possible to get detailed information about the issues of students with special needs.

Evidences/indicators

- Alumni tracer study regarding career (including employment rate with obtained qualification) and academic development;
- Analysis of labour market and employer demands;
- Interview results
- Mechanisms providing further educational opportunities to students, in case of the amendment/annulment of educational programmes;
- Methodology for planning, designing and development of educational programmes;
- Procedures for programme approval, amendment and annulment;
- Program standards;
- Student, alumni, employer satisfaction surveys and analysis;
- Student academic performance monitoring results.

Recommendations:

GRUNI should devise a more participatory policy for a regular updating of programmes;

Suggestions:

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Best Practices (if applicable):

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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 requirement

GRUNI is currently running 21 educational programmes on all three levels. The programmes are based on the legislation of Georgia and taking into account the Guidelines of the European System of Transfer and accumulation of credits. The most important basic principles of an educational programme are formulated in the Educational Program Standard, which – besides the Procedure for Approval and

Modification and Cancellation of the programme – is the main document setting the principles of designing an educational programme. The Educational Program Standard stipulates the definition and planning of learning outcomes, it gives the definition and explains the meaning of learning outcomes as well as considers the methods of reaching of learning outcomes generally. The overviews of the educational programmes also include a description and explanation of learning outcomes in more detail. Learning outcomes for specific fields are in line with the Qualifications Framework of the Ministry of Education.

The credits are distributed in accordance with the regulations of the Rules for Calculation of Higher Educational Program Credits, issues by the Ministry of Education and consider the time spent by the students for contact hours (lectures and seminars) and for independent study. One credit is equal to 25 working (calendar) hours. In order to insure the accuracy of the ECTS-calculation the university has even established a function of ECTS coordinator. The head of the Quality Assurance Service of the university and the quality assurance coordinators of academic schools are at the same time ECTS coordinators, which are responsible for double-checking of the correctness of credit calculation for each programme.

Quality Assurance Service regularly (at least at the end of the year) conducts survey of students and assesses the academic performance of students. The results are analyzed and if needed, proposals for programme modification will be drawn up and the programmes are optimized accordingly.

The institution submitted some reports on the evaluation of surveys of students and graduates. Upon our request some questionnaires on the student satisfaction with academic personnel have been submitted.

The students can get the complete information on programmes with help of the electronic system “Nexus”, which is designed to enable students to create an individual learning plan based on its own interests and needs. The programme helps to choose the courses and blocks automatically the selection of disciplines with prerequisites, it calculates the number of accrued credits and shows the syllabus of the elected programme. All respondent students seem to know and to use this electronic system.

With the view of making information on educational programmes available, the University has formulated a programmes catalogue, which informs the students and other interested persons about the academic activities. The catalogue is placed on the University website. However, it should be noted that the catalogue does not seem current.

While the panel could not inspect all programmes in full detail, there are mechanisms in place that ensure that the learning outcomes for certain fields are based on field characteristics and are developed in line with the Qualifications Framework. The structure of the programmes ensure a logical connection between all of its components and achievement of learning outcomes by a student with an average academic performance within a reasonable timeframe. As has been stated in the part regarding academic freedom, students have opportunities to choose non-compulsory components of an educational programme. The volume of the programme component is defined by its content, learning outcomes and specifics of the field. Teaching and learning methods used within the educational programme reflect specifics of the field and ensure achievement of learning outcomes of the programme.

In several cases the literature used in the dental programme is quite old, old terms are use in the syllabus, e.g. in the syllabus “Children and adults periodontal diseases DEN 158C” we encounter such diagnoses as is “Parodontosis” and others, which are not used in the modern dentistry. Aside of this, as a rule, teaching methods and assessment systems in the dentistry programme is old and stereotyped, and there are no modern methods systematically implemented. To improve matters, GRUNI is conducting the OSCE assessment system pilot, and also a problem based learning method in dental programme.

HEI has the experience of having a mobility-impaired and a visually impaired student. University environment is adapted for people with special needs in Tbilisi and Batumi campuses as well. There are special elevators in the building. In Batumi and Tbilisi, inscriptions are also provided in Braille reading system inside the building. As was indicated by several university staff members, one blind person was also studying at GRUNI and university was providing her/him with every learning material in Braille reading system. However, it remains unclear exactly what are other kind of special educational needs (except above mentioned ones) regarding which university is able to develop individualized education programmes for students (e.g., deafness, autism, dyslexia, etc.). It is also necessary to be indicated where is possible to get detailed information about the issues of students with special needs.

Evidences/indicators

- Academic calendar;
- Analysis of student academic performance;
- Catalogue of educational programmes;
- Educational programme overviews;
- Educational programme standard;
- http://gruni.edu.ge/uploads/files/catalogue_geo/catalog_2017-2018.pdf;
- Individualized education programmes and methodology for their development;
- Interview results;
- Methodology for planning, designing and development of educational programmes;
- Monitoring of programme completion in set timeframe, and dropout rate;
- Questionnaire on student satisfaction with academic personnel;
- Regulations for planning, implementing and assessing scientific-research component;
- Satisfaction survey of students, alumni, employers and analysis of results;
- Student survey results;
- Syllabi of educational programmes.

Recommendations:

- There should be trainings for the academic personnel to learn the design of syllabi in line with the National Qualification Framework, in particular with respect to learning outcomes;
- GRUNI should update teaching materials in some syllabi.

Suggestions:

GRUNI should develop more detailed methodologies for creating individualized education programmes regarding each type of special educational need separately.

Best Practices (if applicable):

Establishing of ECTS coordinators at the university level as well as at the level of the academic schools

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 procedure for appealing assessments is reflected in the provision of the learning process. If the student thinks that her/his knowledge is not objectively evaluated within a certain discipline, or believes

that there is an objective factor that has led to a negative assessment, she/he may, in the timeframe, apply to the Dean. The complaint is reviewed by the Dean's temporary commission. During the interview it was revealed that students have information about the procedures of appeals, but they say that the lecturer revises their works rather than commission. Interview processes revealed that students are less complaining about their assessments. The term of appeal is defined by the statute of the student's status and educational process: within three days after publishing the assessment, the student has the right to appeal the assessment. If a student had an opportunity to submit an appeal through the e-base Nexus, this would simplify the process.

Again, while the panel could not inspect every programme in detail, the institution has procedures in place so that the learning outcomes assessment system takes into consideration specifics of the field, and includes adequate assessment formats, components and methods, which enable identifying whether students have achieved learning outcomes attributed to the specific educational programme. The assessment system and related regulations are clearly described and are in line with legal acts of Georgia. The criteria used to assess student learning are transparent. The assessment system is perceived by students and lecturers alike to ensure equal and fair assessment. There is comprehensive information about the assessment system used within GRUNI. Students receive feedback about their goal attainment, gaps and ways of improving their performance.

Evidences/indicators

- Educational programme;
- Interview results;
- Student survey results;
- System for learning outcomes assessment and its accessibility to all interested parties.

Recommendations:

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Suggestions:

GRUNI should consider to have an appeal submitted through the electronic base "Nexus", in order to simplify the procedure.

Best Practices (if applicable):

GRUNI has a good mechanism to provide the feedback on evaluations through the "Nexus" and/or special section of the examination notebook, the student receives information about the essence of the error that she/he has made, which facilitates her/his academic progress.

Evaluation

- ☒ X 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 and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

GRUNI has a well-defined internal structure and substantial documentation. There are regular personnel satisfaction surveys, and they report also negative incidents. The Strategic Development and Marketing Research Service analyses the survey results and creates mechanisms for problem solving. In a considered case, GRUNI developed a recommendation for structural improvement and presented it to the administration. There also is a trade union, which considers the results of the surveys and the developed recommendations. This is much less pronounced in the Batumi representation.

GRUNI operates a Human Resource Management Service, which is responsible for selection, employment and evaluation of personnel and for professional development of the staff. The main principles of the functioning of the Human Resource Management Service are regulated in the Internal Labour Regulations of the university.

The institution has defined the qualification requirements of academic scientific, invited and administrative staff, considering their job descriptions, functions and existing legislation. According to the SER, the Human Resources Management Policy provides the basis for the University to attract, maintain and effectively utilize qualified staff, monitor and evaluate the work of academic personnel, personnel involved in study and scientific activities and other employees that will facilitate the optimal functional distribution of staff, it determines based on the requirements of the law the rules of suspension and termination of labour agreement, termination conditions, and regulates issues of affiliated academic staff as well. The Charter of GRUNI and the Internal Labour Regulations lay down the rules of hiring the personnel, the formal requirements for the candidate, the rights and obligations of the staff, the terms of labour relations.

The procedure of hiring administrative and support staff stipulates that the personnel can be elected either through open or internal competition or on the basis of recommendation; the selection of personnel on academic position is based on the Law of Georgia on Higher Education and implies a mandatory open competition. The procedure of the announcement of the competition, the establishing of the election committee and the organizing of the competition are formulated by the Rules for selection of administrative, academic and support staff of GRUNI.

The number of applicants on advertised job openings is very low - there is very little competition so that it seems to be difficult to choose outstanding candidates. However, a shortage of qualified personnel is a general problem in Georgia. It may also be attributable to the lack of a practically proven strategy on attracting the new staff. Though, GRUNI manages to attract qualified professors and lecturers by high salary and good working conditions. Doctorates can get position as assistants; it happens often in the university.

Results of GRUNI's Assessment and Satisfaction Survey of Personnel Activity conducted in 2017-2018 shows that 72% of employees are satisfied with working conditions; 69% are completely satisfied with the possibilities for their professional development within the university; 54% are completely satisfied with the help of supporting structural units and only 3% are dissatisfied with them; 85% are completely satisfied with the attitude of the administration towards the lecturers, nobody is dissatisfied; 31% of personnel are completely satisfied with salaries, 5% are dissatisfied. The survey comprises also the recommendations of respondent personnel for improving of performance efficiency. There is a very high retention rate throughout the organisation.

The institution has elaborated a special programme for adaptation of new employees. An advisor from the experienced staff will be even assigned to help to the new employee to integrate into the university

area, to facilitate good collegial communication etc. The adaptation programme is approved by a rector's order.

Almost 80% of academic staff of the GRUNI is affiliated with the university. The affiliation agreement considers the academic personnel as an affiliate only with GRUNI and is obliged to conduct his basic training and scientific research activities on behalf of the University. The affiliation agreement between the academic employer and the university is integrated into the labour contracts with the affiliated personnel.

The demographic distribution of the staff of GRUNI is: by gender 72% female and 23% male; by age – 25-45 years old are 52%, above 65 years old are 9%.

The ratio of academic staff number to the number of students is 0,2, the set benchmark is 0,3; the ratio of the administrative staff number to the number of students is 0,01, the target benchmark is 0,02; the ratio of the academic staff number to the total number of the administrative and support staff is 1,4, the target benchmark - 1,6; retention rate of the academic staff is 96,8%, the target benchmark 97,2; the employment index of alumni by their qualification is 58%, the target benchmark 65%. All of these figures and targets are reasonable and can be achieved in the course of the action plan.

Regarding the assessment of academic and administrative staff qualification there is a regulation within the provision of the Human Resources Management Policy, which determines the "Rule of holding professor's attestation" (held every 5 years) as well as procedure on "Assessment of human resources". Also the article 17 of the Standard of Scientific-Research Activity states assessment system of personnel and quality assessment mechanism. However, GRUNI often uses personal recommendations as selection criteria for invited personnel and the recruitment of visiting lecturers are informal. GRUNI presented the results of the assessment of the scientific-research activities of the academic staff (Annex 6.2.3). Besides the HEI submitted a "Report on response to quality assessment results", implemented in 2011-2012. According to the student survey conducted in 2017-2018, more that 90 % of students are fully satisfied with the competence of lecturers.

Upon our request the institution submitted a plan of trainings offered within the university for the academic and administrative staff. According to this plan the trainings are offered once a year. During interviews appr. 50% of respondents said that they did not participate in trainings or participated only ones.

The majority of staff representatives wish to be involved in more international projects and participate in international exchange programmes.

By the reviews of the personal files submitted by the institution, the employees (academic, invited, and administrative staff) seems to have appropriate qualification to perform their tasks.

Evidences/indicators

- Distribution of academic personnel by age and gender;
- Functions and job descriptions of staff;
- Human resources management policy;
- Interview results;
- Labour contracts;
- Number of applications on advertised job openings;
- Personal files of the personnel;
- Personnel job descriptions and qualification requirements;
- Rector's legal acts on announcing competition for academic positions; Rector's Legal Acts on Staff approval / appointment;
- Regulation of educational and scientific activities;

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results of assessment and satisfaction survey of personnel activity; • Self Evaluation Report; • Staff evaluation and satisfaction survey results; • Statistical data on staff; • Training plan for the employees.
<p>Recommendations:</p> <p>GRUNI must strive more strongly to transfer the staff management processes into the Batumi representation.</p>
<p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The institution should elaborate a better thought-out plan for the training of the academic and administrative staff offering more possibilities for staff improvement; • Initiating of more international project in order to involve the university`s staff in international cooperation and exchange programmes.
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p> <p>The HEI has established a very good procedure for adaptation of new employees, which provides an optimal incorporation of new colleagues into the area of the university.</p>
<p>Evaluation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements</p>
<p>4.2. Academic/Scientific and Invited Staff Workload</p>
<p>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</p>
<p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</p> <p><i>GRUNI has a time schedule for academic staff, which covers assigned functions and duties associated with learning or/and scientific and research schedule. The Human Resources Management Policy regulates the workload of academic and invited professors which covers learning (lecture, practice, laboratory, course project/paper, etc.) or/and research components as well as their workload in another HEI. The staff loading scheme is well thought out and adequate.</i></p> <p><i>An interesting practice is establishing the position of the ECTS coordinator at the university level as well as at the level of academic schools. The ECTS coordinator is responsible for checking the distribution of the ECTS credits as well students' workloads and the academic staff load.</i></p> <p><i>A substantial number out of 146 academic staff are affiliated with GRUNI. The SER mentions 130 affiliated staff; during the interviews the numbers varied somewhat but not substantially. The workload of the affiliated personnel is composed by teaching load, organizational-methodical load and scientific load. Academic, including affiliated academic personnel must present at the end of the academic year a report about the implementation of the load (e.g. articles, reports on the participation in the research projects, monographs etc.).</i></p> <p><i>The ratio of the academic and invited staff number to the number of the higher educational programmes is 16,0, the target benchmark is 16,9; the ratio of the academic and scientific staff number to the number of invited staff is 0,9, the target benchmark is 1,3; the ratio of the affiliated staff number to the total number of academic and invited staff is 0,4, target benchmark is 0,5; the ratio of the affiliated staff number to the number of students is 0,09, the target benchmark is 0,1.</i></p>

According to the SER, the University's affiliated personnel, in agreement with the administration, may be entitled to exercise academic activity at another higher education institution unless their academic, scientific and organizational-methodical load does not exceed the established margin.

Many professors of GRUNI are engaged in other universities. During interviews they confirmed that there are sometimes difficulties to manage the time because of the large load, but they are used to manage this situation. This seems to be a very typical phenomenon for qualified persons in Georgia.

In general, the academic, affiliated, invited and administrative staff showed the motivation and willingness for further development and improvement of the university. It shows a credible commitment and sustainable structures for further substantial growth in their respective fields.

Evidences/indicators

- Academic and scientific staff-invited staff ratio;
- Academic, scientific, and invited staff- programme ratio and academic, scientific, and invited staff- students ratio;
- Affiliate academic staff-entire academic and invited staff ratio;
- Affiliate academic staff-students ratio;
- Benchmarks set by the HEI;
- Educational Program Standard;
- Interview results;
- Methodology for determining the number of personnel;
- Rule of affiliation of academic personnel;
- Staff loading scheme and staff loading indicators;
- Survey results of students, academic, scientific, invited personnel.

Recommendations:

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Suggestions:

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Best Practices (if applicable):

GRUNI has established an ECTS coordinator at the university and at the faculty level, who regularly checks academic workloads for student and staff.

Evaluation

- ☒ X 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.

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Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

GRUNI follows common learning process regulatory procedures, which define the assignment, suspension and termination of student's status, mobility, granting qualification, issuing educational documents as well as recognition of the education received during the learning period. GRUNI has regulations for students' status assignment, suspension and termination, also for mobility, grant qualification, issuing educational documents, recognition of education. All the information about the learning process regulation is public and available at GRUNI's website. Nevertheless, during interviews with students, there was a lack of awareness on the side of the students. This is already noted in GRUNI's SER, and the HEI plans to implement number of activities in this direction.

The mechanisms for students' rights protection are outlined in the university's legal acts (University statutes and contracts for the Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral programme students, each separately). The contract affirms the student's right to assess the process of implementation of the educational programme and the activities of the professors; and the standard of educational programme determines the rules of student's participation in the academic programme evaluation and management. The student's right to be elected to the university management body is also affirmed, which is strengthened by the Charter of the Academic Committee. However, the interviews revealed that students who study at Batumi campus are not members of the Academic Committee and have less contact with student self-government unit.

In the direction of student rights, the University intends to expand the discussion of student rights issues within the scope of the Dean hours. A "Student Ombudsman Office" will be established, which will be staffed by law students.

According to the interviews and the SER students can receive information and explanations about their rights related to assignment, suspension, termination, mobility and related issues from the University's Student Support and Service office managers, information boards and also through online services. The great advantage for the university is the wide use of the electronic system „NEXUS". Students have their own web-pages within the system and through their web-pages can remotely get any information about legal actions related to their status.

An institution's Academic Committee discusses students' appeals related to the work of academic and administrative bodies. Also The Rules of Student's Status and Study Process and the University Dissertation Board and the Doctorate Program regulation provide the mechanism for appealing the results of study and dissertation, which considers creation of the Commission for reviewing student complaints or allocation of experts for additional study of the dissertation work.

Evidences/indicators

- Action plan;
- <http://nexus.gruni.ge/>;
- <http://gruni.edu.ge/>;
- Interview results;
- Regulation documents (Statute About the regulation of educational-scientific activities, Provision for Student Status and Educational Process, Student Support and Service's Provision, University dissertation board and doctorates provision, Provision for academic committee);
- Samples of contracts between HEI and a student (Composition agreement, General agreement);
- Student survey results.

Recommendations:

./.
Suggestions: ./.
Best Practices (if applicable): GRUNI intends to establish the position of students' ombudsman. Such an institution will allow are better protected communication between aggrieved students and the personnel.
Evaluation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X Complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements
5.2 Student Support Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ HEI has student consulting services in order to plan educational process and improve academic performance ○ HEI has career support service, which provides students with appropriate counselling and support regarding employment and career development ○ HEI ensures students awareness and involvement in various university-level, local and international projects and events, and supports student initiatives ○ HEI has mechanisms, including financial mechanisms to support low SES students
Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements <p><i>The student support services are various and range from individual support by academic counselling to organisational structures such as service centres for the study process, international integration and career advancement. Their activities touch on individual planning, international mobility as well as employment.</i></p> <p><i>According to the interviews conducted by the panel, professors are generally available for student academic counselling during consultation hours. During interviews conducted in Tbilisi was mentioned that programme heads support students in the planning of their individual education schedule. Again, the interviews confirmed the wide use of the "Nexus" program.</i></p> <p><i>In Batumi branch learning process coordinator is responsible for providing students with consultations regarding to academic process or other activities, during the panel interviews was revealed that students of Batumi branch have never heard about Erasmus+ opportunities.</i></p> <p><i>The HEI provides a comfortable bus for students to use in case of necessity.</i></p> <p><i>GRUNI has a student support and service centre where students can get proper consultation on the planning the schedule of next semesters. Students are able to receive information regarding mobility, academic performance improvement issues, etc. The head of student support and service centre indicated that there are cases when students are asking help when they have academic difficulties. In these instances, the student support centre tries to investigate the problem and addresses the issue to the dean; sometimes they are giving advice to the student to choose another educational programme where she/he can study successfully. This centre has also other support services such as the services of event manager or employment coordinator.</i></p> <p><i>Generally, HEI meets the criteria of fostering extracurricular activities (sports, arts, educational activities) and supports student initiatives. Students can present their project to the event manager and this person arranges financial or other important issues for implementing student project. As it was indicated by the</i></p>

event manager during the interview, they do not have a separated budget for student projects because the number of events and necessary funding of each of them fluctuates from year to year. However, they annually organise a welcome and a graduation party for the students. As to additional information about sport activities, there is sport playground in Tbilisi campus. The students from Batumi mentioned that they are also wishing to have sport activities in the campus garden which would increase a healthy lifestyle.

GRUNI has presented a list of the projects initiated by the students and supported by the University. Students receive information about the events via the university website and information boards. In addition, the official Facebook page of the University is used, so are SMS and the electronic system of learning process management "Nexus".

GRUNI creates opportunities for students' international mobility and participation in various projects such as ERASMUS + mobility programme or internships in the Criminal Chamber of Bremen (Germany); five students of Business and Management underwent paid internships in various German companies, including Deutsche Bank. In sum, 27 students participated in international mobility activities during 2016-2017 years. This number is not high for an institution such as GRUNI.

In general, university has clear internationalization encouragement policy; they are also trying to attract international students to study at their university. At this moment, only 3 students have studied at GRUNI by the means of ERASMUS + exchange programme. Likewise, this is a low number.

GRUNI has a Career centre, and students get information about vacancies through social network or emails, besides they conduct employment forum once a year to support students in career development. The university has a database of potential employers. As the Career centre is newly established, systematic research on career success is not yet in place; however, some representatives of alumni did mention that they were requested to respond to GRUNI surveys. The centre facilitates employers' involvement in the creation and implementation of educational programmes, implementation of internship and practice corresponding to educational programmes. This process involves the medical school's students in a lesser way. The dental programme has less participation in the process, though university's own dental clinic is a strong side in principle. There are qualifications to make to that principle: It cannot be confirmed that University Dental Clinic provides service to the patients. There are major flaws in management system. The decontamination room and waste management needs improving.

GRUNI has data available on the career progress of their students. 84% of its graduates are employed, among them 58% by their profession. It is clear, that after graduating, 42% of students are employed in the field different from their profession. There is no further evidence on reasons for this as well as future changes towards the originally intended profession.

GRUNI takes into consideration students' socio-economic status and has implemented various mechanisms for tuition discounts. Student can fill special application about his/her socio-economic status and then the university reviews this individual case. This application form is accessible at the university, also the student support service gives information to the students, especially during the registration.

At this moment 251 student from socially vulnerable families are getting benefit from the university. In addition, GRUNI has discounts for siblings and the children of staff members.

In addition to the above mentioned financial support, the student stated during the interview that the University has scholarships for students, studying on the bachelor, as well as on master programmes according to their high academic performance. However, the criteria for selection of students with high academic achievement and financing procedures were not found in the documents presented by the HEI.

The University also offers students, according to the financial capabilities, a flexible scheme to pay individual fee. In the interviews students were expressing satisfaction regarding flexible payment mechanisms too.

Evidences/indicators

- Accessibility of information;
- Action plan;
- Analysis of statistic data;
- Alumni tracer study regarding career (including employment rate with obtained qualification) and academic development;
- Career support services;
- Cooperation with employers and its results;
- Implemented and planned and implemented activities (employment forums, workshops, thematic conferences, individual student counselling, etc.);
- Implemented and planned student initiatives/projects;
- Implemented internship and practice programmes;
- Interview results;
- Planned and implemented consulting services;
- Publicity of information;
- Regulation documents (Student Support and Service's Provision);
- Samples of contracts between HEI and a student (Composition agreement, General agreement);
- Student and alumni employment indicators, including according to the qualifications granted;
- Student survey results;
- Survey results;
- Student participation indicators in various projects;
- Support services for low SES students.

Recommendations:

The Batumi representation must be brought to the Tbilisi levels with respect to the provision of information on international exchanges.

Suggestions:

- GRUNI should develop a strategy to ensure students' overall involvement in extracurricular activities; to figure out more "passive" students and implement mechanisms for their increasing participation in the different educational, sport or cultural activities;
- The HEI needs to implement more services for Batumi students (such as sport, cultural); and it needs to increase their participation in the international mobility programmes. This holds true for all locations and programmes;
- For more transparency GRUNI should ensure that sanctions imposed for the violation of the tuition fee schedule as well as criteria for obtaining scholarships for high academic performance are visibly recorded in the relevant document(s);
- GRUNI should define types of project proposals. Such a distinction may increase the diversity of projects. The importance of encouraging mechanisms for increasing students' initiatives and participation in additional activities should also be emphasized in the politic and strategic development of student support service;
- GRUNI should measure the number of students who have participated in the events/projects. The student support service should have precise information if most of the projects are initiated by the similar groups of students or the number of involved students really represent the whole student population of GRUNI;
- GRUNI should develop policy to support students with academic difficulties.

Best Practices (if applicable):

- The law faculty has a practice of promoting students' participation in voluntary activities (such as helping old people), which aims to foster moral and social values, also to develop the sense of national identity;
- GRUNI has implemented the project "TEEN ACADEMY" - students are carrying out different activities in collaboration with school pupils, which contributes to a better linkage between two educational stages (school and university). This may also increase pupils' awareness about university life and importance of getting high education;

- The law faculty also has a project “Become a politician” - which is carried out by students of GRUNI together with school pupils. They are visiting parliamentary committees and become acquainted with the parliament’s work. On the one hand, it is good opportunity for law students to get more practical knowledge, on the other hand, it increases the civic education of pupils and students about public office.

Evaluation

- ☐ Complies with requirements
- X 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 defence of dissertations which are relevant to the specifics of the field

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

As a university with a PhD programme, GRUNI is required to be a research active university. The SER documents the scientific activity of its staff. In terms of (international) publications, GRUNI scores rather low. Most of the staff emphasize teaching over research. Being a research university from its inception, GRUNI has consistently improved, and it is noticeable that current initiatives seek to promote research activities more strongly. The panel acknowledges that this is a difficult task in most fields in which GRUNI operates. This makes it a strong necessity that the success of the new initiatives need to be monitored. Research priorities have not been firmly established at the institutional level; they follow from the personnel at the university.

GRUNI has public, transparent and fair procedures for the assessment and defence of dissertations which are relevant to the specifics of the field. There are 72 active PHD students and 62 PhD students with suspended status. The ratio of the number of supervisors and doctoral students is 0,4, the target benchmark for 2021 is 0,56. The target seems achievable. The dissertation defence indicator is 16% (20 out of 120), which is somewhat low.

To facilitate the development of scientific potential of scientific-research work, the University has established a Research Management Centre. The Dissertation Board and Doctorate Program Provision and Scientific-Research Activity Standard describe mechanisms for effectiveness of Doctoral Studies management and procedures for assessment and defence of Dissertation. These documents regulate in a very comprehensive way all issues such as: academic ethics, protection from the plagiarism, financing of the scientific studies, coordinating of doctoral programmes, supervision of PhD Students, academic writing rules, procedure of defence.

The framework for implementing an interesting scientific idea and writing a good PhD thesis is well thought out. The defending of the PhD thesis is carried out at the Open Session of the Certification-Expert Committee. The Certification-Expert Committee consists of at least 5 members, one of which is the chairman. Among them, no less than 2 members should work in the specific field of research. It is possible to appoint external experts from other universities or research institutions.

Documenting of the thesis defending process is carried out by stenographic record or video capture which

is an integral part of the protocol. The information about the upcoming PhD defence is placed at the website of the university. According to the survey of PhD students 85% of them are completely satisfied with the supporting role of the supervisors.

Some selected PhD theses that were provided by the university showed variations in the level of scientific achievement and originality.

During the interview the PhD students showed the satisfaction with the doctoral supervisors and the research possibilities within the university, but almost all of them told about the difficulty to combine the working on the dissertation with the work and finishing the PhD thesis in 3 years provided for it.

GRUNI's PhD programme is strong in law, but weaker in other parts. During interviews, the focus was on the research activities carried out in the direction of law and there was less emphasis on the measures implemented in other fields by the university. In these other fields, there are singular outstanding activities but they do not add up to a consistent high-quality whole.

Evidences/indicators

- Current and planned scientific research projects (Appendix 6.1.7);
- Dissertation defence indicator;
- Interview results;
- Relevant publications;
- Regulations for the assessment and defence of PhD dissertations;
- Scientific-Research Activity Standard (Appendix 6.1.8);
- Standard of elective components of the PhD programme (Appendix 6.1.5);
- Standard of scientific components of the PhD programme (Appendix 6.1.4);
- Student Survey Results on Effectiveness of Doctoral Studies (Appendix 6.1.9);
- Supervisor-PhD student ratio;
- The strategy of developing the University as a foundational and/or applied research Institution (Appendix 6.1.6);
- University Dissertation Board and Doctoral Studies Provision (Appendix 6.1.3);
- Workload and functions of academic and scientific staff.

Recommendations:

GRUNI needs to be more stringent on its research priorities and needs a policy for their promotion.

Suggestions:

- GRUNI could make more use of its linkages with the crime research lab and the website, which links into local administrative bodies. This could be widened into field (action) research activities;
- GRUNI should introduce a mandatory membership of external experts in the Certification-Expert Committee in order to improve the quality of the dissertations;
- GRUNI should increase the hours devoted to teaching methods in the PhD programme.

Best Practices (if applicable):

The regulations for the PhD programme are very detailed and thought out.

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

There is a number of activities with which GRUNI supports scientific research in the institution. The research output is not impressive but there is a strong perspective for developing GRUNI at the research front. It has established a research centre that facilitates the expansion of the scientific potential of the staff. It coordinates activities within Georgia and partner universities. There are institutes that reflect the areas of GRUNI's research.

A research committee has been established that evaluates research proposals and prioritizes the university's funds. GRUNI's systems is public, transparent and fair.

With the appointment of dedicated personnel, GRUNI provides assistance to academic and scientific staff as well as scientific-research units to find funding from various sources for research. The administration administers the grants and provides a framework for an effective management of such grants. The development of the centre evidences that GRUNI continuously works to increase the effectiveness of its research and its services.

The panel has already observed in the staff standard that GRUNI practices a somewhat effective system for attracting and supporting new staff in research. However, it suffers from the general constraints of the academic system in Georgia. It gives advanced students the opportunity to get involved in the university's scientific activities but the take-up is rather low.

There is a small number of joint research activities with international partners. It is sparsely involved in EU scientific-research programmes, has a small number of institutional cooperation with international research centres, and is engaged in various international activities, but mostly in the field of law.

Evidences/indicators

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

Recommendations:

GRUNI needs to broaden the international connections in (at least some) fields of its research.

Suggestions:

GRUNI needs to emphasize the need for research more strongly, for instance by committing greater resources into the research fund or by incentivizing research activities more strongly.

Best Practices (if applicable):
./.
Evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements
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 <i>GRUNI has set and formalized evaluation criteria for scientific research performance on individual and institutional level in the document «Scientific standard” article 12. Scientific-research units are evaluated according research activities and indicator of personnel’s scientific productivity. Research activities are evaluated with criteria and coefficients assigned to each activity. Reports of the research are produced for internal use but are to the knowledge of the panel not publicly available.</i> <i>Scientific productivity of the personal is determined by the number of academic papers, with the impact of papers on science development, and the impact of scientific activeness on the development of the society.</i> <i>GRUNI provided matrix of evaluation academic personnel scientific activity, most of the academic papers are published in local academic journals.</i>
Evidences/indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Analysis and utilization of evaluation results; ● Interview results. ● Quality evaluation mechanism for research/creative-arts activities and evaluation results; ● Reports on implemented research activities (taking into consideration the affiliation of academic staff); ● System of evaluation of scientific productivity of staff;
Recommendations: Together with the implementation of research productivity evaluation system, the university should also develop and implement the system to monitor and ensure the quality of research.
Suggestions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It would be beneficial if research units publicly presented/published annual activity reports of their activities and obtained results. ● Financial support of research units and institutes should be associated to productivity and effective output.
Best Practices (if applicable): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● GRUNI is a member of library consortium and requires information about citation index and h index of its academic personnel. ● There is an internet consulting portal for advising civil servants, which is created on the base of the school of Public Management and Politics. The portal has two main goals: serve the public –invest its knowledge in the society, gives the students the possibility to apply practically their theoretical knowledge and generates new research ideas. ● The Forensic Teaching and Expertise Centre is equipped with modern technology and intensively engaged in expert activities and practical/applied research. During seven years the Centre received 89 orders for conducting expertise. This is a good example of economic using of the university teaching and research resources for supporting the investigative procedures in Georgia.

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 panel conducted a careful and comprehensive visit of the three campuses. All buildings were shown voluntarily and with great enthusiasm. With the exception of the Saburtalo campus, which houses the dentistry programme, all facilities are modern and accessible for students with special needs. This by far exceeds the experience from many other institutions. Residential opportunities exist for professors and staff. The dentistry facilities are in need of an update.

Lecture theatres vary according to purposes, in particular in the Didi Dighomi campus, which in part is outstanding for Georgia. Some aspects such as lawful possession and detailed health and safety regulations could not meaningfully be addressed by an academic panel. However, the entire appearance aims at and seems to attain the highest standards.

We found the existing resources fit to support the existing and expanding student numbers.

GRUNI has foyers, recreation spaces, classroom(s) for theoretical teaching, administrative office(s), space for group work, sanitary/hygienic units, library, laboratory appropriate to the specifics of the field, learning classrooms. The educational space is equipped with necessary facilities for educational programme, including teaching/scientific-research laboratories. It is mostly sufficiently large to sustain a substantially higher number of students with the exception of the dental laboratories in the Saburtalo campus.

GRUNI has ascertained an uninterruptible power supply system; its buildings have divided sanitary units, which should have continuous water supply.

We have observed regulations for the health and safety protection of staff and students such as fire prevention and safety, first aid, and order mechanisms.

To provide first aid, GRUNI has medical staff in place, and it has a medical cabinet equipped with first aid tools, both natural and artificial lights, natural ventilation, and constant supply of cold and hot water.

GRUNI has outstanding facilities for students with special needs, in particular with mobility and sight impairments.

However, the existing number of computer resources will not be enough to increase the student contingent and needs to be stocked up. Based on HEI Programme Standard, Article 19, paragraph "b", one computer should be available for 20 students. At this stage the number of computers based on the "information about the educational area equipped with the appropriate inventory" presented by the university, is 170, from which 75 are for students only (the rest 95 is for the personnel). Based on this, protection of the standard (20/1) prescribed by the HEI will not be possible if it plans to increase the student contingent up to 3,920.

Evidences/indicators

- Interview results;
- List of educational programmes and relevant material resources to be used for these programmes, and its compliance with material resources.

Recommendations:

./.

Suggestions:

./.

Best Practices (if applicable):

As health and safety are minimum regulations, GRUNI can only be commended for achieving very high standards in these fields and having their observation in the institution's DNA.

Evaluation

- X 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 library is located at all three campuses in Tbilisi and in Batumi, too. It has general reading, group and individual work and computer use spaces, book repository and material unit processing room. The library paperback and electronic funds are in full compliance with the literature mentioned in the Syllabus of Training Courses provided by the educational programmes. The three spaces of library are equipped with internet, computer and copying equipment.

The library's educational resources are being updated consistently. Students are informed about the acquisition of each new book or electronic material through the Library website and the Academic Process Management System "Nexus". Books are processed in accordance to the library regulations. Students and staff should have better access to international library databases; however, it was revealed in the course of interviews that academic personnel and students are less likely to use international electronic databases. The reason of which is language knowledge barrier for students. This fact is true for some part of the library personnel as well.

The library staff are organizing seminars about the procedures of using library catalogues. The library has specified procedures for ordering new book or other kind of resource. The electronic library resources are diverse, but paper-based literature needs renewing (especially in the library of the Batumi campus).

During the visit, it became evident that some library staff employed in different campuses are not able to provide relevant consultation on the use of international electronic library bases. Despite the fact that the HEI provided training for personnel, it seems that the training was based on more theoretical

knowledge than on practical.

The library is available for students and staff 6 days a week. Satisfaction with library hours was confirmed during interviews. There is no statistical analysis how many students are using library resources from the overall student population. While GRUNI has implemented a statistical analysis of using specific electronic resources, it reveals that the usage numbers are not very high.

Evidences/indicators

- Annual balance sheet of the university;
- Compliance of library books with core literature indicated in educational programmes;
- Documentation confirming involvement in the international library network;
- Electronic catalogue published on the web-site;
- <http://nexus.gruni.ge/>;
- Interview results;
- Mechanisms for library resources and services development;
- Rule of use of the library;
- Statistics of the use of electronic library bases;
- Student survey results on the library environment, resources and services.

Recommendations:

With respect to the international databases, GRUNI has to establish more and better training formats, which should simultaneously address the awareness among students and staff of these databases.

Suggestions:

It is desirable that GRUNI provides more practical training-courses on the use of electronic databases for the personnel of the library and for the improvement of their overall technical skills.

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

Evaluation

- ☐ 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

GRUNI has an information-technological infrastructure that facilitates the teaching process effectively. It has Information Technology Management Policy and with this document defined the university's „information management policy and procedures, infrastructure and development mechanisms, staff responsibilities and obligations” (article 1.1). Main directions of information technology policy are:

- *Administering of computer network and systems;*
- *Database Administration;*
- *Informative support;*
- *Safety.*

HEI has system of Monitoring of university databases and critically important systems. For example, they keeping the reserve backups 3 times a week. Also they are using, analyzing and controlling antivirus applications to prevent the spread of computer viruses/harmful codes. Also, for example, for more security of the university website, it is planned to transfer site from old [http: //](http://) system, to new secure system [https: //](https://).

GRUNI also has a physical security that means the protection of communication and information equipment from physical damage and monitoring is done through the surveillance system.

The University's material resources, including Computer Software and Internet access software programs, is available for students and academic personnel. At this stage, the number of computer hardware in the HEI is sufficient for the staff, as well as for the students. In case of increased contingent, it is planned to increase the number of computer equipment, too (see above).

Students and personnel have the opportunity to use the internet at any time. For example, during the interview, it was noted that the lack of access to the Internet, which was detected at Batumi campus of the HEI, has been corrected in a timely manner. During the visit to the HEI it was found that IT infrastructure (computer hardware and software) does not work equally well in all campuses and the hardware in the computer class of Batumi campus requires a significant renewal.

The following electronic systems are functioning at the University:

- *Electronic process management system "Nexus"*
- *System of accounting for students and academic personnel*
- *University website*

The university also has a 1C document turnover electronic system, but as it turned out during the interview, it has not been put in practice yet.

The administrative, academic staff and students express their satisfaction and appreciation with the Electronic Process Management System "Nexus". However, an important financial module shall be added to the Electronic Process Management System "Nexus". Also, it is necessary to create an appropriate interface for the foreign student there. At this stage, we have to highlight that university has "Nexus" development plans which includes the following modules:

- *Adding a financial module through which student can see financial liabilities.*
- *Adding a Module of Registration Journal (Case Manufacturing) after the electronic registration*
- *Adding Graduate Employment Data Module*
- *Creating a mobile app*
- *Multilingual interface for students.*

According to the information received from the interview, except for existing electronic systems, new systems are tested in a virtual laboratory. Currently IT staff are working on a project which envisages ordering the printed training material remotely, which is less time consuming for the student.

The website of GRUNI is dynamic and colourful. It contains contact and other information in Georgian and English languages, including mission of HEI, its activities, structure and catalogue of educational programmes. However, some information is available only with ID and after registration and some links

during the site visit did not open at all. PhD dissertations are not uploaded on the website. On the site of Batumi representation, there is only information about academic personnel available. While browsing the site it feels difficult to navigate, and the website needs to be more interactive (for example, it may have a chat, etc.). It should be noted that GRUNI is in the process of further development of its site. Nevertheless, according to the student survey 89% are satisfied with the website of the university.

During the visit, there was no renewed list of academic staff on the website, but this information was updated. As for the periodicity of the update, it was revealed that the marketing unit sends the information to the administrator of the website, who in return, provides upload/update of the information in the shortest possible time (in most cases on the same day).

The university has the centre of IT technologies with several people employed, who support technological infrastructure. University IT operates through internal servers, and new programmes and applications are tested in virtual laboratories.

Evidences/indicators

- Action plan;
- Contract with Internet Provider;
- Domain and Hosting Ownership Document;
- Factual Situation;
- <http://nexus.gruni.ge/>;
- Interview with IT staff;
- Interviews with students;
- Information Technology Management Policy;
- University Website <http://gruni.edu.ge>.

Recommendations:

It is desirable that the IT infrastructure (in particular, computer hardware and software) were upgraded at Batumi campus.

Suggestions:

GRUNI should provide an addition of the module for the students' and staff's electronic survey and statistical data procession to the Nexus base.

Best Practices (if applicable):

./.

Evaluation

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

7.4 Financial Resources

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

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ HEI financial resources provide for sustainable and further development of learning/teaching/research/arts-creative activities, and human resources/infrastructure.
<p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</p> <p><i>GRUNI operates a system in which the allocation of financial resources is clearly described in the budget. From the perspective of the panel, the operations are economically achievable, and GRUNI's sources of funding are somewhat diversified ensuring adequate and effective risk management. GRUNI has a stable operating history, and the funds available seem adequate and sufficient to effectively perform activities described in strategic and action plans.</i></p> <p><i>The financial reports have been audited, and the auditors certify correctness, fairness and fullness of financial information. There are funds earmarked for scientific research, activities of students, academic and scientific staff, and post-doctorate students. GRUNI allocates funds for the operation and constant development of the library.</i></p> <p><i>GRUNI conducts a financial audit by an eligible audit company and the reports with relevant financial statements are publicly accessible.</i></p>
<p>Evidences/indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Document assessing functioning of financial management and control system. ● Document implementing financial management and control function; ● Dynamics of funding; ● Dynamics of planned funds according to years; ● Expenditures incurred and planned for research activities and functioning and development of the library; ● Financial reports elaborated by eligible auditor/audit company and relevant financial statements; ● HEI budget; ● HEI budget, dynamics of funding, financial reports for current/previous reporting periods, share of administrative expenditures within total budget. ● Publicity of information; ● Ratios between expenditure; ● Regulation and format for the distribution of responsibilities, delegation, and accountability; ● Sources of funding;
<p>Recommendations:</p> <p>./.</p>
<p>Suggestions:</p> <p>./.</p>
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p> <p>./.</p>
<p>Evaluation</p> <p>X Complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements</p>