Final Report on Ilia State University Authorization

Expert Panel Members

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Tbilisi

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Authorization Report Resume

General information on the educational institution

Founded in 2006, Ilia state university (ISU) is a Legal entity of public Law and an autonomous establishment. It is the result of a merger between two universities and 15 research and academic establishments.

The vision of ISU is to be "a leading and fast growing research university in Georgia and in the region, which through innovated approaches, creates the basis for scientific-technological development, high quality educational processes and public well-being"[1]. Its organization and main bodies are defined in its statute in accordance with the Law of Georgia Higher Education.

The development of the university is based on a Strategic Plan (currently 2018-2024), elaborated in a participative manner and operationalized in action plans at university, faculty and central units level.

The university is composed of 4 faculties (Natural sciences & engineering, school of Business, Law School, Arts and Science) all fully involved in teaching and research.

Currently ISU is offering 23 undergraduate programs and 40 graduate programs as well as 9 doctoral ones. More over one teacher training course and a course in Georgian Language learning course are also offered. A total of 15'978 students are enrolled and active (including 13'705 undergraduate, 1'889 graduates, 119 doctoral students). ISU also organizes Life Long Learning activities.

Due to its score in Scimago's institutional ranking (656th) ISU is considered as a leading research university in Georgia. Nineteen research institutes contribute to the research efforts of ISU.

Research and Teaching are provided by 300 academic staff, 301 scientists, 805 persons invited in educational processes and 1326 administrative and support staff.

Brief overview of the authorization site visit

The site visit has been based on ISU self-evaluation report, result of a very participative self-evaluation. Many surveys and data analysis have been used to produce the self-evaluation report and the main stakeholders of the

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[1] ISU, Values, Vision, Mission.

university, including external ones, have been involved in the process either individually or through their membership of different boards.

The self-evaluation report is clear and contains a lot of useful information. Mainly descriptive, the report has an analytical dimension thanks to the "strengths & Areas for development" analysis at the end of each of the chapters devoted to the 7 main standards

The site visit has been very well organized and the panel could have 25 meetings with all relevant stakeholders. Moreover a visit of the facilities has been organized as well as the opportunity to read a large sample of MA and PhD thesis. The discussions were open and very useful to get a better understanding of the institution and the self-evaluation report. ISU staff has readily provided all information and additional documentation required during the visit.

Overview of the HEI's compliance with standards

Summary of Recommendations

Educational programs
- To improve the formulations and content of learning outcomes with increased ownership of the learning outcome approach (more emphasis on the undelying pedagogical reflexion). Make more explicit connexions between choice of teaching methods and learning outcomes.
- To specify and explicitly detail the mechanisms and methods of monitoring internships and practice component, which is extensively incorporated in education programs offered by ISU

Organizational structure and management of HEI

- To fully implement the HR strategy of ILIA state university and to align with international practices, the number of HR department employees should be increased;
- Further develop description of qualifications required for all positions;
- Further develop trainings and development programs based on performance appraisals and position needs.

Summary of Suggestions

Mission and strategic development
- Further develop the action plans, with more details regarding resources needed and responsibilities, to facilitate implementation and monitoring.

Organizational structure and management of HEI

- Create a systemic view of ISU Quality system, including resources and activities developed for improvement (such as trainings).
- Enlarge the scope of responsibilities of Faculty QA officers (currently mainly focused on programs) to support the development of a quality culture at faculty level.
- Systematize feedback to students on the results of their evaluations of teaching to develop a quality culture and ensure high response rates as well as well developed answers:

Educational programs
- In some programs increase the diversity of assessment methods.
- Make sure that requirements for MA thesis are always meeting academic expectations for this level of study.

Staff of the HEI

- It is desirable to have a single application form for all employees, this will be more convenient for record keeping program and will make activities of the HRM Department better and improve time management.
- As October 1, 2018 is the term of effectiveness of the performance appraisal system, it will be better to use different methods for different positions (for instance, 720 and 360 degree, goal oriented, appraisal according to competences (in the given case development of a map of competence will be necessary) and other methods).

Research, development and/or other creative work

- It is suggested that ISU conducts activities to share best practices in order to improve the integration of all research institutions/units for using the whole scientific potential it acquires.
- It is suggested to raise the involvement of Bachelor students in the scientific-research activities to ensure the development of practical skills and competencies required for the field.
- Action plans of faculties and schools should be more precise and detailed in order to ensure the compliance of actions with the current resources.
- Measures should be taken in order to improve the Doctoral dissertation defense indicator.
- Increase the number of pluridisciplinary doctoral schools.
- Further development of Research assessment methodologies for different categories

Material, information and financial resources
- ISU action plans 2018-2020 does provide detailed description of planned activities for the years 2018, 2019, 2020, and lump sum amount is allocated per year to each individual educational, administrative or research activities; however, it is advisable that, where relevant, a more specific budget (a specific amount of finances) be allocated to each individual activity; e.g. expected expenditure for the planned conferences, staff training, etc.
- Ensure that people are safe on the campus since ISU is a rather open space.
- Use space more efficiently for the benefit of students (e.g. use free space to create informal working and meeting spaces).

Summary of the Best Practices

Mission and strategic development

- Development of the strategic plan in a very participative manner, involving main stakeholders, including external

Organizational structure and management of HEI
- Strong links between QA concept and tools with the strategic plan
- Pro activity regarding ethical issues and support to Academic Integrity, in particular introduction of a tool to avoid plagiarism (Turnitin)

Educational programs
- Clear and applied procedures to develop programs.
- Involvement of external stakeholders in designing the programs.
- Cooperation with budget office to ensure sustainability and cost efficiency.
- ISU offers exclusive programs that cannot be found in any other Georgian HEI.
- Diversity of curricula in relation to ISU mission, some with strong links with research institutes.
- Modular planning of programs.

Staff of the HEI

- All the work done to clarify the "rules of the game"
- Affiliation of academic staff

Students and their support services
- Care of students with vulnerability and disability. All measures and activities illustrating the student centeredness of ISU.

Research, development and/or other creative work

- Qualified staff for support services.
- Competences and success in obtaining external incomes
- Carl Friedrich Lehman-Haupt International Doctoral School

Material, information and financial resources

- ISU has detailed action plans for 2018-2020 year for each individual faculty; the categories to measure faculty performance are clearly outlined, and measurements (e.g. percentage, or numbers, or volumes, etc.) for each individual key performance indicators are specified;
- Efforts to modernize the infrastructure and adapt it to special needs
- IT platform adapted to ISU needs.
- Participative approach to drafting ISU budget
- Internal audit office to monitor financial and material resource management, as well as provide advisory services to faculties or other units if necessary

Complies: 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4.
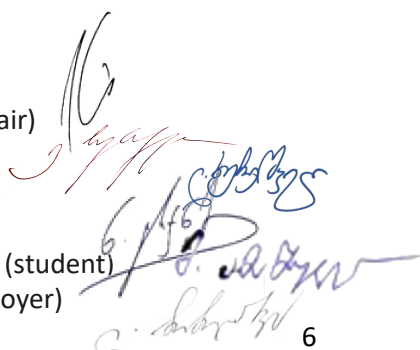
Substantially complies : 3.2, 3.3, 4.1

Summary Table

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

Signature of expert panel members

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1. Mr. Jacques Lanares (Chair)
2. Ms. Elene Cherkezia
3. Ms. Lili Khechuashvili
4. Mr. Nikoloz Parjanadze
5. Ms. Mariam Amashukeli (student)
6. Ms. Lili Bibilashvili (employer)

Compliance of the Authorization Applicant HEI with the Authorization Standard Components

1. Mission and strategic development of HEI

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

1.1 Mission of HEI
Mission Statement of the HEI corresponds to Georgia's and European higher education goals, defines its role and place within higher education area and society, both locally and internationally.
Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements The mission of Ilia state university is defined in accordance with the Law of Georgia on Higher Education (in particular, article 3) and the statute of ILIA State University (in particular, article 1&2). Locally and internationally, the mission of the university as defined in the mission statement is to support the development of the society thanks to the research produced at ISU and its applications. This contribution is underlined by the definition of the values associated to the mission such as "social responsibility", "equal opportunities" and "diversity", all in line with the responsibility of the university in supporting the development of people and the society. The research profile of the University and its ambition at international level are clearly described in the mission statement ("create knowledge") as well as teaching "transfer knowledge" and application of knowledge. The unity of research and teaching is made explicit in the mission and is a core component of a research university such as ILIA. The third mission of the university is fully mentioned in the statement. These priorities of the mission are translated in the strategic goals (strategic goal #1: 1.1, 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.2. 1.5). The concern for development and employability is also explicit in the strategic plan (#3.1, #4, #5.2). The formulation of the mission has been based on a broad participative process, involving all councils and main stakeholders of the university community (academics, Students, Administrative staff) and finally approved by the Academic Board. The interviews have shown clear adhesion of university members to this mission and values. The modifications of the initial draft after discussions within councils illustrate the reality of this participative process.
Evidences/indicators   - ISU Values, Vision, Mission   - ISU Strategic plan 2018-2024   - Law of Georgia on Higher Education (21.12.2004)   - Statute of ILIA state university (11.09.2013)   - ISU Self evaluation report   - Interview with the Leadership of the University   - Interview with the senate representatives   - Interview with the academic board representatives
Recommendations: Proposal(s), which should be considered by the institution to comply with requirements of the standard component
Suggestions:

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

1.2 Strategic Development

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The university has fully developed a strategic plan for the next 7 years (2018-2024) including 6 mains goals and a total of 65 goals linked to the main goals. These goals cover the main missions of the university (goal #3 "Improving Teaching and Learning", goal #4 " Increasing Research activity" goal # 1.5 "Developing the third mission") as well as institutional development (goal #1 "Institutional Strengthening", goal #2 "Organizational Capacity building") and internationalization (goal # 1.2 Internationalization of teaching & Research").

This plan is based on data analysis as well as a SWOT analysis. This strategic plan is complemented by a Research strategy. This institutional strategic plan is on the one hand developed at faculty and central / administrative units and on the other hand detailed in action plans including responsibilities, deadlines and indicators. Many of the quantitative indicators have been set after analysis of the trends on the last three years. This process suggests that the objectives can be met. Resources are also indicated though sometimes at a very global level. Splitting more precisely the resources needed at the level of sub-goals would give a more detailed view of the resources required and devoted to the full implementation of the strategic plan.

The strategic planning is based on a very broad participatory process involving different internal (academics, administrative staff, students) and external stakeholders (graduates, advisory boards) through surveys, focus groups and discussions in several councils (at faculty and institutional level).

The Academic Board assures the overall monitoring of the implementation of the strategic plan. More globally the implementation of each part of the plan is supervised by the authority who has approved it (e.g. the Faculty strategic plan is monitored by the faculty council). All monitoring groups are reporting to the relevant board. The follow up is a regular process, at different time scales depending on the institutional level but at least once a year by the Representative and Academic Boards. This process and how adjustments are decided is described in the "Rule for the approval, Amendment, Assessment and Monitoring of the Strategic Development and Action Plan of Ilia State University".

Several activities either currently run or included in the strategic plan (goals #1.5.1, #4.3.1) contribute to the development of the society and knowledge transmission (e.g. Life Long Learning, Science to public interface activities such as public lectures or scientist picnic). Several activities are closely related to society (e.g. Child Development Institute) and socio-economic world (e.g. National Center for Seismic Monitoring) as well as research conducted for external partners (e.g. Institute of Ecology)

Evidences/indicators

- ISU Strategic plan 2018-2024

- Faculties strategic plans
- ISU action plan
- Faculties action plans
- Internationalization strategy
- ISU Internal Quality concept
- Rule for the approval, Amendment, Assessment and Monitoring of the Strategic Development and Action Plan of Ilia State University"
- Statute of ILIA state university (11.09.2013)
- ISU Self evaluation report
- Interview with the Leadership of the University
- Interview with the senate representatives
- Interview with the academic board representatives
- Interview with Deans
- Interview with academic staff
- Interview with representative of administrative units

Recommendations:

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

Suggestions:

Further develop the action plans, with more details regarding resources needed, to facilitate implementation and monitoring.

Best Practices (if applicable):

Development of the strategic plan in a very participative manner, including main stakeholders, including external

Evaluation

☐ Complies 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

The ISU organizational structure and contents match the university goals, which stipulate possibility of implementation of progressive, development oriented business. Particularly, university components management principles, authority delegation adequacy, sub-divisions work delegation principles, conditions and procedures of elections, rules for attestation of professors and granting corresponding titles, sub-divisions activities, financing and control

principles, rules of organization, liquidation and changes, etc. are clearly described in the University base documents and are adjusted to the University strategic development plans.

The rules of selection and appointment to the represented University management bodies show that the University activities are in compliance with the legislation, are carried out in transparent manner. Justice and equality are observed.

The provisions submitted by the ISU sub-divisions (in Rector subordination, administration, research institutes, faculties and schools) are properly describing the processes and procedures necessary to ensure functional, administrative and operational activities needed for implementation of the strategic and action plans set by the University. Particularly, goals, task, structure of the sub-divisions and functions, obligations, authority of the structural units; people responsible for appointment and dismissal, etc. are described sufficiently.

The documents reflecting relationship with students, graduates and employers; documentation necessary during the tuition process and permanent post-tuition communication confirm satisfaction of the mentioned sub-groups and caring about the quality of positioning of the University graduates in the labour market, which is in complete accordance with the University goals, mission and vision.

Positive attitude and thinking of permanent development of internationalization on the part of the University management is shown quite well in in the international memoranda, covenants and the agreements concluded in the framework of exchange programs and internationalizing action plans. The information given in the internationalization strategic plan (the ISU is cooperating with more than 500 universities around the world; the ISU representatives have taken part in more than 150 international projects in the direction of research and institutional development; the revenue gained from international grants have exceeded GEL 30 mln during the recent years) points out special attention of the ISU management to the mentioned issues, which, in its turn, shows the University's aspiration to further development in step with the international university standards.

Evidences/indicators

Component evidences/indicators including the relevant documents, interview results, etc.

- ISU values, vision, mission document
- ISU charter
- ISU personnel (staff) policy
- Rules for record keeping
- ISU the provisions of subdivisions and action plans
- ISU self-evaluation report
- ISU strategy 2018-2024
- ISU research strategy 2018-2024
- ISU action plan 2018-2020
- ISU research action plan 2018-2020
- ISU strategic plan 2018-2024 strategic plan for internationalisation
- ISU action plans 2018-2020 for internationalisation
- ISU grants since 2006
- ISU the business continuity plan
- ISU rules and procedures for elaboration, approval, modification and abolition of educational program
- ISU report of quality assessment results
- ISU educational program assessment criteria
- ISU regulation on hiring researchers
- ISU student body planning mechanism and methodology
- The rule on conducting a competition for academic positions and employment conditions at ilia state university
- International projects database
- Interview with the senate representatives
- Interview with the academic board representatives
- Interview with research and development office representatives
- Interview with the head of departments, deans and programs' leaders
- Interview with employers

Recommendations:
Proposal(s), which should be considered by the institution to comply with requirements of the standard component
Suggestions:
Non-binding suggestions for further development
Best Practices (if applicable):
Practices, which prove to be exceptionally effective and which may become a benchmark or a model for other higher education institutions
Evaluation
☐ Complies with requirements

2.2 Internal Quality Assurance Mechanisms

- o 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.
- o HEI has a mechanism for planning student body, which will give each student an opportunity to get a high quality education.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

A global quality concept is underlying quality management at ILIA state university and is a core component of the system. This quality concept has been elaborated with very strong links with the strategic plan. In fact all quality processes run at ILIA are explicitly related to specific strategic goals as well as the stakeholders benefiting from the results of the process (e.g. Research on student's employment are communicated to Faculties & schools, Heads of programs, Student services and Internal Audit services). The quality management system is intended to support the development of a quality culture based on core values such as transparency, sharing, inclusiveness, continuity or accountability. The current strategic plan contains some goals that will contribute to the development of the quality system (e.g. # 1.1.3, 1.3.3, 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3,2.2.1), illustrating the will of the leadership to develop QA mechanisms and further increase the quality of information to take decisions.

This quality concept includes many procedures and tools, covering the main functions of the university. Teaching and Research as well as the activities of university's units or staff (recruitment, assessment. Reporting mechanisms at individual and unit level ensure a good follow up of the activities. All the quality processes are properly planned through out the year and responsibilities are clear and well understood by university members. However the global supervision of all quality activities could be deepened. Even though, activities and resources to support improvement, such as training, exist at ILIA, they are not included in the global quality concept essentially focused on implementation of the strategic plan and the PDCA cycle. Some of the procedures are new or on the verge to be implemented and will require time to be well rooted in daily activities.

Even though each level/structure of the university is responsible for the implementation of the strategic plan and improvement measures, a central role is played by the central QA office, which has the main responsibility to gather data (e.g. data about students progression collected in the University data warehouse ARGUS) or feedback (from students, graduates, alumni and employers). They prepare report for relevant stakeholders as described un the QA concept. They are also involved in elaboration and improvement of tools. There is a QA correspondent officer un each faculty. Their role is essentially focused on teaching. Many systematically used processes are related to teaching and cover all phases of student's life cycle from admission to job. Several satisfaction surveys and focused groups are taking place and include internal and external stakeholders. In some faculties advisory boards have been created to include employers and external experts to increase the fitness for purpose of programs.

All QA processes are supported by an efficient IT system as mentioned during the site visit by many participants. The interviews during the site visit suggest that resources for quality activities are adequate.

During the site visit the panel could hear about many examples of improvement following feedback given by students, alumni, employers, and academics. It could be either adaptation of tools (e.g. questionnaires), infrastructure (e.g. cafeteria) or teaching (e.g. development stronger links with the socio-economic sector). As mentioned, they are regular student satisfaction surveys and the students give examples of improvements introduced after these surveys, however students do not receive systematic feedback on the results of the surveys. Examples of improvements following annual reports of central / administrative units were also given during the site visit.

ILIA state university has a mechanism for planning student body. This is described in a procedure that makes explicit ratio and criteria used for different types of programs (Bsc or Msc, field, teaching methods etc.). These are the basis for decision of the relevant bodies.

Evidences/indicators

- ISU Internal Quality concept
- ISU Self evaluation report
- ISU report of quality assessment results
- Report of the QA office I-II part 2017
- Regulation for the assessment of the work performed by administrative-assisting personnel.docx
- Regulation on hiring assisting personnel.doc
- Regulation on hiring researchers.docx
- Regulation on the assessment of the work performed by academic personnel.docx
- Regulation on the assessment of the work performed by the research personnel.docx
- Rule on conducting a competition for academic positions and employment conditions.doc
- The Rule for the scientific-research activity evaluation and financing.docx
- Rules for record keeping
- ISU Student Body Planning mechanism and methodology
- Interview with central QA office
- Interview with faculty QA officers
- Interview with Academic Board representative
- Interview with Senate representative
- Interview with Deans
- Interview with Heads of programs

Recommendations:

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

Suggestions:

Create a systemic view of ISU Quality system, including resources and activities developed for improvement (such as trainings). Enlarge the scope of responsibilities of Faculty QA officers (currently mainly focused on programs) to support the development of a quality culture at faculty level. Systematize a feedback to students on the results of their evaluations of teaching evaluations and other surveys to develop a quality culture, ensure high response rates and fully developed answers..

Best Practices (if applicable):

Strong links between QA concept and tools with the strategic plan

Evaluation

☐ Complies with requirements
☐

2.3. Observing Principles of Ethics and Integrity

- o HEI has developed regulations and mechanisms that follow principles of ethics and integrity. Such regulations are publicly accessible.

| | o | Institution has implemented mechanisms for detecting plagiarism and its prevention. |
| | o | HEI follows the principles of academic freedom. |

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

Ilia state university has developed an ethic code in a very participative manner, including students and has been discussed and approved by the Representative Council and the Academic Board. This participative process increases ownership of the rules.

The code contains all necessary information about rights and ethical behaviors in the university as well as academic integrity that is also a core value of the university. Academic freedom has a central position in ILIA code of ethics and has been frequently mentioned as a core value of the university by academics and other staff during the interviews.

A document defines the procedure to follow when rules are broken. An ethical committee deals with related issues. In order to assure academic integrity in publication, ILIA has generalized the use of an electronic tool to detect plagiarism (Turnitin).

Several means and channels are used to widespread the code. It is publicly available on the university website and available on learning platforms. It is presented to newcomers including during the induction days of new students. The code is part of students agreement received at the beginning of studies and is part of the contract signed by all employees.

All interviewees met during the site visit were fully aware of the ethical code and its main content as well as the use of Turnitin.

The Legal unit of the university mentions few cases of unethical behaviors or academic non-integrity cases to be addressed (19 cases in 2017 according to the report of LAW office).

Commitment of the leadership in addressing this issue seriously is also illustrated by the coordinating role of ILIA in the Erasmus + program "INTEGRITY" (2017).

Evidences/indicators
- ISU Values and Vision
- ISU code of ethic of Academic Personnel and Other People Participating in the Teaching Process (5.09.2011)
- ISU code of ethic for ISU students (16.10.2015)
- ISU strategic plan 2018-2024
- ISU Report of the Quality Assurance Office (2017)
- ISU Internal Quality Assurance Concept
- ISU Employers' program evaluation mechanism (QA office)
- ISU Self Evaluation Report
- Interview with Academic Staff
- Interview with students
- Interview with doctoral students
- Interview with supervisors
- Interview with Legal office

Recommendations:
Proposal(s), which should be considered by the institution to comply with requirements of the standard component

Suggestions:
Non-binding suggestions for further development

Best Practices (if applicable):
Pro activity regarding ethical issues and support to Academic Integrity, in particular introduction of a tool to avoid plagiarism (Turnitin)

Evaluation
☐ Complies with requirements

3. Educational Programs

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

3.1 Design and Development of Educational Programs
• HEI has a policy for planning, designing, implementing and developing educational programs.
Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements
HEI has established the policy and detailed mechanisms (in accord to its own mission) for planning, designing and developing educational programs, which are compatible to the interests of students from vast variety of fields. It is guided by the regulations, such as: (a) Rules and procedures for elaboration, approval, modification and suspension of educational program; (b) Educational Program Assessment Criteria; and (c) Rule of assessment of implementation of educational programs. The whole process of planning, designing and developing educational programs are based on the basic principles of cooperation, curriculum oriented on labor market, incorporation of the latest trends in the curriculum and multifaceted evaluation of the programs to reach desirable level of quality.

These lead to active and substantial involvement in the program development process all interested stakeholders, such as employers, students, alumni (if any) and academic (faculty) as well as administrative (school dean, head of quality assurance office, curriculum expert, etc.) staff. Participation of all interested parties in the stages of the program planning, designing and development ensures the modernity and market-orientations of the given program. As for quality assurance, regular self-evaluation practice is introduced. As interview with QAO representatives revealed, in case of ongoing programs, central QAO provides feedback for program head and team, which, in turn, collect their own data from students and report to the dean, if any modifications, improvements or changed are needed in given program. Further, school reports back to the central QAO.

As intensively was mentioned during site visit as well as was proved by relevant documentations and self-evaluation form, HEI takes into consideration interests and feedback from all interested stakeholders in the process of planning, designing, implementation, development and annulment of the given educational program. Namely, to improve the efficiency of systematization and co-operation of external actors in the process of establishing, developing and evaluating, board of advisers have been established at most of schools. The board consists of experts in relevant fields and members of international institutions, whose functions and responsibilities are envisaged in relevant provisions. For nowadays such advisory boards operate in the fields of business, law and engineering. HEI plans to compile advisory boards in the fields unified under the School of Art and Social Sciences.

As far as HEI involves more than dozens of research institutes in various fields, they are actively involved in program development process. Each program, if relevant, emerges in close collaboration with compatible research institution, such as, Institute of Botany, Abastumani Observatory, etc.

Besides, administrative (Deans, QA representatives) as well as academic staff (Professors, invited lecturers) mentioned that openness to new programs is one of the good practices at |

the HEI. If proposed program is in compliance with the mission of ISU, meet all criteria for properly elaborated education program (Educational Program Assessment Criteria), and has reasonable and affordable budgeting, can proceed to formal procedures of establishment of new program, as described in Rules and procedures for elaboration, approval, modification and suspension of educational program and Rule of assessment of implementation of educational programs. It should be mentioned that ISU seeks to ensure sustainability of its educational programs via tight cooperation between program developers and budgeting office

HEI seeks feedback from all interested parties and incorporates all possible best practices communicated from students, employers, alumni, local and/or international experts. Be more precise, it tries to stay in relevance with constantly changing environment and adapts its activities: (a) in case of changes of the educational program HEI employs data provided by internal quality mechanisms for system evaluations, external evaluations, feedbacks from students and/or other interested parties, student academic performance monitoring and program satisfaction surveys; However, when it comes to (b) cancellation, HEI relies on the information provided by program implementation assessment on weaknesses and risk factors, e. g. lack of material and human resources needed for the implementation of the program, lack of students' interests in the program due to labor market demands, results of student and alumni surveys and termination of cooperation with external partners supporting the program.

Procedures involved in the planning, establishment and development of programs are based on the "PDCA" principle. Specifically, the plan assessment criteria are used in the planning stage (PLAN) and the rule and procedures for applying, approving, modifying and abolishing the program. On the stage of implementation (DO), to assess given results (Check) Periodical Self-Assessment Reports are employed, which contains diverse indicators, including student, employer and alumni feedback.

If there are active students on annulling program, HEI operates according to the rule of "recognition of education received under the amended or revised educational program" and enables students to smoothly complete an educational program and gain relevant qualification.

Evidences/indicators

- Inner Quality Assurance Concept
- Rules and procedures for the elaboration, approval, modification and suspension of educational program
- Educational Program Assessment Criteria
- Rules for assessing the implementation of educational programs
- Recognition of obtained education in case a study program is changed or cancelled
- Report on analysis of the labor market and employers' demands
- Graduate opinion study report
- Student academic performance data sheets
- Advisory Board Provisions
- Interviews with Deans, QA central and faculty level office representatives, Program heads, students, academic staff, budgeting office representatives.

Recommendations:
Proposal(s), which should be considered by the institution to comply with requirements of the standard component

Suggestions:
Non-binding suggestions for further development

Best Practices (if applicable):
Clear and applied procedures to develop programs. Involvement of external stakeholders in designing the programs. Cooperation with budget office to ensure sustainability and cost efficiency.

Evaluation

☐Complies with requirements

3.2 Structure and Content of Educational Programs

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

o With the help of individualized education programs, HEI takes into consideration various requirements, needs and academic readiness of students, and ensures their unhindered involvement into the educational process.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

ISU follows existing acting legislation and European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) guidelines, when creating educational programs that are and is consistent with the University Mission. Hence, learning outcomes of each individual program is clearly detailed and are given in line with the level of higher education and qualification to be awarded.

Learning outcomes for each educational program corresponds to the field of study, are based on field characteristics and are defined by the National Qualifications Framework in terms of six criteria (knowledge and understanding, the ability to apply knowledge in practice, the ability to arrive to conclusions, communication ability, learning ability, value acquisition).

The components' sequence in the program and the prerequisites for access to them is logical; The structure and content of the program provides the learning outcomes of the program envisaged by the average academic student achievement within a reasonable time. Besides, any given educational program offered by the HEI incorporates elective components.

The volume of the program, represented in terms of ECTS, is defined by its content, learning outcomes and consideration the specific characteristics of the given field.

To determine the efficiency of student load within the components, regular student survey on the relevancy of their work load is conducted through "Argus". It automatically generates students' academic performance indicators. The data is accessible to course instructor and enables her/him to improve and/or develop the course based on the given data, including improving course load for students. For instance, as repeatedly was mentioned during interviews with program heads, academic staff, students and QA representatives, the content of number of courses were modified based on above mentioned feedback in terms of incorporating more practice hours (e.g. in frame of Education Administration Program). Another example was offered by Law Faculty QAO representative, where separate practice-based module was introduced, after careful exploration of feedback given by students, alumni and employers.

The use of ECTS credits in the program corresponds to Law on higher education Current Regulations, Ilia State University Level of standards and regulations and ECTS guidelines.

The programs incorporate a variety of teaching methods. As self-evaluation report states and interviews showed, the teaching methods listed in frame of individual program follow its objectives and learning outcomes. Besides, they take into consideration the field specifications and ensure achievement of the results predefined in the program; However,

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careful examination of randomly sampled syllabuses revealed that sometimes this is not the case. More precisely, chosen teaching methods do not correspond the learning outcomes stated in the program/course description,

Faculties and schools regularly update information about their programs and publish them on the university website. Besides, programs catalog provides short information about programs and relevant contact details, which is also available online.

Curriculums that are offered by ISU incorporate different requirements of students, academic training and special educational needs, flexible learning plans, appropriate forms and conditions of study. HEI uses modular planning of the programs, provides diverse curricula, and offers exclusive programs. Here are some illustrations: (a) Individual consultation meetings with instructors may be set in advance during office hours or on individual student's request through "Argus" or corporate mail; (b) Academic writing center of the university serves students' individual needs. It gives students the opportunity to register online for specific individual tutoring session or to receive online feedback on the written assignment.

The elaboration of an individual curriculum for students with special educational needs is linked with adapted environment to the learning process and if necessary special human resources will be allocated for the use. The University Scientific Research Institute – "Children and Adolescent Development Clinic" is involved in the development of individual curriculum for students with special educational needs. The individual curriculum may also be compiles if the educational program is changed or canceled.

Evidences/indicators
- Educational programs and corresponding syllabuses
- Rule of Evaluation of Implementation for Educational Programs of Ilia State University
- The rules and procedures for elaboration, approval, modification, and cancelation of the educational program of the legal entity of public law - Ilia State University
- Assessment Criteria for Educational Program of Ilia State University
- Bachelor's and Master's Program Standards
- University dissertation board and doctorates provision
- Undergraduate and Graduate Program Standards
- Academic Calendar
- Catalogues of Educational Programs
- Definition of payment rules for Ilia State University students / vocational students, granting of credits, additional rating and / repetition of courses / components
- Monitoring of programs completion in set timeframe, and dropout rate
- Results of monitoring students' academic performance
- Student Services Assessment Survey Report and Training Course Assessment Mechanism
- Interviews with Deans, QA central and faculty level office representatives, Program heads, students, academic staff, budgeting office representatives
- Defended MA and PhD Thesis reviewed during site visit.

Recommendations:

To improve the formulations and content of learning outcomes with increased ownership of the learning outcome approach (more emphasis on the undelying pedagogical reflexion). Make more explicit connexions between choice of teaching methods and learning outcomes.

Suggestions:

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Best Practices (if applicable):
- ISU offers exclusive programs that cannot be found in any other Georgian HEI.
- Diversity of curricula in relation to ISU mission, some with strong links with research institutes.
- Modular planning of programs.

Evaluation

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

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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

HEI has clear instructions for setting up the assessment system for learning outcomes incorporated into any single syllabus included in each educational program. The assessment system at the HEI is vividly described and presented in accord to the Order N3 of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia, Rule of Calculation of Higher Educational Program Credits and Rule of Determination of Student/Vocational Student Evaluation, Credit Assessment, Rate and Additional/Repeated/Component Payment rules. it details the methods of evaluation, forms, components and criteria applied to the students' activity evaluation, and, as stated in self-evaluation report, takes into consideration the specificity of the field, whilst enables instructor to trace students' progress and performance.

HEI employs 100-point system for each course that are distributed, at least, in-between three different components (mid-term assessments and one mandatory final assessment with maximum 30 points) with clearly defined margins of minimum requirements. Besides, each syllabus details the assessment criteria (methods and grading criteria) for students' activities. Due to the specificities of each course, evaluation methods can be test, essay, demonstration, presentations, presentation of audiovisual work, participation in the performance, performing the concert, solving the case, participating in a mock trial, etc. Evaluation criteria is defined for each abovementioned component of the assessment and informs students about their learning outcomes, shortcomings and ways of improvement; However, presented relevant documentation as well as onsite interviews did not specify the exact mechanisms and/or methods of monitoring internships and practice component, and criteria for assessment the reaching learning outcomes stated in any given program.

HEI operates an equal and fair system of assessment for every student, as well as detailed appeal mechanism, which gives the student an opportunity to address the relevant faculty or school in case of a thorough suspicion, to establish appeal commission and initiate appropriate procedures.

The electronic versions of syllabuses are placed in the University's electronic system "Argus" to ensure students' awareness about the requirements defined by the course components assessment system and are available before students start academic year/semester. Besides all information connected to evaluation criteria, procedures and dates are communicated to the students by instructors orally in the beginning of the course.

Evidences/indicators

- Rule of Calculation of Higher Educational Program Credits and Rule of Determination of Student
- Educational program evaluation criteria
- Syllabuses/Program descriptions
- Onsite interviews with program heads, academic staff and faculty QAOs

Recommendations:

To specify and explicitly detail the mechanisms and methods of monitoring internships and practice component, which is extensively incorporated in education programs offered by ISU

Suggestions:
In some programs increase the diversity of assessment methods. Make sure that requirements for MA thesis are always meeting academic expectations for this level of study.
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
☐ Substantially complies with requirements
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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
o HEI has staff management policy and procedures that ensure the implementation of educational process and other activities defined in its strategic plan.
o HEI ensures the employment of qualified academic/scientific/invited/administrative/ support staff.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

ISU Personnel Management Policy corresponds to the University strategic plan, mission and vision.

The University has submitted the documents necessary for elaboration of the newcomer adaptation process acceleration program – "Procedure of Arrangement Working Environment for new Employees and their Familiarization with Corresponding Rights and Obligations" and "Guide for New Employees", ensuring acceleration of the process of finding his/her place in a new working environment by a new employee, getting the information on the organization, elements of corporate culture, salary, bonuses and benefits, acquainting with his/her obligations. The mentioned documents create the basis of a new employee's loyalty to the organization, respect towards the organizational culture and positive attitude and assisting in revealing and making use of employee skills.

Rules of recruitment at ISU are differentiated. Particularly, there are submitted the rules for recruiting academic and support personnel, teachers and researchers. Basically, the personnel are selected based on an open procedure – a researcher and teacher are the exception. People can be appointed to the mentioned positions based on recommendations (of the dean, head of research unit) as a result of analysis of the candidate's scientific-pedagogical work. When recruiting a teacher, his/her professional experience and/or experience in the academic sphere has great importance. In the given case the period of getting experience in professional or academic sphere is not determined, which makes preciseness of definition of a teacher's qualification doubtful, moreover, in the document "Rules for recruiting teachers", when a teacher is introduced by the dean, it is said that "in the case of recruiting a candidate with no experience of working in universities, the dean of the faculty shall interview the candidate together with the head of the program and faculty quality assurance representative." The above excludes involvement of HRM Department in the recruitment and selection process. The same has been confirmed in the conversation with the deans. Passive participation of HRM Department in the staff selection process, presumably, is caused by small number of HRM employees – just 8 HRM people are

providing services to 2732 employees. According to international standards and in order to fully implement the University HR strategy, the number of employees in the HR department should be incresead.

In the document "The rules of competition for academic positions and conditions of recruiting to academic positions at ISU" there is given the information on initiation of competition announcement, the corresponding competition conditions and processes, conditions of recruiting to academic positions, types of employment agreements, work-load of the academic personnel, employment conditions. The mentioned document ensures selection of the university academic personnel and transparent and fair procedure of selection.

To conduct the selection process in the best manner, the position instructions are important. The mentioned documents have the title "Job analysis documents (position instructions)". The above document does not have the job analysis basic indicators. Besides, the position instructions of several positions to not involve full amount of qualification requirements (very often there are given the requirements related to knowledge, but there are not indicated necessary skills, experience, etc.; for instance, "Administration Secretarial Senior Specialist").

The rule of ISU academic and research personnel Performance Appraisal stipulates the basis for relevant implementation of the appraisal of the given group, which is ensured by the appraisal method and criteria.

In compliance with article 4.4 of the Rule on Performance Appraisal of ISU invited personnel involved in the tuition process "On the initiative of the faculties, schools or university quality assurance service, in addition to the appraisal instruments set forth under this article, other instruments and mechanisms can be determined."

In the rule of the Performance Appraisal for the ISU administrative-support personnel the goal of appraisal is well-determined. Besides, there are given the methods of appraisal, though it is said in paragraph "a": "a) Each employee shall be appraised through appraisal of the competences and his/her functions-obligations important for successful implementation of his/her activities.", but there is no map of competencies.

It should be mentioned that HR Department has provided the key indicators for the activities in several directions (KPI, which, certainly, is a positive fact).

A part of the University employee motivation system, trainings and development, in whole, has a positive tendency, though, it should be mentioned that it would be better if the spent amounts, time and energy are more targeted to the position activities and result. Particularly, three-months training in foreign languages cannot have a good result for beginners. It is worth mentioning that the University is taking into consideration the employees' wants.

In whole, it can be said that the personnel policy is implemented satisfactorily at the University and it ensures attracting of qualified staff, which, in the given case, meets the requirements. It should be underlined that perfections of the personnel processes and procedures and aspiration to improvement is apparent. The HR development strategic plan makes the basis for the above, thus, being directed to higher level development and improvement.

Evidences/indicators
- Human Resource Management Service Strategic Development Plan
- Rules for personnel employment
- Internal Order
- New employee's guide

- Code of Ethics
- Rules of Performance Assessment
- LEPL Ilia State University Election Regulations
- Rules of the University staff labour remuneration and bonuses and, also, Social monetary assistance to the University employees
- Job analysis documents (Job description)
- Announced competitions
- Personal records of the personnel
- Research reports
- Sample of labor agreements
- Structural units' provisions. Statistical indicators about personnel (see self-assessment form Tables)
- Exchange programs
- International Projects Base
- Interview with research and development office representatives
- Interview with employers
- Interview with the head of department, deans and programs' leaders
- Interview with students.
- Interview with the heads of research institutes

Recommendations:

To fully implement the HR strategy of ILIA state university and to align with international practices, the number of HR department employees should be increased;

Further develop description of qualifications required for all positions;

Further develop trainings and development programs based on performance appraisals and position needs.

Suggestions:

It is desirable to have a single application form for all employees. This will be more convenient for record keeping program and will make activities of the HRM Department better and improve time management.

As October 1, 2018 is the term of effectiveness of the performance appraisal system, it will be better to use different methods for different positions (for instance, 720 and 360 degree, goal oriented, appraisal according to competences (in the given case development of a map of competence will be necessary) and other methods).

Best Practices (if applicable):

All the work to clarify the "rules of the game"
Affiliation of academic staff

Evaluation

☐ Substantially complies with requirements
☐

4.2. Academic/Scientific and Invited Staff Workload

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The number and work load of academic/ scientific and invited personnel is adequate to the educational programs, scientific-research/ creative/ executive activities implemented and other functions imposed on them.

To implement educational programs, scientific-research/ creative/ executive activities and

other functions imposed on them, at the given stage, the adequacy of number ISU academic/ scientific and invited personnel and their work load shall be confirmed by the scheme of the academic and invited personnel work load. Though, in several cases, 16-18 hours (workload) per week (e.g., Business Administration bachelor stage – Chkhetia Nino – work load: 18 hours per week, Lominashvili Ketevan and Vacheishvili Natia – work load: 16 hours per week; Faculty of Science and Art - Makashvili Ketevan – work load: 16.7 hours per week) creates danger for the quality level of performance or violations of an employee's labour and leisure balance.

In whole, as a result of researching the satisfaction of the University product and service obtaining sub-groups, it can be said that the parties interested in the work carried out by the academic/ scientific and invited personnel are satisfied, which shows relevance of the number of the academic/ scientific and invited personnel and their work load policy. Though the procedure of performance appraisal for the invited personnel needs some perfection.

The methodology for determination of the students body proposed by the University considers optimization of the existing number of the students and the number of those to be admitted, considering the specificity of the programs and target markings in connection with the number of academic and invited personnel.

Important – high level of involvement of international professionals in academic and research processes is confirmed based on the international projects and indicates high level of involvement of highly qualified international specialists and, correspondingly, progressive, development oriented basic activity of the University.

Evidences/indicators
- Sample of labor agreements
- Rules for assessing the activities of academic, invited personnel and researchers at Ilia State University
- Semester Scheme for LL. academic and invited personnel
- Methodology of Planning of Students' Contingent of Ilia State University
- Number of academic, scientific and invited personnel with respect to the number of programs and students (see Self-evaluation form tables)
- Ratio of affiliated academic staff with full academic and invited personnel (see self-assessment form Tables)
- Ratio of affiliated academic staff with the number of students (see Self-Assessment Form Spreadsheets)
- Student and academic / invited personnel research results
- International Projects Base
- Interview with research and development office representatives
- Interview with employers
- Interview with the head of department, deans and programs' leaders
- Interview with students
- Interview with the heads of research institutes

Recommendations:
Proposal(s), which should be considered by the institution to comply with requirements of the standard component

Suggestions:
Ilia state could consider ways to reduce workload of academic staff

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

ISU internal regulations on assignment, suspension and termination of student status, mobility, qualification granting/recognition of education as well as payment rules and academic standards for each educational level are publicly accessible at the ISU official website: **www.iliauni.edu.ge.**

The samples of BA/MA/PhD student contracts provide detailed information on ISU students' rights and obligations, including tuition fees and payment procedures.

According to the amendment 9[3] made to the document on regulation for granting of credits (4.07.2017), the ISU students can appeal against their intermediate/final assessment through the faculty or school administration. The students' right to appeal is reflected in the samples of BA/MA/PhD student contracts. The contracts contain the thorough information on students' obligations and code of ethics as well.

There are several mechanisms provided for students to apply their complains /appeals to the university administration: "ARGUS" application system where the application process can be monitored by the students themselves, official email of the Department of Students Affairs (student.affairs@iliauni.edu.ge) and the hotline number (032 2 22 32 43) when the call recipients redirect the registered complains/questions to the Department of Students Affairs. The latter is responsible for forwarding (if necessary) and monitoring the flow of the information, and giving feedback to the applicant student.

ISU has developed the guidebook for freshmen students to provide them with substantial information on university mission and values, infrastructure, teaching/learning processes, student obligations and rights, student support services, academic integrity principles, etc. Besides, there are compulsory meetings for freshmen students organized before their enrollment.

Evidences/indicators

- ISU-SER
- Internal regulation documents
- ISU departments' statutes
- Student contract samples www.iliauni.edu.ge.,
- Interview data

Recommendations:

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

Suggestions:
Non-binding suggestions for further development

Best Practices (if applicable):
Practices, which prove to be exceptionally effective and which may become a benchmark or a model for other higher education institutions

Evaluation
☐ Complies with requirements

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

Students' affairs department is the main sub-unit of the University PR office responsible for providing the ISU students with consulting and career support services. The functions and responsibilities of the department are determined by its separate regulation (statute). The most used communication channels by students' affairs department are the following: face-to-face consultation meetings during the office working hours, official email address student.affairs@iliauni.edu.ge (working on Monday-Friday), official Facebook page, Q&A Facebook page, 'Argus' system and hotline number (032 2223243) which is available every day from 10:00 to 22:00 pm, except Sunday. The hotline numbers is especially used for registration of problems related to the teaching and learning processes at ISU.

The electronic system 'Argus' provides the ISU students with the possibility to organize and monitor their overall teaching and learning process. Through the 'Argus', students get familiar with study course syllabuses and time tables, can choose the relevant study courses, see their mid-term and final examination results, credits and can contact to the lecturers/program heads directly.

Through the abovementioned channels, the students' office provides the ISU students with information on the exchange programs available at the University, internship opportunities and job vacancies, planned competitions and other activities/events taking place at the University.

The students' affairs department supports and advocates projects initiated by the ISU students, provides consultations for students during proposal writing, holds orientation meetings for freshmen students, organizes the ISU students' clubs, the summer/winter schools and other extracurricular activities related to science (e.g. Science Picnic), informal education (e.g. S.POT), sport and corporate social responsibility (e.g. blood donation).

The students' department supports the ISU students and graduates career development through the UNI JOBS program [Unijobs@iliauni.edu.ge]. The department organizes potential employers' and students databases in order to match the available job vacancies with students' applications who are willing to get employed. The ISU students/graduates receive the updated information on their emails on the daily bases. Moreover, the students with high academic performance are provided with the possibility to make an internship in public services. The internship is available at the ISU students' office as well. Three job fairs were organized by the ISU students' office in 2017. In order to raise the participant

students/graduates employability, they were introduced to the resume writing and job interviewing trainings.

In addition, the ISU students are provided with the possibility to improve their academic writing skills by registration the academic writing center. Apart from the organized seminars, the students are eligible to receive individual consultations on the specific topics as well. For the students willing to improve their national study scholarships there are free intensive training courses provided by the ISU students' office in collaboration with ISU Preparatory Center. In partnership with QA office, the students' affairs department participates in students' surveys and needs assessments on a regular basis and mainly on part of collecting data through 'Argus' system. As it was mentioned during the interview with students, they do not receive direct feedback on survey findings, but the results are visible in the improvement made by the University administration.

In the administrative decision making the ISU students are represented through the University Senate (representative board). The Senate member students are eligible to advocate the ISU students' needs and requirements.

In accordance to the ISU tuition payment rules all the BA and MA students are able to choose a convenient payment schedule (e.g. in 2, 4, 6 and 10 equal parts for BA students).

Evidences/indicators
- Summary report of the students' affairs department
- ISU internal regulations
- ISU-SER
- Samples, www.iliauni.edu.ge.
- Interview data
- ISU survey reports (instruments, data).

Recommendations:
Proposal(s), which should be considered by the institution to comply with requirements of the standard component

Suggestions:
Non-binding suggestions for further development.

Best Practices (if applicable):
Care of students with vulnerability and disability. All measures and activities illustrating the student centeredness of ISU.

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

As stated, the ISU mission, which is "**to create**, transmit and use **knowledge** and advance science for public development both locally and internationally", among others is based on the principle of "unity of research and teaching; the knowledge is accumulated and passed by the same people, while students get the opportunity to participate in the process of knowledge accumulation". Among the main values "the integrity in learning/teaching and research" is named. The integration of learning and teaching with research is being reached through the wide incorporation of researchers into the educational process through conducting lectures/seminars/lab works; introduction of the latest research data into teaching resources; broad involvement in the design and improvement of new and running educational programs. ISU provides the access to the wide list of international databases in different fields and the list has been continuously increased.

The fundamental and applied research activities at ISU are carried out by 19 scientific-research institutions and the Music Center involved in performance and creative activities in the field of music. It is noteworthy, that the incorporation of the mentioned institutions into the ISU structure and their contribution to the institutional scientific performance varies from very successful to less participative. It is suggested that ISU conduct the activities to share best practice in order to improve the integration of all research institutions/units for using the whole scientific potential it acquires.

It should also be mentioned that if the involvement of Master and PhD students in research activities is quite high, the Bachelor students' participation is comparatively low. It is important to provide the access of students to research facilities and introduce them to science as early as possible to ensure the development of practical skills and competencies required for the field.

Declaring the implementation and promotion of research as its main priority, ISU is keen to permanently improve its research performance which is reflected in the high ranking of the University (Scimago, Webometrics, U-Multirank, etc) on local, and by some indicators on international level.

The strategic plan for 2018-2024 considers "development and strengthening of university research activities. The research strategy and action plan, which is shared with university faculties / schools and research units, is synchronized with the university's development strategy...". It should be noted, however, that while the strategic plan defines the priority of the research in clear and concise manner, the action plan of ISU and its schools and faculties seems to be too general, lacking the quantitative details and precise view on the actions and measures which are to be taken, thus, making it hard to assess whether the stated aims, tasks and objectives are realistic and reachable taking in mind the present financial, human, technical and/or material resources.

In order to ensure effective management in doctoral research "Regulations on dissertation council and doctoral studies" is in act at the Faculty of Sciences and Arts, Faculty of the Natural Sciences and Engineering, and the Business school. The mentioned regulations clearly define the functions for the supervisors of PhD students/researchers, while still providing some freedom depending on the specificity of different fields and areas. Coming from the fact, that the terms of the "communication" between the student and his/her supervisor are not strictly regulated, there are cases of "insufficient" communication.

The doctoral theses concepts include gradual and consistent processes, including systematization of research process, intermediate reports on progress, and periodic feedback. In order to ensure high quality of doctoral research, the regulations on dissertation council and doctoral studies foresees presentation of relevant international

publications, which should be indexed in the periodicals defined by the university. As it became evident from the interviews with the persons involved, the workload of academic and scientific staff enables the effective supervision of the scientific/creative projects and high-quality scientific works.

The mentioned regulations define the procedures and criteria for the evaluation and the defense of dissertation, which are transparent, objective, fair and open to the public.

It's a point of concern that the Doctoral dissertation defense indicator is comparatively low, while the number of suspended Doctoral students is rather high, which is explained by the fact that the majority of Doctoral students are employed and not able to reconcile the work with scientific activities due to lack of time and the absence of flexible schedule of studies, or the lack of resources to publish the findings in high impact factor journals. It is important to give the applicants the real picture of the work load, their responsibilities and the existing requirements to be awarded with the Doctoral degree, so that they can assess realistically their capacities prior to submission to the Doctoral program.

Evidences/indicators
- University mission;
- ISU strategy and action plan;
- ISU research strategy and action plan;
- Faculties / Schools strategies and action plans;
- ISU service agreement register;
- Completed and ongoing projects base;
- Dissertation councils and doctorates statutes;
- Doctoral Programs / PhD thesis abstracts / Graduate papers listing;
- Dissertation defense index;
- ISU academic staff assessment rules;
- International periodicals databases;
- Exemplar Doctoral theses
- Interviews with the representatives of Research institutions, academic staff, doctoral students, supervisors, alumni.

Recommendations:
Proposal(s), which should be considered by the institution to comply with requirements of the standard component

Suggestions:
- It is suggested that ISU conduct the activities to share best practice in order to improve the integration of all research institutions/units for using the whole scientific potential it acquires.
- It is suggested to raise the involvement of Bachelor students in the scientific-research activities to ensure the development of practical skills and competencies required for the field.
- Action plans of faculties and schools should be more precise and detailed in order to ensure the compliance of actions with the current resources.
- Measures should be taken in order to improve the Doctoral dissertation defense indicator.

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
☐

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

Research-related administrative issues are regulated by the University charter and relevant statutes of each research institution/unit. The research/creative activities are supported by Scientific Coordination Office, Development Office, and University Research Council, which functions, duties and responsibilities are clearly defined to prevent the possible overlapping and at the same time to provide the effective and timely coordination of actions.

Definitely, ISU has its priorities in supporting and developing some special fields of research, which does not exclude the equal financial support provided to the other fields and areas. The research funding procedures are transparent and in open access and are based on the assessment of previously achieved results.

ISU constantly provides assistance (through trainings, workshops, consultations, etc.) to academic and scientific staff as well as to the staff of scientific-research institutions in order to find funding from various local and international sources for research and the improvement of research infrastructure; to prepare grant proposals; to effectively manage the projects and make reports.

ISU mentions as its strong side the constant efforts to attract and encourage young and highly motivated researchers. One of the examples is the establishment of annual Pascal Prize awarded to the young academicians affiliated with the University for publications in internationally recognized periodicals.

ISU actively supports and sponsors the participation of students (especially at MA and PhD level) and young researchers in conferences/trainings/workshops/seminars/ festivals, including the international events. ISU participates in exchange programs, thus providing the national and international mobility of students, academic and scientific staff.

Currently ISU is involved in more than 80 different research projects. In 2017, the University became a member of the NUCLEUS- European Commission consortium, aimed "to promote research and development projects and to strengthen their internationalization, and also stimulate social needs-driven research and innovation". In 2017 ISU founded Carl Friedrich Lehmann-Haupt International Doctoral school, which was set "to become an umbrella doctoral school" for all faculties with a strong focus on international exchange and mobility 'offering cotutelle-based doctoral projects leading to double or multiple degree'. The other example of joint projects is the MA program in Central and Eastern Europe, Russian and Eurasion Studies (CEERES).

Evidences/indicators

- University charter;
- ISU research strategy and action plan;
- Scientific Research Coordination Statute;
- Development Office Statute;
- International Relations Office statute;
- Completed and ongoing projects database;
- Strategic plan for internationalization
- Pascal award-winners - webpage;
- Rustaveli Foundation data;
- Ilia State University Carl Friedrich Lehman-Haupt International Doctoral School
- statute and agreements;
- Framework agreement for doctoral level cooperation;

- Joint supervision of contract sample;
- MoUs
- Interviews with the representatives of Research institutions, academic staff, doctoral students, administrative staff.

Recommendations:

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

Suggestions:

Increase the number of pluridisciplinary doctoral schools.

Best Practices (if applicable):

Qualified staff for support services.

Competences and success in obtaining external incomes

Carl Friedrich Lehman-Haupt International Doctoral School

Evaluation

☐ Complies 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

ISU research quality evaluation system is a part of the internal quality assurance mechanisms and includes the evaluation of the research performance of academic staff as well as the evaluation of research activities of research institutions. The evaluation of academic staff is based on the multiple criteria, including publications, grants, rewards, patents, creative/performing projects, participation in national and international forums/conferences/workshops, supervision of MA /PhD thesis etc. The evaluation of research units include: program funding and / or utilization of internal funding indicator; a quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the scientific activities, such as publications, obtained patents; obtained scientific grants and / or submission to obtain scientific grants; organization and participation in scientific conferences, forums and seminars – all the standard evaluation criteria.

The evaluation process is managed by the University Research Council with the support of the Scientific Research Coordination Service. The relevant annual self-assessment reports are used as assessment tools. At the end of each year, the University submits the report on scientific and research activities to the public (through presentations that are uploaded to the website).

Still it is not quite clear, how the evaluation reports are used to raise the effectiveness of scientific research units as far as the intervention mechanisms are not defined documentally.

Evidences/indicators

- Concept of internal quality assurance;
- ISU academic staff assessment rules;
- Scientific-research activity evaluation and university funding rules;
- ISU webpage
- Scientific-research institution reports;
- Scientific research coordination office and Research Council Statute;
- Meetings with academic, scientific and administrative staff

Recommendations: Proposal(s), which should be considered by the institution to comply with requirements of the standard component

Suggestions: Further development of assessment methodology for different categories of personnel and units.

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

7. Material, Information and Financial Resources

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

7.1 Material Resources

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

ISU has a clear vision of current and future needs and requirements concerning material (both fixed and liquid assets), information and financial resources necessary for proper functioning of the institution; this vision is actually manifested in the budget, strategic plan and action plans. Renovation and refurbishment of facilities has been one of the major endeavours throughout recent years; upgrading technical resources has occurred; labs are equipped with necessary technology or other material resources to support research and teaching-learning processes, and these factors are of focal importance being in line with statements outlined in the mission and vision. All resources are adequate and relevant to the activities performed by the ISU, and are sufficient for existing and planned student body.

The ISU building has the compulsory sections: foyer, recreation spaces, classrooms and administrative offices with natural and artificial light possibilities, as well as spaces for group work and sanitary units (with continuous water supply and cleaning services). The first aid cabinet is not provided in all the buildings, however, the ISU has a plan to deal with the issue. All the facilities (classrooms, libraries, labs, inventory, etc.) and resources (reflected in the budget) are geared to supporting effective educational as well as research activities. Safety regulations in teaching/scientific labs are observed. ISU has uninterruptible power supply system, which was actually tested during the visit as there was a power cut and all systems and electricity supply continued to function without interruption. The buildings have central heating system; fire alarm system will be installed, and the process is described in the action plans. Fire extinguishing facilities and equipment are provided, and buildings have various exits in case of fire; health and safety protection of staff and students is among the priorities, though free access to all university facilities, which is ISU's institutional policy, raises some concerns about security; still, ISU has trained

security staff placed on each floor in the buildings to prevent any possible hazard. Security video recording system is installed as an additional security mechanism.

All buildings, except for the main building, are adapted (equipped with lifts, ramps, elevators, etc.) so that students with special educational needs can freely access all the facilities.

The possession of all fixed and liquid assets are supported with relevant documents.

Evidences/indicators

- ISU budget for the year of 2018
- ISU self-evaluation report
- ISU statement of financial position (balance sheet) as of the year of 2017
- ISU regulations on drafting, amending and monitoring of the budget
- Tentative 3-year budget (2018,2019, 2020) supporting ISU strategy and action plans
- ISU strategy 2018-2024
- ISU research strategy 2018-2024
- ISU action plan 2018-2020
- ISU research action plan 2018-2020
- ISU action plans 2018-2020 for each faculty
- ISU strategic plan 2018-2024 strategic plan for internationalisation
- ISU action plans 2018-2020 for internationalisation
- ISU grants since 2006
- International projects database
- Interview with the Senate Representatives
- Interview with the Academic Board Representatives
- Interview with Research and Development Office Representatives
- Interview with Material Resources and Budgeting Analysis and Accounting Office Representatives
- Minutes of Inventory Commission
- Interview with the Head of Security
- Documents on material resources

Observation of ISU library and facilities

Recommendations:

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

Suggestions:

- Ensure that people are safe since ISU is a rather open space.
- Use space more efficiently for the benefit of students (e.g. use free space to create informal working and meeting spaces)

Non-binding suggestions for further development

Best Practices (if applicable):

Efforts to modernize the infrastructure and adapt it to special needs.

Evaluation

☐ Complies with requirement

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 ISU library as the University structural unit has its own statute, seal and webpage. The library fund holds up to 2 million monographs, manuals, periodical editions, electronic resources, etc. in different languages. The ISU library provides 9 reading halls and 2 computer resource centers. The latter is well equipped with copying and printing machines (paid service). Meeting and training center is located in the Ilia Hall.

The library is equipped with Wi-Fi. Electronic catalogue is provided on ISU official website (http://opac.iliauni.edu.ge/eg/opac/home). The ISU library has an open access for everyone. The ISU students can access the electronic data basses from the outside of the University. ISU library Reading spaces are open to public from 9 am until 11 pm except Sunday.

The University has developed a standard for the library staff. The ISU library provides annual reports which are public and available on the library webpage along with the guidelines for using the library resources and services. The library stuff provides statistics of the use of electronic bases.

Bibliographic references included in the ISU study course syllabuses are available in the library's book fund. The library also prepares "Readers" (printed and electronic) based on a request of a professor/ head of the academic course. Additionally, the library staff members provide trainings on how to use resources (printed as well as electronic) through fixed and flexible scheduling. The library administration organizes induction meetings for freshmen students as well.

Services like reserving a book, looking for bibliography concerning particular topic, books from partner libraries, preparing audio books, electronic books, reading materials in Braille are also provided at the ISU library. The University library is actively developing the academic repository of the ISU academic staff through collecting their articles, books, publications, video lectures, translations etc.

Evidences/indicators

- https://library.iliauni.edu.ge/,
- statistic data
- interviews with library staff members;
- Site visit

Recommendations:

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

Suggestions:

Non-binding suggestions for further development

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

Evaluation

☐ Complies with requirements
☐

7.3 Information Resources

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

ISU has several buildings to support academic process and provide relevant space to faculties for their effective and efficient operations. IT infrastructure is relevant and up-to-date and complies with business processes. IT risk management strategy and practices are clear and feasible. The data concerning administrative processes are stored and processed online supported by relevant platforms (Argus, Moodle, etc.); data (including personal data)

protection mechanisms are relevant and secure; the data is saved on several servers which are protected through UPS power supply; power generators provide additional protection; the data is backed up on a regular basis on a virtual space. Data management processes are constantly observed and monitored.

Students and staff have constant access to IT infrastructure (both hardware and software); computer labs are provided to students and staff; ISU has electronic services and electronic management systems which are used both in research (electronic databases, e.g. Clarivate Analytics, EBSCO, Elsevier, JSTOR, ProQuest, etc.) as well as study process administration (e.g. Argus and Moodle). Electronic libraries and databases provide access to modern publications, course-books, research, etc. ISU operates Argus (online platform) which is integrated in the teaching and learning process and provides means of communication between university administration, academic personnel and students. The use of electronic services are constantly monitored in order to improve user experience and effective operation of the systems. Library personnel provide regular training sessions for academic and invited staff and students on how to effectively use library and other resources. ISU operates Turn-it-in platform (plagiarism-detector) which is a valuable resources to enhance the quality of teaching-learning and research at the university.

ISU has functional web-page which mostly provides information in Georgian and English concerning all fields of university operation: study programs, enrollment, news, specificity of teaching and learning at ISU, etc. The website provides information concerning international students: choice of programs, fees and scholarships, application and visa procedures, etc.

Evidences/indicators
- ISU self-evaluation report
- ISU strategy 2018-2024
- ISU research strategy 2018-2024
- ISU action plan 2018-2020
- ISU research action plan 2018-2020
- ISU action plans 2018-2020 for each faculty
- ISU strategic plan 2018-2024 strategic plan for internationalisation
- ISU action plans 2018-2020 for internationalisation
- Interview with the Senate Representatives
- Interview with the Academic Board Representatives
- Interview with Research and Development Office Representatives
- Interview with academic personnel
- Interview with invited teaching personnel
- Interview with students
- Interview with IT support staff
- Interview with Library staff
- Observation of ISU library and facilities

Evaluation

☐ Complies with requirements

Recommendations:
Recommendation/or proposal, which should be considered by the institution to comply with requirements of the standards

Suggestions:
Non-binding suggestions for further development

Best Practices (if applicable):
IT platform adapted to ISU needs.

7.4 Financial Resources

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

Allocation of financial resources is clear and is based on the priorities outlined in strategic and action plans; all the financial resources aim at supporting goals and objectives outlined in the mission statement; allocation of financial resources is merit-based; ISU has a specific approach to diversify income and obtain resources from three major sources: 1) income from economic activities including income from educational programs, tuition fees, etc., 2) state budget allocations, and 3) various grants – local and international foundations. Growing number of students, increase in local and international research funds and focus on attraction of more international students, as well as other activities to commercialise research activities may lead to an assumption that the financial stability of the institution is ensured. The fact that ISU budget is drafted through participative approach increases the chances that individual faculty or research institutes objectives and performance are safeguarded. ISU funds are adequate and sufficient to support activities outlined in strategic and action plans – development of learning, teaching, research or creative activities, as well as infrastructure. The budget allocates certain amount of finances to support research activities; ISU provides financial support to scientific personnel, as well as young scholars and doctoral students; ISU provides monitoring of financial activities and the completion of tasks outlined in the budget through internal audit office; internal audit assumes not only monitoring, but also an advisory function.

Evidences/indicators

- ISU self-evaluation report
- ISU strategic and action plans
- ISU statement of financial position (balance sheet) as of the year of 2017
- Regulations for Budgeting and Financial Analysis
- ISU budget for the year 2018
- Financial statement (balance sheet) for the year 2017
- Interview with Internal Audit Office
- Interview with Budgeting and Financial Resources Office

Recommendations:

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

Suggestions:

- ISU research action plans 2018-2020 does provide detailed description of planned activities for the years 2018, 2019, 2020, and lump sum amount is allocated per year to each individual educational, administrative or research activities; however, it is advisable that, where relevant, a more specific budget (a specific amount of finances) be allocated to each individual activity; e.g. expected expenditure for the planned conferences, staff training, etc.

Best Practices (if applicable):

- Participative approach to drafting ISU budget
- Internal audit office to monitor financial and material resource management, as well as provide advisory services to faculties or other units if necessary
- ISU has detailed action plans for 2018-2020 year for each individual faculty; the categories to measure faculty performance are clearly outlined, and measurements (e.g. percentage, or numbers, or volumes, etc.) for each individual key performance indicators are specified;

Evaluation

☐ Complies with requirements

☐