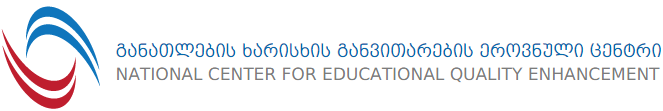
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**Final Report on Teaching University Geomedi Authorization**

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| Expert Panel Members  Chair: Pandelis Ipsilandis, Emeritus Professor, University of Thessaly, Greece  Members:  Professor Ivana Oborna, MD, PhD; independent consultant, Czech Republic  Irma Manjavidze M.D., PhD, AFAAM, Tbilisi State Medical University, Georgia  Irine Darchia, Associate Professor, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University  Davit Makasarashvili (Student Expert),  Zurab Alkhanishvili (Labor Market Expert) |

Tbilisi

2021

**Authorization Report Resume**

**General information on the educational institution**

Teaching University Geomedi (TUG) was established in 1998, founded by its Rector, who serves as the Head of the University since its establishment. TUG is an authorized Higher Education Institution (HEI) in Georgia, implementing accredited higher education programs in the field of Health Care.

The University primarily aims at establishing national and international humanistic values in the education system, promoting scientific research, development of higher and continuous professional education in correspondence to international standards. Its main goal is to train the specialist with knowledge and competence respective to modern international requirements and lead the medical activity with nationally accepted professional and ethical standards of medical service.

Learning and Teaching is provided by four faculties: Dentistry, Medicine, Healthcare economics and management, and Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, offering 7 programs:

Two (2) bachelor programs in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and Health Economics and Management;

Two (2) Master programs in the same fields as the bachelor ones, and

Two (2) One-cycle programs in Dentistry and Diploma of Medicine. The latter is offered both in Georgian and English languages and is the flagship of the University, accounting for 80% of the students.

The University is housed in modern premises, providing students, academic and administrative staff comfortable and convenient atmosphere for study and scientific research activities, with well-organized auditoria, high technology labs, modern clinical bases and a library holding both printed and electronic resources and free access to scientific databases (EBSCO, SCOPUS). Clinical training and practice take place at clinics and hospitals contracted by the University.

Academic personnel includes 58 affiliated academics (25 professors, 27 associate professors, 4 assistant professors and 2 assistants), 127 invited teaching staff, and 8 scientific personnel. Support of teaching, learning and administration is provided by 98 administrative and support personnel.

Currently, the student population accounts for 946 students, 563 of whom are international students, mostly from India, and 601 graduates.

University plans for the next 7 years include growing in student numbers, offering the Dentistry program in English language for international students, strengthen the research activities, enhance internationalization and achieve University ststus that will enable it to offer doctoral programs.

**Brief overview of the authorization site visit**

Because of the Covid-19 conditions, the site visit was organized in hybrid mode in three consecutive days from Monday, March 29th to Wednesday March 31st. All of the interviews between the panel of Experts and the University teams during those days were conducted on-line via the Zoom platform, controlled by the NCEQE representatives. On the second day, Tuesday March 30th, the Georgian members of the Panel accompanied by the NCEQE representative visited the University premises and facilities and several clinics where practicals for the MD programs take place. The international members of the panel had a chance to watch the visits and participate in discussions through mobile connection to the Zoom platform.

Before the visit, the panel received a Self-Evaluation Report (SER), and supporting documents for all standards in Georgian and English, the latter not being so complete. The panel would like to express its gratitude for receiving a very detailed report including identification of strengths and weaknesses in each area, but at the same time to advise the University to avoid repetition of information and adopt a critical rather than descriptive view. The University’s WEB site which was expected another significant source of information, had very limited content. The panel requested additional documents during the preparation phase, before the visit that were provided by the University. Requests for additional documents and evidence during the visit were handled professionally and efficiently.

During the visit, the panel had the chance to meet and interview the administration team (Rector and Deputy rectors, Academic board, the Self-Evaluation Team, the QA team, Faculty Deans and Program Heads, representatives of Affiliated and Invited Academic Staff, representatives of Science Foundation and Scientific research unit, representatives of student governance and students (Georgians and Foreigners), Alumni, social partners and representatives of administrative units. All participants were very cooperative and willing to participate in the discussion in an open and frankly way.

The experts’ panel would like to express sincere thanks for the cooperation of all participants and their participation in fruitful discussions during the visit and especially the Head of the administrative services for ensuring the smooth operation and provision of all additional information that was requested during the visit.

***Response to argumentative position of Teaching University Geomedi***

On May 17th, 2021, the panel received the “argumentative position on the factual circumstances stated in the draft report of the expert panel”, which included the position of the Geomedi Teaching University on every recommendation made by the panel.

The panel after examining the arguments of the University amended the report as follows:

1. Factual errors were taken into consideration and appropriate revisions were made [points # 16, 37, 72, 73] in Geomedi’s argumentative position].
2. Duplications in recommendations were removed [points # 32, 33, 51], leaving single recommendations [points # 19, 21, 52].
3. Further clarifications are given [points # 7, 9, 16, 17, 18, 20, 40, 74].
4. Certain arguments provide “after the visit evidence” and cannot be considered [points # 30, 48, 50, 54, 78, 79, 84].
5. The rest of the arguments raised in Geomedi’s argumentative position are beyond factual errors [point # 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31, 34, 35, 36, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 53, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 75, 76, 77, 80, 81, 82, 83].

The panel would like to point out that its recommendations are not based solely on published Rules and Regulations but **mainly on evidence derived during the visit.** In that sense, we believe that all our recommendations were made in good faith, are fully supported by evidence as described in the analysis of each standard and aim in improvements and further development of the HEI.

**Overview of the HEI’s compliance with standards**

The institution is:

* **Substantially Compliant** with the first standard**: *Mission and strategic development of HEI***

Teaching University Geomedi has a publicly stated clear mission. Geomedi is trying to keep up to its mission, but serious effort is still required in planning and implementation of strategic actions in order for its mission to be fulfiled. The University needs a strategic plan that clearly reflects the overall strategic goals of the University in a clear, consistent and coherent way, and an Action Plan that refers to specific actions that will make the strategic goal possible.

* **Partially compliant** with the second standard: ***Organizational structure and management of HEI***

Geomedi’s organizational structure was renewed in 2018 and a series of regulation documents describe the functions of each unit. The functionality of the current structure can be greatly improved by empowering top administrators and ensuring full time commitment to the University, and making the hierarchal structure operationally effective and efficient, avoiding functional ambiguities and overlapping, and enhancing critical areas such as QA and internationalization.

* **Partially Compliant** with the third standard: ***Educational Programmes***

Programmes content are aligned with programme goals, and the structure allows the smooth progress of students through the programmes. There is a missing link between labor market research, student body planning /student intake and a design/development of particular Educational Programs. Estimated size of student groups is large and does not facilitate students gaining practical skills, and detail timetables not available in advance. Conflicts with Medical sectoral requirements were identified.

* **Partially Compliant** with the fourth standard: ***Staff of the HEI***

Affiliation terms and conditions, principles of involvement of academic and scientific staff in educational and research activities is well defined. Objective procedures and requirements for MD Program academic staff, based on the sectoral benchmarks for Medical Education in Georgia have been elaborated and followed. Professional development is addressed by QA, HR and LLL departments with some overlaps. No personal development plans exist. Trainings have taken place but no clear training plan exists. A clear scheme for calculating total workload including work for academic research, consultation, thesis supervision or administration is needed. Concerns about level of commitment of affiliated staff, to Geomedi, given that many, some in high administrative positions, are not full time and are allowed to work at other Universities.

* **Substantially Compliant** with the fifth standard: ***Students and their support services***

Geomedi has clearly defined procedures regarding the student status, mobility, qualification granting and recognition of education. Since a large number of students in the University and especially in MD program are from India, Geomedi should ensure that they receive accurate and complete information regarding their studies and career prospects. Students support services should be strengthened in the areas of career support, alumni relations and communication in English with international students.

* **Partially Compliant** with the sixth standard: ***Research, development and/or other creative work***

The recently founded Scientific Research Institute of Experimental and Clinical Medicine, and the Research Foundation are expected to empower the University in conducting high-level research. Currently research activities are at minimal level and research output includes mostly articles published in Georgian language with a very small percentage in impact factor international journals. Incentives are provided by the University but the low level of internationalization in both research and educational activities is an obstacle, and although the increase in research funding is welcomed, results will take time to be seen.

* **Substantially Compliant** with the seventh standard: ***Material, information and financial resources***

The material base of the University generally is sufficient to support the teaching and learning process, and expansions of clinics and laboratories are in progress. Some concerns exists regarding support of clinical skills for MD students. Library houses a sufficient stock of books and electronic materials and provides access to international scientific databases but should ensure availability of all basic literature in syllabi and be more active in training students. Web-based information is limited. Information regarding the education programs, admissions and study planning should be enhanced. At the same time, information provided by contracted agencies to prospective international students should be monitored regarding accuracy and completeness. Budget allocation to faculties and clinics will result in increased accountability and managerial control.

**Summary of Recommendations**

* The university should find ways and develop a plan to bridge the gap between reality with its mission and vision
* Redraw the strategic plan, after revisiting the SWOT analysis, so that it clearly reflects the **overall** **strategic goals** of the University.
* Monitoring of strategic development plan should take place more often (quarterly basis) with the involvement of the Academic board.
* Enrich the review process of the action plan by including internal stakeholders and adding a qualitative prospective.
* Revise Action Plan so that it refers to specific actions for the achievement of strategic goals, with allocation of project management responsibilities to specific persons .
* Update the Contingency plan to address the management of risks and threats to actions of strategic goals.
* Vice-Rectors and Faculty Deans should have a full-time engagement with the University and empowered to perform their management functions.
* Faculty Deans and Program Heads should be affiliated staff to ensure a high level of commitment and engagement and continuity in the development and implementation of study programs.
* Vice-rectors, Faculty Deans and Program Heads should be employed exclusively at the University.
* Hierarchical structure of the University administration should be revised in order to achieve a clear line of command. Each structural unit reports directly to one of the Vice-Rectors and not to the Rector directly, certainly not to the Academic Board, which is a collegiate body.
* Functions assigned to structural units should be reviewed in order to remove ambiguities and overlapping of functions.
* Ensure continuity of critical operations through deputies and a degree of commonality in practices.
* Immediately start efforts to establish ERASMUS+ exchange programs (or other international exchange programs) with partner universities for students and staff.
* Increase the number of the Quality Assurance Service staff
* Ennsure the development of **QA mechanisms** at educational units.
* Ensure involvement of different structural units in quality assurance mechanisms to foster establishment of quality culture in the Institution.
* Ensure systematic and effective involvement of the external stakeholders in internal quality assurance processes, including study programs development and their improvement by establishing a formal procedure of stakeholders’ participation.
* Use the results of external evaluation more effectively for enhancement of teaching and learning, research and other services.
* Plan the student body according to the human and material resources of the Institution, relevant indicators and benchmarks.
* University should consider acquiring its own plagiarism detection software and extend plagiarism checking to all written student work.
* Provide Timetables timely well in advance of the start of educational semester and make them accessible for students and teachers for every facilities (for clinical and basic subjects).
* Timetables should contain all relevant pieces of information including a group of students, place, timing and teacher/teachers.
* Rules for implementation of all programs but particularly of MD programs must be clearly stated and available.
* When concluding contracts with clinics, pay attention to the mechanisms that guarantee clinical teaching.
* The up-to-date local labor market research should be done in relation to existing and planned increase of the student body.
* QA, Head of programs and Deans must ensure compliance of teaching to internal rules of GEOMEDI.
* University must have clear Academic calendar publicly available for the whole Academic year, is necessary, with amendments, but all those documents must be available all stated period of time, in both-languages.
* A separate admission folder should be available on GEOMEDI website with information regarding admission to particular programs including conditions, dates etc.
* Ensure access to the program structure, at least for students and staff of GEOMEDI
* The continual in-depth analysis of the involvement of transfer students should be performed to verify their academic readiness and to identify their further real needs, as well as the reasons for students transferring to other universities.
* QA has to find ways how to check also assessment of practical and communication skills of students, not only evaluate surveys.
* The level of integration in MD curricula should be regularly assessed.
* Develop and approve by the Academic Council the Rule for Electing and Appointing the Academic Staff, which will ensure transparency, objectivity and sustainability of the process, attracting and hiring qualified personnel.
* Improve the staff professional development policy and practice by identifying, approving and implementing the roles and functions of different structural units in this process.
* Ensure needs oriented and financially supported training activities for personnel.
* Develop, approve and implement the procedure for new employees’ integration into work environment.
* Utilize the staff evaluation and satisfaction survey results for enhancement of teaching and research quality, as well as for improvement of university management.
* Develop and approve job descriptions for different types of personnel and settle the KPIs for effective evaluation of staff.
* Use full time equivalent (FTE) to measure the workload of part-time and invited staff as well as for measuring the teaching workload of affiliated staff.
* Develop a clear scheme to compute total workload for academic staff including, besides teaching, preparation of courses, consultation, thesis supervision, research activities, administrative work, etc.
* Measure the student/teacher ratio for each teaching method (e.g., PBL, bedside training) and observe already stated own rules.
* Consider objectively students/teacher ratio in relation to teaching workload of relevant staff.
* Provide clear and accurate information, publicly available, for interested international MD students to protect their rights and interests.
* State any provisions in student contracts.
* Academic personnel should have fixed weekly consulting hours, announce at the beginning of each semester, for students' assistance, either physically or through videoconference.
* Improve career support services by implementing practice and internship programs outside the University.
* Ensure involvement of students, alumni and employers in quality assurance mechanisms.
* The University should strengthen international connections; create more opportunities for students’ international mobility and participation in projects and conferences outside the University.
* Health care and psychological support for students, especially foreign students must be provided.
* Student relation and student center personnel should be staffed with persons fluent in English.
* Student Relations Office Centre should retain an alumni database, an employer database and a bank of student CVs than will enable systematic career support services and effectively conduct surveys of students and alumni regarding their personal, professional and academic development.
* The University should strengthen its research profile in a more balanced way among its faculties, which must develop research agendas, identifying research that focuses on research areas relevant and important in social and economic development of the region according to the mission of the University.
* Increase English language publications in international impact-factor journals to gain increased dissemination and recognition and create opportunities for join international research.
* Develop a solid plan for enhancing research internationalization.
* Strategy to attract young scientists should be implemented. Planned open competition should take place.
* Acquiring expertise for participating in open competitions for research projects. Specific trainings to academic and scientific staff for writing research proposals for national and international research agencies.
* International office should include a research unit dedicated to provide information and assistance to academics and scientists regarding research opportunities at European and international level.
* Consider requiring skills and international research experience when recruiting academic staff.
* Work on placing the University publications "Modern Issues of Medicine and Management" in International journal databases.
* Ensure the involvement of MD students in research and monitoring of their activities
* Extend the current research assessment process to an integrated system of research analysis and assessment that involves Faculties, Scientists, HR and QA.
* Introduce the requirement of individual research activity planning for academic staff.
* Connect research assessment results and planning research work with staff workload and remuneration.
* Set a minimum annual threshold for published work per academic.
* Regularly publish reports on implemented research activities.
* The University should ensure that the Clinical Skills Laboratory is properly equipped for achievement the sectoral Benchmarks requirements in Medical Education.
* Ensure adequate changing rooms with lockers for students in all facilities where any teaching is provided.
* Find ways to increase the usage of electronic databases by students and staff.
* Improve library resource planning process.
* Introduction to the library databases should be organized at least twice a year as GEOMEDI attracts students twice a year. Additional training sessions should be provided periodically to all students in the course of their studies.
* Consider availability of stated basic literature in syllabi in the library.
* Admission criteria should be available on the website
* Academic calendar has to be available on the website
* Timetables must be available at least after login
* Ensure that other commercial websites that act as agents for foreign students have the correct information about Geomedi but do not convey the impression that they are part of the University. Best practice is to have limited information at the agency’s site, with links to Geomedi’s web pages where official information should reside.
* Break down budget expenditures according to faculties
* Clinics budgets should include income and expenditures for each clinic for better monitoring and control.
* Increase of budget dedicated for the professional development.
* Increase of budget allocated to internationalization
* Make the external financial audit report available.

**Summary of Suggestions**

* Develop a clear marketing strategy identifying diverse markets for international students and multiple channels for attracting international students, so that the attraction of international students is not limited to a specific geographical area and a sole agent.
* Develop criteria for accepting mobility students in terms of their previous academic record and study years.
* Applying the PDCA cycle (“Plan”, “Do”, “Check”, “Act”) not only to the tasks of the Quality Assurance Service, but to the activities of the whole Institution to foster establishment of quality culture. Development of Quality Assurance mechanisms at faculty level, will certainly help.
* Adjusting the tasks and activities of the Quality Assurance Service to its goals as formulated in the Statute.
* Enhance the University’s social dimension by supporting more students with disadvantaged background.
* Encourage and support Master students to publish their work. Consider asking them to prepare a 4-5-page paper describing the research and output of their Master’s dissertation.
* Interdisciplinary approach in research should be a priority at inter or intra faculty level.
* Engage Master’s level students in research activities and dissemination of research results.
* Temporary storage of hazardous waste provided for the clinic to comply with the requirements of the law. The respective requirements are defined by the Resolution of the Government of Georgia, Technical Regulation # 294 - " Management of Medical Waste". In accordance with the requirements of the technical regulations, the temporary storage of waste must have a washbasin, water drain and ventilation system.
* The movement cycle of instruments in the sterilizer to be improved. Equipment and materials should be placed so that the instruments had the ability to move only in one direction- from the contaminated space to the clean space.

**Summary of the Best Practices**

**Summary Table**

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

**Signature of expert panel members**

1. Pandelis, Ipsilandis (Chair) 
2. Ivana Oborna (Co-chair) 
3. Irma Manjavidze ****
4. Irine Darchia, 
5. Davit Makasarashvili 
6. Zurab Alkhanishvili 

**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.

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| --- |
| **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 Teaching University Geomedi is publicly stated. According to its mission, the University aims to *integrate into the global education realm*. The University deems the *harmonious development of education and research processes as an indispensable precondition for the accomplishment* of this mission.  Since its development, the University is trying to live up to mission in providing and creating supportive structures and environment for both education as well as scientific research activities.  Although not stated directly in its mission statement, the main feature of the University is that it is a sectoral institution serving mainly the higher education and research in the field of Health Care.  Its single cycle program for Medical Doctors (MD), offered parallel in Georgian and English language, is the flagship of the University, attracting both Georgian and international students, who account for more tha 75% of the total student population in MD.  Its vision includes the offering of the one-cycle program in Dentistry in English language, for foreign students in 2022 and also embark on offering programs at doctoral level in 2022 or 2023 (different dates are provided in the same Action Plan document), a not so realistic prospective, given that capacity in research is still low (standard 6).  The mission of the University fits its vision to establish itself as an educational-research center and serve national and international needs in the field of Health Care, and gradually, occupy an important place in the Georgian Higher Education area.  In the course of the site visit, the panel became aware that the academic community of the University shares this mission, students realize the value of the education they receive, employers were positive about the education that the University provides. The panel’s impression is that the University is trying to keep up to its mission but still serious effort is required in planning and implementation of strategic actions (see next section) in order for its mission to be fulfiled. |
| **Evidences/indicators**   * Self-Evaluation Report * Teaching University Geomedi web site * Strategic development plan (2021-2027) * Interviews with Rector, Academic board, Deans, Representatives of research units * Interview with Georgian and foreign students * Interview with stakeholders (employers) |
| **Recommendations:**   * The university should find ways and develop a plan to bridge the gap between reality with its mission and vision |
| **Suggestions:** |
| **Best Practices (if applicable):** |
| **Evaluation**  Complies with requirements  **Substantially complies with requirements**  Partially complies with requirements  Does not comply with requirements |
| **1.2 Strategic Development** |
| * HEI has a strategic development (7-year) and an action plans (3-year) in place. * HEI contributes to the development of the society, shares with the society the knowledge gathered in the institution, and facilitates lifelong learning * HEI evaluates implementation of strategic and action plans, and duly acts on evaluation results. |
| **Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements**  Teaching University Geomedi has developed a 7-year strategic plan (2021-2027) following the provisions described in the official University document *“Strategic Planning Methodology (10.02.2021)”.* Accordingly, a strategic development task group that includes the Rector of the University, the Head of the Quality Assurance Office, the Chair of Student Self-Government, and the Heads of all structural units were established for this purpose. The strategic development plan is in accordance to the mission of the University and is based on a SWOT analysis done by the task group. There is no evidence that stakeholders participated in the SWOT analysis, which in certain areas lacks objectivity (e.g. “*involvement in international projects- Study in Georgia, Erasmus+”* is mentioned as a strength, while there is no activity at all, under Erasmus+ program, the University is considered as “*high rated*” whereas according to Unirank and Edurank its rankings range between 25th and is 37th in the country).  The 5 main axis of the Strategic Development Plan 2021-2027 includes Development of institutional infrastructure / Quality Assurance / Planning and implementing educational programs / Creative activities / Student services.  The Action plan, which is supposed to provide more details on actions / projects, resulting from the directions of the strategic plan, and are scheduled to be implemented in the next 3 years, it is just a repetition of the information in the Strategic development plan, with the addition of budgets for each action information. These two documents should receive more attention and be well prepared for they describe the road map for the short and long term. For example a main action such as offering of doctoral programs appears in the action plan twice in different years (as Authorization procedures in 2022 and as Planning Educational programs in 2023).  According to strategic goals, the University sets benchmarks for 2027, for achieving an over twofold increase in the student population (from 944 currently to 2100 students in 2027), increase in academic and scientific staff by 13 (20%) members, and increase in administrative / support staff by 9 (9%) persons.  Overall, the Strategic Development Plan lacks a strategic orientation and coherence, and resembles a collection of proposed actions. As such fails to convey a clear picture of the strategy of the University, to their own academic community, as well as to the outside environment (potential students, potential partners, employers, organizations, etc.). Some indicative examples include (not exhaustively):   * Strategic goal *Development of Educational Activities* has no references to how the University will meet the target of the high number of students set for year 2027, No specific plans or actions exist. Furthermore, the planning does not address the consequences of increasing the number of students to requirements of academic human and material resources that will be needed, as well as the operation of the structural units. The panel’s opinion is aligned with previous (2019) expert panel’s, report also suggested that the institution was not ready for increasing the number of students, although a permission was finally granted. * The planned activity *Improvement of organizational structure* is not refined neither in the strategic plan nor in Action plan. During the interviews with the Academic Board, the answer that was given to the expert panel is that it means is training of the staff. * Development of Research is not promoted as a separate Strategic goal so that its importance be emphasized but as individual actions. The expert panel during the visit at one of the research laboratories was informed about the expansion and relocation of the lab, an action that was not mentioned either in Strategic or in Action Plan. * Same with internationalization. No specific activities are included in the planning, especially for international student exchanges and indicators like *Contracts signed with foreign teachers, consultants, Contracts with, foreign, universities. Financial documentation attending the exhibitions* do not really reflect active internationalization. * *Ensure financial sustainability* includes actions to expect to bring income like certificates, start-ups the development of which appear nowhere in planning or even mentioned during the interviews. The same is expected from Dental and Rehabilitation clinics but during the interviews with the financial department, no information on the financial operation of the clinics was available. * *Attracting new academic staff… Announcement of open completion* refer to an operation. What is needed is the strategy on how to attract well-qualified staff, given that in the SWOT analysis *outflow of staff* is a threat and *shortage of qualified staff in the employment market* is identified, rightfully so as a risk factor.   The document *“Strategic Planning Methodology (10.02.2021)”* describes the process for evaluation of the Strategic Development Plan. The evaluation is done by a team of evaluators consisting of the Rector, the President of the Student Self-Government, two employers and the head of the administrative unit (*competent person*) of another higher education institution. The latter is done in the spirit of “enhancing friendly and cooperative relations with other higher education institutions”. Perhaps it could make more sense to include in the team a Geomedi University stakeholder (employee or alumni), who may have a more direct interest in the development of the University, instead of a person from another University. After all, it is the business of the Teaching University Geomedi.  The evaluation process is based on individual ratings according to the scale (0-not completed, 1-partially completed and 2-completed), where the final score (sum of individual scores) leads to four classifications (goal completed, mostly performed, partially completed, not completed.). As the methodology is established just before the visit, no specific evaluations were available. Although the numerical rating approach is transparent and easily understood it needs to be complemented by qualitative assessment of the goals and analysis of the external or internal reasons for deviations / revisions / adjustments, etc. Furthermore, the monitoring and evaluation of the process should take place periodically not on an annually basis, so that any deviations or needs for amendment are identified early and corrective actions are applied accordingly. It is also important that the Academic Board is involved in the review process, since strategic planning and related actions are directly connected to academic work in teaching, research and internationalization thus affecting faculties, research units and other structural units.  During the interviews, the expert panel did not receive any clear answers regarding the feasibility and/or the progress of the Action plan, apart from actions related to Infrastructure and Research development. Definitely, the Team was not made aware of any specific actions related to the planned growth in the number of students; how this will be achieved, what are the target markets; how the quality of learning will not be harmed. Currently, student enrollment in the 7 programs offered by the University has significantly declined since 2017 (131 students in 2020 vs. 303 students in 2017). More than half of the student population are foreign students, the vast majority from India, enrolled in the English language MD program. In the last two years student mobility from other Georgian Universities to Geomedi is high. Currently, no specific criteria regarding the previous academic performance of mobility students exist. Indicatively, the lists of mobilities provided to the expert panel include students at the 4th semester who have passed successfully course credits that correspond to less of two-semester workload.  A single market for foreign students presents a risk regarding expectations for enrollment in the English language programs (existing and planned), while the admission of mobility students without prior academic performance criteria presents a risk regarding the quality of education. Apparently, the University needs a clear market strategy as well as admission procedures.  In relevant discussions during the interviews, a *Survey of labor market* document was presented, in which a growth of the Georgian Health sector until 2017 is documented; however, enrollment data after 2017 do not reflect the continuation of the trend. During the interviews with the administration bodies of the University, regarding planning of human and material resources for the anticipated increase in the number of students, the answers indicated a reactive (*will plan accordingly*) approach instead of a proactive one, an indication of poor planning.  The same approach was observed regarding internationalization actions, where because of Covid conditions, no preparations for Erasmus+ action are done. Efforts for drawing agreements for student exchanges could start already and not waiting for the lifting of Covid restrictions.  Apparently, the Teaching University Geomedi needs a strategic plan that clearly reflects the **overall** **strategic goals** of the University in a clear, consistent and coherent way, and an Action Plan that refers to specific actions that have to be managed as specific projects (quantity & quality of results / time / cost) with allocation of responsibilities to specific persons. Possible risks and threats, associated with the revised strategic and action plan should be addressed in updating Contingency planning, (e.g include risks of decreasing demand for offered courses, policies in countries of international students that may affect enrollment, completion, etc.) along with planned mitigation actions |
| **Evidences/indicators**   * Self-Evaluation Report * Strategic Planning Methodology * Strategic development plan (2021-2027) * Action plan (2021-2023) * Survey of labor market * Enrollments and Student numbers per program and study year * Student mobility lists * Interviews with Rector, Academic board, Deans, Representatives of research units * Expert panel report [https://eqe.ge/media/12510/-%E1%83%93%E1%83%90%E1%83%A1%E1%83%99%E1%83%95%E1%83%9C%E1%83%9012.12.2019.pdf](https://eqe.ge/media/12510/-%E1%83%93%E1%83%90%E1%83%A1%E1%83%99%E1%83%95%E1%83%9C%E1%83%9012.12.2019.pdf%20) * Council decision <https://eqe.ge/media/12509/sdoqmin2620122019.pdf> |
| **Recommendations:**   * Redraw the strategic plan, after revisiting the SWOT analysis, so that it clearly reflects the **overall** **strategic goals** of the University. * Monitoring of strategic development plan should take place more often (quarterly basis) with the involvement of the Academic board. * Enrich the review process of the action plan by including internal stakeholders and adding a qualitative prospective. * Revise Action Plan so that it refers to specific actions for the achievement of strategic goals, with allocation of project management responsibilities to specific persons . * Update the Contingency plan to address the management of risks and threats to actions of strategic goals. |
| **Suggestions:**   * Develop a clear marketing strategy identifying diverse markets for international students and multiple channels for attracting international students, so that the attraction of international students is not limited to a specific geographical area and a sole agent. * Develop criteria for accepting mobility students in terms of their previous academic record and study years. |
| **Best Practices (if applicable):** |
| **Evaluation**  Complies with requirements  Substantially complies with requirements  **Partially complies with requirements**  Does not comply with requirements |

1. **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

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| **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**  Geomedi’s organizational structure was renewed in 2018. The structure of the University is in correspondence with the requirements set by Georgian Law on Higher Education. The governing bodies are: Academic Board, Rector, Vice Rector in Administrative and logistic field, Vice Rector in Research, Vice Rector in Academic Field, Vice Rector in Clinical Field and Quality Assurance (QA) Office. There is not Representative Board (Senate).  The Educational work is carried out by the four Faculties, which according to the management structure diagram, report to both the Vice Rector in Academic Field and the QA Office.  In an effort to support and develop further research activities, the Research Foundation of the University Geomedi was established in 2020. The same year, the University founded the independent Scientific Research Institute (SRI) of Experimental and Clinical Medicine that encompasses the Pathology lab and the Molecular Medicine Laboratory. Both report directly to the rector.  Learning and Teaching activities are supported by structural units that include: Library, Computer center, University Dental Clinic, University Rehabilitation Clinic, Exam center, Simulation Clinic, Students Service Center, Department of Student Relations and Department of International Relations and Public Relations.  Administrative support includes structural units that include by Human Resources Management Department, Department of Informational Technologies and Computer Maintenance, Department of Life Long Learning, Financial Department, Department of Security and Labor Safety, Legal consultant and Chancellery.  The structural units report to different Vice-Rectors, but quite some of them directly to the Academic Board and the Rector.  The internal structure of each administrative unit and the functions that should perform are described in a series of University documents “*Regulations of the …..”.*  Most of the administrative structural units are not sufficiently staffed. Besides the Head of the office in most cases, there is one or rarely two other persons. Even the QA office, which carries many responsibilities and besides performing the standard QA processes, is actively involved in program development, is staffed by one person besides the head.  Based on the documents provided and the interviews with the University administration bodies and the Structural Units Heads, the expert panel have the following serious concerns regarding the functionality of the current Organizational Structure.  *A. Top administrators empowerment and commitment to University affairs*  According to the data regarding staff workload, it seems that Vice rectors and Faculty Deans are not engaged on full-time basis in University affairs (e.g. VR-Research 130 hrs. annually, VR-Academic 386, Deans Dentistry and Medicine 169 & 210 hrs. respectively), while VR-Administrative and Deans of Healthcare economics and Physical Med and Rehabilitation do not even show on the affiliated staff list. It is obvious that persons who serve in such critical positions for the development of the University and the design and implementation of the teaching and learning process should be absolutely devoted to their role at the University and to be accordingly empowered to execute their functions. Their role requires active and full participation in both strategic planning as well as operations.  *B. Management of the Teaching and Learning*  The same rationale should also apply for all Deans and Program Supervisors. The Expert Team was informed that there is no requirement for Deans and Program Supervisors to be affiliated staff since University regulations do not require so. During the visit the panel received evidence that persons in those positions are allowed to work in other places. One of the Deans is currently completing his responsibilities at previous position and is not affiliated with the University yet. Apparently, arrangements with invited staff to serve as Deans or Program Heads presents a risk of lack of continuity given that there is no strong commitment from either party.  *C. Making the hierarchal structure operationally effective and efficient*  According to the organizational chart of the University, certain structural units report directly to the Rector. While this may make sense for the Research Foundation and the Scientific Research Institute, the supervision of other structural units like LLL Office, Student relation Examination Center, Finance, Library, International relations can be allocated to the Vice-presidents. Rector’s time is a valuable resource for the University. Thus, it should be exploited in a way that brings maximum benefit to the University and not be wasted in dealing with the daily management of operations. The Team of expert came across cases where matters that can be taken care of at lower levels of the hierarchy are addressed at the Rector’s level (e.g. admission of mobility students) and other cases where representatives of administrative units when asked about handling a specific case, responded that it is done by the Rector’s office, which in fact does not exist as a structural unit.  *D. Ensuring continuity - Deputies*  The rules and regulations of the University do not provide for deputies in administrative positions. The expert panel happen across two cases during the visit, where administrators were not able to participate in the meeting and no deputies existed. Although this might not be a serious problem for the work of the authorization process, it could be a serious problem in the operations of the University, especially if it happens at key-positions. The case of the Head of the Chancellery who abstains from his duties for a long period because of health problems is indicative. During the interview with Alumni, one of the interviewees mentioned that the request made to the University in October 2020 for residency was not answered yet. Subsequent interviews with the Student center and Student relations department showed that none of the departments handled the case. With the Chancellery not being fully functional (*supervision of timely submission of incoming and outgoing documents)*, the case is still floating within the University.  *E. Streamline activities – avoiding functional overlapping*  In certain cases, the functions of the structural units show overlaps. Since structural units are marginally staffed, such overlaps may create conflicts and distraction of operations. Indicatively:  Human resources functions like *Supervision and organization various training and retraining programs, seminars, educational and certification courses for the University staff for their professional development* is similar to functions the Long Life Learning performs.  Functions like *Cooperation with Georgian and foreign organizations, foundations, state, and private structures within the competence of the Office, preparation of projects, and their implementation* in HR department and *The Office may, in agreement with the University Administration, establish relationships with local and foreign governmental and non-governmental organizations on behalf of the University* in the Students Relations Office, are better coordinated and served by the International and PR department.  The expert panel sensed, in some cases, the absence of clarity in the functions of structural units. Study process management is carried out at Faculty level by the Dean’s Office according to the regulations. During the site visit, the Team requested repeatedly the time schedules for the student groups at different clinical activities (a standard practice in MD programs), which were never received. Workload data regarding affiliated staff were never explained clearly as to what they represent and how they are computed.  Career Office functions are administered by the Student Relations department, which according to the representatives is mostly involved with social, cultural and sports events for students. While, the document *Regulations for the Student Relations Office*, include Career support services, the document *Career Support services* allocates this responsibility to the Student Service Center. Ambiguities regarding the handling of Alumni affairs and Career support functions should be lifted so that these services are seamlessly delivered.  Overall, the University should pay serious attention to streamline the structure and functions of managing its activities, in order to achieve desired level of efficiency and effectiveness.  Geomedi’s appointment rules to the management bodies are in line with Georgian Law on Higher Education. The process is conducted in accordance to predefined requirements, that considers candidates’ qualification, experience, vision and development plans. The procedures for election/appointment of the management bodies of HEI are described in the Regulation of the University and the document *The rule for appointing administrative, support personnel*; they are transparent, equitable, and in line with legislation. In case the relevant candidate cannot be selected within the University’s human resources, then an open competition will be announced. Information about the competition will be posted on the website www.jobs.ge and on the official website of the University.  In order to ensure the continuity of main processes ongoing at the University, it has developed the business processes continuity plan. The business processes continuity plan includes the mechanisms of continuous and stable working mode maintenance at the University, in unexpected or emergency circumstance, also the evaluation and prevention of the risks, definition of the correction terms and deadlines, actions to be taken according to the given situation and ensuring of the responsible staff. The business continuity plan should also address the need for appointing deputies for every administrative position so that absences for various reasons have no or very little effect on business continuity.  Contemporary technologies are used in the management process of the University, including electronic case administration system. In accordance with the current legislation requirements, the electronic register of the higher education institution is provided at the University.  Internationalization is stated as a strategic goal but although the University has an English language program and the majority of students are not Georgian, international activities are very low. Participation of foreign academics is limited to five persons (2 of them living in Georgia) who have delivered some lectures / seminars in English language. The University has five bilateral agreements with other universities and Institutes for joint Ph.D. programs, joint exchanges, and joint research activities that have not produced any results yet. Erasmus+ opportunities for student and staff exchanges have not been exploited yet. |
| **Evidences/indicators**   * Self-Evaluation Report * Statute of the Teaching University Geomedi (2021) * Regulation of the Teaching University Geomedi * Functions of structural units * The rule for appointing administrative, support personnel * Procedures and rule for the appointment for management * Interviews with Rector, Academic board, Students, Alumni, Heads of structural units * Business Continuity Plan * Internationalization Policy |
| **Recommendations:**   * Vice-Rectors and Faculty Deans should have a full-time engagement with the University and empowered to perform their management functions. * Faculty Deans and Program Heads should be affiliated staff to ensure a high level of commitment and engagement and continuity in the development and implementation of study programs. * Vice-rectors, Faculty Deans and Program Heads should be employed exclusively at the University. * Hierarchical structure of the University administration should be revised in order to achieve a clear line of command. Each structural unit reports directly to one of the Vice-Rectors and not to the Rector directly, certainly not to the Academic Board, which is a collegiate body. * Functions assigned to structural units should be reviewed in order to remove ambiguities and overlapping of functions. * Ensure continuity of critical operations through deputies and a degree of commonality in practices. * Immediately start efforts to establish ERASMUS+ exchange programs (or other international exchange programs) with partner universities for students and staff. |
| **Suggestions:** |
| **Best Practices (if applicable):** |
| **Evaluation**  Complies with requirements  Substantially complies with requirements  **Partially complies with requirements**  Does not comply with requirements |
| * 1. **Internal Quality Assurance Mechanisms** |
| * Institution effectively implements internal quality assurance mechanisms. Leadership of the institution constantly works to strengthen quality assurance function and promotes establishment of quality culture in the institution. * HEI has a mechanism for planning student body, which will give each student an opportunity to get a high quality education. |
| **Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements**  Teaching University Geomedi has the Quality Assurance Service, the goals and the functions of which are regulated by its Statute approved by the Academic Council on 30.04.2019. According to this document, the Quality Assurance Service should ensure effective involvement of different structural units in the assessment and enhancement of educational process and research, as well as in the development of self-evaluation reports for authorization and accreditation. Involvement of the different structural units in internal quality assurance processes has been mentioned in the annual report of the Quality Assurance Service as well, but the interviews with the representatives of the structural units, students and academic staff revealed that in fact involvement of other structural units is limited and doesn’t ensure establishment of quality culture in the Institution.  The University does not have quality assurance mechanisms on the faculty level, while it is required by the Law on Higher Education of Georgia (see: Law on Higher Education of Georgia, article 25.2). It was mentioned during the interviews, that there is a discussion on development of Quality Assurance on the faculty level, but the Strategic and Action plans of Geomedi do not envisage such activities. Geomedi does not allocate appropriate human and material resources for effective implementation of internal quality assurance mechanisms, as only two persons are employed in the Quality Assurance Service, while according to its Statute the Quality Assurance Service has more than 12 functions and is responsible for time-consuming, demanding and challenging tasks.  Although private HEIs are not obliged to have QA services at Faculty level, a **proper QA mechanism** must exist. The current staffing of QA service is not sufficient to meet this demand. Only two persons are employed in the Quality Assurance Service, while according to its Statute the Quality Assurance Service has more than 12 functions and is responsible for time-consuming, demanding and challenging tasks. During the interviews, only one person – head of QA – was able to provide answers and to prove her participation in quality assurance processes. Representatives of all other structural units were unable to answer questions regarding QA of the services they provide, which indicates no or minimal involvement. Therefore**, it is recommended to increase the number of the Quality Assurance Service staff, develop QA mechanisms to cover educational units and strengthen the involvement of different structural units in quality assurance mechanisms.**  The internal quality assurance mechanisms of Geomedi, except of the Quality Assurance Statute, are regulated by the following documents: “Internal and External Mechanisms for Assessment of Teaching Quality” and “Methodology for Analyzing Assessment Data” approved by the Academic Council on 11. 08. 2020. These documents refer to the assessment of the academic and invited staff’ activities, administrative services, library and other material resources, students’ academic achievements and research activities, achievement of learning outcomes by the students, etc. The assessment is conducted via surveys of students, academic and invited staff, alumni, employers, representatives of the clinics, etc. It should be mentioned that there is a confusion in understanding the PDCA cycle (plan, do, check, act) in the “Internal and External Mechanisms for Assessment of Teaching Quality”. Different tasks of the Quality Assurance Service are structured under the categories “Plan”, “Do”, “Check”, “Act”, while the PDCA cycle should refer to the activities of the Institution in teaching and learning, research, service to society etc., to the assessment of these activities by the Quality Assurance and to the implementation of the assessment results by the relevant stakeholders. Hence, **it is suggested to apply the PDCA cycle (“Plan”, “Do”, “Check”, “Act”) not only to the tasks of the Quality Assurance Service, but to the activities of the whole Institution to foster establishment of quality culture.**  The research activities of Geomedi are evaluated by the “Assessment System of the Academic/Affiliated Staff’ Research Activities” approved by Academic Council on 30.04.2019. The following criteria are applied for assessment: monograph, handbook, article in the journal with impact factor, article in peer-reviewed journal, presentation at international conference in Georgia and abroad, research grant, etc. Based on the evaluation results, the financial bonus to three professors of Geomedi have been allocated in 2020. It should be mentioned that according to the above-mentioned regulation, the Academic Council decides on granting financial bonus to the professors based on the report prepared by the vice-rector in Research and approved by the Academic Board. It means that the Quality Assurance Service is not involved in the assessment of staff research activities, while according to its Statute, one of the goals of the Quality Assurance Service is “to support enhancement of the research activities of the Institution in collaboration with other structural units through systematic monitoring, assessment and renewal”. Neither the tasks of the Quality Assurance Service pointed out in the Statute, nor other documents regulating internal quality assurance mechanisms, refer to involvement of quality assurance in the evaluation of the research activities. Therefore, **it is suggested to adjust the tasks, functions and activities of the Quality Assurance Service to its goals as formulated in the Statute.**  The University has developed the monitoring mechanisms for students’ academic performance, provided the results of the monitoring and respective recommendations. It has the “Rule of Development, Implementation and Assessment of the Study Programs” approved by the Academic Council on 11. 08. 2021. According to this document, except of the program director and co-director, the staff of the program, alumni, students and employers should actively take part in updating, making changes in the program. The document does not envisage involvement of the above-mentioned stakeholders in the development of the curricula and there is not a procedure, which should ensure their systematic and effective participation.  The Quality Assurance Service has conducted student, academic staff, alumni and employers’ surveys for evaluation of the academic staff and management, as well as the knowledge and skills of the students and graduates. Based on the survey results, the Quality Assurance Service developed recommendations on different aspects of teaching and research, development of infrastructure and according to the interviews with the students, staff, alumni and employers and the documents provided, some measures have been taken by the University and Faculty leadership to address these recommendations. E.g., different stakeholders pointed out on some changes in the curricula, adding the allergology and ICT courses, increased contact hours for English, providing trainings etc. The documents and the site-visit confirmed establishment of phantom labs, rehabilitation clinic, cafeteria, etc. It should be mentioned that the Institution provided the employers’ survey results, while the respondents in the interviews did not mention them and referred to communication via phone or exchanging ideas via email. There were some inconsistences of the information provided by the Institution and the employers concerning the internship of the students in the clinics. That is, lack of proper communication with the internal and external stakeholders has been identified by the experts’ panel. Therefore, **it is recommended to ensure systematic and effective involvement of the internal and external stakeholders in internal quality assurance processes, including study program development and improvement by establishing a formal procedure of stakeholders’ participation.**  The services and resources of Geomedi have been evaluated by three experts’ groups of NCEQE in January, July and November 2019 through monitoring of authorization conditions, follow-up visit of this monitoring and through the visit for increasing the maximum student number of the Institution. It should be mentioned that some findings and recommendations of our experts’ panel are in line with the recommendations given in by other experts in January 2019. A quick comparative analysis done by the panel showed that 16 recommmendations of the 2019 review are included in this document as well, including: structure of the University, delegation of rights, functions ad tasks of QA, increasing QA personnel, transparency in hiring staff criteria, students rights, etc. Therefore evaluation results arenot sufficiently utilized for further improvement. Hence, **it is recommended to use the results of external evaluation more effectively for enhancement of teaching and learning, research and other services.**  The University has the “Mechanism and Methodology for Planning Student and Staff (Academic, Invited, Research, Administrative) Body” approved by the Academic Council on 25. 09. 2019. The methodology envisages different parameters, which if properly applied may address the requirements of the authorization standards, but as the interviews revealed even the members of the Academic Council – which has approved the above-mentioned document – are not familiar with the methodology and planning of the student body is not carried out in the Institution according to the relevant internal regulations. Therefore, **it is recommended to plan the student body according to the human and material resources of the Institution, relevant indicators and benchmarks, as approved by the Academic Council.** |
| **Evidences/indicators**   * Statute of the Quality Assurance Service of Geomedi * The Report of the activities of the Quality Assurance Service in 2020 * Internal and External Mechanisms for Assessment of Teaching Quality * Methodology for Analyzing Assessment Data * Assessment System of the Academic/Affiliated Staff’ Research Activities * Students, Academic Staff, Alumni, Employers’ Survey Results * Procedure and Report of Applying Quality Assessment Results * Assessment of the Learning Outcomes of the Study Programs during the Teaching Process * Rule of Development, Implementation and Assessment of the Study Programs * Reports of the experts’ panels from 2019 <https://eqe.ge/media/12510/-%E1%83%93%E1%83%90%E1%83%A1%E1%83%99%E1%83%95%E1%83%9C%E1%83%9012.12.2019.pdf> * Interviews |
| **Recommendations:**   * Increase the number of the Quality Assurance Service staff * Ennsure the development of **QA mechanisms** at educational units. * Ensure involvement of different structural units in quality assurance mechanisms to foster establishment of quality culture in the Institution. * Ensure systematic and effective involvement of the external stakeholders in internal quality assurance processes, including study programs development and their improvement by establishing a formal procedure of stakeholders’ participation. * Use the results of external evaluation more effectively for enhancement of teaching and learning, research and other services. * Plan the student body according to the human and material resources of the Institution, relevant indicators and benchmarks. |
| **Suggestions:**   * Applying the PDCA cycle (“Plan”, “Do”, “Check”, “Act”) not only to the tasks of the Quality Assurance Service, but to the activities of the whole Institution to foster establishment of quality culture. Development of Quality Assurance mechanisms at faculty level, will certainly help. * Adjusting the tasks and activities of the Quality Assurance Service to its goals as formulated in the Statute. |
| **Best Practices (if applicable):** |
| **Evaluation**  Complies with requirements  Substantially complies with requirements  **Partially complies with requirements**  Does not comply with requirements |
| **2.3. Observing Principles of Ethics and Integrity** |
| * HEI has developed regulations and mechanisms that follow principles of ethics and integrity. Such regulations are publicly accessible. * Institution has implemented mechanisms for detecting plagiarism and its prevention. * HEI follows the principles of academic freedom. |
| **Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements**  The University has the *Code of Ethics* for students, academic, administrative and support staff, approved by the Academic Council on 11. 08. 2020, in which procedures for responding to the violation of these regulations have been defined. The Code of Ethics for Staff and Student is referenced in the University Regulation (02-10-2020) as well in Faculty regulations. Internal stakeholders are informed about ethical and conduct norms, as identified during the interviews.  Students are informed about the provisions of the Code of Ethics by the Students Relation departments. Most of the interviewed students were aware of the Code of Ethics and especially for the provisions relating to plagiarism.  The University itself is obliged to protect the rights of staff and students in accordance with the laws of Georgia, University Statute, Code of Ethics for Staff and Student, Regulations of Study Process, and other legal acts of the University.  Issues of plagiarism are addressed through the mechanism of preventing and detecting plagiarism. Academic Writing course is obligatory at both Bachelor and master level programs. The University has signed a contract with “The Libraries of Georgia Integrated Informational Network Consortium 2017”, which operates a plagiarism detection software. Student theses are submitted through Geomedi Library to the plagiarism detection software and the plagiarism status report is attached to the corresponding thesis before proceeding to defense stage (evidence of 15 Master Theses that have been checked against plagiarism was presented). No thesis is advanced to defense stage unless the similarity index is not less than the threshold of 15%. Currently no other pieces of student written work is checked against plagiarism through a plagiarism detection software.  The plagiarism detection process is also applied to articles to be published in the Universities scientific journal, but not to other written students work (reports, essays, etc.). If limited shared capacity of the current system is a constraint or paid fees are high for extending plagiarism checking to all written students, the University may consider the option of buying its own plagiarism detection software, that could also be integrated to the existing learning platform.  Evidence from interviews with staff, students, and alumni shows that the University community shares the principles of academic freedom. |
| **Evidences/indicators**   * Self-Evaluation Report * University Code of Ethics * Rule for Plagiarism Detection and Reacting * Academic Regulation of the Teaching University Geomedi (2020) * Regulations of Faculties * Agreement with the Consortium of Georgian Libraries Integrated Informational Network 2017 * Interviews with Academic and Invited staff, Program Heads, Students, Head of Library * Interviews with students * Interview with the Head of the Library |
| **Recommendations:**   * University should consider acquiring its own plagiarism detection software and extend plagiarism checking to all written student work. |
| **Suggestions:** |
| **Best Practices (if applicable):** |
| **Evaluation**  Complies with requirements  **Substantially complies with requirements**  Partially complies with requirements  Does not comply with requirements |

1. **Educational Programmes**

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

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| **3.1 Design and Development of Educational Programmes** |
| HEI has a policy for planning, designing, implementing and developing educational programmes. |
| **Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements**  In the self-evaluation report, it is mentioned, “*The educational programs must be developed according to the requirements given in Georgia for HEI*”. The document “*The rules for the development, implementation and assessment of Bachelor's, Master's and single-cycle educational program*” describes the process.  In SER are present only “*The rules on approval, amendments and cancellation of Bachelor, Master and one-step educational programs”,* but missing are rules on implementation of educational programs. In SER stated implementation means establishment of the program but not the rules how the program should be run.  Modification, renewal (amendments) of educational programs at the University are implemented by the respective faculty board and/or according to the report prepared by the QA department, which is based on the educational program assessment outcomes. Head, co-supervisor of the program, program-implementing staff, graduates, students and employers take an active part in the process.  During on-line authorization only some parts of regulation documents were accessible in English.  There is a missing link between a labor market research, a student body planning /student intake and a design/development of particular Educational Programs.  **Timetables are neither publicly available, nor after login to University system.** As revealed during interviews, students receive their timetables mainly in two ways, via group leaders and via email. Even though timetables were requested, only samples of timetables were provided. The majority of GEOMEDI students are from the Faculty of Medicine (77.5%) and the largest programme is the One Step Educational Program for Medicine held in English (59 % of all GEOMEDI students) thus the alignment of both MD programmes with Medicine sectoral benchmarks is of particular importance. Moreover, GEOMEDI plans significantly increase number of students in all programmes, in Stomatology (currently 92, target 348), Health Management (currently 59, target 306), Medicine (currently 732, target 1143), Rehabilitation (currently 61, target 312), thus planning and ever more, implementation of programmes aims our attention.  Regarding timetables experts received for 2020/2021:  1. week teaching samples for MD programme 3rd,4th, 5th and 6th semester where no dates were stated.  2. timetables for practical training in clinics for Georgian MD programme for Spring semester with dates. This timetable was approved on March 29, when the semester and teaching started.  3. timetable of practical training in clinics for English MD programme for Spring semester with dates for 11th and 12th semesters, and for 4th and 5th years.  Thought experts were not received timetables, and number and size of groups of students, the total number of students in each study year was provided. For analysis was chosen 2-week period from March 29 to April 12 2021 for English MD programme for clinical subjects.   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | Study year /  No of students in this year | Students  group number | Clinical subject taught in period March 29-April 12 2021 + schedule | | 6/66 | Not stated | Neurosurgery 10-13 | | 5/146 | Not stated | Paediatrics 10-13 | | 5 | Not stated | Clinical radiology 10-12 | | 5 | 1611 | Infectious disease 13.30-15.30 | | 5 | 1612 | Ophthalmology 13-15 | | 4 /123 | 1705 | Internal disease 2 11-14 | | 4 | 1706 | Internal disease 1 10-12 | | 4 | 1707 | Special surgery 12-16 |   The analysis shows that the estimated size of groups of students is probably very large and does not enable students to gain required practical skills.  Another analysis was performed for the 4th semester of English MD programme. According to the students list, 84 students are currently in the 4th semester. Sample of timetable was provided for one week (without dates) for four groups of students (MDE1902, 1903, 1904, 1905). Let´s assume that those students are divided partially, thus each group consists of 21 students. Two groups (1902, 1903) were assigned to Simulation Clinic for the same date, same time, and same teacher. This means 42 students for practical training which is in direct contradiction with GEOMEDI own rules.  In methodology for student contingent plan is stated: *For the conduct of the high-quality educational process at the University, the number of students in the course group at the practicum should not exceed 15 and at the lecture - 75 students. The teaching format mainly includes lecture/practicum classes in the following proportions:*   * *1 lecture / 2 practicums - in which case, 2 × 50 minutes are assigned to practical training. Therefore, 6.7 minutes of time is devoted to each student.* * *1 lecture / 3 practicums - in which case, 3 × 50 minutes are assigned to practical training. Therefore, 10 minutes of time is devoted to each student* * *1 lecture / 4 practicums - in which case, 4 × 50 minutes are assigned to practical training. Therefore, 13 minutes of time is devoted to each student.* * *The time assigned for practicums is quite sufficient for any format of practical training to ensure the involvement and testing of all students, also the teacher can allot individual time for each student.*   This statement needs to be evaluated with regard to above-mentioned facts concerning clinical training. It seems that there is a lack in the methodology of student body planning.  Other doubts appeared during the site visit on March 30 when practical training for Georgian MD programme at PINEO clinic was cancelled or rescheduled. As explained at the PINEO clinic it was rescheduled for morning alongside morning practical training of another group of Georgian MD programme due to “emergencies”. It was said this emergency was recognized in the evening of the previous day. Experts were interested in how were students informed about rescheduling. It was said that students were informed by emails and that the Dean´s office was informed as well. The time schedule of any teaching for GEOMEDI at PINEO Clinic was not available during the site visit. Moreover, the timetable was approved on March 29.  Experts requested copies of communication between PINEO and affected students but did not receive it. Later on, during the site visit, timetables for current spring semester were requested also in Simulation Medicine Clinic and German Clinic. Present personnel could not provide it. The timetables were available at Dental Clinic. There are 7 dental chairs in the University Dental Clinic. Students, under the supervision of a supervisor, conduct only professional cleaning. Clinical practice involves the assistance of 5 employed doctors.  Structure of both Management programs fulfil authorisation standards.  Structure of both Rehabilitation programs is clear according to authorisation standards. Our attention was also drawn to the fact that the contract with the Rehabilitation Clinic (where quite a number of patients were presented) does not provide the support of students during the learning process. |
| **Evidences/indicators**   * Part of timetables received upon request of ongoing semester. programs * Contracts with Rehabilitation and Dental clinics * SER * Interviews * Students´ list of all educational programs * The methodology for Student and personnel (academic, invited, scientific, administrative) contingent planning * Site visit to PINEO Clinic * Site visit to German Clinic, Simulation Medicine Clinic, Rehabilitation clinic, Dental Clinic |
| **Recommendations:**   * Provide Timetables timely well in advance of the start of educational semester and make them accessible for students and teachers for every facilities (for clinical and basic subjects). * Timetables should contain all relevant pieces of information including a group of students, place, timing and teacher/teachers. * Rules for implementation of all programs but particularly of MD programs must be clearly stated and available. * When concluding contracts with clinics, pay attention to the mechanisms that guarantee clinical teaching. * The up-to-date local labor market research should be done in relation to existing and planned increase of the student body. * QA, Head of programs and Deans must ensure compliance of teaching to internal rules of GEOMEDI. |
| **Suggestions:** |
| **Best Practices (if applicable):** |
| **Evaluation**  Complies with requirements  Substantially complies with requirements  **Partially complies with requirements**  Does not comply with requirements |
| * 1. **Structure and Content of Educational Programmes** |
| * Programme learning outcomes are clearly stated and are in line with higher education level and qualification to be granted * With the help of individualized education programmes, HEI takes into consideration various requirements, needs and academic readiness of students, and ensures their unhindered involvement into the educational process. |
| **Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements**  University has provided 7 programs:  **Cycle 1 (Bachelor*) 2 programs***– educational program which includes not less than 240 credits, in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and Health Economics and Management;  **Cycle 2 (Master)** – ***2 programs*** educational program which includes not less than 120 credits, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and Health Economics and Management;  **One -cycle educational programs**: ***3 programs.***  Medical / Dental education program is one-step higher education program which is completed by awarding of Diploma of Medicine (360 credit) 2- programs ENG and GEO / ;  Dentistry (300 credit) GEO program academic degree.  On the web page of GEOMEDI the Program Catalogue is not accessible. During interviews, experts discovered that stakeholders are involved in program development in Rehabilitation, and MD program. However, for further development of educational programs, stakeholders’ survey was not provided nor Alumni survey. As recommended in 2.2 establishment of formal procedures of stakeholders’ participation in program development is necessary.  Structure and content of educational programmes are described in ”*Brief description*” of each programme available on the website separately at each faculty. **There is no separate Admission folder on the official GEOMEDI website**. During site visit´s discussions was found out that none of departments that deal with students (Student Service Centre, Student Relations Office, IR and PR Office) deal with admission process. None of staff was able to answer this question another way than ”Rector´s office”. Preconditions for admission to any generally described programme are in accordance with the law of Georgia on Higher Education, Article 52, para 3. Admission of foreign citizens is regulated according to legislation established by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia.  **Academic Calendar is missing completely**. In the brief description of each programme is mentioned that Academic year has 42 weeks, duration of the semester is 21 weeks - 15 weeks for study; 4 weeks for exams and 2 weeks for additional exams. The current Academic year calendar is not available. It was approved by the rector on 31. 08. 2020 and amended by the rector on 25. 12. 2020. This amendment in Georgian is a part of materials sent to Experts. Currently, the only available dates are for the Spring semester of 2021. For BA, MA, and Stomatology semester starts on 22. 03. 21, and ends on 09. 07. 21, which is 16 weeks. The exam period is stated for 12. 07. 21 - 13. 08. 21, which is 5 weeks (there is a discrepancy with overall description of the semester). The situation for Georgian and English MD programmes differs. The spring semester is stated for the period from 29. 03. 21 to 20. 08. 21 including the final exams. Currently, no information about the Autumn semester is available. But there is also mentioned ”*First stream” English Language MD programme* which has stated Autumn Semester for 25. 01. 21 to 18. 06. 21 including final exams and Spring Semester from 28. 06. 21 to 19. 11. 21 including final exams. This information was available only in Georgian.  All programs are based on ECTS system, students can obtain ECTS 30 credits per semester, 1 credit is equal to 25 academic hours. There are compulsory and elective credits.  Each educational program has a Programme Head, who is responsible for management of programme implementation, its development and effective performance of all its components. Educational programmes are developed by respective faculty.  Brief description of each educational programme is available on the website of the University.  However, **a password is required to access the program structure, therefore full content of the curriculum is not available for everybody. Moreover, even for students of the University, the only educational programme available is the one they are registered for.**  During interviews, it was found that quite a large part of the students is transferred students from other programmes, mainly MD programmes.  According to EMIS data, 9 students were transferred to GEOMEDI IN 2019-2020, and 31 students - in 2020-2021. In 2019-2020 43 students continued studies in other universities. In 2020-2021 45 students chose to continue studies in other institutions. As for general admissions, in 2019 – 143 students were enrolled, in 2020 – 130, and in 2021 only 30 were enrolled. The data show reduction in students enrolment and higher outgoing mobility than incoming. According to the Rule of regulating academic process determines, learning outcomes of courses taken by student in previous institution checked for alignment with learning outcomes at Geomedi and in students rights “..by the rules established by the normative acts applicable to the university and Georgian legislation, has the right of mobility to other university from the second academic year and transfer the state funding to the institution”. However, the panel did not receive any clear answer regarding the academic readiness of transferred students neither as to whether program heads are directly involved in the process. Concerns are raised especially for transfers of students at a late stage of their studies. No information exists on transferred-out students as well. |
| **Evidences/indicators**   * SER * Website - Structure <https://geomedi.edu.ge/?page_id=432&lang=en> * HEI standards * Medicine sectoral benchmarks * Interviews * Syllabi * Amendment to Academic calendar 2021 in Georgian |
| **Recommendations:**   * University must have clear Academic calendar publicly available for the whole Academic year, is necessary, with amendments, but all those documents must be available all stated period of time, in both-languages. * A separate admission folder should be available on GEOMEDI website with information regarding admission to particular programs including conditions, dates etc. * Ensure access to the program structure, at least for students and staff of GEOMEDI * The continual in-depth analysis of the involvement of transfer students should be performed to verify their academic readiness and to identify their further real needs, as well as the reasons for students transferring to other universities. |
| **Suggestions:** |
| **Best Practices (if applicable):** |
| **Evaluation**  Complies with requirements  **Substantially complies with requirements**  Partially complies with requirements  Does not comply with requirements |
| **3.3 Assessment of Learning Outcomes** |
| HEI has law-compliant, transparent and fair system of learning outcomes assessment, which promotes the improvement of students’ academic performance. |
| **Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements**  The student assessment follows current legislation as well as the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) guidelines. One ECTS is related to 25 hours. The student workload hours comprise different kind of teaching/learning methods and independent learning. In general, GEOMEDI use a multi-component evaluation system of knowledge with a midterm and a final examination. GEOMEDI has a 100-point (100%) evaluation system with clear rules. According to the SER, examinations are organized and conducted by the Examination Center. Students get their exam results via school electronic system, which is also used to get students’ feedback. Student performance is analysed and the results are discussed with relevant deans, heads of the programme and recommendations are implemented.  Assessment system of educational programs is in line with current legislation. In some programmes (e.g., MD programme) the assessment system does not clearly describe components and methods of **how mainly practical and communication skills are assessed**. The MD curricula are integrated and require more complex exam tests.  During the site visit, in the Simulation Medicine Clinic, only one piece of each requested manikin (according to Medicine sectoral benchmarks) was present. **Manikins for intramuscular injections, intravenous injection and peripheral venepuncture were thoroughly checked**. **There were no marks that any use of these while teaching in Simulation Medicine Clinic has taken place.** It brings doubts about ways of practical teaching and assessment of practical skills in this setting. Moreover, those practical procedures must be trained and checked regularly in compliance with item 5 of Medicine sectoral benchmarks, that sets out the competence of Conducting Practical Procedures as one of the competences of graduates of MD programmes. There is a plan of Upgrading of Simulations Medicine Clinic Moulages during 2021-2023 but currently the assessment of practical and communication skills is not in compliance with Medicine sector benchmarks.  In Clinical Skills Lab relevant clinical cases for OSCE stations with appropriate assessment were presented in printed form in English only, Georgian version was missing. The institution clarified that Georgian version of clinical cases for OSCE stations with appropriate assessment was also available in Georgian, but the experts panel was not able to see it. Upon request the Georgian version of clinical cases was not provided. It implies that clinical cases for OSCE are taught in English only. Moreover, it is obvious that clinical skills teachers do not use assessment list or checklist for everyday activities in skills lab.  No sectoral benchmarks exist for the rest of the programmes offered by the University. A variety of assessment methods is employed, to ensure the achievement of learning outcomes.  The appeal policy is also clearly stated. During interviews with students and staff it was find out that students are familiar with the appeal policy. No statistics about appeals was provided but during interviews it was find out that appeals occur rarely and mainly about technical problems during examination. |
| **Evidences/indicators**   * SER * Interviews * Educational programmes * Interview with QA Office, Deans, Heads of Departments * Evaluations of the learning outcomes of the educational program during process of course * Site visit * HEI standards * Medicine Sector Benchmarks |
| **Recommendations:**   * QA has to find ways how to check also assessment of practical and communication skills of students, not only evaluate surveys. * The level of integration in MD curricula should be regularly assessed. |
| **Suggestions:** |
| **Best Practices (if applicable):** |
| **Evaluation**  Complies with requirements  Substantially complies with requirements  **Partially complies with requirements** (due to a conflict with Medicine sectoral benchmarks)  Does not comply with requirements |

1. **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.

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| **4.1. Staff Management** |
| * HEI has staff management policy and procedures that ensure the implementation of educational process and other activities defined in its strategic plan. * HEI ensures the employment of qualified academic/scientific/invited/administrative/ support staff. |
| **Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements**  The general principles and rules of staff management of the Geomedi are defined in the following documents approved by the Academic Council: Geomedi Statute (02. 10. 2020), Statute of the Service of Human Resources Management (30. 04. 2019), Statute of Lifelong Learning Service (02. 07. 2020), Rule of Hiring Administrative/Support Staff (30. 04. 2019), Methodology for Attracting Young Staff and Involving Them in Research (23. 07. 2019), Minutes of the Academic Council and Its Decisions on Announcement of Open Competition for Academic Positions, Approval of Assessment Criteria and Selection Committees (24. 01. 2020, 05. 06. 2020, 12. 11. 2020 etc.).  The above-mentioned documents define the procedures for electing and appointing the academic, scientific, administrative and support staff. The evidences gathered by the experts panel concerning hiring the invited staff are controversial. The representatives of the administration described more formal procedure (making “labour market search” by the deans and program directors followed by the official announcement), as pointed out in the Statute of the Institution, while the invited personnel referred to more informal friendly process. Electing academic staff is administered only by the individual decisions of the Academic Council concerning each faculty which doesn’t ensure the transparency and sustainability of the processes, while according to the Statute of the University, the rule of the competition for academic positions, should be approved by the Academic Council. The University already has such a Rule for Administrative and Support Staff. Therefore, it is recommended to develop and approve by the Academic Council the Rule for Electing and Appointing the Academic Staff, which ensures transparency, objectivity and sustainability of the process, attracting and hiring qualified staff. It is also suggested to ensure proper implementation of the regulation on hiring invited staff.  The affiliation terms and conditions of Geomedi’s academic staff are pointed out in the Statute of the University and the respective contracts. The Statute of the Institution also describes the principles of involvement of academic and scientific staff in educational and research activities as well as in decision-making processes.  Three different structural units – Quality Assurance, Human Resources Management and Lifelong Learning Services deal with professional development of the staff and from time to time different training courses are provided to the academic, invited, administrative and support staff, but as the interviews revealed, there is a confusion and misunderstanding among the internal stakeholders (academic, administrative and support personnel), who is responsible for situational analysis, identifying the professional development needs and taking relevant measures. There are overlapping in the Statutes of the above-mentioned Units as well (comp. QA Statute 2.3, HR Statute 2.1.6, LLL Statute 2). It is important to distinguish between the different dimensions of staff development policy and practice, identify the concrete function of each Service in this process. E.g., different units may be responsible for staff needs assessment, organizing the trainings, assuring the quality of them, etc. Teaching University GEOMEDI elaborated objective procedures and requirements for academic staff for all programs, including medical programs based on sectoral benchmarks for High Education in Georgia. Regarding contracts and personal files - academic quality and clinical experience are meeting requirements.  Geomedi elaborated Life Long Learning Strategy, but a clearly written training plan is not available. It should be pointed out as well, that the there is only 8500 GEL envisaged in the Budget for improving qualification of the academic personnel of the entire University. Concerning requirements for educational program resources for MD programme, it is mentioned, that “*academic persons and invited teachers should undergo training in medical education methodology on regular basis (every 2 year) should get relevant certificate*”. Given these requirements the panel expressed concerns as to whether the planned budget for training is sufficient to provide proper training for staff development. The representative of the Financial Department convinced the expert panel, that the additional funds will be allocated for this training, but better organizational and financial planning for staff professional development should be provided.  According to the *Report of the Service of Human Resources Management*, these training has been already conducted in November 2020 and additional sessions were planned for March 2021, but it was not mentioned during the interviews. Hence it is recommended to improve the staff professional development policy and practice by identifying, approving and implementing the roles and functions of different structural units in this process, by ensuring needs oriented and financially supported training activities for personnel;  The University has defined principles of remuneration and encouragement based on the research activities only and they are defined in the Assessment System of the Academic/Affiliated Staff’ Research Activities. There is no procedure for ensuring the integration of new employees into work environment and their efficient involvement into the working process. Therefore, it is recommended to develop, approve and implement the procedure for new employees’ integration into work environment.  As it is mentioned in the report 2.1, Geomedi conducts the assessment of the research activities and also conducts the evaluation of the academic/invited staff via students’ surveys, but as the provided and already mentioned documents and interviews showed, the institution doesn’t use effectively and systematically the staff evaluation and satisfaction survey results in the process of staff management. Only the result of the assessment of research activities has been used for granting the financial bonus. Therefore, it is recommended to utilize the staff evaluation and satisfaction survey results for enhancement of teaching and research quality, as well as for the improvement of University management.  Geomedi provided information on academic/affiliated, invited, scientific, administrative and support staff, as well as student and staff ratio in the SER. The benchmarks have been set for 2027 and only the internal and external evaluation of the Institution’s activities in the future and monitoring of implementation of the strategic plan, may answer the question of how successfully Geomedi will address the benchmarks.  As it is already pointed out above, Geomedi has established the qualification requirements for academic/scientific/administrative/support staff. The functions of the personnel are defined in the Statute of the Institute and in the Statutes of different structural units, but there are no job descriptions formulated and approved, which doesn’t allow the institution to determine KPIs and evaluate staff activities. Therefore, it is recommended to develop and approve job descriptions for different types of personnel and to settle the KPIs for effective evaluation of staff.  Geomedi has elaborated objective procedures and requirements for MD Program academic staff, based on the sectoral benchmarks for Medical Education in Georgia. The CVs, diplomas and certificates confirm that the academic quality and clinical experience of the MD Program Staff meet the legislative requirements.  No restrictions exist for affiliated academic staff to teach at other universities; 2/3 do; but no monitoring mechanism to supervise the workload effectively exists in general. It is noticed that staff in high administrative positions are not full-time employees and/or have other work commitments, which raises concerns regarding commitment and devotion to Geomedi’s vision. |
| **Evidences/indicators**   * Geomedi Statute * Statute of the Service of Human Resources Management * Statute of Quality Assurance Service * Statute of Lifelong Learning Service * Rule of Hiring Administrative/Support Staff * Methodology for Attracting Young Staff and Involving Them in Research * Minutes of the Academic Council and Its Decisions on Announcement of Open Competition for Academic Positions, Approval of Assessment Criteria and Selection Committees * Personal files and contracts with academic and invited staff for MD program * Competitive commission protocols of University * University budget * Life Long Learning Strategy * Protocols of the academic staff selecting committees * University website * Copies of the newspapers in which the open competition for academic positions have been announced * Payment receipts of the website “jobs.ge” * Lifelong Learning Strategy * Report on the activities of the Service of Human Resources Management in 2020 * Interview’s results |
| **Recommendations:**   * Develop and approve by the Academic Council the Rule for Electing and Appointing the Academic Staff, which will ensure transparency, objectivity and sustainability of the process, attracting and hiring qualified personnel. * Improve the staff professional development policy and practice by identifying, approving and implementing the roles and functions of different structural units in this process. * Ensure needs oriented and financially supported training activities for personnel. * Develop, approve and implement the procedure for new employees’ integration into work environment. * Utilize the staff evaluation and satisfaction survey results for enhancement of teaching and research quality, as well as for improvement of university management. * Develop and approve job descriptions for different types of personnel and settle the KPIs for effective evaluation of staff. |
| **Suggestions:** |
| **Best Practices (if applicable):** |
| **Evaluation**  Complies with requirements  Substantially complies with requirements  **Partially complies with requirements**  Does not comply with requirements |
| **4.2. Academic/Scientific and Invited Staff Workload** |
| Number and workload of academic/scientific and invited staff is adequate to HEI’s educational programmes and scientific-research activities, and also other functions assigned to them |
| **Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements**  According to SER GEOMEDI currently employs 273 members of staff. Of these, 65 are academic staff, of which 58 is affiliated academic staff, 127 are invited, and 98 are administrative and support personnel. In the methodology for Student and personnel is stated ”*If the student contingent in the educational program increases, the faculty should also provide increase number of academic staff taking into account the defined methodology*”. In SER is stated “*Ratio of the number of academic, scientific, invited personnel to the number of students*”. Currently, it is 193/946, with the target number 212/2100 in 2027.  The ratio of academic staff number to the number of students is according to SER 1:4.9, and the target ratio in 2027 is 1:9.9. These figures seem reasonable but do not reflect reality since many of the staff are not employed full time; therefore, the ratios should be computed on full-time equivalent numbers. The ratio of the affiliated staff number to the total number of academic and invited staff is 1:3 and the ratio of the affiliated staff number to the number of students is currently 1:16.3, **the target ratio will reach 1: 26.6 for 2027.** In Methodology is stated that “*Academic personnel for no more than 25 students (1/25) (Qualification and / or research profile of the academic personnel must meet the qualification requirements of the specialty).”* Moreover, the mode of planning was not explained during interviews. GEOMEDI does not have in place a “Workload Framework Scheme” but HR office provided the percentage workload of affiliated academic staff separately in teaching, research and administration. From provided Excel tables is not clear whether data cover the whole academic year 2020/2021 or a semester only, but for broader view into GEOMEDI system of workload it is satisfactory. **Sixty affiliated personnel** are stated, interestingly, only 12 affiliated are fulltime; out of them, ten do mainly administration and remaining two, research. Eight personnel have workload more than 50%, and **remaining 40 have workload between 8 and 48 %.** All affiliated personnel do research – at least 5 % of their workload, seven of them do research for more than 30 %. **Teaching workloads vary between 3-88% with an average workload of 22%.**  The maximum workload of staff is 40 hours weekly, and the average teaching workload of affiliated personal is 22%, which responds to 8.8 hours per week for one staff, which is 510 hours per week for all affiliated staff.  The table provided for invited staff has 93 personnel teaching from 14 to 625 hours per semester, on average 178 hours per semester, which is 11.7 hours average teaching workload for one personnel per week for 15-week semester.  Altogether, there are in one semester 153 personnel, each teaching roughly 10 hours per week 944 students in, at least, 28 different timetables (6 for each MD programme, 5 for Stomatology, 4 for BA Rehabilitation etc.), where some of them are integrated.  Based on provided Tables of Affiliated and Invited staff Workloads, the calculated student (946)/teacher (153) ratio is 6/1; but in both groups of staff, teaching on average covers only 25 % or less of their workload (11.7 or 8.8 hours a week). **If recalculation based on stated teaching workload is performed, then the student (946)/teacher (153) ratio is 24/1.**  Moreover, GEOMEDI plans significantly increase number of students in all programmes, in Stomatology (currently 92, target 348), Health Management (currently 59, target 306), Medicine (currently 732, target 1143), Rehabilitation (currently 61, target 312), but with very little increase in staff! Current academic, scientific, invited personnel to the number of students is 193/946 and target number in 2027 is 212/2100. With regard to above mentioned analyses any increase of students must be closely related to relevant number of staff and material resources.  GEOMEDI has in place a “Personnel management policy” that covers lifelong learning rules and recruitment policy, the latter sets out the terms and conditions of affiliation. |
| **Evidences/indicators**   * The methodology for Student and personnel (academic, invited, scientific, administrative) contingent planning (Methodology) * Interviews * SER * Regulation of the Human Resource Management Office * Excel tables provided by HR about affiliated and invited staff workload * HEI standards |
| **Recommendations:**   * Use full time equivalent (FTE) to measure the workload of part-time and invited staff as well as for measuring the teaching workload of affiliated staff. * Develop a clear scheme to compute total workload for academic staff including, besides teaching, preparation of courses, consultation, thesis supervision, research activities, administrative work, etc. * Measure the student/teacher ratio for each teaching method (e.g., PBL, bedside training) and observe already stated own rules. * Consider objectively students/teacher ratio in relation to teaching workload of relevant staff. |
| **Suggestions:** |
| **Best Practices (if applicable):** |
| **Evaluation**  Complies with requirements  Substantially complies with requirements  **Partially complies with requirements**  Does not comply with requirements |

1. **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

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| **5.1. The Rule for Obtaining and Changing Student Status, the Recognition of Education, and Student Rights** |
| * For each of the educational levels, HEI has developed regulations for assignment, suspension and termination of student status, mobility, qualification granting, issuing educational documents as well as recognition of education received during the learning period. * HEI ensures the protection of student rights and lawful interests. |
| **Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements**  Geomedi has clearly defined procedures regarding the student status, mobility, qualification granting and recognition of education, which are described in the document named “Regulatory rule for academic process”. The document is public and available in Georgian and English and is accessible on the University website.  Based on the interview results, the Students Relations Office is a responsible body for informing students about the above-mentioned procedures and addressing any issues if present.  Provided samples of contracts between HEI and students ensures, in general, that students’ rights and interests are protected, although serious concerns were raised regarding international students’ rights interests. The majority of the students in the MD program are international, mostly from India. Most of those students are recruited through contracted agency which provides information to prospective students on their own web site <https://www.geomediindia.com/> (see 7.3). According to information available on the agency’s site. regulations passed by the Medical Council of India (MCI) require all Indian students interested in studying MBBS abroad to appear for the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET), as a mandatory prerequisite for being allowed to practice medicine in India after completion of the MBBS course in Georgia.  During discussions regarding admission procedures, the panel received no indication that this requirement is clearly communicated to prospective students although it relates to protection of their rights and interests. Moreover, no relative reference was found in the “Regulatory rule for academic processes”. Notheless, it is the University’s responsibility to inform prospective students accordingly and ensure that relevant terms are included in student contracts.  Appropriate mechanisms exist in the University in case of appeals. Interviews reveal a high degree of awareness regarding these regulations by students. |
| **Evidences/indicators**   * Regulatory rule for academic process * University website * Samples of Agreement between HEI and students * SER * University website * Geomediindia website |
| **Recommendations:**   * Provide clear and accurate information, publicly available, for interested international MD students to protect their rights and interests. * State any provisions in student contracts. |
| **Suggestions:** |
| **Best Practices (if applicable):** |
| **Evaluation**  Complies with requirements  **Substantially complies with requirements**  Partially complies with requirements  Does not comply with requirements |
| **5.2 Student Support Services** |
| * HEI has student consulting services in order to plan educational process and improve academic performance * HEI has career support service, which provides students with appropriate counselling and support regarding employment and career development * HEI ensures students awareness and involvement in various University-level, local and international projects and events, and supports student initiatives * HEI has mechanisms, including financial mechanisms to support low SES students |
| **Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements**  The function of student support services is distributed between 2 administrative units in the University: The Students Service Centre and Students Relations Office, which operate according to their respective regulatory documents. However, according to interviews, it is worth mentioning that some responsibilities mentioned in these documents are either not executed by these services or shared with other units, for example, communication with alumni, creating and maintaining their database for follow up, career development services. During the site's visit discussions, it was unclear whether or not University maintains any communication with alumni and which department is responsible for that.  Involvement of graduates in the academic process (Ex: developing programs, communication with current students) is minimal. Each department employs two persons. Students receive information mainly through an electronic system or email.  As revealed during interviews, academic personnel do not have a predetermined amount of consulting hours for students' assistance and mainly rely on less formal communication through social networks.  Career support services in Geomedi is executed by Students Relations Office. Given the level of staffing only basic services like forwarding employers interests and announcements of open competitions to students performed ad-hoc. From interviews, it was clear that HEI supports students by either employing or offering an internship in the dental and rehabilitation clinic owned and operated by the University and its staff, although a significant shortage of internship and job opportunities offered by third party employers was reported. Student Relations Office does not possess an employer database either a bank of student CVs. Furthermore, no systematic monitoring of graduates´ employment records was observed. There is no evidence of alumni involvement in the creation and implementation of educational programmes, and there is no framework for active communication between students and them.  During interviews, students could not recall any instances of assistance in employment outside the University. During the visit, the employers remarked on the demand for physical medicine and rehabilitation specialists in the graduate market, noting that the University has high potential to deepen collaboration with the representatives of the field and increase the number of students in this area. However, the University's priority seems to be the medical education program.  The Quality assurance department conducts anonymous surveys of students twice per semester, reviews their complaints, and gives recommendations to the University's respective units. However, it is unclear if the QA department actively monitors the process of implementing these recommendations or gives any feedback to the staff or students. For example, the following recommendations have been issued by the department in the report of the QA evaluation results:   * Program manager and affiliated academic staff must increase students’ interest to be involved in scientific- research working * Improving student practical (online) training assessment mechanisms * Quality assurance department recommended: Program manager, Dean and the International relations office should provide students and academic staff participation in exchange programs and international projects.   It is ambiguous how these recommendations were fulfilled and if they had any positive outcomes or not.  Practices of student involvement in the international mobility programs and research have not been identified. The University has no experience in participating in any exchange programs like "Erasmus +" and does not provide any opportunities for students to participate in international projects outside the institution. It is also one of the significant issues raised by students according to the surveys conducted by the QA department. These issues have been addressed in "Internationalization Policy" (which was implemented by the institution in 2018) and became one of the components of the Action Plan (2021-2023). However, there seems to be no clear vision of how HEI plans to achieve this goal.  University has Student Self-governance, which is actively involved in extracurricular activities, sport and cultural events, outdoor trips. A budget of 21,000 GEL is allocated to Student Self Governance for 2021. It also participates in the educational process, as the head of the self-government is a member of the Academic Board. The unit's structure ensures that every student has an opportunity to raise their voice through the help of Group heads/leaders who are members of the student self-government. Members include both Georgian and international students.  The University offers students from socially vulnerable groups a unique plan of paying the fees that meet their individual needs, based on their statement, which means paying the education fees with the time terms acceptable for the students themselves. Interviewed students confirmed that they benefited by this policy.  .The experts made aware of the University’s social interventions in assisting socially vulnerable families in the district where it is located and suggest further enhancement of its social dimension by condidering support for students with disadvantaged backgrounds. For example, offering skills enhancement programs to young people from vulnerable groups.  The majority of the student population are international students and their Georgian language skills are basic. Students studying in a foreign country may suffer from anxiety, depression, and other mental illnesses that may affect their academic outcomes. It so happened that no incidents of this type have been reported so far, but in any case support mechanisms such as consultation service for students should be in place. |
| **Evidences/indicators**   * Regulations of Students’ Relations Office * Regulations of Students’ Service Center * Regulations of Students’ Self-Government * Career Support services * Instruments of support for socially vulnerable students and their outcomes * Interview results |
| **Recommendations:**   * Academic personnel should have fixed weekly consulting hours, announce at the beginning of each semester, for students' assistance, either physically or through videoconference. * Improve career support services by implementing practice and internship programs outside the University. * Ensure involvement of students, alumni and employers in quality assurance mechanisms. * The University should strengthen international connections; create more opportunities for students’ international mobility and participation in projects and conferences outside the University. * Health care and psychological support for students, especially foreign students must be provided. * Student relation and student center personnel should be staffed with persons fluent in English. * Student Relations Office Centre should retain an alumni database, an employer database and a bank of student CVs than will enable systematic career support services and effectively conduct surveys of students and alumni regarding their personal, professional and academic development. |
| **Suggestions:**   * Enhance the University’s social dimension by supporting more students with disadvantaged background. |
| **Best Practices (if applicable):** |
| **Evaluation**  Complies with requirements  Substantially complies with requirements  **Partially complies with requirements**  Does not comply with requirements |

1. **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

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| **6.1 Research Activities** |
| * HEI, based on its type and specifics of its fields, carries out research/creative activities. * Ensuring the effectiveness of doctoral research supervision * HEI has public, transparent and fair procedures for the assessment and defense of dissertations which are relevant to the specifics of the field |
| **Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements**  University GEOMEDI while a teaching University, strives to be empowered with both human and material resources to conduct high-level research. University GEOMEDI Research Development Institutional Strategy is mentioned overall goal to support research activities at the faculties, promote qualified research, provide effective collaboration and internationalization.  In 2020, the University founded the independent Scientific Research Institute (SRI) of Experimental and Clinical Medicine, where the experimental research studies are being conducted, with Pathology Lab and Molecular Medicine Lab. Currently, 15 scientists and support personnel are employed at SRI. At this same time was established the Research Foundation of the University Geomedi, which aims to support scientific research activities. According to the Rector and Vice Rector of Research, an open competition is expected to be announced soon, but no definite date was given to the panel.  Being a Teaching University and thus not offering doctoral programs, the research output is rather limited and funded exclusively by the University. The panel was not made aware of any cooperation with other agents to implement research activities.  During the interview with research staff was clear their great efforts for research, though they have not yet formulated either an idea or a plan on how to promote student’s active involvement in research.  Currently, 14 research projects are being funded by the University, 5 of them in the implementation stage mainly in the faculty of Medicine, and the rest in the planning stage across the rest of the faculties. Since systematic efforts for development of research are at the initial stages, the involvement of the academic community is limited. The research teams for the 5 projects consist of 1 to 3 persons, with total involvement of 5 persons.  The rest of the research output includes individual research papers produced by academic/scientific staff to be presented and/or published in conference proceedings in Georgian and abroad, publications in Georgian journals, including the University Scientific journal, and some publications in impact factor journals. Overall, 60 persons (out of 112) of the academic staff had at least one scientific output (94 in total or less than 1 per academic staff member). Conference presentations makes up more than 55% of publications, followed by publications in non-impact journals (29%), while publications in impact factor journals are rather limited (10 publications in 2020). Deviations exist between faculties. A quick analysis by the panel showed that the average number of publications is 2 per person for the faculties of Health Economics & Management and Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, about 1.5 for Medicine and 1.2 for Stomatology.  Most of the published scientific work is in Georgian with a summary in English and Russian, mainly in the University scientific journal – “Modern Problems of Medicine and Management (ISSN 1512-4169). This journal called “international” but does not have any Impact factor; neither is referenced in international databases, thus limiting the opportunities of the published work to be cited and recognized outside Georgia. Other papers are also published in other Georgian journals, which are without visible awareness.  As the University embarks on a plan to enhance its research profile, attention should be paid to increase research output in English, so that research work has more opportunities for dissemination and recognition, which can facilitate opportunities for international cooperation in research.  Based on current and planned scientific-research activities, University believes that it has all needed resources for doctorate (s) program work. For some reason, this is not stated clearly in the mission and vision of the University.  Apparently, involvement of academic staff in research must be enhanced and Faculties must consider developing research agendas in specific fields. The fact that all Faculties of the University are in the health care facilitated synergies in research that have not yet be explored.  Overall, experts believe that the University should ask and encourage faculties to develop research agendas, identifying research fields that fit the mission of the University and respond to the local and international issues in healthcare. Faculty research agendas based on collective research efforts instead of individual ones and involving more students in research will enhance the research capacity of the University, enabling the institution to reach a level to successfully support Ph.D. programs.  As the University under authorization, is a teaching University, dissertation supervision is carried out at Master’s level only. During the visit, the panel reviewed a sample of Master thesis from various faculties. Rules and guidelines for the scientific research component in Master’s thesis are stated clearly in relevant document.  The MD program includes 10 mandatory credits for scientific skills, such as scientific research methodology (4 credit), evidence based medicine (3 credit), modern informative system (3 credit). |
| **Evidences/indicators**   * Self-Evaluation Report * Interview with the Rector, Vice Rectors, The Head of the HEI and representative of Research Foundation * Interview with the representatives of Research Foundation and Scientific-Research Institute * Observation of facilities (research laboratories) * Institutional research strategy development University Geomedi * Plan for research project and Timeline; * Form of research project proposal * Statistics of scientific published work * Master thesis guidelines * Samples of Master theses * Report on research activities – current and planned projects |
| **Recommendations:**   * The University should strengthen its research profile in a more balanced way among its faculties, which must develop research agendas, identifying research that focuses on research areas relevant and important in social and economic development of the region according to the mission of the University. * Increase English language publications in international impact-factor journals to gain increased dissemination and recognition and create opportunities for join international research. |
| **Suggestions:**   * Encourage and support Master students to publish their work. Consider asking them to prepare a 4-5-page paper describing the research and output of their Master’s dissertation. * Interdisciplinary approach in research should be a priority at inter or intra faculty level. |
| **Best Practices (if applicable):** |
| **Evaluation**  Complies with requirements  Substantially complies with requirements  **Partially complies with requirements**  Does not comply with requirements |
| **6.2. Research Support and Internationalization** |
| * HEI has an effective system in place for supporting research, development and creative activities * Attracting new staff and their involvement in research/arts-creative activities. * University works on internationalization of research, development and creative activities. |
| **Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements**  Research at the Teaching University Geomedi is funded almost exclusively by its own funds. For 2021, 5% of the total budget is allocated to the Research Foundation to fund research projects and attract new scientists. Currently, an open completion is planned for interested young scientists but not exact date is set yet.  Academic staff could submit proposals for research to be funded by the University. As of last year, a template for research proposal is in place. Potential researchers must formally present state of the art in the field, research methodology including description of the experimental part, budget and expected results. Proposals are approved by decision of the Academic Board. Currently 14 such research projects are in implementation or planning stage.  Publication fees for affiliated/invited staff is fully subsidized by the University budget. The University also subsidizes expenses for participation of academic/scientific staff in conferences, textbook publication fees and organization of trainings. Associated evidence received during the interviews with academic staff.  Currently, there is limited participation of students in research activities. According to Medicine sectoral benchmarks, students should prove their ability to apply scientific principles, method and knowledge to medical research. They should have the opportunity to contribute to the work of the research program.  Training of researchers in preparing research proposals as well as a support mechanism to identify possible sources of funding and disseminate information to scientific staff are vital for increasing the capacity of the University to attract outside funds.  One of the most serious obstacles in development of research is the very low level of internationalization. Most of the research output, no matter how important it is, is published only in Georgian language, in Georgian publications. There is very limited published work in English language and in journals outside Georgia. Limitation in English language skills prohibit staff to exploit opportunities to visit universities in other EU countries, establish contacts with colleagues, perform joint publications (a small number of published work is jointly published). Thus, most research work is constrained within national boundaries. Internationalization of research would add additional advantages to research and researchers. The University should consider internationalization as a top priority issue.  The University international contacts in both Research and Education are limited to five foreign academics (2 live in Georgia) who participated in the teaching process; one of them also in the most recent MD program development activity (2018). The University has five bilateral agreements with other universities and Institutes for join Ph.D. programs, join exchanges, join research activities, that have not produced any results yet. Erasmus+ opportunities for creating a network of European and international partners have not been exploited yet. Although Erasmus+ focuses mostly in educational activities, staff exchanges could also help in finding partner universities in research. |
| **Evidences/indicators**   * Self-Evaluation Report * Interview with the Rector, Vice Rectors * Interview with the representatives of Research Foundation and Scientific-Research Institute * Interview with the Library Head * Interview with Affiliated and Invited Academic Staff. * Memoranda with International partners |
| **Recommendations:**   * Develop a solid plan for enhancing research internationalization. * Strategy to attract young scientists should be implemented. Planned open competition should take place. * Acquiring expertise for participating in open competitions for research projects. Specific trainings to academic and scientific staff for writing research proposals for national and international research agencies. * International office should include a research unit dedicated to provide information and assistance to academics and scientists regarding research opportunities at European and international level. * Consider requiring skills and international research experience when recruiting academic staff. * Work on placing the University publications "Modern Issues of Medicine and Management" in International journal databases. * Ensure the involvement of MD students in research and monitoring of their activities |
| **Suggestions:**   * Engage Master’s level students in research activities and dissemination of research results. |
| **Best Practices (if applicable):** |
| **Evaluation**  Complies with requirements  Substantially complies with requirements  **Partially complies with requirements**  Does not comply with requirements |
| **6.3. Evaluation of Research Activities** |
| HEI has a system for evaluating and analysing the quality of research/creative-arts activities, and the productivity of scientific-research units and academic/scientific staff. |
| **Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements**  The University has in place a process for Assessment of research work of academic staff based on the number of scientific publications and other research work. The document *Research Activity Assessment System of Academic/Affiliated personnel* describes a rubric scheme of weight points assigned to different type of research output or effort, including book authorship, monographs, papers in impact factor journals, papers in other peer review journals, presentations at Georgian / international conferences, scientific grants, international research exchanges, student participation in research projects, etc. Vice Rector of Research evaluates the research activities of the academic/affiliated personnel of Geomedi University on an annual basis, based on individuals reports by the academic staff, deriving a research assessment score for each person. A monetary research bonus of 500 /1000/ 2000 GEL is awarded to academics that achieve a score of 30-40 / 41-70 / over 70 points in the assessment scale. The expert panel received the assessment sheet for 2020 during the site visit, in which two 1000 GEL and one 500 GEL awards were granted. Definitely, the assessment system is transparent but can be improved in taking care of qualitative aspects of published work. For example, the weights of published papers should also take into account the number of authors, and first or prime authors. Otherwise, it could face the risk of being exploited by clusters of academics aiming at high scores.  Since research work needs to be assessed and analyzed by experts in the field, the process should not be a joined task of the Vice Rector of Research, Faculty experts, preferably an external expert along with QA department.  Furthermore, a more integrated system could be in place. At the moment, the expert panel was informed that academic staff is not obliged to submit rolling annual research plans, based on which, their annual research performance will be monitored and evaluated, a well know international practice. Then, evaluation of research work would involve Faculties, Human Resources and QA, so that results of research assessment can be used in planning individual workload and possibly remuneration.  Information on on implemented research activities is limited. Only titles of implemented and current research are posted on the University’s website. The University scientific publication [Modern Issues of Medicine and Management](https://geomedi.edu.ge/wp-content/uploads/pdf/%E2%84%961(21)_2021_jurnali.pdf) and scientific conference proceedings that include articles published by Geomedi’s academic staff are full-text accessible on the website. |
| **Evidences/indicators**   * Self-Evaluation Report * Interview with the Rector, Vice Rectors * Interview with the representatives of Research Foundation and Scientific-Research Institute * Interview with QA * Interview with Affiliated and Invited Academic Staff. * Research Activity Assessment System of Academic/Affiliated personnel * Results of evaluation of research activities of affiliated academic personnel |
| **Recommendations:**   * Extend the current research assessment process to an integrated system of research analysis and assessment that involves Faculties, Scientists, HR and QA. * Introduce the requirement of individual research activity planning for academic staff. * Connect research assessment results and planning research work with staff workload and remuneration. * Set a minimum annual threshold for published work per academic. * Regularly publish reports on implemented research activities. |
| **Suggestions:** |
| **Best Practices (if applicable):** |
| **Evaluation**  Complies with requirements  Substantially complies with requirements  **Partially complies with requirements**  Does not comply with requirements |

1. **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.

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| **7.1 Material Resources** |
| * The institution possesses or owns material resources (fixed and current assets) that are used for achieving goals stated in the mission statement, adequately responds to the requirements of educational programmes and research activities, and corresponds to the existing number of students and planned enrolment. * HEI offers environment necessary for implementing educational activities: sanitary units, natural light possibilities, and central heating system. * Health and safety of students and staff is protected within the institution. * HEI has adapted environment for people with special needs |
| **Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements**  The University owns material resource in the shape of assets (#4 King Solomon II str. Tbilisi; #6 King Solomon II str. Tbilisi; #170 D. Aghmashenebeli str. Tbilisi and #10 Kedi Komuna str. Tbilisi), 6 cars and high voltage electricity substation. Furniture and technical supplies for 69 lecture auditoria (desks, chairs, tables, boards, computer technique); Study labs equipment (microscopes, chemistry and physics labs with respective equipment.  Durin the site visit at Teaching University Geomedi MD students (Georgian and English programme) were carrying out activities for procedural skills development at the Clinical Skills Lab. During the site visit, the experts’ panel observed the clinical skills lab, with enough spaces and accommodation, the panel also observed rooms by mirror effects; also, space where students store bags and personal items. The experts panel also observed simulators, moulages and mannequins, but skills lab was not equipped sufficiently for providing all procedural skills listed by the benchmarks (Sectoral Benchmarks part.5), such as intracutaneous injections, wound care, ECG recording, for conducting Respiration Tests (RS) and facilities for carrying out (male and female)catheterization properly step by step action from the position of patients until completion of catherization according to guidelines listed in Medicine Sectoral Benchmarks.  However, in the Lab we also saw additional simulators and mannequins for Obstetrics and Gynecology and Ophthalmology and Otology for integrated syllabi for developing advanced subject oriented skills.  During the site visit several facilities were visited (PINEO, GERMAN hospital, GEOMEDI clinics, Simulation Medicine Clinic). While in the GEOMEDI building changing rooms and lockers for students are available, no such space was found in the clinical sites (e.g., Pineo clinic). Instead, changing rooms for staff were shown. It does not ensure the safety of students´ belongings and can impede clinical rotations.  In the Simulation Medicine Clinic only one piece of each requested manikin (according to sector benchmarks) was present. Manikins for intramuscular injections, intravenous injection and peripheral venipuncture were thoroughly checked. There were no marks of any use though teaching in Simulation Medicine Clinic was ongoing. It brings doubts about way of practical teaching in this setting.  HEI has mandatory spaces including a sanitary unit, natural light possibilities and central air conditioning system. There are adapted restrooms on each floor of the University, not all of them are adapted in accordance with standards although other adapted restrooms on the same floor are available.  Mandatory facilities such as sterilization room and hazardous waste temporary storage are considered for the dental clinic. There is an X-ray machine available and University has respective licenses and documents.  Two clinics, besides the Simulation clinic, are operating in the University – dental and physical rehabilitation. Both of them regulated basic issues of infection prevention and control. Staff use personal protective equipment correctly, the institution has developed appropriate protocols and guidelines. However, the temporary storage of waste and sterilization room need to be upgraded. The waste management system must be brought in compliance with the requirements of the law (such as container labelling, color differentiation).  There are 7 dental chairs in the University Dental Clinic. Students, under the supervision of a supervisor, conduct only professional cleaning. Clinical practice involves the assistance of 5 employed doctors. There are also several dental chairs in the University, which, according to the University, are not used for practice and have only a demonstration function.  University has the agreements with local clinics, where students have practical courses, they assist doctors and observe the manipulations. However, in majority of agreements there are missing descriptions about subjects which will be taught, number of students and length of their training and daily activities.  The facility has developed fire safety, medical assistance and order protection mechanisms and there is an appropriate inventory; The State Reserve and Civil Security Services Agency provides security for the building under a service contract. Big Choice Ltd. provides installation and maintenance of video cameras and sirens. A protection and labor safety service has been developed, which operates in accordance with the relevant regulations.  The facility has an evacuation plan, firefighting equipment, thermal scanning equipment and disinfectants. |
| **Evidences/indicators**   * Recipes for porches of simulators, moulages and mannequins. * List of simulators provide by University. * Site visit results. * Assets / Liabilities ownership documentation. * Instruction on keeping sanitary hygienic norms. * Safety documents. * Interviews. |
| **Recommendations:**   * The University should ensure that the Clinical Skills Laboratory is properly equipped for achievement the sectoral Benchmarks requirements in Medical Education. * Ensure adequate changing rooms with lockers for students in all facilities where any teaching is provided. |
| **Suggestions:**   * Temporary storage of hazardous waste provided for the clinic to comply with the requirements of the law. The respective requirements are defined by the Resolution of the Government of Georgia, Technical Regulation # 294 - " Management of Medical Waste". In accordance with the requirements of the technical regulations, the temporary storage of waste must have a washbasin, water drain and ventilation system. * The movement cycle of instruments in the sterilizer to be improved. Equipment and materials should be placed so that the instruments had the ability to move only in one direction- from the contaminated space to the clean space. |
| **Best Practices (if applicable):** |
| **Evaluation**  Complies with requirements  **Substantially complies with requirements**  Partially complies with requirements  Does not comply with requirements |
| **7.2. Library Resources** |
| Library environment, resources and service support effective implementation of educational and research activities, and HEI constantly works for its improvement. |
| **Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements**  The library is an integral part of GEOMEDI, has appropriate space for students, library staff and for meetings. Library has altogether 5 staff. There is a language barrier at least in the Head of Library which might cause problems as the majority of students are international. There are 21 computers for students/academics, 3 PCs for staff. There are a printer and a copy machine.  The library is open 6 days a week.  Library has 14345 books. As found during the site visit, a great majority are in Russian and Georgian. There are regulations for using the library, and the electronic catalogue is accessible from the webpage.  Experts selected books indicated in syllabi on random in the electronic catalogue and did not find all of them even though they were stated as basic literature.  Students know about the existence of electronic databases. Students have access to Scopus, Science Direct, Elsevier and EBSCO. E-books catalogue is not available online. It might be after registration.  It is stated in SER that an introduction to the library databases is provided at the beginning of the academic year for freshman students. As revealed during the interview, GEOMEDI attracts students twice a year (at least to English MD programme), and for freshman is training provided only at the beginning of the academic year.  According to the 2021 budget, 150.000 GEL is allocated to the purchase of literature and E-resources.  The HEI has provided statistics of electronic database usage from January 2016 to February 2021. According to the report, for year 2020 there were 707 database sessions and 4527 total searches during this period. Given the number of students and staff, the use of databases is marginal, the same is valid for number of searches.  There is a description of enrichment and updating of library resources, but it seems that the library staff is mainly involved in the purchasing of books as requested by the HEI academic board, academic staff, and does not conduct independent research of the library resources and does not provide recommendations for the enrichment of the library. If any staff wants to buy e.g., a new book, request is sent to the library and the book is bought. If the budget is spent, the management is asked to increase the budget. It seems that there is no mechanism, which will prioritized and classify requests submitted by academics and faculties. |
| **Evidences/indicators**   * List of the library resources * SER – description of updating of library resources * Statistics for the application of electronic database * Regulations for using library https://geomedi.edu.ge/wp-content/uploads/pdf/Regulation%20of%20the%20Library.pdf * Webpage * Interviews * Site visit * English syllabus e.g., 10 sem – Gynaecology, 6 sem - Cardiovascular system pathology module |
| **Recommendations:**   * Find ways to increase the usage of electronic databases by students and staff. * Improve library resource planning process. * Introduction to the library databases should be organized at least twice a year as GEOMEDI attracts students twice a year. Additional training sessions should be provided periodically to all students in the course of their studies. * Consider availability of stated basic literature in syllabi in the library. |
| **Suggestions:** |
| **Best Practices (if applicable):** |
| **Evaluation**  Complies with requirements  **Substantially complies with requirements**  Partially complies with requirements  Does not comply with requirements |
| **7.3 Information Resources** |
| * HEI has created infrastructure for information technologies and its administration and accessibility are ensured * Electronic services and electronic management systems are implemented and mechanisms for their constant improvement are in place * HEI ensures business continuity * HEI has a functional web-page in Georgian and English languages. |
| **Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements**  The HEI has an adequate number of computers, Internet is accessible in every part of University building.  The HEI has introduced electronic services and electronic management systems, also has own educational platform which ensures communication between administration, students and faculty. There in intranet which enables one-to-one chat.  IT department has altogether 3 staff members.  IT management policy is in place. IT risks are assessed.  HEI has a functional website [www.geomedi.edu.ge](http://www.geomedi.edu.ge), [www.geosis.edu.ge](http://www.geosis.edu.ge) where the domain belongs to GEOMEDI, in Georgian and English languages. There is also other website [www.geomedi.ge](http://www.geomedi.ge) which contains information about GEOMEDI but domain does not belong to. It contains also information about GEOMEDI, which is not completely relevant. (***The website www.geomedi.ge has been deactivated after the site visit (?), but www.geomediindia.com appeared with the same content***). In the Home page of the latter, it is stated that “they” (no company name) are “*official direct representatives of Geomedi University”,* and a certificate of partnership signed by the Active Rector of Geomedi, dated 31.03.2017, designates Mr. Harish Kumar “*exclusive partner of Geomedi as a duly authorized recruiting agent and gives the right to conduct extensive activities necessary for student enrollement to University programmes”*. Although there is nothing wrong in the practice of using agencies to recruit foreign students, the information the agents provide to prospective students must be under the control of the University and be accurate and not misleading. This does not seem to be the case with *geomediindia.com*. Some information is not even available in the official university site, and does not appear on any University regulations. Indicatively:  Admission criteria: *No IELTS & No TOEFL required for getting admission in MBBS course. Only 10+2 (?)* *with medical stream are eligible for the admission,* *100% Admission, 100% Invitation Letter, 100% Guaranteed Visa*. It is worth noticing that although NEET requirements are not mentioned in any Geomedi regulations, *geomediindia.com* states the requirement in a very direct way “*MCI (Medical Council of India) gave their advice for the students aiming to study MBBS Georgia* / *They'll not be allowed to practice medicine in India after completion of the MBBS course from Georgia), NEET exam is mandatory for MBBS in Georgia”.*  *https://www.geomediindia.com/study-mbbs-in-abroad.php*.  *https://www.geomediindia.com/mbbs-admission-in-georgia.php*  Admisssion application form is available along with information on supporting materials. Suprisingly, there is no requirement of certain level of English  Other information in Geomediindia seems misleading: *“International medical university with more than 1000 International students”, “University Hospital … Geomedi is providing students with remarkable practice opportunities at the University Clinic of the Academy” (https://www.geomediindia.com/university-hospitals.php)*  Given that the cooperation of Geomedi with the exclusive recruiting agency is over 3 years long, one expects that there is a content management policy and practice for both the official Geomedi site and the one of the agency, so that prospective students receive accurate information. Lack of content control may be harmful for prospective students, as well as for the Unibersity in the long run.  The relevant GEOMEDI website contains information as required by the standard 7.3 apart from basic statistics, annual report available, and clear admission criteria. Academic calendar and timetables are not available online even after login for students. Content of website in English is considerably reduced. Content of the website is administered by International Relations and Public Relation Office, IT provides technical support.  . |
| **Evidences/indicators**   * Interviews * Site visit * Information Technology (IT) Management Policy at Teaching University Geomedi LLC * Website(s) * https://geomedi.edu.ge/?page\_id=432&lang=en * https://www.geomediindia.com/study-mbbs-in-abroad.php. * https://www.geomediindia.com/mbbs-admission-in-georgia.php * https://www.geomediindia.com/university-hospitals.php |
| **Evaluation**  Fully complies with requirements  **Substantially complies with requirements**  Partially complies with requirements  Does not comply with requirements |
| **Recommendations:**   * Admission criteria should be available on the website * Academic calendar has to be available on the website * Timetables must be available at least after login * Ensure that other commercial websites that act as agents for foreign students have the correct information about Geomedi but do not convey the impression that they are part of the University. Best practice is to have limited information at the agency’s site, with links to Geomedi’s web pages where official information should reside. |
| **Suggestions:** |
| **Best Practices (if applicable):** |
| **7.4 Financial Resources** |
| * Allocation of financial resources described in the budget of HEI is economically achievable * Financial standing of HEI ensures performance of activities described in strategic and mid-term action plans * HEI financial resources are focused on effective implementation of core activities of the institution * HEI budget provides funding for scientific research and library functioning and development * HEI has an effective system of accountability, financial management and control |
| **Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements**  The consolidated University budget including income and expenses related to the operation of the two clinics is about 8 million GEL, an amount that experts consider too low for a University that runs two MD and a Dentistry program.  Income is derived mainly (97%) from tuition fees and a small part from the operation of the two clinics, indicated in the budget as, income received from economic activities. The total income of both clinics is GEL 335269.  In order to purchase consumables, the management of the clinic carries out the recording of the materials once a month, addresses the Chancellor, the Chancellor submits it to the Academic Council, and after the approval of the Council, the purchase is made.  According to the explanation of the representative of University, Consumables dedicated to the clinic, including consumables for dental clinics are included in the 2021 budget of the University, in 3.5 paragraph (consumables for the study process) and it amounts to 9180 GEL. This amount does not include materials intended only for clinics. According to the representatives of the University, in case of need, the money will be spent from the reserve budget (12% of the budget).  Although the University is not legally required to provide a separate budget for the clinics, having separate budgets for each clinic will allocate responsibilities and help in monitoring and control.  5% of the University budget (or 388.900 GEL) is considered for th Science and Devepoment Fund. Most of it (314.400 GEL) is allocated to expenses for scientific publication fees, leaving low margin for other development activities, such as internationalization which has a budget of only 15 000 GEL, a very low amount for a significant strategic goal, give that there are currently no other sources of funds for international activities. Considerably low is the amount (8.500 GEL) allocated for professional development of Academic staff, given the priorities set by the University.  The amount of 155.000 GEL (2% of total budget) is allocated to library, which should be reconsidered if a university owned plagiarism system will be purchased..  Capitalized costs amount to 1.7 MGELand cover all activities consider for implementation in 2021 according to the 3 year action plan, including improvement of infrastructures, lab equipment and materials.  Sufficient funds are allocated to Student support activities such conference, cultural and sport activities, self-governance etc.  Financial Department is headed by the financial team, which is a structural unit of the university. The team includes: Chief Accountant, Dental Clinic Accountant, Accounting Program Manager and Internal Auditor. They are also responsible for developing the university's annual budget.  The budget is reviewed quarterly by the Academic Board and necessary adjustments are made. Internal allocation of the budget lines to Faculties will increase accountability and provide incentives for Faculties to set priorities, elaborate their own development strategies, increase synergies within faculties, and sharing of good practices at University level.  To implement the financial management and control system, the university introduced accounting program "Info Accountant" and created an internal audit service. However, no external financial audit report was provided. External financial audit is necessary for ensuring fairness and fullness of financial information.  The business processes continuity plan developed by the university describes processes by which a stable working environment can be achieved, which affects all aspects of the its operations, including financial stability. |
| **Evidences/indicators**   * HEI Self-Assessment document * Interviews * Dynamics of Funding of Past 5 Years * Teaching University GEOMEDI LLC Budget * Financial report of 2019 |
| **Recommendations:**   * Break down budget expenditures according to faculties * Clinics budgets should include income and expenditures for each clinic for better monitoring and control. * Increase of budget dedicated for the professional development. * Increase of budget allocated to internationalization * Make the external financial audit report available. |
| **Suggestions:** |
| **Best Practices (if applicable):** |
| **Evaluation**  Complies with requirements  **Substantially complies with requirements**  Partially complies with requirements  Does not comply with requirements |