NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

Accreditation Expert Group Report on Higher Education Programme

Early Childhood, Development and Education, Bachelor

LEPL - Ilia State University

Evaluation Date(s)
07.03.2024

Report Submission Date
28.05.2024

Tbilisi

Contents

Information about a Higher Education Institution [1]

Name of Institution Indicating its Organizational Legal Form	LEPL - Ilia State University
Identification Code of Institution	204861970
Type of the Institution	University

Expert Panel Members

Chair (Name, Surname, HEI/Organisation, Country)	Anna Klim-Klimaszewska, University of Siedlce, Poland
Member (Name, Surname, HEI/Organisation, Country)	Ketevan Aptarashvili, East European University, LTD, Georgia
Member (Name, Surname, HEI/Organisation, Country)	Teona Lodia, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Georgia
Member (Name, Surname, HEI/Organisation, Country)	Irma Kurdadze, SJSU, Georgia
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[1] In the case of joint education programme: Please indicate the HEIs that carry out the programme. The indication of an identification code and type of institution is not obligatory if a HEI is recognised in accordance with the legislation of a foreign country.

I. Information on the education programme

Name of Higher Education Programme (in Georgian)	ადრეული ბავშვობა, განვითარება და განათლება
Name of Higher Education Programme (in English)	Early Childhood, Development and Education
Level of Higher Education	Bachelor's
Qualification to be Awarded[2]	Bachelor of Preschool Education
Name and Code of the Detailed Field	0112 Training for Pre-school Teachers
Indication of the right to provide the teaching of subject/subjects/group of subjects of the relevant cycle of the general education[3]	N/A
Language of Instruction	Georgian
Number of ECTS credits	240
Programme Status (Accredited/ Non-accredited/ Conditionally accredited/new/International accreditation) Indicating Relevant Decision (number, date)	New
Additional requirements for the programme admission (in the case of an art-creative and/or sports educational programme, passing a creative tour/internal competition, or in the case of another programme, specific requirements for admission to the programme/implementation of the programme)	N/A

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[2] In case of implementing a joint higher education programme with a higher education institution recognized in accordance with the legislation of a foreign country, if the title of the qualification to be awarded differs, it shall be indicated separately for each institution.

[3] In case of Integrated Bachelor's-Master's Teacher Training Educational Programme and Teacher Training Educational Programme

II. Accreditation Report Executive Summary

▪ **General Information on Education Pogramme[4]**

The undergraduate educational program 'Early childhood, development, and education,' presented for accreditation, was developed in 2023, with the aim of training professional staff in preschool education. The presence of the program in the educational space is very important, as labor market research data shows a significant shortage of teachers with innovative thinking in preschool institutions.

It is worth noting that when determining the goals and results of the presented program, the program leaders relied on the sectoral characteristics of preschool education, national legislative and educational documents (state standards of early and preschool education, professional standards of educators and teachers), and other research documents.

The goal of the program is to prepare a competitive, reflective, and creative specialist in preschool education who will:

- *"Be capable of supporting the holistic development and well-being of the child by applying child-centered approaches in practice.*
- *Possess a systemic view of early childhood education, enabling them to understand the specificity, diversity, and mutual influence of different systems.*
- *Master strategies promoting autonomy, curiosity, self-expression, and tolerance in oneself and others, as the main characteristics of professional activity in early education.*
- *Be able to address challenges in professional practice, and make and/or implement evidence-based recommendations for successful practice''.*

International practice was used to develop the program and define its goals. In particular, the relevant programs of the University of Sydney, Plymouth State University, and the University of New England.

Program is a new and A total of 15 academic and visiting staff are involved in the Early Childhood, Development, and Education program, of which 3 are University-affiliated academic staff and 12 are visiting staff.

▪ **Overview of the Accreditation Site Visit**

The visit to Ilia State University was organized on March 7th, 2024. The accreditation commission was led by the foreign expert Anna Klim-Klimaszewska, alongside Georgian experts. The panel gradually met and conducted interviews with representatives of different groups/positions at the Ilia State University. They were as follows: self-evaluation team members, heads of the programme, academic and invited staff, rector of ILIAUNI, Dean of the faculty, students and alumni of already existing programmes, employers, quality assurance representatives. The whole visit was well organized. additional documentation was requested, which the institution promptly provided.

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[4] When providing general information related to the programme, it is appropriate to also present the quantitative data analysis of the educational programme.

- **Brief Overview of Education Programme Compliance with the Standards**

The expert panel evaluates the proposed bachelor's programme is the way as follows: Standards 1 and 5 – Compliance with the requirements; Standard 2,3,4 – Substantial compliance with requirements. Altogether, the expert panel formulated 9 recommendations and 2 suggestions that relate to different aspects of the proposed programme.

- **Recommendations**

Standard 1:

1.5

- To ensure the achievement of the first outcome presented in the program, it is recommended to develop Georgian-language study materials based on the English-language literature specified in the training courses. This approach would facilitate better understanding and accessibility of the content for students, particularly those who may not be proficient in English.
- Additionally, specifying the amount of reading material for each topic presented in the syllabus would be beneficial.

Standard 2:

2.1.

- To enhance transparency, It is recommended that the prerequisites for admission to the program include detailed information about the criteria or basis for obtaining student status in the bachelor's program.

2.2.

- It is recommended that the agreements/memorandums signed with employers or centers of practice take into account the number of students.

2.4.

- It is recommended to establish clear criteria and, based on them, develop transparent and objective evaluation rubrics/schemes for all educational courses in order to achieve greater reliability of evaluation and measurability of learning outcomes

- It is recommended that the evaluation system presented in all study course syllabi should comply with ''The Rule of Calculation of Higher Education Programmes with Credits'' (Article 4, section 7).

Standard 3:

3.1.

- Implement measures to promote inclusivity and diversity within the learning environment, including addressing concerns related to discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities for

all students. This may involve providing sensitivity training to faculty and staff and establishing support mechanisms for students from marginalized backgrounds;

Standard 4:

4.1.

- It's recommended, to identified the balance between academic, including balance between affiliated academic and invited staff, and to increase the number of academic staff in the sectoral direction, which ensures the programme sustainability.

4.4.

- Make sure that Library keeps all the core literature indicated in the syllabi (including electronic resources), that ensures the achievement of programme learning outcomes;

- **Suggestions for Programme Development**

Standard: 3

3.1.

- Enhance communication channels between students and faculty to facilitate open dialogue, feedback exchange, and timely resolution of concerns. Encourage students to voice their opinions and provide feedback through surveys, focus groups, and regular meetings with program coordinators.

Standard 4:

4.5.

- It is desirable that the presented budget should detail the necessary funds for professional development, scientific research, and various scientific activities, so that the exact costs required for the implementation of this or that activity are visible

- **Brief Overview of the Best Practices (if applicable)[5]**

  An exemplary illustration of best practice is the Child Development Institute operating at the university, whose material resources we had the opportunity to familiarize ourselves with. The Institute of Child Development boasts many years of experience working with children of early and preschool age, which serves as an important foundation for both practice and research for students.

- **Information on Sharing or Not Sharing the Argumentative Position of the HEI**

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[5] A practice that is exceptionally effective and that can serve as a benchmark or example for other educational programme/programmes.

1.5.

The working group of the program shares the recommendation on the preparation of Georgian-language study materials and notes that it will continue to work in this direction. Specifically, the working group highlights a particular course, "Children's Health and Disease Prevention," for which Georgian-language study material remains a challenge. In their argumentative response, the working group also identifies specific courses in the 7th semester for which efforts to prepare reading materials in Georgian are ongoing.

The Program Working Group shares the expert group's recommendation on specifying the amount of reading material for each topic in the syllabus.

Therefore, both recommendations remain valid.

According to the argumentative position presented by the university, the recommendation given regarding sub-standard 2.4 was shared and adjusted the evaluation system in the syllabi. Corrected syllabi are submitted as additional evidence. The expert group considers that the recommendations made in relation to sub-standards 2.1, 2.2, 4.1 and 4.4 are relevant.

As for the argumentative position of the recommendation related to standard 3.1, despite the fact that the working group cited as an example the implemented projects that contribute to the creation of an inclusive environment, during the meeting with the students, it became clear that the measures taken in previous years regarding this matter are not sufficient. Therefore, we welcome the university's desire to address the challenge mentioned in the recommendation by planning additional activities to ensure an inclusive and diverse environment for students. Accordingly, the said recommendation remains valid.

- **In case of re-accreditation, it is important to provide a brief overview of the achievements and/or the progress (if applicable)**

III. Compliance of the Programme with Accreditation Standards

1. Educational Programme Objectives, Learning Outcomes and their Compliance with the Programme

A programme has clearly established objectives and learning outcomes, which are logically connected to each other. Programme objectives are consistent with the mission, objectives and strategic plan of the HEI. Programme learning outcomes are assessed on a regular basis to improve the programme. The content and consistent structure of the programme ensure the achievement of the set goals and expected learning outcomes.

1.1 Programme Objectives

Programme objectives consider the specificity of the field of study, level and educational programme, and define the set of knowledge, skills and competences a programme aims to develop in graduate students. They also illustrate the contribution of the programme to the development of the field and society.

Summary and Analysis of the Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

The Early Childhood Development and Education (BA) program at Ilia State University was established in 2023. In the Program Description, clear goals are presented, which are fully consistent with the requirements given in the national legislative and educational documents in the direction of preschool education. These documents include state standards of early and preschool education, the professional standard of a preschool teacher, field characteristics of preschool education, and the national qualifications framework. The program's strength lies in its curriculum, which is based on practical experience in early education and preschool institutions, serving as a compelling argument for achieving its stated goals.

International practices were used in determining the program's goals, drawing insights from similar programs at the University of Sydney, Plymouth State University, and the University of New England. Additionally, the program authors considered findings from studies related to preschool and early education, such as the Georgian Preschool Education Quality Survey (UNICEF) and the Georgian Early Education Diagnostic Survey (PPMI) - this aimed to train specialists whose competence aligns with both international standards and the Georgian context. Graduates of the program are expected to:

- Foster the holistic development and well-being of children through child-centered approaches. Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of early education.
- Encourage autonomy, curiosity, self-expression, and tolerance in both themselves and others.
- Address professional challenges in practice by making and implementing evidence-based recommendations.

Such specialists are poised to contribute significantly to enhancing the field of early and preschool education and overcoming existing challenges.

Evidences/Indicators

- o Early Childhood, Development and Educational program description;

- o Description of Practice Component;
- o Syllabuses of the courses included in the program;
- o Interview results with the Self-Assessment Group, head of the program, academic and invited staff, employers;
- o Self-Assessment report;
- o State standards for early and preschool education;
- o Field characteristics of preschool education;
- o University Strategic Plan, Objectives, Mission from website.

Recommendations:

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Suggestions for the Programme Development

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Evaluation

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
1.1 Programme Objectives	☒	☐	☐	☐

1.2 Programme Learning Outcomes

➤The learning outcomes of the programme are logically related to the programme objectives and the specifics of the study field.

➤ Programme learning outcomes describe knowledge, skills, and/or the responsibility and autonomy that students gain upon completion of the programme.

Summary and Analysis of the Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

The program's learning outcomes are logically connected to its goals and fully comply with national legislative and educational document requirements in preschool education. A mapping of the program's learning outcomes and goals demonstrates this alignment. The learning outcomes of the program comprehensively describe the knowledge, skills, responsibilities, and autonomy expected of graduates with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education. These outcomes reflect industry needs, contemporary requirements, and a strong emphasis on applied and practical skills. In order to determine the compliance of the learning outcomes of the program with learning outcomes of the

field characteristic of preschool education, a map of correspondence of the learning outcomes of the program and the learning outcomes of the field characteristic of preschool education is used.

To achieve the program's goals, seven main outcomes are defined, the achievement of which is realistic given that a large part of the training courses presented in the curriculum include embedded practice. This practice gives students the opportunity to gain work experience and research in early and preschool education institutions. Each course offers focused practical components, ensuring students gain relevant work experience and research opportunities in early and preschool education settings. For example, if in the case of one course the focus of the practical component is playing and interaction with a child, the focus of another practical course will be the development and observation of the child. We can consider the curriculum built this way as a useful argument for achieving the results presented in the program.

However, the description of the first outcome of the program states: "Considers the well-being and holistic development of the child (birth to 8 years) in the context of local and international contexts, early development theories and models (including multilingual education and second language acquisition)." This outcome aligns with the learning results outlined in the field competence document. Understanding development theories is foundational to effective teaching practice. While some attention is given to this topic in various training courses, the relevant literature is primarily in English, with often unspecified volumes. This circumstance raises concerns regarding the program's capacity to fully achieve the aforementioned outcomes, particularly since proficiency in English is not specified as a prerequisite for admission to the program. Please refer to the relevant recommendation in the Academic Course/Subject section.

Evidences/Indicators

- o Early Childhood, Development and Educational program description;
- o Description of Practice Component;
- o Syllabuses of the courses included in the program;
- o Self-Assessment report;
- o Map of learning outcomes of the program;
- o   Benchmarks of the program;
- o Policy Governing Assessment of Implementation of Higher Education Programs;
- o State standards for early and preschool education;
- o Field characteristics of preschool education;
- o Interview results with the Self-Assessment Group, head of the program, academic and invited staff, employers.

Recommendations:

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Suggestions for Programme Development

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Evaluation

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
1.2 Programme Learning Outcomes	☒	☐	☐	☐

1.3 Evaluation Mechanism of the Programme Learning Outcomes

➢ Evaluation mechanisms of the programme learning outcomes are defined; the programme learning outcomes evaluation cycle consists of defining, collecting and analyzing data necessary to measure learning outcomes;

➢ Programme learning outcomes assessment results are utilized for the improvement of the programme.

Summary and Analysis of the Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

The program incorporates various mechanisms for evaluating learning outcomes, including:

- Analysis of students' academic performance;

- Assessment of the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes based on student surveys;

- Analysis of the results of surveys of graduating students and graduates regarding the educational program;

- Assessment of the effectiveness of the teaching process implemented by the visiting and academic staff involved in the implementation of the educational program;

- Analysis of the benchmarks defined for the educational program;

- Analysis of the feedback received about the program from interested parties, including employers field experts.

These mechanisms appear to be comprehensive for evaluating achievable results. Furthermore, the practical courses within the program encompass a range of activities demonstrating the competencies attainable through it. It is imperative to maintain objectivity and reliability in evaluating these competencies. However, the evaluation schemes outlined in the syllabuses lack clarity regarding the allocation and assignment of points, raising concerns about the objectivity and reliability of the

evaluations. Please refer to the recommendation in the student assessment section for further clarification.

Evidences/Indicators

- o Syllabuses of the courses included in the program;
- o Benchmarks of the program;
- o Self-Assessment report;
- o Assessment guide of learning outcomes of Ilia State University
  https://iliauni.edu.ge/uploads/other/79/79304.pdf
- o Interview results with the Self-Assessment Group, head of the program, academic and invited staff, students.

Recommendations:

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Suggestions for the Programme Development

- o –

Evaluation

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
1.3 Evaluation Mechanism of the Programme Learning Outcomes	☒	☐	☐	☐

1.4. Structure and Content of Education Programme

➢ The Programme is designed according to HEI's methodology for planning, designing and developing of education programmes.

➢ The Programme structure is consistent and logical. The content and structure of the programme ensure the achievement of programme learning outcomes. The qualification to be granted is consistent with the content and learning outcomes of the programme.

Summary and Analysis of the Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

The program is compiled according to the methodology of planning and development of educational programs. The curriculum consists of three components: the general module, the main module, and

the free component, totaling 240 credits (48 credits for the general module, 132 credits for the main module, and 60 credits for the free component). The program's content and structure are coherent and logical. Each course has a logical prerequisite related to its subject matter, outlined in the course syllabuses.

The main module of the program offers various practical courses that allow students to deepen their competencies determined by the program's learning outcomes. It should be noted that the program's content considers the latest achievements in the field. In particular, the primary and supporting literature used within each course and other study materials draw on the latest research and sources.

The program's total number of learning courses relevant to the main field of study corresponds to the amount of credit distribution established by law for the undergraduate educational program. The optional compontent of teh program offers study courses trhat are optional according to the student's interest, which gives tehm the opportunity to obtain sufficient knowledge according to their choice. The program content reflects the latest developments in the field and also helps the student to improve their English language skills.

Evidences/Indicators

- o   Educational program description;
- o   Syllabuses of the courses included in the program;
- o   Map of correspondence between program learning outcomes and field characteristic learning outcomes;
- o   Map of learning outcomes of the program;
- o   Syllabi of the courses included in the program;
- o   Description of Practice Component;
- o   State standards for early and preschool education;
- o   Field characteristics of preschool education;
- o   Interview results with the Self-Assessment Group, head of the program, academic and invited staff, students.

Recommendations:

Suggestions for the programme development

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Evaluation

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
1.4 Structure and	☒	☐	☐	☐

Content of Educational Programme

1.5. Academic Course/Subject

➢ The content of the academic course / subject and the number of credits ensure the achievement of the learning outcomes defined by this course / subject.

➢ The content and the learning outcomes of the academic course/subject of the main field of study ensure the achievement of the learning outcomes of the programme.

➢ The study materials indicated in the syllabus ensure the achievement of the learning outcomes of the programme.

Summary and Analysis of the Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

The outcomes for each course of study of the presented bachelor's program are consistent with the program's learning outcomes and the corresponding steps in higher education. A learning outcomes map is in place to ensure level alignment and describes which courses cover which program learning outcomes.

However, there are some concerns regarding the achievability of specific program outcomes, especially about the first outcome, where we read: "Considers the well-being and holistic development of the child (birth to 8 years) in the context of local and international settings, early education theories and models (including multilingual education and second language acquisition)." This outcome aligns with the record of learning outcomes in the field competence document. Knowledge of development theories is fundamental for practical teaching, and some time is dedicated to this topic in various training courses. However, the relevant literature is in English. This circumstance raises doubts about the extent to which the outcomes mentioned above will be achieved within the program, primarily since English language proficiency is not defined as a prerequisite for admission.

The literature used in each course is based on contemporary resources and research in the field of preschool education, and relevant topics are identified in the course syllabuses. However, in some cases, the volume of relevant literature is not specified by topic, which makes it challenging to determine the correspondence of the literature volume with the allocated number of credits. Additionally, it is worth noting that a significant portion of the literature is in English.

Evidences/Indicators

- o Educational program description;
- o Syllabuses of the courses included in the program;
- o Map of correspondence between program learning outcomes and field characteristic learning outcomes;
- o Map of learning outcomes of the program;
- o Description of Practice Component;
- o State standards for early and preschool education;
- o Field characteristics of preschool education;

o   Interview results with the Self-Assessment Group, head of the program, academic and invited staff, students.

Recommendations:

- To ensure the achievement of the first outcome presented in the program, it is recommended to develop Georgian-language study materials based on the English-language literature specified in the training courses. This approach would facilitate better understanding and accessibility of the content for students, particularly those who may not be proficient in English.

- Additionally, specifying the amount of reading material for each topic presented in the syllabus would be beneficial.

Suggestions for the programme development

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Evaluation

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
1.5.Academic Course/Subject	☐	☒	☐	☐

Compliance of the Programme with the Standard

1. Educational programme objectives, learning outcomes and their compliance with the programme	Complies with requirements	☒
	Substantially complies with requirements	☐
	Partially complies with requirements	☐
	Does not comply with requirements	☐

2. Methodology and Organisation of Teaching, Adecuacy of Evaluation of Programme Mastering

Prerequisites for admission to the programme, teaching-learning methods and student assessment consider the specificity of the study field, level requirements, student needs, and ensure the achievement of the objectives and expected learning outcomes of the programme.

2.1 Programme Admission Preconditions

The HEI has relevant, transparent, fair, public and accessible programme admission preconditions and procedures that ensure the engagement of individuals with relevant knowledge and skills in the programme to achieve learning outcomes.

Summary and Analysis of the Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

Ilia State university has determined prerequisites for admission of for the Early Childhood, Development, and Education program; Applicants interested in enrolling in the program must pass the Unified National Examinations by the rules established by the Ministry of Education, Science and youth of Georgia. The prerequisites specified in the programme are in accordance with the applicable legislation but are not transparent. For example, the program does not specify whether obtaining student status in the bachelor's program, apart from the results of the unified national exams, requires a complete general education or an equivalent document. Additionally, it is unclear which foreign language the applicant must pass in the unified national examinations. Moreover, the conditions for enrollment in the program should include provisions for internal and/or external mobility and acceptance of foreign nationals in accordance with applicable legislation.

The interviewer determines that the applicant can pass in any foreign language. However, they do not exclude the possibility of this requirement changing. In addition, it should be noted that for some courses, only English-language literature is specified as compulsory reading material for students (for example: Outdoor Learning in Early Childhood Education, Visual arts in early childhood education, Music in early childhood education...)

The planning of the student contingent follows a specific mechanism and methodology at the University. When planning, various aspects are considered, including the level of study, the ratio of students to academic and visiting staff, the program's field of study, the availability of places for practice, and other relevant factors. In the 2024 National Center for Assessment and Examinations entrant Handbook, admission to the said program is announced with reference to the prerequisites, and the university plans to admit 20 students

To promote the program and provide comprehensive information to entrants, the Faculty of Business, Technology, and Education organizes information meetings. According to interview results, the university has a plan to create and share promotional videos about the program on the University's website and social media platforms, as well as host an Open-Door Day, and more.

Evidences/Indicators

- Educational program;
- University website https://iliauni.edu.ge/ge/;
- Student contingent planning mechanism and methodology of Ilia State University
- SER
- Interview results
- Handbook for applicants 2024 (NAEC)

Recommendations:

- To enhance transparency, It is recommended that the prerequisites for admission to the program include detailed information about the criteria or basis for obtaining student status in the bachelor's program.

Suggestions for the programme development

- ○ –

Evaluation

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
2.1 Programme Admission Preconditions	☐	☒	☐	☐

2.2. The Development of Practical, Scientific/Research/Creative/Performing and Transferable Skills

Programme ensures the development of students' practical, scientific/research/creative/performing and transferable skills and/or their involvement in research projects, in accordance with the programme learning outcomes.

Summary and Analysis of the Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

The program ensures the development of students' practical and transferable skills by the learning outcomes. According to the learning outcomes, to develop students' practical, research, and transfer skills, the Early Childhood, Development and Educational Bachelor's Degree Programme as a practical component provides educational practice. he practice component is implemented in two formats:
1. Practice integrated into courses for which at least nine credits are allocated; 2. Independent practice courses, for which 42 credits are allocated. By taking practice courses, the student summarizes, analyzes, self-evaluates, and reflects on the theoretical and practical knowledge and skills acquired at different stages of the programme.

In the practice component, both the staff of the university and the representative of the organization (mentor) participate in the assessment of the student through mutually agreed assessment tools. Adequate evaluation forms, components, methods, and criteria provided by the syllabus are used to evaluate the practical component.

The university has provided a "Description of Practice Component," which was created by Ilia State University. In this document, the institution has clearly and comprehensively described all stages of practice planning and organization/implementation.

Through interviews and the study of the presented documentation, it is confirmed that during the internship, university students are guided by qualified individuals in the field.

,,Action Research in Early Childhood Education'' is s also a compulsory research component of the undergraduate educational program. This course aim is to introduce students to the key components of early education research and ways to improve research-based practice to support child development and education. According to the curriculum, students can also choose the bachelor's

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thesis and bachelor's research project seminar components from the elective block, within which they will study the planning and implementation of a research paper/project.

To develop educational research and communication skills, the syllabus of study courses of the Bachelor's Degree Programme course syllabi requires the student to complete a research and/or practical project, reflection, observation, evaluation notes, etc. For this purpose, the student will search for the necessary information, analyze the problems in the field, develop ways of their solution, and based on updated knowledge, using appropriate terminology, justify their positions, both orally and in writing.

As a result of studying the agreements signed with practice facilities and employers, it is confirmed that these agreements consider the purpose of the practice, as well as the rights and obligations of the parties. However, they do not specify the number of students. Ilia State University presented a memorandum signed with 6 kindergartens in Tbilisi. Interviews with employers confirm that each kindergarten will be able to accommodate an average of 10-15 students for practice, which is a sufficient number for the contingent planned by the university.

Evidences/Indicators

- Educational program;
- concepts of the courses included in the program;
- Memorandums of cooperation signed between educational institutions and Ilia State University.
- SER
- Interview results

Recommendations:

- It is recommended that the agreements/memorandums signed with employers or centers of practice take into account the number of students.

Suggestions for the programme development

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Evaluation

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements

2.2.The Development of practical, scientific/research/creative/performing and transferable skills	☐	☒	☐	☐

2.3. Teaching and Learning Methods

The programme is implemented by use student-oriented teaching and learning methods. Teaching and learning methods correspond to the level of education, course/subject content, learning outcomes, and ensure their achievement.

Summary and Analysis of the Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

The teaching-learning methods provided by the syllabus of each study course are focused not only on acquiring knowledge but also on developing skills. The teaching-learning methods described in the syllabus of each study course of the educational program correspond to the level of education and the goals and content of each study course. Teaching-learning methods, depending on the specifics of the study course, ensure the achievement of the learning outcomes provided by the syllabus of the study course, and the combination of existing teaching methods - to achieve the learning outcomes provided by the programme. Within different courses, considering their goals, content, and format, the following methods are used: interactive lecture/seminar; practical teaching method; individual, pair and group work methods; discussion/debate; case study; practice observation, analysis, reflection; presentation; role plays and simulations; problem-based learning; project-based learning etc. Interviews with the staff responsible for implementing the program confirm their dedication to teaching methods aimed at developing students' critical and analytical skills.

The University develops individual curricula to ensure students' different requirements, special educational needs, academic preparation, and smooth involvement in the educational process. The scientific research institute of the University - Child Development Institute, is involved in developing individual curricula for students with special educational needs.

Evidences/Indicators

- Educational program and Syllabus of the courses
- University website https://iliauni.edu.ge/ge/;
- Child Development Institute of Ilia State University - https://cdi.iliauni.edu.ge/
- SER
- Interview results

Recommendations:

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Suggestions for the programme development

- o –

Evaluation

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
2.3. Teaching and learning methods	☒	☐	☐	☐

2.4. Student Evaluation

Student evaluation is conducted in accordance with the established procedures. It is transparent, reliable and complies with existing legislation.

Summary and Analysis of the Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

The achievement level of a bachelor's degree within the implementation of the bachelor program is assessed in accordance with the evaluation system approved by Order No. 3 of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia dated January 5, 2007, titled "The Rule of Calculation of Higher Education Programmes with Credits." The university has an evaluation system for studying results that contributes to the improvement of students' academic achievements. However, it should be noted that the program syllabi do not correspond to the changes ''The Rule of Calculation of Higher Education Programmes with Credits'' approved by Order No. 105/N of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia dated December 29, 2021, which were implemented regarding the evaluation system (Article 4, section 7).

The learning outcomes evaluation system takes into account the specifics of the study course and includes adequate assessment forms, methods, which it is determined to what extent students have achieved the learning outcomes envisaged by the components of the educational programme.

The assessment system of each courses includes assessments with at least three components (midterm assessments and one final assessment). Midterm assessment assesses the student's knowledge during the semester defined for lectures-seminars. The final assessment implies the assessment of the student at the end of the semester, during the examination period. Minimum Competency threshold is defined for midterm and final assessments. This limit does not exceed 60% of the points allocated for the final assessment. The specific share of the final assessment does not exceed 30 points. The final assessment is a mandatory component of the course.

The subjects offered by the university are linked with different assessment methods. Th assessment methods include essay, presentation, discussion, practical assignment, participating in a discussion etc. Each form and component of the assessment has a specific share of the final grade (100 points) in the final assessment, which is reflected in the specific syllabus.

Students are assessed according to the assessment criteria (rubrics) presented in the all syllabus of each course. But it should be noted that in some cases there is not adequate and transparent criteria (rubrics). For example, a student may receive 24 points out of 30 if the issue is comprehensively presented in the paper and there are only minor stylistic errors (''Curricula in Early Childhood Education'', ,,Modern Challenges in Early Childhood Education''), 18-20 points - the student **always** read the material and wrote the assignments correctly, 12-17 points - the student **mostly** read the

material and wrote the assignments (''Bilingual Education in Kindergarten''); 13-15 points - the issue is presented accurately and exhaustively in the paper; 9-12 points - the issue is presented exhaustively in the paper. There are minor stylistic errors ('' Diversity in Early Childhood Education'', rubric of midterm, max point: 15) etc.

The institution uses Turnitin program to detect plagiarism; Additionally, the University operates an assessment appeal mechanism, which allows the student to apply to the faculty with a complaint application in case of reasonable doubt. This initiates the formation of a complaint commission and the relevant procedures. The results of the assessment are reflected in an Electronic selection system ''Argus''

Evidences/Indicators

- Educational program and Syllabus of the courses
- Electronic selection system Argus
- SER
- Interview results

Recommendations:

- It is recommended to establish clear criteria and, based on them, develop transparent and objective evaluation rubrics/schemes for all educational courses in order to achieve greater reliability of evaluation and measurability of learning outcomes

- It is recommended that the evaluation system presented in all study course syllabi should comply with ''The Rule of Calculation of Higher Education Programmes with Credits'' (Article 4, section 7).

Suggestions for the programme development

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Evaluation

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
2.4. Student evaluation	☐	☒	☐	☐

Compliance with the programme standards

2. Methodology and Organisation of Teaching, Adequacy of Evaluation of Programme Mastering	Complies with requirements	☐
	Substantially complies with requirements	☒
	Partly complies with requirements	☐
	Does not comply with requirements	☐

3. Student Achievements, Individual Work with Them

The programme ensures the creation of a student-centered environment by providing students with relevant services; promotes maximum student awareness, implements a variety of activities and facilitates student involvement in local and/or international projects; proper quality of scientific guidance is provided for master's and doctoral students.

3.1 Student Consulting and Support Services

Students receive consultation and support regarding the planning of learning process, improvement of academic achievement, and career development from the people involved in the programme and/or structural units of the HEI. A student has an opportunity to have a diverse learning process and receive relevant information and recommendations from those involved in the programme.

Summary and Analysis of the Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

The Bachelor's program in Early Childhood, Development, and Education offers robust support mechanisms to students, ensuring they receive adequate guidance, resources, and assistance to navigate their academic journey effectively. The inclusion of various support mechanisms, including academic, career, and psychological counseling services, ensures that students receive guidance across different aspects of their academic and personal development.

Information meetings, induction sessions, and personalized consultations are provided to familiarize students with the learning environment and facilitate effective planning of their educational path. The university appears to offer various avenues for students to receive information and consultation regarding their learning process, academic achievement, and career development. Faculty members and administrative staff are available for consultation, and a program coordinator cooperates with students. Additionally, a quality assurance service specialist helps students with individual study plans if needed.

The university utilizes a software system called "Argus" to manage and support the educational process. This system allows students to access course materials, choose study courses, and communicate with academic staff. The integration of technology seems comprehensive and provides students with easy access to essential resources and communication channels. The utilization of the Argus system enhances students' autonomy in course selection and assessment tracking, enabling them to monitor their progress and seek assistance as needed.

The university offers various academic support services such as an academic writing center, library training sessions, and resources for improving writing skills. Platforms like Moodle and Turnitin are used to provide additional resources and support for academic writing. Furthermore, the psychological counseling center is available for students, staffed by qualified specialists trained in evidence-based methods. Such supplementary services offer valuable resources for enhancing students' academic and mental well-being.

The Department of Student Affairs plays a pivotal role in promoting student employment and career development through various initiatives, including career month events, employment forums, and support for student projects. Additionally, the university fosters a vibrant student life through seasonal schools, camps, and student clubs, enriching students' educational experience beyond the classroom. Regular trainings and workshops are conducted to enhance students' skills and provide necessary support.

The International Relations Office facilitates international exchange programs and offers support services to students participating in these programs. This includes information dissemination, individual consultations, and assistance with study agreements and visa applications. The program's proactive approach to student engagement, career development, and international opportunities contributes to a holistic learning experience.

While the program demonstrates compliance with the standard requirements, ongoing monitoring and feedback mechanisms are essential to ensure continuous improvement and the provision of high-quality support services to students. Also, it's crucial to ensure that these support services are accessible to all students, including those from diverse backgrounds or with specific needs. During student interviews, instances of ethnic or other forms of discrimination perpetrated by lecturers were reported. Additionally, students highlighted communication challenges both with lecturers and university administration. It was noted that there is often a lack of transparent communication regarding existing issues, leading students to hesitate in reporting specific cases to the administration. These challenges and areas for improvement identified during the site visit underscore the importance of continuous evaluation and enhancement to better meet the diverse needs of students and ensure an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

Overall, the education program appears to be compliant with the requirements of standard 3.1. The university has established a comprehensive system of support services, consultation mechanisms, and technological infrastructure to facilitate students' learning, academic achievement, and career development. Moreover, the incorporation of feedback mechanisms and continuous improvement efforts suggest a commitment to enhancing the quality of support services provided to students.

Evidences/Indicators

- Regulations of the Department of Student Affairs; https://iliauni.edu.ge/ge/iliauni/units/dsa;
- Regulations of the International Relations Office: https://iliauni.edu.ge/uploads/other/62/62039.pdf;
- Performance rules for academic program supervisors and working groups;
- Personal files of University administration employees;
- Ilia State University website: www.iliauni.edu.ge;
- Electronic selection system Argus www.argus.iliauni.edu.ge;
- University Library http://library.iliauni.edu.ge;
- Psychological Counseling Center of students - https://bit.ly/3MoRMxu;
- University Office of Development - https://iliauni.edu.ge/ge/;liauni/units/developmentoffice;
- Career development https://bit.ly/3LGFZtR;
- International exchange programs: https://iliauni.edu.ge/ge/iliauni/units/foreignrelations/gacvliti-programebi;
- Self-assessment report;
- Interviews conducted during the site visit.

Recommendations:

- Implement measures to promote inclusivity and diversity within the learning environment, including addressing concerns related to discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities for all students. This may involve providing sensitivity training to faculty and staff and establishing support mechanisms for students from marginalized backgrounds;

Suggestions for Programme Development

- Enhance communication channels between students and faculty to facilitate open dialogue, feedback exchange, and timely resolution of concerns. Encourage students to voice their opinions and provide feedback through surveys, focus groups, and regular meetings with program coordinators.

Evaluation

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
3.1 Student Consulting and Support Services	☐	☒	☐	☐

3.2. Master's and Doctoral Student Supervision

➤ A scientific supervisor provides proper support to master's and doctoral students to perform the scientific-research component successfully.
➤ Within master's and doctoral programmes, ration of students and supervisors enables to perform scientific supervision properly.

Summary and Analysis of the Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

-

Data related to the supervision of master's/ doctoral students	
Quantity of master/PhD theses	
Number of master's/doctoral students	
Ratio	

Evidences/Indicators

o Component evidences/indicators, including the relevant documents and interview results

Recommendations:

- Proposal (s), which should be considered by the HEI, the programme to meet the requirements of the standard

Suggestions for the programme development

- o Non-binding suggestions for the programme development

Evaluation

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
3.2. Master's and Doctoral Students Supervision	☐	☐	☐	☐

Compliance with the programme standards

3. Students Achievements, Individual Work with them	Complies with requirements	☐
	Substantially complies with requirements	☒
	Partly complies with requirements	☐
	Does not comply with requirements	☐

4. Providing Teaching Resources

Human, material, information and financial resources of educational programme ensure sustainable, stable, efficient and effective functioning of the programme and the achievement of the defined objectives.

4.1 Human Resources

➢ Programme staff consists of qualified persons, who have necessary competences in order to help students to achieve the programme learning outcomes.

➢ The number and workload of programme academic/scientific and invited staff ensures the sustainable running of the educational process and also, proper execution of their research/creative/performance activities and other assigned duties. Quantitative indicators related to academic/scientific/invited staff ensure programme sustainability.

➢ The Head of the Programme possesses necessary knowledge and experience required for programme elaboration, and also the appropriate competences in the field of study of the programme. He/she is personally involved in programme implementation.

➢ Programme students are provided with an adequate number of administrative and support staff of appropriate competence.

Summary and Analysis of the Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

The University has well-defined internal regulations that are in line with the national legislation ensuring the selection of qualified academic personnel and creating a decent working environment.
the workload of the academic staff, which is in full compliance with the requirements of the Labor Code of Georgia and nsures the proper conduct of the educational process defined by the educational program.

The Head of the Programme is an associate professor of ilia state university and possesses necessary knowledge and experience required for programme elaboration according to the level of the programme. The qualification of the Head of the programme is certified by relevant practical experience and/or scientific papers/creative work; she is also actively engaged in developing the documents defining the early education policy and developing existing training programs for early education, actively involved in international projects, the purpose of which is to introduce the best practices in early education in Georgia. The results of the interview and the study of the documentation confirm that the head of the program was personally involved in programme Development, in various events planned within the programme.

The university has a methodology and mechanism of Planning Student Body. According to the mentioned regulation, for the successful implementation of the Teacher Training for Preschool Education program 1) the ratio between the academic/invited staff and the student body should not exceed 1/15 2) One professor per no more than 70 students, but no less than two professors for each program. However, there is not identified The balance between academic, including balance between affiliated academic and invited staff, which ensures the programme sustainability. According to SER, 15 academic and visiting staff are involved in the Early Childhood, Development, and Education program, of which 3 are University-affiliated academic staff and 12 are visiting staff. However, according to the program, the lecturers for the general compulsory courses (English language, Introduction to Modern Thought, Academic Technique) will be a Group of professors/teachers and university has also provided their Personal files (2 - academic staff, 6 – invited teacher of english language); According to the SER, the university plans to admit 20 students per educational cycle.

Both the academic and invited staff have relevant experience and competencies necessary to help students achieve programme learning outcomes, which are reflected in their personal files and interview resluts. However, it should be mentioned that part of them do not have relevant degree in the sectoral direction and most of the staff involved in the Early Childhood, Development, and Education program are invited staff. Therefore, the university should continue working to increase the number of academic staff in the sectoral direction.

The Faculty of Business, Technology, and Education administers the programs. Qualification of administrative staff is consistent with their functions.

During the interview, academic personnel confirmed their commitment to work for the programme. They discussed their expertise and expectations towards the university.

Number of the staff involved in the programme (including academic, scientific, and invited staff)	Number of Programme Staff	Including the staff with sectoral expertise[6]	Including the staff holding PhD degree in the sectoral direction[7]	Among them, the affiliated staff
Total number of academic staff	3			3
Professor				

[6] Staff implementing the relevant components of the main field of study

[7] Staff with relevant doctoral degrees implementing the components of the main field of study

Associate Professor	2	1	1	2
Assistant-Professor	1	1	1	1
Assistant				
Visiting Staff	12	6		
Scientific Staff				

Evidences/Indicators

- Early Childhood, Development and Education program and Syllabuses
- Personal files of the staff;
- Ilia State University Policy and Procedures for the Development, Approval, Amendment and Abolishment of Education Programmes
- Student Contingent Planning Mechanism and Methodology;
- Job descriptions of administrative staff;
- Program workload schemes of academic and visiting staff;
- Interview results
- SER

Recommendations:

- It's recommended, to identified the balance between academic, including balance between affiliated academic and invited staff, and to increase the number of academic staff in the sectoral direction, which ensures the programme sustainability.

Suggestions for Programme Development

- o   -

Evaluation

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
4.1 Human Resources	☐	☒	☐	☐

4.2 Qualification of Supervisors of Master's and Doctoral Students

The Master's and Doctoral students have qualified supervisor/supervisors and, if necessary, co-supervisor/co-supervisors who have relevant scientific-research experience in the field of research.

Summary and Analysis of the Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

Number of supervisors of Master's/Doctoral theses	Thesis supervisors	Including the supervisors holding PhD degree in the sectoral direction	Among them, the affiliated staff
Number of supervisors of Master's/Doctoral thesis	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
- Professor	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
- Associate Professor	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
- Assistant-Professor	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Visiting personnel	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Scientific Staff	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

Evidences/Indicators

o Component evidences/indicators, including the relevant documents and interview results

Recommendations:

• Proposal (s), which should be considered by the HEI, the programme to meet the requirements of the standard

Suggestions for the programme development

o Non-binding suggestions for programme development

Evaluation

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
4.2 Qualification of Supervisors of Master's and Doctoral Students	☐	☐	☐	☐

4.3 Professional Development of Academic, Scientific and Invited Staff

➤ The HEI conducts the evaluation of programme staff and analyses evaluation results on a regular basis.
➤ The HEI fosters professional development of the academic, scientific and invited staff. Moreover, it fosters their scientific and research work.

Summary and Analysis of the Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

The proposed bachelor programme is new; therefore, the experience of supporting the academic staff cannot be directly evaluated. However, The Faculty of Business, Technology, and Education has an assessment mechanism for academic and visiting staff, which includes specific assessment methods

and instruments (Funding Regulations of Ilia State University for Participating In International Scientific Conferences and Publishing Scientific Articles in International Journals; The Procedure for Assessing the Academic Staff of the Faculty of Business, Technology, and Education of Ilia State University) and Assessment results are used for staff professional development, encouragement, and promotion.

Istitutution was established Personal and Professional Development Center (PPDC) and this center promotes the development of academic and visiting staff. It provides training modules related to improving the educational process for the staff involved in the teaching process. Also, The Office of Development promotes the involvement of university researchers and scientific staff in international cooperation projects related to research. It should be noted that 264 grants have been registered in the last 12 years, 33.31% of which are research grants. The academic and visiting staff of the program are currently involved in the ongoing World Banksupported project - Innovation, Inclusion, and Quality. Within the framework of the project, they are experts in preschool education. In addition, they are involved in the project Improving Early Childhood Education Institution Management System and Enhancing the Quality of the Programs Across the Country.

During the interview, the potential academic and ivited personnel discussed their expectations and almost all of them mentioned the expectancy of the university's support in leading research activities and participating in various academic/scientific activities.

Evidences/Indicators

- Regulations of the Office of Development of Ilia State University;
- Funding Regulations of Ilia State University for Participating In International Scientific Conferences and Publishing Scientific Articles in International Journals;
- Research strategy of Ilia State University;
- Regulations of the International Relations Office of Ilia State University;
- Interview results;
- Self-evaluation report;

Recommendations:

- –

Suggestions for the programme development

- –

Evaluation

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
4.3 Professional development of academic,	☒	☐	☐	☐

scientific and invited staff	

4.4. Material Resources

Programme is provided by necessary infrastructure, information resources relevant to the field of study and technical equipment required for achieving programme learning outcomes.

Summary and Analysis of the Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

It is important for any student to have a good material and technical base that will help them acquire and improve quality knowledge. During the visit, experts visited the auditoriums, work and student spaces, which we evaluated quite positively, because they were modern equipment. The During the visit, expert panel also visited the library where was checked several literatures. The experts wanted to verify in particular literatures, but they could not find several books and readers either physically or electronically in the library. Later, before the end of the visit, expert panel received the electronic version of four of them and institution also send list of books Which according to their explanation, were purchased, but there was not provided relevant evidence/document that could be show that they purchased these books (for example: 1. A. Montague-Smith, T. Cotton, A. Hansen and A. H. Price. Mathematics in early years education, 4th ed. 2018. 2. J. Sarama and D.H. Clements. Early Childhood Mathematics Education Research. Learning Trajectories for Young Children, Routledge, 2009)

The institution has a programme to detect plagiarism, namely the program "Turnitin", which is important for prevention plagiarism. The institution has a document confirming the purchase of the "Turnitin" programme.

The institution has international electronical resources, for example: EBSCO, Sage, Scopus, etc (https://library.iliauni.edu.ge/elibrary/sametsniero-bazebi/)

Argus operates at the university to manage and support the educational process.

The program also uses the resources of the University's Child Development Institute. It is a multi-disciplinary institution under Ilia State University, which creates an opportunity for education, research, and quality service in child and adolescent development in one space. Currently, the Institute unites the following centers: Center for Preschool and Inclusive Education; The Practical Training Center for Consultation, Education, and Rehabilitation of Students with Special Needs; Early Childhood Development Center; Autism Center; bachelor's programme Students will have access to the resources and opportunities available at the Child Development Institute.

Evidences/Indicators

- Electronic selection system Argus http://argus.iliauni.edu.ge/en
- University library and scientific bases: http://library.iliauni.edu.ge/en
- Child Development Institute https://cdi.iliauni.edu.ge/en
- international electronical resources: https://library.iliauni.edu.ge/elibrary/sametsniero-bazebi/
- Results of interviews;

- Additional documents;
- Self-evaluation report;

Recommendations:

- Make sure that Library keeps all the core literature indicated in the syllabi (including electronic resources), that ensures the achievement of programme learning outcomes;

Suggestions for the programme development

- -

Evaluation

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
4.4 Material Resources	☐	☒	☐	☐

4.5 Programme/Faculty/School Budget and Programme Financial Sustainability

The allocation of financial resources stipulated in the programme/faculty/school budget is economically feasible and corresponds to the programme needs.

Summary and Analysis of the Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

The presented documentation and interviews with the administration of Ilia State University, academic staff and students show that the financial resources required for the implementation of the presented program for 15 students enrolled in the unified national exams for one academic year are 33,750 GEL.

Administration representatives confirm the financial support and sustainability of the program presented by the university for accreditation. According to them, the program's significance lies in addressing the evident need within the labor market for qualified educators and pedagogues in preschool education institutions. Additionally, there's a necessity to train a new breed of educators-pedagogues, aligning with contemporary legal requirements. The analysis of the presented budget, along with the responses from the interviewees, reveals that the direct expenses for the program amount to 33,750 GEL for one year. This breakdown includes 13,650 GEL for teaching-related salary expenses, 1,500 GEL for literature and other library resources, 250 GEL allocated for software and infrastructure renewal/maintenance, 3,500 GEL earmarked for maintenance, 900 GEL for current office expenses, 12,450 GEL for administrative expenses, and 1,500 GEL for program accreditation expenses.

It should be noted that expenses related to staff development, research, and various scientific

activities will be covered from the main budget of profitable programs, faculty, and/or the university, as deemed necessary.

The dean of the faculty noted that they have the opportunity to request all necessary funds from the central budget of the university for program development purposes, such as teacher professional development, research, and other needs.

Evidences/Indicators

- Central budget of Ilia State University,

- Educational program forecast budget.

Recommendations:

- -

Suggestions for the programme development

- It is desirable that the presented budget should detail the necessary funds for professional development, scientific research, and various scientific activities, so that the exact costs required for the implementation of this or that activity are visible.

Evaluation

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
4.5. Programme/ Faculty/School Budget and Programme Financial Sustainability	☒	☐	☐	☐

Compliance with the programme standard

4. Providing Teaching Resources	Complies with requirements	☐
	Substantially complies with requirements	☒
	Partly complies with requirements	☐
	Does not comply with requirements	☐

5. Teaching Quality Enhancement Opportunities

In order to enhance teaching quality, programme utilises internal and external quality assurance services and also, periodically conducts programme monitoring and programme review. Relevant data is collected, analysed and utilized for informed decision making and programme development.

5.1 Internal Quality Evaluation

Programme staff collaborates with internal quality assurance department(s)/staff available at the HEI when planning the process of programme quality assurance, developing assessment instruments, and implementing assessment process. Programme staff utilizes quality assurance results for programme improvement.

Summary and Analysis of the Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

The presented documentation and the interviews conducted within the scope of the visit reveal that issues related to internal quality assurance are coordinated by the Quality Assurance Service of the Faculty of Ilia State University/University Management Body, whose main task is to raise the quality of teaching and research in the HEI and promote integration into the common European educational space.

It should be noted that the program coordinator collaborates with specialists from the Quality Assurance Service of the University in planning the evaluation process, development of evaluation tools, implementation, and execution of the evaluation process. The respective procedures, evaluation tools, and mechanisms are described within the framework of the University's internal quality assurance concept and the evaluation criteria for program implementation.

The self-assessment process, which involves faculty members and students of the respective programs, initiates evaluations prior to the minor program students' completion, graduation, and course completions (focus-group assessments). Additionally, it covers internal and external evaluations conducted by employers, both locally and internationally.

The faculty's involvement in professional development assessments of academic personnel, focusing on the quality of teaching and scientific-research activities, contributes to the university's preparation for self-assessment for authorization and accreditation, ensuring strong and accurate identification of areas for improvement in line with standards. This collaborative effort with administrative personnel aims at the accurate identification of areas for improvement, with the ultimate goal of implementing precise measures to address the identified issues during the process of preparing recommendations.

The aforementioned commitment to quality assurance in the faculty involves monitoring the implementation of professional development measures related to work performance.

The ongoing assessment of current processes is well-planned within the framework of QA. Following the evaluation results, subsequent improvement and enhancement follow, adhering to the principle of "plan, do, check, act" on a continuous improvement basis.

It is important to note that participation in the feedback from interested parties ensures not only the acquisition of vital feedback but also promotes accountability in response to program enhancement rather than merely seeking compliance with standards.

Quality Assurance professionals consider the evaluation of educational programs as a standardized process, utilizing both direct and indirect methods, including quantitative and qualitative data.

The approval is typically granted based on a package of documented materials and information gathered during interviews.

Additionally, discussions are conducted to systematically gather feedback from interested parties, including students and staff, regarding the quality of service, examination of their needs through material-technical resources, utilization of library funds, and so on. Periodically, updates are made to the questioning process. The faculty employs recommended practices on university level, as well as additional questions that relate to the specificity of the degree.

According to interviewees, various types of questions are utilized in surveys, including those aimed at students, graduates, employees, and questions for analysis. Specialists from the Quality Assurance Service of the Faculty actively participate in the internal quality assessment process alongside program coordinators, contributing to the enhancement of the organizational culture, which promotes the improvement of staff performance.

During discussions, it was also noted that there is active involvement of academic staff in the assessment of academic and professional activities, as evidenced by surveys conducted within academic departments. According to the Quality Assurance Officer, N.Zh., the annual report format, completed by staff based on the academic year, covers various types of activities, both academic and educational. Following the processing of the collected data by the Faculty and the Quality Assurance Service, personalized activities are planned for academic personnel based on identified needs.

The personnel have detailed their involvement in academic and practical teaching hours in the contracts. The Quality Assurance Service regularly conducts consultations with academic, educational, administrative, support, and external personnel, as well as with internal and external quality assurance, authorization, and accreditation-related matters.

With the aim of ensuring the quality of distance learning before transitioning to it, the Quality Assurance Service prepared the "Regulation on Electronic Learning Quality Assurance Document," which was processed by academic and qualified personnel to manage the educational courses and the methodology of effective learning processes. In this process, systematic feedback from students is systematically collected to evaluate the organization and assessment of the educational process.

 It should be noted that active participation of program personnel is crucial in ensuring the quality of service with the Quality Assurance Service. Their involvement encompasses various types of interactions, such as the management of the educational and academic process, program development, syllabus preparation, and continuous modification of certain courses, as well as participation in various formats of consultation or training sessions.

The purpose of familiarizing with new regulations or updating internal regulations is essential, as well as documenting the information obtained on regulations in the program. Additionally, the internal quality mechanism involves a cycle of planning, implementation, evaluation, and improvement, aiming to enhance the quality of the established educational program.

From the aforementioned, it is evident that internal mechanisms for assessing the quality of the educational program have been established.

During meetings, interviews are conducted to ensure that academic and administrative staff are familiar with these mechanisms and effectively utilize them for the program's improvement and self-assessment.

Discussion of issues identified through internal quality mechanisms is actively carried out by the working group responsible for quality assessment, as well as by the faculty council, leading to concrete recommendations that drive corresponding changes. Ultimately, confidence in the program's quality is reaffirmed through continuous improvement on the academic level.

Interviews have highlighted that the results of staff evaluations contribute to the enhancement of the program, as it increases the accountability of professors and instructors and ensures the quality improvement of the educational process. According to the Quality Assurance officer, staff evaluations occur once every two years in collaboration with external evaluators.

For the preparation of the accreditation and self-assessment report of the educational program, working groups were actively involved, collaborating with various stakeholders.

It is also important to note the highly valuable exchange of experiences and information in the Centers for Children's Development, which are highly recognized for their significant achievements. Additionally, the center is actively engaged in hosting specialized training and certification courses, as well as international collaborations, which contribute to the continuous improvement of the center and the ongoing professional development of its staff involved in the program. According to the program developers, the practical experiences gained at the center are fully utilized by the program participants.

Certainly, it is clear that the responsibilities of the Quality Assurance Office of the Educational Quality Service are oriented towards students and serve to enhance the quality of teaching and research. Within the institution, there is a commitment to providing high-quality educational resources and services; internationalization of teaching and research; periodic and effective monitoring, evaluation, and correct responses.

The educational program utilizes internal mechanisms for quality assessment, which are developed and implemented within the framework of the institution's quality assurance policy. It ensures the internal mechanisms for planning, assessment, monitoring, and improvement are aligned with the principles of quality assurance.

Studying documents and discussing their outcomes demonstrates that the mechanisms for internal quality assurance in educational programs, including development, evaluation, and improvement, as well as the assessment of academic staff's professional performance, student academic monitoring, course completion, employment of graduates, and workplace readiness, are oriented towards ensuring the quality of educational programs, the teaching process, and the assessment and improvement of academic personnel regarding teaching and development.

The quality assurance service ensures the enhancement of the quality of the educational process by developing necessary instruments and methods for evaluating the quality of the educational process, planning the periodicity of evaluations, conducting assessments, and providing recommendations based on collected data to improve the quality of the educational process.

The academic/invited personnel involved with the program receives and considers the results of quality assessment, as well as utilizes feedback obtained from surveys. The Faculty's Quality Assurance Service systematically administers surveys for students, graduates, employees, and conducted research findings are taken into account to ensure the improvement of the program's educational

outcomes, its development, and the enhancement of professors' teaching strategies.

Through discussions, it was found that the preparation of the accreditation self-assessment document's working version was entrusted to the program coordinator, prioritizing the Faculty's quality assurance service and the specialist from the same service.

The same group also worked on the final version of the document. Following the distribution of responsibilities and responses among the working group members, after careful consideration, in a short period, the program's compliance with the accreditation standards and evaluation criteria, as well as the strong and precise roles of the program's coordinator, were determined according to each standard. According to the program coordinator, "the preparation of the accreditation self-assessment document's final version was carried out based on the recommendations prepared by the Faculty's quality assurance service, the program's personnel, and the university's quality assurance service, considering the "Early Childhood, Education, and Training" accreditation self-assessment document's working version and the final version."

Evidences/Indicators:

- Quality Assurance Service of the Institution;
- Job Description of the Program Leader;
- Internal Quality Assurance Concept of Ilia State University;
- Evaluation Criteria for the Implementation of Educational Programs;
- Decisions of the Working Group Meetings;

Recommendations:

- –

Suggestions for the programme development

- –

Evaluation

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
5.1 Internal quality evaluation	☒	☐	☐	☐

5.2 External Quality Evaluation
Programme utilises the results of external quality assurance on a regular basis.

Summary and Analysis of the Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

Based on the provided documentation, discussions in the format of debates or active interviews have been conducted to explore that the program utilizes various instruments for external quality assessment, including evaluations by external experts, employers, graduates, and student surveys. According to the employers, their active involvement and recommendations resulted in the inclusion of courses such as Methodology Courses with a capacity of 30 credits. Specifically offered courses include "Leadership and Management in Higher Education" and "Diversity in Higher Education", which were determined based on employer evaluations, ensuring maximum consideration of program development according to the recommendations of the program's stakeholders.

Similarly, based on the declaration of one employer, the activities included in the components of the practical part of the completed program fully ensure the development of skills for transitioning in students. It is gratifying that the practical component in the completed program is quite high, which is very important for us.

The evaluation of the program includes the assessment by an external expert, where the expert identifies that the "Early Childhood Development, Inclusion, and Education" program is structured and content-wise well-managed. The program has clearly defined objectives. The results align with these objectives. The authors of the program have thoroughly considered and established pathways for result acquisition and evaluation mechanisms, which are well-defined and consistent. The document of practical components of the program is a robust aspect of the program evaluation.

Based on the evaluation of the external expert, "the program fully prepares graduates of the bachelor's degree in education for professional activities with a well-defined set of competencies." Comparing it to analogous programs, the program's developers have prepared and discussed it with the stakeholders of the program, and then consulted with similar programs of accredited programs as for the Bachelor of Education program at the University of Sydney - Early Childhood.

Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood)/link: https://www.sydney.edu.au/handbooks/arts/coursework/education_early_childhood/learning_outcomes.html, where courses are provided - on general education and professional research. The program enables students to obtain professional qualifications, allowing them to teach children from birth to five years old in early childhood education and care settings. According to the program leader, this program, similar to accredited programs, includes a module on general education and professional research.

In analogy, the program resembles the Plymouth University's Early Childhood Education Bachelor's Program, where students are prepared to work with children and their families for several years from birth to their career path. Similar to accredited programs, this program also emphasizes effective communication, collaboration, and leadership.

Also, Plymouth State University/https://coursecatalog.plymouth.edu/catalog-archive/2019-2020/undergraduate-programs/bachelors/early-childhood-education-bs/, New England University https://www.une.edu.au/study/courses/bachelor-of-education-early-childhood-education-and-care,

According to Kh.D., the Bachelor's program (Early Childhood Education and Care) is also being prepared for this program, which includes training and development in early childhood education.

The program is designed to meet the growing need for early childhood education professionals who

are interested in becoming agents of change for children's development. Accordingly, according to the program coordinators, this program is similar to existing programs.

It should be noted that, based on the announcement of the evaluation group of the program coordinator, the developed program adheres strictly to established standards, both in terms of professional qualifications and legal compliance.

The information received is verified through authenticated documentation, interviews with program coordinators, assessment group members, and representatives from quality assurance services, as well as discussions with stakeholders.

Evidences/Indicators

- External expert evaluation of the program;
- Minutes of the working group meetings;
- Evaluation of the "Early Childhood, Development, and Education" program;
- Annual reports of the quality assurance service on analog documents.

Recommendations:

- –

Suggestions for the programme development

- –

Evaluation

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
5.2. External Quality Evaluation	☒	☐	☐	☐

5.3 Programme Monitoring and Periodic Review

Programme monitoring and periodic evaluation is conducted with the involvement of academic, scientific, invited, administrative, supporting staff, students, graduates, employers and other stakeholders through systematic data collection, study and analysis. Evaluation results are applied for the programme improvement.

Summary and Analysis of the Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

The analysis of discussions and the evaluated documentation suggests that ongoing periodic internal evaluations of the educational program at Ilia State University are aimed at developing an internal evaluation framework for the program. This includes identifying strong and weak areas based on evaluation results, planning targeted interventions for improvement, and processing and analyzing

obtained data for further enhancement of the quality of the educational program.

According to periodic assessments, the following evaluations are conducted:
Analysis of students' academic performance; Semester-wise feedback from students regarding courses; Assessment of course completions and feedback from students; Evaluation of the academic personnel involved in the program based on student feedback; Continuous analysis of the program's objectives, ongoing monitoring, and assessment of each semester's academic training for students; Evaluation of the performance of instructors and external experts.

With the aim of program improvement, the results of each subsequent self-assessment within the designated assessment period will be compared with the data from the previous assessment period. According to the quality service provider, the evaluation of the education program will encompass three semesters: the entry and induction semester - for data collection, the intermediate semester - for data analysis, which is crucial for defining the program's requirements in the evaluation process.

It should also be noted that in the case of the full cycle of program evaluation for a bachelor's program (three assessment periods), there will be five years, while in the case of a master's program (two assessment periods), it will be three years, to compile the evaluated portfolio for faculty/school review and for the purpose of confirming the designated activities for program improvement until the completion of the assessment period (third semester).

It is also important to note that the higher quality of service provided by the faculty/school's quality assurance service in reviewing the compiled portfolio about the program and subsequently delivering it to the university's quality assurance service results in a more comprehensive evaluation of the received portfolios, and the final instance is already an academic council, where the discussion and approval of the compiled document take place.

According to the quality assurance officers, the internal evaluation mechanism of program implementation continues to evolve, incorporating additional tools for assessment and enhancing the possibilities of the quality assurance system. Additionally, there is intense collaboration between faculties/schools and the office of the dean, along with the university's quality assurance service.

The training series ensures the enhancement of competence in utilizing internal mechanisms, assessment tools, and data analysis methods effectively for quality assurance personnel within the university service.
According to quality assurance personnel, there are various types of professional development opportunities available for staff turnover and career advancement. For instance, professionals with up to 37 years of experience, who have high-index rating publications in renowned journals such as "Pascal's Journal," often engage in sabbaticals (2-3 times per year). Additionally, they participate in trainings, international conferences, and other forms of professional development activities.

It is worth noting that the program continuously announces various types of grant/university projects for the staff employed in the program. For example, in 2024, an institutional grant project was financed, aimed at studying the integration of existing educational concepts in the field of technology and effective pathways for STEM education in Georgia's education system. Additionally, the project aims to define the domains of knowledge required by teachers for successful implementation of the

teaching process using the TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge) model, which necessitates the use of technology for successful teaching and learning.

The involvement of personnel in international grant projects, including Erasmus+ and various other multidisciplinary projects, ensures their professional development and enhancement in an uninterrupted regime.

From an analytical standpoint, it can be noted that the analysis of documented information and series of discussions demonstrate that the mechanisms for program monitoring and periodic evaluation are developed and deliberated within the university. This guarantees the continuous improvement of the program.

Evidences/Indicators

- Quality Assurance of the Service of Educational Quality Enhancement;
- Criteria for the Evaluation of Educational Programs;
- The selection process facilitated by the electronic system "Argus" - https://argus.ge/ge/;
- https://iliauni.edu.ge/uploads/other/79/79304.pd

Recommendations:

- –

Suggestions for the programme development

- o –

Evaluation

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
5.3. Programme monitoring and periodic review	☒	☐	☐	☐

Compliance with the programme standards

5. Teaching Quality Enhancement Opportunities	Complies with requirements	☒
	Substantially complies with requirements	☐
	Partially complies with requirements	☐
	Does not comply with requirements	☐

Attached documentation (if applicable):

Name of the Higher Education Institution:

LEPL – Ilia State University

Name of Higher Education Programme, Level:

Early Childhood, Development and Education, Bachelor

Compliance with the Programme Standards

Standards \ Evaluation	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
1. Education Programme Objectives, Learning Outcomes and their Compliance with the Programme	☒	☐	☐	☐
2. Teaching Methodology and Organisation, Adequacy Evaluation of Programme Mastering	☐	☒	☐	☐
3. Student Achievements, Individual Work with them	☐	☒	☐	☐
4. Providing Teaching Resources	☐	☒	☐	☐
5. Teaching Quality Enhancement Opportunities	☒	☐	☐	☐

Signatures:

Chair of Accreditation Expert Panel
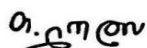
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