**Higher Education Institution Authorisation Experts' Draft Report Template**
**LEPL - Tbilisi Vano Sarajishvili State Conservatoire**

Expert Panel Members

Chair: Professor Jeffrey Sharkey, external chair, Principal- Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Members:

Mariam Ghambashidze - member – expert of higher education

Natalia Tvalchrelidze, member - Ilia State University

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Teona Kakhidze - member Kakhidze Music Centre

Jovana Ablotia - member -Caucasus International University

Tbilisi
11th -14th June, 2024

**General information on the educational institution**

The Vano Sarajishvili Tbilisi State Conservatoire was founded in 1917 and is the first European style higher music education institution in the country. It has 14 higher educational programmes with 800 total students, 438 of whom are active. TSC has 87 full time academic staff delivering Bachelor, Master and PhD degrees. It has a very strong reputation and tradition with particular expertise noted in piano and vocal studies as well as scientific research in musicology and in Georgian Traditional polyphony.

**Brief overview of the evaluation process for authorisation: SER and  Site visit**

The visiting team met at TSC June 11-14, 2024. The visit was very well organized and materials from the SER to supporting documents well prepared and mostly all translated into English. The chair relied on Georgian language speakers to verify some of the untranslated documents. The meetings were cordial and thoughtful with a good balance of administrators, academic and support staff and students. The TSC has an active Student Government who actively participated in the preparation for the visit and had thoughtful responses along with faculty and staff. The visiting team was well balanced and professional with QA experts, student support experts and industry colleagues and we found the work to be productive straight forward.

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

**Summary of Recommendations**

**1.2 component**

It is recommended that TSC should update its Strategic Plan with the arrival of the new Rector, link it to the previous one and add KPIs to measure progress against the plan.

**2.1 component**

It is recommended to have a conservatoire owned program of internal audit each year, looking at the effectiveness of key activities such as fundraising, student services, annual accounts and budgets.

It is recommended to implement better cyber security training for all staff and students as lack of it is an institutional risk.

It is recommended that the record of academic integrity be corrected and aligned with each other. The revised version should support the generally recognized principles of academic freedom.

**2.2 component**

It is recommended to strengthen the quality assurance system by adding more QA staff in student support services.

It is recommended that Staff (Academic, Scientific, Invited) evaluation process should be more systematic and comprehensive.

**2.3 component**

It is recommended that closer cooperation between the conservatoire and the Ministry of Culture and Sports of Georgia should take place to create a positive environment that ensures academic freedom and autonomy flourish within the TSC

**4.1 component**

To enhance its operational capacity and achieve its strategic goals, the panel recommends the conservatoire to consider the following actions.

It is recommended to establish a personal data protection officer.

**5.2 component**

It is recommended to add staff in key student support services.

It is recommended to ensure an active collaboration between the Conservatoire and Alumni regarding their personal, professional and academic development.

**7.1 Component**

It is recommended that TSC needs to find alternative sources of income for instrumental purchases to ensure it can maintain the quality of its study programs – this was apparent in brass and percussion instruments.

It is recommended that TSC needs to have a medical cabinet with trained staff.

**7.2 Component**

It is recommended to continue the process of diversification of library resources – purchasing textbooks in English as well as purchasing and publishing new materials in Georgian.

**7.3 Component**

It is recommended to update and improve the performance (speed and ease of navigation) to the TSC website.

It is recommended that TSC prepare English translations of all key student facing documents and these should be available on the website.

## Summary of Suggestions

### 1.1 component

It is suggested that the Ministry of Education (the typical funding body for Higher Ed) be the main source of income with cooperation from the Ministry of Culture for artistic events, instrument repairs-purchases, festivals etc.

It is suggested that conservatoire should present a case for a higher tariff per student, as it is common in some European Countries, to accommodate the additional expense of one to one and small group intensive teaching required of conservatoire level education

It is suggested that the conservatoire should invest in a fundraising officer as well as an alumni engagement officer in addition to the current marketing resource. The goal is for the fundraising and alumni engagement to bring in income, perhaps with well-known alumni contributing time and their presence to the effort.

### 2.1 Component

It is suggested to add key staff positions for fundraising and for alumni relations to diversify income

It is suggested that TSC consider adding a Saturday Juniors (pre-He) provision to develop pipeline for hard-to-find instruments.

### 2.2 Component

It is suggested that TSC create a quality assurance manual and/or record short videos to support professional development and increase motivation of the staff. Having these materials would be more efficient and save time for the HR and QA staff.

### 3.1 component

It is suggested to continue efforts to benchmark programs against peer institutions in Europe.

**3.2 Component**

It is suggested that theoretical subjects could be selected more carefully for performing faculty students taking into account their specific needs.

It is suggested that learning outcomes assessment methods and schedule (exams) could be revised for performing faculty according to their wish to have more time for stage performances within the conservatoire.

It is suggested that more possibilities could be created for academic choir-conducting students to work with different choirs in collaboration with music schools and other universities which have such musical ensembles as the leaders of these choirs are the alumni of TSC.

It is suggested that TSC considers starting an arts management program for master's degree of Musicology program in collaboration with business management schools of other universities as there is a lack of professional personnel who can work in this field either in state or private sector organizations.

It is suggested that TSC continue working on orchestra conducting and opera coach BA and MA programs in order to get accreditation in the near future.

It is suggested that TSC develops programs that support growth in targeted areas - such as brass and percussion.

**4.1 Component**

It is suggested to establish a clear strategy for professional development that is not solely dependent on external funding.

It is suggested to seek alternative funding sources and internal budget reallocations to support continuous staff development and international collaborations.

It is suggested to promote best practice sharing, international partnerships, and job shadowing opportunities as part of a broader, sustainable strategy.

It is suggested to conduct a thorough assessment of staffing needs in critical departments such as IRO, PR, QA, and Academic Affairs. Allocate resources to recruit additional staff and enhance the capacity of these departments.

It is suggested to develop and communicate clear, transparent criteria for assessing invited guest teaching staff. Ensure that these criteria are aligned with the institution's overall standards and objectives.

It is suggested that TSC leadership consider implementing continuing professional development training for music teachers in schools. This might be paid for by local authorities or teachers themselves. to have a teaching qualification/diploma from the TSC could carry a lot of value.

## 5.2 Component

It is suggested to improve the career support service, providing training, workshops or informational meetings about students CV preparation, job applications, interview techniques etc.

It is suggested to ensure an active collaboration between the Conservatoire and Alumni regarding their personal, professional and academic development.

It is suggested that TSC support its students who would like to be involved in AEC projects like EPASA (European Performing Arts Student Association).

## 6.1 Component

It is suggested that a research project (PhD) could be commissioned around the state of music education in Tbilisi. Where are the gaps of unmet need how can brass, wind, percussion and other low taken up instruments be encouraged from a young age and how can the conservatoire best leverage its influence and expertise.

## 6.2 Component

It is suggested that TSC grow its funding for greater participation in international research and internationalisation activities.

It is suggested that TSC leadership implement a more strategic approach to recruitment - where to find balanced numbers of instrumentalists and singers, how much should it be international.

## 6.3 Component

It is suggested that TSC try to hire more research active pedagogues and performers as positions open upon retirements from older faculty members

### 7.1 Component

It is suggested that TSC work with the government of the country and the Tbilisi Municipality on adapting the buildings to the needs of people with special needs in the shortest possible delay.

It is suggested that TSC work with private sponsors/donors to raise funds for purchasing rare instruments.

It is suggested that TSC work to purchase what whole building for jazz and music technology and create a true second campus.

To find alternative ways of funding for TSC to be less dependent on State funding.

### 7.3.Component

It is suggested to create a more flexible system for booking the rehearsal spaces for students.

It is suggested to financially support boosting posts using Social media thus increasing interactions and attracting more interest towards TSC and classical music in general.

### 7.4 Component

It is suggested to seek alternative ways of funding (higher tariff for conservatoire intensity teaching from the state) and alternative sources of funds for increasing budget resources for higher salaries, necessary instrument purchases, estate developments and investments in research.

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

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6.3 | Evaluation of research activities | ☑ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 7 | **Material, information and financial resources** | ☐ | ☑ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 7.1 | Material resources | ☐ | ☑ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 7.2 | Library resources | ☐ | ☑ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 7.3 | Information resources | ☐ | ☑ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 7.4 | Financial resources | ☑ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**Summary of the Best Practices**

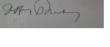- Using the Grand Concert Hall of the TSC for the needs of students.

**Summary Table of Compliance of HEI with Standards and Standard Components**

**1.1 Component - Complies with Requirements**
**1.2 Component - Substantially complies with requirements**

**2.1 Component - Substantially complies with requirements**
**2.2 Component - Substantially complies with requirements**
**2.3 Component - Substantially complies with requirements**

**3.1 Component - Complies with Requirements**
**3.2 Component - Complies with Requirements**
**3.3 Component - Complies with Requirements**

**4.1 Component - Substantially complies with requirements**
**4.2 Component - Complies with Requirements**

**5.1 Component - Complies with Requirements**
**5.2 Component - Substantially complies with requirements**

**6.1 Component - Complies with Requirements**
**6.2 Component - Complies with Requirements**
**6.3 Component - Complies with Requirements**

**7.1 Component - Substantially complies with requirements**
**7.2 Component - Substantially complies with requirements**

**7.3 Component - Substantially complies with requirements**

**7.4 Component - Complies with Requirements**

**Signature of expert panel members**

1. Jeffrey Sharkey  (Chair)

2. Mariam, Gambashidze,  (member)

3. Natalia Tvaltchrelidze (Member)

4. Tea Gergedava (Member)

5. Jovana Ablotia (Member)

**Compliance of the Applicant HEI with the Authorisation Standard Components**

**1.      Mission and strategic development of HEI**

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

| **1.1 Mission of HEI** |
| --- |
| Mission Statement of the HEI corresponds to Georgia's and European higher education goals, defines its role and place within higher education area and society, both locally and internationally. |

**Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements**

The mission of the conservatoire corresponds to Georgia's and European Higher Education Goals. The Strategic Plan which ensures the mission is carried out, needs updating with the arrival of the new Rector. It should take into account the previous plan and seek to address that plan's major points for continuity as well as forging new developments.

The conservatoire will need to find additional sources of funds if it is to be sustainable into the future. It is at a key inflection point - a large number of senior faculty are soon to retire and work will need to take place to ensure the next generation of talented artist/teachers do not all emigrate for higher salaries in other countries.

Ministry support is of great value and appreciated. It is best if this is kept at arm's length allowing the conservatoire to behave as an autonomous higher education institution. Consideration could be given to the following in terms of ministry support:

1. should the Ministry of Education (the typical funding body for Higher Ed) be the main source of income with cooperation from the Ministry of Culture for artistic events, instrument repairs-purchases, festivals etc.
2. The conservatoire should present a case for a higher tariff per student, as it is common in some European Countries, to accommodate the additional expense of one to one and small group intensive teaching required of conservatoire level education

The conservatoire should invest in a fundraising officer as well as an alumni engagement officer in addition to the current marketing resource. The goal is for the fundraising and alumni engagement to bring in income, perhaps with well-known alumni contributing time and their presence to the effort.

**Evidences/indicators**

The Review team had the previous strategic plan and the SER to examine as well as discussions with the leadership team, the Academic and Representative Councils, faculty and students.

**Recommendations:**



**Suggestions:**

It is suggested that the Ministry of Education (the typical funding body for Higher Ed) be the main source of income with cooperation from the Ministry of Culture for artistic events, instrument repairs-purchases, festivals etc.

It is suggested that conservatoire should present a case for a higher tariff per student, as it is common in some European Countries, to accommodate the additional expense of one to one and small group intensive teaching required of conservatoire level education
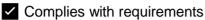
It is suggested that the conservatoire should invest in a fundraising officer as well as an alumni engagement officer in addition to the current marketing resource. The goal is for the fundraising and alumni engagement to bring in income, perhaps with well known alumni contributing time and their presence to the effort.

**Best Practices (if applicable):**

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

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**Evaluation**

Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard

☑ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

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## 1.2 Strategic Development

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

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**Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements**

This is dealt with above. The institution has a strategic plan that is in the process of being updated with the arrival of a new Rector. KPI's need to be added to each major plank of the plan for tracking progress.

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**Evidences/indicators**

The panel met with representatives of staff and students. Regular surveys are carried out and actions to improve the learning outcomes or the facilities are regularly enacted, subject to funds being available.

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**Recommendations:**

1. It is recommended that TSC should update its Strategic Plan with the arrival of the new Rector, link it to the previous one and add KPIs to measure progress against the plan.

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**Suggestions:**

Non-binding suggestions for further development

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**Best Practices (if applicable):**

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

**Evaluation**

Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard

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

## 2. Organizational Structure and Management of HEI

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

### 2.1 Organizational Structure and Management

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

**Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements**

The TSC organizational structure is effective and is working towards the implementation of activities defined in its strategic plan and achievement of its goals. The functions and responsibilities of structural units are clearly defined and divided, although the newly appointed head of administration said that it could be optimized according to future needs. The procedure for election/appointment of the management bodies are approved, transparent, equitable and in line with legislation. It should be admitted that in some departments they have a lack of personnel (international relations department, PR department), but the improvement of this problem is linked to insufficient financial remedies. These will be listed as strong suggestions below to help find new sources of income and achieve the goals for the institution. Generally, all members of administrative staff work with great enthusiasm to sustain the high quality of educational and research traditions which are the main significance of TSC.

The top management together with academic and representative councils have systematic feedback from the quality assurance department, academic faculty and program leaders about the issues that have to be improved, they are open to ideas coming from the student contingent, and try to find additional financial funding from the Ministry of Culture and private sector. The new rector is very motivated to work harder in this direction and hopes to achieve success.

The document processing within the institution corresponds to the established legislation. There is one electronic system for document exchange and they also have a database of hard copies of the documents with wet stamps. TSC has a clear plan for continuity of business processes which takes into account all possible risks, mechanisms for their prevention and risk mitigation.

The procurement department works in line with Georgian Law established for LEPL organizations. As it was mentioned by the financial department, according to this law in order to get additional funds for different activities or events that are necessary for improvement of the educational, research or artistic life of conservatoire, they have to prepare projects to apply to the Ministry of Culture indicating the goals, implementation plans and budget needed. They admitted that in most cases the projects are supported.

One of the main goals underlined in the strategic plan of TSC is the internationalization of the institution. The implementation of this goal is clearly defined in the internationalization policy document which supports the mobility of students and staff, the participation into international research activities, joint artistic projects, etc. The mobility program Erasmus + ensures the exchanges of students, academic and administrative staff (master classes, training, study, research). They have cooperation with music institutions from 38 countries. According to the interviews it can be assumed that the exchange activities go smoothly as well from the administrative side as from the educational side. The students are very satisfied with this process. In the case of academic staff, the mobility is less because of problems with English language proficiency, especially in the older generation of professors. Some problems exist in finding the finances to cover the costs of participation in international scientific conferences especially if the thematic of the research work do not concern Georgian traditional or classical music. As to participation into the international performing competitions or festivals it is also the subject of requesting the additional financing from the Ministry of Culture.

During the interviews with a relevant department and top management it was underlined that there still exists the challenge to recruit more international students to study in TSC. A more effective work should be done to present abroad the advantages of high level education that is available in TSC including the evidences of learning outcomes (the list of prizes taken at the international competitions, concert calendars or/and CVs of famous alumnus, videos of

concerts, master-classes, etc). TCS could develop attractive Masters degree programmes. taught in English, working with its strengths in Classical, Traditional Georgian and Jazz. The new rector seems very enthusiastic in this direction as from one hand he wants to make all well known musicians who are now working outside Georgia come back to teach in TSC and from the other hand he hopes to give the new generation of brilliant musicians that are growing up in this institution to stay and have appropriate concert and teaching carrier here in their homeland.

**Evidences/indicators**

TCS Charter, Strategic Plan, Organizational Structure and committee structure, Statistical data, mechanisms for monitoring management effectiveness and evaluation system, internalization policy, student and staff survey results, interview results.

**Recommendations:**

1. It is recommended to have a conservatoire owned program of internal audit each year, looking at the effectiveness of key activities such as fundraising, student services, annual accounts and budgets.
2. It is recommended to implement better cyber security training for all staff and students as lack of it is an institutional risk.
3. It is recommended that the record of academic integrity be corrected and aligned with each other. The revised version should support the generally recognized principles of academic freedom.

**Suggestions:**

- It is suggested to add key staff positions for fundraising and for alumni relations to diversify income.
- It is suggested that TSC consider adding a Saturday Juniors (pre-He) provision to develop pipeline for hard to find instruments.

**Best Practices (if applicable):**

The activities directed to the internationalization of TSC

The attitude of top management towards academic staff and student body. Bottom-up model of management effectiveness improvement

**Evaluation**

Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard

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

## 2.2 Internal Quality Assurance Mechanisms

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

A quality assurance system has been implemented in the conservatory. The quality department makes every effort to involve all stakeholders in the internal quality assurance process as much as possible. This was highlighted during the interview and is considered a good practice. Currently, three people are employed in the quality assurance department: one head of service, one deputy, and one senior specialist, all of whom are quite experienced and possess a good knowledge of the field of Music and QA mechanisms.

During the interviews, it was confirmed that the quality assurance service has made their activities relatively decentralized and has made progress compared to the previous two years. However, it is necessary to continue supporting a quality culture and internal quality mechanisms as much as possible by the new management, academic staff, invited staff, and administrative staff. Faculty deans and program heads mentioned that they perform many functions typically handled by the quality assurance service. While this may be a good practice of decentralization, the panel considered it necessary to recommend that additional quality assurance staff be added to the Performing Arts and Composition and Musicology faculties or to the quality assurance service itself, given the already busy schedules of the deans and program heads.

During the interviews, many interviewees, especially students, mentioned the quality assurance service when discussing support, even though they should not be functionally part of it. This allows the panel of experts to think that the quality assurance service has too many functions combined. This suggests that the institution correctly identified "the lack of support staff with relevant knowledge and competence involved in serving students in educational programs" as an area for improvement, a view the expert group agrees with.

At the end of the site visit, after presenting the findings, the new management confirmed to the panel their willingness to enhance the quality assurance service with appropriate personnel. Additionally, it is necessary to consider adding suitable human resources to the student services department.

As noted in the interviews, a significant amount of resources from the quality assurance department are clearly spent on supporting staff in developing programs and syllabus components according to the standards. This is due to the specificity of the conservatory, where program implementers mostly have experience in traditional teaching. To save time and human resources for the quality service staff, the expert group advises QA representatives, to establish a guideline document (quality assurance manual), record short videos by the quality assurance staff, or introduce short certificate courses on syllabus design, forming learning outcomes, modern teaching-learning strategies, and assessment methods. This initiative will be part of the staff's professional development measures and may increase staff motivation, thereby strengthening the culture of quality assurance. Most importantly, this initiative does not require financial expenditure.

The quality assurance service has introduced evaluation mechanisms. Both students and academic staff confirmed the effectiveness of these assessment methods and provided examples of how certain issues have been improved. Alumni also noted that, while they were students, they actively participated in quality assurance research and observed improvements. However, they mentioned that there were cases when the administration could not resolve certain challenges, attributing these difficulties to the specifics of the conservatory and the program.
As mentioned, almost all the interviewees, except for the alumni, confirmed the surveys carried out by the quality assurance service. It should be noted that, according to quality assurance mechanisms, a survey of alumni is conducted once every three years. It should be noted that three years have not passed since the graduation of most of the alumni, however, they also expressed their desire to cooperate more intensively with the conservatory. Currently, their only connection with the conservatory is through their corporate email, where they still receive information about competitions and other updates, which can be considered as a good practice.

The institution has developed a performance evaluation system for its staff. However, during the review of the quality assurance mechanisms and the interviews, it was revealed that the quality assurance service should pay special attention to evaluating scientific activities (both academic and scientific personnel). Although the quality assurance service operates according to the PDCA cycle while evaluating academic, scientific, and invited staff, it is worth noting that the evaluation process is incomplete and possibly unsystematic for some activities. This issue was observed particularly in the evaluation of invited staff and in the scientific activities of academic and scientific staff. For example, while the semester workload of the staff and the activities performed at the end of the semester are collected, their analysis and evaluation lack a systematic approach, as confirmed in the interviews. Additionally, during the interview with invited staff, it was revealed that they do not have information about how they are evaluated.

In an interview with the Quality Assurance Office, it was confirmed that they are closely monitoring the strategic plan evaluation process and noted that a mid-term evaluation is due in September 2024. It should be noted that during the interview with top management, it was revealed that a change in the strategic/action plan might be on the agenda. In the event of such a change, it will be necessary to maintain the continuity of the action plan's evaluation to ensure the institution's ongoing activities and assessments.

During document review and the interview process, it was revealed that the previous management of the conservatory made decisions based on the results of the quality assurance assessment. The areas for improvement identified through research were discussed and subsequently monitored by the quality service. The current leadership, which includes newly appointed rector and vice-chancellors, has not had sufficient time to practically implement these practices, whether in relation to leadership or quality assurance and other services. However, during the interview, it was expressed that employees hope this process will continue according to established practices.

Institution has mechanisms for monitoring students' academic performance, as well as mechanisms for evaluation and improvement of educational programmes, where all external stakeholders are involved. There is a mechanism for planning the student body as well. Interviews with the academic council, program heads and deans revealed that they plan the number of students to be admitted based on existing criteria. In this process, they also take into account the perspectives of graduates of music schools, which has been proven many times. It should be considered a good practice for the employees of the conservatory to visit the music schools in the regions of Georgia to find future students.

It should be noted that the quality assurance service, together with the international service, works on international accreditation, in which the expert panel wishes great success. It is good that the institution itself sees its areas for improvement, which it has mentioned in the self-evaluation, including the "Sustainability of the quality and frequency of feedback on the achievement of learning outcomes for students, Strengthening the effectiveness of the mechanism for evaluating learning outcomes". Acknowledging areas for improvement should be considered good practice.

**Evidences/indicators**

- Resolution No. 36/2022 - LSI - Tbilisi Vano Sarajishvili State Conservatory on approval of quality policy document;

- Resolution of the Academic Council No. 80/2020 – on the approval of the document defining the policy of announcing admission places for students at the Faculties of Performing Arts and Composition and Musicology at the State Conservatory named after Vano Sarajishvili Tbilisi State University;

- Resolution of the Academic Council No. 41/2021 - LSI - on approving the rules for the initiation, development and development of the educational program at the Tbilisi State Conservatory named after Vano Sarajishvili;

- Orders on creation of working groups working on program development;

- Student and staff survey questionnaires;

- Interviews.

**Recommendations:**

· It is recommended to strengthen the quality assurance system by adding more QA staff and staff in student support services.

· It is recommended that Staff (Academic, Scientific, Invited) evaluation process should be more systematic and comprehensive.

**Suggestions:**

It is suggested that TSC create a quality assurance manual and/or record short videos to support professional development and increase motivation of the staff. Having these materials would be more efficient and save time for the HR and QA staff.

**Best Practices (if applicable):**

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

**Evaluation**

Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard

&#9633; Complies with requirements

&#9745; Substantially complies with requirements

&#9633; Partially complies with requirements

&#9633; Does not comply with requirements

**2.3. Observing Principles of Ethics and Integrity**

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

A code of ethics has been developed and implemented in the conservatoire, as well as by-laws and norms of disciplinary responsibility. In addition, in order to improve the quality of the learning and research process, an academic integrity policy is in place, supported by electronic plagiarism detection software Turnitin. It should be emphasized that permanent training on using 'Turnitin' is provided by the Library of the Conservatoire, which was confirmed as a result of interviews with all stakeholders.

In November 2021, an academic integrity policy document was approved (Updated in 2022), the purpose of which is to define and regulate issues related to academic integrity, forms of academic misconduct and proportionate and fair mechanisms for responding to them. The conditions defined by the mentioned document apply to the person involved in the educational, creative and scientific-research activities of the conservatoire (student, academic, invited staff, etc.).

During the visit, special emphasis was placed on the issue of academic freedom. This was as a result of the area for improvement mentioned by the conservatory in the self-assessment report, namely „Realization of the rights defined by paragraph 3 of Article 27 of the Constitution of Georgia. It is - academic freedom and autonomy of higher educational institutions is ensured".

As it was mentioned in SER (page 25-26 of Georgian SER), conservatory supports "academic freedom of learning, teaching, creative activity and scientific research, which means the right of academic staff and students to independently carry out creative activity, scientific research, teaching and learning, within the framework of educational programs and for the purpose of their development".

During interviews with academic and scientific staff, it was confirmed that their academic freedom is not limited, and they can conduct research in their areas of interest (within the field of music). However, attention is drawn to the following record in the statute of the conservatoire:

"Restriction of academic freedom is allowed only in the following cases:

a) freedom of scientific research - in determining organizational issues and priorities;

b) freedom of teaching - in solving the organizational issues of the educational process, drawing up and approving the schedule of lectures and training course programs;

c) freedom of study - in organizing the educational process and ensuring high-quality teaching". (Statute. Article 2. Paragraph 4). According to the last part of the regulation, it remains unclear how academic freedom is achieved.

The practical implementation of this record seems to be confirmed by the recommendation issued by the temporary advisory group for the promotion of artistic education (musical) reform created in the Ministry of Culture and Sports of Georgia in 2023, not to send to NCEQE two new educational programs within the framework of cluster accreditation: "Opera concertmaster" and "Symphonic orchestra and opera conductor". As it is mentioned in SER, "accredited master's degree programs have addressed a serious shortage of qualified graduates". (Georgian-language self-assessment document, p. 30). Interviews with staff revealed that they hope to submit these two new programs for accreditation. It should be noted that during the interview, mentioning "2 masters program topic", several interviews mentioned the difficulty in discerning the boundary between the autonomy of the conservatory and the rights of the Ministry.

**Evidences/indicators**

- Statute https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/2382073?publication=5
- Turnitin Purchase Agreement;
- Charter of the conservatory
- Quality assurance service report
- Interviews.

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that closer cooperation between the conservatoire and the Ministry of Culture and Sports of Georgia should take place to create a positive environment that ensures academic freedom and autonomy flourish within the TSC

**Suggestions:**

**Best Practices (if applicable):**

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

**Evaluation**

Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard

☐ Complies with requirements

☑ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

## 3. Educational Programmes

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

**3.1 Design and Development of Educational Programmes**

HEI has a policy for planning, designing, implementing and developing educational programmes.

**Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements**

The Academic Council passed a resolution in 2021 to improve the process for developing relevant programmes for the profession and implementing them successfully. TSC takes into account the Association of European Conservatoires framework for course developments to ensure mobility and transferability of courses for international Erasmus students. TSC meets with employees in Georgia to ensure their practices fit market demand as well.

**Evidences/indicators**

Previous Authorization Report

Critical Friend's reports 2019, 2022

Resolution of Academic Council  - Rules for designing and development of educational programmes

QA department analyses

**Recommendations:**

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

**Suggestions:**

It is suggested to continue efforts to benchmark programs against peer institutions in Europe.

**Best Practices (if applicable):**

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

**Evaluation**

Please mark the checkbox,  which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard

☑ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

**3.2 Structure and Content of Educational Programmes**

- o Programme learning outcomes are clearly stated and are in line with higher education level and qualification to be granted
- o With the help of individualized education programmes, HEI takes into consideration various requirements, needs and academic readiness of students, and ensures their unhindered involvement into the educational process.

**Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements**

The educational programs of both faculties of TSC are designed according to current legislation and ECTS guidelines. The learning outcomes of the programs are clearly stated and are in line with the level of higher education and qualification to be granted. Programme structure and content ensure logical connection between all of its components. There is a wide scale of non-compulsory components that could be elected by students according to their professional interest. The volume of the programme component is defined by its content, learning outcomes and specific of the field. The teaching and learning methods used within the educational programme reflect specifics of the field.

The catalog of educational programmes is accessible to all interested parties, is updated according to the changes in the programmes and is published on the web-page of TSC. The institution systematically works on improving the programmes taking into account the satisfaction surveys of students, alumni, employers and analysis of results. Also, the quality assurance department works on initiation of new programs in collaboration with Academic staff and council.

The scientific-research programs of TSC have had challenges with the amount of students caused by some decline in interest in the field of musicology. In response, the faculty are implementing the new directions as Traditional Georgian Church Music studies, music therapy, ethnomusicology, and ecomusicology. The research component has been strengthened in the composition faculty too. To keep the balance between practical and scientific components the students of performing faculty conduct Creative Research projects.

The information available for all programmes is clear on the website and in course syllabi. The TSC is very able to adapt its programmes to the specific needs of its students and ensures they can progress successfully through their degree and into the profession.

It should be specially noted that the programs of jazz and music technology are quite popular in Georgia. These courses are taught by prominent Georgian musicians and professors from partner foreign music schools.

In recent years the special attention has been put on pedagogical aspects as the conservatoire lost this qualification due to changes made in state legislation and the graduates need this status to teach different courses in the music schools. They also created a one year program for music teachers in the public schools. On both faculties there are mandatory courses developing pedagogical skills of performers, musicologists and composers.

The syllabi of educational programs are designed according to existing regulations and contain all necessary descriptions about the aim of the course, its teaching methods, learning outcomes, the titles of each lecture, the list of literature and assessment methods. The teachers explain the content of syllabi to their students at the first meeting so they are fully informed about the educational process, but as it was admitted during the interviews, the changes could be done during the process if the students meet some difficulties or have their own attitude towards effectiveness of teaching methods. TSC has individualized programs and methodology for their development.

Despite quite a number of professors who teach in TSC already since the 1980s, the students obtain an education of very high standards. During the interviews with employers it has been noted that the graduates of TSC are always competitive professionals as in Georgia as well as in other countries. It is hoped that the state would invest in the new generation of musicians further, because the economic conditions of music teachers are so challenging that many are forced to go outside the country and get the high paid jobs there.

**Evidences/indicator**

Educational programme, syllabi, catalog of educational programmes, monitoring of programme completion, alumni tracer study regarding career and academic development, results of surveys and interviews.

- Recommendations

**Suggestions**

- It is suggested that theoretical subjects could be selected more carefully for performing faculty students taking into account their specific needs.

- It is suggested that learning outcomes assessment methods and schedule (exams) could be revised for performing faculty according to their wish to have more time for stage performances within the conservatoire.

- It is suggested that more possibilities could be created for academic choir-conducting students to work with different choirs in collaboration with music schools and other universities which have such musical ensembles as the leaders of these choirs are the alumni of TSC.

- It is suggested that TSC considers starting an arts management program for Master Degree of Musicology program in collaboration with business management schools of other universities as there is a lack of professional personnel who can work in this field either in state or private sector organizations.

- It is suggested that TSC continue working on orchestra conducting and opera coach BA and MA programs in order to get accreditation in the near future.

- It is suggested that TSC develops programs that support growth in targeted areas - such as brass and percussion.

**Best Practices (if applicable):**

- Wide scale of programs for both faculties
- The good balance in coordination of practical and research components
- Systematic work to improve existing and initiate the new programs
- Equitable assessment methods of learning outcomes
- Satisfaction surveys of students, alumni and employers.

**Evaluation**

Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard

☑ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

**3.3 Assessment of Learning Outcomes**

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

**Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements**

Student assessment is in accordance with Georgian legislation and follows the internal regulations of the TSC. Students are informed about assessment forms and methods in advance and are provided with personal feedback on their evaluation, strengths and weaknesses. Students can see and track their progress through the study process management system. the assessment methods ensure an equal approach and fairness for all students. The specific nature of conservatoire teaching also maintains regular feedback through instrumental, vocal and composition lessons, with one-to-one progress being monitored on a regular basis.

All evaluation criteria are described in the specific syllabi for each course. The review team also witnessed vocal exams taking place - a typical method for summative evaluation at conservatoire

**Evidences/indicators**

The TSC study management system

Resolution of the Academic Council No 41/2021 (rules for initiation, implementation and development of educational programmes)

**Recommendations:**

**Suggestions:**

**Best Practices (if applicable):**

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

**Evaluation**

Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard

☑ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

## 4. Staff of the HEI

HEI ensures that the staff employed in the institution (academic, scientific, invited, administrative, support) are highly qualified, so that they are able to effectively manage educational, scientific and administrative processes and achieve the goals defined by the strategic plan of the

institution. On its hand, the institution constantly provides its staff with professional development opportunities and improved work conditions.

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

**Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements**

*Describe, analyze and evaluate institution's compliance with the standard component requirements (considering the relevant evaluation criteria) based on the information collected through self-evaluation report, relevant enclosed documents and site visit; the analysis has to reflect problematic issues related to HEI's compliance with the requirements of this standard component (if applicable).*

The institution has established comprehensive staff management policies and procedures, covering employment and the engagement of academic staff in various institutional activities, such as educational, research, creative, and performing processes. These procedures are well-defined and uniformly understood across the institution. However, there are some areas that need addressing, particularly concerning professional development, internationalization, and the overall staffing framework.

Currently, the institution lacks a clear and strategic approach to professional development and internationalization. While there are existing opportunities for staff development through external programs like the ERASMUS+ International Credit Mobility (ICM) Program, these are heavily reliant on external financial sources. Although the institution has been successful in securing ERASMUS+ ICM grants annually, this dependence on external funding limits the institution's ability to set and achieve long-term benchmarks for staff development and international collaboration. It makes it challenging to create a sustainable and autonomous strategy for staff professional growth, particularly one that includes regular best practice sharing with international colleagues or job shadowing. The institution's limited investment in staff remuneration and incentives based on performance evaluation further exacerbates this issue, as there is insufficient internal support to foster continuous professional development and international engagement.

The institution's administrative units maintain up-to-date information on staff employment and ensure a balanced ratio between academic and administrative/support staff, which is crucial for the institution's effective functioning. Efforts are made to integrate new employees smoothly into the work environment and to involve them efficiently in institutional processes. However, despite the generally favorable staff-to-student and staff-to-staff ratios, certain key administrative services are notably understaffed.

Specific areas such as the International Relations Office (IRO), Public Relations (PR), Quality Assurance (QA), and the Academic Affairs Office suffer from understaffing. This under-resourcing can lead to inefficiencies and challenges in managing these crucial functions effectively. The shortage of personnel in these departments may hinder the institution's ability to support its academic and operational objectives fully and to implement its policies and strategies comprehensively.

Despite the staffing challenges, the institution boasts an exceptionally qualified and dedicated faculty, along with invited personnel and administrative and support staff. This team is deeply committed to the institution, taking pride in their contributions and the rich traditions and legacy of the conservatoire. Their dedication is reflected in the institution's ability to produce successful alumni who achieve recognition both nationally and internationally. The strong sense of pride and commitment among the staff is a significant asset to the institution, contributing to its overall success and reputation. TCS sets clear goals for staff and effectively manages their work. There is a clear process to continue to improve. New employees are given appropriate support from senior colleagues when they are hired.

A critical area identified for improvement is the clarity of assessment criteria for invited teaching staff. The team found that the institution does not have a transparent or well-communicated set

of criteria for evaluating these staff members, which could affect the consistency and fairness of assessments.

Additionally, there is a pressing need to review and potentially revise the salary structures offered by the institution. The current remuneration packages may not be competitive or reflective of the staff's qualifications and dedication, which could impact staff morale and retention. Adequate investment in employee remuneration is essential to maintain a motivated and high-performing workforce and to attract a new generation of staff.

The panel identified several gaps in the institutional support structure of the conservatoire. These gaps are particularly evident in areas essential for maintaining operational integrity, legal compliance, and the professional development of students and staff. Some of the key missing roles are:

Personal data protection officer - the lack of a DPO means the conservatoire might not have a structured approach to safeguarding personal data, potentially risking data breaches and non-compliance with data protection laws.

Career development office - a career development office plays a pivotal role in supporting students 'transition from education to employment. This office typically offers career counseling, job placement services, internship opportunities, and networking events to enhance students' career prospects. While the members of the staff as well as faculty members underlined that the internal dynamics of the conservatoire resembles a closely neat family, where supporting one another including students is a well established practice, the lack of a Career Development Office suggests a potential gap in providing structured support and resources to students as they prepare to enter the professional world. A career development office would build on the work of the individual teacher, providing support in writing a CV, writing an application, in handling meetings and interviews as well as career counseling.

**Evidences/indicators**

Component evidences/indicators including the relevant documents, interview results, etc.
- SER
- Interview results
- Strategic Development Plan
- HR Policy document

**Recommendations:**

- To enhance its operational capacity and achieve its strategic goals, the panel recommends the conservatoire to consider the following actions:

- It is recommended to establish a personal data protection officer

**Suggestions:**

Non-binding suggestions for further development:
- It is suggested to establish a clear strategy for professional development that is not solely dependent on external funding.
- It is suggested to seek alternative funding sources and internal budget reallocations to support continuous staff development and international collaborations.
- It is suggested to promote best practice sharing, international partnerships, and job shadowing opportunities as part of a broader, sustainable strategy.
- It is suggested to conduct a thorough assessment of staffing needs in critical departments such as IRO, PR, QA, and Academic Affairs. Allocate resources to recruit additional staff and enhance the capacity of these departments.
- It is suggested to develop and communicate clear, transparent criteria for assessing invited guest teaching staff. Ensure that these criteria are aligned with the institution's overall standards and objectives.
- It is suggested that TSC leadership consider implementing continuing professional development training for music teachers in schools. This might be paid for by local authorities or teachers themselves. to have a teaching qualification/diploma from the TSC could carry a lot of value.

**Best Practices (if applicable):**

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

**Evaluation**

Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard

☐ Complies with requirements

☑ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

**4.2. Academic/Scientific and Invited Staff Workload**

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

**Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements**

At Tbilisi State Conservatoire, the management and allocation of staff resources are structured to support the institution's academic and creative endeavors.

The Conservatoire employs a flexible workload scheme for its academic and invited staff. This scheme is revised every semester to ensure it reflects current needs and priorities. It encompasses a comprehensive range of responsibilities, including teaching (including one-to-one tutoring), research, creative, and performing activities.

The number and workload of academic staff and invited lecturers are planned to guarantee the effective delivery of educational programs and the successful execution of teaching, creative, and performing activities. When evaluating these requirements, the Conservatoire considers the cumulative workload of academic staff across all institutions where they hold positions, including the Seminary curated by the TSC.

More than half of the academic staff at the Conservatoire declare their primary affiliation with a single Higher Education Institution (HEI). This primary affiliation is determined through a formal agreement between the staff member and the Conservatoire. By defining a primary affiliation, the institution ensures that its academic staff have a clear and focused commitment to Tbilisi State Conservatoire, which strengthens the institution's academic integrity and stability.

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**Evidences/indicators**

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

- Affiliation Rule
- HR Policy
- SER
- Results of the conducted interviews
- Sample contracts between TSC and various types of staff

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**Recommendations:**

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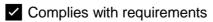
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**Suggestions:**

Non-binding suggestions for further development.

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**Best Practices (if applicable):**

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

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**Evaluation**

Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard

☑ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

## 5. Students and Their Support Services

HEI ensures the development of student-centred environment, offers appropriate services, including career support mechanisms; it also ensures maximum awareness of students, implements diverse activities and promotes student involvement in these activities. HEI utilizes student survey results to improve student support services

### 5.1. The Rule for Obtaining and Changing Student Status, the Recognition of Education, and Student Rights

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

**Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements**

According to the information on the TSC website: tsc.edu.ge and as pointed out in the Self Evaluation Report as well as after assessing the contract samples, provided by the Conservatoire prior to the site visit – it is justified to say that regulations for assignment, suspension and termination and/or reinstatement of student status, mobility, qualification granting and recognition of education are transparent and fair, and are in line with current legislation. Also Students were aware of the code of ethics and of the document of internal regulation of the university.

The information regarding these issues is public and accessible to everyone. – Above mentioned documents are available on TSC website only in Georgian language, but English versions Conservatoire have been provided to the expert panel for assessment. It is suggested that the English version of the website should be the same as the Georgian version and all necessary documents must be published in the English language too.

According to the SER, in the section on quantitative data, it is pointed out that Conservatoire has the student quota as determined by the Authorization Council is 800; from the total number of students 675 – 438 students are with active status and 237 - with Suspended status.

TSC has two faculties, The Faculty of Performing Art and the Faculty of Composition and Musicology. They have their individual methods of assessment. All students of the Conservatoire use the Learning Management System. The mentioned system ensures the improvement of the student's ability to manage the learning process and achieve learning outcomes, and includes the ability to manage electronic schedule, academic registration, electronic office, educational program, study card and other data. This possibility allows the institution to perform automated tasks to facilitate the learning process for students and lecturers.

The Conservatoire ensures effective and timely implementation of the above mentioned procedures in order to protect student rights and lawful interests. Student's membership of Administrative councils (but not of Academic Council) gives them a voice and helps to protect their interests; their rights, which includes timely and effective procedures, as well as electronic systems and platforms.

**Evidences/indicators**

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

- · Regulation documents;
- · Publicity of information - Website;
- · Samples of contracts between Conservatoire and a student;
- · A mechanism for the protection of student rights and lawful interests;
- · Student survey results;
- · Interview results.y

**Recommendations:**

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

**Suggestions:**

**Best Practices (if applicable):**

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

**Evaluation**

Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard

☑ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

**5.2 Student Support Services**

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

**Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements**

TSC students receive proper consultation and support in the planning of their education process, but the most extensive counseling that the Conservatoire provides upon enrollment of students is planned in the first week of the beginning of Academic year. The Conservatoire provides them with individual study plans. Academic staff offer consultation hours permanently, which was praised by Students in the interview process.

The Conservatoire provides a career support service by promoting the work of academic staff and of the international department. During the interview process, students and graduates mentioned that it would be good if the institution would help in organizing training in the writing of a CV and with professional orientation and other information events regarding employment and career development. In this direction the institution must work more intensively to cover all career service issues.

TSC finds information on potential employers, and ensures cooperation with them; All employers who met the Panel said they have a strong relationship with the university and make extensive use of alumni and current students

Students are kept informed about Erasmus+ mobility programs, and most of the students/alumni who met the Panel had participated in international exchange programs.

The student self-government organization supports extracurricular activities, and provides a means for students to set up a new club for their own interests. Student self-government also provides a bridge between students and the university administration. TSC supports student initiatives, also students can use the material and technical base of the conservatory.

The Conservatoire implements various support services, they have flexible payment mechanisms of tuition, and other benefits. Also it should be noted that since the pandemic, the Conservatoire has been announcing scholarships twice a year to pay tuition fees for low Socioeconomic status (SES) students. During the on-site visit, the administrative staff stated that after the implementation of the mentioned mechanism, it can be said that not a single student has had their student status suspended due to financial problems.

HEI provides scholarships for students. TSC also provided the Panel with a document about other initiatives to support socially vulnerable students.

In the graduate's interview process, it was revealed that the institution does not have a close relationship with the graduates. In this direction, the conservatory should cooperate more actively with them and regularly conduct surveys of alumni regarding their personal, professional and academic development.

**Evidences/indicators**
- Planned and implemented consulting services;
- Career support services;
- Implemented internship and practice programmes;
- Cooperation with employers;
-  Survey results;
-  Interviews with student groups, student government, alumni and employers.

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended to add staff in key student support services.

It is recommended to ensure an active collaboration between the Conservatoire and Alumni regarding their personal, professional and academic development.

**Suggestions:**
- It is suggested to improve the career support service, providing training, workshops or informational meetings about students CV preparation, job applications, interview techniques etc.
- It is suggested to ensure an active collaboration between the Conservatoire and Alumni regarding their personal, professional and academic development.
- It is suggested that TSC support its students who would like to be involved in AEC projects like EPASA (European Performing Arts Student Association).

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

**Evaluation**
Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard

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

# 6. Research, development and/or other creative work

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

### 6.1 Research Activities

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

**Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements**

The TSC has a well established research practice and profile. Its' recent charter addition of the International Center of Traditional Polyphony adds to a very strong culture of scientific and artistic research.

**Evidences/indicators**

There are a good number of doctoral candidates who complete within the allotted time and are well-supervised by academic faculty. They have their own scientific journal (Musicology and Culture) published in Georgian, English and Russian.

Additional evidence: Statute of LEPL

Charter of Scientific Research Department

Joint international projects

Tbilisi International Musicology Conference

**Recommendations:**

**Suggestions:**

It is suggested that a research project (PhD) could be commissioned around the state of music education in Tbilisi. Where are the gaps of unmet need How can brass, wind, percussion and other low taken up instruments be encouraged from a young age and how can the conservatoire best leverage its influence and expertise.

**Best Practices (if applicable):**

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

**Evaluation**

☑ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

**6.2. Research Support and Internationalisation**

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

**Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements**

Tbilisi State Conservatoire actively promotes and supports scientific research and creative activities that aim to expand the frontiers of knowledge and practice. The institution encourages its academic and scientific community to pursue innovative research topics and creative practices, fostering a culture of intellectual and artistic exploration. This support is crucial for developing new visions, approaches, and perspectives within the Conservatoire's fields of expertise. The institution provides assistance to its academic staff in securing funding from diverse sources. Some fundings have been secured from the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation to carry out research in the fields of ethno-musicology and digital musicology. The institution fosters an environment where MA, and PhD students are involved in scientific and creative projects, providing them with opportunities to contribute to and shape the Conservatoire's academic and creative landscape. Additionally, Tbilisi State Conservatoire frequently organizes international scientific conferences and symposia that engage both faculty members and students. Faculty members are also actively contributing to the academic community by publishing their research in prestigious international journals.

Despite these significant achievements, the institution currently lacks a dedicated internal funding mechanism to support scientific research. While this gap presents a challenge, it is noteworthy that the Conservatoire plans to address this issue by establishing such a mechanism, as indicated in the Self-Evaluation Report (SER), page 37.

One of the areas where Tbilisi State Conservatoire excels is in its international collaborations. The institution implements creative arts projects with international partners and is actively involved in ERASMUS+ ICM program. This allows TSC to send and received students, academic and administraitve staff to/from dozens of partner institutions in the Program Countries. TSC's efforts in securing these partnerships and its attemtps to engage in various global arts-creative activities highlight its commitment to maintaining a significant international presence.

The visiting team was not made aware of any joint MA or PhD programmes though we were informed about the many research partnerships fostered between TSC and European collaborators. The TCS supports its research staff and students well and attracts a wide variety of initiatives and areas of study.

Despite these commendable efforts, a significant challenge undermines the sustainability and expansion of these internationalization activities: the lack of adequate internal funding. While TSC is involved in numerous ERASMUS+ ICM projects, these activities largely depend on external financial sources. This heavy reliance on external funding, such as EU grants, exposes the institution to financial vulnerabilities and limits its capacity to sustain and expand its international efforts independently. Lack of internal funding for internationalization restricts the Conservatoire's strategic flexibility in pursuing new international opportunities. The institution may find it challenging to initiate or participate in international projects that align with its strategic goals but fall outside the scope of available external funding sources.

**Evidences/indicators**

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

- Results of the interviews
- SER
- Strategic Development Plan

**Recommendations:**

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

**Suggestions:**

Non-binding suggestions for further development

It is suggested that TSC grow its funding for greater participation in international research and internationalisation activities.

It is suggested that TSC leadership implement a more strategic approach to recruitment - where to find balanced numbers of instrumentalists and singers, how much should it be international.

**Best Practices (if applicable):**

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

**Evaluation**

Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard

☑ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

## 6.3. Evaluation of Research Activities

HEI has a system for evaluating and analysing the quality of research/creative-arts activities, and the productivity of scientific-research units and academic/scientific staff.

**Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements**

There is a clear annual plan for the Scientific Research department. Statistical data is regularly collected and goals are clear. There is a noted increase in international cooperation. Some of the participation from faculty is patchy and TSC is working to involve more academic staff in research activities and capture their work in an electronic system. There is a research committee that regularly evaluates the quality of activity and of the scientific units. The TSC also has its own scientific journal for publishing journals and articles. The Georgian polyphony research is unique in the world and performing very well.

**Evidences/indicators**

Reports of research labs, report of the IRCTP, work plan development for staff, membership of relevant scientific associations

**Recommendations:**

**Suggestions:**

It is suggested that TSC try to hire more research active pedagogues and performers as positions open upon retirements from older faculty members

**Best Practices (if applicable):**

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

**Evaluation**

Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard

☑ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

## 7. Material, Information and Financial Resources

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

### 7.1 Material Resources

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

**Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements**

TSC is in possession of the fixed and current resources that are necessary to implement their goals and achieve learning outcomes stipulated by the programmes and to support the research activities.

The main building of the TSC is a Cultural Heritage monument of Georgia situated in the very heart of the city. With its wonderful, fully equipped Big Concert Hall and Small Concert Hall the TSC can not only provide necessary practical training on stage for their students but also hold concerts and organize music festivals with famous musicians thus contributing to the cultural life and education of the country. The Concert Halls also provide additional income for the TSC from the ticket sales.

The Main building also houses rehearsal rooms, classrooms for theory lectures, studios, spaces for group work and orchestra rehearsals, stage for the opera practices, etc. The TSC main building is well equipped. All the spaces have natural as well as artificial lighting, central heating systems and ventilation and air conditioning systems wherever possible. As the building is a monument of cultural heritage the administration of the TSC does not have a liberty to install the air-conditioning at their convenience, yet it is in place wherever possible. The halls are also equipped with the humidity control systems to make sure that the instruments are well taken care of. The building is not adapted to the needs of the disabled which is again due to the fact that the TSC administration is not at liberty to organize repair works within the building. Yet, the Law of 2020 obliges the institution to make all necessary changes to make the space adapted for people with special needs. As the Experts Panel learned during the visit, the TSC addressed the Department of Protection of the Rights of People with the Special Needs at the Ombudsman's Office of Georgia as well as Tbilisi Municipality to provide recommendations on how to proceed with the necessary changes to the building.

The TSC also possesses other premises in Saburtalo, which is a different part of the city – it is one floor in a four storied building which is newly refurbished to the needs of the institution and houses the students of Jazz and Music Technologies programmes. This building, although it is not a cultural heritage site, is not adapted well either. As the TSC administration mentioned, it does not have a necessary sound isolation either which makes it difficult for the students to practice. The fact that the TSC possesses only one floor of this building makes it difficult to make the necessary adaptation.

The TSC is continuously trying to take care and renew their material and technical base. The institution has:

1.    Renewed the publishing house which is extremely important for the research activities as well as for publishing new textbooks in Georgian

2.    Rehabilitated the water supply system of the Main Building

3.    Installed air-conditioning systems in the rehearsal rooms and classrooms

4.    Purchased necessary computers for the Music Technology Department

5.    Installed special nonstandard size cabinets for storing students' musical instruments

6.    Most importantly signed an agreement to purchase 79 Steinway & Sons grand pianos, out of which 23 have already been installed in the auditoriums in 2022 and 2023 and the remaining 56 will be provided by the end of 2025

It has to be mentioned separately that the TSC Alumni often donate instruments to the institution. This support is extremely important yet cannot cover the need for the rare instruments. During the visit both TSC administration and students were mentioning the lack of instruments, especially percussion and brass. The institution should put in effort to secure appropriate funding to purchase and renew all instruments needed to maintain the quality of the programme.

The Institution has a fire safety system in place. During the visit the Expert Panel could observe the fire escape plans that were visible everywhere throughout both buildings. The fire

extinguishers with instructions are placed on the floors. The TSC also possesses necessary medical boxes for first aid that are placed on every floor. The conservatoire needs to ensure it has a full medical cabinet with trained staff on the premises

**Evidences/indicators**
- HEI
- Public Registry Abstracts;
- Movable Property Inventory Act;
- Agreements on instrument donations
- Fire safety, first aid and security services documentation
- Meeting with administration, professors, students and alumni
- Sight visit

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that TSC needs to find alternative sources of income for instrumental purchases to ensure it can maintain the quality of its study programmes – this was apparent in brass and percussion instruments.

It is recommended that TSC needs to have a medical cabinet with trained staff

**Suggestions:**
- It is suggested that TSC work with the government of the country and the Tbilisi Municipality on adapting the buildings to the needs of people with special needs in the shortest possible delay.
- It is suggested that TSC work with private sponsors/donors to raise funds for purchasing rare instruments.
- It is suggested that TSC work to purchase what whole building for jazz and music technology and create a true second campus.
- To find alternative ways of funding for TSC to be less dependent on State funding.

**Best Practices (if applicable):**
1. Using the Grand Concert Hall of the TSC for the needs of students

**Evaluation**

Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard

☐ Complies with requirements

☑ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

**7.2. Library Resources**

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

**Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements**

The Library of TSC was founded over a century ago. Hence it is in possession of vast printed materials on music including rarities. The funds of the TSC library include:

Music Sheets and Scores

- Books and textbooks
- Audio library – a space equipped with modern technologies that can be used on the spot
- DVD and CD recordings
- Periodicals
- Dissertation Archive
- Electronic catalogue
- Digital libraries including access to the scientific bases and musical recordings

The library has a reading hall with books, music scores and recordings in open access. The students can come and read in the library or make photocopies of the material they need using the copying services provided in the library.

The renewal of the library funds depends on the demands from the professors and administration as well as the availability of financial resources which are unfortunately quite limited. The library's working hours are everyday, including Saturdays. Library is an important resource for the TSC and its resources are in everyday use as no practical class can be held without borrowing music sheets and scores from its funds. The library reading hall is properly equipped with connected computers, copy machine and wifi. The library has clear instructions in place and makes good use of several electronic search engines for music.

During the site visit, the Panel of Experts had a possibility to randomly check the availability of the necessary literature. All the books that were demanded were easily found in the library. The library also has access to international scientific databases that can be accessed outside the library using the corporate email.

The library provides the following services to the staff, professors and students:

- Ask a librarian
- Electronic reserve system – a book or musical sheet r recording can be reserved in advance by simply contacting the library
- Interlibrary subscription – which makes sure that a book can be borrowed from any library of Georgia and provided for students and professors

During the site visit the students, professors and administration spoke about the lack of professional literature as well as textbooks in Georgian language. This tendency is also visible when looking through the syllabi where many mandatory books listed are in Russian. Provided the majority of the younger generation in Georgia does not speak Russian at all, they will be unable to make use of the literature available in this language. Therefore, the library together with the administration of the TSC should look for means of purchasing the necessary literature in English, as well as work on the translation of the important textbooks. Provided the TSC has a newly refurbished publishing house, printing of the translated literature will not be difficult or over expensive. The library staff are competent and able to provide assistance to students and staff whenever needed

**Evidences/indicators**

- HEI
- electronic catalogue http://conservatoire.library.ac.ge/
- E-library http://dspace.tsc.edu.ge/
- Libraries website https://tsc.edu.ge/biblioteka-fonoteka/
- Statistics on using the electronic resources
- Mechanisms for renewals and development of library resources
- Regulation on purchasing the library resources
- Inventory documentation and on possession of book funds
- Sight visit to the library
- Meeting with the staff and management of the library

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended to continue the process of diversification of library resources – purchasing textbooks in English as well as purchasing and publishing new materials in Georgian.

**Suggestions:**

**Best Practices (if applicable):**

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

**Evaluation**

Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard

☐ Complies with requirements

☑ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

**7.3 Information Resources**

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

**Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements**

During the visit to the TSC the Panel of Experts had an opportunity to observe and to discuss the state of information technologies and its administration with the management and staff of the institution.

TSC has high quality internet with free WiFi access for students and staff, corporate network and mail server as well as corporate electronic storage, data exchanging and sharing facilities. The institution takes data protection seriously and ensures it is sufficiently managed

TSC has following electronic services and systems in place:

- Document Management System which facilitates the work of the administration
- System for managing study processes which facilitates communication with students as well as planning the study process
- UniMusic which enhances the development of English-language educational programmes and promotes the internationalization of performance and higher music education through digital transformation. The project includes 2 main components: 1) international accreditation for English language programmes; 2) implementing Eduroam and LOLA software (low latency audiovisual streaming technology) in TSC concert and educational activities.
- Webpage in two languages – English and Georgian contains all necessary information about the mission of TSCm its courses of study and activities, enrolment criteria and information for staff and students for their work

TSC also has an agreement with TKT.GE which is one of the main online ticket sellers in Georgia. TKT.GE provides a platform for selling the tickets for festivals and concerts held in and by TSC.

TSC also maintains a presence in social networks to advertise Conservatoire as well as classical music in general amongst youth.

At the same time, it has to be mentioned that the TSC website needs renewal for better functioning as well as better planning as the Panel of Experts could not, for instance, find information on the concert to be held on the night of the visit. The presence in the social networks need enhancement too, as the activities on the TSC pages is rather low. The TSC administration has to find minimal funds for boosting posts on Facebook and Instagram and other platforms. Having an asset of world famous alumni, this resource can be used to promote the work of Conservatoire and attract more applicants to its programmes.

During the visit the students have also underlined the need for a more flexible platform for booking the rehearsal spaces. On balances, the IT infrastructure is adequate and ensures the proper management of the institution

**Evidences/indicators**
- HEI
- Information management politics and procedures
- TSC webpage – www.tsc.edu.ge
- Sight visit
- Meetings with staff and management

**Evaluation**

Please mark the checkbox which mostly describes your position related to the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard

&#9633; Fully complies with requirements

&#9745; Substantially complies with requirements

&#9633; Partially complies with requirements

&#9633; Does not comply with requirements

**Recommendations:**

- It is recommended to update and improve the performance (speed and ease of navigation) to the TSC website

- It is recommended that TSC prepare English translations of all key student facing documents and these should be available on the website.

**Suggestions:**

- It is suggested a more flexible system for booking the rehearsal spaces for students.
- It is suggested to financially support boosting posts using Social media thus increasing interactions and attracting more interest towards TSC and classical music in general.

**Best Practices (if applicable):**

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

**7.4 Financial Resources**

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

**Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements**

TSC budget can be found on the institution's website. It is carefully planned to provide financial means for all the activities of TSC, including library and research activities.

Budget of the TSC mainly consists of several main sources: governmental subsidies given to the institution, tuition fees paid by students and own income from the ticket sale. The budget also shows a one-time source of income such as grants for various research activities. Separate budgets for each individual programme were not presented. Subsidies from the State budget, which are provided and controlled by the Ministry of Culture of Georgia, supports student training in educational programmes, remuneration of academic staff and visiting lecturers involved in programme implementation, and maintenance and improvement of the programmes' material and technical infrastructure.

The institution's own income is allocated to cover expenses related to participation in international conferences and missions, particularly for academic staff. At the same time the Conservatoire ensures the implementation of scientific, research, creative, and educational projects. This includes projects financed by both the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Culture.

This said it also has to be mentioned that the budget of the institution, although showing no deficit, is extremely low. Given the potential of the institution, its achievements and uniqueness for the Georgian cultural landscape the State should work to ensure TSC's financial sustainability and future development of its campus and its workforce.The budget as well as discussions with the staff and administration during the visit shows a clear need for diversifying TSC incomes through working with local businesses. It will be advisable to hire and/or train staff for fundraising. Ensuring financial support from private business will not only allow the TSC to provide financial incentives to its staff and professors but will also provide means for purchasing new instruments, working with the youth, etc. Additional income will also make sure that the institution is less dependent on the State, thus providing a better degree of independence in its endeavors.

**Evidences/indicators**

- HEI
- TSC Budgets
- Dynamics of funding for the last 5 years
- Meetings with administration, professors and staff

**Recommendations:**
Proposal(s), which should be considered by the institution to comply with requirements of the standard component
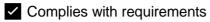
**Suggestions:**
- It is suggested to seek alternative ways of funding (higher tariff for conservatoire intensity teaching from the state) and alternative sources of funds for increasing budget resources for higher salaries, necessary instrument purchases, estate developments and investments in research.

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

**Evaluation**

Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard

☑ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard