



განათლების ხარისხის განვითარების ეროვნული ცენტრი
NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

Higher Education Institution Authorisation Experts' Report

Batumi State Maritime Academy

Expert Panel Members

Chair:

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Members:

Vakhtan Beroshvili	Tbilisi State Medical University, Georgia
Tornike Khoshtaria	University Geomedi, Georgia
Ia Mosashvili	Kutaisi International University, Georgia
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Tbilisi
2024

Authorisation Report Resume

General information on the educational institution

As part of the institutional evaluation of LEPL - Teaching University - Batumi State Maritime Academy an expert panel checked the delivered documents like BSMA's self-evaluation report, Educational Programmes, Policies, Rules, and further documents that give information regarding the structure and the fulfillment of the HEI standards.

Following this study, a 4-day visit, with interview sessions, a facility tour to BSMA, the training ship, and the Poti Branch was carried out. An expert panel of 7 persons, one as an international expert checked especially the 7 institutional authorization standards.

On the last day of the visit, there was a final outlining of the main parts of the draft agenda together with local panel members.

Overview of the HEI's compliance with standards

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

Organisational structure and management of the HEI is effective use of management and quality assurance mechanisms in the management process. This approach ensures the implementation of a strategic plan, and integration of quality assurance function into the management process, and promotes principles of integrity and ethics.

The mission and strategic development of HEI comply with standards:

- 1.1 complies with standards;
- 1.2 substantially complies with standards;
- 2.1 substantially complies with standards;
- 2.2 substantially complies with standards;
- 2.3 complies with standards;
- 3.1 substantially complies with standards;
- 3.2 substantially complies with standards;
- 3.3 substantially complies with standards;
- 4.1 substantially complies with standards;
- 4.2 substantially complies with standards;
- 5.1 complies with standards;
- 5.2 complies with standards;
- 6.1 complies with standards;
- 6.2 complies with standards;
- 6.3 substantially complies with standards;
- 7.1 substantially complies with standards;
- 7.2 complies with standards;
- 7.3 substantially complies with standards;
- 7.4 substantially complies with standards;

Summary of Recommendations

Standard 1.2:

- It is recommended that all stakeholders' involvement in the strategic plan formulation process be intensified.

Standard 2.1:

- It is recommended that the structural units work more clearly and coordinate with each other to achieve effective results

Standard 2.2:

- it is recommended to increase the awareness of the personnel regarding the quality of assurance mechanisms

Standard 3.1:

- It is recommended to introduce mechanisms to raise English language proficiency levels among students in technician education programs (Marine Engineering, Marine Electrical Engineering)
- It is recommended to increase the involvement of graduates in program evaluation for those educational programs that have lower rates of graduate employment.
- It is recommended to use international approaches to meet the requirements of the international labor market and to do a detailed research/ feasibility study of existed Labor market before program design and implementation, to analyze thoroughly the relevance of the new program and set up the appropriate risks for program implementation and delivery process, which can ensure more sustainability in program implementation

Standard 3.2:

- It is recommended to reflect clear and correct information regarding the programs in catalogs and all concerning documents and to have more active participation from the personnel involved in the program implementation process.

Standard 3.3:

- It is recommended to include more clear and detailed analyses in the report of learning outcomes.
- It is recommended that also academic staff should be more involved in how the learning outcomes have to be analyzed and improved.

Standard 4.1:

- It is recommended to check the ratio of academics to invited staff. Obviously, there are more invited academic staff available than permanent academic staff.

Standard 4.2:

- It is recommended that the university should develop mechanisms to convince invited staff to become academic staff of the university. For this BSMA should identify the reasons that prevent invited staff from joining the permanent academic staff and try to remove these obstacles in a targeted manner.
- It is recommended that the personnel's workload (academic/administrative) be revised to ensure they have a balanced workload for administrative, teaching, and research roles.

Standard 6.3:

- It is recommended to prove, that the QAS has the competencies to assess the quality of research activities. Qualified academic staff should be involved to ensure the quality of evaluating research activities.

Standard 7.1:

- It is recommended to separate the teaching/learning, training area, and auxiliary spaces of the academy from the residential building(s) of the citizens
- It is recommended to replace the door of the evacuation exit (should not be made of iron and should be opened from the inside to the outside)

Standard 7.3:

- It is recommended to improve the IT infrastructure, including:
 - WIFI connection (should be possible throughout the university space) and
 - Implementation of appropriate hardware and software in terms of cyber security;
- It is recommended that the content for the website be provided both in Georgian and English languages

Standard 7.4:

- It is recommended to increase the funding for scientific research activities

Summary of Suggestions

Standard 2.1:

- It is suggested to develop joint educational programs with foreign universities

Standard 3.2:

- It is suggested to use the existing, very good infrastructure (i.e. Simulators) more intensively and more efficient

Standard 4.2:

- It is recommended to identify the reasons that prevent invited staff from joining the permanent academic staff and try to remove these obstacles in a targeted manner
- It is suggested to prove the approach that in addition to competitive pay (which is likely to be particularly difficult for seafarers), also the opportunity for research and academic qualifications could be an incentive

Standard 5.1:

- It is suggested that Students self-government become more informed and more independent and can be more active therewith

Standard 6.1:

- It is suggested to develop more activities to implement research projects favored in international current topics
- It is suggested to increase the encouragement of the university side, regarding the installation of boundary conditions; for growing research teams by giving one or more focal points, letting different research groups work interdisciplinary on selected major topics

Standard 6.2:

- It is suggested to make a SWOT analysis regarding research possibilities to find out possible and requested topics – find international partners and research programs
- It is suggested to find scientific staff for research projects that can work continuously on one – and maybe at following projects in the same direction aiming to build up and hold competencies in selected topics
- It is suggested to encourage more active participation in research activities making research activities attractive (time, qualification chances, participation in international conferences)

Standard 7.1:

- It is suggested to modernize the dormitory

Standard 7.2:

- It is suggested to increase the workspace of students in the library in Batumi

Summary of the Best Practices

Standard 4.2:

- BSMA involves active seafarers as invited staff in their educational program. This leads to the fact, that the topics are always on the state of the art, and the relationship to active officers and engineers is very valuable for the students. To ensure, that there is a continuous presence BSMA uses its own Database of active seafarers, which is very helpful. In addition, the involvement of invited staff in the structures and mission of the academy is remarkable.

Standard 6.1:

- For various research activities, BSMA has excellent infrastructure (laboratories, workshops, simulators, software licenses, and access to online libraries like "Science Direct"..). Furthermore, BSMA is an active member of IAMU which allows contributing to conferences with scientific and student research presentations.

Summary Table of Compliance of HEI with Standards and Standard Components

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

Signature of expert panel members

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Jean Rom Rabe | (Chair of Panel Members) |
| 2. Vakhtan Beroshvili | (member) |
| 3. Tornike Khoshtaria | (member) |
| 4. Ia Mosashvili | (member) |
| 5. Nino Gorgoshadze | (employer) |
| 6. Kristine Akhaladze | (employer) |
| 7. Ia Butskhrikidze | (Student) |

Compliance of the Applicant HEI with the Authorisation Standard Components

1. Mission and strategic development of HEI

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

1.1 Mission of 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.
<p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</p> <p>The Batumi State Maritime Academy (BSMA) mission is integral to its strategic development plan, continuously refined, implemented, and shared with the academic community and stakeholders. This ongoing refinement ensures that BSMA's role and place in higher education and society are clear locally and internationally and that the institution is always adapting to the changing needs of industry and society.</p> <p>BSMA's mission emphasises its dedication to providing education and training that meets the demands of the labor market and fosters responsible specialists and leaders. The mission includes developing the competence to solve professional problems, work in teams, and realise personal potential. It stresses education based on modern standards and continuous learning, ensuring students are competitive in the labor market. The mission also highlights the importance of promoting personal development and disseminating knowledge.</p> <p>BSMA's mission is to function as an educational center that trains competitive specialists in maritime and related fields. It is designed to reflect the academy's specific characteristics and priorities, including its type of institution and main functions and purposes.</p> <p>A working group, with active participation from the academic community and stakeholders, critically reviewed the current mission and agreed on necessary changes. Their insights and contributions were instrumental in revising the mission statement, which was then shared with BSMA's staff, students, and stakeholders and publicly available on the academy's website. This process, which ensures that the entire BSMA community knows and supports the mission, is a testament to the shared responsibility and commitment of all those involved, as confirmed during the interviews with the stakeholders.</p>
<p>Evidences/indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BSMA-self-evaluation report; • EMSA report and feedback; • internationalization report; • academic council and Senates Report; • interviews at site-visit
Recommendations:
Suggestions:
Best Practices (if applicable):
<p>Evaluation</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements</p>
1.2 Strategic Development

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The Batumi State Maritime Academy's (BSMA) strategic plan is not a static document, but a living one that continuously evolves to ensure the fulfillment of its institutional goals. Developed in 2006, the plan has been open to improvement, incorporating successful models from renowned institutions like the State University of New York and the Marine Institute of Memorial University of Newfoundland. This commitment to continuous improvement and the incorporation of best practices ensures that the strategic development plan outlines priorities, goals, mechanisms, and expected outcomes for the next seven years, effectively guiding BSMA toward its objectives.

BSMA's goals are rooted in its mission and reflect its primary activities. These goals are structured to be realistic, with specific timeframes and measurable outcomes. The strategic plan, updated by the institution's mission, identifies strategic priorities that guide BSMA toward sustainable development.

BSMA employs a comprehensive strategic planning methodology tailored to its unique needs. This methodology involves evaluating the current state, analysing challenges and risks, and setting strategic initiatives and performance indicators. The institution's approach ensures systematic and evidence-based planning, with a clear framework for achieving its strategic objectives.

According to the SER, the strategic planning process at BSMA is highly participatory. It involves consultations with academic and administrative staff, students, graduates, employers, and regulatory bodies. This inclusive approach ensures that the strategic plan reflects the needs and perspectives of all stakeholders, fostering a sense of ownership and commitment to the institution's goals. However, during the interview, it became clear that the stakeholders' involvement needs to be intensified.

BSMA's strategic development plan comprehensively addresses all critical aspects of the institution's operations. It includes strategies for institutional development, quality assurance, educational program planning and implementation, student body planning, research activities, human and material resources management, student services, and infrastructure development. This holistic approach ensures that all essential areas are considered developed and coordinated.

The action plan derived from the strategic plan provides detailed descriptions of future activities, specifying implementation timeframes, performance criteria, and the necessary resources. This level of detail ensures that activities are well-planned and resourced, facilitating effective execution and monitoring.

BSMA actively contributes to societal development through various programs and events. These include social, cultural, economic, and environmental initiatives and lifelong learning opportunities. The academy organises public lectures, educational visits, summer schools, and other activities that foster knowledge dissemination and community engagement.

BSMA's academic and scientific staff address significant social issues, providing expert consultation services and conducting research for various organisations. This involvement ensures that the academy's expertise contributes to societal challenges and advancements.

BSMA has established procedures for monitoring the implementation of its strategic and action plans. Regular evaluations are conducted, and results are presented in comprehensive reports. These reports inform necessary adjustments and actions, ensuring the institution remains on track to achieve its strategic goals.

Evidences/indicators

BSMA-self-evaluation report; EMSA report and feedback; internationalization report; academic council and Senats Report; interviews at site-visit

Recommendations:

It is recommended that stakeholders' involvement in the strategic plan formulation process be intensified.

Suggestions:

Best Practices (if applicable):
Evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements

2. Organisational Structure and Management of HEI

Organisational 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 the implementation of a strategic plan, and integration of quality assurance function into the management process, and promotes principles of integrity and ethics.

2.1 Organisational Structure and Management
<p>Organisational structure of HEI ensures the implementation of goals and activities described in its strategic plan</p> <p>Procedures for election/appointment of the management bodies of HEI are transparent, equitable, and in line with legislation</p> <p>HEI's Leadership/Management body ensures effective management of the activities of the institution</p> <p>Considering the mission and goals of HEI, leadership of the HEI supports international cooperation of the institution and the process of internationalisation.</p>
<p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</p> <p>Batumi State Maritime Academy is a teaching university and according to its organizational structure, the governing bodies of the Maritime Academy are the Rector, the Academic Council, the Senate and the Center for Management and Development Systems. The Academy has its own charter. According to which, the Academy is accountable to the Maritime Transport Agency, operates within the framework and manner established by the "Georgia Higher Education law" and statutes of "Public Law Legal Entity".</p> <p>The organizational structure of the Maritime Academy is clear, it is posted on the website and can be viewed by all stakeholders. The main educational units are faculties, auxiliary educational units, and the auxiliary structural units are departments (Events department, HR department, department of Law), and the library. The training center, which is a part of the academy, carries out the same educational and training activities as the academy. The rights and duties of the units of the academy are described in the bylaws.</p> <p>The description of the functions of each structural unit is described in detail scope, goals and objectives, which are procedurally consistent with the Academy's strategic development plan. In this regard, it should be noted that in some issues, more transparency is needed on the part of the management, so that all structural units should be aware and clear about the issues of a specific structural unit with which they are in contact. For example, although the document flow is well described in the e-procedure rule of the academy, the interviews revealed that there are several foreign students studying at the academy, about which some structural units don't have information. Also, some structural units learned during the experts' visit that the information about the suspension of the status by the foreign student should be sent to the relevant department of the Ministry of Justice in the form of a statement from August last year. It should be noted that the institution itself resolved</p>

this issue during the experts' visit, and it was noted that an application to suspend the status of one foreign student has already been sent to the Ministry of Justice. According to the principle of random selection by the experts, the examples of electronic and documentary case proceedings were verified, in accordance with document management procedures, and examples of document control.

The rules of election and appointment in management bodies are written in the charter of the Batumi State Maritime Academy. The Rector of the Academy is appointed and dismissed by the Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia. Its powers are defined here. He is also the Head of the Senate. The same document presents the composition and structure of the Senate, the Academic Council, the Center for Management and Development Systems, the Faculty, the Faculty Council, the Dean, the Quality Assurance Service of the Faculty, and the Poti branch.

Elections in the academy are conducted by the election commission, which has an odd number of members and consists of at least 5 members. Elective positions are held by the Dean, the head of the quality service, and the head of the quality service of the faculty. The same document presents the selection/appointment procedures of academic and administrative staff, student rights and obligations, the powers of the student self-government and the selection procedures, which are detailed in its regulations. Regarding the Students self-governance issues, for more details, please, see the narrative section of Standard 5. The last chapter of the statute refers to the Academy's property and financial-budgetary activities. According to the order of February 23, 2024, by the Rector of the Maritime Academy, the issues of delegation of the Rector's powers and areas of care are defined. The rights and duties of the rector, vice-rector, head of the administration, head of the educational and scientific center, head of the professional training center, head of the Poti branch - Poti maritime training center, head of the training, training and certification center for sailors and deans are defined in the document of delegation order. The procedure for the dean election is presented as a separate document, starting with the announcement of the election and ending with the appeal of the election results. During the interviews, academic and visiting staff were interviewed regarding their selection issues. All of them described the process in detail and consistently, as well as the procedures for the selection/appointment of personnel in the governing bodies in accordance with the written procedures. The last 3 minutes of the sessions of the Academic Council and the Senate were requested by the group of experts, which the Academy presented in full with accompanying documents.

According to the management effectiveness monitoring mechanisms and evaluation system developed by the Maritime Academy, the management effectiveness monitoring mechanisms are applied to senior officials, administrative and support staff, and the monitoring itself provides for the observation of the management of the activities of the Maritime Academy and the systematic informing of the employees about the results of the observation and the control of the response. The expert group met with the monitoring group, where it was noted that the monitoring of the effectiveness of the Academy's management is carried out based on the conclusions of the internal audit. Based on this, an action plan is drawn up and they present a performance report to the head of the Center for Management and Development Systems. Internal audit procedures and non-compliance management procedures were also reviewed by the experts. The analysis of organizational management effectiveness monitoring results, 2023, is presented in the Quality Management System Analysis Results Report and the Strategic Plan Performance Monitoring Report. The analysis is presented with quantitative and qualitative indicators, an analysis is made with respect to areas for improvement, where it is stated that on the basis of internal audits, the need to raise the quality culture in all units, timely feedback to eliminate gaps and strengthening of follow-up on the given recommendations was revealed, which is also confirmed by the results of the experts interviews. The procedure for managing corrective and warning actions has also been developed.

Batumi Maritime Academy has a risk management procedure document that identifies, assesses and responds to risks identified by Batumi State Maritime Academy and Poti Branch of Batumi State Maritime Academy. According to this document, the risks are identified, assessed, mitigated,

communicated and monitored. Annual risk reduction plans by risk category are also presented, according to the faculties. Probability of risk, occurrence and level of risk are defined. As it turns out from the interviews, the program risk analysis is conducted once a year and it is part of the faculty's risk assessment. Examples of such risks were, for example, post-Covid risks, when the students had difficulty returning to the academy from the regions. Also, there can be risks when there is a rotation of professors/teachers due to their departure from sea. Also, it was mentioned that the risks may affect the student contingent too. The experts have studied the risk analysis documents of previous years, where the dynamics of risks are not increasing, and they are within the norms.

Batumi Maritime Academy's internationalization strategy includes its policy as well. According to the internationalization policy, the main principles of international cooperation include raising awareness of academy, compliance with national and international regulations, internationalization of education, strengthening ties with international partners in the maritime field. In order to improve learning/teaching, emphasis is placed on the international mobility of academic staff and students, international communications and partnership relations, support of international students, lecturers and researchers, although the latter creates certain problems in relation to students who are going to graduate from the Batumi Maritime Academy, because the regulations of the Maritime Agency According to them, it's impossible to issue a working diploma to them. Consequently, foreign students rarely choose Batumi Maritime Academy to study. Because of this, at this moment, only 3 foreign students (2 from Ukraine and 1 from Russia) are studying at the Batumi Maritime Academy. The experts assume that this may be the reason why the Academy has been expressing its desire to develop joint educational programs for several years, but no steps have been taken in this regard. However, it should be noted that 2 foreign experts were involved in the development of the programs. Batumi Maritime Academy strives to promote staff involvement in international projects and programs. The Academy is involved in the activities of IAMU conferences, which it hosted by Batumi Maritime Academy last year. The Academy has implemented and now is implementing grant projects, has signed various memorandums with foreign universities. Interviews show that students and staff report having participated in international mobility. This is also shown by the results of their surveys. The evaluation of the internationalization component is done by points and determines the efficiency of the staff's activities. As for the invitation of foreign professors for training courses, as mentioned during the interviews, this does not happen at the Maritime Academy, because only Georgian-language programs are implemented, although foreign professors are sometimes invited to give public lectures.

Batumi Maritime Academy maintains registry of educational institutions, as described in current legislation. It's important to note that during the experts' visit, it became clear that until that period the Service Development Agency had not been informed about the status suspends of international students. After August 2023, there was only one student, who had suspended status, and the institution started this procedure at the time of the expert visit. To ensure the business continuity of all major processes taking place at the institution, HEI has a plan, which ensures continuity of all major business processes taking place at the institution. The plan takes into account all possible risks, mechanism for their prevention and in case the prevention is not possible, HEI has a strategy for risk mitigation.

Evidences/indicators

- Organizational structure;
- Description of functions of structural units;
- Statute;
- Bylaws;
- Provision of the main educational unit;
- Regulations of the Senate;
- Regulations of the Academic Council;

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rector's appointment order; - delegation order; - approved staff list; - procedure; - persons responsible for the registry; - the procedure for choosing the dean; - document management procedure; - Academic council and Senate reports (last 3) - Management efficiency monitoring mechanisms and assessment system; - Quality management system analysis results report; - The procedure for managing corrective and warning actions; - Risk management procedures; - Documents describing the risk assessment of the faculties; - Internationalization policy; - Internationalization strategy; - Results of surveys; - Interview results.
<p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is recommended that the structural units work more clearly and coordinate with each other to achieve effective results
<p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is suggested to develop joint educational programs with foreign universities
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p>
<p>Evaluation</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements </p>
<p>2.2 Internal Quality Assurance Mechanisms</p>
<p>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.</p> <p>HEI has a mechanism for planning student body, which will give each student an opportunity to get a high quality education.</p>
<p>The quality assurance system of the Maritime Academy is based on the external regulatory framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Law of Georgia of "Higher Education", the Law of Georgia "Development of the Quality of Education", accreditation and authorization standards, Standards and guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), ISO 9001 :2015, the Law of Georgia "Education and Certification of Seafarers", the Law of Georgia "Vocational Education" and internal regulatory documents of the Maritime Academy. Accordingly, in the implementation of quality assurance in the academy, both the quality assurance service and the center of management and development systems are involved, which ensures the quality of teaching in the academy in terms of learning, teaching and

evaluation; This center determines quality control criteria and their application methodology, which is guided by the Education Quality Assurance Service, ISO Compliance Service, Faculty Quality Assurance Services; Develops internal and external evaluation procedures aimed at improving the quality of teaching and management of the academy.

According to the quality policy document, the Academy strives to develop and implement relevant training programs in the maritime direction at the national and international level, to carry out innovative research and to engage the community in this process. It can be seen from the interviews that the programs are in demand, and the institution tries to introduce various innovations into the programs, for example, they actively cooperate with the Technopark, develop a robotics laboratory, purchase Festo and Arduino devices for the mechatronics course, and include relevant topics in the educational courses.

Internal and external quality assurance mechanisms operate in the academy. The internal quality assurance document defines the purpose of quality assurance mechanisms, their application area, responsible persons, internal and external quality assessment. The internal mechanisms of quality assurance are divided into three main areas: teaching-learning and services (educational programs (undergraduate, graduate, vocational), personnel involved in the implementation of educational programs and the educational process); Research - assessment and analysis of research activities, scientific productivity of academic/scientific personnel; Management processes - evaluation of the organization's management processes. It also described how the annual reporting of the quality assurance service is done and how the results are used. Quality assurance mechanisms and procedures for using evaluation results have been developed as a separate document. As it turns out from interviews with different groups, the quality service conducts surveys of students, staff, graduates, employers and other types and analyzes these surveys, according to which the Academy carries out relevant activities, for example, as a result of the analysis of such surveys, a cafeteria, a student space, textbooks were purchased.

According to the document management procedure, the quality management system documentation management rules are defined. Although these documents have been developed, there is a lack of familiarity among the Academy staff. During the interviews, it appeared that some quality assurance mechanisms aren't known for some structural units, such as the student self-government, as well as some rules applicable to foreign students aren't known to the academic and administrative staff how to deal with foreign students who don't attend the classes. However, the non-conformance management procedure is spelled out, which clearly shows, in such cases, prevention, action and corrective actions.

The Academy has an internal audit procedure. It can be seen from the interviews that the monitoring of the effectiveness of quality management is carried out based on the conclusions of the internal audit, according to which an action plan is drawn up and then a report on its implementation is presented. Evidence of the effectiveness of quality management system is maintained in accordance with records management procedures.

In order to evaluate the educational programs, management processes and infrastructure, the Academy applies service monitoring, during which evaluation of educational programs and study course syllabi, short-term training courses, academic staff activities, learning environment, students' academic learning results, as well as the dynamics of employment of graduates, employers' satisfaction is determined, also, the degree of organization of the educational process. Interviews confirmed the reality of conducting all these processes, and the institution presented the results of the analysis of the quality management system for 2020-2023, where a detailed analysis of quality assurance issues is shown.

Batumi State Maritime Academy has developed a rule for determining the student contingent with criteria, target marks, and a rule for approving the number of students. According to this document,

the program's staff-to-student ratio is 1/20, and 1/30 for full-time. Also, the ratios of material and informational resources and financial resources are established.

Evaluation of educational programs, teaching/learning processes, staff, educational materials and technical base in the Batumi Maritime Academy is systematic and consistent. In order to effectively use and promote their continuous improvement, quality assurance studies are conducted according to the schedule – every semester. All structural directions of all Batumi maritime academy, internal and external stakeholders are subject to evaluation. Institution has developed performance evaluation system for its staff (academic, scientific, invited, administrative, support). They periodically evaluates quality of its services and resources. Evaluation results are utilized for their further improvement.

Evidences/indicators

- Quality policy;
- Internal quality assurance document;
- Quality assurance mechanisms and procedures for using evaluation results;
- Questionnaires and satisfaction surveys;
- Document management procedure;
- Non-compliance management procedure;
- Internal audit procedure;
- Service monitoring process procedure;
- Quality management system analysis results reports;
- The rule of determining the quota of students;
- Interview results.

Recommendations:

- It is recommended to increase the awareness of the personnel regarding the quality of assurance mechanisms

Suggestions:

Best Practices (if applicable):

Evaluation

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

2.3. Observing Principles of Ethics and Integrity

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

The institution has implemented mechanisms for detecting plagiarism and its prevention.

HEI follows the principles of academic freedom.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

Regarding the protection of the principles of ethics and good faith, the Batumi Maritime Academy has developed various normative acts, among them the issues of protection of ethics and good faith are included in the Academy's statutes and internal regulations. In addition, a code of ethics has been developed, which describes the goals and objectives of the code of ethics, ethical standards, values

and norms, student and staff ethical norms, rules and principles, as well as responsibilities. During the interview, it was mentioned what the procedure is in case of violation of ethics rules. The Academy has an Ethics Commission, and the decisions of the Ethics Commission in cases of disciplinary misconduct are reported to the Academic Council. It was also mentioned that issues related to academic honesty are discussed by the academic council, for instance, regarding plagiarism of master's theses.

Provision on disciplinary liability the provision describes in clauses the initiation of disciplinary investigation against academic staff and students, imposition of liability, its forms, appeal. In the case of a disciplinary investigation conducted against the academic and invited staff of the Academy, based on the disciplinary investigation conducted by the legal department and the relevant conclusion, the rector creates the permanent commission, which consists of the chairman and members.

Both academic staff and students are aware of plagiarism-related regulations, including mechanisms for responding to plagiarism. The plagiarism prevention and response rule define types of plagiarism, ways to prevent it, detection and response mechanisms. The academy uses the program Turnitin to detect plagiarism. Using it, the acceptable percentage of plagiarism when checking master theses is 30%. According to the Plagiarism prevention and response rules this amount of plagiarism is acceptable, depends on its type. During the interviews, it was mentioned that the process of introducing an electronic system is underway in the examination center, after which the plagiarism system will work properly.

The Academy has also developed a policy for combating plagiarism and establishing academic integrity, where it is noted that the rules of plagiarism and academic integrity must be used when performing and presenting scientific-research, BA diploma, master's, course projects and other types of work at the Maritime Academy.

Evidences/indicators

- Code of Ethics;
- statute;
- Bylaws;
- Provision on disciplinary responsibility;
- Plagiarism prevention and response rules;
- Interview results

Recommendations:

Suggestions:

Best Practices (if applicable):

Evaluation

- ☒ 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 programs. Program learning outcomes are clearly defined and are in line with the National Qualifications Framework. A program ensures the 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 programs.

To remain competitive and provide high-quality, market-oriented modern educational programs, the Academy regularly updates and improves its programs. The program goals and learning outcomes are clearly defined and follow the National Qualifications Framework. A program ensures the achievement of its objectives and intended learning outcomes.

The academy elaborated the special regulatory document "Rule for planning, designing and development of educational programs" which encompasses the thorough procedures from the program creation until its evaluation. The rule complies with National laws and accreditation standards.

The preparation of educational programs at the Academy involves an interactive and collaborative process. The following issues are considered: labor market requirements, international practice, etc.

According to the mentioned document, the Academy has a methodology for planning, designing, and developing educational programs. In the development of the educational program, the participation of all interested parties is taken into account. Designing and developing an educational program is an active process; employers are involved in its development so that it is in line with educational standards and labor market requirements.

As the rule considers, all interested parties have to be involved in the program designing process, among them industry representatives, employers, alumni, and students. BSMA keeps close contact with interested parties especially with alumni and employers, which has been confirmed during the site-visit and interviews. Active collaboration with employers is used for program development and the designing process. Collected feedbacks and analysis are also the basis for program designing and for its implementation.

Maritime Academy currently conducts high educational programs at bachelor and Master levels, among which are 8 bachelor and 3 are master level programs. Academy also is delivering a Georgian Language preparation educational program.

BSMA cancelled 6 educational programs since 2018 and one current program finance and insurance is planned to annul until December 2024. Main reason for annulments was a diminishing number of students.

It is recommended to use international approaches to meet the requirements of the international labor market and to do a detailed research/ feasibility study of existed Labor market before program design and implementation, to analyze thoroughly the relevance of the new program and set up the appropriate risks for program implementation and delivery process, which can ensure more sustainability in program implementation

As per procedure of program designing and implementation process, faculty conducts the first stage review of the program and afterwards it is presented to the academic council for confirmation. BSMA tries to amend the programs as per current industry requirements and always foresees the relevant technological developments, which is reflected in implementing new simulators, laboratories, literature. BSMA elaborated the main processes and mechanisms for the approving, amendment and annulment of the educational programs. In case of program annulment, Academy takes all proper actions to adjust students on other suitable for them program and assist in a mobility process.

Educational programs are continuously monitored and evaluated for effectiveness. Feedback from students, alumni, and employers is used to make ongoing improvements to the programs. Throughout this process, communication and collaboration among stakeholders are essential to ensure that the educational programs prepare students adequately for careers in the maritime industry and align with industry needs and standards.

Typically, when developing an educational program, it is crucial to take into account the results of research analyses involving various stakeholders such as students, alumni, employers, and other relevant parties. Here's why each group's input is important:

Students: Their perspectives can provide insights into what aspects of the program are effective, what could be improved, and what new areas or skills should be included to better meet current and future needs.

Alumni: They offer valuable feedback on how well the program prepared them for their careers and what skills were most useful in their professional lives. Alumni insights help in refining the program to align with real-world demands.

Employers: Feedback from employers is essential to ensure that graduates possess the skills and knowledge needed in the job market. This helps in aligning the program with industry needs and improving graduates' employability.

The Academy confirms that employers are actively involved in the development of the program. However, both during the interviews with the representatives of the academy and also during the interviews with the employers, it was determined that the involvement of the employers in the development of the program is more informal.

It is recommended to increase the involvement of graduates in program evaluation for those educational programs that have lower rates of graduate employment.

During the interview with the Academy representatives, one of the key observations was the need to strengthen proficiency in the English language. This suggests that improving English skills is seen as crucial for the Academy's goals. To address this, the Academy should prioritize ongoing efforts to enhance and maintain the English language proficiency of its students. This could include regular language training sessions, encouraging English communication in various contexts, and providing resources like language courses or materials. By doing so, the Academy can effectively meet its objectives and adapt to global communication standards as needed.

It is recommended to introduce mechanisms to raise the English language proficiency level among students in the Marine Engineering education programs.

Academy has a special rule for amending/annulling educational programs. an institution gives due consideration to the legal interests of the students and grants students an opportunity to smoothly complete an educational program or do mobility on another program.

Evidences/indicators

Rule for planning, designing and development of the Educational Programs;
Satisfaction surveys;
Site-visit Interviews;
Self-evaluation report

Recommendations:

- It is recommended to introduce mechanisms to raise English language proficiency levels among students in technician education programs (Marine Engineering and Marine Electrical Engineering).
- It is recommended to increase the involvement of graduates in program evaluation for those educational programs that have lower rates of graduate employment.
- It is recommended to use international approaches to meet the requirements of the international labor market and to do a detailed research/ feasibility study of existed

<p>Labor market before program design and implementation, to analyze thoroughly the relevance of the new program and set up the appropriate risks for program implementation and delivery process, which can ensure more sustainability in program implementation</p>
<p>Suggestions:</p>
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p>
<p>Evaluation</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements </p>
<p>3.2 Structure and Content of Educational Programmes</p>
<p>Programme learning outcomes are clearly stated and are in line with higher education level and qualification to be granted With the help of individualized education programmes, HEI takes into consideration various requirements, needs and academic readiness of students, and ensures their unhindered involvement into the educational process.</p>
<p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</p> <p>BSMA considers the current legislation and European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) requirements. Bachelor's degree educational programs require an accumulation of 240 (ECTS) credits and 120 ECTS credits are considered for Master's degree educational programs. Master programs contain research components equal to 30ECTS credits. The allowed workload for students equals 41 hours per week, in exceptional cases can be allowed to rise as high as 45 hours helping the student accumulate 60 ECTS annually.</p> <p>Formulation of learning outcomes of the program is based on the rule of formation and evaluation of learning outcomes of Educational Programs, which considers all required criteria for the higher education and National Qualification Framework. Each learning outcome is defined for the levels of knowledge and understanding, skills, responsibility, and autonomy. Learning outcomes derive from the mission of the program and reflect the results that have to be achieved after completion of the program.</p> <p>Consequently, corresponding teaching courses for each learning outcome are identified, which will assist in their achievement at different levels. Each program is composed map for learning outcomes which presents a clear picture for matching the goals of the program to learning outcomes and teaching courses.</p> <p>Programs are established for national framework documents, which are taken into consideration for the formation of learning outcomes. They are well-defined and comply with field specification and main national or international requirements.</p> <p>Each program suggests non-compulsory components, which can be elected by the student. Suggested elected components are logically connected to the program content and direction.</p> <p>The teaching and learning methods used for educational programs can vary, such as lecturing, seminars, laboratories, workshops, group working, working on simulators etc., all reflecting the</p>

specific nature of the programs. Specially for maritime programs using the practical components are essential.

For this BSMA has at its disposal a very good infrastructure including laboratories, a training basin, and modern simulators. A valuable integration in the educational programs is mandatory – but also requires intensive use with high self-employment of the students. So the trainers have to keep care, that they give the students suitable tasks and time to solve them independently. So good familiarisation and enough simulator-using time for the students are the preconditions to prepare the students for self-controlled problem-solving and decision-making.

As mentioned in the interview minimum of 50 % attendance on the lectures is required for admission on the final exam.

BSMA developed a program catalog for each program, containing all required and necessary information concerning the program and they are accessible on the web page. Most programs are delivered in Batumi, and only one bachelor program, finances, and insurance, is conducted in the Poti Branch, as it was mentioned during the interview process. However, in the presented self-evaluation report it is indicated that the program Economics is also delivered at Poti, however, in the web-uploaded program catalogs, contrary information is given, as it is stated that, the delivery place for both programs is Batumi. That can lead to confusion among students and interested parties.

BSMA has a mechanism for using individualized educational programs. The rule of planning, designing, and developing educational programs contains a special chapter regulating of creation of individualized teaching programs for persons with special needs. Regulations consider the workload, requirements for special environments, and human resources. BSMA has all the necessary adaptable environments for persons with special needs.

Evidences/indicators

Educational programs and syllabi;

Academic calendar;

Brief description of Educational programs (catalogue);

Formation and evaluation of learning outcomes of the program;

Rules for conducting sea-going practice;

Satisfaction surveys;

BSMA web-page;

Self-evaluation report;

Site-visit interviews.

Recommendations:

- It is recommended to reflect clear and correct information regarding the programs in catalogs and all concerning documents and to have more active participation from the personnel involved in the program implementation process.

Suggestions:

- It is suggested to use the existing, very good infrastructure (i.e. Simulators) more intensively and more efficient

Best Practices (if applicable):

Evaluation

- ☐ Complies with requirements
- ☒ Substantially complies with requirements
- ☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

3.3 Assessment of Learning Outcomes

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The objective of assessing the level of students' learning outcomes is to determine the relevance of students' learning results to the goals of education programs and to one of the components of the mission of the Academy - to prepare highly qualified and competent specialists.

Learning outcomes determine what a student is expected to know, understand, and be able to do by applying this knowledge upon completion of the academic process or any of its stages.

To enhance the involvement of academic staff in analyzing and improving learning outcomes, it's essential to adopt a collaborative and structured approach.

Clear and Detailed Analyses of Learning Outcomes:

Ensure that the learning outcomes are clearly defined and measurable. Use specific criteria and indicators to assess whether these outcomes are being met.

Implement regular assessments and evaluations of learning outcomes to gather data on their achievement.

Utilize feedback from students, alumni, employers, and academic staff to improve the clarity and relevance of learning outcomes.

Continuous Improvement Process:

Establish a structured process for reviewing and updating learning outcomes regularly, incorporating feedback and insights from various stakeholders.

Monitor trends in the field or industry to ensure that learning outcomes remain relevant and aligned with market demands.

Consider benchmarking against best practices in academia and industry to identify areas for improvement.

By focusing on these areas, the Academy can strengthen its educational programs, enhance student learning experiences, and maintain competitiveness in the modern educational landscape.

Assessment of learning outcomes is conducted based on the special regulatory document of BSMA "Formation and assessment of learning outcomes educational programs". The rule clearly defines the methods that can be used for the learning outcomes evaluation process: it can be direct methods, such as exams, tests, and thesis, or indirect ones, such as evaluation from students, alumnae, and employers. As the rule considers a plan shall be prepared for learning outcomes, where learning outcomes, timeframes, and corresponding learning courses will be given. For the evaluation of learning outcomes, the target marks have to be identified, that will establish the expected, ideally, desirable results. Level of Deviation from the target marks is also established and if the assessment results show a higher deviation level then learning outcomes have to be reviewed and appropriate measures have to be implemented.

BSMA makes the report on program learning outcomes in order to analyze the evaluation results. As per rule monitoring the results are conducted every 5 years for bachelor programs and every 3 years for master programs.

Student assessment and examination is conducted as per the regulatory document "student's assessment and examination procedure" which complies with Georgian legislation. Assessment form contains evaluation components, methods with their assessment criteria. Total assessment score is 100 points and assessment system have 5 positive and 2 negative assessments. Students have proper information regarding existing rules and procedures and for each course assessment criteria. Assessment system incorporates midterm assessment and final exams. BSMA has a well-established exam electronic system that can create transparent and objective approaches for evaluation. The electronic system allows to conduct evaluation of student's work anonymously, lecturer has no access to student names. Final exams are conducted on a Computer and are monitored and arranged by the exam center, which has the only access to the questions database.

Student has a right to appeal the result in case of objection. There can be two types of appeals: technical and by content. If it is a technical appeal, a student can write a statement from the electronic portal directly to lecturer, in turn lecturer can rise or even down the mark. Lecturer doesn't see the previous mark and nor the student's name. If student is not satisfied, he/she can appeal the work with commission. Commissions include faculty staff and itself lecturer of the course.

If the commission appellation is violated student has the right to apply to Vice- Rector, decision of Vice-rector is notified to the student via electronic journal

Well-established and transparent electronic system for exams, which was developed by the Academy's human resources and it represents the Academy's own product. Electronic system is on the continuous development and improvement process.

Evidences/indicators

Student assessment and examination procedure;
Educational process procedure. Bachelor Level;
Educational process procedure. Master Level;
Satisfaction surveys;
Self-evaluation report;
Site-visit interviews

Recommendations:

It is recommended to include more clear and detailed analyses in the report of learning outcomes.

- It is recommended that also academic staff should be more involved in how the learning outcomes have to be analyzed and improved.

Suggestions:

Best Practices (if applicable):

Evaluation

- ☐ 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, and support) are highly qualified so that they can 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
<p>HEI has staff management policy and procedures that ensure the implementation of educational process and other activities defined in its strategic plan.</p> <p>HEI ensures the employment of qualified academic/scientific/invited/administrative/ support staff.</p>
<p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</p> <p>BSMA's staff management policy is built on fundamental principles that emphasise justice, equality, and transparency. The policy ensures that all decisions regarding recruitment, compensation, promotion, and other HR activities are made based on objective criteria and each individual's competencies. This approach promotes fairness and non-discrimination, ensuring equal opportunities for all staff members.</p> <p>During the interviews, it was confirmed that the recruitment process at BSMA is rigorous and transparent. The academy employs a merit-based approach to hiring qualified individuals for various roles. This includes public announcements of vacancies, thorough selection procedures, and adherence to established qualification requirements. The process is designed to attract and retain competent staff who meet the institution's high standards.</p> <p>BSMA offers clear terms and conditions for staff affiliation. Academic staff can affiliate with the academy voluntarily, which involves a written agreement outlining their roles and responsibilities. Affiliated staff are actively engaged in educational and research activities and benefit from support mechanisms such as funding for conferences and research activities.</p> <p>Academic and scientific staff at BSMA are encouraged to participate in decision-making. Their involvement spans educational program development, research projects, and creative activities. This participatory approach ensures that staff contributions are valued and integrated into the institution's strategic initiatives.</p> <p>BSMA strongly emphasises staff professional development. The academy offers various training programs, workshops, and opportunities for further education. These initiatives are designed to enhance staff members' skills and knowledge and ensure they stay abreast of the latest developments in their respective fields.</p> <p>During the interviews, the evaluation team observed that the remuneration and encouragement system at BSMA is linked to performance evaluation results. The academy has established clear principles for rewarding staff based on their contributions and achievements. This includes financial incentives, professional recognition, and opportunities for career advancement.</p> <p>New employees at BSMA undergo a comprehensive onboarding process. This includes orientation sessions, mentorship programs, and regular feedback mechanisms. The goal is to integrate new staff smoothly into the academy's work environment and ensure they are effectively involved in their roles from the outset.</p> <p>BSMA maintains detailed records and statistical data on its staff. This information includes demographic details, qualifications, professional achievements, and feedback from satisfaction surveys. The data is used to inform HR policies and ensure continuous improvement in staff management.</p> <p>BSMA regularly conducts staff evaluations and satisfaction surveys. The results of these assessments are actively used to refine HR policies and practices. This feedback loop helps the academy address any issues promptly and maintain a motivated and satisfied workforce.</p> <p>BSMA sets clear benchmarks for staff performance and institutional activities. These benchmarks are regularly reviewed and updated to remain relevant and challenging. Continuously improving these benchmarks is critical to BSMA's commitment to excellence.</p> <p>BSMA has established detailed qualification requirements for all staff categories. These requirements are based on job descriptions, specific functions, and compliance with relevant legislation. This ensures all staff members have the qualifications and competencies to fulfill their roles effectively.</p> <p>The qualifications of BSMA staff are aligned with the institution's standards, which are harmonised with the requirements of the law on higher education. Regular audits and evaluations ensure that all staff members possess the required qualifications and continue to meet the high standards expected by the academy. This alignment is crucial for maintaining the quality and integrity of BSMA's educational and administrative processes.</p>

<p>BSMA involves active seafarers as invited staff in their educational program. This leads to the fact, that the topics are always on the state of the art, and the relationship to active officers and engineers is very valuable for the students. To ensure, that there is a continuous presence BSMA uses its own Database of active seafarers, which is very helpful. In addition, the involvement of invited staff in the structures and mission of the academy is remarkable. The expert panel members have certain concerns regarding the ratio of academics to invited staff. Obviously, there are more invited academic staff available than permanent academic staff. The ratios administrative/support staff; Academic/scientific staff-students ratio; Administrative staff-students ratio; Staff retention rate is adequate.</p>
<p>Evidences/indicators</p> <p>Self-evaluation report; Site-visit interviews</p>
<p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is recommended to check the ratio of academics to invited staff. Obviously, there are more invited academic staff available than permanent academic staff.
<p>Suggestions:</p>
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p>
<p>Evaluation</p> <p>Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements </p>
<p>4.2. Academic/Scientific and Invited Staff Workload</p>
<p>The number and workload of academic/scientific and invited staff is adequate for HEI's educational programs and scientific-research activities, and also other functions assigned to them</p>
<p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</p> <p>BSMA is well equipped with experienced academic staff, nevertheless a remarkable number of invited staff is engaged to support them. This combination has considerable advantages: in addition to flexibility, it also offers state-of-the-art training close to the practice and a high degree of autonomy with regard to the professions being studied. This practice places high demands on semester planning, especially when it comes to active seafarers, whose voyage planning can often not be very precise. The BSMA responds to this with a database of suitable and interested candidates who can also take on teaching assignments at short notice. Professional continuity is guaranteed by standardised training documents and plans that can be shared between the instructors.</p> <p>The expert panel members have certain concerns regarding the ratio of academics to invited staff. Obviously, there are more invited academic staff available than permanent academic staff. Combined with the positive fact that the invited lecturers are involved in all other areas of university life in addition to teaching, this raises the question of the workload and whether quality does not suffer in the long term under these circumstances. This raises the question of the reasons why more permanent academic staff are not or cannot be acquired, what opportunities there are to attract young and experienced staff for a fully academic career, and who attract them to become academic</p>

staff. Academic staff defines his/her primary affiliation to a single HEI based on an agreement between the academic staff and the HEI. And to also pay attention to affiliated staff number.
Evidences/indicators Self-evaluation report; Site-visit interviews
Recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is recommended to identify the reasons that prevent invited staff from joining the permanent academic staff and try to remove these obstacles in a targeted manner • It is recommended that the personnel's workload (academic/administrative) be revised to ensure they have a balanced workload for administrative, teaching, and research roles.
Suggestions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BSMA should identify the reasons that prevent invited staff from joining the permanent academic staff and try to remove these obstacles in a targeted manner • It is suggested to prove the approach that in addition to competitive pay (which is likely to be particularly difficult for seafarers), also the opportunity for research and academic qualifications could be an incentive
Best Practices (if applicable): BSMA involves active seafarers as invited staff in their educational program. This leads to the fact, that the topics are always on the state of the art, and the relationship to active officers and engineers is very valuable for the students. To ensure, that there is a continuous presence BSMA uses its own Database of active seafarers, which is very helpful. In addition, the involvement of invited staff in the structures and mission of the academy is remarkable.
Evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements

5. Students and Their Support Services

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

5.1. The Rule for Obtaining and Changing Student Status, the Recognition of Education, and Student Rights
For each of the educational levels, HEI has developed regulations for assignment, suspension, and termination of student status, mobility, qualification granting, issuing educational documents as well as recognition of education received during the learning period. HEI ensures the protection of student rights and lawful interests.
Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements During the visit to Batumi State Maritime Academy, the expert team had a chance to see the necessary documentation which are required under the "Law of Georgia on Higher Education" and other regulatory or normative documents. It can be said that the university has all the required documents about the processes of suspension and termination of student status and mobility (Appendix 5.1.1). As for the international students, who want to study in the academy they have to undergo specific steps and present required documents (Appendix 5.1.1). All this information is sent to students at the beginning of the study year and the documents are available on their student portal as well.

<p>There is a contract between university and students which contains information about Academy duties and rights, students' rights and duties, information about tuition fees. In terms of appealing procedures (Appendix 3.3.1) students can appeal their final grades in three days after receiving results.</p> <p>Students can also participate in the exchange programs (Appendix 6.1.6) and the detailed information about the programs are usually available on the academy's facebook page or/and on their webpage.</p> <p>Students can also see Student Guide on the webpage, which provides them with general information about the academy, programs and student services.</p>
<p>Evidences/indicators</p> <p>Regulation documents Interview with students Academy Webpage</p>
<p>Recommendations:</p>
<p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is suggested that Students self-government become more informed and more independent and can be more active therewith
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p>
<p>Evaluation</p> <p>Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements</p>
<p>5.2 Student Support Services</p>
<p>Students at BSMA are introduced to the student services available at the beginning of the study year. They are also sent questionnaires by the quality assurance office to evaluate their lecturers and programs.</p> <p>When a student has negative feedback, the dean, program coordinator, and quality assurance manager discuss it together.</p> <p>Students have a student portal which gives them a chance to see their timetable, exam schedules and grades, and in case of unsatisfactory exam results, students can appeal the grade directly through the student portal, they should write a statement and specify what is the problem. Students were aware of the appealing procedures.</p> <p>Students can also choose their exam dates themselves according to their convenience.</p> <p>They can access the e-library as well using their special ID given by the academy.</p> <p>Students can also see most of the documents and news on their student portal. Whenever there are new projects or exchange programs students can see the details on their student portal or the university's social media and webpage.</p> <p>The university has career support services (Appendix 5.2.1) which provide students with useful information about current job opportunities and internships, projects, and conferences. They offer students the necessary training on job interviews and CVs, to get employed later on. The university tries to strengthen cooperation with the international and local sectors to support their students' employment. University organizes different events, and job affairs, where different company</p>

<p>representatives are invited and students have a chance to meet them and receive feedback and information about their professional development. The university receives feedback from employers about their graduates and monitors how satisfied employers are and what could be improved in the program. As for the communication with the alumni, the university has social groups with them and they share information through the groups. Students highlighted that they can use consultancy hours whenever they need.</p> <p>University offers students extracurricular activities. They have teams in different sports such as football, basketball, and volleyball; they have a music band, Georgian National Dance Club...</p> <p>The academy has a student self-governance that plans and organizes different extracurricular activities in the academy, however, self-governance is not independent in terms of budget, and they need to plan details beforehand and then agree to the event details with the administration.</p> <p>Student Self-governance supports students if needed in terms of the educational process if they have some questions but during the interview with the representatives of SSG, it was clear that they are not fully informed about their duties and support they can provide the students with and how to do it.</p> <p>Students can use scholarships and a flexible tuition fee scheme. If students have problems with the payments due to different reasons, they can address the administration and discuss the case. The academy has special tuition discounts for students whose siblings already study in the academy and also for orphan students.</p>
<p>Evidences/indicators</p> <p>Interview with the students Interview with the administration and lecturers Interview with student self-governance representatives Contract samples</p>
<p>Recommendations:</p>
<p>Suggestions:</p>
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p>
<p>Evaluation</p> <p>Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements</p>

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, ensure proper conditions to support research activities, and improve the quality of research activities

<p>6.1 Research Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 that are relevant to the specifics of the field
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Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

BSMA integrates teaching and research with economic development by collaborating with industry partners and conducting research that drives technological and industrial innovation. This collaboration enhances the relevance and application of academic study, contributing to regional and national economic development.

BSMA engages in various research and creative activities that significantly impact scientific, social, economic, and cultural development. These activities are carried out at multiple levels, from local to international, ensuring that BSMA's contributions are widespread and impactful.

BSMA has a strategic vision for its role in research and development. The institution has established and continues implementing complex research and creative projects aligning with its mission and strategic goals. These initiatives are planned meticulously to ensure they meet the highest standards of excellence.

BSMA ensures that the findings from its research activities are incorporated into its teaching programs. This integration enriches students' educational experience, providing them with up-to-date knowledge and practical insights derived from ongoing research projects.

BSMA has well-defined roles and responsibilities for MA student supervisors. These supervisors guide research projects, provide academic mentorship, and ensure that research activities meet the institution's high standards.

BSMA upholds stringent standards for evaluating and defending dissertations. The process is designed to be public, transparent, and fair, involving highly qualified academic and scientific staff to ensure the integrity and quality of the evaluation.

BSMA already made a high effort to meet the requirements of standard 6. So a relevant structural unit was established to encourage and coordinate research activities, a strategic plan, procedures, and rules were defined, there were meetings with local stakeholders, and so on. Between 20-30 articles were published each year within the last 4 years and BSMA is active in IAMU – research – including young academic staff – and was holding the IAMU AGA 21 in Batumi. An internal competition for research projects has been launched on 10 July 2020. For the selection of scientific research projects, a commission was established, which included BSMA Emeritus staff, representatives of BSMA administration, and the Georgian Maritime Regulatory Authority - the Maritime Transport Agency. Competitive applications were submitted and reviewed in accordance with the "Rules for Implementation and Financing of R&D Projects". 8 applications were submitted, out of which 6 projects were fully funded from the internal budget of the Academy. Furthermore, BSMA is pushing a process to realize doctoral – programs – in collaboration with national and international Universities and partners. So, the strategic plan and the support of the HEI are given - anyhow the activities of the academic staff seem to be variable. Apart from the special challenges in the last years, caused by the pandemic situation, there is a specific challenge caused by seafaring invited staff and master-students. This fact is recognized by the academy already.

For various research activities, BSMA has an excellent infrastructure (laboratories, workshops, simulators, software licenses, and access to online libraries like "Science Direct"..). Furthermore, BSMA is an active member of IAMU which allows contributing to conferences with scientific and student research presentations.

To sum up, it can be said, that BSMA is on the right track, draws the right conclusions from their critical observations, and is ready and active to set the right signals.

To take part in the leading research of present topics an increased international cooperation would be helpful – also to acquire highly promoted research projects.

If this can be achieved continuously, a solid base of research staff can be built up, which can then successfully work on further topics over a longer period and give research at the BSMA a special profile in the international research landscape.

Evidences/indicators

Self-evaluation report;

Site-visit interviews

Recommendations:
Suggestions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is suggested to develop more activities to implement research projects favored in international current topics It is suggested to increase the encouragement of the university side, regarding the installation of boundary conditions; for growing research teams by giving one or more focal points, letting different research groups work interdisciplinary on selected major topics
Best Practices (if applicable): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For various research activities, BSMA has excellent infrastructure (laboratories, workshops, simulators, software licenses, and access to online libraries like "Science Direct"..). Furthermore, BSMA is an active member of IAMU which allows contributing to conferences with scientific and student research presentations.
Evaluation Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements
6.2. Research Support and Internationalisation
HEI has an effective system in place for supporting research, development and creative activities Attracting new staff and their involvement in research/arts-creative activities. University works on internationalisation of research, development and creative activities.
Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements The evaluation of the research support and internationalization is orientated on these standard requirements: <p style="text-align: center;"><i>1. HEI continuously works to increase the effectiveness of its research, development and creative services.</i></p> <p>BSMA actively supports research and activities to advance new knowledge and innovative approaches. The institution encourages its academic and scientific staff to explore diverse research topics and creative practices, fostering a culture of continuous intellectual growth and discovery. BSMA has established an effective system for attracting and supporting new staff in research and creative activities. The institution encourages student involvement in its scientific and creative projects, providing them with opportunities to develop their skills and pursue their academic interests.</p> <p>As already pointed out, the success of these endeavors is particularly right now, not all academic staff and students seem to be motivated enough – or don't see their possibilities to make an effort in research activities.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>2. The dynamic of funding allocated for research, development and creative/performing activities during last 5 years;</i></p> <p>The funding procedures at BSMA are designed to be public, transparent, and fair. The institution ensures that all research funding opportunities are openly advertised and the selection process is based on clear, objective criteria.</p> <p>This approach promotes trust and equity in the distribution of research funds.</p> <p>BSMA offers comprehensive support to its academic and scientific staff in securing research funding. This includes assistance with identifying funding sources, drafting grant proposals, and navigating</p>

legal issues. The institution also provides administrative support for grant management and reporting, ensuring efficient use of research funds and compliance with funding requirements.

3. HEI implements joint research, creative-arts projects/activities with international partners. It is involved in EU scientific-research programs, has institutional cooperation with international research/arts centers, is engaged in various international scientific/arts-creative activities

BSMA is aware this requirement and active to implement joint research with international partners and to be involved in EU scientific-research programs. Right now, these activities are not completely successfully, the possible reasons are already discussed in standard 6.1. Here it should be pointed out, that BSMA is trying everything to fulfill this requirements. Institutional cooperation with international research centers are given, here we can emphasise the active role in IAMU, witch includes active international collaboration also in maritime relevant research. Anyhow, some staff is claiming for higher budget for research activities and international conferences.

4. HEI supports the implementation of joint MA and PhD programs. It also supports joint supervision practices by international and local professors.

BSMA is pushing a process to realize joint master – and doctoral – programs – in collaboration with national and international Universities and partners. The supervision practices by international and local professors are in force – so BSMA is under supervision o international professors to restructure their courses in marine navigation. For marine technical, and electro technical study-courses the involvement of international academic experts are planned.

Evidences/indicators

- Self-evaluation report;
- Site-visit interviews

Recommendations:

Suggestions:

- It is suggested to make a SWOT analysis regarding research possibilities to find out possible and requested topics – find international partners and research programs
- It is suggested to find scientific staff for research projects that can work continuously on one – and maybe at following projects in the same direction aiming to build up and hold competencies in selected topics
- It is suggested to encourage more active participation in research activities making research activities attractive (time, qualification chances, participation in international conferences)

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

BSMA is committed to enhancing the effectiveness of its research, development, and creative services. The institution regularly evaluates research activities and implements strategies to improve quality and impact.

BSMA has implemented a system for evaluating and analysing the quality of its research and creative activities. This evaluation includes assessing the productivity of scientific research units and the performance of academic and scientific staff. Specific rules for implementing and financing scientific research projects guide the process. The evaluation aims to ensure that research activities are aligned with the institution's goals and contribute to the educational process, graduate employability, and the development of new programs and training courses.

BSMA publishes detailed reports on its research activities at the end of each calendar year. These reports include the results of ongoing research projects, participation in scientific conferences, and contributions to new educational programs. The publication of these reports enhances the transparency and accountability of BSMA's research endeavors, showcasing the institution's achievements and increasing its status and rating in international classification.

The results from evaluating research activities are systematically used to inform and improve future research and creative projects at BSMA. The Education Quality Assurance Service at BSMA assesses the quality of planned research activities and evaluates the implementation of these plans based on annual reports. Identified deficiencies and non-conformities are considered when developing new action plans for subsequent years, ensuring continuous research quality and productivity improvement.

For this point, it should be proved, that the QAS has the competencies to assess the quality of research activities. Qualified academic staff should be involved to ensure the quality of evaluating research activities.

Evidences/indicators

- Self-evaluation report;
- Site-visit interviews

Recommendations:

It is recommended to prove, that the QAS has the competencies to assess the quality of research activities. Qualified academic staff should be involved to ensure the quality of evaluating research activities.

Suggestions:

Best Practices (if applicable):

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 the sustainable, stable, effective, and efficient functioning of the institution, and the achievement of goals defined through a 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 programs and research activities, and corresponds to the existing number of students and planned enrolment.

HEI offers the environment necessary for implementing educational activities: sanitary units, natural light possibilities, and a central heating system.

The 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

Batumi Maritime Academy carries out educational and training processes in Batumi and since 2018 in the Poti branch. Since 2018, it has also owned the training ship "CADET". The total area of the academy is 22,289.33 sq.m., of which the teaching area is 10,581.47 sq.m., and the auxiliary area is 11,707.86 sq.m. The Academy has presented documents confirming ownership of real estate and a ship. Also, during the visit of experts, the said property was inspected. Information about the movable property on the balance sheet of the Academy as of January 1, 2024, is presented in the relevant document. For the ship "CADET", the inland navigation ship registration certificate certified by the Maritime Transport Agency of Georgia, as well as the ship's radio station certificate, have been issued. The ship's safety certificate is valid until the end of April 2026. From the available documents and inspection, it is confirmed that the educational programs are provided with the appropriate material and technical base, as well as the available simulators and laboratories provide opportunities for conducting research. Both in Batumi and in the Poti branch there are theoretical and laboratory teaching auditoriums equipped with modern technologies, conference halls, professorships, and training center rooms. The Academy has signed memorandums with the practice facilities. The experts also checked the sanitary units, where the sanitary-hygienic standards are observed, the library, study rooms, and the archive. Recreation spaces are equipped with appropriate material means. As a result of student surveys, based on their request, a cafeteria has been opened and is functioning in the academy. The Academy has a dormitory in Batumi, which consists of 10 rooms for students, with a shared kitchen, bathroom, and toilets, and one apartment for invited guests. As can be seen from the inspection, the dormitory needs to be modernized. Also, it should be noted that the building where the dormitory is located is an ordinary residential building and is not separated from the academy, it is located in the yard of the academy. Safety norms are observed in educational/scientific research laboratories. All laboratories are monitored by video cameras at the request of the Maritime Agency. The list of educational infrastructure and material-technical base coincides with the bases seen by experts. Documents confirming the payment of electricity, water, and natural gas are presented, as well as the labor contract regarding the supervision of the heating system. The academy has a doctor's office, a schedule of medications checked by experts, and a registration log of the use of the doctor's services. The Academy has a contract for services related to public safety, law and order, and a report on building security is presented. Fire safety inventory, fire safety rules, evacuation plans, fire safety contracts were checked by experts. During the inspection, it was found that the emergency exit door in the 2nd building of the Academy in Batumi is made of iron and opens from the outside to the inside. Security guards ensure order in the academy, as a result of inspection, it is confirmed that video cameras are installed, which store information for a period of 2 weeks.

During the experts' visit, the institution had no students with disabilities, although one teacher required an adapted environment. The academy's environment has been adapted, an elevator installed, ramps and sanitary facilities arranged. Buildings have the central heating system.

Evidences/indicators

- Document confirming real estate - extract from the public register;
- measuring drawings (Batumi, Poti);
- certified documentation of movable property;
- ship "CADET" documentation;
- list of educational infrastructure and material-technical bases;
- Agreements signed with practice facilities within educational programs;
- Receipts confirming the payment of electricity, water and natural gas;
- Agreement on supervision of the heating system;
- a document confirming compliance with sanitary norms;

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Documentation confirming ownership of medical inventory and security cameras; - Persons responsible for finding medical assistance; - Conclusion on building safety; - document on fire safety; - documentation confirming the adapted environment; - Interview and inspection results.
Recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is recommended to separate the teaching/learning, training area, and auxiliary spaces of the academy from the residential building(s) of the citizens • It is recommended to replace the door of the evacuation exit (should not be made of iron and should be opened from the inside to the outside)
Suggestions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is suggested to modernize the dormitory
Best Practices (if applicable):
Evaluation Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard <input type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements
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 Batumi Maritime Academy has 2 libraries: in Batumi and Poti. Both consist of a reading room equipped with computers, a projector, a printer, a copier, a scanner, and the Internet. Also, the libraries have a bookstore, a space for group work, which would be desirable if it were larger (in the case of Batumi). Rules for using the library are posted in both branches, and it is also posted on the web page. The experts randomly checked the literature specified in the syllabuses of the educational programs, which the academy had in the library book fund and processed in a library manner. The library is included in the international electronic library network. In the last 5 years, the statistics of the use of electronic resources of the library were high during the pandemic, the figure for 2023 is relatively low and it is 470. Both students and Academy staff have access to the electronic catalog outside the Academy premises. Scientific electronic databases and their usage statistics were verified by experts. The library staff has a professional knowledge of library work, freely uses the library management system, in particular, the electronic catalog, the search system, the electronic journal of the use of library services. Interviews at various meetings confirmed that the library periodically conducts various types of training for students and professors. Student and staff surveys include questions about the library. The dynamics of the library budget is increasing. The students and staff have access to international library databases. They have the access to bases from all places.
Evidences/indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rules for using the library; - Document confirming the book fund; - Documentation confirming involvement in the international electronic library network; - Description of electronic services; - Interview and inspection results.

Recommendations:
Suggestions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is suggested to increase the workspace of students in the library in Batumi
Best Practices (if applicable):
Evaluation Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements
7.3 Information Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HEI has created infrastructure for information technologies and its administration and accessibility are ensured. Electronic services and electronic management systems are implemented and mechanisms for their constant improvement are in place. HEI ensures business continuity. HEI has a functional web page in Georgian and English languages.
Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements The information technology management policy and procedures of the Batumi Maritime Academy define the information technology management policy and procedures implemented in the academy, the manner of their use, the infrastructure and development mechanisms of information technology, the use of electronic systems in the educational, scientific and administrative activities of the academy and establish the related responsibilities. To evaluate the effectiveness of information systems, as mentioned in the interviews, logs are checked daily. During the verification of information resources by experts, the server space was checked both in Batumi and Poti. The Batumi server is equipped with a more powerful server, 6 hard drives are installed, each with a capacity of 2 terabytes. Both servers are protected by a network administrator. It was also stated in the self-assessment report, and it was mentioned in the interviews that the licenses of the servers should be renewed. To store a larger volume of information, the academy uses cloud technologies and backups are made for reserves. Documents confirming the existence of the Internet are presented, however, it should be noted that the WIFI connection is not perfect, which means that a full-fledged Internet connection is not possible in the entire university space (including the courtyard, in some places). The Maritime Academy uses the electronic document circulation system DES, the principles of which have been verified by experts. Also, an electronic management system has been implemented in the academy, which is available for staff and students. As revealed from the interviews, it is planned to improve the student registration system. The Maritime Academy has a website just in Georgian language. According to the public relations strategy and confirmed interviews, information is uploaded to the web page in agreement with the quality assurance department and the public relations department. The people responsible for the administration of the web page are ISO manager, IT service specialist, public relations specialist. The Academy also presented an annual risk mitigation plan, which also addresses IT risks. During the interviews, it was revealed that the academy needs to improve its IT infrastructure in terms of cyber security. The self-assessment report also states that both hardware and software (Firewall, anti-virus) must be purchased for security purposes.
Evidences/indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information technology management policies and procedures; - Documents confirming the existence of the Internet; - Domain, hosting-confirmation document;

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public relations strategy; - Job description of persons responsible for website administration; - Interview and inspection results.
<p>Evaluation</p> <p>Please mark the checkbox that mostly describes your position related to the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Fully complies with requirements</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements</p>
<p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Its recommended to improve the IT infrastructure, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → WIFI connection (should be possible throughout the university space) and → Implementation of appropriate hardware and software in terms of cyber security • It is recommended that the content for the website be provided both in Georgian and English languages
<p>Suggestions:</p>
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p>
<p>7.4 Financial Resources</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</p> <p>The Batumi Maritime Academy has developed a rule for drawing up a budget, which underwent changes in 2023. According to this document, priority programs for the budget and their performance evaluation indicators are defined. Program Budgeting Methodology, Faculty, Branch and Center Support Program, Management, Regulatory and Infrastructure/Capital Program and Student/Professional Student Support Program are budgeting priorities. When drawing up a budget, budget applications are represented by structural units. Academic staff from the faculties are involved in the process. For example, their involvement takes place in the sense that they have a request to purchase literature for their subjects and similar issues. The academic staff discusses the budget at the faculty council and a decision is made.</p> <p>The Academy has a reporting system. Budget spending decisions are made by the Vice Rector, together with other departments and faculties. Procurement is done in a systematic way: planning, procurement, management and evaluation.</p> <p>The sources of financing of the Academy are the following: financing from the state budget, financing from the budget of Adjara Government, international targeted grant, grants from the central LEPLs/NGOs, own incomes, other incomes allowed by the legislation of Georgia. The dynamics of the last 5 years of financing of the Maritime Academy are presented, where the increasing dynamics can be seen. Financial risks were also mentioned during the interviews. If the Academy did not receive the expected revenues, then changes are made in the budget, diversification sources are sought, for example, governmental, local.</p> <p>The dynamics of the Maritime Academy's budget were discussed in detail by experts, because according to the data presented in the self-evaluation report, financial fluctuations were felt depending on the years, however, during the interviews, it became clear that a sharp increase in the budget was observed as a result of the joining of the Poti branch in 2018, while the dynamics of the</p>

previous and following years were less. Also, the 2022 budget was significantly higher, which was caused by the organization and holding of the IAMU conference.

Although the overall budget of the Maritime Academy is increasing in 2024 compared to 2023, the rate of funding for scientific research activities is reduced.

The mentioned facts were confirmed by the presented documents and materials.

The Maritime Academy monitors and analyzes the results of the budget once in 6 months, based on which, if necessary, it adjusts the budget. - Also, once a year, an external audit is conducted in the Maritime Academy by the State Audit Service.

Evidences/indicators

- Budget preparation procedure;
- Funding sources;
- Budget;
- Financial reports;
- Interview results.

Recommendations:

- It is recommended to increase the funding for scientific research activities

Suggestions:

Best Practices (if applicable):

Evaluation

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