Higher Education Institution Authorisation Experts' Final Report

LEPL - Tbilisi State Medical University

Expert Panel Members

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CoChair: Professor Margus Viigimaa, Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia

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Tbilisi

2024

General information on the educational institution

Established nearly a century ago, Tbilisi State Medical University (TSMU) has played a pivotal role in the development of medical education in Georgia. Beginning with the inception of its Faculty of Medicine in 1918, the institution expanded with the establishment of the Medical Institute in 1930 and achieved university status in 1992 as Tbilisi State Medical University. A significant milestone occurred in 2006 when TSMU integrated the State Medical Academy of Georgia, confirming its position as a leading educational institution in the Caucasus region.

TSMU boasts a robust academic portfolio spanning one-cycle educational programs, undergraduate, master's, and doctoral programs, featuring specialized courses in both English and Russian languages. The university's offerings include 7 one-cycle medical education programs, 8 Bachelor's degree programs (including 2 in English), 11 Master's degree programs, 4 PhD programs, and a Georgian Language Preparatory Program. Currently, TSMU hosts approximately 3400 international students from 84 countries, enriching its diverse academic community.

In support of the health care programmes TSMU operates five clinics: The First University Clinic, Givi Zhvania Pediatric Academic Clinic, TSMU and Ingorokva High Medical Technology University Clinic, Apollon Urushadze Dental Clinic, and #1 Dental Clinic. The university also houses two prestigious research institutions: the Vladimer Bakhutashvili Institute of Medical Biotechnology and the Iovel Kutateladze Institute of Pharmacochemistry. These facilities underscore TSMU's commitment to medical education, scientific research, and international collaboration.

Further enhancing its educational mission, TSMU is home to the Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Continuous Professional Development, the Academic Development Centre, and serves as the Regional Representation of the Association for Medical Education in Europe (AMEE), functioning as the AMEE International Networking Centre in Georgia. These initiatives solidify TSMU's reputation as a hub for medical education excellence and innovation in the region.

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

The Self Evaluation Report and associated documents were submitted to the expert panel on May 21, 2024. The Self-Evaluation Report (SER) was approximately 164 pages long and was comprehensive, providing extensive detail in all sections. It included hyperlinks to evidentiary documents whenever possible, enhancing its credibility and ease of reference. The SER identified strengths in all seven standard areas and highlighted significant areas for improvement across these standards. This thorough analysis demonstrated a broad understanding of TSMU's operations both within individual teams and across the entire institution. Furthermore, it showcased a significant level of institutional awareness regarding the progress made over time and the strategic direction for future development.

Panel members assigned themselves to the standard sections aligning with their expertise, each taking a lead role. However, they explored beyond their designated areas during their review of the provided data. Specific areas of inquiry were prepared in anticipation of the site visit.

The site visit occurred from June 10 to June 14, following a detailed schedule encompassing meetings and visits to various locations. These included sessions with senior management, administration teams, Deans, Heads of programs, the SER and quality assurance team, representatives from all educational departments and related support units, research department representatives, academic and guest staff, students, alumni, and employers as scheduled over three days.

Additionally, specific site visits were conducted as follows:

- Day 3: Visits to five facilities

    1. TSSU Apollon Urushadze University Dental Clinic
    2. The First University Clinic of TSMU
    3. Ken Walker University Clinic of Medical Rehabilitation
    4. G. Zhvania Paediatric Clinic
    5. I. Kutateladze Institute of Pharmacochemistry
    *** there was insufficient time to visit TSMU & High Technology Medical Centre University Clinic.

- Day 4: Visit to campus teaching facilities including the Sports Centre, Arts Centre, Simulation Centre, and Genetics laboratory.

During these visits, the panel identified additional documents that could provide further insights, which were promptly provided before the conclusion of the visit. All members of the expert panel asked questions of the TSMU representatives and contributed to the informal feedback given to TSMU at the end of the visit.

Overview of the HEI's compliance with standards

TSMU was found to be fully compliant with all seven standards. While a few areas of 'best practice' have been highlighted, TSMU is generally considered to be operating at a very high standard in most areas. Suggestions are included here to support their plans for ongoing growth and development.

Summary of Recommendations
None

Summary of Suggestions

1.2 The addition of AI as a new strategic priority shows TSMU's forward-thinking approach and readiness to adopt transformative technologies. While early projects are underway, maintaining a broad perspective on AI's impact in medical education and staying open to new ideas perhaps through the planned public discussion of the Strategic Plan will further strengthen TSMU's leadership in innovation within Georgia and beyond.

2.1 Given TSMU's well-established reputation in delivery of AMEE-ESME courses, there may be opportunities to develop an increasingly autonomous approach to delivery in light of potential changes within AMEE.

2.1 It is suggested that the Senior Executive leadership team at TSMU maintain a broad perspective to limit any adverse consequences related to the high-risk areas identified in the Business Continuity Plan. These areas include, but are not limited to, international student flow. The preventive measures outlined in the plan require vigilant oversight and strategic action to effectively address these challenges.

2.2 While TMSU teams adhere strictly to protocols, occasional deviations can occur. Embracing continuous learning and adaptation will strengthen QA practices and foster resilience. Encouraging open communication and proactive feedback channels will help identify and address deviations early, contributing to ongoing growth and success.

2.3 As part of the planned efforts to encourage students and staff to publish more widely, TSMU might consider implementing a process where authors can use anti-plagiarism tool - "Strikeplagiarism" to self-check their work before submission for publication. This initiative aims to enhance authors' confidence in their writing by ensuring they have not inadvertently made errors, rather than implying any concern about plagiarism.

3.2 TSMU might consider developing ways to enhance its educational approach by promoting inter and intra-professional learning among students in all of its professional disciplines. Learning together would provide valuable insights into diverse professional perspectives and responsibilities, preparing students for effective collaboration in the multidisciplinary healthcare teams when they enter the workforce.

3.2 Given students' enthusiasm for skill development through bedside teaching, particularly noting the effective group sizes of 10-12 students in clinical settings with at times groups being split into even smaller units , TSMU might explore ways to adapt this model across all MD programmes. This initiative aims to enhance the quality of bedside teaching opportunities for students, ensuring more individualized learning experiences in clinical environments.

3.2 TSMU might consider enhancing learning by exploring the flipped classroom technique. Recorded lectures and tutorials on an online portal allow students to review content beforehand, freeing up in-person sessions for interactive learning. This approach supports TSMU's commitment to effective education and utilizes their strong virtual learning environment for flexibility.

3.3 To enhance educational practices, TSMU might also consider creating a longitudinal student portfolio. This would help students develop professional attributes through reflective practice throughout their studies and beyond. Integrating the portfolio into the university's framework supports documenting academic and professional growth, fostering lifelong learning and career development.

3.3 As TSMU works on expanding the number of domain-based OSCE stations, it is suggested to move towards integrating assessment development activities across both the existing checklist-based porograms and the American MD program to enhance the overall quality and comprehensiveness of skill evaluation.

4.1 Given the average age of academic staff is 58 years, with professors averaging 63 years, associate professors 57 years, and assistant professors 55 years, there is a clear need to lower the overall age,

especially among assistant professors. This approach would not only enhance succession planning but also optimize input from faculty actively engaged in current healthcare practices.

5.2 TSMU might consider enhancing its approach to providing career development support for international students, particularly by increasing awareness of early career pathways in their home countries through additional targeted events..

6.1 To develop further the journal "Georgian Biomedical News" with an international editorial board and good opportunities to become a journal with an impact factor >0.5.

6.1 As part of the planned efforts to develop commercialization in research TSMU might encourage additional ways to expand these types of activities and in a timely manner to maintain and build on enthusiasm.

6.2 To fully exploit the TSMU potential in interdisciplinary and applied research, it is suggested that TSMU make more emphasis on cooperation among the faculties and encourage joint research projects.

6.2 To increase its research funding, TMSU might consider the following options beyond its current participation in Horizon Europe:

- Twinning Projects: Engage in projects with EU Member States to achieve concrete results through peer-to-peer activities.
- EU International Partnership Grants: Apply for grants available to organizations meeting specific requirements.
- SKYENET Project: Participate in the EU-funded SKYENET project, which supports disadvantaged youth by providing essential knowledge and skills.
- Joint Ventures with Industry Partners and Start-Ups: Collaborate with industry partners and start-up companies to open new funding avenues and practical applications for research.

7.1 As part of the plan to continue the modernization and adaptation of the infrastructure of the university for persons with special needs. Due to consideration of the issue mentioned in the strategic development documents and next year's budget, reconstruction and adaptations of the library and examination center are given as suggestions.

7.3 TMSU might consider increasing the functionality of the LMS system to integrate the courses pre-requisite system into LMS to simplify the process of student self-registration. It also might consider ways to facilitate access to study materials and communication with administrative staff and tutors.

Summary of the Best Practices

2.1 TSMU's International Office is to be congratulated for its exemplary coordination of student recruitment, admissions, and strategic partnerships across diverse international landscapes. Their commitment to best practices and strategic alignment is commendable

3.1 TSMU's proactive introduction of new courses to address workforce gaps in Georgia's professional disciplines shows a strong commitment to healthcare development. These steps are impressive and will positively impact healthcare services and foster stronger partnerships with employers, who are clearly actively contributing to and supporting your initiatives.

6.2 The proactive Doctoral Scholarship programme with research funding aligned to staff recruitment which has already proven to be an excellent method of developing TSMU's own future academic leaders
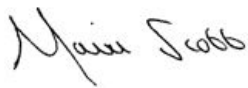
7.4 Overall TSMU's comprehensive investments have not only enhanced its internal operations but also brought about a palpable sense of positivity among both staff and students, bringing about a strong sense of belonging and engagement within the institution.

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	☒	☐	☐	☐
1.1	Mission of HEI	☒	☐	☐	☐
1.2	Strategic development	☒	☐	☐	☐
2.	Organisational structure and management of HEI	☒	☐	☐	☐
2.1	Organisational structure and management	☒	☐	☐	☐
2.2	Internal quality assurance mechanisms	☒	☐	☐	☐
2.3	Observing principles of ethics and integrity	☒	☐	☐	☐
3.	Educational Programmes	☒	☐	☐	☐
3.1	Design and development of educational programmes	☒	☐	☐	☐
3.2	Structure and content of educational programmes	☒	☐	☐	☐
3.3	Assessment of learning outcomes	☒	☐	☐	☐
4	Staff of the HEI	☒	☐	☐	☐
4.1	Staff management	☒	☐	☐	☐
4.2	Academic/Scientific and invited Staff workload	☒	☐	☐	☐
5	Students and their support services	☒	☐	☐	☐
5.1	The Rule for obtaining and changing student status, the recognition of education, and student rights	☒	☐	☐	☐
5.2	Student support services	☒	☐	☐	☐
6	Research, development and/or other creative work	☒	☐	☐	☐
6.1	Research activities	☒	☐	☐	☐
6.2	Research support and internationalisation	☒	☐	☐	☐
6.3	Evaluation of research activities	☒	☐	☐	☐
7	Material, information and financial resources	☒	☐	☐	☐
7.1	Material resources	☒	☐	☐	☐
7.2	Library resources	☒	☐	☐	☐
7.3	Information resources	☒	☐	☐	☐
7.4	Financial resources	☒	☐	☐	☐

Signature of expert panel members

1. Professor Mairi Scott (Chair)

2. Professor Margus Viigimaa (Co-chair)

3. Professor Nino Chikhladze

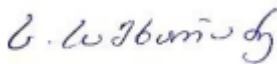4. Professor Vladimer Margvelashvili (Member)

5. Dr Lana Bokuchava (Member)

6. Nino Amiranashvili (Member)

7. Sopio Samkharadze(Member)

1.   Mission and strategic development of HEI

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

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

TSMU's Mission statement aligns well with both Georgian and European higher education goals. It defines TSMU's role locally and internationally, focusing on high-quality teaching, research, and professional training at all medical education levels. The mission emphasizes enhancing quality of life, improving the healthcare system, and preparing graduates for global professional communities, reflecting a commitment to lifelong learning. The faculty stressed that the mission is deeply rooted in TSMU's legacy and its adherence to international best practices in education.

TSMU's vision integrates teaching, research, and medical activities, promoting a holistic educational approach. The diverse programs and language offerings support internationalization and accessibility, aligning with the mission to provide continuous professional development and meet labour market needs. This vision reflects a strategic commitment to high standards and the global educational environment. During interviews, most respondents were either explicitly aware of the Mission and Vision or demonstrated an implicit understanding through their response to questions indicating a well-embedded institutional culture.

TSMU's values emphasize academic freedom, quality, and continuous professional development, ensuring a robust educational framework. Autonomy, democracy, and transparency highlight good governance, while international cooperation and traditions of excellence support the mission and vision. Professional ethics, human rights, and social responsibility further reinforce TSMU's positive societal impact.

Overall, TSMU's Mission, Vision, and Values align closely with national and European objectives. They convey the university's position within higher education, emphasizing high-quality education, research, and professional training. The commitment to improving healthcare and societal contributions is evident. The values support academic excellence, governance, international cooperation, and ethical responsibility. The well-embedded mission and vision, as evidenced by faculty and interview responses, ensure TSMU continues to build on its historical foundation and contribute significantly to medical education both locally and globally.

Evidences/indicators

- TSMU Self-Evaluation Report

- Interviews
- TSMU Website
- Annex1.1.1–University mission, vision and values
- Annex 1.1.2 - University Mission, Vision, Values - Approved by Academic Council (Protocol #24/10; 19.02.2018) Annex 1.1.3 - Tbilisi State Medical University Strategy for implementation of the third mission

Recommendations:
None

Suggestions:
Non-binding suggestions for further development

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

Evaluation
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

1.2 Strategic Development

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

TSMU has established a comprehensive strategic development framework, including a seven-year plan (2018-2024) and two three-year action plans (2018-2020 and 2021-2023). Drafts for the 2025-2031 strategic plan and the 2025-2027 action plan are under public discussion and will be submitted for approval at the end of 2024. These plans align with TSMU's mission to become a modern, internationally recognized institution. The strategic goals are clearly defined, achievable, time-bound, and measurable.

The strategic planning methodology at TSMU involves both top-down and bottom-up approaches, ensuring comprehensive participation from all university sectors, including administration, research institutes, and external stakeholders. A working group led by the Vice-Rector develops the strategic plan, which is reviewed and approved by the Academic Council.

The strategic plan identifies six main priorities: institutional development, teaching and learning quality, research development, student services, university ranking, and societal contribution, and TMSU's decision to maintain its previous six strategic priorities signals a commitment to its proven path of success. These priorities have been instrumental in driving progress and development over recent years and by staying the course, TSMU can further build upon its achievements and continue its trajectory of excellence in medical education.

Examples of these priorities include the establishment of the AMEE International Networking Centre at TSMU, which provides innovative teaching methods and training for academic staff. Approximately 300 representatives from 20 higher medical schools have participated in these training courses. Additionally, TSMU has implemented procedures to support young doctoral students with scholarships and potential academic positions. The university's budget has significantly increased from 106,953,699 GEL in 2018 to 217,468,600 GEL in 2023. These priorities ensure comprehensive institutional growth, educational excellence, and societal impact. TSMU actively contributes to societal development through public lectures, conferences, TV programs, international rankings, public health campaigns, and research commercialization. The university's academic staff, students, and doctoral students engage in these activities, enhancing TSMU's societal impact. For instance, TSMU participated in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings, achieving notable positions in "Good Health and Wellbeing" and "Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure." During the COVID-19 pandemic, TSMU staff and students participated in campaigns to raise awareness about vaccination and the epidemiological situation.

TSMU employs a robust monitoring and assessment system based on the PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) cycle. A strategic development and action plan monitoring group prepares performance reports and makes recommendations for amendments, ensuring continuous improvement. Regular monitoring involves presenting annual reports to the Academic Council, with adjustments made as necessary. An example of this is the TSMU "Plan B" developed during the COVID-19 pandemic to maintain educational process sustainability, transitioning to a hybrid education model. This adaptation demonstrates the university's proactive and flexible management in response to external disruptions.

Overall, TSMU's strategic development report reflects a well-structured and forward-thinking approach, aligning closely with national and European higher education objectives. The strategic and action plans are participatory, transparent, and aligned with the university's mission and goals. TSMU's comprehensive approach to planning, execution, societal contribution, and monitoring ensures it is well-positioned to achieve its objectives and continue its evolution as a leading institution in medical education. The faculty's emphasis on the mission's legacy and the awareness demonstrated by interviewees reinforces the institutional culture supporting TSMU's strategic development. The draft plans serve to highlight TSMU's commitment to high-quality education, research, and societal impact, ensuring its continued growth and relevance in the global educational landscape.

Evidences/indicators

- TSMU Self-Evaluation Report
- Interviews
- TSMU Website (Strategic Plan)
- Annex 1.1.1 University Mission Vision and Values
- Annex 1.2.1 – Seven year (2018-2024) Strategic Development Plan
- Annex 1.2.2 – Two three-year (2018-2020 and 2021-2023) and 2024 Action Plans -
- Annex 1.2.3 – Drafts of seven-year (2025-2031) strategic development plan and three-year (2025-2027) action plan (Chapter 7)
- Annex 1.2.4 - AMEE International Networking Centreat
- Annex 1.2.5 - Procedures for encouraging young doctoral students and enhancing doctoral studies attraction for young individuals at TSMU
- Annex 1.2.6 - Modification of Medical Education due to COVID-19 Pandemic at Tbilisi State Medical University
- Annex 1.2.8 – Contribution of TSMU to the development of society
- Annex 1.2.9 – Orders on creation of the monitoring and strategic development teams; Self-evaluation team meeting orders
- Annex 1.2.10 – Monitoring implementation rule, monitoring team orders
- Annex 1.2.11 – TSMU Business Continuity Plan

Recommendations:

None

Suggestions:

- The addition of AI as a new strategic priority shows TSMU's forward-thinking approach and readiness to adopt transformative technologies. While early projects are underway, it is suggested that TSMU should aim to maintain a broad perspective on AI's impact in medical education and stay open to new ideas perhaps through the planned public discussion of the Strategic Plan and so further strengthen TSMU's leadership in innovation within Georgia and beyond.

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

Evaluation

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

☒ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

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

2.1 Organisational Structure and Management

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The TSMU has complex organizational structure, which ensures effective implementation of activities defined in its strategic plan, and achievement of its goals. Functions and responsibilities of each structural unit are clearly defined in their provisions.

The governing bodies of TSMU are: Academic Council, Representative Council, Rector, Head of Administration (Chancellor) and Quality Assurance Service. Members of academic and representative councils as well as rector, chancellor and head of QA service are elected according predefined requirements. Election procedures and requirements are described in the Statute on Elections of the Managerial Bodies of Legal Entity of Public Law (LEPL) - Tbilisi State Medical University and the Faculty, and are transparent, equitable and in line with Georgian legislation.

The TSMU runs 31 educational programmes, which are implemented and administered by 6 faculties:
The Faculty of Medicine
The International Faculty of Medicine and Stomatology:
The Faculty of Stomatology
The Faculty of Pharmacy
The Faculty of Public Health
The Faculty of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

Each faculty has its management body which includes the Faculty Council, the Dean and the Faculty Quality Assurance Service.

Decisions of the University and Faculty management related to academic, scientific and administrative issues, are mostly made at the meetings of the Academic and Representative Councils. In case of need, administrative meetings and/or special meetings are held. Decisions made by management bodies are recorded and communicated in accordance with the regulation of document processing, which

corresponds to the current legislation. For timely provision of its decisions and effective communication with its staff, TSMU operates an electronic document management system (workflow software) and corporate emails.

The University maintains registry of students and academic personnel, according to the current legislation and has a Management System (LMS) which supports students with their studies.

In 2019, TSMU established the AMEE International Networking Centre which is the regional hub for medical education in Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus. The primary objective of this center is to disseminate knowledge about the most recent teaching, learning, and evaluation methodologies to professors and instructors of higher medical institutions and providing training sessions for them. ESME (Essential skills in medical education) training is conducted by international medical education experts. Upon successful completion of four AMEE-ESME courses, participants are awarded the certificate of an internationally recognized AMEE medical education specialist. The TSMU AMEE Centre plays a crucial role in medical education and research training, benefiting institutions in Georgia and beyond. There are potential changes within AMEE which pose risks and opportunities for the Centre's long-term viability and discussions on the potential impact of these changes are ongoing. Given TSMU's well-established reputation for delivering this training, there may be opportunities to develop an increasingly autonomous approach. To ensure the business continuity of all major processes taking place at the University, the TSMU has developed a business continuity plan, which includes the following strategies:

Response approaches, enabling the university to respond to any risk in an appropriate and proportionate manner; Recovery opportunities, duration and activities;Mitigation measures, reducing the impact of risks.

Considering its mission and goals, TSMU has elaborated an internalization policy and supports international mobility of students and staff. Currently, TSMU is the partner of more than 120 Universities and University Clinics from over 40 countries worldwide; collaboration with them is regulated on the basis of bilateral agreements and / or joint international projects (ERASMUS +, HORIZON 2020, etc.).

Since 2012, TSMU runs the programme that envisages invitation of leading Professors from US, EU countries, Great Britain, Turkey, Israel, etc. With the help of this special programme about 600 Professors has delivered thematic lectures in different fields of basic and/or clinical medicine and engaged in various types of medical activities, including consultations and charity operations at TSMU university clinics.

TSMU has implemented 7 foreign language higher educational programmes and has more than 3000 international students. The panel was impressed by TSMU's International Office excellent work in the coordination of student recruitment, admissions, and strategic partnerships across diverse international landscapes. Their commitment to best practices and strategic alignment is commendable. The Business Continuity Plan identifies four high-risk areas with contingency plans primarily related to international student flow. The preventive measures described in response to these challenges require TSMU to maintain a broad perspective to limit any adverse consequences.

Evidences/indicators

- TSMU Self-Evaluation Report
- Interviews

- TSMU structure (Annex 2.1.1)
- Provisions of the structural units (Annexes: 2.1.2 -2.1.27)
- Statute on Elections of the Managerial Bodies of Legal Entity of Public Law (LEPL) - Tbilisi State Medical University and the Faculty (Annex 2.1.28)
- Internationalization policy (Annex 2.1.31)
- TSMU Business Continuity Plan (Annex 1.2.11)

Recommendations:

None

Suggestions:

- Given TSMU's well-established reputation in delivery of AMEE-ESME courses, there may be opportunities to develop an increasingly autonomous approach to delivery in light of potential changes within AMEE.

- It is suggested that the Senior Executive leadership team at TSMU maintain a broad perspective to limit any adverse consequences related to the high-risk areas identified in the Business Continuity Plan. These areas include, but are not limited to, international student flow. The preventive measures outlined in the plan require vigilant oversight and strategic action to effectively address these challenges.

Best Practices (if applicable):

- TSMU's International Office is to be congratulated for its exemplary coordination of student recruitment, admissions, and strategic partnerships across diverse international landscapes. Their commitment to best practices and strategic alignment is commendable

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

o ☐ Does not comply with requirements

2.2 Internal Quality Assurance Mechanisms

o Institution effectively implements internal quality assurance mechanisms. Leadership of the institution constantly works to strengthen quality assurance function and promotes establishment of quality culture in the institution.

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The University quality assurance service is responsible for continuous assessment of TSMU's educational and scientific activities and material resources. The quality assurance service elaborates internal quality assurance mechanisms and supports involvement of other units of TSMU in their effective implementation.

Each faculty of TSMU has its own quality assurance unit, which is mainly responsible for the quality of educational programmes. Functions and responsibilities of quality assurance personnel at university and faculty level are clearly defined and divided.

The educational programmes of TSMU are evaluated on a regular basis. For the involvement of internal (academic/invites staff, students) and external (employers, alumni, etc.) stakeholders in the evaluation processes, the QA service has developed special questionnaires. The survey results are used for programme improvement.

For the evaluation of teaching and learning process, the QA has developed monitoring mechanisms for students' academic performance. Monitoring of Students' academic performance is the responsibility of Dean of the relevant Faculty and the QAS. Collected results are analyzed by the QAS and reports are presented to collegial bodies for further action.

TSMU has developed a performance evaluation system for its staff. The main instrument for assessment of academic and invited staff is a self-evaluation report, while administrative and support staff are assessed via self-evaluation report and a circular (360^0) assessment. The evaluation is carried out by QA service, with collaboration of HR department. Unlike program evaluation system, the staff performance evaluation system is in its initial phase and the institution plans to specify mechanisms for utilizing the results of staff evaluation (including self-evaluation), for effective management and development of human resources.

The QA service periodically evaluates the quality of the University's services and resources by using special questionnaires. The evaluation results are utilized for their further improvement. TSMU consistently ensured that staff adhere to established protocols without significant challenges. While occasional deviations from protocols are inevitable, they offer valuable opportunities for debate and continuous improvement. This strong commitment to compliance reflects the university's dedication to maintaining high standards and effective QA practices.

From 2021, Tbilisi State Medical University is the holder of ISO 9001:2015 - quality management compliance certificate, which has obtained with IAF and IAS accreditation.

TSMU has mechanism for planning student contingent which considers both the qualitative and quantitative parameters, including human (academic), material and technical resources, the dynamics of demand for the educational program, the rate of student enrollment, the results of the analysis of the educational process, etc. The mechanism and methodology for planning student contingent are described in the student body planning rule and ensures access of high-quality education for TSMU students.

Evidences/indicators

- TSMU Self-Evaluation Report
- Interviews
- Questionaries of Quality Assurance Service (Annex 2.2.1)
- Educational programs and educational literature evaluation and criteria in the Quality Assurance Service (Annex 2.2.2)
- The procedure for using the quality assessment results (Annex 2.2.4)
- -The student body planning rule (Annex 2.2.6)
- Personnel evaluation rules (Annex 2.2.8)
- Staff survey results(Annex 2.2.10)
- Quality Assurance Service - Presentations on the results of survey (Bachelor's, One-step education, Master's, Ph.D.), including distance learning (Annex 2.2.11)
- Student and staff opinion survey on infrastructure of TSMU (Annex 2.2.12)
- Alumni and employer opinion survey (Annex 2.2.13)
- Provision of Quality Assurance Service (Annex 2.1.3)
- Additional documents provided by TSMU on site visit

Recommendations:

None

Suggestions:

- While TMSU teams adhere strictly to protocols, occasional deviations can occur. Embracing continuous learning and adaptation will strengthen QA practices and foster resilience. Encouraging open communication and proactive feedback channels will help identify and address deviations early, contributing to ongoing growth and success.

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

Evaluation

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

    ☒ Complies with requirements

    ☐ Substantially complies with requirements

    ☐ Partially complies with requirements

    ☐ Does not comply with requirements

2.3. Observing Principles of Ethics and Integrity

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

TSMU has developed codes of ethics and conduct for students and staff, and has defined procedures for responding to the violation of these regulations. The Code of Ethics is accessible on University website and its articles are incorporated in the contracts with both staff and students.

The procedures for responding to the violation of the principles of ethics and integrity are described in the following documents: the Statute of LEPL - Tbilisi State Medical University (Article 35), Internal regulations of the LEPL - Tbilisi State Medical University (Article 39) and Rules for the assessment of student performance.

The violations of ethics and integrity are investigated and responded to by the administration of TSMU according to regulations defined in abovementioned documents. Interviews with students and staff revealed that they are well aware of these regulations and use them in case of need.

According to the rule of anti-plagiarism, all scientific works conducted at the University must be checked on similarities by means of plagiarism detection program - "Strikeplagiarism". The results of the inspection are forwarded to TSMU's quality assurance service which issues the report about nonexistence of plagiarism or addresses academic commission for further review.

To prevent plagiarism and academic fraud more effectively, the TSMU took additional measures, which include incorporating certain topics in the relevant syllabi of educational programmes and developing the new Rule on Anti-Plagiarism. During the interviews it was clear that although some of the faculty staff were able to use their own software systems to self-check their work for originality prior to any submission they might make this was not widely available. TSMU honors academic freedom that has been declared in the mission and statute that are available on TSMU website. The TSMU's personnel and students are familiar and share the principles of academic freedom

Evidences/indicators

- TSMU Self-Evaluation Report
- Interviews
- Code of Ethics (Annex 2.3.1)
- Statute of the TSMU (Annex 2.3.2)
- Internal Regulations (Annex 2.3.3)
- Rule on evaluating student performance at TSMU (Annex 2.3.4)
- Anti-plagiarism rule (Annex 2.3.6)
- TSMU website

Recommendations:

None

Suggestions:

- As part of the planned efforts to encourage students and staff to publish more widely, TSMU might consider implementing a process where authors can use anti-plagiarism tool – "Strikeplagiarism" to self-check their work before submission for publication. This initiative aims to enhance authors' confidence in their writing by ensuring they have not inadvertently made errors, rather than implying any concern about plagiarism.

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

Evaluation

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

☒ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

3. Educational Programmes

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

3.1 Design and Development of Educational Programmes
HEI has a policy for planning, designing, implementing and developing educational programmes.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

TSMU has a methodology for planning, designing and developing educational programs, specifically through the 'Rules on drafting, approving, amending and canceling the educational programs'.

Developing of educational Programs is a collaborative process involving not only academic and invited staff, but also employers, students, administration, alumni and professional organizations. The development of educational programs is guided by national regulations, for example by sectoral benchmarks, the National Qualification Framework (NQF), etc.

At University each Faculty has curriculum committee, which is a permanent standing body. These committees, in collaboration with the QA service, review educational programs. Employers are included in the structure of the curriculum committees.

Decisions regarding the drafting, approving, amending and canceling of educational programs are based on analysis of various factors, including innovations in the relevant field/sector and feedback from graduates and employers.

Decision on the development of the educational programs take into account findings internal QA evaluations, which include feedback from students, graduates, employers' surveys, as well as results from monitoring students' academic performance and program dropout rates.

TSMU maintains strong international collaboration that facilitates the sharing of best practices in developing educational programs. Examples include partnership with Emory University School of Medicine (MD programs), Cardiff School of Sports and Health sciences and Tartu University (MA program 'Rehabilitation in Sport'), Tyrol Hospital Union-Western Educational center (Bachelor program in Nursing).

TSMU has regulations and procedures in place for the annulment of educational programs. When a program is annulled, the university ensures that each student can continue their education through individual curriculum and schedule, providing every student with an opportunity to complete their educational program smoothly.

Evidences/indicators

- TSMU Self-Evaluation Report
- Interviews
- University Website
- Annex 3.1.1 - Educational programs and syllabi
- Annex 3.1.2 - The procedure for developing, approving, amending and cancelling educational programs of the LEPL – Tbilisi State Medical University
- Annex 3.1.3 - Analysis of labor market and employers' demand
- Annex 3.1.4 - Students' academic progress monitoring results
- Annex 3.1.5 - Monitoring results of the program completion/dropout rates
- Annex 2.2.11 - Results of student assessment
- Annex 5.2.6 – Survey of graduates
- Annex 5.2.7 - Survey of employers

Recommendations:
None

Suggestions:
Non-binding suggestions for further development.

Best Practices (if applicable):
• TSMU's proactive introduction of new courses to address workforce gaps in Georgia's professional disciplines shows a strong commitment to healthcare development. These steps are impressive and will positively impact healthcare services and foster stronger partnerships with employers, who are clearly actively contributing to and supporting your initiatives.

Evaluation
Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard
☒ Complies with requirements
☐ Substantially complies with requirements
☐ Partially complies with requirements
☐ Does not comply with requirements

3.2 Structure and Content of Educational Programmes
o Programme learning outcomes are clearly stated and are in line with higher education level and qualification to be granted
o With the help of individualized education programmes, HEI takes into consideration various requirements, needs and academic readiness of students, and ensures their unhindered involvement into the educational process.
Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements
TSMU offers educational programs at all three levels: Bachelor programs, One-cycle programs (MD and dentistry), Master programs and PhD programs.
TSMU designs its educational programs in accordance with national legislation and ECTS guidelines. These programs are developed to achieve both general and sector-specific competencies, ensuring that the structure and content align with the desired learning outcomes. The learning outcomes for specific programs, such as the MD programs and the Bachelor program in Public Health, are based on national sectoral benchmarks. In all educational programs the learning outcomes are clearly defined and align with the appropriate level of Higher Education and the qualification to be awarded.
The structure and content of the educational programs ensure a logical connection between all its components, allowing a student with average academic performance to achieve the learning outcomes within a reasonable timeframe. The structure of the programs is logical.
Depending on the program, specific programs are structured with subjects and various levels of integrated modules. For example, in MD (English) program module 'Response of the body to injury' integrates topics from immunology, pathology, microbiology and pharmacology; in USMD program

module 'becoming a doctor' integrates topics from diagnostics, ethics, psychology, social sciences; in Medical Doctor (Georgian) Program module 22 integrates topics from internal diseases, paediatrics, surgery and clinical anatomy.

The allocation of ECTS credits to each subject or module corresponds to the workload required for students to achieve learning outcomes.

All educational programs provide students with the opportunity to select optional components. For example, MD (English program) includes 30 ECTS for elective subjects, Master program in Pharmacy Managment –12 ECTS, Master Program in Epidemiology-13 ECTS. The allocation of mandatory and elective subjects in MD programs adheres to the sectoral benchmarks in Medicine.

The teaching and learning methods employed in different educational programs are fit for the specifics of the field and ensure the achievement of the program's learning outcomes. All programs utilize lectures and seminars, one-cycle educational programs (MD and Dental medicine programs) additionally incorporate methods such as CBL, PBL, MD programs – bedside teaching, work-based learning, portfolio base learning. Students expressed a strong preference for bedside teaching as they find it beneficial for skills development and that mostly they were in groups of 10-12 as specified in the regulations however anytime there were opportunities for smaller group sizes e.g. by being able to split the groups up into smaller units then the students found that this enhanced this learning experience.

However, there is a need to move towards increasing the extent of interactive learning opportunities during in-person sessions. Introducing a flipped classroom can enhance student-centered teaching and learning by encouraging students to engage with the material before class and participate actively during the class.

Despite the wide range of educational program at TSMU (MD, Dental Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy) there are few opportunities to collaborate with peers from other health professions, students from different educational programs learn separately without significant interaction. Promoting Inter– and Intra-professional learning can provide crucial experience.

TSMU has developed the rules for development of Individualized educational programs. Individual programs provide tailored formats and conditions for teaching and learning to accommodate students with diverse requirements, special educational needs and varying academic readiness. Decision related to individual schedule should be approved by the resolution Dean's office on relevant faculty.

TSMU provides access to information about its educational programs through an educational program catalogue. This catalogue informs interested parties about following details for each educational program: name of the educational program, language of instruction, admission prerequisites, qualification awarded, ECTS credit volume, program objectives and learning outcomes, as well contact information of staff, who can provide further information regarding the educational program. The catalogue is published on the TSMU website and is accessible to all interested parties.

Evidences/indicators

- TSMU Self-Evaluation Report
- Interviews
- University Website
- Annex 3.1.1 - Educational programs and syllabi
- Annex 3.2.1 - Catalogue of educational programs
- Annex 3.2.3 - Rules for developing students' individual plan
- Annex 3.2.4 - Academic calendar
- Annex 3.2.1 - Monitoring results of program completion/dropout rates

Recommendations:

None

Suggestions:

- TSMU might consider developing ways to enhance its educational approach by promoting inter and intra-professional learning among students in all of its professional disciplines. Learning together would provide valuable insights into diverse professional perspectives and responsibilities, preparing students for effective collaboration in the multidisciplinary healthcare teams when they enter the workforce.

- Given students' enthusiasm for skill development through bedside teaching, particularly noting the effective group sizes of 10-12 students in clinical settings with at times groups being split into even smaller units, TSMU might explore ways to adapt this model across all MD programmes. This initiative aims to enhance the quality of bedside teaching opportunities for students, ensuring more individualised learning experiences in clinical environments

- TSMU might consider enhancing learning by exploring the flipped classroom technique. Recorded lectures and tutorials on an online portal allow students to review content beforehand, freeing up in-person sessions for interactive learning. This approach supports TSMU's commitment to effective education and utilizes their strong virtual learning environment for flexibility.

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

Evaluation

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

    ☒ Complies with requirements

    ☐ Substantially complies with requirements

    ☐ Partially complies with requirements

o   ☐ 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

TSMU has regulations for assessment learning outcomes, specifically through 'student academic performance assessment rules', rules governing exams procedures at TSMU examination Center, and provision of MA and PhD programs. The assessment system for learning outcomes complies with legal requirements and with Law Decree #3 (5 January 2007) of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia on the 'Rules for Calculating Higher Educational Programs by Credits'.

The assessment system for learning outcomes in all educational programs considers the specific characteristics of the field. It incorporates appropriate assessment formats, components and methods (for evaluating both knowledge and practical skills) to determine whether students have attended the learning outcomes associated with the educational program.

The following grading system is used for the assessment of the student: 91-100 (excellent), 81-90 (very good), 71-80 (good), 61-70 (satisfactory) and 51-60 (least satisfactory). There are two negative evaluations: 41-50 (not passed, but student is allowed to take the exam once more) and 0-40 (failed, the study course must be retaken).

In all educational programs for subjects and modules the final assessment consists of both midterm and end-of course examination. The Intermediate assessment is graded by 0-60 points. The intermediate scoring criteria are established by the study department for each subject and module and are standardized for all students within the specific study course. The following methods are used for midterm assessment: group working, presentation, projects, participation in debates, discussions, performing the tasks, etc.

The final exam is graded by 0-40 points. In BA programs, the passing grade for the final exam is 20 points out of a maximum of 40 (50% or more of the maximum exam grade). However, for one-cycle educational programs (MD and Dental medicine programs) the passing grade is set at 24 points (60% or more of the maximum exam grade). Examination for subject and modules are held in written form of are combined (written/oral).

The following assessment methods are employed in one-cycle educational programs: MCQs, EMQs, OSPE, OSCE, brief case assessment, observer report, Journal/Diary, portfolio, workplace-based assessment (WPBA), etc. OSCE and OSPE are used for examination across multiple disciplines (for example OSCE-Internal Medicine, pediatrics and OSPE-operative odontology, phantom course of endodontics). For WPBA the following components are used: Mini-CEX (Minimal clinical assessment exercise), DOPS (direct observation of procedural skills), CBD (case –based discussion). OSCE is now also being used in the Physical Medicine and rehabilitation program.

TSMU is compliant with using checklist-based OSCE assessment approaches. However, domain-based assessments allow for more advanced OSCE stations that test higher-level skills. These domain-based OSCEs are already utilized in the American MD program. As TSMU works on expanding the number of domain-based stations, there is an opportunity to integrate assessment development activities across all programs that uses OSCE's to enhance the overall quality and comprehensiveness of skill evaluation.

The assessment system also included an evaluation of professionalism. For example, assessment of professionalism (MDUS program) includes the following components: ethical behavior, timely completion of tasks, communication with staff and students, etc. From 2021/2022 academic year was introduces evaluation based on EPA (entrusted professional activities). Students are informed about the assessment system in advance. Information about assessment system and criteria is described in all syllabi. The assessment system guarantees equal and fair treatment. TSMU has a system for appealing assessments. Students are aware of the procedures for appellation.

In order to better prepare students for their careers, implementation of longitudinal portfolio can link academic achievements with professional growth.

Evidences/indicators

- TSMU Self-Evaluation Report
- Interviews
- Annex 3.1.1 - Educational Programs and syllabi
- Annex 3.3.1 - Rule of assessment of student performance
- Annex 3.3.2 - Procedures for conducting exam at the exams and skills assessment center
- Annex 3.2.5 - Academic calendar
- Annex 6.1.22 - Provision of master's studies
- Annex 6.1.19 - Provision of Doctoral studies of the faculties
- Annex 6.1.21 - Provision of the dissertation board

Recommendations:

None

Suggestions:

- To enhance educational practices, TSMU might also consider creating a longitudinal student portfolio. This would help students develop professional attributes through reflective practice throughout their studies and beyond. Integrating the portfolio into the university's framework supports documenting academic and professional growth, fostering lifelong learning and career development.

- As TSMU works on expanding the number of domain-based OSCE stations, it is suggested to move towards integrating assessment development activities across both the existing checklist-

based programs and the American MD program to enhance the overall quality and comprehensiveness of skill evaluation.

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

Evaluation

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

☒ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

o ☐ Does not comply with requirements

4. Staff of the HEI

HEI ensures that the staff employed in the institution (academic, scientific, invited, administrative, support) are highly qualified, so that they are able to effectively manage educational, scientific and administrative processes and achieve the goals defined by the strategic plan of the institution. On its hand, the institution constantly provides its staff with professional development opportunities and improved work conditions.

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

Human, material, informative and financial resources provide sustainable, stabile and effective functioning and reaching of the goals of the HEI. The TSMU staff consists of the academic, scientific, research, administrative and support/auxillary personnel. Academic staff of the University consists of Professors, Associate Professors and Assistant- Professors. The primary objective of the university is to attract and retain highly qualified professors and researchers. Academic and scientific staff at the university are selected by open competition in accordance with Articles 34 and 35 of the Law of Georgia "On Higher Education" and the rules of the competition for academic and scientific positions at Tbilisi State Medical University and the regulations of the competition committee, approved by the Resolution #23/6 of the Representative Council of the TSMU on April 27, 2015, where the documentation for the competition and the rules of conducting the competition are represented. Selection of the personnel for the academic and scientific positions is accomplished by the competition committee, according to the documentation submitted by the applicants. Based on the recommendations of the competition committee, the Academic Council approves the academic and scientific personnel for the contested positions. During the competitive selection of academic staff,

particular emphasis is placed on assessing clinical activity (in clinical specialties) and the proficiency of foreign language skills.

The selection of personnel for academic and scientific positions at Tbilisi State Medical University (TSMU) ensures transparency, fairness, and adherence to institutional and legal regulations. This is achieved through a Competition Committee, which conducts a transparent review of the documentation submitted by applicants to ensure all candidates meet the required qualifications and criteria. These criteria include clinical activity (if relevant), experience, and foreign language proficiency. Based on the committee's recommendations, the Academic Council reviews and approves the academic and scientific personnel for the contested positions.

All academic and invited staff communicate with curriculum councils of the programs, due to their directions. They renew the literature permanently, participate in exchange programs in several countries: Austria, Ulm, Germany. For continuing professional development of the academic and invited staff, The University places special emphasis. For this reason, the Academic Development Center and the AMEE International Networking Centre operate within the university. The Academic Development Center supports the integration of new employees and regularly conducts training sessions for academic staff and invited teachers once in two years about several approaches to new teaching methods.

Since 2022, Tbilisi State Medical University (TSMU) has actively participated in the annual conferences of the Association for Medical Education in Europe (AMEE). During this time, the AMEE Georgian Center has published 12 abstracts annually, with 8-9 of these publications co-authored by TSMU representatives.

Additionally, approximately 300 representatives from 20 higher medical schools in Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia have participated in training courses offered by the Academic Development Center. Among them, 70 participants, including 50 members of TSMU's academic staff, were awarded the AMEE specialist certificate in medical education.

From 2021 to 2023, over 60 individuals, representing 85% of applicants, successfully passed the interview process required for new staff members. To join the department and work with foreign language-instructed groups, it is mandatory for candidates to have their foreign language proficiency assessed through an interview or attestation by a specially formed commission. Only those who pass this evaluation are permitted to engage in academic activities.

The SER states that TSMU has a total of 407 academic staff members, comprising 85 professors, 175 associate professors, and 147 assistant professors. The average age of the academic staff is 58 years, with professors averaging 63 years, associate professors 57 years, and assistant professors 55 years, respectively. The scientific staff consists of 72 staff units, with an average age of 59 years. Additionally, administrative /auxiliary staff is defined by 292 personnel (including temporary contract support staff). The average age of the staff is 55 years.

The ratio of the number of academic and scientific staff to the number of administrative/auxilliary staff is 0.87. The ratio of academic and scientific staff to the number of students is 0.05, and the ratio of the administrative staff to the number of students is 0.03. Thie staffing level meets the regulatory requirements.

The university pays great attention to supporting staff to be invovled in research and teaching along with their various leaderhsip roles. In recognition of the need to develop a plan for succession TMSU has estabished training programmes to cultivate and encourage young academics in all areas who will succeed the current academic staff. Funding has been provided to 37 individuals, nine of whom have obtained doctoral degrees, with three already joining the academic staff at TSMU.

Evidences/indicators

- Annex 4.1.1 – TSMU Human Resources management policy - https://tsmu.edu/ts/images/dxp/1607970_1666007970.pdf
- Annex 4.1.2 - Methodology for determining the number of academic, scientific and invited personnel at the educational programmes of the university
- https://tsmu.edu/ts/images/dxp/16010403_1666010403.pdf
- Annex 4.1.3 –Rule for Evaluation of academic and invited staff of TSMU
- https://tsmu.edu/ts/images/dxp/169657_1666696557.pdf
- Annex 4.1.4 - Rule for evaluating the productivity of the scientific-research activity of academic and scientific personnel of TSMU
- https://tsmu.edu/ts/images/dxp/1696950_1666696950.pdf
- Annex 4.1.5 - Procedure for determining the amount of premium, bonuses, subsidies and cash allowances at TSMUhttps://tsmu.edu/ts/images/dxp/16010527_1666010527.pdf
- Annex 4.1.6 - Procedure for conducting competitions to fill academic and scientific positions, as well as the regulations governing the competition commission
- https://tsmu.edu/ts/images/dxp/16840745_1684407455.pdf,
- Types/forms of Employee Contracts, Staff CVs
- Annex 4.1.7 - Certification of English (or other language) speaking teachers
- Annex 4.1.8 - Selection procedure for auxiliary staff(https://tsmu.edu/ts/images/dxp/1607484_1666007484.pdf)
- Annex 4.1.9 – Rule of affiliation of the academic staff of Tbilisi State Medical University
- https://tsmu.edu/ts/images/dxp/170912314_1709123114.pdf
- Annex 4.1.10 - Rules of affiliation of scientific staff of independent scientific research units of Tbilisi State Medical University
- https://tsmu.edu/ts/images/dxp/16010564_1666010564.pdf Annex 4.1.11 –Center of Academic Developmenthttps://tsmu.edu/ts/content/2/146/131/0/0/0
- Annex 4.1.12 – AMEE – ESME courses https://tsmu.edu/ts/content/2/146/259/344/0/0
- Annex 4.1.13 - Procedures for encouraging young doctoral students and enhancing doctoral studies attraction for young individuals at TSMU
- Annex 4.1.14 - Rules for granting the title of Emeritus and payment terms at TSMU
- tsmu.edu/ts/images/dxp/169715602_1697115602.pdf

Recommendations:

None

Suggestions:
• Given the average age of academic staff is 58 years, with professors averaging 63 years, associate professors 57 years, and assistant professors 55 years, there is a clear need to lower the overall age, especially among assistant professors. This approach would not only enhance succession planning but also optimize input from faculty actively engaged in current healthcare practices.

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

Evaluation
Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard
+☒ Complies with requirements ☐ Substantially complies with requirements ☐ Partially complies with requirements ☐ Does not comply with requirements

4.2. Academic/Scientific and Invited Staff Workload

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

Defining the workload of the staff involved in educational programs is one of the most important part of implementation of teaching programs. The academic and invited staff should have appropriate workload in order to provide not only teaching, but also research and consultation activities.

The development of human resources management system is one of the priorities of the TSMU reform and aims to institutionalize merit-based management. For this purpose, relevant priorities are defined in the Strategic Development Plan of the University. determines the maintenance of the achieved results improvement concerning the given standard.

The number and workload of academic and scientific staff ensures implementation of educational programmes, and proper fulfilment of research and other activities and duties assigned to them. The workload of the teaching/research staff can be updated and confirmed at each semester. The academic workload of the academic staff includes teaching-methodical and scientific-research activities, academic consultations, participation at university events, and in clinical specialties - active clinical activities.

Within the framework of the workload, the semester hourly workload for academic staff and guest teachers is determined based on the report card presented by the head of the department to the Rector, and formalized by the Rector's relevant orders. The workload for academic staff employed at other universities is managed in agreement with TSMU, strictly adhering to TSMU's established workload conditions. The actual working hours for academic and invited staff are regulated by decisions of

TSMU's Academic and Representatives Board. University personnel work 39 hours per week, including 32 hours in their departments. The weekly contact hours for clinical and theoretical department staff differ as follows: professors have a maximum of 11 hours, associate professors up to 16 hours, and assistant professors up to 21 hours. The workload for invited teachers is determined individually, based on departmental needs to ensure smooth operation of the educational process. To motivate and reward staff, the university provides a system for bonuses, supplements, aid, and rewards, in addition to salary and hourly compensation. Visiting professors from leading international medical schools participate in the university's educational programs, and the number of visiting and invited professors is steadily increasing.

The workload scheme at TSMU complies with legal requirements and ensures the effective implementation of educational programs.

Evidences/indicators

- Annex 4.2.1 - educational and research activities of TSMU
- The workload of the implementing academic staff -
- https://tsmu.edu/ts/images/dxp/160782_1666007782.pdf
- Annex 4.2.2 – Department hourly workload sample
- Annex 4.2.3 - Semester workload sample of academic staff
- Annex 4.2.4 – academic in the fall semester of the 2023-2024 academic year
- Staff overtime and foreign language education
- Hourly load on programs Annex 4.2.5 Consent in other USS about work
- Annex 4.2.6 – Visiting professors - https://tsmu.edu/ts/content/2/205/0/0/0/0
- Annex 4.2.7 - Visitor at Tbilisi State Medical University
- Granting the status of Visiting Professor and Invited Professor
- Rule - https://tsmu.edu/ts/axa.php?lang=ge&id=1449
- Index 4.2.8 - number of academic, scientific and guest personnel according to program determination
- Methodology - https://tsmu.edu/ts/images/dxp/16010403_1666010403.pdf

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Recommendations:

None

Suggestions:

Non-binding suggestions for further development.

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

Evaluation

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

+☒ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

5. Students and Their Support Services

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

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

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The Tbilisi State Medical University (TSMU) has established comprehensive mechanisms to regulate the acquisition, suspension, and termination of student status, as well as the processes for student mobility, qualification assignment, issuance of educational documents, and recognition of education during the study period. These mechanisms are in accordance with the TSMU statute and relevant Georgian legislation. TSMU demonstrates robust compliance with the standard component requirements through its detailed and structured policies. The institution's adherence to national and internal regulations ensures a transparent, fair, and consistent approach to managing student status and mobility. Admissions Process: The requirement for passing national exams ensures merit-based entry. The provision for foreign nationals and other special cases allows for inclusivity and flexibility.

Mobility: The twice-yearly mobility process, including internal mobility, supports student flexibility and academic progression. The collaboration with the Education Management Information Center ensures the legality and proper documentation of the process.

Suspension and Restoration: The outlined grounds for suspension reflect a comprehensive understanding of student needs and potential life circumstances. The detailed procedure for restoration ensures that students can continue their education without undue hindrance.

TSMU has established a comprehensive framework to protect student rights and legal interests. This framework is embedded within multiple regulatory documents and operational practices, ensuring that students are well-informed and their rights are safeguarded throughout their academic journey.

Evidences/indicators
 • Interviews results (including with Self-Governance) • LEPL Tbilisi State Medical University Rule of the qualification award to the 60 graduates of the educational programmes, usage, issuance and accounting-reporting of the diploma forms; • Samples of the agreements concluded between the TSMU and the students of all three levels; • Internal mobility rules and rule of recognition of the educational credits obtained during the studies at the LEPL Tbilisi State Medical University; • Examples of recognition of prior learning

Recommendations:
None

Suggestions:
Non-binding suggestions for further development

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

Evaluation

Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard
 	
    ☒ Complies with requirements
 	
    ☐ Substantially complies with requirements
 	
    ☐ Partially complies with requirements
 	
    ☐ Does not comply with requirements

5.2 Student Support Services
o HEI has student consulting services in order to plan educational process and improve academic performance o HEI has career support service, which provides students with appropriate counselling and support regarding employment and career development o HEI ensures students awareness and involvement in various university-level, local and international projects and events, and supports student initiatives o HEI has mechanisms, including financial mechanisms to support low SES students
Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements Tbilisi State Medical University (TSMU) offers a strong student consulting service to aid in the planning of the educational process and the improvement of academic performance. Key elements include: 1. Faculty Dean/Head of Programme: Provides consultation to students for effective learning process planning and academic improvement. Customized individual curricula are developed for students with special educational needs as per the "Students Individual Curriculum Development Rules"; 2. Academic Staff Availability: As per TSMU regulations, academic staff must dedicate at least 2 hours per week to

student consultations; 3. Students and Alumni Relations Office: Offers guidance on educational planning and academic achievements; 4. Student Service Center: Functions as an intermediary between different university units, providing information, solving student problems, and ensuring timely communication; 5. Student Support Service: Informs students about university regulations and assists in resolving educational process issues; 6. Quality Development Service: Conducts student surveys to gather feedback and improve educational and administrative processes. TSMU's student consulting services are well-structured and encompass various support mechanisms to enhance student success. The mandatory consultation hours for academic staff ensure accessibility, while the integration of feedback through surveys indicates a responsive and evolving system. TSMU effectively meets the standard for student consulting services. The comprehensive support structure, including mandatory academic consultation hours and dedicated support offices, demonstrates the institution's commitment to academic excellence and student success.

TSMU provides extensive career support services through the Student and Alumni Relations and Career Development Service. Key initiatives include: 1. Employment and Internship Opportunities: Information about over 300 vacancies is provided annually, and employment forums with over 50 companies are held; 2. Career Planning: Approximately 20 career planning and development meetings are organized annually; 3. Internship Programs: Winter and summer school internship programs allow students to gain practical experience. TSMU's career support services are comprehensive, offering numerous opportunities for employment and career development. The proactive approach in organizing job fairs, internships, and continuous communication with employers ensures students and graduates are well-prepared for their professional careers. TSMU's career support services significantly exceed standard requirements. The institution's dedication to student and graduate employment is evident through its extensive programs and initiatives. The career development portal and strong employer partnerships are particularly noteworthy.

TSMU's financial support mechanisms for low SES students are comprehensive, providing scholarships, financial aid, and paid internships. The institution's response during the COVID-19 pandemic highlights its commitment to supporting students in times of crisis. The diverse range of financial aid options and proactive response to student needs demonstrate a strong support system.

Tbilisi State Medical University excels in ensuring student awareness and involvement in a variety of university-level, local, and international projects and events. By leveraging multiple communication channels, supporting a diverse range of student organizations, and providing financial and organizational support for student initiatives, TSMU fosters an environment where students are actively engaged and can significantly contribute to and benefit from their academic and extracurricular activities.

Tbilisi State Medical University demonstrates a strong commitment to ensuring student awareness and involvement in various projects and events, particularly focusing on the needs of foreign students. The university's structured approach, from initial orientation and health insurance provision to continuous support through cultural activities and career development, facilitates a comprehensive and inclusive environment. The active involvement of foreign students in governance and decision-making processes further enhances their integration and engagement in university life. This multifaceted support system underscores TSMU's dedication to fostering a vibrant and inclusive academic community.

Evidences/indicators

- Interviews results;
- Resolution of the TSMU Representatives Council "On workload of the Tbilisi State Medical University Educational and Research Conducting Academic Staff";
- Certificate confirming internship;
- Student and alumni employment rates, including those by awarded qualification;
- Results of the alumni studies concerning their career and academic development;
- 2014-2017 figures of the TSMU students/residents foreign internships through the bilateral programmes;
- Information concerning the participation of the TSMU students in the EU international mobility projects (Erasmus+, ErasmusMundus)during 2001-2017;
- Provision on the LEPL - Tbilisi State Medical University Students Self-Governance;
- The student diaries and certificates;
- Certificate of the Public Health and Disease Control National Center concerning the activities conducted by the TSMU students in support of the Charity Public Healthcare;
- Survey of employers;
- Order of TSMU Rector dated 02/06/2022 "On organizational-legal measures for the selection of persons participating in exchange programs";
- Student Self-Government Regulation of Tbilisi State Medical University;
- List of measures implemented in 2023;
- The list of events planned in 2024
- Student social assistance program

Recomendations:

None

Suggestions:

- TSMU might consider enhancing its approach to providing career development support for international students, particularly by increasing awareness of early career pathways in their home countries through additional targeted events.

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

Evaluation

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

☒ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

6. Research, development and/or other creative work

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

6.1 Research Activities
- HEI, based on its type and specifics of its fields, carries out research/creative activities.   - Ensuring the effectiveness of doctoral research supervision   - HEI has public, transparent and fair procedures for the assessment and defense of dissertations which are relevant to the specifics of the field
Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements TSMU carries out research activities in the direction of both fundamental and applied scientific studies, as well as participates in international multicenter clinical studies. The research profile of TSMU includes fundamental theoretical and experimental studies and clinical studies, which have a significant contribution to the development of medical science at the national and international level. The University promotes the integration of teaching, research and commercialization of obtained results. The TSMU has elaborated a strategy for the development of both fundamental and applied research activities which is reflected in the strategic plan of the university for 2025-2031.The strategy is based on the mission and core values of the HEI, to promote scientific activities of students and academic staff through development of critical thinking, innovation and academic skills; active participation and contribution to the formation of the knowledge society and knowledge-based economy in Georgia. The goal of the strategy is to establish an effective system to promote innovative research activities and to share best research practices in collaboration with local and international partners. To promote commercialisation of scientific activities, the strategy defines the relevant market research, finding potential partners and other activities. The TSMU runs accredited PhD programmes: "Medicine", "Stomatology", "Public Health", and "Pharmacy". There are also 10 Master's Programmes, that shall be completed by defending Master's Thesis, and a joint Master's Programme "Biomedical Engineering". Within the framework of the DAAD-SDG project, a course "Preparation for a Scientific Career" was prepared. Three international and 10 national grant projects were financed, in which TSMU participates as a leading or partner organization. In 2023, the academic and scientific staff of TSMU published 422 scientific articles, 212 of them in foreign languages, 4 monographs, 13 textbooks (1 published abroad), and 2 guidelines, and 1 patent was obtained. Successful researchers based on the H-index and the annual number of published publications could be especially encouraged. The journal "Georgian Biomedical News" with an international editorial board and good quality layout has started very successfully and provides good opportunity for publications from the TSMU. The Biomedical Research Ethics Committee of TSMU has been granted registration and overall federal assurance by the US Department of Health and Human Services Bureau of Research Subject Protection.

In 2023, 37 doctoral theses were defended, including the academic degree of Doctor of Medicine awarded to 28 doctoral students, the academic degree of Doctor of Dentistry - to 3, the academic degree of Doctor of Pharmacy - to 2, the academic degree of Doctor of Public Health - to 4 doctoral students. The defense rate of doctoral theses in 2023 is 18.9%.

Evaluation of the doctoral student's annual report on the conducted research is regulated by the TSMU regulations on doctoral studies. The representative council of TSMU adopted resolution "Workload of academic staff carrying out educational and research activities of TSMU", which determines the number of contact hours necessary for doctoral research program heads to work with doctoral students.

The staff of the TSMU actively participate in local and international scientific-practical conferences and are involved in the editorial boards of scientific journals of universities in Georgia and other countries.

Evidences/indicators

- TSMU Self-Evaluation Report
- Annex 6.1.3 - Ranking analysis of published in the SCOPUS database 2012-2024.
- Annex 6.1.4 - Doctoral research projects operating in TSMU in 2023
- Annex 6.1.7 - Master programs operating in TSMU
- Annex 6.1.8 - Implemented/ongoing scientific research projects at TSMU
- Annex 6.1.9 - Georgian BioMedical News - https://www.gbmn.org/
- Annex 6.1.10 – Textbooks and monographs published in 2023
- Annex 6.1.13 - Scientific activity of TSMU academic and scientific staff in 2023
- Annex 6.1.14 - Doctoral and Master's research projects, which are supervised/consulted with foreign partners
- Annex 6.1.15 - Foreign-funded research in TSMU
- Annex 6.1.16 - training courses implemented at TSMU, which serve to form research habits at the first level of education
- Annex 6.1.17 - Rules for encouraging young doctoral students and implementing measures to improve the attraction of young people to doctoral studies
- Annex 6.1.18 - Doctoral regulations
- Annex 6.1.19 - Academic staff workload
- Annex 6.1.20 - Regulation on Dissertation Council
- Annex 6.1.21 - Regulation on Master's Degree
- Annex x 6.1.22- 2023 list of protected doctoral theses
- Annex 6.1.23 - Memorandum of cooperation with partner universities and scientific research with the centers.
- Interview results with:
- Academic and Representative Councils
- Self-Evaluation Team
- Heads of Programs
- Academic & Invited Staff
- PhD Students
- Graduates of PhD programs
- Heads/Representatives of Research Department
- Vice-Rector for Research
- Scientific Research institutes,
- Chief editor of the journal "Georgian Biomedical News"

Recommendations: None
Suggestions: • To develop further the journal "Georgian Biomedical News" with an international editorial board and good opportunities to become a journal with an impact factor >0.5. • As part of the planned efforts to develop commercialisation in research TSMU might encourage additional ways to expand these types of activities in a timely manner to maintain and build on enthusiasm.
Best Practices (if applicable): Practices, which prove to be exceptionally effective and which may become a benchmark or a model for other higher education institutions
Evaluation Please mark the checkbox, which best describes the HEI's compliance with this specific component of the standard ☒ Complies with requirements ☐ Substantially complies with requirements ☐ Partially complies with requirements ☐ Does not comply with requirements
6.2. Research Support and Internationalisation
o HEI has an effective system in place for supporting research, development and creative activities o Attracting new staff and their involvement in research/arts-creative activities. o University works on internationalisation of research, development and creative activities.
Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements TSMU has an effective system for supporting research, development and creative activities. HEI supports the academic and research staff/scientific-research units in their efforts to get financing from different funding organisation to conduct their research and to improve the research infrastructure. Flexible mechanism of financial support for financing scientific publications is under development. TSMU provides support regarding legal issues, financing, preparing, evaluating, and presenting the Grant Application. HEI operates an effective system of attracting and supporting young personnel in research, which involves the involvement of students of master's and doctoral programs, and effective support of their research initiatives and activity. Establishment of a flexible and transparent system of evaluation and financing of intra-university research projects is under development.

TSMU has established "Procedures for Encouraging Young Doctoral Students of Tbilisi State Medical University and Implementing Measures to Improve Attracting Young People to Doctoral Studies" for doctoral students under the age of 35 (Resolution N23/12 of the Representative Council of TSMU on November 26, 2019). Students are provided with a scholarship, for 24,000 GEL per year, during the duration of the educational program (3 years) and funding research and study – for 10,000 GEL.

TSMU is motivating and supporting young researchers and their research, including foreign colleagues. HEI has signed several Memorandum of Understanding with partner universities and scientific research centers. Fragments of several doctoral and master's studies carried out and currently operating at TSMU in the fields of medicine, dentistry, public health, and pharmacy were/are being completed in foreign university clinics (USA, Great Britain, Holland, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Turkey, Poland).

TSMU is participating and the staff has been trained in "Erasmus+ Capacity Building Project (CBHE)SQUARE". Within the "Erasmus+" Capacity Building (CBHE) „SPRING" project, experts from Bulgaria, Lithuania, Moldova, and Kazakhstan evaluated the English-language medical education program of TSMU within the framework of the project. Within the frames of the Erasmus+ Capacity Project „HERD", a unified research management base was created, TSMU personnel was trained in research management through international (Germany, France) training. "Erasmus+ Capacity Building Project " SAFEMED+" project is about the development of Clinical line and improving medical education by introducing the medical simulation methods in Clinical Skills teaching.

The annual scientific festival, scientific forums, and the Open Days with the students of the graduate courses serve to attract and involve young personnel in the scientific and research activities of the university. TSMU implements joint research projects with foreign partners.

Local and international trainings are regularly held at TSMU, the purpose of which is to familiarise the academic and scientific staff of the university with the principles of preparation of scientific projects, their evaluation, scientific integrity, and preparation of scientific publications.

Evidences/indicators

- TSMU Self-Evaluation Report
- Annex 6.2.1- Association membership certificate
- Annex 6.2.4 - TSMU Research Ethics Committee
- Annex 6.2.5 - International Festival of Science and Innovation
- Annex 6.2.6 - Local and international conferences held in TSMU

- Annex 6.2.7- Participation of TSMU doctoral students in local and international conferences

- Interview results with:
- Self-Evaluation Team
- Heads/Representatives of Research Department
- Vice-Rector for Research

Recommendations:

None

Suggestions:

- To fully exploit the TSMU potential in interdisciplinary and applied research, it is suggested that TSMU make more emphasis on cooperation among the faculties and encourage joint research projects.

- To increase its research funding, TMSU might consider the following options beyond its current participation in Horizon Europe:
    - Twinning Projects: Engage in projects with EU Member States to achieve concrete results through peer-to-peer activities.
    - EU International Partnership Grants: Apply for grants available to organizations meeting specific requirements.
    - SKYENET Project: Participate in the EU-funded SKYENET project, which supports disadvantaged youth by providing essential knowledge and skills.
    - Joint Ventures with Industry Partners and Start-Ups: Collaborate with industry partners and start-up companies to open new funding avenues and practical applications for research.

Best Practices (if applicable):

- The proactive Doctoral Scholarship programme with research funding aligned to staff recruitment which has already proven to be an excellent method of developing TSMU's own future academic leaders

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 analyzing 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

To ensure the evaluation of the quality of scientific research activities as well as the effectiveness of academic / scientific staff, the TSMU has established mechanisms for protecting academic integrity,

including plagiarism detection and prevention procedures. The University annually evaluates the scientific-research activities of the academic staff and based on the results, carries out further activities.

The evaluation of doctoral/master's theses is done based on regulations of TSMU on the establishment, activities and rules on awarding of the academic degree by the Dissertation Council of the Faculties of Medicine/Dentistry/Public Health/Pharmacy and by the regulations on conferring master's degree.

The TSMU regularly evaluates and analyses the quality of research activities of academic and scientific personnel, as well as the effectiveness of research activities of scientific-research units, regularly organizes thematic scientific conferences, receives the reports of individual structural units of the university and affiliated scientific-research institutes, and conducts analysis/evaluation of the work done at the meetings of the particular faculty and the Academic Council.

The electronic portal of the scientific activities coordination is being created. The research work of the TSMU academic/scientific staff is evaluated according to their annual scientific reports. During the competition for academic/scientific staff positions, and is evaluated by a special commission. The results of the assessments shall be used in further development of the research activities.

Reports on the accomplished studies are published by TSMU on a regular basis. Annual reports on the scientific-research activities of the academic/scientific staff are submitted to the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia upon the request, and to the National Academy of Sciences – on an annual basis. During the last years studies accomplished by the TSMU were awarded the highest assessment rates by the National Academy of Sciences.

The vision of the development of mechanisms supporting research activity is described in the strategic development plan of TSMU.

Evidences/indicators

- TSMU Self-Evaluation Report
- Annex 6.3.1 - in the National Academy of Sciences of Georgia 2018-2023 Submitted reports
- and evaluation
- Annex 6.3.2 - indicators of scientific productivity
- Annex 6.3.4 - Rules for evaluating the scientific productivity of staff
- Annex 6.3.5 – Rules for the work of the competitive certification commission
- Annex 6.3.6 - Funding of research budgeted by TSMU in 2018-2023
- Interviews

Recommendations:

None

Suggestions:

Non-binding suggestions for further development

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

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

    ☒ Complies with requirements

    ☐ Substantially complies with requirements

    ☐ Partially complies with requirements

    ☐ Does not comply with requirements

7. Material, Information and Financial Resources

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

7.1 Material Resources

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

Tbilisi State Medical University effectively utilizes its material resources to achieve its mission objectives and cater to its student population. The university's assets include five clinics and two scientific research institutes, where a range of activities from training and clinical practice to research and production are conducted.

Creating an optimal educational environment is a priority at Tbilisi State Medical University, evident in its equipped facilities. These include essential amenities such as sanitary units, central ventilation systems, heating facilities, and abundant natural lighting throughout educational buildings. Under the direction of the rector, a dedicated group ensures adherence to annual health, hygiene, and epidemiological standards across all university units.

In compliance with national legislation, TSMU implements comprehensive sanitary and hygiene measures. Specialized ventilation systems, including HEPA filters in high-risk areas, are employed in laboratories and medical facilities to prevent air pollution from chemical and microbiological agents.

University commitment to water quality is upheld by its reliance on a centralized supply that meets stringent sanitary regulations. Additionally, where mandated by government decree, supplementary water sources are maintained and regularly disinfected by contracted services.

The university boasts extensive real estate holdings spanning 30 cadastral units nationwide, totaling approximately 116,000.80 sq.m. These facilities house a variety of spaces including lecture halls, libraries, laboratories tailored to specific fields, operating theaters, diagnostic areas, and recreational spaces. Recent developments include the complete rehabilitation of educational buildings, landscaping projects, and enhancements to accessibility features such as ramps.

Infrastructure improvements are complemented by the integration of modern technologies, including high-tech medical equipment in clinics and laboratories equipped with adequate lighting and amenities. Sanitary facilities are meticulously maintained, with heating systems powered by natural gas boilers ensuring optimal conditions year-round.

Safety measures are enforced across TSMU campuses, encompassing comprehensive fire suppression systems, emergency response protocols, and facilities adapted for individuals with disabilities.

The university continuously evaluates its infrastructure and service quality through stakeholder feedback. Insights from academic and administrative staff, as well as student opinion research, inform ongoing improvements in educational facilities, campus infrastructure, and service offerings.

Evidences/indicators

- TSME Self-Evaluation Report
- Site visits
- Annex 7.1.1 - Conclusion on the provision of sanitary-hygienic and epidemiological norms in Tbilisi State Medical University and its structural units;
- Annex 7.1.2 - document confirming ownership of a real estate by TSMU and internal measurement drawings;
- Annex 7.1.10 - the agreement signed by TSMU regarding the complete rehabilitation of the second educational building;
- Annex 7.1.13 - list of construction and repair works carried out by TSMU in 2018-2023;
- Annex 7.1.19. Conclusions about the technical condition of the building structure of TSMU; Chancellor's order approving policy and occupational safety recommendations.
    Annex 7.1.20 - Conclusion on the operation of heating and ventilation systems in TSMU. (Electricity, water, gas receipts);
- Annex 7.1.21 - about the alternative source of electricity supply - generators;
- Annex 7.1.24 - TSMU rector's letter dated 27.11.2019 Order N482/04 "On the appointment of the head of the labor safety department"; by the representative council on 04.04. 2018 N23/5 Minutes on the changes implemented in the regulations of the infrastructure department 13.02.2020 N23/1; Chancellor's 15.06.2021 Order MES 2 21 0000576538 "On determining the persons responsible for the fulfillment of fire safety requirements, compliance with fire safety rules and operation of fire protection systems, maintenance, their repair and readiness for use, and safe evacuation of people from buildings in emergencies";

Recommendations:

None

Suggestions:

- As part of the plan to continue the modernization and adaptation of the infrastructure of the university for persons with special needs. Due to consideration of the issue mentioned in the strategic development documents and next year's budget , reconstruction and adaptations of the library and examination center are given as suggestions.

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

Evaluation

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

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

7.2. Library Resources

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The library at TSMU stands as a vital hub, serving professors, researchers, students, and residents alike with essential resources for their academic and research pursuits. Its mission is not just to provide information but to foster an environment conducive to learning and scholarly exploration. This commitment is reflected in its comprehensive range of services and continuous efforts to evolve and expand.

The library ensures that its collections meet the diverse needs of its patrons, from undergraduate students to doctoral candidates and faculty members. It actively engages with its users, studying their interests and professional requirements to ensure timely and thorough support.

In recent years, the library has undergone significant modernization. From transitioning to electronic membership and cataloging systems to implementing barcoding for efficient book circulation, these changes have streamlined access and management of its extensive collection. Departments like bibliography, acquisitions, services, and information technology work harmoniously to maintain smooth operations and deliver quality service.

The library's influence extends widely. It collaborates with educational institutions and medical organizations, enriching its collection with specialized documents and facilitating interlibrary loans. Its subscription to prestigious international databases like HINARI and Elsevier's ScienceDirect and Scopus provides access to a wealth of scholarly literature, enhancing research capabilities across disciplines.

Equally important is the library staff's role in supporting users. They not only provide guidance on navigating resources but also offer workshops, consultations, and training sessions to enhance information literacy and research skills.

Looking ahead, the university remains committed to further enhancing its library services. Plans include renovating the library's infrastructure, integrating new technologies, and expanding its database subscriptions to platforms like Web of Science and Medline. Additionally, ongoing surveys and feedback mechanisms will continue to shape future developments, ensuring that the library remains responsive to the evolving needs of its academic community.

Evidences/indicators

- TSMU Self-Evaluation Report
- Interviews
- Annex 7.2.3 - license to use the Research4life electronic databases (HINARI, AGORA, OARE and ARDI) of the International Health Organization (WHO);
- Annex 7.2.5 - Access to four Elsevier Publishing Corporation databases;
- Annex 7.2.9 - Mechanisms for developing and updating library resources and services.

Recommendations:

None

Suggestions:

Non-binding suggestions for further development

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

Evaluation

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

☒ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

7.3 Information Resources

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The IT service administration policy at TSMU is governed by the Rector's Office statutes and employee position instructions. It operates under the oversight of the Rector and Head of Administration. IT Service manages the university's information technologies, website design, and network infrastructure, ensuring smooth operation of computers and office equipment. Beyond administrative and teaching blocks, departments are connected to optic and DSL internet. The library offers 85 computers with WIFI for students, supplementing department resources.

Recent upgrades include the purchase of two powerful servers in 2020, enhancing distance and hybrid learning capabilities. In 2023, the installation of a Fortigate 401E firewall improved network security. The university continues to expand, with a newly established computer network in the reconstructed historical building and plans to update its computer and server infrastructure. Construction is underway for a new university building and hospital by 2025, expanding network capacity for more users.

Tbilisi State Medical University utilizes various ICT tools, including Eduroam for secure internet access globally. Key electronic services include the eFlow document system, LMS for academic management, electronic journals for attendance and grades, resident registration system, and electronic examination system. These systems are backed up daily and stored on redundant servers for continuity.

TSMU has introduced Management System (LMS), where students can see their course syllabi, tuition fees and receive their marks. To take into consideration the increased number of students, the TSMU might consider to further develop the LMS system in such a way, that students have access on study materials, can communicate with tutors and can register on the courses by themselves without the input from administrative staff.

Future developments will focus on optimizing LMS modules, enhancing electronic journal functionalities, website modernization, and expanding the electronic examination system with new question types and modules for improved assessment and data analysis.

Evidences/indicators

- TSMU Self-Evaluation Report
- Interviews
- Site visit
- Websites: tsmu.edu (www.tsmu.edu) sms.tsmu.edu

- Annex 2.1.2 - Regulation of the Office of the Rector of TSMU
  (https://tsmu.edu/ts/axa.php?lang=ge&id=1101)
- Annex 2.1 - Official instruction of the Information Technology Service
- Annex 7.3.7 - Agreements on Internet provision
- Annex 7.3.8 - Agreements on web hosting services indicating relevant documents/other evidences.

Evaluation

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

☒ Fully complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

Recommendations:

None

Suggestions:

- TMSU might consider increasing the functionality of the LMS system to integrate the courses pre-requisite system into LMS to simplify the process of student self-registration. It also might consider ways to facilitate access to study materials and communication with administrative staff and tutors.

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

7.4 Financial Resources

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

Tbilisi State Medical University's 2023 budget increased by 2.3 times compared to 2017. The main income sources are tuition fees, state program financing, research grants, and other legal activities.98% of the budget comes from own revenues, 1.3% from state financing, and 0.7% from scientific activities. Major revenue sources are educational activities (57.1%), medical activities (36.7%), scientific activities

(1.8%), and other economic activities (4.4%).Tuition fees contribute 85% of educational income, with 15% from state grants. Also Medical income, primarily from university's clinical bases.

From 2018-2023, most expenses went towards enhancing university clinical bases, improving education and clinical practice. The number of students is rising, supported by developing educational and clinical infrastructure, which also attracts more international students. The student population is expected to grow by at least 5%, increasing the budget.

Efforts to retain young doctoral students include financing their studies and providing scholarships. Projects from 2020-2023 and planned for 2024-2027 aim to boost student numbers and income, aligning with modern educational and research standards.

Tbilisi State Medical University operates under the control of the Ministry of Education and Science, which approves the university's charter and oversees its activities. The highest administrative body is the Head of Administration, accountable to the Representative Council, which approves the budget and annual reports.

State control includes periodic audits by the State Audit Service, and financial reports are submitted annually. Internal controls and private audit firms ensure proper financial management. Tbilisi State Medical University adheres to state procurement laws and utilizes an electronic treasury system for transparent financial transactions.

Scientific research funding from 2018-2023 has been significant, with regular inventory assessments ensuring accurate asset records.

In summary, Tbilisi State Medical University's financial stability and growth are driven by increased tuition revenues, strategic infrastructure investments, and effective administrative controls, supported by rigorous internal and external audits.

Evidences/indicators

- TSMU Self-Evaluation Report
- Interviews
- Annex 7.4.1 - TSMU budget, 2018
- Annex 7.4.2 - Budget of TSMU, 2019
- Annex 7.4.3 - Budget of TSMU, 2020
- Annex 7.4.4 - Budget of TSMU, 2021
- Annex 7.4.5 - Budget of TSMU, 2022
- Annex 7.4.6 - Budget of TSMU, 2023
- Annex 7.4.6.1 - TSMU budget, 2024
- Annex 7.4.7- Dynamics of salary growth of TSMU academic staff
- Annex 7.4.16- Dynamics of balance sheet value of real and movable property of TSMU
- Annex 7.4.17 - Regulation of the Economic Department of TSMU
- Annex 7.4.18 - Rules for drawing up a unified budget for TSMU
- Annex 7.4.19 - Rules for approving the annual procurement plan of TSMU
- Annex 7.4.20 - TSMU agreements with private auditing firms

Recommendations:

None

Suggestions:

Non-binding suggestions for further development

Best Practices (if applicable):

- Overall TSMU's comprehensive investments have not only enhanced its internal operations but also brought about a palpable sense of positivity among both staff and students, bringing about a strong sense of belonging and engagement within the institution.

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