



განათლების ხარისხის განვითარების ეროვნული ცენტრი  
NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

**Higher Education Institution Authorization Experts'  
Final Report  
LLC Caucasus International University**

**Expert Panel Members**

**Chair:** Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Jochen Zimmermann, Universität Bremen, Germany

**Co-Chair:** Prof. Mihaly Boros, University of Szeged, Hungary

**Members:**

Mariam Gorgodze, Sulkhani-Saba Orbeliani University, Georgia

Ana Gvritishvili, International Black Sea University, Georgia

Ia Pantsulaia, Tbilisi State Medical University, Georgia

Shota Potolashvili, Tbilisi State University, Georgia

Khatuna Saganelidze, New Vision University, Georgia

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## Authorization Report Resume

### General information on the educational institution

Caucasus International University (CIU) is a higher education institution based in Tbilisi, Georgia, dedicated to offering a modern and innovative academic environment. Founded as a Limited Liability Company, CIU aims to integrate interdisciplinary education, foster research excellence, and contribute to both local and international socio-economic development. The university offers a range of undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral programs through its main faculties, including Medicine, Business and Technology, Law, Viticulture and Winemaking, and Social Sciences and Humanities.

CIU's mission is focused on nurturing democratic values and preparing students to be competitive in global job markets. This mission aligns with the national education strategy of Georgia and European higher education priorities, emphasizing quality education, innovation, and sustainability. CIU's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) further demonstrates its dedication to creating positive societal impact through education.

The university is equipped with modern infrastructure, particularly in its medical and laboratory facilities, which provide a conducive learning environment for both theoretical and practical education. The evaluation panel highlighted these facilities as best-in-class, supporting high-quality training and student engagement.

CIU also emphasizes internationalization, with partnerships across Europe and beyond, offering exchange programs and joint research opportunities. The institution supports a friendly and collaborative environment, encouraging active participation from students and staff. CIU's dedication to community engagement is reflected in its initiatives to promote lifelong learning, entrepreneurship, and cultural preservation, contributing to the broader development of Georgian society.

The evaluation panel formed an overall positive impression of CIU, recognizing its commitment to providing quality education, fostering an inclusive and supportive environment, and maintaining modern facilities. The panel was particularly impressed by CIU's strategic investments in infrastructure, the proactive integration of international standards, and the dedication to continuous improvement in both academic and community-related activities. The atmosphere at CIU was found to be welcoming and collaborative, supporting a learning environment where both staff and students are motivated to succeed.

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

The evaluation process for CIU's authorization involved an in-depth review of the self-evaluation report (SER) submitted by the institution. The report provided comprehensive insights into CIU's mission, strategic priorities, organizational management, academic offerings, research activities, and quality assurance systems.

The evaluation panel consisted of experts with significant experience in higher education, research, and institutional governance. Members of the panel represented both national and international perspectives, ensuring a thorough and balanced assessment of CIU's performance and compliance with standards. The panel members brought diverse expertise across fields such as quality assurance, academic program development, research management, and strategic planning.

Following the SER review, the panel conducted a site visit, during which interviews were held with key stakeholders, including university leadership, faculty members, administrative staff, students, and representatives from partner organizations. The panel's site visits also included a tour of CIU's facilities, such as classrooms, laboratories, clinical databases, and student services, which provided a firsthand look at the infrastructure supporting academic and administrative activities. The panel was particularly impressed by the quality and availability of the facilities, noting that several resources are comparable to the highest international standards.

Throughout the evaluation process, the panel observed the engagement and openness of CIU's staff and leadership, who demonstrated a clear commitment to the university's strategic goals and a willingness to address areas for improvement. The panel found the site visit invaluable for verifying the information provided in the SER, gaining a deeper understanding of CIU's institutional culture, and assessing how effectively the university's mission and goals were being implemented on a day-to-day basis.

The evaluation panel noted that CIU provides some best-in-class facilities, particularly in the medical faculty and the recently upgraded laboratories, which are equipped with modern educational tools and resources. These facilities support both academic excellence and practical learning experiences, creating an environment conducive to high-quality education. The panel was also impressed by the friendly and supportive atmosphere at CIU, highlighting the sense of community and cooperation among students, faculty, and administrative staff. The university fosters an inclusive and diverse academic environment, which encourages active student participation and facilitates a positive campus culture. Overall, the panel formed a favorable impression of CIU, recognizing its commitment to enhancing both the student experience and the quality of education offered.

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

CIU mostly complies with the requirements across multiple standards, including mission and strategic development, organizational structure and management, research development, and staff management. The university has demonstrated a strong alignment with its mission and strategic goals, with effective support systems for research and initiatives to foster international cooperation. Notably, CIU's efforts in integrating Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into its educational activities were viewed as exemplary, reflecting its commitment to societal progress. While CIU shows substantial compliance with standards, certain areas require improvement, particularly related to technological aspects of the internal quality assurance, addressing workload challenges in the medical faculty, and refining ethical governance practices to fully align with international best practices. The panel has the impression that shortcomings can be quickly addressed while improving the underlying issues will require close attention over the authorization period.

### **Summary of Recommendations**

- **Enhance Stakeholder Engagement:** The university could benefit from formalizing its approach to stakeholder engagement in the evaluation of strategic and action plans by involving external partners, alumni, industry representatives, and community members more systematically in decision-making processes.
- **Improve Digital Monitoring:** The planned automated monitoring system should be implemented as a priority. This system will improve the efficiency of tracking the progress of strategic and action plans in real time, ensuring that the university can swiftly respond to challenges and capitalize on opportunities.
- **Increase International Collaboration:** CIU could enhance its global presence by increasing international research collaborations and expanding student mobility programs. This would further strengthen the university's academic and research reputation on the international stage and provide students with more opportunities for cross-cultural engagement and learning.
- **A University-wide independent Ethics Council** should be established with active participation from all stakeholders, extending its remit to all human and non-human scientific research. The HEI must ensure that scientific research is conducted transparently and adheres to the highest standards of research ethics; therefore, the regulations and documents governing the Council's operation should be accessible to stakeholders on the website.
- **Article 19** needs to be rectified according the findings.
- It is recommended to increase the number of affiliated staff at medical faculty.

- It is recommended to either remove the following provision from the rule ("Rule on the regulation of the educational process", Article 9.12) altogether and regulate this issue directly within the syllabi of the programs where it is relevant, or the rule could be reformulated to clarify exactly which programs and situations it applies to. Additionally, the phrase "deregistered from the relevant subject" should be replaced with a clearer and more transparent provision.
- It is recommended to implement and complete all administrative-regulatory tasks related to scientific and research activities listed in the SER as 'planned for the future.' These include: 1) Developing new comprehensive guidelines for PhD students and academic leaders, with detailed information available in separate documents; and 2) Establishing a new standard that requires a change in the approach to implementing PhD programs, where priority scientific directions will be determined by the faculties. Considering these points, a revised research strategy is proposed, organized by faculties, programs, and academic semesters.

### **Summary of Suggestions**

- Strengthen the link between research and education in the mission, ensuring that research plays a central role in the university's identity and academic offerings.
- Emphasize more strongly a quality culture with continuous improvement and accountability in teaching, research, and administration.
- Further clarify and expand the university's internationalization strategy, with specific objectives related to global partnerships, student mobility, and international research collaboration.
- Establish a more formal process for stakeholder involvement in shaping and revising the mission to ensure diverse perspectives are considered.
- Enhance the university's focus on entrepreneurship and market needs, offering additional programs and opportunities that encourage innovation and new venture creation.
- Expand Public Outreach: CIU could broaden its impact on social development by expanding public engagement efforts, especially in underserved areas and rural communities.
- Strengthen Research Integration: CIU should continue to strengthen the integration of research and teaching to ensure that its educational programs are informed by the latest academic advancements.
- Focus on Faculty Development: While CIU has made strides in developing its academic staff, additional resources could be allocated to faculty development programs to ensure that teaching staff are continually improving their skills in line with innovative teaching practices and international standards. Incentive mechanisms that

reward faculty for research output, teaching innovations, and student success could help drive this improvement.

- Improvement of Selection and Appointment Transparency: Introducing external peer review or involving external experts in the appointment of senior management could help enhance transparency and equity in the selection process.
- Use of Performance Survey Data: Management could make more systematic use of performance evaluation data to drive strategic adjustments and improve administrative practices.
- Expansion of International Collaborations: CIU's leadership could enhance international cooperation by pursuing structured, strategic partnerships that involve joint degree programs and collaborative research initiatives with international institutions.
- For future development, it would be beneficial for the institution to actively increase the participation of invited staff in university activities and QA mechanisms. This broader inclusion would further strengthen the university's quality assurance processes and foster a more cohesive institutional culture.
- It is suggested to periodically organize campaigns, courses, and workshops for students and staff to raise awareness of ethical principles related to responsible research and issues such as the use of artificial intelligence.
- The responsiveness of the faculties' educational programs to regional needs could be further enhanced by increasing the regular involvement of external stakeholders – more specifically alumni - in the development of programs.
- The Medical Faculty has introduced modular learning, and it is suggested that the vertical integration of the program components be strengthened, and the logical sequence of clinical subjects be reviewed.
- The medical teaching laboratories are equipped for basic practical courses in anatomy, microbiology, and biochemistry. It is suggested that with further developments, these sites can be made suitable for specific scientific research pathways, such as neurosciences or molecular biology studies.
- The university should conduct a detailed and comprehensive review of the legal acts regulating student assessment to ensure consistent application of regulations.
- The university should support and enhance initiatives aimed at raising student awareness regarding the review and appeal of learning outcomes and assessment one.
- The University should review the payroll policy for affiliate staff in medicine program.
- It is suggested that CIU further informs students about their right to choose a representative/be chosen in the faculty council, including the election procedures and the significance of this right.

- To enhance international mobility opportunities, it is suggested that CIU conduct a thorough analysis of student participation data, identify the factors contributing to the decline, and implement targeted measures to address these challenges and improve outcomes in this area.
- Scientific research projects conducted outside the university in collaboration with partner research centers should be encouraged, and joint research activities should be strengthened. These partnerships could contribute to the future establishment of a medical PhD school.
- Opportunities for students to engage in research as part of their academic programs should be continuously expanded. Students' research output should be used as a key performance indicator, with measurable metrics to evaluate how effectively the university is achieving this core objective.
- It is suggested to consider establishing a Doctoral Council to supervise and coordinate the educational activities of the University's doctoral schools.
- Sustained Engagement in Research: CIU has introduced a points-based system for research engagement, but it may not sufficiently incentivize high-quality, impactful research. Strengthening mentorship programs, particularly for early-career researchers, and increasing research funding for high-impact projects could help address this.
- Limited Interdisciplinary and Intersectoral Collaboration: While there are strategic goals to promote interdisciplinary research, there is limited evidence of successful implementations. More structured initiatives and institutional support mechanisms could help foster collaboration across different faculties and sectors.
- Enhancement of International Collaborations: Current efforts to internationalize research largely focus on individual mobility. Establishing joint research initiatives and formal partnerships with international institutions could improve research quality and CIU's global standing. Strengthening these international collaborations would be crucial for CIU's ambition to become a leader in the region.
- The university should continue its efforts to fully adapt the campus, and until full adaptation is achieved, create a detailed guide or map indicating adapted and non-adapted spaces.
- The university should also continue to work on increasing and diversifying the number of recreational spaces.
- While the usage of scientific databases appears to be adequate, there remains an opportunity for the University to further enhance the promotion of these resources to encourage broader utilization.

## **Summary of the Best Practices**

- Commitment to contributing to sustainable development through the integration of SDGs into teaching, research, and third-mission activities.
- Efforts to foster internationalization, promoting global partnerships and adopting best practices.
- A diverse and inclusive university life that supports democratic engagement and student involvement.
- Commitment to Social Development: CIU actively contributes to societal development, particularly through public lectures, cultural preservation, and entrepreneurship initiatives, reinforcing its role as a leading institution in community engagement.
- Support for Lifelong Learning: The university provides diverse opportunities for lifelong learning, including continuing education programs and career development services that support both personal and professional growth.
- Effective Evaluation Mechanisms: CIU has implemented a robust system of internal and external evaluations, ensuring that its strategic goals are regularly monitored and adjusted as needed.
- A notable best practice is that, in collaboration with the university's quality assurance service, the clinics themselves evaluate students' clinical practice. The clinics have implemented an electronic online survey system, enabling management to monitor the quality of clinical training and take corrective action if needed. This system allows for real-time feedback from both students and clinic staff, ensuring a comprehensive evaluation of the clinical experience. By utilizing the electronic survey, the clinics can gather insights into various aspects of the training, such as the effectiveness of supervision, the relevance of clinical cases, and the overall learning environment. The data collected from these surveys provide valuable information for continuous improvement and ensure that any identified issues are promptly addressed. Additionally, this collaborative approach between the university and clinics fosters a more transparent and accountable training process, ultimately enhancing the quality of education and better preparing students for their future professional roles.



- The panel has received and considered CIU's argumentative position on our suggestions and recommendations. After careful consideration, the panel has decided to retain their recommendations and suggestions. However, the panel would also like to point out that many of the contested recommendations refer to the implementation of policies that CIU has already developed in a planning stage. Our recommendations and suggestions in these cases should therefore be read as acknowledging the valuable planning (or recruitment) efforts with the perspective of ensuring that these plans (or initiatives) are swiftly implemented and do not remain in the planning stage for a long time. We also acknowledge very positively that in regards to recommendation, some changes have already been implemented. However, these changes – commendable as they are – cannot be incorporated into the findings of this report. Also, after discussing the argumentative position, the group of experts specified/changed several technical issues in the report.

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

	Standard	Compl ies wit h Req uire me nts	Subs tanti ally com plies with requi reme nts	Parti ally Com plies with Req uirem ents	Does not Compl y with Requir ement s
1.	<b>Mission and strategic development of HEI</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.1	Mission of HEI	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2	Strategic development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	<b>Organisational structure and management of HEI</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.1	Organisational structure and management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.2	Internal quality assurance mechanisms	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.3	Observing principles of ethics and integrity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	<b>Educational Programmes</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.1	Design and development of educational programmes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.2	Structure and content of educational programmes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.3	Assessment of learning outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	<b>Staff of the HEI</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.1	Staff management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2	Academic/Scientific and invited Staff workload	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	<b>Students and their support services</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.1	The Rule for obtaining and changing student status, the recognition of education, and student rights	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5.2	Student support services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	<b>Research, development and/or other creative work</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.1	Research activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.2	Research support and internationalization	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.3	Evaluation of research activities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	<b>Material, information and financial resources</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.1	Material resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.2	Library resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.3	Information resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.4	Financial resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Signature of expert panel members

1. Jochen Zimmermann (Chair)



2. Mihaly Boros (Co-chair)



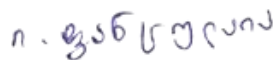
3. Mariam Gorgodze (Member)



4. Ana Gvritishvili (Member)



5. Ia Pantsulaia (Member)



6. Shota Potolashvili (Member)



7. Khatuna Saganelidze (Member)



## Compliance of CIU with the Authorization Standard Components

### 1. Mission and strategic development of HEI

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

#### 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**

Caucasus International University's mission focuses on creating a modern academic and research environment that integrates innovative methods, promotes internationalization, and ensures a diverse and inclusive university life. CIU aims to cultivate generations of students who possess democratic values and are competitive in both local and international labor markets. The university seeks to prepare students who can address global challenges such as sustainable development through education and research.

The mission aligns closely with Georgia's national educational goals, particularly the emphasis on modernizing higher education, fostering innovation, and addressing socio-economic challenges. Georgia's 2030 strategy, which integrates sustainable development goals (SDGs), finds a strong reflection in CIU's focus on contributing to sustainability, particularly through the integration of SDG 3 (Health and Well-being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). CIU's mission also aligns with European higher education goals, particularly those laid out in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). These goals emphasize international collaboration, student mobility, and the cultivation of inclusive and diverse academic environments.

CIU's mission reflects these overarching priorities, as it places a strong emphasis on the internationalization of education by adopting global best practices, forging international partnerships, and contributing to the creation of a well-rounded, democratic, and competitive graduate profile.

#### **Key Mission Components**

##### *Modern Learning Environment*

CIU's commitment to fostering a modern learning environment is a significant strength. The mission emphasizes the use of innovative teaching methods, such as interdisciplinary approaches, service learning, and challenge-based education. These methods aim to equip students with essential skills like critical thinking, creativity, adaptability, and digital literacy, which are vital in today's fast-evolving global economy.

The university's efforts to modernize its teaching methods align with current trends in both Georgian and European higher education. By integrating these methods, CIU demonstrates its commitment to staying relevant in a rapidly changing academic landscape. However, the institution can further strengthen this component by more explicitly linking research and education, ensuring that students are actively involved in research projects and that the learning process is informed by the latest academic developments.

##### *Sustainability*

CIU's mission demonstrates a strong commitment to sustainable development. The university has embedded the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into its curriculum and research activities. The focus on sustainability positions CIU as a forward-thinking institution that recognizes the importance of addressing global challenges. The university's specific commitment to health, education, and environmental sustainability reflects its desire to contribute to Georgia's national development goals and the global community.

To further enhance this focus, CIU could develop specific, measurable objectives for sustainability outcomes within its academic programs and research initiatives. This could include offering dedicated research funding for projects aimed at solving environmental or societal challenges and involving students in these initiatives.

##### *Internationalization*

Internationalization is a central pillar of CIU's mission, focusing on the introduction of international best practices and the strengthening of global partnerships. This aligns with the global trend toward cross-border education and collaboration. The university's goal of ensuring that students are

competitive internationally by fostering a diverse and inclusive academic environment also mirrors European objectives to cultivate global citizens who can thrive in various cultural and economic settings.

However, the institution can benefit from expanding its focus on internationalization by establishing more concrete objectives related to international research collaborations, student exchanges, and joint academic programs with global partners. By defining these goals, CIU can solidify its role as an internationally oriented institution.

### **Analysis of Mission Effectiveness**

#### *Research and Education*

While CIU's mission reflects its commitment to providing high-quality education, research does not play as prominent a role in the mission statement as it could. Research is a crucial element of higher education, and for CIU to strengthen its position as a leading academic institution, it should more explicitly integrate research into its mission. This could involve emphasizing how research informs teaching, how students are engaged in research activities, and how the university contributes to the global academic research community.

By strengthening this link, CIU would align more closely with European higher education standards, which emphasize the interconnection between research and education as a defining characteristic of universities.

#### *Student-Centered Learning*

CIU's mission highlights the importance of preparing students with future-proof skills, but it could more explicitly focus on student-centered learning. The European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) emphasize the importance of placing students at the heart of the educational process. CIU can enhance its mission by including a clear commitment to student engagement, ensuring that students have a voice in shaping their learning experiences and that the university prioritizes personalized, adaptable teaching approaches.

#### *Stakeholder Involvement*

Involving stakeholders—students, faculty, alumni, employers, and external partners—is critical for developing a mission that reflects the needs and expectations of the entire university community. While the mission reflects a broad commitment to the community, there could be more formal mechanisms in place to involve stakeholders in shaping the mission. Engaging these groups more actively would help ensure that the mission remains relevant and widely supported.

External stakeholders, such as industry partners and community organizations, could provide valuable insights into how CIU can further align its educational offerings with the demands of the labor market and societal needs. Involving these groups in the mission development process would also strengthen the university's ties to the local and international community.

### **Continuous Improvement**

#### *Quality Culture*

A quality culture—one that emphasizes continuous improvement, accountability, and high standards—is essential for any higher education institution. While CIU has made significant progress in terms of innovative teaching methods, the mission does not explicitly reference quality assurance processes. By including a commitment to quality culture, CIU would demonstrate its dedication to maintaining high standards in both education and research. This could involve regular feedback mechanisms from students and faculty and ongoing monitoring and evaluation of teaching practices and learning outcomes.

#### *Market Needs and Entrepreneurship*

CIU's mission refers to preparing students to be competitive in the labor market, but the institution could further enhance its focus on entrepreneurship and innovation. Offering more programs and opportunities that encourage entrepreneurial thinking—such as electives in entrepreneurship, innovation hubs, or incubators—would allow CIU to stand out as a leader in producing graduates who are not only job-ready but also capable of creating new ventures. This would align with global trends in higher education, where entrepreneurial skills are increasingly seen as essential.

The mission statement is shared in the institution. The members know about it and incorporate its central tenets into their actions.

### **Evidences/indicators**

Submitted documents on mission and action plans; interviews with stakeholders on site

<b>Recommendations:</b> None.
<b>Suggestions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen the link between research and education in the mission, ensuring that research plays a central role in the university's identity and academic offerings.</li> <li>• Emphasize more strongly a quality culture with continuous improvement and accountability in teaching, research, and administration.</li> <li>• Further clarify and expand the university's internationalization strategy, with specific objectives related to global partnerships, student mobility, and international research collaboration.</li> <li>• Establish a more formal process for stakeholder involvement in shaping and revising the mission to ensure diverse perspectives are considered.</li> <li>• Enhance the university's focus on entrepreneurship and market needs, offering additional programs and opportunities that encourage innovation and new venture creation.</li> </ul>
<b>Best Practices:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to contributing to sustainable development through the integration of SDGs into teaching, research, and third-mission activities.</li> <li>• Efforts to foster internationalization, promoting global partnerships and adopting best practices.</li> <li>• A diverse and inclusive university life that supports democratic engagement and student involvement.</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements</li> </ul>
<b>1.2 Strategic Development</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ HEI has a strategic development (7-year) and an action plans (3-year) in place.</li> <li>○ HEI contributes to the development of the society, shares with the society the knowledge gathered in the institution, and facilitates lifelong learning</li> <li>○ HEI evaluates implementation of strategic and action plans, and duly acts on evaluation results.</li> </ul>
<b>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</b> <p>Caucasus International University (CIU) has laid out a 7-year strategic development plan (2025-2031), supported by 3-year action plans to ensure the university's growth and development. The strategic development plan aligns with the 2022-2030 Unified National Strategy of Education and Science of Georgia and key recommendations from the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). It also incorporates the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly focusing on the intersection between higher education, sustainable development, and public engagement.</p> <p>The strategic plan is divided into several priority areas that reflect the university's long-term goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Creation of Modern and Innovative Educational Opportunities:</b> CIU prioritizes the modernization of its teaching methods by integrating digital tools, artificial intelligence, and interdisciplinary approaches into its programs. The strategic plan emphasizes the development of joint programs and international collaborations to ensure that CIU's educational offerings remain competitive on a global scale.</li> <li>• <b>Strengthening Research Activities:</b> CIU's strategic plan highlights the importance of establishing a world-class research environment that attracts international researchers and promotes interdisciplinary partnerships with public and private sectors. This includes creating mechanisms for the commercialization of research and supporting the career development of young researchers and doctoral students.</li> </ul>

- **Sustainable Development and the Third Mission:** The university is committed to supporting the SDGs through its third mission, which involves collaborating with public, governmental, and non-governmental organizations to address societal challenges. The strategic plan outlines how CIU will use its expertise to contribute to health, education, and responsible consumption through research, public engagement, and community-oriented projects.

The action plans for 2024 and 2025-2027 provide a more detailed roadmap for implementing strategic goals. These plans include measurable objectives and timelines for evaluating progress, ensuring that CIU remains adaptable to changing educational trends and societal needs. CIU uses a SWOT and PESTEL analysis approach to identify both internal capabilities and external factors influencing the higher education sector, ensuring that the strategic plan is responsive to the macro-environment.

Caucasus International University's (CIU) strategic and action plans display a clear commitment to aligning with both national and international priorities in education, with a focus on innovation, sustainability, and research development. However, while the plans are comprehensive, there are areas where CIU could benefit from a more detailed execution framework. For example, while the integration of AI and digital learning tools into the curriculum is mentioned as a priority, there is limited clarity on the concrete steps that will be taken to train faculty and staff in these new technologies or how the infrastructure will support these innovations across different programs. Without such specifics, the risk is that the adoption of innovative methods may be uneven across faculties, affecting the overall goal of positioning CIU as a transformative institution.

Additionally, while the strategic plan outlines a robust approach to research strengthening and third-mission activities, the lack of a clear data collection and monitoring system for real-time progress tracking is a notable gap. Though there are plans to implement an automated monitoring system, the current reliance on annual reports and manual monitoring could delay timely interventions when action plans are not progressing as expected. Moreover, the university's plan to increase international collaborations is promising, but it would benefit from a more structured approach that includes clear timelines and goals for increasing faculty mobility, joint research, and student exchanges, ensuring CIU's global positioning strengthens over time.

In addition to these gaps, CIU's internationalization strategy, though commendable in its ambition, could benefit from a more comprehensive integration of intercultural competencies within its academic programs. While the plan emphasizes global partnerships and student mobility, it lacks a robust framework for promoting intercultural dialogue among its increasingly diverse student body. This is especially important given the growing number of international students, which now make up a significant percentage of CIU's student population. To effectively capitalize on its internationalization goals, CIU would need to focus on creating a more inclusive environment where cross-cultural learning is systematically fostered through both curricular and extracurricular activities.

Moreover, the strategic emphasis on promoting the third mission—engagement with society and business—is a notable strength, but the plan could be more detailed in terms of measurable outcomes and impact assessment. For instance, the university's initiatives in supporting entrepreneurship and contributing to regional development through the business incubator and community-oriented projects are valuable. However, without a clear methodology for tracking the long-term economic and social impact of these initiatives, it will be difficult for CIU to fully demonstrate its contributions to national development. A more structured approach to evaluating the effectiveness of its third mission activities, along with clearer goals for scaling up successful initiatives, would strengthen CIU's role as a key player in Georgia's socio-economic progress.

- **Contribution to Social Development and Lifelong Learning:** Caucasus International University's third mission is centered on its contribution to social development and the dissemination of knowledge to society. The university's efforts in this regard are multifaceted and encompass a range of activities aimed at fostering lifelong learning, cultural preservation, and the promotion of entrepreneurship.
- **Public Lectures and Knowledge Sharing:** CIU has implemented several initiatives to ensure that the knowledge produced within the university reaches the broader public. One of the most notable efforts is the Lecturerium project, which makes university lectures publicly available online through a multimedia platform. These lectures cover a wide range of topics, making academic knowledge accessible to a diverse audience, including students, professionals, and the general public.
- **Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning:** Through its Service of Continuing Education and Career Development, CIU offers a variety of certificate and professional

development courses aimed at different societal groups. These courses are designed to address personal and professional development, ensuring that individuals can acquire new skills throughout their lives. CIU's lifelong learning initiatives not only support professional growth but also contribute to upskilling Georgia's workforce, making it more competitive in the global economy.

- **Entrepreneurship and Business Incubators:** CIU's business incubator plays a key role in fostering entrepreneurship among students. The incubator provides funding and mentorship for student business projects, allowing students to apply the knowledge they have acquired in their studies to real-world challenges. This initiative aligns with CIU's strategic priority of supporting the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Georgia, which is essential for the country's socio-economic development.
- **Cultural and Educational Outreach:** CIU has a strong commitment to preserving Georgian culture and promoting civic awareness. The university has produced several educational programs and documentaries, such as "From Kvareli to Mtatsminda," which focuses on the life of national figure Ilia Chavchavadze. These programs are broadcast on national television and are used as educational resources in Georgian schools. By engaging with the broader public through these projects, CIU reinforces its role as a cultural institution and contributes to the preservation of Georgian identity.
- **Support for School Students:** CIU provides career guidance and educational programs for high school students to introduce them to various fields, including medicine, law, and international politics. These programs help students explore potential career paths and develop skills that will prepare them for future university studies. By investing in the education of younger generations, CIU contributes to the long-term development of human capital in Georgia.
- **Legal Clinic:** CIU's Legal Clinic provides free legal services to the public, allowing law students to gain practical experience while serving the community. This initiative not only benefits students by giving them hands-on experience but also supports social justice and access to legal services for individuals who may not otherwise have access to legal assistance.

These activities demonstrate CIU's commitment to social engagement and its contribution to Georgia's socio-economic development. By fostering lifelong learning and promoting cultural and civic awareness, the university strengthens its role as an important institution in the country's educational and social landscape.

### **Evaluation of Strategic and Action Plans**

CIU has established robust mechanisms for evaluating the implementation of its strategic and action plans, ensuring that the university's objectives are met and that adjustments are made when necessary. Evaluation is done through internal and external processes, making monitoring progress comprehensive and transparent.

**Internal Evaluation:** CIU uses an annual reporting system, where each unit responsible for a specific task submits a report on its progress. These reports are reviewed by a monitoring group led by the rector, which includes representatives from the Quality Assurance Service, academic staff, and student self-government. This group assesses whether the university is meeting the objectives laid out in the strategic and action plans. Feedback is gathered from various stakeholders, including students, faculty, and administrative staff, to ensure that the strategic goals are aligned with the university's needs.

**External Evaluation:** CIU submits regular reports to the National Center for Education Quality Enhancement (NCEQE). These reports provide updates on the university's compliance with national educational standards and recommendations issued during previous accreditation cycles. CIU also undergoes periodic accreditation reviews to ensure that its programs meet both national and international standards.

**Automation and Real-Time Monitoring:** As part of its commitment to continuous improvement, CIU is developing an automated monitoring system that will allow for real-time tracking of progress on strategic and action plan goals. This system is expected to improve the efficiency of monitoring processes and make it easier to adjust strategies based on real-time data.

**Feedback and Action:** Based on the results of the internal and external evaluations, CIU takes corrective actions to improve its strategic initiatives. For example, feedback from the NCEQE and internal assessments is used to refine teaching methods, update academic programs, and strengthen research efforts. The university's approach to evaluation and feedback is aligned with international best practices, ensuring that it remains competitive in a global educational landscape.

By continuously monitoring its strategic and action plans, CIU ensures that it can adapt to changes in the educational environment and address any challenges that arise. This comprehensive approach to evaluation demonstrates the university's commitment to transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement.

While these evaluation mechanisms are comprehensive, there are notable areas to take the institution forward. First, CIU's reliance on annual reporting as a primary evaluation tool may limit the institution's ability to respond swiftly to emerging challenges. In a rapidly changing educational environment, relying on yearly assessments could result in delays in addressing issues that require immediate attention. A more frequent evaluation cycle, perhaps on a quarterly basis, could provide CIU with more timely data and allow for quicker interventions when needed.

Also, while CIU is developing an automated monitoring system, the lack of real-time data collection at present poses a challenge. Without real-time monitoring, the university may miss opportunities to adjust its strategic goals as they progress. The automated system, once implemented, will likely resolve this issue, but until then, CIU remains vulnerable to information gaps that could hinder timely decision-making.

Another area for improvement is the degree to which stakeholder feedback is integrated into the evaluation process. While CIU does collect feedback from students, faculty, and administrative staff, there is limited evidence that external stakeholders—such as employers, community organizations, or alumni—are systematically involved in the evaluation of strategic plans. Incorporating broader stakeholder input would enhance the relevance and impact of the university's strategic goals by ensuring that they are aligned with societal needs and labor market trends.

#### **Evidences/indicators**

Documents submitted with respect to strategic development; interviews on site.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Enhance Stakeholder Engagement: The university could benefit from formalizing its approach to stakeholder engagement in the evaluation of strategic and action plans by involving external partners, alumni, industry representatives, and community members more systematically in decision-making processes.
- Improve Digital Monitoring: The planned automated monitoring system should be implemented as a priority. This system will improve the efficiency of tracking the progress of strategic and action plans in real time, ensuring that the university can swiftly respond to challenges and capitalize on opportunities.
- Increase International Collaboration: CIU could enhance its global presence by increasing international research collaborations and expanding student mobility programs. This would further strengthen the university's academic and research reputation on the international stage and provide students with more opportunities for cross-cultural engagement and learning.

#### **Suggestions:**

- Expand Public Outreach: CIU could broaden its impact on social development by expanding public engagement efforts, especially in underserved areas and rural communities.
- Strengthen Research Integration: CIU should continue to strengthen the integration of research and teaching to ensure that its educational programs are informed by the latest academic advancements.
- Focus on Faculty Development: While CIU has made strides in developing its academic staff, additional resources could be allocated to faculty development programs to ensure that teaching staff are continually improving their skills in line with innovative teaching practices and international standards. Incentive mechanisms that reward faculty for research output, teaching innovations, and student success could help drive this improvement.

#### **Best Practices:**



- Commitment to Social Development: CIU actively contributes to societal development, particularly through public lectures, cultural preservation, and entrepreneurship initiatives, reinforcing its role as a leading institution in community engagement.
- Support for Lifelong Learning: The university provides diverse opportunities for lifelong learning, including continuing education programs and career development services that support both personal and professional growth.
- Effective Evaluation Mechanisms: CIU has implemented a robust system of internal and external evaluations, ensuring that its strategic goals are regularly monitored and adjusted as needed.

### Evaluation

- ☐ 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

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

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

#### Organizational Structure and Implementation of Strategic Goals

Caucasus International University (CIU) has an organizational structure that appears effective in supporting the implementation of the goals and activities described in its strategic plan. The structure is characterized by a clearly defined chain of authority involving the Chancellor, Rector, vice-rectors, and heads of various structural units, which facilitates decentralized decision-making and allows for efficient delegation of responsibilities. Each unit within the administrative apparatus has well-defined roles that align closely with the university's strategic goals. This is reflected in the clear delineation of tasks and responsibilities for each structural unit in relation to strategic development objectives. The presence of key performance indicators and control measures within the action plan ensures continuous monitoring of progress towards achieving institutional goals.

However, while the structure is comprehensive, there are some areas where CIU could strengthen its operations. Although collaboration between structural units is encouraged, the mechanisms for inter-departmental synergy could be made more systematic to ensure that all units work towards complex, interdisciplinary objectives. The establishment of the Administrative Council, which includes key leadership figures, is a positive step in enhancing coordination, but more emphasis could be placed on formalizing communication channels and regular joint strategic sessions across different units to foster a more integrated approach to problem-solving and achieving the university's goals.

#### Procedures for Election/Appointment of Management Bodies

CIU's procedures for the election and appointment of management bodies are transparent and adhere to legislative standards. The university's charter outlines the rules for appointing the Chancellor, Rector, Deans, and other management figures, ensuring that all processes are public and equitable. Transparency is further supported by public announcements for administrative vacancies, including qualification requirements and the composition of selection committees. The participation of stakeholders such as faculty members and the Quality Assurance Service in selecting deans and program heads ensures that the appointment processes consider relevant expertise and quality benchmarks.

Nevertheless, the selection and appointment processes could be enhanced by increasing the level of external oversight or peer review for high-level appointments to further strengthen transparency and equity. This would help CIU align with best international practices, where senior appointments often involve external experts or representatives from other institutions. Such measures could help avoid potential biases in selection and foster a culture of accountability at the highest levels of management.

### **Effective Management of Institutional Activities**

The management structure of CIU is designed to ensure effective oversight and implementation of both academic and administrative functions. The responsibilities of each structural unit are clearly outlined in statutes that define rights, obligations, and operational domains. The institution also applies several mechanisms to enhance management efficiency, including regular performance evaluations and the use of a Business Continuity Plan to ensure uninterrupted operations in case of emergencies. The recent acquisition of an ISO9001-2015 certification further attests to the institution's commitment to quality management practices and continuous improvement.

The institution management uses modern technologies, including electronic document processing system. It maintains the registry of educational institutions as described in current legislation.

### **Leadership Support for International Cooperation**

CIU's leadership supports the internationalization of its operations, which is reflected in its Internationalization Policy. The policy outlines goals and mechanisms for establishing partnerships, promoting academic exchanges, and integrating international perspectives into teaching and research. The International Relations Department plays a pivotal role in coordinating these activities and ensuring that internationalization efforts align with the university's mission and objectives. The institution has made efforts to build partnerships with international universities and to provide mobility opportunities for students and faculty, thereby enhancing CIU's visibility and engagement on a global scale.

However, there are limitations in the depth and scope of these international collaborations. Current partnerships are largely focused on mobility programs rather than on long-term, strategic research collaborations or joint programs. CIU could benefit from expanding its internationalization strategy to include more structured, formalized partnerships, such as joint degree programs or collaborative research initiatives with renowned international universities. Such partnerships could provide more substantial opportunities for CIU's academic community and help enhance the institution's reputation globally.

### **Evidences/indicators**

SER, Annexed Materials, Interviews.

### **Recommendations:**

None.

### **Suggestions:**

- Improvement of Selection and Appointment Transparency: Introducing external peer review or involving external experts in the appointment of senior management could help enhance transparency and equity in the selection process.
- Use of Performance Survey Data: Management could make more systematic use of performance evaluation data to drive strategic adjustments and improve administrative practices.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expansion of International Collaborations: CIU's leadership could enhance international cooperation by pursuing structured, strategic partnerships that involve joint degree programs and collaborative research initiatives with international institutions.</li> </ul>
<b>Best Practices:</b> None.
<b>Evaluation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements</li> <li><input type="radio"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements</li> </ul>
<b>2.2 Internal Quality Assurance Mechanisms</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 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.</li> <li>○ HEI has a mechanism for planning student body, which will give each student an opportunity to get a high-quality education.</li> </ul>
<b>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</b> <p>Caucasus International University (CIU) has established robust Quality Assurance (QA) procedures as outlined in its regulation, "Quality Assurance Mechanisms and Assessment of Their Efficiency." This document provides a detailed description of QA processes, including the periodicity with which they are conducted. Furthermore, CIU has been awarded the ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management Standard certification, granted by TÜV NORD GROUP, one of the most reputable German certifiers worldwide.</p> <p>The Quality Assurance Service, a key structural unit within the university, plays a central role in promoting a culture of quality and coordinating QA processes. Each structural unit at CIU recognizes its individual responsibility in ensuring quality, contributing to the university's evaluation processes, and using quality assessment results to enhance institutional operations. The QA department has also developed a QA policy document, with the entire system following the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle.</p> <p>CIU has provided evidence of surveys, including templates, results from previously conducted surveys, and QA office reports. To promote continuous quality improvement, the Quality Assurance Service, along with various university units, conducts evaluations in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of educational programs;</li> <li>• Student support services;</li> <li>• Administrative, academic, visiting, and support staff;</li> <li>• Research quality;</li> <li>• Internationalization efforts;</li> <li>• Material, library, information, and financial resources;</li> <li>• University's third mission activities;</li> <li>• Effectiveness of QA mechanisms.</li> </ul> <p>During interviews, panel members confirmed their awareness of existing QA mechanisms and the presence of a functioning feedback loop. Students also noted positive changes based on their requests, it was repeated by staff.</p> <p>Additionally, CIU has an evaluation system for academic, invited, and administrative staff. Program heads confirmed that any challenges related to specific staff members are addressed through meetings involving the QA service. Furthermore, all staff proved that they are aware of the evaluation system and receiving results.</p> <p>Student academic performance is monitored each semester, and significant improvements have been made to the monitoring system. The implementation of modern digital technologies automated data</p>

processing through the university's Academic Processes Management Electronic System (GONI). Lecturers can monitor students' performance by themselves.

CIU's evaluation mechanisms for educational programs were also confirmed through documentation and interviews with stakeholders. Program development actively involves stakeholders, and the QA Service has provided consistent consultation to over 30 program heads on topics such as program structure, modern teaching methodologies, assessment systems, and quality evaluation. Student satisfaction surveys are regularly conducted to assess the quality of resources and facilities. Specific questionnaires and mechanisms have been developed for the Medicine program. Additionally, while academic staff and students demonstrated clear involvement in the QA process, this level of engagement was notably lacking among invited staff. For future development, it would be beneficial for the institution to actively increase the participation of invited staff in university activities and QA mechanisms. This broader inclusion would further strengthen the university's quality assurance processes and foster a more cohesive institutional culture.

It is worth noting the evaluation of the university's "third mission"—its contribution to community development. Annual reports compiled by the Public Relations Service summarize these activities, ensuring transparency and guiding future initiatives to strengthen CIU's societal impact.

The QA service's annual report demonstrates the consistent application of QA mechanisms. Throughout the reporting period, CIU regularly assessed the efficiency of its internal QA mechanisms, making necessary modifications. Changes were made to two key documents: "Quality Assurance Mechanisms and Evaluation of Their Efficiency" and "Procedures for Using the Results of Quality Assessment." In addition to the PDCA cycle, CIU has introduced a modified cycle—PDCA+—which evaluates the impact of measures implemented in response to QA recommendations. The QA Service reflects these results in its reports.

In 2024, CIU established a Quality and Innovation Team, which is set to play a pivotal role in integrating quality and innovation into the teaching-learning process. The team organizes meetings to share best practices between academic staff, faculty heads, and students, fostering a development-centered approach to quality assurance.

The university has also developed a system for planning student enrollment. This includes setting maximum student numbers and target indicators based on various levels. The methodology for determining student capacity considers factors such as: a) The total teaching and support areas available to the university; b) The number of academic staff; c) The seating capacity of auditoriums; d) The availability of practice and clinical teaching facilities; e) Program relevance to labor market demands.

Each academic year, CIU plans student intake for its various educational programs. For programs in the Faculty of Medicine, laboratory capacity, practical training rooms, and partner clinic capacity are considered. For master's and doctoral programs, supervision capacity and research resources are considered. The planning process also accommodates foreign language programs, ensuring adequate staffing for English-language instruction.

#### **Evidences/indicators**

- Self-Evaluation Report;
- Quality assurance mechanisms and assessment of their efficiency;
- Procedures for using the quality assessment results;
- Quality assurance policy;
- Interviews with stakeholders;
- Methodology for planning student quota.

#### **Recommendations:**

None.

#### **Suggestions:**

For future development, it would be beneficial for the institution to actively increase the participation of invited staff in university activities and QA mechanisms. This broader inclusion would further strengthen the university's quality assurance processes and foster a more cohesive institutional culture.

<b>Best Practices:</b> None.
<b>Evaluation</b>  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements
<b>2.3. Observing Principles of Ethics and Integrity</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ HEI has developed regulations and mechanisms that follow principles of ethics and integrity. Such regulations are publicly accessible.</li> <li>○ Institution has implemented mechanisms for detecting plagiarism and its prevention.</li> <li>○ HEI follows the principles of academic freedom.</li> </ul>
<b>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</b>  <p>Caucasus International University (CIU) is an educational and scientific institution that fosters social and economic progress, promoting the values of Georgia and world culture through modern knowledge (Provision). The University's Code of Ethics (Code) establishes the principles and standards that staff and students must adhere to in these activities. The Code was developed based on the Constitution of Georgia, the Law on Higher Education, international practices, and university regulations. It specifically defines a set of disciplinary rules that establish standards to protect the values upheld by CIU. Serving as the conduct guidelines for staff and students, the Code also outlines the appropriate disciplinary actions for violations of these established rules. Staff and students have confirmed their understanding of the Code, which is publicly available. One of the main tasks of the University's Monitoring Service and faculty administration is to evaluate compliance with ethical standards and respond accordingly.</p> <p>The policy on academic integrity is also clearly defined; the Code outlines key terms related to academic integrity and ethics, ensuring a common understanding of what constitutes plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic misconduct. CIU documents its commitment to upholding the principles of academic freedom as one of the core values of the HEI.</p> <p>The HEI also outlines procedures for addressing plagiarism and other violations of academic ethical principles, which are clearly documented in the regulations. All academic staff and students interviewed were aware of CIU's commitment to academic values and the consequences of breaching these rules. The University conducts training sessions to educate PhD supervisors on the institution's Academic Writing Standards, the characteristics of a qualifying thesis, and the procedures for detecting and responding to plagiarism. The Turnitin program has been integrated into the educational system to check the similarity of academic papers and doctoral theses, ensuring efficient and continuous oversight. Additionally, the University's Plagiarism Detection and Response Rule identifies improper use of artificial intelligence programs and shapes preventive measures. The University plans to gradually develop approaches to raise awareness of the capabilities and limitations of artificial intelligence, while also upholding the principles of ethical AI use and academic integrity.</p> <p>An Ethics Commission was also established at the HEI to uphold the ethical standards outlined in the Code of Ethics. Its primary purpose is to review and adjudicate cases of student and staff misconduct, ensuring that all community members adhere to the principles of integrity, standards, and expectations that govern the conduct of students and academic staff at the institution. Also, this Commission has the authority to review any complaints or allegations related to academic integrity, professional conduct, and violations of the Code of Ethics. The Code specifies the composition of the Ethics Commission, including the number of members (at least three persons, not related to or dependent on disciplinary proceedings, and a student representative from the Student Self-Governance for student-related issues), their roles (chairperson and members) as well as the process for their selection or appointment.</p> <p>Students have the right to submit complaints to the Ethics Commission, which addresses issues within the scope of the Code. According to the SER, disciplinary proceedings were initiated against 37 students in the 2022-2023 academic year, who were subsequently sanctioned. This suggests that the Commission functions effectively, but the number also indicates a need for greater awareness of ethical norms and values among students.</p>

The HEI ensures the protection of the rights and legal interests of students enrolled in educational programs based on national legislation and internal normative acts. The regulation of the educational process describes the student's rights in detail expressing clearly that it is forbidden to limit the academic freedom of students, as well as the student's rights recognized by the Law of Georgia on Higher Education.

The provisions of the faculties reflect the protection of academic freedom as one of their responsibilities. Academic and invited staff determine the training course format through the syllabus. To assess perceptions of academic freedom, CIU surveys the opinions of academic staff and according to the more recent 2023 staff satisfaction results, 87% believe that CIU offers a high level of academic freedom.

According to the SER, the University is currently working on establishing an Ethics Council that will include representatives of the Academic Processes Management Service, the Scientific Research Departments, the Doctoral Service, the academic staff, doctoral students, and students from other levels of education. Agreeing with this proposal, the operation of such a committee is essential. The establishment of a university-wide Ethics Council is necessary to ensure transparency and adherence to ethical standards in the HEI's research activities, especially in fields like medicine and social sciences. To appropriately address such issues, it is crucial to have an independent expert body that provides guidelines and supervises compliance with ethical rules. Besides, the responsibilities of the Ethics Council should include reviewing university-linked research plans from an ethical perspective and addressing disputes where ethical dilemmas arise. The existence of this Council will ensure also that research conducted at CIU complies with international ethical standards and protects the institution's reputation from potentially harmful research practices. The independent Ethics Council is thus a key element in maintaining the credibility and responsibility of university research even if external contracted or affiliated units, clinics, hospitals, and research institutes have their own ethics committees (indeed, no ethical committee license number or reference to an ethical board review is presented in the cooperative and co-authored research papers No. 8. or No. 23. listed in the attached Scopus database of scientific output).

It can also be proposed that the establishment of the Council be linked to academic integrity campaigns, which aim to promote understanding of the reciprocity between academic freedom, responsibility, and accountability, all of which are essential for those (staff and students) working in academic fields of the institution. Additionally, in line with the proposed roles of the Council (according to SER p. 37), another function of the Ethics Council would be to offer courses and workshops for students and staff to raise awareness of ethical principles related to responsible research and issues such as the use of artificial intelligence. Nevertheless, in the meetings with the program staff, the experts gained the impression that a satisfactory level of compliance with internal regulations relating to ethical conduct in research, teaching, and assessments in most of the relevant areas has already been achieved. In this regard, the CIU administration and the PhD Department have already implemented various measures and activities to ensure the effective management of PhD research. The PhD student's Scientific Supervisor assists in formulating the research topic and methodology, monitors the progress of the student's teaching and research components, and ensures adherence to ethical norms throughout the process. As mentioned, these responsibilities could also fall under the future remit of the Ethics Council.

The privacy of personal data is governed and protected by the Constitution of Georgia and the Law of Georgia on Personal Data Protection. Notably, the university has received a relevant quality certificate, confirming that staff management processes comply with ISO 9001-2015 standards; personal data protection is managed in cooperation with a contractor company.

All forms of discrimination, harassment, and violence in the workplace are addressed in accordance with Georgian law and internal regulations. CIU ensures equal employment and career development opportunities for all staff members, prohibiting gender discrimination in job positions and the selection/recruitment process. The Expert Panel has not received any substantive feedback regarding these issues.

#### **Evidences/indicators**

- SER
- Interview results
- Annexes

#### **Recommendations:**

A University-wide independent Ethics Council should be established with active participation from all stakeholders, extending its remit to all human and non-human scientific research. The HEI must ensure that scientific research is conducted transparently and adheres to the highest standards of research ethics; therefore, the regulations and documents governing the Council's operation should be accessible to stakeholders on the website.

#### **Suggestions:**

It is suggested to periodically organize campaigns, courses, and workshops for students and staff to raise awareness of ethical principles related to responsible research and issues such as the use of artificial intelligence.

**Best Practices:**

None.

**Evaluation**

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

### 3. Educational Programmes

HEI has procedures for planning, designing, approving, developing and annulling educational 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**

In the Self-Evaluation Report (SER), CIU has outlined its policy for planning, designing, implementing, and developing educational programs. This well-structured process is further detailed in two key documents: 'Methodology for Planning, Developing, and Enhancing Educational Programs' and 'The Rule of Designing, Developing, and Cancelling Educational Programs.' Besides, the University has additionally developed work forms (instructions) that simplify the work process of planning/implementation/development of educational programs.

All key aspects and crucial details of the main educational fields—Medicine, Viticulture-Winemaking, Social Sciences and Humanities, Business and Technology, and Law—along with descriptions of their existing programs, are accessible on the University website for all interested parties. In addition to the website (<https://ciu.edu.ge>), the Annexes to the SER provided detailed information on accredited educational programs, curricula, and the administrative and academic staff overseeing these programs across various schools and faculties. The HEI has established clear procedures for reviewing and regularly monitoring its programs, considering the following key points:

- Labor market research, including international trends;
- Analysis of internal and external data related to the program;
- Development of a program plan and strategy, along with periodic communication with stakeholders during implementation;
- Evaluation of the implementation process.

In the quality assessment of educational programs, the flaws of the methodology used for monitoring students' academic performance (the Gaussian normal distribution method) were recognized, specifically regarding its reduced accuracy in cohorts with small number of students. Therefore, starting in 2025, the University will actively implement a new method—Fuzzy Logic, a mechanism for monitoring students' academic progress. In summary, program development is on track, driven by the analysis of numerical results, including evaluation data from labor market surveys.

The health science programs at the Faculty of Medicine meet the needs of Georgian society and the Expert Panel received ample evidence that the programs have incorporated modern teaching methods in accordance with current medical field standards. The medical curriculum includes essential components of biomedical sciences, clinical sciences and skills, and behavioral and social sciences, facilitating the acquisition of both clinical and professional skills. In terms of design and development, the medical program has been adapted to align with the updated subject benchmarks for higher medical education,

and the components related to scientific research and clinical skills development have been strengthened to satisfactory levels.

Based on interviews conducted by the Expert Panel, faculty teaching staff, administrative personnel, and other faculty members are well-informed about the content of the educational programs and the related regulatory documents. For the one-cycle educational programs in Medicine (offered in Georgian and English, with 360 ECTS) and Dentistry (offered in Georgian and English, with 300/305 and 300 ECTS), the credits required for graduation are evenly distributed between preclinical and clinical courses. These credits are proportionally assigned to mandatory and optional subjects, and global higher education requirements are effectively integrated into the curriculum.

During the last reporting period, all educational programs at CIU underwent various levels of modification. New educational and research entities emerged, significantly contributing to the practical research and scientific activities of both students and academic staff. These new structural units are the Legal Clinic, the NATO and EU Research Center, the Center for Synthesis and Research of Antitumor Chemodrugs, the Institute for Strategic Studies of Nuclear, Chemical, Biological, and Radiological Threats, and the Scientific Research Institute of Constitutional Democracy. In the case of Medicine and Dentistry programs revised curricula have been introduced that better integrate theoretical education with practical training, placing greater emphasis on clinical practice to meet the requirements of the UK General Dental Council (GDC) and the General Medical Council (GMC), targeting an official registration of diplomas issued outside the UK. Based on the panel interviews conducted by the site visit team, the curriculum reform is well accepted by both teachers and students.

The Medical Faculty has commendably introduced integrated learning, combining horizontal and vertical integration of clinical sciences with basic biomedical and social sciences. However, vertical integration should be further enhanced, and the logical sequence of clinical subjects needs reconsideration and there are overlaps in courses. For example, topics such as antibiotics, the diagnosis, classification, pathophysiology, and management of diabetes mellitus are already covered in Semester VIII in the 'Digestive System' module (MOD011-1-6Cr) and other clinical subjects. However, the treatment of diabetes, insulin, and anti-diabetic drugs are revisited later in Clinical Pharmacology (MOD018-2-5Cr) in Semester XII, and in Toxicology (MOD014-1-3Cr) in Semester X.

The University expanded its clinical educational resources by acquiring teaching opportunities in a multi-profile hospital. Additionally, a Clinical Skills Center was established within its own educational space, equipped with modern facilities and consumables for medical and dental practical programs. In summary, the range of educational opportunities enables students to acquire the necessary professional knowledge, skills, attitudes, and responsibilities.

In pursuing the objectives outlined in the HEI's mission and strategic development plans, educational and research activities are led by the Rector, who collaborates with the Academic Council. The Academic Council is the highest collegial body, comprising the heads of all educational programs, and holds decision-making authority regarding academic teaching and scientific matters. This includes the approval of educational programs, the establishment of the university's scientific research priorities, and the determination of other strategic directions. Although the Council certainly undertakes critical roles at the HEI, the conditions of operation and competencies were not sufficiently clear and understandable for the university citizens interviewed.

To evaluate the university's strategic and action plans, assess the efficiency of various activities, and respond to issues while providing a structured approach to organizational and institutional development, a new unit -Organizational Development Service- has been created. How effective this system will be is not yet known, but this unit will actively collaborate with faculties, university departments, and other stakeholders in designing strategic development and action plans. It will also coordinate the strategic development process and the implementation of action plans, making necessary adjustments in cooperation with the relevant faculties and departments.

To facilitate more effective implementation of the methodology for program planning, design, and development, the university plans to introduce structured platforms to enhance connections and collaboration with alumni and employers. An 'Alumni Club' was created to strengthen connections between alumni and the faculties. The university also plans events aimed at developing students' constructive dialogue skills, encouraging their active involvement in program development.



Regarding the process of changing or cancelling educational programs, mechanisms for providing further education to students affected by such changes are determined by a legal act of the rector and in accordance with Georgian legislation. When revising or cancelling programs, the university strives to consider the legal rights and interests of students, offering both adjacent programs and those from partner universities. The Expert Panel was able to verify the compliance of the procedure on-site, through the example of one of the programs to be discontinued (BA in Pharmacy, Georgian language) under the Faculty of Medicine.

#### **Evidences/indicators**

- SER
- Interview results
- Annexes

#### **Recommendations:**

None.

#### **Suggestions:**

- The responsiveness of the faculties' educational programs to regional needs could be further enhanced by increasing the regular involvement of external stakeholders – more specifically alumni - in the development of programs.
- The Medical Faculty has introduced modular learning, and it is suggested that the vertical integration of the program components be strengthened, and the logical sequence of clinical subjects be reviewed.
- The medical teaching laboratories are equipped for basic practical courses in anatomy, microbiology, and biochemistry. It is suggested that with further developments, these sites can be made suitable for specific scientific research pathways, such as neurosciences or molecular biology studies.

#### **Best Practices:**

None.

#### **Evaluation**

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

### **3.2 Structure and Content of Educational Programmes**

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

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

Upon reviewing the university's documentation, exploring the website, and conducting interviews, the experts confirmed that the university offers various programs:

Bachelor educational programs -11:

1. Bachelor's Educational Program in Management;
2. Bachelor's Educational Program in Finance;
3. Bachelor's Educational Program in Tourism;
4. Bachelor's Educational Program in Information Technologies (in Georgian);
5. Bachelor's Educational Program in Information Technologies (in English);
6. Bachelor's Educational Program in Law;
7. Bachelor's Educational Program in Journalism;
8. Bachelor's Educational Program in International Relations;
9. Bachelor's Educational Program in English Language and Literature;

10. Bachelor's Educational Program in Pharmacy;
11. Bachelor's Educational Program in Georgian Viticulture and Winemaking.

One-cycle educational programs -4:

1. Educational Program in Medicine (in Georgian);
2. Educational Program in Medicine (in English);
3. Educational Program in Dentistry (in Georgian);
4. Educational Program in Dentistry (in English).

Master educational programs -6:

1. Master's Educational Program in International Business Management;
2. Master's Educational Program in International Marketing;
3. Master's Educational Program in Law;
4. Master's Educational Program in International Relations and International Security;
5. Master's Educational Program in Media Studies and Multimedia Production;
6. Master's Educational Program in Georgian Viticulture and Enology.

Doctoral educational programs -5:

1. Doctoral Educational Program in Business Administration.
2. Doctoral Educational Program in Law.
3. Doctoral Educational Program in Political Science.
4. Doctoral Educational Program in Mass Communication.
5. Doctoral Educational Program in Viticulture and Enology.

Bachelor educational program is implemented in closing mode

1. Bachelor's Educational Program in Business Administration in English.

Master educational programs not in full operative mode -2:

1. Master's Educational Program in International Marketing in English (in closing mode);
2. Master's Educational Program in Global Policy and Security Studies (submitted for accreditation, administrative proceedings are underway).

All bachelor's educational programs – 240 credits, duration of study is 4 years, i.e., 8 semesters:  
Language of instruction – Georgian / English.

One-cycle Educational Program in Medicine (in Georgian) - 360 credits. Duration of - 6 years, 12 semesters; the language of instruction is Georgian

The structure of the program is as follows:

Field of study mandatory study courses/modules - 337 credits, among them:

Scientific research skills mandatory study courses - 11 credits.

Clinical skills mandatory study courses (among them in modules) - 17 credits.

In addition: 58

Field of study elective study courses - 13 credits.

University mandatory study courses - 5 credits.

University elective study courses - 5 credits.

One-cycle Educational Program in Dentistry (in Georgian) - 300 credits. Duration of studies - 5 years, 10 semesters; the language of instruction is Georgian.

Mandatory components: 289 credits, among them:

University mandatory study courses - 19 credits.

Faculty mandatory study courses - 30 credits.

Field of study basic mandatory study courses - 85 credits.

Field of study clinical mandatory study courses - 155 credits.

Elective components: 11 credits, among them:

University elective study courses - 5 credits;

Faculty elective study courses - 6 credits

Educational Program in Medicine in English - 360 ECTS.

Field of study mandatory study courses/ modules - 325 credits

Among them:

Basic study courses - 123 credits.

Clinical study courses - 168 credits.

Scientific skills mandatory courses - 10 credits.

Clinical skills mandatory courses (among them in modules) - 24 credits.

Field of study elective courses - 18 credits;

General mandatory courses - 12 credits.

General elective courses - 5 credits.

Educational Program in Dentistry in English - 300 ECTS

Mandatory Components - 284 credits, including:

University mandatory study courses - 12 credits.

Faculty mandatory study courses - 30 credits.

Field of study mandatory basic study courses - 87 credits.

Field of study mandatory clinical study courses - 155 credits.

Elective Components - 16 credits, including:

University elective study courses - 10 credits.

Faculty elective courses of study - 6 credits.

#### Study Period and Volume

- One academic year comprises 38 weeks;
- Duration of the I semester is 19 weeks;
- Duration of the II semester is 19 weeks.

Duration of studies on Master's degree is 4 semesters (2 academic years). Program volume in credits 120 ECTS credits. Teaching at master's educational programs is conducted in Georgian language, except for the English-language master's educational programs in International Marketing and Global Policy and Security Studies, for which the language of instruction is English.

The structure and content of the programs are designed to create a logical and cohesive progression between all components, ensuring that students can achieve the intended learning outcomes in a reasonable timeframe, even for those with average academic performance. This progression is planned to guide students step by step through increasingly complex topics and skills, fostering deep understanding and competence in their chosen fields. The structure of each educational program is designed to ensure a logical sequence of components, with prerequisites for advanced courses where applicable. Some courses have no prerequisites, while many require prior completion of earlier courses. The program structure typically includes the following components:

- Mandatory and elective courses in the field.
- Practical and research components.
- 

In addition to the core requirements, the programs offer students the flexibility to select non-compulsory components, allowing them to tailor their education to their interests and career goals. These elective

<p>components enable students to explore diverse topics or deepen their expertise in specific areas, thereby enriching their academic experience.</p> <p>The volume and complexity of each program component are carefully calibrated based on its content, learning outcomes, and the specific demands of the field. This ensures that each course is manageable within the program's context, while still challenging students to engage with the material at an appropriate level of rigor.</p> <p>The teaching and learning methods used across the programs are reflective of the specific requirements of each field, incorporating both theoretical and practical approaches to ensure that students can achieve the defined learning outcomes. Whether through lectures, seminars, practical exercises, or laboratory work, the methods are chosen to effectively impart the knowledge and skills necessary for success in the field.</p> <p>The institution emphasizes transparency and accessibility by ensuring that detailed information about the programs is available. The educational program catalogue serves as a vital resource for prospective and current students and other interested parties, providing comprehensive information about the institution's educational offerings. This catalogue is continuously updated to reflect any changes or improvements to the programs and is accessible to the public via the institution's official website. This commitment to keeping stakeholders informed demonstrates the institution's dedication to maintaining high standards in its academic programs and ensuring that students receive a well-rounded, high-quality education.</p> <p>According to University SER and interview results it is essential to highlight that the university creates individualized study plans within its educational programs based on student needs. Through these personalized curricula, the university addresses various demands, academic backgrounds, and preparation levels, ensuring students' seamless participation in the educational process. The program head is responsible for developing each student's individual study plan, which is done after an interview and a review of the student's study record. This process allows for the customization of the study experience and teaching methods to suit the student's specific requirements.</p> <p>CIU regularly tracks the alumni to assess their employment rates and whether their employment matches the obtained qualifications. It is, as all academic institutions are, limited in the information it can obtain once students leave the institution. However, CIU applies considerable effort in obtaining this data.</p>
<p><b>Evidences/indicators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational program syllabi</li> <li>• Catalogue of educational programs</li> <li>• Students' academic achievement monitoring results</li> <li>• Satisfaction survey results</li> <li>• Interview results.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>None.</p>
<p><b>Suggestions:</b></p> <p>None.</p>
<p><b>Best Practices:</b></p> <p>None.</p>
<p><b>Evaluation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> Does not comply with requirements</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>3.3 Assessment of Learning Outcomes</b></p> <p>HEI has law-compliant, transparent and fair system of learning outcomes assessment, which promotes the improvement of students' academic performance.</p>

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

The Regulation of the Educational Process at Caucasus International University defines the directions for the evaluation of learning outcomes, which are based on the current legislation in the field of higher education in Georgia, including the "Rule on the Calculation of Credits for Higher Education Programs" approved by the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia by Order N3 of January 5, 2007. The assessment system and the related regulations are clearly outlined in the specified rule and are in full compliance with the legal acts in force in Georgia. The conditions established by this regulation are quite detailed and well-structured, and in most cases, the results are unambiguously clear to the interested parties. However, there are several details that, in our opinion, require more specificity to ensure that the best interests of students are maximally protected and that the content of the regulation is fully comprehensible.

For example, according to Article 9, Paragraph 12 of the mentioned rule, if a student misses more than half of the scheduled contact hours in any academic component during a semester without a valid excuse, they may, upon the instructor's request and by decision of the rector, be deregistered from the respective course. This provision leaves some ambiguity as to whether "deregistration from the course" implies a failure in the course (i.e., receiving unsatisfactory results) or simply the annulment of the course registration.

According to Paragraph 16 of the same rule, if a student receives a negative evaluation, they can retake the course in subsequent semesters. If, based on the number of students wishing to retake the course, a separate group needs to be formed, the student must pay for the course on a self-financed basis, in accordance with the number of credits. In this case, while the goal of the provision is clear, the specific requirement for students to pay the respective credit fee during a given semester depends on how many students fail the course.

According to Article 19 of the same rule, a student is allowed to take a supplementary exam if they missed the final exam for a valid reason, provided they submit appropriate evidence and obtain the dean's approval. Here, it is unclear why, if there is a valid reason established by law, it is still necessary to obtain the dean's approval to take the supplementary exam. This position is reinforced by Article 21(1), which states that if a student cannot present any valid evidence for missing the exam but submits a written request detailing the reason for their absence, the dean has discretionary authority to allow the student to retake the exam without a valid reason. In such cases, the dean provides a reasoned explanation on the student's request and forwards the information to the examination center. Here, too, it would be advisable to clarify the scope of the dean's discretion to prevent varying approaches within the university.

Besides these few details, the university has open, transparent, and effective mechanisms for informing students about the assessment system.

Additionally, it should be noted that in the case of educational programs, the evaluation system for learning outcomes takes into account the specifics of the field and includes adequate forms, components, and methods of evaluation, which make it possible to determine to what extent students have achieved the learning outcomes specified in the components of the educational program. The "Rule for the Development, Amendment, and Termination of Educational Programs" was approved by the Chancellor's Order N01-157 of November 10, 2023, which includes not only the directions for the creation and support of educational programs but also the framework form of the program, a learning outcomes map, a map correlating the learning outcomes of the program with the courses, mechanisms for observing the program's development over time, and more.

The group reviewed the learning outcomes evaluation mechanisms at Caucasus International University based on a specific educational program (Master's program in International Business Management). The educational program includes both general (transferable) and field-specific competencies, which encompass knowledge and awareness, skills, responsibility, and autonomy. The document specifies not only the learning outcomes but also the correlation between the learning outcomes of the courses and the program (through corresponding maps). The evaluation levels in relation to learning outcomes are analyzed. The document includes an evaluation indicators map (in relation to the courses), a timeline for the observation of learning outcomes, and more. The group also reviewed the learning outcomes evaluation (LOE) report for the same program, which is clearly an important mechanism for ensuring quality and developing the educational program. Based on the submitted documentation and interviews, we can conclude that transparent criteria are used for the assessment of student knowledge, ensuring that students are informed about their achieved results, shortcomings, and ways to improve. The assessment system generally ensures equal and fair approaches.

During the interview process, it was confirmed that students are informed about the evaluation system and related regulations at CIU, as well as the system for appealing evaluations. Although only a small number of students have personally used the appeals system, several methods of appeal were mentioned during the interviews (e.g., using email, the learning process management system, or

personal requests). While information on the appeals procedure is available on the university website and other sources, it is important for the university to continue supporting the practical implementation of a unified and effective system to eliminate confusion and prevent disruptions in the process.

#### **Evidences/indicators**

- SER
- Regulation on the Organization of the Educational Process
- Rule for the Development, Amendment, and Termination of Educational Programs
- Current Educational Programs of the University
- Rule for the Organization and Implementation of the Examination Process
- Interview Results
- Regulation on the Monitoring of Students' Academic Performance
- Survey Results and Reports

#### **Recommendations:**

Article 19 needs to be rectified according the findings.

#### **Suggestions:**

- The university should conduct a detailed and comprehensive review of the legal acts regulating student assessment to ensure consistent application of regulations.
- The university should support and enhance initiatives aimed at raising student awareness regarding the review and appeal of learning outcomes and assessment one.

#### **Best Practices:**

None.

#### **Evaluation**

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

### **4. Staff of the HEI**

HEI ensures that the staff employed in the institution (academic, scientific, invited, administrative, 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**

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

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

Caucasus International University (CIU) has staff management policies covering university strategic objectives to improve recruitment, motivation, and evaluation processes. The self-evaluation report shows that the recent staff policy was updated according to ISO9001-2015 standards. In 2022, to obtain the ISO9001-2015 certification, the university revised its staff management policy. CIU employs a structured recruitment process for academic, visiting, and administrative staff:

- Academic Staff: Recruitment based on open competition, with transparent conditions published on the university website. The "Rules for Holding Academic Positions" ensure a consistent, fair, and transparent recruitment process.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visiting Lecturers: The university actively collaborates with foreign higher education to involve the international academic staff in its teaching and research processes. In the recent reporting period, around 40 competitions were held, resulting in the appointment of 200 academic staff members, including 13 foreign professors.</li> <li>• Administrative Staff: Hiring through competitive or non-competitive methods, with specific qualifications outlined in the staff management policy.</li> </ul> <p>CIU's affiliation rules are governed by Article 37 of its charter, which formalizes academic staff's commitment to contributing to research, community engagement, and knowledge sharing. CIU provides various incentives to support affiliated staff, including research grants, co-financing for local and international grants, financial support for conference participation and publication costs, incentives for meeting scientific activity standards, and the "Tamar" scientific prize. Last 6 years CIU staffs has published 206 papers, 68 of which are indexed in major international databases like Scopus and Web of Science.</p> <p>According to the self-evaluation report, CIU has a mentorship program, a pivotal component of its staff integration process for newly hired staff. As outlined in Article 7 of the 'Staff Management Policy,' newly hired employees are assigned a mentor from their structural unit for one month. The mentor provides crucial support by introducing them to institutional regulations and resources, ensuring they feel welcomed and supported.</p> <p>CIU conducts staff satisfaction surveys and performance evaluations to assess the effectiveness of its staff management practices. The collected information shows the satisfaction levels of academic, scientific, and visiting staff, identifying key areas for improvement. Feedback from staff satisfaction surveys helps identify areas for improvement in academic operations and staff engagement. Based on staff feedback, CIU has identified several areas for improvement, which were integrated into the 2024 action plan. For example: in 2024, the university enhanced its communication with academic and visiting staff by organizing frequent meetings to discuss innovative teaching and education quality. Also, the University supports medical education and has provided access to the 3D VR Anatomy Premium Edition software and purchased a 3D anatomy table since 2024. Furthermore, based on SER and budget, the university plans to invest 215,000 GEL in new computer equipment in 2024 to improve the technical infrastructure for academic staff.</p> <p>According to the SER (p.6) CIU has in total 704 staff (administrative, academic, support) from which affiliated professors are 25 (11 – medicine), associated professor - 103 (33 - medicine), assistant professor - 67. The university's self-assessment report also presents the ratios of academic, administrative, visiting and support staff to programs, students, and other stakeholders. According to the mentioned table, it is planned to improve the presented ratios by 2030, for example: 1. Ratio of academic and scientific staff to the total number of administrative and support staff increases to 50/100 (now is 30/100) and Ratio of academic, scientific, invited staff number to the number of higher educational programs: up to 20/1 (now is 17/1) (SER).</p>
<p><b>Evidences/indicators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4.1.01 Staff management policies, relevant regulations (including staff recruitment, selection, employment, evaluation, and professional development mechanisms);</li> <li>• 4.1.02 Staff CVs;</li> <li>• Self-evaluation report</li> <li>• Interview Results</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>None.</p>
<p><b>Suggestions:</b></p> <p>None.</p>
<p><b>Best Practices:</b></p> <p>None.</p>

## Evaluation

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

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

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

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

Based on the self-assessment report and additional documentation, the University has developed a methodology for managing the number and workload of academic, scientific and guest personnel. The institution believes that using the methodology ensures effective management of educational and scientific-research processes in accordance with the goals of each educational program. The methodology of determining the number of personnel, workload and work distribution was developed by the university. including:

- Workload distribution. In determining the workload, the University considers the specificity of the programs, which is important in determining each program's staffing requirements.
- Individual staff workload scheme, which is prepared individually for staff at the beginning of each semester and takes into account their commitments at other institutions (if any).
- Allocating time for research, whereby affiliated staff are allocated time to carry out scholarly activities.

The workload and remuneration of academic, scientific, and visiting staff is governed by the University's personnel management policy, which provides a structured approach to determining employment conditions. These conditions are set out in individual contracts, which also detail the terms of membership for academic staff. However, part of affiliated staff to the Medical Faculty are paid only hourly, which cannot ensure the cessation of staff outflow and thus the program's sustainability.

According to the SER (p.6) CIU has in total 704 staff (administrative, academic, support) from which affiliated professors are 25 (11 – faculty of medicine), associated professor - 103 (33 - faculty of medicine), assistant professor - 67. The university's self-assessment report also presents the ratios of academic, administrative, visiting and support staff to programs, students, and other stakeholders. According to the mentioned table, it is planned to improve the presented ratios by 2030, for example: 1. Ratio of academic and scientific staff to the total number of administrative and support staff increases to 50/100 (now is 30/100) and Ratio of academic, scientific, invited staff number to the number of higher educational programs: up to 20/1 (now is 17/1) (SER).

From the documentation submitted by the university, CIU has defined the minimum number of affiliated staff according to the programs. For example, the medicine and one-step program have a total of 18 professors (SER p.115). Currently CIU has about two times more affiliated staff, but considering the number of students (SER p.6 - active - 3431, suspended - 1061), in case of restoration of the status, 11 affiliated professors will not be enough to sustain the programs. Thus, the expert panel suppose that CIU needs to attract more affiliated academic personnel, especially in the medicine field.

To monitor staff efficiency and ensure high performance, the University has developed target performance indicators for academic and administrative staff. These indicators, detailed in sub-standard 4.1 of the University's self-evaluation report, provide measurable criteria for evaluating staff.

Thus, the University has implemented a strong and structured system to manage the number and workload of academic, scientific, and visiting staff. A personal management methodology, along with an individual workload scheme ensures that staffing levels match the unique requirements of each educational program.



<b>Evidences/indicators</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4.2.01 Results of the staff performance evaluation and satisfaction survey and a report on their use in staff management and development;</li> <li>• 4.2.02 Job descriptions and qualification requirements;</li> <li>• 4.2.03 Samples of contracts signed with staff;</li> <li>• 4.2.04 Academic staff affiliation rules and conditions;</li> <li>• 4.2.05 Methodology for determining the number of academic, scientific, and visiting staff of relevant programs;</li> <li>• Self-evaluation report</li> <li>• Interview Results</li> </ul>
<b>Recommendations:</b> It is recommended to increase the number of affiliated staff at medical faculty.
<b>Suggestions:</b> The University should review the payroll policy for affiliate staff in medicine program.
<b>Best Practices:</b> None.
<b>Evaluation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements</li> </ul>

## 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

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

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements Caucasus International University (CIU) has established comprehensive guidelines governing student status, including enrollment (including enrollment procedures at different levels with or without the results of unified national/master's exams), suspension, reinstatement, termination, mobility, and recognition of prior learning for each academic level. These rules are outlined in various internal regulations such as the "Rule on the regulation of the educational process", "Rules on Mobility, Internal Mobility and Credit Recognition", "Rules for Planning the Student Body" and provisions for Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral studies.

International students are admitted to the programs without unified national exams. The specific admission requirements are outlined in the respective program curricula and internal university documents. These admissions procedures comply fully with Georgian legislation. As part of the application process, applicants must demonstrate proficiency in the English language. This can be achieved by submitting a language proficiency certificate. Alternatively, candidates can take an internal university language assessment to verify their English competency if they do not have such certification. Interviews conducted with international students have provided further evidence of their English

language skills. During these interactions, students have shown the ability to communicate fluently and effectively in English.

The institution ensures the accessibility of these documents through its website, with relevant information available to interested parties. Based on the provided documentation, it is evident that CIU's regulations are transparent, fair, and consistent with Georgian legislation. Contracts between CIU and its students outline the rights and responsibilities of both parties. Students are informed about these terms before signing the agreement. Furthermore, the university regularly conducts informational meetings and consultations on student rights.

A specific provision in the "Rule on the regulation of the educational process" has raised concerns. The rule states that "a student who misses more than half of the scheduled classroom sessions in any educational component during one semester without a valid reason may be deregistered from the relevant subject upon the lecturer's request and the rector's decision." While this provision was initially introduced for medical programs, particularly for practical courses (as it was explained by the university representatives during the interview process), its current formulation allows it to be applied to all components of all programs. This provision contradicts the assessment systems outlined in several syllabi and lacks transparency, potentially jeopardizing students' interests. Therefore, it is recommended to either remove this provision from the rule altogether and regulate this issue directly within the syllabi of the programs where it is relevant, or the rule could be reformulated to clarify exactly which programs and situations it applies to. Additionally, the phrase "deregistered from the relevant subject" should be replaced with a clearer and more transparent provision.

To safeguard students' interests, CIU has implemented various protective mechanisms, including a structured appeals process for students' assessments and an Ethics Committee that addresses issues within the scope of the university's Code of Ethics. To protect their rights and interests, students can apply to the dean/rector or the Appeal Committee of the faculty. The Appeal Committee considers complaints from students and lecturers related to the educational process. Student representation in HEI's governance is ensured through their participation in Faculty Councils. Student members of the council are elected from the student self-government. However, interview results indicate that students are not sufficiently informed about their right to representation in governance bodies. Accordingly, it is suggested that CIU further informs students about their right to choose a representative/be chosen in the faculty council, including the election procedures and the significance of this right.

Caucasus International University has also implemented a framework for student self-governance, including guidelines for elections, operational procedures, and objectives. Interview results indicate that students are well-informed about these processes. The self-government body plays an integral role in coordinating and planning diverse student activities. Students demonstrate active participation in and support for the initiatives of the self-government.

#### **Evidences/indicators**

- Self-evaluation report;
- A sample of the contract between the University and the student;
- Provisions of Structural Units;
- Ethics code;
- "Rule on the regulation of the educational process";
- "Rules on Mobility, Internal Mobility and Credit Recognition";
- "Rules for Planning the Student Body";
- Provisions for Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral studies;
- Interview results;
- Website - [ciu.edu.ge](http://ciu.edu.ge).

#### **Recommendations:**

It is recommended to either remove the following provision from the rule ("Rule on the regulation of the educational process", Article 9.12) altogether and regulate this issue directly within the syllabi of the programs where it is relevant, or the rule could be reformulated to clarify exactly which programs and situations it applies to. Additionally, the phrase "deregistered from the relevant subject" should be replaced with a clearer and more transparent provision.

#### **Suggestions:**

It is suggested that CIU further informs students about their right to choose a representative/be chosen in the faculty council, including the election procedures and the significance of this right.

**Best Practices:**

None.

**Evaluation**

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

**5.2 Student Support Services**

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

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

CIU has implemented a comprehensive range of student support services aimed at enhancing the learning experience and promoting academic success. These services encompass academic advising, career development, and international opportunities. The institution provides academic counselling through various channels, including face-to-face meetings and online consultations. Student Support Services at CIU include the participation of the Institution's administrative, academic, and invited personnel. Students can access information about these services in advance.

Alongside the learning process and academic activities, the university places importance on promoting a diverse student life. The administration, structural units, faculty, and the Youth, Sports, and Culture Service work to offer sports, cultural, creative, and educational activities to students. Student Clubs also provide students with opportunities to engage in activities that support personal development and add to the variety of student life. Caucasus International University has established a student-mentors institute that serves as an additional connection between new students and the administration. This program focuses on introducing first-year and mobility students to the university, helping them engage in campus life, and providing guidance and recommendations in various areas. Mentors support their assigned student groups through direct meetings, individual consultations, group communications on social media, and by organizing excursions and other gatherings.

The university provides various activities aimed at supporting students' professional growth. Internship opportunities with partner organizations are available, offering students hands-on experience. Additionally, workshops and training sessions are held to develop job-related skills.

CIU regularly organizes career events, job fairs and other networking opportunities with potential, where students and alumni have the opportunity to meet potential employers. CIU also offers individual career counselling sessions, which provide tailored guidance to the students. The institution has established relations with employers across various industries to facilitate internships and job placements for students and graduates. The institution also offers other activities to its students, such as public lectures, master classes, training courses, etc.

CIU encourages student participation in international mobility programs. The institution has established partnerships with foreign higher education institutions and participates in Erasmus+ projects to offer international opportunities to its students. During interview sessions, students demonstrated a strong interest in taking part in these opportunities. However, it is important to acknowledge that statistical data provided by the university indicates a decline in carried-out exchange programs over the past few years. To enhance international mobility opportunities, it is suggested that CIU conduct a thorough analysis of student participation data, identify the factors contributing to the decline, and implement targeted measures to address these challenges and improve outcomes in this area.

Academic Processes Management System "GONI" has an important role in supporting the educational processes at CIU. GONI facilitates the electronic availability of essential information for the students. Students benefit from the system's features, which include access to their "Student's Momento", the educational program, and the ability to register for study courses. GONI allows students to view their academic performance, access educational material provided by lecturers, and check their study and examination schedules. Moreover, students can control their financial situation and easily communicate with their professors or teachers. The system also enables students to submit different types of statements and track the responses to those submissions.

CIU provides social and financial support services to assist socially vulnerable students. The university has implemented a "Rule for creating special education conditions for SES students" which outlines benefits such as fee reductions, exemptions, debt write-offs, and the ability to take intensive courses for free in case of subject failure. This comprehensive approach to financial support demonstrates an understanding of the diverse challenges faced by students, particularly those from socially vulnerable backgrounds. The university also offers scholarships and other incentives to high-performing students to increase motivation in educational, scientific, and cognitive activities.

#### **Evidences/indicators**

- Self-evaluation report;
- Provisions of Structural Units;
- "Rule on the regulation of the educational process";
- "Rules on Mobility, Internal Mobility and Credit Recognition";
- "Rule for creating special education conditions for SES students";
- "Rules of student-mentor activity";
- Provisions for Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral studies;
- The procedure for issuing one-time awards and other incentives to successful students;
- Memoranda with partner organizations;
- Memoranda with foreign HEIs;
- Carried out internship programs;
- Interview results;
- Website - ciu.edu.ge.

#### **Recommendations:**

None.

#### **Suggestions:**

To enhance international mobility opportunities, it is suggested that CIU conduct a thorough analysis of student participation data, identify the factors contributing to the decline, and implement targeted measures to address these challenges and improve outcomes in this area.

#### **Best Practices:**

None.

#### **Evaluation**

- ☒ 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**

During the last authorization period (between 2018-2024), the HEI has made significant strides in fostering research activities, as evidenced by the parametric outcomes of the University's scientific endeavors, including the number of peer-reviewed publications, scientific meetings, congresses, national and international research projects, and collaborative grants, as detailed in the SER. Faculty-based and university-wide research activities are coordinated by the Scientific Research Department, which operates according to a predetermined plan to enhance scientific productivity. To better serve doctoral programs and students, the Doctoral Service was separated from the Scientific Research Department.

In line with its mission, the University has established research and innovative activities in strategic directions, focusing on promoting international collaborations and publications, developing a post-doctoral system, and maintaining high-quality standards while facilitating knowledge transfer in various forms. In this respect, CIU demonstrates considerable strength in several disciplines, although in others, its existing potential has yet to be fully realized. It is important to note that the University has identified shortcomings in each case and proposed several strategic tasks in the SER aimed at improving and better integrating research into educational processes.

During the site visit, attention was given to medical and dental research fields, as the Faculty of Medicine, unlike other faculties of CIU, does not have a doctoral (PhD) program. It should be emphasized that, in line with the Statutes of the Faculty of General Medicine, the implementation of basic and applied scientific research in the health sector, student participation in research, innovative approaches to scientific inquiry, the integration of research results into the study process, the focus of the faculty's intellectual potential on priority scientific problems, the promotion of new research projects, and the development of scientific human resources should all be considered key performance indicators for the future. Additionally, developing strategic links with sister universities and research institutes across various disciplines and faculties—especially in medical subjects—would significantly enhance the reputation of CIU within local and national communities.

In this line, CIU may establish a Doctoral Council at CIU, consisting of faculty members overseeing doctoral programs. Such councils play a crucial role in enhancing the professional quality of doctoral education in multi-faculty universities by ensuring consistency and quality control across diverse programs and strategic initiatives. They also help align doctoral training with the university's goals and research priorities. Additionally, these councils can significantly support networking by facilitating connections among schools from different disciplines, fostering a stronger sense of community. The Council can also provide feedback to the university administration, including the Doctoral Service, on policies and practices affecting doctoral research.

In order to increase the scientific productivity and visibility of CIU, incentive mechanisms have been launched to promote high-quality research by university lecturers and doctoral students. CIU promotes the development of fundamental research through an internal grant competition that has been in operation since 2018. According to the competition requirements, research proposals should contribute to scientific, social, economic, cultural, and other forms of development at both national and international levels, which is reflected in the evaluation criteria. The competition includes a mandatory condition for deepening cooperation and knowledge transfer with both international and local research centers and economic agents to facilitate the integration of teaching, research, and the economy. CIU is a successful competitor for national research grants, and in several fields, international funding already plays an important and stimulating role. However, surveys among faculty indicate that the lack of adequate research infrastructure is often seen as a pressing problem.

In planning the student body for admission to doctoral programs, CIU considers the number of academic staff available to supervise doctoral theses, as established by internal university rules and the resources allocated by the university budget for research. Obtaining the student status at the level of doctoral studies is carried out by considering the prerequisites for admission to the relevant doctoral program, passing the internal university exam/interview following the regulations of the doctoral program and the Rules for Planning the Student Body.

During the reporting period, student scholarship funding quotas and the amount of funding increased, but it was recognized that most doctoral students are effectively part-time, with many holding suspended status, which contributes to low completion rates.

The planning, implementation, and evaluation of the scientific research component of the doctoral programs are carried out in accordance with the Provisions on the Dissertation Committee and Doctoral

Studies, which establish the minimum standards necessary for implementing the doctoral program at the faculty and for awarding the academic degree of Doctor. The duration of a doctoral program is at least 3 years, with the educational component comprising no more than 60 credits. The definition and evaluation of the research component are determined by legislation and reflected in the minimum standards for doctoral studies. The distribution of credits for the educational component is determined by the academic staff responsible for the program, based on the specific requirements of the curriculum.

Mechanisms for ensuring the effectiveness of doctoral study supervision and the procedures for the evaluation and defense of dissertations are transparent and fair, as defined by the Dissertation Board and PhD Regulations. PhD students are informed and prepared to take the following steps from the time they submit their thesis to the moment of defense:

- Compliance with the Rules of Academic Honesty,
- Adherence to the Academic Writing Standard,
- Familiarization with experts' conclusions and preliminary defense,
- Making necessary changes to the thesis,
- Reviewing the reviewer's conclusions and preparing responses,
- Preparing for the public defense.

To ensure that all the above is addressed, the PhD Department conducts training and individual meetings with PhD students, ensuring they are familiar with the Dissertation Board and PhD Regulations, the Guidelines for PhD Students, the Academic Writing Standard, and the Procedure for Detecting and Responding to Plagiarism.

Academic staff conducting research are actively involved in the life of the University at various educational levels, with most serving as supervisors for PhD research. The qualifications of a Scientific Supervisor must be validated by scientific papers published in the last 10 years, relevant competencies, and research experience in the scientific field related to the PhD candidate's thesis topic. Notably, PhD students are a key focus group for CIU, and the institution has made significant strides in this area by expanding doctoral education programs in specific fields, such as Viticulture, and fostering interdisciplinary research opportunities for doctoral students. However, there are currently no plans to establish similar programs in Medicine or Dentistry, even though PhD studies involving young, dedicated students are undoubtedly a driving force for progress. In line with the observations and comments in the SER, if PhD students are enrolled in the PhD program within the framework of long-term research projects, the Scientific Supervisor will be motivated to engage a competent PhD student with potential in the research while ensuring the high quality of the work. New administrative approaches are also mentioned in the SER (p. 77) in this direction, outlining plans to make changes in the procedure for admission to PhD studies in two directions: 1. accepting PhD candidates only based on the need for inclusion in priority research; and 2. appointing only University-affiliated personnel as Supervisors.

It should be noted that, in terms of the internationalization of academic programs, the university has implemented its first Joint Doctorate Program. This initiative allows doctoral students to conduct research simultaneously at least two universities in different countries, resulting in a joint degree awarded by both institutions based on a single doctoral thesis. This practice should be supported and extended. Future initiatives in this area, particularly those that possibly include joint doctoral programs with Georgian universities, are expected to significantly enhance both the quality and quantity of scientific output and the development of doctoral education at CIU.

Cooperation agreements and memoranda of understanding have been signed with local and international economic operators for several studies as part of the university's completed, ongoing, and planned projects, with examples provided in the relevant appendices.

Funds are allocated in the university budget to support research projects in which PhD students are actively engaged. The budget also provides scholarships for doctoral students, enabling them to complete their dissertations within these research projects. According to SER these projects will prioritize areas with the best publication results from the 2018-2024 reporting period, as well as fields where the university can establish a unique niche. This is an important proposal that needs to be implemented, and it would be most effectively delivered as part of a new research strategy, broken down by faculties, programs, and academic semesters.

#### **Evidences/indicators**

- SER
- Interview results
- Annexes

#### **Recommendations:**

It is recommended to implement and complete all administrative-regulatory tasks related to scientific and research activities listed in the SER as 'planned for the future.' These include: 1) Developing new comprehensive guidelines for PhD students and academic leaders, with detailed information available in

separate documents; and 2) Establishing a new standard that requires a change in the approach to implementing PhD programs, where priority scientific directions will be determined by the faculties. Considering these points, a revised research strategy is proposed, organized by faculties, programs, and academic semesters.

#### **Suggestions:**

- Scientific research projects conducted outside the university in collaboration with partner research centers should be encouraged, and joint research activities should be strengthened. These partnerships could contribute to the future establishment of a medical PhD school.
- Opportunities for students to engage in research as part of their academic programs should be continuously expanded. Students' research output should be used as a key performance indicator, with measurable metrics to evaluate how effectively the university is achieving this core objective.
- It is suggested to consider establishing a Doctoral Council to supervise and coordinate the educational activities of the University's doctoral schools.

#### **Best Practices:**

None.

#### **Evaluation**

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

#### **6.2. Research Support and Internationalisation**

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

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

Caucasus International University (CIU) demonstrates a structured approach to research support through its strategic plans and institutional policies, with initiatives aimed at becoming a leading research institution in the Caucasus region. CIU has adopted an Institutional Strategy for Research Development which includes detailed actions and indicators aligned with its broader mission to lead in research and innovation, foster interdisciplinary and intersectoral research, and contribute to social and economic progress. The strategic plan outlines significant investments in research, including the implementation of both bottom-up and top-down funding mechanisms, research infrastructure support, and efforts to promote the career development of young scientists.

However, while CIU has made substantial progress in enhancing research capabilities, there are some problematic areas that need addressing to ensure full compliance with the standards. From a procedural perspectives, fair and transparent rules for the distribution of research funds are in place and are well and actively publicized. Despite allocating a percentage of the budget towards research and supporting PhD programs, the university's ability to attract high-caliber researchers and sustain their involvement in research activities could be further improved by introducing more incentives and mentorship programs. Moreover, the integration of research into the academic environment at CIU is still evolving; efforts could be strengthened through greater interdisciplinary collaboration and structured mentorship for junior researchers. The strategic goals for research include promoting interdisciplinary and intersectoral projects, but evidence of successful implementation is somewhat limited, indicating a need for more tangible results in this area.

CIU's Faculty Dissertation Council is actively involved in developing research programs, ensuring the quality of PhD programs, and establishing clear standards for awarding doctoral degrees. The university also encourages staff to participate in research through a points-based evaluation and promotion system, which offers incentives for publishing in recognized journals and participating in conferences. This system is a positive step towards involving faculty members in scientific activities and ensuring a minimum level of engagement in research across all academic ranks. CIU also has a PhD Department that oversees PhD

<p>admissions, progress, and the overall quality of research activities, which helps to maintain consistent standards for doctoral research.</p> <p>Despite these efforts, challenges remain in ensuring consistent and impactful engagement in research by new and existing staff. The minimum points requirement for research activities provides a baseline, but it could be perceived as insufficient for motivating staff to achieve higher levels of research output. More focus could be placed on establishing joint research initiatives with international institutions, which could help attract a broader pool of talented researchers and enhance the university's international reputation. Additionally, while the Tamar Scientific Award and other incentives are in place, the effectiveness of these rewards in promoting substantial, high-impact research outputs could be further evaluated and adjusted as necessary to achieve greater success in attracting and retaining talented researchers. While the dynamic of research funding in the past five years are positive throughout, more needs to be done along the lines suggested in this report.</p> <p>CIU has made some efforts to internationalize its research activities, including developing partnerships with international organizations and offering mobility opportunities for faculty and students. The university provides funding for academic and scientific international conferences, as well as for academic-research mobility, which is an important step in integrating its research efforts into the global academic community. These initiatives contribute to the broader strategic goal of raising CIU's international profile and enhancing the quality and visibility of its research outputs.</p> <p>However, the actual impact of these internationalization efforts is not fully clear. Although CIU is involved in partnerships and provides funding for participation in international activities, more emphasis on structured international collaborations—such as joint research programs and collaborative publications—would likely yield stronger and more visible outcomes. Currently, most activities seem to focus on individual mobility and participation in events rather than sustained, strategic partnerships. CIU could benefit from building long-term, collaborative relationships with renowned international universities and research institutions to enhance the quality of its research and broaden the opportunities for both students and staff.</p>
<p><b>Evidences/indicators</b></p> <p>SER, Annexed Documents, Interviews</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>None.</p>
<p><b>Suggestions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustained Engagement in Research: CIU has introduced a points-based system for research engagement, but it may not sufficiently incentivize high-quality, impactful research. Strengthening mentorship programs, particularly for early-career researchers, and increasing research funding for high-impact projects could help address this.</li> <li>• Limited Interdisciplinary and Intersectoral Collaboration: While there are strategic goals to promote interdisciplinary research, there is limited evidence of successful implementations. More structured initiatives and institutional support mechanisms could help foster collaboration across different faculties and sectors.</li> <li>• Enhancement of International Collaborations: Current efforts to internationalize research largely focus on individual mobility. Establishing joint research initiatives and formal partnerships with international institutions could improve research quality and CIU's global standing. Strengthening these international collaborations would be crucial for CIU's ambition to become a leader in the region.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Best Practices:</b></p> <p>None.</p>
<p><b>Evaluation</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements</p>



### 6.3. Evaluation of Research Activities

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

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

Caucasus International University (CIU) has established a system to evaluate and analyze the quality of its research activities and the productivity of its scientific-research units and academic staff. This system involves multiple components, including peer review mechanisms, quantitative scoring, and the evaluation of research impact. The evaluation procedures are coordinated by the Quality Assurance Service and the Scientific Research Department, ensuring consistency and compliance with the university's standards for academic quality. CIU employs a combination of qualitative assessments, supported by responsibly applied quantitative indicators, and emphasizes transparency by involving external independent reviewers for the internal grant competitions.

The evaluation criteria are comprehensive, including aspects such as the relevance of the research topic, the research methodology's compliance with goals, interdisciplinary approaches, and international cooperation. The combination of these indicators suggests an intentional effort to align CIU's research output with international standards, encouraging local and international collaboration and promoting the social and cultural impact of research.

While CIU's overall approach to research evaluation is thorough, there are notable challenges concerning the productivity of medical research staff. Medical research is typically resource-intensive, and despite the mechanisms in place, the number and impact of research outputs from the medical faculty appear to lag compared to other faculties. This gap can be attributed to several factors, including a lack of adequate research infrastructure specific to medical fields and an over-reliance on individual research initiatives rather than well-coordinated, large-scale projects.

Moreover, the productivity metrics currently in place may not fully capture the unique challenges faced by medical researchers, such as the time and resource requirements for conducting clinical trials or patient-based studies. This is compounded by limited funding allocations for medical-specific projects, which constrains the ability of researchers to pursue ambitious, high-impact studies. Although CIU has made efforts to improve infrastructure, such as investing in VR anatomy tools and upgrading laboratory facilities, the support still does not seem sufficient for enabling large-scale medical research that matches the rigor and complexity seen in other international medical research institutions.

#### **Evidences/indicators**

SER, Annexed Materials, Interviews

#### **Recommendations:**

None.

#### **Suggestions:**

None.

#### **Best Practices:**

None.

#### **Evaluation**

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

## 7. Material, Information and Financial Resources

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

### 7.1 Material Resources

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

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

Based on the review of the submitted documentation and the on-site visit, it was determined that the material resources (immovable and movable assets) owned or legitimately possessed by Caucasus International University serve the institution's educational purposes and meet the requirements for the implementation of educational programs.

The university has classrooms, centers, laboratories, conference halls, and various types of offices necessary for educational and research activities. For instance, the university's multimedia center serves as a local educational and creative base for the journalism program, equipped with video-audio, television, documentary, and radio technology. For viticulture and winemaking, there is an independent laboratory and a wine cellar equipped according to relevant standards. Additionally, there are criminology laboratories and others. Notably, the university is constructing a multifunctional sports hall, and the construction process was observed during the visit.

The university campus includes recreational spaces, lecture halls, group work areas, a sufficient number of sanitary units, a renovated library, laboratories relevant to specific fields, study rooms, an archive, and more. The university has submitted architectural plans of its buildings along with the self-assessment report. The educational programs and the listed material resources are in line with the material resources available at the institution; the university has also signed relevant agreements with the necessary facilities for practical training. Classrooms and educational/research spaces are equipped with appropriate inventory, considering the specifics of the educational programs. The university is also equipped with appropriate information technology resources.

During the on-site visit, it was revealed that safety norms are adhered to in educational/research laboratories, and relevant informational brochures are displayed in visible locations. The university has developed mechanisms for fire safety, medical assistance, and order maintenance, with the necessary equipment in place (fire safety equipment is installed with detailed usage instructions and evacuation plans).

The group inspected the university's medical room, which meets the standards set by current legislation. Specifically, qualified personnel are employed, and the necessary material-technical base is provided.

Order is maintained within the university perimeter by security personnel. For security purposes, the institution has installed cameras with video recording capabilities both inside and outside the buildings.

Students with special educational needs have access to the main parts of the campus (including a specially equipped sanitary unit for students with special educational needs), although the campus is not 100% adapted for individuals with disabilities or special educational needs. In rare cases, there is no appropriate infrastructure, or the existing infrastructure does not fully meet the required standards. It is important to note that the university has taken steps in this direction, and in some cases, accessibility limitations are due to objective challenges.

The university ensures the operation of the heating and cooling systems, which meet the required standards, as confirmed by the submitted reports.

As noted in the report, the university has recreational spaces, but given the number of students and the high usage observed during the visit, the university should work on expanding and diversifying these spaces.

To enhance the study and implementation of core disciplines offered by the Faculty of Medicine, the following facilities have been established in CIU:

- Clinical Skills Center: This is a specially designed area where courses focused on developing clinical skills are taught, either as standalone courses or as components of modules. The center provides students with opportunities to acquire and refine essential skills for doctors. It is fully

equipped with modern medical tools and mannequins, including a childbirth simulator, an interactive birthing mannequin with a laptop, neonatal and adult resuscitation mannequins, an interactive arrhythmia simulator, an auscultation simulator with a smart stethoscope, heart and lung sound simulators, and mannequins for patient care, catheterization, intravenous injections, suturing, and trauma simulation. The center also features stations for efficiently conducting OSPE (Objective Structured Practical Examination) and OSCE (Objective Structured Clinical Examination) exams.

- Microbiology and Immunology Laboratory: This lab meets all the needs of microbiology and bacteriology courses, equipped with modern microscopes and laboratory tools for growing and studying microorganisms, conducting bacteriological analyses, and creating bacteriograms. The microscopes are also used in subjects like histology, cytology, and embryology.
- Chemistry and Biochemistry Laboratory: Outfitted with modern equipment and necessary reagents, this lab facilitates chemical and biological experiments for students in both medicine and pharmacy programs.
- Study Rooms for Basic Learning Disciplines: These rooms are equipped with modern mannequins and visualization tools.
- Botany and Pharmacognosy Cabinet: Provides specialized resources for learning in these fields.
- Dental Clinic: This clinic is equipped with dental chairs and all necessary equipment, allowing students to perform procedures under faculty supervision, helping them develop clinical skills and prepare for professional practice. The clinic covers 178 square meters and includes spaces where students can practice on mannequins, jaw models, and endodontic blocks during pre-clinical training. The university also provides three specialized rooms for spectroscopic instruction and a nearby laboratory where students practice surgical procedures on pig heads.
- Anatomy Laboratory: Equipped with modern mannequins and digital tools, including:
  - An Anatomical Table: Allows students to study human anatomy interactively using 3D anatomical models, observing organs, tissues, and various structures on both microscopic and macroscopic levels.
  - 3D Virtual Reality Glasses: These glasses enable students to explore human anatomy in a virtual reality environment, visualizing details that are impossible to see in the physical world. Through this technology, students can dissect and observe anatomical structures with accuracy, providing a view of over 2,500 anatomical features.

The university has signed memorandums with various clinics, outlining details such as the number of students, the duration of their practical training, and the mutual responsibilities of both parties. During an onsite visit, two clinics were inspected: Tsitsishvili Children's Clinic and Caucasus Medical Center. The head of the clinical training management service provided the experts with comprehensive information regarding the organization and progress of the training practice at these facilities.

For the other faculties, there are sufficient and well-equipped lecture theaters and laboratories. The facilities are in decent shape throughout and, in certain parts, leading in national in international standards. Each faculty has their own "signature" lecture theater. The professors and staff have sufficient workspaces which are technologically up to the standards. CIU constantly develops additional spaces, including recreational spaces for students and staff.

#### **Evidences/indicators**

- Self-Evaluation report of the university;
- Interviews with stakeholders
- University Budget
- Statute of the library (Rules for use);
- Mechanisms for the development and renewal of library resources;
- Fire safety mechanisms;
- Report on the functioning of the cooling system;
- Report on the functioning of the heating system;
- Report on compliance with sanitary standards;
- Evacuation plans;
- Report on the structural stability of the building;
- Inventory documents and fire safety report;
- Report on occupational safety.
- Observation of facilities.

<b>Recommendations:</b> None.
<b>Suggestions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The university should continue its efforts to fully adapt the campus, and until full adaptation is achieved, create a detailed guide or map indicating adapted and non-adapted spaces;</li> <li>• The university should also continue to work on increasing and diversifying the number of recreational spaces.</li> </ul>
<b>Best Practices:</b> A notable best practice is that, in collaboration with the university's quality assurance service, the clinics themselves evaluate students' clinical practice. The clinics have implemented an electronic online survey system, enabling management to monitor the quality of clinical training and take corrective action if needed. This system allows for real-time feedback from both students and clinic staff, ensuring a comprehensive evaluation of the clinical experience. By utilizing the electronic survey, the clinics can gather insights into various aspects of the training, such as the effectiveness of supervision, the relevance of clinical cases, and the overall learning environment. The data collected from these surveys provide valuable information for continuous improvement and ensure that any identified issues are promptly addressed. Additionally, this collaborative approach between the university and clinics fosters a more transparent and accountable training process, ultimately enhancing the quality of education and better preparing students for their future professional roles.
<b>Evaluation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements</li> </ul>
<b>7.2. Library Resources</b>
Library environment, resources and service support effective implementation of educational and research activities, and HEI constantly works for its improvement.
<b>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</b> <p>The Library of Caucasus International University is located in a dedicated building, offering a range of essential facilities, including a book archive, reading hall, staff offices, meeting and group workspaces, and an IT equipment area. Additionally, the university's various faculty buildings are equipped with specialized libraries, such as the Faculty of Viticulture and Winemaking. A newly renovated reading room has been added on the 7th floor of the main building, providing a more comfortable and conducive environment for students. All library spaces are well-equipped with internet access, and students have access to printing machines and scanners.</p> <p>The university has established regulations for the use of library facilities, which are publicly available on its website. During interviews with students and staff, it was confirmed that they can access all the necessary literature and resources through the library.</p> <p>CIU has also designed mechanisms for the development and renewal of library resources and services. Interviews with academic and invited staff revealed that they are able to continuously update the main literature in syllabi to align with learning outcomes and evolving trends in their respective fields. Random sampling demonstrated that the primary literature listed in the syllabi is accessible in the university's library.</p> <p>Several processes are in place for updating the library's book collection. When changes are made to a program or syllabus, or when a new course is developed, the head of the program submits a written request to the chancellor or rector to procure the necessary books. This request must be approved by the university's Quality Assurance Service. Additionally, all researchers and academic staff are entitled to request books essential for their planned and approved research projects. Budget allocations for book acquisitions and library renovations are also included in the university's budget.</p> <p>The library maintains records of materials requested by students and professors. These statistics are analyzed, and the head of the library makes recommendations to replenish or diversify the book</p>

collection. The head of the library oversees the entire procurement process, including selecting books, processing invoices, signing contracts, coordinating transportation, and receiving new materials.

An electronic library is also available, providing bilingual (Georgian and English) internet-based resources exclusively for CIU students and professors. Access to the electronic library is granted through university email authentication. Furthermore, the university subscribes to prominent scientific databases, including EBSCO and Elsevier, which are being used for international publications. The library also participates in inter-library subscription services, enabling the temporary use of literature not found in CIU's library through partnerships with national and scientific libraries. The University has also provided statistical data regarding the usage of scientific databases for previous years, which is sufficient, however university can further promote engagement with this resources.

To enhance the scientific productivity of both academic staff and students, CIU library systematically organizes training sessions on how to search international scientific databases, process sources, and utilize these resources in scientific work. These sessions ensure that users are well-informed and capable of navigating databases effectively. Library staff members are certified in the use of these databases, allowing them to offer expert consultations.

In 2022, the CIU library became a member of IATUL and the Association of International University Libraries, further expanding its global engagement and resource accessibility.

One of the services provided by the CIU library is also the administration of the anti-plagiarism software Turnitin. The library conducts training sessions for academic staff and students on how to effectively use the program, ensuring academic integrity across the university.

Additionally, the library offers two-hour consulting and orientation meetings every Wednesday. Information about the library's services, resources, and contact details is regularly updated on the university's website. The library operates six days a week, with a total of 60 hours of service, making it accessible and accommodating to both students and staff.

#### **Evidences/indicators**

- Self-Evaluation report of the university;
- Interviews with stakeholders
- University Budget
- Statute of the library (Rules for use);
- Statistics for use of electronic library databases;
- Electronic catalogue;
- Compliance of library books with core literature indicated in educational programs;
- Mechanisms for the development and renewal of library resources;
- Observation of facilities.

#### **Recommendations:**

None.

#### **Suggestions:**

While the usage of scientific databases appears to be adequate, there remains an opportunity for the University to further enhance the promotion of these resources to encourage broader utilization.

#### **Best Practices:**

None.

## Evaluation

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

### 7.3 Information Resources

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

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

Caucasus International University has established a secure and efficient electronic services system that operates under a unified principle for its educational, scientific, and administrative sectors, supported by a reliable information technology infrastructure. This system includes developed protocols to protect against internal and external threats, crisis situations, and intentional damage, ensuring the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of information within the university. To support academic and research activities, the university provides six computer labs and two computer-equipped reading rooms. Classrooms are outfitted with projectors and personal computers to facilitate the teaching process effectively. Additionally, specialized laboratories equipped with appropriate digital tools and software for various educational programs are available for conducting research and practical work. Administrative staff are supplied with personal computers or laptops to assist in their duties.

Prior to each academic semester, system updates are applied in the computer labs and reading rooms, ensuring they have the necessary software for educational programs. The university's IT infrastructure is continually updated based on institutional activities and technological advancements. Currently, the university's IT infrastructure consists of 774 computers/laptops, 91 projectors, 4 servers, 80 multifunction printers, and other computer equipment. This equipment is integrated into the university's internal network and connected to the global network. The university's IT infrastructure includes four types of networks: a global network (connected through providers Silknet and Magti), an internal network, a VPN network connecting additional buildings, and a VoIP telephone network. A centralized Wi-Fi network covers the entire campus, with two internet providers ensuring uninterrupted access.

The university manages its network using monitoring systems and security measures, including antivirus protection, application control (blocking unsafe applications), and a web filter that restricts access to inappropriate content, such as adult or gambling websites. The university operates four physical servers where important and confidential data is stored, with access permissions based on user needs.

CIU has implemented electronic services and management systems, with mechanisms for ongoing improvement. These systems enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, and accessibility of university services and processes. The university offers corporate email services, with accounts created during student enrollment or contract signing. Official email addresses for faculties and services are listed on the university website, facilitating easy communication. Managing educational and scientific processes through secure information technology is a key priority for the university.

Educational management is conducted via the portal [goni.ciu.edu.ge](http://goni.ciu.edu.ge), where users (students, professors, administration) are registered in the "GONI" Academic Process Management System. The Digital Services Development Office supports and trains users in utilizing the system's functionality. "GONI" includes information on students, faculty, academic performance, educational programs, and courses, and also allows for professor evaluations and surveys.

The university uses an electronic testing system on the Moodle platform for midterm and final exams. Human resource management is handled by the university's staff data system, overseen by the Human Resources Management Office. The "Tuniket" system monitors lecture attendance, supported by the Monitoring Service. Student financial data is managed by the Financial Service using the ORIS accounting software. Additionally, the university provides an electronic catalog of its book collection and operates an e-library at [elibrary.ciu.edu.ge](http://elibrary.ciu.edu.ge). The Scientific Research Department manages the international electronic journal in the social sciences, hosted at [journal.ciu.edu.ge](http://journal.ciu.edu.ge). An inventory management system is also in place.

Some electronic systems are outsourced and maintained by specialized companies, while systems hosted on the university's servers are managed by the Digital Services Development Office. The need for the

development or implementation of new electronic services and systems is determined by the Digital Devices Development Office based on the requirements of specific structural units, technological innovations, or system optimization efforts.

A centralized antivirus server functions for the security of the internal local infrastructure.

Licensing of software products available at the university is actively underway in cooperation with UGT, the distributor of Microsoft in Georgia.

The university has a functional web-page in Georgian and English languages [www.ciu.edu.ge](http://www.ciu.edu.ge). It contains central information such as its structure; a catalogue of educational programs; programs and enrollment criteria; core administrative and academic; and regulation documents. The web-page allows a good identification of the institution for outsiders.

The Academic Process Management System is located in the following domain <http://goni.ciu.edu.ge/ge/>.

#### **Evidences/indicators**

- Information technology management policy and procedure
- Web site
- Accessibility of IT infrastructure
- Interview results

#### **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:**

None.

#### **Best Practices:**

None.

### **7.4 Financial Resources**

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

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

Caucasus International University (CIU) demonstrates a solid financial foundation, with its allocation of financial resources appearing economically achievable and well-aligned with its strategic goals. These resources support core academic functions, research, and infrastructural development. CIU's budget shows a stable operational performance and the capacity to fund ongoing and future projects. This suggests that CIU can achieve the targets outlined in its strategic development plan and mid-term action plans.

The financial resources of CIU are focused on supporting its core activities, such as teaching, learning, research, and internationalization. A significant portion of the budget is directed toward reimbursements for academic and visiting staff, ensuring the university can attract and retain high-quality educators. Moreover, the budget provides for the development of scientific research through various grant competitions and co-financing scientific activities. CIU has also allocated funding for the development of

its library and laboratory setup, reflecting its commitment to advancing educational and research facilities.

CIU has implemented an effective system of accountability, financial management, and control, adhering to international accounting standards. The annual budget breakdown provides a detailed allocation for operational expenses and long-term investments, showcasing a structured approach to managing the institution's resources.

Despite the robust financial planning, there are some cautionary issues that CIU needs to address. First, the university's reliance on student numbers for income makes it vulnerable to fluctuations in enrollment, which could be impacted by political regulations, demographic changes, or economic shifts. A significant portion of CIU's revenue is derived from student tuition, and any drop in student numbers could affect the university's ability to maintain its financial stability.

Additionally, CIU is currently engaged in two substantial infrastructure projects—namely, the construction of a sports complex and student dormitory. While these projects are critical to improving student facilities, they may present challenges related to cost overruns and fixed costs in the future. The financial burden of these projects, combined with potential fluctuations in income, could impact CIU's long-term financial health if not carefully monitored.

#### **Evidences/indicators**

Submitted budget reports; on-site interviews with financial staff and top management and other stakeholders.

#### **Recommendations:**

None.

#### **Suggestions:**

None.

#### **Best Practices:**

None.

#### **Evaluation**

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