



განათლების ხარისხის განვითარების ეროვნული ცენტრი
NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

**Higher Education Institution Authorisation
Experts' Report
[N(N)LE - GIPA-Georgian Institute of Public Affairs]**

Expert Panel Members

Chair: Maurizio Tira, University of Brescia, Italy

Members:

Giga Khositashvili, Ilia State University, Georgia

Tamta Tskhovrebadze, International Black Sea University, Georgia

Tinatin Dvalishvili, Civil Society STAR Initiative, Georgia

Shota Potolashvili, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Georgia

Larisa Patariaia (employer), Start - Business Solutions, Georgia

Tatia Uberi (student), Caucasus University, Georgia

Tbilisi, 2024

Authorisation Report Resume

General information on the educational institution

GIPA- The Georgian Institute of Public Affairs, hereinafter referred to as GIPA, stands as one of the most innovative educational institutions established following the restoration of Georgia's independence. Founded in 1994, GIPA's inception was intrinsically linked to the establishment of the Master's Program in Public Administration which was launched through a collaborative effort of the Government of Georgia, the United States Information Agency (later subsumed into the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the US Department of State) and the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) of the United States of America. The primary objective of this initiative was to train a new generation of civil servants in Georgia. According to the agreement among the parties, at the initial stage the goal was to train 30 Masters of Public Administration annually to bolster the Georgian public sector during the country's democratic transition.

The collaboration between GIPA and NAPA extended over a seven-year period. In 2000, with NAPA's assistance, GIPA became a member of the National Association of Schools of Public Administration (NASPAA), an affiliation that established a foundation for long-term cooperation and future success.

Initially, the university's academic staff primarily comprised professors from leading American universities. As an integral part of the collaboration with NAPA, these professors not only provided essential textbooks for the Master's Program in Public Administration but also engaged in knowledge transfer and experience sharing with local educators through comprehensive training sessions and workshops and participated in GIPA's management. Consequently, the university gradually recruited professional Georgian lecturers who had acquired Western knowledge and modern teaching methods.

Since its establishment, GIPA's primary objective has been the development of a new branch of public administration in Georgia through rigorous educational programs. For nearly three decades, the university has promoted the development of effective governance at the national, municipal and local levels through interactive educational programs and training initiatives. Additionally, GIPA has played a pivotal role in the establishment of independent media at the regional level.

Today, GIPA offers a comprehensive array of educational programs, including Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral degrees across various disciplines. In addition to these higher education programs, the university has also been implementing a vocational education program for over five years and plans further expansion in this domain. It is noteworthy that for nearly two decades, GIPA has successfully administered an extensive range of certificate programs reflecting its commitment to comprehensive and continuous education.

Established as an importer of education through a single Master's program in the 1990s, GIPA has transitioned to become a significant exporter of new knowledge in Georgia. Today, the institute's impact is evidenced by its alumni body of approximately 5,000 graduates who are successfully employed in the public and business sectors as well as in international organizations. Employment statistics further underscore GIPA's efficacy with 89% of graduates securing employment and, notably, 71% working in fields directly aligned with their GIPA-acquired qualifications. Furthermore, one in four graduates occupies senior managerial positions highlighting the practical application of the knowledge acquired at the university and demonstrates the effectiveness of GIPA's continual assessment of labor market demands and the integration of these insights into its educational programs.

In its current organizational structure, GIPA comprises four primary educational units (schools) along with additional structural entities that facilitate teaching:

- School of Government;
- Caucasus School of Journalism and Media Management;
- School of Law and Politics;
- School of Social Sciences;
- Department of Rural Development and Vocational Education;
- Training and Consulting Centre.

Brief overview of the evaluation process for authorisation: Self Evaluation Report and Site visit

Georgian higher education institutions are required by legislation to use internal and external quality assurance mechanisms.

In November 2023, the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs (GIPA) started preparations for its planned authorization process. Pursuant to Rector's Order N01-23/327, dated November 14, 2023, a self-evaluation group was established comprised of representatives from all primary management bodies, structural units, academic personnel, students, employers and other stakeholders directly or indirectly associated with the university's functioning. The primary task assigned to this group was to conduct a comprehensive self-assessment of the university in accordance with authorization standards.

At the initial stage of the self-evaluation process, the working group thoroughly revised the advice and recommendations received during the 2018 planned authorization and the 2021 evaluation concerning the increase in student quotas. Subsequently, to ensure the efficient planning and implementation of the authorization process, the working group developed a detailed self-assessment action plan which delineated a list of key activities (including responsible individuals/structural units involved and performance timelines) all aligned with the standards stipulated by the authorization regulation.

The evaluation process from the expert group went through the following steps:

- submission of application by HEI (Self-Evaluation Report and annexed Documents)
- recognition as an authorization Seeker
- creation of the panel of experts,

On the 29th August 2024, the chair of the expert group met online with the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement to revise the rules for the authorization process. Followed:

- a preliminary study of the authorization documentation and preparation of the agenda.

The experts and the EQE staff met online on the 3rd September 2024:

- sharing opinions and identifying key questions,
- distributing roles and responsibilities among the experts,
- identifying the documents to be requested during the site-visit.

Then, experts determined a map of the standards, in which they wrote down the initial findings around the standards and possible questions for the site-visit.

Since the very start of the activities, the expert group experienced a very positive collaboration from all the members of GIPA community.

During the three days on-site, at the GIPA premises (Lado Asatiani street, Tbilisi, from 9 to 11th September 2024), the expert group met all the components of the GIPA community.

- o The interviews covered the following roles: Rector, Head of the Administration;
- o Self-Evaluation Team;
- o University Academic Board;
- o QA Office;
- o International Relations Service;
- o Training and Consulting Center;
- o Research Department;
- o Department of Rural Development and Vocational Development;
- o Financial Office and Procurement Manager;

- Student Support and Career Development Center;
- Public Relations and Marketing Office;
- Study Office, Frontline Georgia, Radio GIPA;
- Information Technology Office;
- Logistics and Security Department;
- Security Office, Work Safety Office, Material and Technical Support Office;
- Human Resources Office;
- Document Processing Office;
- Lawyer;
- Teaching Excellence Center;
- Deans;
- Head(s) of the Programs;
- Academic and Invited staff;
- MA and PhD supervisors;
- Students and Alumni (BA, MA);
- students (PhD);
- international students;
- alumni (BA, MA);
- alumni (PhD);
- the employers.

During the last day (11th September 2024) the expert group conducted the visits to a couple of facilities/infrastructure (at 2 Mari Brose Street and Rustavi highway N22a), that is a long-term teaching and research premise and the new building of GIPA, a crucial structure for the future development of GIPA and the hosting of the foreseen increased number of students.

In conclusion, the SER has been analytically edited and allowed the experts to prepare the interviews and to come to know the main features of GIPA and the strategic actions.

The interviews and the visit were perfectly organized by GIPA staff and they allowed the experts to verify the correspondence of reality to the SER and to confirm the willing of the entire GIPA community to implement the new strategy.

Overview of the HEI's compliance with standards

GIPA compliance with standards will be described in detail in the following pages. .

Only few points are highlighted as "substantially" compliant with requirements.

Few recommendations are reported, together with slightly more suggestions and few best practices.

Summary of Recommendations

- Ensure that all academic staff have a Turnitin profile to check students' assignments
- Plan activities for academic staff to raise awareness about the necessity of using an anti-plagiarism program instead of relying on personal judgment to determine whether something is plagiarized

- Implement effective mechanisms for responding to the outcomes of academic/scientific staff workload performance
- To ensure the sustainability of the teaching and learning processes, as well as to strengthen the impact of scientific research, it is recommended to increase the number of academic/affiliated staff
- It is recommended to arrange at least one additional reading hall of the library, to have a capacity of hosting at least 70-80 readers
- It is recommended the library designs training modules (information seeking/information literacy) and proactively promote it within the students and other stakeholders

Summary of Suggestions

- The expert panel does not recommend any different target for the number of students by 2023, but simply warns about the complexity of such a goal, which relates to the need to hire new staff and thus significantly influences the budget
- Establish the positions of quality specialists at the faculty level
- Update the Code of Ethics to include procedures for addressing AI use by students
- Establish more clearly the objective and target indicators, for personnel planning, considering all relevant perspectives
- Further Investigate Academic Staff Turnover and Strengthen Retention Mechanisms: Conduct additional research on academic staff turnover rates and implement more effective mechanisms to improve retention
- Expand Internationalization Support Mechanisms: broaden the mechanisms supporting the internationalization of staff to foster greater global engagement and collaboration
- Enhance support for professional development initiatives: provide increased support for a wider range of professional development activities
- It is suggested that the university refine its planning methodology for academic staffing to better address the specific needs and characteristics of individual educational programs and courses
- It is suggested the details regarding the co-authorship is clearly communicated with the PhD students
- It is suggested the research department invite scholarship holders from partner universities to organize workshops or informational sessions on how to apply for and manage PhD grants from local and international grants
- It is suggested the university enhances the practice of inviting co-supervisors of PhD theses to enrich the academic experience for both students and faculty
- It is suggested, GIPA starts implementing the evaluation of the research activities with a qualitative approach, as per new initiatives across the EU countries
- It is suggested GIPA actively supports creation of joint educational programs MA or PhD programs, to further enhance its study programs, institutional visibility and the quality of internationalization
- It is suggested the university develops only one catalogue where both printed and e-resources will be accessible, so that readers use only one search engine to find out whether the resources are accessible or not
- It is suggested the library staff are more actively engaged in the professional development activities, to guarantee the stakeholders are getting up-to-dated services in the library
- It is suggested in case of remote access on databases the identification of the readers is based on the university email (not the current steps), that will make it easy for students to have access
- In the English version of the website annual reports, financial reports, basic statistics and employment opportunities could be added
- The expert panel suggests to establish a better connection with the services provided by Grena; that could help the entire IT sector of GIPA
- We suggest the budget to be more detailed
- We suggest the cost of research to be gradually increased in the future from 3% to 10%.

Summary of Best Practices

- In the structure of GIPA, the Internationalization office has the same rank of Schools and Departments
- Labor market research and focus groups, held with interested parties, both from the point of view of specific disciplines and programs as well as higher education in general
- Long-term Qualification Programs Aligned with Labor Market Needs
- The university hosts various clubs, a discussion platform called Frontline Georgia, and a student-run radio station, Radio GIPA, to develop extracurricular activities that cater to students' interests and enhance their proficiency.
- Inter-university grant for PhD research with a max. of 4,000 GEL annually

Signature of expert panel members

1. Chair: Maurizio Tira 
2. Member: Giga Khositashvili 
3. Member: Tamta Tskhovrebadze 
4. Member: Tinatin Dvalishvili 
5. Member: Shota Potolashvili 
6. Member: Larisa Pataraia 
7. Member: Tatia Uberi 

Summary Table of Compliance of HEI with Standards and Standard Components

	Standard	Complies with Requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially Complies with Requirements	Does not Comply with Requirements
1.	Mission and strategic development of HEI	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.1	Mission of HEI	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2	Strategic development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Organisational structure and management of HEI	<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.	Educational Programmes	<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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.3	Assessment of learning outcomes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Staff of the HEI	<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	Students and their support services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.1	The Rule for obtaining and changing student status, the recognition of education, and student rights	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.2	Student support services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Research, development and/or other creative work	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.1	Research activities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.2	Research support and internationalisation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.3	Evaluation of research activities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Material, information and financial resources	<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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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"/>

Compliance of the Applicant HEI with the Authorisation Standard Components

1. Mission and strategic development of HEI

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

1.1 Mission of HEI
Mission Statement of the HEI corresponds to Georgia's and European higher education goals, defines its role and place within higher education area and society, both locally and internationally.
<p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</p> <p>Georgian Institute of Public Affairs (GIPA) holds a particular status, as it is neither state-owned nor a profit-oriented private institution of higher education. That's maybe one of the reasons why it highly corresponds to Georgian and European higher education goals and has a very important role in generating and distributing knowledge not only at the local but at the regional level. The uniqueness of GIPA is blending Georgian needs with international programs, since three decades, not just copying foreign experience, but making it adaptable to the current situation within the region, playing a very important role in spreading democracy among its stakeholders.</p> <p>"In the history of modern Georgia, GIPA is the first university that introduced Western teaching methods into the field of state administration and politics, just when the Georgia was taking its first steps on the way to statehood and democracy" (quote from the Strategic Plan 2024-2030). GIPA embodies the goals of the European strategy for Universities, such as "universities as lighthouses of European way of life" and "Reinforcing universities as drivers of the EU's global role and leadership".</p> <p>The awareness of the important contribution of GIPA, often referred as "third mission" is widely shared among all components of the HEI community, from the Rector, to professors, to the students and alumni. The important role of GIPA in various areas relevant for public life clearly emerges from interviews. Strengthening the ideals of democracy, freedom and prosperity is felt as a mission and a real concern at all levels, as it is rarely the case in this kind of assessment.</p> <p>GIPA addresses the three missions of universities, with five clear goals at the core of the 2024-2030 strategy.</p> <p>Internationalization as the most important priority, being Georgia a full member of the Bologna Process / European Higher Education Area since 2005. GIPA considers EHEA and ERA as significant opportunities for the development of cooperation with European universities.</p> <p>Educational activity as a top priority. The goal is "to maintain and strengthen its leading positions in traditional fields of social sciences, especially in terms of the practical application of acquired knowledge" (quote from the Strategic Plan 2024-2030), while increasing the number and variety of subjects offered.</p> <p>Scientific-research is another crucial goal, but it is felt as the most important challenge, both for GIPA and the whole country. Among weaknesses the limited number of publications and studies in the field of social sciences that are published in highly rated journals is reported.</p> <p>GIPA is focused on Institutional development, even facing limited financial and infrastructural opportunities so far. So the new building recently restored will be a very important asset for GIPA.</p> <p>Last but not least, Vocational education has become a special priority since 2018, when GIPA started implementing the first vocational program to prepare qualified personnel for labor safety and environmental technologies.</p> <p>In conclusion, a clear evidence from the interviews is that Mission Statements are shared by the entire community of GIPA, that present an high level of involvement.</p>
Evidences/indicators

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Unified National Strategy of Education and Science of Georgia 2022-2030 ○ The <i>Bologna Process</i> ○ Self-evaluation report ○ Strategic Plan ○ GIPA labor market research and focus groups ○ Interviews ○ GIPA web-page
Recommendations:
Suggestions:
Best Practices (if applicable):
Evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements
1.2 Strategic Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ HEI has a strategic development (7-year) and an action plans (3-year) in place. ○ HEI contributes to the development of the society, shares with the society the knowledge gathered in the institution, and facilitates lifelong learning ○ HEI evaluates implementation of strategic and action plans, and duly acts on evaluation results.
Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements <p>GIPA has developed its strategic plan and corresponding action plan, which is realistic and achievable. GIPA aims at maintaining its comparative advantage in the future by strengthening its position in the higher education system at the regional level. GIPA is focused on internationalization with numerous activities held at the university, initiating different projects and raising the number of free students.</p> <p>Georgia's rapprochement with the European Union is considered as a new opportunity, "both for attracting additional resources for research activities and for the further diversification and deepening of cooperation with the universities of EU member states" (quote from the Strategic Plan 2024-2030).</p> <p>Another opportunity being the changes in the legislative framework of Georgia to facilitate the full or partial implementation of online education so to attract a new segment of students, in the frame of the foreseen increase in the number of applicants.</p> <p>The opportunity to increase the number of students largely lays in the possibilities offered by the new university building, that is one of the core actions of the next years (indeed nearly completed). Among students to be attracted, the number of foreigners is an indicator of attractiveness of the Country for its quality higher education. The number of English-language educational programs should consequently increase.</p> <p>In its SER GIPA lists the consistency and continuity of the Strategic (2024-2030) and Action Plans (2024-2026) with the University's Development Plans of 2018-2024 as a strength.</p> <p>A Clear and Detailed Form of the Strategic (2024-2030) and Action Plans (2024-2026) for University Development has been set and a broad representation and participation of the University Community in the Development Process of the Strategic (2024-2030) and Action Plans (2024-2026) have been assured.</p> <p>GIPA's goals are based on its mission and priorities of its activities. They are achievable, time-bound, and measurable and shared in the community.</p>

The goals and activities that are mentioned in the strategic development plan are achievable provided the budget increases accordingly, namely based on the increased number of activities and tuition fees.

As for the Action plan, worth mentioning some differences in the Activities as related to the key performance indicators: some Actions are related to clear indicator + target, while some others indicators may have a target as well but they do not.

Some targets could be more ambitious (as for ex.: KPI 2.3.5.1.1) while some others could be defined (as for ex.: KPI 3.4.2.2.2).

A couple of targets are really ambitious, also in the light of the new facilities:

- 4.4.1.1 number of students by 2030 = 4,500
- 4.4.1.3 number of vocational student by 2030 = 500

Evidences/indicators

- Self-evaluation report
- Interviews
- Strategic Plan
- Action plan
- KPIs

Recommendations:

Suggestions:

- The expert panel does not recommend any different target for the number of students by 2023, but simply warns about the complexity of such a goal, which relates to the need to hire new staff and thus significantly influences the budget.

Best Practices (if applicable):

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

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Considering the mission and goals of HEI, leadership of the HEI supports international cooperation of the institution and the process of internationalisation.
<p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</p> <p>The organizational structure of complex bodies may present different layouts. Anyway, some important elements has to be clear. The GIPA organizational structure fits those requirements. For example, the Q&A office is separated from the head of administration. Well noticed the choice to keep under the Rector's competence the <i>International Relations Office</i>, as internationalization is a strategic goal in the Strategy 2024-2030.</p> <p>The organizational structure can fully ensure the implementation of goals and activities described in its strategic plan. Worth to be mentioned the enthusiasm of all the members of GIPA community, starting from the Rector, to professors, to the head of administration and all the staff interviewed. The level of consciousness about the mission of GIPA is considerably high.</p> <p>The procedures for election/appointment of the management bodies of GIPA are transparent, equitable, and in line with legislation.</p> <p>GIPA's Leadership/Management body ensures effective management of the activities of the institution and shared high involvement in the mission and vision of GIPA.</p> <p>Considering the mission and goals of GIPA, leadership supports international cooperation of the institution and the process of internationalization as a core goal of the strategic development. Internationalization is not just an activity, but the attitude that underlies all activities, from research to teaching, to the third mission.</p> <p>As stated in the SER, University proceedings (depending on its content), are conducted electronically through the software of an electronic document circulation system (eDocument). Additionally, the preparation and issuance of student statements and certificates is managed via the university's electronic database. The university has made significant efforts to digitize certain management processes (see the portal.gipa.ge).</p> <p>In accordance with the evolving legislative requirements in Georgia, GIPA has established a Labor Safety Service as a structural unit. The purpose of this service is to set the fundamental requirements and principles for preventive measures concerning labor safety within the university workspace. This includes identifying existing and potential threats as well as planning and implementing control measures to manage the associated risks effectively.</p>
<p>Evidences/indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internal Statute and Charter - Organizational Structure - Self-evaluation report - Interviews - Internationalization Policy
<p>Recommendations:</p> <p>-</p>
<p>Suggestions:</p>
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the structure of GIPA, the Internationalization office has the same rank of Schools and Departments
<p>Evaluation</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements</p>

2.2 Internal Quality Assurance Mechanisms

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

In the submitted documentations, it is written that the university views Quality Assurance (QA) as a continuous and comprehensive process. As stated in the SER, GIPA has cultivated a quality-driven culture that emphasizes periodic assessments of teaching effectiveness, research, and overall university operations. The results of those assessments are analyzed and used to fostering further institutional development. As highlighted, the University is fully committed to continuous quality enhancement through the regular monitoring and evaluation of its educational programs, research activities, and services. GIPA believes that QA should be embedded within the entire university community, while the QA Service plays a central role. Based on the SER and annexed documents, the QA mechanisms employed by the University involve all university members—students, graduates, academic and visiting staff, administrative and support staff—along with external stakeholders, including employers, field experts, quality assurance agencies, and other interested parties in the QA process. The evaluation tools under the QA mechanisms are also subject to periodic review and further development. GIPA QA is PDCA-cycle-based. Each phrase of QA PDCA cycle is explained in-details in the SER, and then how the results of the evaluations are used for the further development of the institution.

During the interview sessions with management, structural units and different stakeholders of the University community, the QA process seems to be participatory. Notably, referring to the management, the Rector explained several decisions made based on the recommendations from the QA office, including those related to infrastructural arrangements and program improvements. The Head of Administration provided examples of his contributions to fostering a culture of quality within his area of responsibility. Additionally, the Academic Board specified the type of information they require from the QA Office, and they receive and discuss mechanisms for contributing to the institution's quality culture. The Financial Office also mentioned that they received the information about the incentives of students declared through the questionnaires and upon request, they make the financial re-arrangements where required. Head of the Student Support and Career Development Center, as well as the Head of the Public Relations and Marketing Office, Manager of Radio GIPA highlighted how they are involved in the quality culture development at the Institution. Head of the Student Support and Career Development Center well-explained how the Center she manages is getting the feedback/analysis from students through the QA Service, and explained the recent decisions the Center has made to meet the needs of students. For example, due to the recommendations by students, the job offers were listed due to their professional background, and then sent out to the student audience. The head of GIPA Radio underlined how the Radio as a basis of practice is involved in the quality assurance, as participating in evaluations of students or interns.

The functions and responsibilities of the QA Service are stated in the Statute of the University (Chapter V, article 2). During the interviews, it became obvious that the staff of the QA Service have the knowledge and understanding of their role and functions within the University. As declared, the QA Service staff played a central role in the self-evaluation process, leading the effort and ensuring thorough involvement.

The QA mechanisms utilized by the University are presented in the Study Process Regulation Rule, including the Chapter VIII – Rule for Study Process Monitoring, Quality Assessment, Analysis of the Outcome and Use, and in the Quality Assurance Guideline. The mechanisms offered in these documents cover all crucial aspects (teaching, research, overall effectiveness) of the University operation, incorporating both internal and external QA. The mechanisms indicated to ensure the QA of teaching and research are:

- anonymous evaluation of the course, lecturer as well as self-evaluation conducted by the student,
- analyzing focus group reports conducted with students and graduates,

- monitoring and evaluation of students' academic achievements using Gaussian distribution,
- anonymous evaluation of the master's thesis supervisor by the student,
- evaluation of the student's progress on their master's thesis by the supervisor,
- evaluation of the supervisor during the performing doctoral dissertation process (during the process and after the completion of the Doctoral dissertation),
- evaluation of a Ph. D student's working process on the dissertation by a supervisor,
- annual evaluation of the academic productivity of academic personnel,
- analyzing the best local and international practices – studying and analyzing educational programs of the relevant level in the Georgian and international educational space,
- analysis and statistics of employment rate of students and graduates,
- evaluation of educational program alignment with contemporary labor market demands,
- conducting focus groups with employers.

For ensuring the effective operation of overall university, the institution refers to the following evaluations:

- material-Technical Resources and University Services Assessment,
- student Support and Career Development Center Activities Assessment,
- assessment of Administrative Unit Activities,
- assessment of Satisfaction with the Organizational Environment,
- evaluation of University Internationalization Mechanisms by Students,
- assessment of satisfaction with international mobility exchange programs by students,
- monitoring the implementation of strategic development and the action plan.

Referring to the GIPA documentations, the institution submitted the questionnaires and related analysis documents, covering all faculties. The exception is only two mechanisms - Evaluation of the student's progress on their master's thesis by the supervisor; and Evaluation of a Ph.D student's working process on the dissertation by a supervisor- as they are recently newly introduced in 2024, and the analysis documents will be developed later.

During the interviews with the QA Service and other structural units, Heads of the programs and academic staff, it was revealed that the analysis documents were sent to the respective structural units and the further actions to enhance the quality of either teaching or research or academic performance are implemented. For example, during the interview, it was clarified that the outcome of the evaluations of the QA Office was effectively used by HR Office Manager to plan further motivation, encouragement or support activities for the staff. The deans also talked about it, on how they receive the analyses of the evaluations from the QA Office and how effectively they use them within their competence. The heads of the Programs clarified that the QA office organizes the focus groups and questionnaires and shares the outcome with the heads of the programs. Based on the results of the evaluations, the heads take their respective actions to deal with all challenges and needs revealed through the evaluations. The heads talked about the concrete cases concerning the changes in the syllabus or approach of a lecturer, or in the practical part of the course based on the results of the evaluations done by the QA Office. The academic staff mentioned that they get the students' assessment results from the portal alongside the interactive results from the students, and they considered the comments of students to improve their study course. The some of the academic staff mentioned that they changed reading materials, teaching and evaluation methods based on the feedback from students.

During the interviews with the QA, the staff comprehensively clarified their working agenda. As the QA staff stated, the Service now includes 1 head, 1 manager, 2 specialists (and 1 specialist will be employed later). Although the University has digitalized (portal.gipa.ge) the evaluation process to collect data, the substantial workload of the central QA Office seems to be high. It is suggested to establish QA specialist position at the faculties, most of the daily QA works to be solved locally. During the interviews, it was mentioned that Quality Assurance (QA) issues are primarily addressed by faculty coordinators. However, it is important to involve QA specialists at faculties in this process, as coordinators have other responsibilities that may prevent them from fully focusing on QA matters. This is also directly related to the University incentive to increase the number of students.

During the interviews with the QA, the staff stated that GIPA evaluates the effectiveness of the QA mechanisms it uses. Based on it, the evaluation tools used under the QA are subject to periodical review

and development. They referred to concrete examples of either modifying the questionnaires or adding the tools.

During the interview with students, they expressed that they participate in the questionnaires which is compulsory, and the anonymous questionnaire can be filled any time through the portal.gipa.ge, while the other standardized evaluations could be done before the end of the course.

During the interview with international students, they also confirm the filling of the questionnaire online through the GIPA portal.

During the interview with alumna, they highlighted their active role in sending feedback and evaluations. Some of them mentioned the library, study course, university space and portal related recommendations that were sent to the University to act. All of them confirmed that they receive e-mails and calls from the University and get information about the vacancies.

During the interview with employers, they also confirmed their close partnership with GIPA and mutual working process.

QA Office emphasized that they evaluate the effectiveness of QA mechanisms and tools utilized by them. Regarding the timeline of implementing any of the QA mechanisms (which surveys and questionnaires will be used, and when), the QA Office prepares the suitable list at the beginning of each academic semester.

As part of its quality culture, the university incorporates external evaluations by field experts to assess its quality assurance mechanisms. The external QA mechanisms the University uses to further develop the internal practices (the evaluations on GIPA QA mechanisms done by the external QA expert from other Georgian HEI or external experts on the HR management system). The respective documents of evaluations are presented in the authorization application package.

The University has student quota planning methodology. The process of planning requires the involvement of school deans, program heads, head of administration and QA Service and other structural units (if there is a necessity). The planning methodology incorporates two stages: planning and implementation. The planning phase, school deans together with the program heads of all programs inform the Head of Administration and QA Service about the projected number of students. During the implementation stage, the Rectorate makes the final decision on the student quota for the upcoming year. During the checking phase, the Rectorate with other structural units and key stakeholders analyze the outcome of the student in-take. And, during the development phase, the set of recommendations are elaborated to manage the contingent effectively. Aligned with the development of new educational programs, the University plans to increase the number of students while simultaneously enhancing its material and technical resources. The ratios that are indicated in the methodology paper are also clear.

During the interviews, the process of student quota planning was described as it is outlined in the methodology. On the methodological level, the ratios that are indicated in the methodology paper are also clear. However, during interviews with some academic and administrative staff, it was revealed that the management's decision regarding the increase in student numbers is not fully communicated. The connection between the current figures and target benchmarks for student quota increases is evident. However, the university's actual plans to increase academic, scientific, and invited staff (from 400/2200 to 485/4500), administrative staff (from 103/2200 to 115/4500), and affiliated academic staff (from 147/2200 to 171/4500) were not clarified during the interviews, in the documents or in the respective section of SER. It would be more reasonable to present the specific plans or mechanisms the university intends to use to attract more human resources (or other types of resources) in line with the increasing student population.

Evidences/indicators

- Analysis of QA Internal and External Evaluations Results: several files

Recommendations:

Suggestions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establish the positions of quality specialists at the faculty level
Best Practices (if applicable):
Evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements
2.3. Observing Principles of Ethics and Integrity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ HEI has developed regulations and mechanisms that follow principles of ethics and integrity. Such regulations are publicly accessible. ○ Institution has implemented mechanisms for detecting plagiarism and its prevention. ○ HEI follows the principles of academic freedom.
Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements <p>The University has the Code of Ethics and Conduct which applies to the administrative, support and academic staff, and students. The compulsory rules of ethics and conduct are outlined in the Rule. The types of disciplinary sanctions in case of the violation of the code of ethics and conduct are defined for academic/invited, administrative/support staff and students. The proceedings for the disciplinary measures include the creation of the Disciplinary Commission. The membership of the Disciplinary Commission includes the Rector, Head of the Administration, Dean of the School, academic/invited staff, students and other representatives of the University or invited experts (if needed). In case of administrative/support, academic/invited staff, the sanctions include reprimand, rebuke, detention up to 20% from the remuneration or termination of the contract. In the case of the students, it includes reprimand, or rebuke, or terminations of the student status. As the Lawyer of the Institution shared with the expert panel that since the previous authorization, GIPA has the experience of the violation of the disciplinary norms, and the Commission decisions have been evidence-based, taking the interest of students into account (Chapter V of the Code of Ethics and Conduct – Research Ethics and Academic Integrity). During the interviews, the University underlined that it conducted the training on Ethics and Academic Integrity for the supervisor, with an attendance of 25 attendees.</p> <p>During the interviews with academic staff and students, all clarified that the Code of ethics and Conduct exists, and they were informed. The instruction document to avoid plagiarism is also elaborated.</p> <p>However, this Code is not online accessible on the webpage of the University, as checked by the panel. It's a standard requirement for the HEIs to have mechanisms for plagiarism detection and prevention. GIPA has implemented such mechanism – Turnitin and submitted the order of its purchase.</p> <p>During the interviews, some of the academic staff stressed that they use Turnitin in final and mid-term evaluations only. The academic staff expressed that the program is fully used at PhD level of studies. Some of the staff said that they used Turnitin, and then in case of plagiarism, they proceed towards the Dean Office. Some of the academic staff expressed the students uses AI effectively, which underlines non-ethical behavior rather than plagiarism. As they suggested, the Plagiarism Rule document must be updated to include the AI prevention and detection measures. The invited staff expressed during the interview that they know the possibility of its use, but they do not use this program, do not have access and their own profiles on this program. Surprisingly, some of them expressed that they do not need this program. Additionally, it was observed that the master and PhD theses are uploaded and checked for plagiarism by the Administration (coordinators were named), rather than academic staff (supervisors) by themselves.</p> <p>As declared in the SER, the University follows the Rule of Academic Freedom. During the interviews, the heads of the programs/academic staff explained the academic freedom they have in their daily working, while the administrative staff does not intervene in their daily academia work, content of the syllabus, teaching methodology, research topics, etc.</p>

Evidences/indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-evaluation Report • Code of Ethics and Conduct
Recommendations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure that all academic staff have a Turnitin profile to check students' assignments ○ Plan activities for academic staff to raise awareness about the necessity of using an anti-plagiarism program instead of relying on personal judgment to determine whether something is plagiarized
Suggestions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Update the Code of Ethics to include procedures for addressing AI use by students
Best Practices (if applicable):
Evaluation
<input type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements

3. Educational Programmes

GIPA 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

GIPA has defined Procedures for Developing, Approving, Amending and Canceling Educational Programs. According to these, educational programs are elaborated by academic and invited personnel of the respective School and administrative staff of the University. As stated in the methodology, besides the academic and invited personnel, other interested parties (field specialists, potential employers, graduates, students etc.) are involved in the programme designing process. The institution considers labour market requirements, feedbacks from alumni and employers, results of satisfaction surveys, student's academic performance assessment results, benchmarking of local and international analogue programs while making decisions on planning, amending, developing or annulling the program. The visit findings, submitted documents and interview results with various stakeholders revealed that program development is constant and participatory process. According to the mechanisms of quality assurance, outlined in the Self-evaluation Report and in the Statute, assessment and the procedure for utilizing assessment results, the institution, the Quality Assurance Service conducts an anonymous survey of students, graduates and employers and based on the analysis of the results of the survey, it compiles recommendations for the development of educational programs. Feedback schemes are sufficient and well crafted, as well as quality assurance service ensures periodic reporting and dissemination of considering the survey results, that was also confirmed by academic and invited staff, students and alumni during interviews.

<p>The program can be initiated by staff member at GIPA, external partner organization or individual. The initiative should also contain information concerning best available practices, labor market requirements and tendencies, potential human resources, preliminary budget and other relevant documents. After approval from Quality Assurance Office, relevant school's academic board discusses the potential of the program to be implemented and in case of positive decision transfers it to the university academic board for approval.</p> <p>The necessity of amending and developing existing program is defined by the QA office recommendations derived from the program evaluation results and analysis. Recommendations are submitted to the Head of the Program/Dean of the School, who ensure discussing the case of amending educational program with all relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>Furthermore, the university regularly conducts labor market analysis and the findings are considered by the program team for further development of the program. Motivation, commitment and engagement of employers within programs to ensure compliance with the constantly evolving tendencies and standards is really worth mentioning. Programs are also benefitting from hand-on experience for students and various internship opportunities integrated within educational programs.</p> <p>The procedures for the annulment of educational programs clarifies that the institution gives due consideration to legal interests of the students, and grants them the opportunity to smoothly complete an educational programme they have primarily been enrolled to, in line with the Georgian legislation.</p>
<p>Evidences/indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GIPA's Rules for Governing the Education Process (Chapter III - Rules and Procedures for Developing, Approving, Amending and Canceling Educational Programs) • Quality Assurance Manual • Analysis of labor market and employers' requirement for educational programs • Analysis of local and international analogue programs • Program-specific analysis of students and graduate surveys • Results of monitoring students' academic performance • Self-Evaluation Report • Interview results.
<p>Recommendations:</p>
<p>Suggestions:</p>
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labor market research and focus groups, held with interested parties, both from the point of view of specific disciplines and programs as well as higher education in general
<p>Evaluation</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements</p>
<p>3.2 Structure and Content of Educational Programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Programme learning outcomes are clearly stated and are in line with higher education level and qualification to be granted ○ With the help of individualized education programmes, HEI takes into consideration various requirements, needs and academic readiness of students, and ensures their unhindered involvement into the educational process.
<p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</p> <p>The university follows the Georgian legislation and the principles of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) while creating an educational program. "The Rules for Governing Educational Process" regulates all practical aspects related to calculations credits, requirements for elaboration of program content, includes information concerning teaching and learning methods and</p>

methodology for defining individual study plan. The University currently operates 24 educational programs on Bachelor, Master and Doctoral levels. In accordance with the Georgian legislation 2 new bachelor programs were introduced within 180 ECTS credit, however rest of the programs consider fulfillment of 240 ECTS. Master programs correspond to 120 ECTS and doctoral programs include no more than 60 ECTS study component.

Learning outcomes of these programs are clearly stated and are in line with the level of higher education, and qualification to be granted. Learning outcomes are based on field characteristics and are developed in line with the qualification framework. The structure and content of educational programs are logically connected and ensure achievement of learning outcomes. Program components are defined, teaching and learning methods reflect specifics of the field and ensure achievement of learning outcomes of the programs. The regulated Bachelor Program in Law and Master Program in International Law consider the Subject Benchmark Statement for Law Bachelor and Master Programs, therefore, program objectives, learning outcomes, MA program admission precondition, teaching and learning, as well as assessment methods are complying with the benchmark statement.

According to the SER and educational program documents, the program structure and contents ensure logical links of all comprising components and achievement of learning outcomes by a student with an average academic performance in a reasonable time frame. The Quality Assurance office also considers completion rate of the program within defined duration.

Programs are balanced with compulsory and non-compulsory components, therefore, giving students possibility to modify study plan according to their specific interests and requirements. Possibility of elective components are confirmed in the SER and program descriptions, as well as through the interviews conducted by the panel. The volume of the program components considers specificity of the field, implies logical connection between the content and learning outcomes. The institution integrates teaching and learning methods that ensure achievement of learning outcomes of the program. GIPA encourages academic and invited staff to participate in events aimed at facilitating contemporary teaching and learning methods.

According to the SER, a catalogue of educational programmes serves the purpose of informing interested parties about the educational activities and programs of the institution. The catalogue is updated according to the changes in the programme. It is accessible to all interested individuals and is published on the web-page of the university. The university website locates Georgian language catalogue. Despite the fact English language catalog is not available, information concerning individual programs are fully available in English. The University provides students with academic development possibilities both in terms of knowledge enhancement and the service facilitation. Student Support and Career Development Center facilitates students' engagement in internships and foster their employment possibilities. Graduate employment rates according to the obtained qualification differ for schools and programs and ranges from the lowest 65 to 77 percent.

Students are also provided with opportunity to individualize educational program according to their different requirements, special educational needs and different academic capabilities. According to "The Rules for Governing Educational Process", individual study plan is prepared by the Head of the Program with active engagement of School Quality Assurance Manager, Academic/Invited Staff, relevant student, Inclusiveness Coordinator and in case of necessity other related staff or invited experts.

Evidences/indicators

- Educational programs and syllabi
- GIPA's Rules for Governing the Education Process
- Quality Assurance Manual
- Program-specific analysis of students and graduate surveys
- Results of monitoring students' academic performance
- Self-Evaluation Report
- Institutional website: <https://gipa.ge/eng>
- Interview results.

Recommendations:

Suggestions:

Best Practices (if applicable):

Long-term Qualification Programs Aligned with Labor Market Needs

Evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="radio"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements
3.3 Assessment of Learning Outcomes
<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 <p>GIPA has a transparent system of learning outcomes assessment: a 100-point scale, which includes two forms of evaluation: midterm and final evaluation. The evaluation is measured by evaluation criteria and determine the level of learning outcomes achieved. Each form and component of assessment is allocated a specific share within the final grade. The final evaluation of the course is the sum of the points obtained in the midterm and final evaluations. The assessment system takes into account the specifics of the field. The learning outcomes assessment system includes the assessment format and methods. The assessment system enables identifying students' achievements. According to the syllabi made available to the panel, the assessment system regulations are described and are in line with Georgian legislation on the Rules for Calculating Credits for Higher Education and student evaluation system established by Decree No. 3 of the Minister of Education and Science.</p> <p>Furthermore, program learning outcomes are measured holistically by observing direct and indirect methods. The institution collects and analyzes academic performance of students and compares them with the predefined target benchmarks. Indirect methods of evaluation include student self-assessment, focus group discussions with students and graduates, and employer surveys. Programs are actively benefiting from the practice of curriculum map and a map of program goals and learning outcomes.</p> <p>During the authorization site visit, the panel was confirmed that the institution uses transparent criteria during the assessment of students' learning outcomes. The information about the assessment system is known for students, who also have information about the appellation system. Mostly, the learning outcomes assessment system elements are located in the syllabi. As confirmed during the interviews conducted by the panel, students are aware of the programme evaluation system, they receive relevant consultations of the achieved goals and objectives, and in case of necessity they are provided by the guidance for improving their academic performance.</p>
Evidences/indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational programs and syllabi; • GIPA's Rules for Governing the Education Process; • Quality Assurance Manual; • Program-specific analysis of students and graduate surveys; • Results of monitoring students' academic performance; • Mechanisms for assessing learning outcomes; • Self-Evaluation Report; • Interview results.
Recommendations:
Suggestions:
Best Practices (if applicable):

Evaluation

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

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

The Georgian Institute of Public Affairs (GIPA) has developed an open and transparent human resources management policy (approved by the Academic Council's decision No. 18/02, dated May 8, 2018). This policy encompasses various areas, including recruitment processes (announcing competitions for vacant positions, selection of personnel, and talent acquisition), qualification requirements for academic, administrative, and support/invited staff, conditions for conducting competitions, mechanisms for professional development, incentives, staff evaluation systems, salary policies, certification procedures, and more. However, it should be noted that in certain areas, the document is general in scope and may not include comprehensive mechanisms for staff support.

The university has also developed a "New Employee Guide," which provides detailed information to newly hired staff and simplifies the on-boarding process.

Additionally, the university has established a Personnel Affiliation Policy (approved by the Rector's Order No. N01-24/112 on April 4, 2024), which explains the content, goals, and obligations of affiliation. However, it provides limited information on the benefits that affiliation offers to staff. The signing of an affiliation agreement with the university is optional and based on the free will of the parties involved.

During interviews, it was confirmed that GIPA actively utilizes staff evaluation and satisfaction survey results, with examples of this being shared during various meetings with personnel. Furthermore, to illustrate this, the university has presented a report on the evaluation of the performance of its administrative units, which separately highlights satisfaction results across different positions and structural units. The institution has also provided an organizational environment satisfaction survey report, which assesses employees' attitudes toward the organization, with the results being predominantly positive. It takes high importance that, the research methods, scope, and outcomes are clearly articulated and include specific recommendations and suggestions.

The university's self-assessment report clearly outlines the distribution of personnel across educational programs as well as by status and category. The average age of GIPA's academic and invited staff is 43, underscoring the university's efforts to involve young researchers and professors in the educational process. However, it is noteworthy that no postdoctoral fellows are currently employed at the university. The average age of administrative and support staff is 46. GIPA's declared priority is to retain highly qualified academic staff; however, the retention rate during the reporting period was 65%, which is not particularly high. It is believed that the university has the potential and resources to achieve a higher retention rate in this area. It is also important to note that both research findings and interviews indicate the need for additional mechanisms to attract and retain qualified personnel, for which it would be

<p>advisable to review the human resources management policy and introduce further mechanisms and activities in this direction.</p> <p>To ensure the professional development of academic and invited staff as well as the administrative personnel, the university operates a Teaching Enhancement Center (TEC), which functions as a structural unit within GIPA's Human Resources Management Department. The center offers short-term training and activities tailored to staff needs in various areas. Since 2018, 18 different types of events have been held. It is crucial for the institution to continue fostering professional development and further strengthen its support by providing necessary activities. The workload of academic staff includes teaching, academic advising, involvement in research and consultancy, and participation in academic activities.</p> <p>It is important to highlight that personnel are highly qualified and exhibit a strong sense of collegiality. Accordingly, the qualifications of the staff align with the qualification requirements set by the university's internal standards.</p> <p>The university has defined target indicators for personnel in its self-assessment forms. However, during interviews, it was noted that the content indicators for determining these benchmarks, along with various perspectives for achieving them over specific time periods (including financial considerations), were not fully substantiated. It is also important to note that the future targets for the university to serve 4,500 students are very ambitious. As a consequence, the ratio of academic, research, and invited staff to the number of students has to be matched.</p>
<p>Evidences/indicators</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Self Evaluation Report 2. Statute of GIPA 3. Rules for the affiliation of academic staff at GIPA 4. Methodology for determining the number of academic and invited staff involved in the implementation of educational programs at GIPA and the guidelines for the workload of academic staff 5. Job descriptions and qualification requirements 6. New Employee Guide 7. Personnel's files (CV) 8. Workload scheme for academic and invited staff 9. Human resource management policy 10. Research reports (evaluation of administrative units' activities; satisfaction with the organizational environment) 11. Interviews.
<p>Recommendations:</p>
<p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish more clearly the objective and target indicators, for personnel planning, considering all relevant perspectives; • Further Investigate Academic Staff Turnover and Strengthen Retention Mechanisms: Conduct additional research on academic staff turnover rates and implement more effective mechanisms to improve retention • Expand Internationalization Support Mechanisms: broaden the mechanisms supporting the internationalization of staff to foster greater global engagement and collaboration • Enhance Support for Professional Development Initiatives: Provide increased support for a wider range of professional development activities
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p>

Evaluation <p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements </p>
4.2. Academic/Scientific and Invited Staff Workload
<p>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</p>
<p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</p> <p>At GIPA, the total number of academic, invited, administrative, and support staff involved in the implementation of educational programs amounts to 503, including 179 academic staff members (76% affiliated), 103 administrative and support staff, and 221 invited staff. The number of invited staff significantly exceeds that of the academic staff, which could potentially pose future challenges for maintaining a sustainable academic process.</p> <p>GIPA employs a "Methodology for Determining the Number of Academic and Invited Personnel Involved in Educational Programs and the Academic Staff Workload Guide." According to this methodology, for bachelor's and master's degree programs, no more than three invited staff members should be assigned per academic staff member, while for doctoral programs, the ratio should not exceed two invited staff members per academic. However, this planning method appears vague and does not sufficiently account for the specific needs or characteristics of individual educational programs or courses. Additionally, the methodology requires that at least 70% of the academic staff involved in bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs be affiliated with the university. It is unclear what specific objective this threshold aims to achieve or why the 70% figure was chosen. The methodology for determining academic staff (as outlined in the document) is not based on key indicators such as the number of educational programs, student enrollment, staff retention rates, and other relevant factors.</p> <p>Considering the teaching, research, and consultancy workload, the university's academic staff are categorized into "A," "B," "C," and "D" groups. Each category is assigned a different workload structure, which is generally appropriate. A critical issue is the absence of an effective feedback system for ensuring compliance with minimum requirements. For example, whether or not a particular staff member fulfills their research obligations has little impact on their current or future responsibilities. The workload distribution across four categories ("A," "B," "C," and "D") varies and is clearly outlined in the methodology for determining the number of academic and invited staff involved in educational programs and in the Academic Staff Workload Guide (Annex N1: Weekly Workload Distribution for Academic Staff). However, it should be noted that the scientific workload component at the university remains somewhat ambiguous. For instance, the job description for Associate Professor ("A") includes a requirement to publish at least one scientific publication (in a peer-reviewed journal with an impact factor or as a book chapter or monograph) within two years; participate in a research or creative project, scientific conference, or festival, or another creative activity; participate in a professional development project; or prepare a textbook. It is unclear whether these activities are alternatives or if all components are required. As clarified during meetings, completing just one of these tasks is sufficient to meet the minimum scientific requirement. Nevertheless, the activities differ qualitatively, and assigning them a uniform status is ineffective. Based on this, it is recommended that the institution clearly define the mandatory requirements for staff and prioritize them according to its own needs and goals. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the obligations across different categories are significantly similar.</p> <p>As confirmed in interviews, failure to meet research workload requirements is merely noted as informational, with no further mechanisms applied. This lack of accountability is likely to have a negative long-term impact on the university's outcomes and undermines the significance of the workload component. In this regard, it is important for the university to establish a sustainable system for academic staff workload and obligations.</p>
<p>Evidences/indicators</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Self Evaluation Report 2. Statute of GIPA 3. Rules for the affiliation of academic staff at GIPA

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Methodology for determining the number of academic and invited staff involved in the implementation of educational programs at GIPA and the guidelines for the workload of academic staff 5. Job descriptions and qualification requirements 6. New Employee Guide 7. Personnel's files (CV) 8. Workload scheme for academic and invited staff 9. Human resource management policy 10. Research reports (evaluation of administrative units' activities; satisfaction with the organizational environment) 11. Interviews.
<p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement effective mechanisms for responding to the outcomes of academic/scientific staff workload performance; • To ensure the sustainability of the teaching and learning processes, as well as to strengthen the impact of scientific research, it is recommended to increase the number of academic/affiliated staff.
<p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is suggested that the university refine its planning methodology for academic staffing to better address the specific needs and characteristics of individual educational programs and courses
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p>
<p>Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements

5. Students and Their Support Services

HEI ensures the development of 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

<p>5.1. The Rule for Obtaining and Changing Student Status, the Recognition of Education, and Student Rights</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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.

<p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</p> <p>Based on the Self-evaluation report of GIPA, together with relevant enclosed documents, information on the authorisation site visit results and as a result of the study and development of the submitted documentation by the institution, the following conditions have been observed.</p> <p>GIPA has developed detailed internal legal regulations for each educational tier in the Institution. These regulations encompass various areas such as student assessments, suspension and expulsion procedures, student mobility, certification, and issuance of educational credentials. Moreover, GIPA is committed to protecting students' rights and legal interests, guaranteeing proper acknowledgement of the education they attain during their academic activities.</p> <p>GIPA is committed to fostering innovative methods in the learning process. The teaching, invited, and administrative staff possess the high qualifications to ensure that expected learning outcomes are met and legal requirements are adhered to. They are widely recognized in both national academic and professional circles, bringing with them valuable practical and professional experience that will greatly support the implementation of high-quality education within the institution. GIPA has formulated a document called "Regulations Governing the Educational Process" in compliance with Georgia's higher education laws. The document outlines procedures for admission, suspension, and termination of student status, as well as guidelines for inter-institutional transfer and academic credential granting.</p> <p>GIPA has established a student-centred environment and operates a Student Support and Career Development Centre to protect student rights. The Centre organizes orientation meetings for incoming students and provides comprehensive information about the educational process. Additionally, GIPA has enhanced its digital platform, portal to provide students with access to academic information, official documents, and electronic library materials. It also ensures that students with disabilities and special needs have equitable access to education. The institution has guidelines for individualized study plans and an inclusion coordinator to support students with special needs. Students have the right to appeal evaluations and provide anonymous feedback. The university also offers flexible course enrollment policies to accommodate student interests and needs. Overall, the institution prioritizes safeguarding student rights and interests.</p> <p>GIPA has implemented internal legal acts to provide a variety of student consulting services geared towards improving the educational experience and raising academic achievement. The institution ensures that students have access to comprehensive information, promoting transparency and comprehension of the educational processes.</p> <p>Institutions place a strong emphasis on the well-being of international students throughout the enrollment process. They establish specific requirements for foreign language proficiency to ensure that students possess the necessary language skills. This framework not only verifies language abilities but also provides access to tailored language support services for international students. Additionally, institutions develop policies and gather insights on the language proficiency challenges encountered by these students, as well as implement strategies to help them attain language readiness.</p> <p>Evidences/indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-evaluation report of the Higher Educational Institution - The Georgian Institute of Public Affairs with relevant enclosed documents, information on the authorisation site visit results, • Interviews, • University web-page. <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>Suggestions:</p> <p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p>
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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

Based on the Self-evaluation report of GIPA with relevant enclosed documents, information on the authorisation site visit results and as a result of the study and development of the submitted documentation by the institution, the following conditions have been observed:

GIPA offers a range of student consulting services aimed at enhancing the educational process and elevating academic performance. The institution provides comprehensive information to students, ensuring clarity and understanding of the educational process. Through interviews with students and alumni, it has been confirmed that the procedures established by the Internal Legal Acts are readily accessible and easily comprehensible. Additionally, GIPA offers career support services, guiding students through employment opportunities and fostering their career development. The institution actively engages students in various university-level, local, and international projects and events, while also supporting student-led initiatives. Moreover, GIPA has implemented mechanisms, including financial support, to assist students from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

Students and alumni benefit from frequent and meaningful interactions with program academic, invited, and administrative staff, utilizing both formal and informal channels of communication. Students consistently have the chance to engage in informal discussions with academic staff members during their regular study hours.

The University administration is committed to offering thorough information, including insights into possible career paths and employment outlooks.

An essential electronic database is available to support the planning and execution of educational activities. This resource offers students comprehensive information on the educational procedures, including insights into the learning process, strategies for enhancing academic performance, and guidance for career advancement.

The institution provides students with information on local scientific conferences, supports them in applying for these conferences, and implements various methods to encourage successful students. GIPA offers a wide range of student consulting services aimed at enhancing the educational process and improving academic performance. It also provides comprehensive information to students, ensuring clarity and understanding of the educational process. Through interviews with students and alumni, it has been confirmed that the procedures established by the Internal Legal Acts are readily accessible and easily comprehensible.

In addition, GIPA offers career support services, guiding students through employment opportunities and fostering their career development. The institution also actively engages students in various university-level, local, and international projects and events, while supporting student-led initiatives.

Moreover, GIPA has implemented mechanisms, including financial support, to assist students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. The institution also has several partner universities/institutions where students can participate in different programs, activities, and internships. It should be mentioned that the institution has a strong, realistic and proactive career development and international partnership policy for the future development of its programs.

GIPA provides students with information on scholarships from local and international funds and supports them in applying for these scholarships. Furthermore, the institution has a practice of encouraging successful students by financing or co-financing their tuition fees. GIPA has a strong mobility policy, encouraging student participation in local and international mobility activities, as well as different international scientific activities, including out-of-curriculum activities throughout Georgia and abroad.

<p>(for instance, the Erasmus+ Program). GIPA offers robust assistance for students' career advancement, as evidenced by the successful employment outcomes of both current students and alumni.</p> <p>107 students have participated in exchange programs, actively engaging in the educational process at GIPA. Regarding GIPA students studying abroad, 342 students participated in exchange programs during the reporting period (2018-2024), highlighting the institution's success in promoting international mobility.</p> <p>GIPA plays a crucial role in increasing access and success for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. To achieve this, GIPA implements both financial and non-financial mechanisms. They offer need-based grants and scholarships specifically aimed at students, funded by institutional resources or external partnerships with the government. GIPA also provides partial or full tuition waivers to students who demonstrate financial need, making higher education more affordable; promotes student participation in extracurricular activities including film festivals, theater, sports, and dance. The university also hosts various clubs, a discussion platform called Frontline Georgia, and a student-run radio station, Radio GIPA.</p>
<p>Evidences/indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-evaluation report of the Higher Educational Institution - The Georgian Institute of Public Affairs with relevant enclosed documents, information on the authorisation site visit results • Interviews • University web-page.
<p>Recommendations:</p>
<p>Suggestions:</p>
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p> <p>The university hosts various clubs, a discussion platform called Frontline Georgia, and a student-run radio station, Radio GIPA, to develop extracurricular activities that cater to students' interests and enhance their proficiency.</p>
<p>Evaluation</p> <p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements </p>

6. Research, development and/or other creative work

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

<p>6.1 Research Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ HEI, based on its type and specifics of its fields, carries out research/creative activities. ○ Ensuring the effectiveness of doctoral research supervision ○ HEI has public, transparent and fair procedures for the assessment and defense of dissertations which are relevant to the specifics of the field
<p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</p> <p>According to the submitted documentation GIPA places a strong emphasis on research and creative activities. This focus is evident in the university's growing financial commitment, with annual increases in funding allocated to research. The research department's budget has seen a notable 77% rise in</p>

2023-2024 compared to 2018-2019. The university ensures a strong connection between its educational, scientific, and development initiatives, creating a comprehensive approach to institutional progress. The university has a well-defined research strategy and clear priorities that align with its mission, goals, and strategic development plan. These priorities are carefully integrated into the institution's broader objectives to ensure cohesive development. Additionally, the university has allocated sufficient human and material resources to support its research initiatives, enabling sustainable growth and innovation in key areas.

As stated during the interviews, the research conducted by GIPA's academic staff is integrated into their teaching and plays a critical role in addressing societal changes, aligning with the university's broader mission. Faculty members also participate in research projects supported by donor organizations, collaborating with both local and international partners from diverse sectors. The institution mostly conducts applied research, along with creative projects that contribute to the development of various sectors—scientific, social, and cultural—on regional, national, and international levels.

According to the SER and the submitted documents, in the given reporting period GIPA's academic personnel have achieved notable research productivity, including 89 publications in international peer-reviewed journals, 232 publications in local scientific journals, and participation in 182 international and local conferences. The additional documents indicate that between 2018 and 2024, GIPA received 29 awards for research and creative endeavors, many of which were international recognitions from festivals and competitions. Additionally, the university hosted seven international summer/winter schools, organized five scientific conferences/seminars, and supported around 30 academic staff in attending conferences and publishing their research. The submitted documentation highlighted that GIPA's faculty have a strong presence in scientific projects, with 46 staff members involved in 32 university-supported research grants, and 28 participating in international or donor-funded research projects.

GIPA has established numerous cooperation with both public and private sector organizations, which have facilitated the implementation of various research projects. These projects are often focused on applied research, aiming to address public and private sector challenges through consultation, training, and capacity-building initiatives. However, due to the specificity of GIPA's research fields, particularly in areas such as public administration and social sciences, the commercialization of research outcomes has not been a primary focus and remains less active compared to other sectors. Nonetheless, the university continues to contribute significantly to public sector reform and private sector development through collaborative research and professional consultation.

According to the institutional regulations, transparent and fair procedures have been established for the evaluation and defense of doctoral dissertations, tailored to each field's specifics. These processes are governed by various university regulations, including those of the Dissertation Council of the School of Social Sciences and the Doctorate Regulations of GIPA. Currently the university has two PhD programs, both on the faculty of Social Sciences.

As per existing regulations, admission to the doctoral program follows open and transparent procedures. Admission is announced by the university's Rector, and applicants must submit documents such as a CV, application form and a research proposal of at least 1,000 words. Additional documents may be

requested by the Dissertation Board. The expert team double checked both with the PhD students and alumni if they went through those procedures, as it turned out all of them confirmed to have gone the same steps.

As noted during the interviews, Doctoral candidates are required to publish two scientific articles during their studies, with at least one appearing in an international publication indexed in databases such as Thomson Reuters Master Journal List, Scopus, ERIH PLUS, EBSCOHost. These publications must relate directly to the dissertation topic and can be published individually or with co-authors. The expert team double checked whether this criterion will be met, in case the student is not the first or the second author of the article. The university representative confirmed that in co-authorship they meant only the possibility of second authorship. However, the PhD candidates were not sure about this detail, perhaps due to the fact that they have started their studies recently and had not have case or were not planning to publish the paper yet. In order to avoid the risks of any misunderstanding it is suggested the details regarding the co-authorship is clearly communicated with the PhD students.

According to the current inter-university regulation the dissertation supervisor must hold a PhD degree, be a member of the university's academic or invited staff, and have relevant research experience related to the dissertation topic. During the interviews with the university representatives it was noted, to ensure effective supervision, the ratio of doctoral students to supervisors is maintained at 1:3, this is also specified at the School of Social Sciences Dissertation Council and Doctoral Regulations. The expert team asked few questions to double check whether the PhD students are evaluating their supervisors. It was confirmed that they have done this and the document on the analyses is submitted as evidence, the document itself indicates more positives aspects from the PhD candidates towards their supervisors. The defence of the PhD thesis is open to everyone interested in the subject, and it takes place in accordance with the Georgian Law of Higher Education.

Evidences/indicators

- Self-evaluation report
- Research and Development Institutional Strategy of N(N)LE GIPA
- Rule of Funding Research and Scientific-Creative Activities
- Documentation evidencing cooperation with international and local partners
- Doctoral dissertation abstracts for last five years
- Rule of Planning, Implementing and Evaluating the Research Component of Master's Educational Programs
- Dissertation Council and Doctoral Regulations of the School of Social Sciences
- Interviews during the site visit
- University web-page.

Recommendations:

Suggestions:

- It is suggested the details regarding the co-authorship is clearly communicated with the PhD students

Best Practices (if applicable):

Evaluation

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

<input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements
6.2. Research Support and Internationalisation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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.
<p>The SER together with the additional documents submitted by the university describes GIPA's effective system for supporting research and artistic-creative activities, the university actively promotes the advancement of various scientific fields by providing funding for relevant research and creative projects. As confirmed by the university management this financial support, guided by the institute's funding policies, aims to contribute to the growth of specific disciplines, subfields, and interdisciplinary areas, while fostering the generation of new knowledge.</p> <p>According to the existing practice, to financially support the scientific and creative activities of the university's affiliated academic staff and students, the Research Department manages an Internal Grant Funding Program, which covers different initiatives, like participation in scientific conferences and publication of research results and support for doctoral research.</p> <p>The university's Research Department oversees the Internal Grant Funding Program, which enables faculty from different schools within the university to apply for financial support for small-scale research projects twice a year. These proposals are reviewed by the Research Department's Scientific Council, which also assesses requests for co-financing. Research projects must align with the university's primary educational and scientific goals, and student involvement is a mandatory criterion for eligibility. As noted by the administrative staff interdisciplinary research proposals are prioritized. Since 2018, 32 scientific projects have been funded through this program. The expert team asked the procedural aspects of the above-mentioned scheme to the faculty members, in order to understand how this initiative worked in practice. As it was confirmed by some of faculty members they have already benefited from this grant, while some were in the process of implementation. In addition to this, everyone with whom the expert team met, confirmed that they proactively receive emails once the call is open, in addition to this, if it comes, they have a unique idea, they can directly address to research department or other decision makers.</p> <p>As the submitted documentation illustrates, the scientific workload and associated responsibilities for academic staff are mandatory and clearly outlined by university regulations based on different workload categories (a, b, and c). These guidelines include requirements for publishing in high-impact international peer-reviewed journals. If academic staff exceed these expectations, incentive mechanisms, as detailed in the Human Resources Management Policy, are in place to encourage further research productivity.</p> <p>As noted during the site-visit, GIPA is also committed to the internationalization of its research, development, and creative activities by using Research Department resources to support staff participation in international conferences and seminars, helping to disseminate research on a global scale. The department actively promotes funding for travel grants to facilitate this participation.</p> <p>The interviews with the administrative staff together with the existing rules and regulations confirmed that there is a system of attracting young researchers, with student involvement being a significant criterion in grant evaluations (20% of the total score). In the given targeted period, 147 students from all academic levels have participated in these initiatives.</p>

The SER describes that the university has founded special scholarships for PhD students, that can be max. 4000 GEL annually for four students in each year. The expert team double checked during the interviews with PhD students if they have already had this information and if any of them benefited from the scheme. As it turned out, the PhD students confirmed that they have information regarding this possibility, but so far have not tried yet, due to the fact of being a new initiative. Considering the fact that PhD students have to pay tuition fee for their studies, this scholarship might help them to concentrate on their projects, the expert team believes this is a best practice.

As mentioned during the interviews GIPA's Research Department actively supports academic personnel and doctoral students by providing information on grant opportunities and consulting on grant proposals. However, the expert team noted that there was no any case of getting grant for the PhD studies from the National Science Foundation, that annually opens the call. The students declared that they do have information regarding the possibility, but have not tried it yet. The expert team suggest, the research departments invite scholarship holders from partner universities and conducts workshop or info session how to apply and manage a PhD grant from local and international funds.

During the previous authorization period, GIPA reports having signed memoranda with 22 international partners in both Europe and the USA. By 2024, these partnerships had increased significantly with 64 exchange program framework agreements currently in place. Notably, in 2023 alone, 34 new ICM agreements were signed, bringing the total to 92 for the reporting period.

The agreements encompass international mobility for students, academic and administrative staff, including organizing summer schools, joint research projects, study trips and other types of cooperation. Since 2018, GIPA has facilitated the mobility of 202 academic and administrative personnel within the framework of the abovementioned cooperation. Additionally, the institution hosted 122 professionals from various countries worldwide. It is noteworthy that the achievements of the previous reporting period significantly surpass the established targets, underscoring the institution's commitment to enhancing exchange opportunities. Future plans aim to further strengthen these efforts to diversify exchange opportunities. Analyzing the available data reveals that the target of having 5% international incoming students in relation to the total student body (1,500) for 2024 has been surpassed (by 2024, this number is 107). This target has not only been exceeded but also maintained a consistent upward trend. In the English-language Master's programs, the number of foreign students is 68 (students from countries including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Germany, Tanzania, Algeria, Iran, etc.). Additionally, 107 students have participated in exchange programs, actively engaging in the educational process at GIPA. Regarding GIPA students studying abroad, 342 students participated in exchange programs during the reporting period (2018-2024) which means exceeding the target benchmark and highlighting the institution's success in promoting international mobility. As the action plan of the university states, GIPA will develop one joint educational programs in collaboration with international partner universities (MA in Political Sciences). Currently there are two MA joint programs with collaboration of University of Wroclaw (Poland) and 52 students have already benefited from this. The expert panel suggests GIPA enhances the creation of the joint MA and PhD programs.

There is a practice at GIPA of inviting foreign professors to serve as co-supervisors for theses, providing valuable international expertise and fostering collaborative academic efforts. However, this practice is currently applied in only 10-15% of cases. Given the potential benefits of such collaboration, it is suggested that the university enhances and expands this practice to involve a greater number of international co-supervisors, thereby enriching the academic experience for both students and faculty.

Evidences/indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-evaluation report • Rule of Funding Research and Scientific-Creative Activities • Agreements under grant projects • 2018-2023: Assessment of staff performance and use of assessment results in professional development • Interviews during the site-visit • University web-page.
Recommendations:
Suggestions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is suggested GIPA actively supports creation of joint educational programs MA or PhD programs, to further enhance its study programs, institutional visibility and the quality of internationalization • It is suggested the research department invite scholarship holders from partner universities to organize workshops or informational sessions on how to apply for and manage PhD grants from local and international grants • It is suggested the university enhances the practice of inviting co-supervisors of PhD theses to enrich the academic experience for both students and faculty.
Best Practices (if applicable): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter-university grant for PhD research with a max. of 4000 GEL annually
Evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements
6.3. Evaluation of Research Activities
<p>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.</p>
Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements <p>According to the submitted documentation the Research Department at GIPA oversees and coordinates scientific research activities. It works with the Quality Assurance Service to assess and evaluate research outcomes based on annual reports. Each year, the department evaluates research and creative activities, gathering data on conference participation, publications, research and consulting projects, and international collaborations. This information is used to plan future activities and enhance internal</p>

funding support. The research department also organizes training sessions and workshops based on identified needs to improve scientific and creative productivity. During the interviews the administrative staff, as well as academics few times confirmed that the research department focuses on boosting academic staff development and research productivity through various mechanisms. These include an internal grant program for research proposals, travel grants for scientific events, and financial support for translation, editing, and organizing scientific events.

Gipa regularly publishes comprehensive reports on the research activities it has implemented, ensuring transparency and accountability in its academic endeavors. These reports are available on the university's webpage under the Research Office section, providing easy access to detailed insights into ongoing and completed projects, as well as their outcomes. Additionally, the evaluation results from these research activities are systematically used to inform and guide the further development of research and creative initiatives, helping to refine strategies and enhance future projects. This continuous cycle of reporting and evaluation supports the growth of a vibrant research culture within the institution.

The expert team noted that GIPA is currently employs a quantitative approach in evaluating research activities, focusing on metrics such as publication output, citation counts, and internal or external funding. While these quantitative measures provide valuable insights into research productivity, it is suggested that the institution also incorporate qualitative evaluation methods. By integrating peer reviews, case studies, and in-depth analyses of research impact, GIPA can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the significance, quality, and societal relevance of its research. Combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches will enable a more holistic evaluation and foster a deeper appreciation of the research contributions made by its academic staff.

Evidences/indicators

- Self-Evaluation Report
- Rule of Planning, Implementing and Evaluating the Research Component of Master's Educational Programs
- Dissertation Council of the School of Social Sciences and Doctorate Regulations
- Rule of Funding Research and Scientific-Creative Activities
- The 2018-2023: Assessment of Staff Performance and the Use of Assessment Results in Professional Development
- Evaluation report of the supervisors and Doctoral dissertation performance process by PhD students
- Interviews during the site-visit
- University Web-page

Recommendations:

Suggestions:

- It is suggested, GIPA starts implementing the evaluation of the research activities with a qualitative approach, as per new initiatives across the EU countries

Best Practices (if applicable):

Evaluation

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

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

7. Material, Information and Financial Resources

Material, information and financial resources of HEI ensure 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

GIPA owns several fixed and current assets that are used for teaching purposes. Below is a list of real estate owned by GIPA:

1. A 428 sq. m. land plot located at 2 M. Brosse Street, Tbilisi, a 779 sq. m. building located on it with Cadastral Code N01. 15. 04. 005. 006;

2. A 1,062 sq. m. land plot located at 101, Gorgasali Street, Tbilisi, a 1,475,6 sq. m. building located on it with Cadastral code N01.18.09.006.002;

3. A 207.32 sq. m. space located at 62 L. Asatiani Street, Tbilisi which is registered as the following Cadastral Code units: 01.15.05.093.023.01.502; 01.15.05.093.023.01.501; 01.15.05.093.023.01.508; 01.15.05.093.023.01.515; 01.15.05.093.023.01.511 and 01.15.05.093.023.01.516.

4. A 59.93 sq. m. space located at N13 Tamarashvili Street, Tbilisi with Cadastral Code N 01.10.16.004.160.01.511;

5. A 136.91 sq. m. premises located at N16-18-20 Gogebashvili Street, Kutaisi with Cadastral Code N 03.03.21.216.01.503;

6. A 9,208 sq. m. land plot located in the village of Pkhvenisi, Gori region, a 474.14 sq. m. premises located on it with Cadastral Code N 66.42.15.004.

GIPA currently runs its processes in three different buildings in Tbilisi. From interviews it was declared that from 2024 fall semester all teaching process will be run in one building. The building in Vaktang Gorgasali street, Tbilisi will be used for language courses as well. The building is old and needs renovation but as the all lectures, teaching process will be run in one newly renovated campus. Below is a detailed description of the area.

During the visit, we had the opportunity to visit a newly renovated campus located in Tbilisi on a 5,130 sq. m. land plot 22a Rustavi Highway a 5,098.72 sq. m. premises situated in it, in April 2024 based on a lease agreement. The lease term, as determined by the agreement document, is until August 31, 2034. The Cadastral Code for this real estate is 01.18.12.007.031. As mentioned above the campus is leased

<p>for 10 years. The building has its yard, parking, separate building for the cafeteria. The building is fully equipped for the teaching process with its classrooms, examination center, spaces for administration, and spaces for informal meetings for students and professor rooms. The building has all the required elements, computer and research laboratories as well. The building has central heating system. All classrooms are equipped with chairs and desks, whiteboards, and in several classrooms there are smartboards. All rooms, including the doctor's space, are equipped with a central heating system and air conditioners. All rooms have natural light possibilities as well. The doctor's room has kit for a first aid which has validity for the next two years. In some rooms the accessibility for disabled professor can be easily assured, by making podiums accessible with ramps. As for the parking lot for people with disabilities, they have not yet been completed, but the space can easily be provided.</p> <p>On all floors, there are sanitary units separated for males and females. The building has all health and safety-required appliances. The building is equipped with a firefighting system, with evacuation schemes approved by the competent agency. On every floor, there are emergency exits, which open inside out. The doors are nonheating doors, and there are a fire escape which can be used in case of fire. External and internal perimeters are equipped with security video cameras for safety issues and have recording program. Cameras are not installed in classrooms.</p> <p>The new building is adapted for people with special needs. On the first floor, there is a special sanitary unit and a ramp for people with special needs. The building has an elevator which can be used for moving on different floors.</p> <p>During the visit, it was highlighted that simultaneously the new building can run the teaching process for 2,250 students in one shift. If the process is organized in a high manner, the building is capable of serving twice as many students.</p>
<p>Evidences/indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Self-evaluation document • Site visit • Extract from public register • Lease agreement with the owner of new campus • N(N)LE GIPA - documents confirming the safety of the real estate possessed and owned by the institute: - Conclusion of LEPL Levan Samkharauli National Forensics Bureau • LLC Mshen-expert + inspection report (expert report) • Document confirming the proper operation of the heating and ventilation system • Document confirming compliance with sanitary norms.
<p>Recommendations:</p> <p>-</p>
<p>Suggestions:</p>
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p>
<p>Evaluation</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements</p>
<p>7.2. Library Resources</p>
<p>Library environment, resources and service support effective implementation of educational and research activities, and HEI constantly works for its improvement.</p>
<p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</p>

The library is open 6 days a week, from 9:00 am to 8:00 pm during the working days, and 10:00-17:00 on Saturday.; this makes 62 hours in a week. There is one reading hall within the library together with PC Labs that students use for accessing the computers and two group working spaces that can be booked in advance. One printer is also accessible for students in the library. In total the library reading hall can host 24-30 students at the same time. The library is arranged with open-shelving mode. Considering the fact that the university new building is outside of the city center and when visiting the campus most probably students would stay at the library between the classes, it would be beneficial to increase the number of the sits in the reading hall. The expert panel recommends the university creates at least one more reading hall for students, to have a capacity of hosting at least 70-80 readers at the same time. Given the fact, that the existing reading hall all is for PC usage as well, the other reading hall can be designed for quite working, this will guarantee students are having choice, if they wish to discuss and speak to their pairs they will stay in the main reading hall, otherwise they will visit another. The expert panel randomly checked several textbooks from the course syllabus that were specified as mandatory reading materials and it turned out that they were accessible in the library. The books are classified according to international library standards and are shelved accordingly. The institution has an electronic catalog, that is accessible to all stakeholders of the library, and the rules and regulations about the usage of printed resources and reading halls are also freely accessible. However, during the visit it was noted that the library has one main catalogue for printed resources and another for the e-resources, that is for internal usage only. Considering the international practice in Library and Information Sciences it is suggested the university develops only one catalogue where both printed and e-resources will be accessible, so that readers use only one search engine to find out whether the resources are accessible or not. During the site visit it was also noted that university has a practice of scanning textbooks, although this is only for educational reasons, still the expert team suggests to consider the copyright issues when making those available for students.

The library offers access to academic databases that cover the study fields taught at the university. According to the SER the usage statistics of the databases is not that high, counts 10,000 entries in recent 5 years. GIPA conducts a periodic survey of students and staff with a view to studying satisfaction vis-à-vis library resources and services. The results are used by the university to improve the existing resources and services. As a result of the survey conducted in 2024, 88.2% of surveyed students fully and partially agree with the provision that the basic literature provided by the syllabus of a particular course is available electronically. The expert team asked both students and alumni, if they could recall any training that the library offered on using different academic databases. As it turned out, they could not recall any example, but noted that the Academic Writing course covered this topic, and if they had some questions, they directly addressed to the course supervisors. In order to guarantee the sustainability of the usage of academic databases it is recommended the library designs training modules in information seeking/information literacy and proactively promote it within the students and other stakeholders. The expert team asked whether the remote access on the resources is guaranteed, as it turned out with the help of IT departments students can access those resources, however, the steps they need to go through is not simple. The expert team suggests the identification of the readers is based on the university email, that will make it easy for students to have access.

During the interviews with the programs heads and teaching staff it was confirmed that from time to time they are purchasing new printed resources required for different study programs, the university

<p>budget specifies special field for the expanses of the library. Moreover, some of the books are being bought within the different projects funded externally.</p> <p>Currently there are five people working at the library, out of who three are university students working as a part-time. Although the staff members are experienced in the field, the expert team suggest the library staff are more actively engaged in the professional development activities, to guarantee the stakeholders are getting up-to dated services in the library. The SER reports: "The library collection includes core literature prescribed in all educational program syllabi. With consideration for the needs of university staff and students, ongoing efforts are made to enhance and update library resources and services. The library's book fund is renewed every semester to enrich research, educational, and library resources as needed. The university's budget continually provides a separate financial resource for the renewal and further development of library resources. In addition, the sum allocated for books and other resources after 2018 amounted to GEL 155,108 while the current and future three-year budget indicate increasing financing for books and library resources".</p>
<p>Evidences/indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-evaluation Report • The usage statistics of the Academic Databases • The agreements with the provider of the Academic Databases • University Budget • Interviews with the staff members • Observation of the facilities during the site-visit • University Web-page.
<p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is recommended to arrange at least one additional reading hall of the library, to have a capacity of hosting at least 70-80 readers; • It is recommended the library designs training modules (information seeking/information literacy) and proactively promote it within the students and other stakeholders
<p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is suggested the university develops only one catalogue where both printed and e-resources will be accessible, so that readers use only one search engine to find out whether the resources are accessible or not; • It is suggested in case of remote access on databases the identification of the readers is based on the university email (not the current steps), that will make it easy for students to have access; • It is suggested the library staff are more actively engaged in the professional development activities, to guarantee the stakeholders are getting up-to-dated services in the library.
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p>
<p>Evaluation</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements </p>
<p>7.3 Information Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ HEI has created infrastructure for information technologies and its administration and accessibility are ensured ○ Electronic services and electronic management systems are implemented and mechanisms for their constant improvement are in place ○ HEI ensures business continuity ○ HEI has a functional web-page in Georgian and English languages.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

GIPA has all the necessary facilities to adequately run the IT services, both for students, professors and staff. Partially quoting from the Information Technology Development Policy of NNLE GIPA-Georgian Institute of Public Affairs, we summarize the following points.

The information technology process at the university includes the proper functioning of the following elements of the information technology infrastructure:

1. Network infrastructure and devices; the internal local network of the university fully covers all buildings and separate spaces of the university, through two independent virtual networks:

- a. Administration virtual network;
- b. Virtual network of students and other guests.

The university network is monitored daily and an electronic report on the system status is carried out"

2. Electronic services;

The electronic services implemented in the university, which are used for effective management of both administrative processes and educational processes, include:

- the electronic management database "PORTAL.GIPA.GE", which combines the electronic management of educational and administrative processes, and the features of which are described in the rules of use of the internal university electronic database (PORTAL.GIPA.GE) of Georgian Institute of Public Affairs;
- the electronic database of library management and accounting - "Koha", which was successfully introduced in the university in 2018;
- Google Workspace e-mail and services management system;
- Moodle
- Case management system Edoc, the introduction of which started in May 2018 and involves the system of creation and archiving of document circulation, administrative acts and other documents in an automated mode;
- "Assets.gipa.ge" - inventory logistics accounting program, which was introduced in 2023;
- "Teamviewer" - a remote access program that helps the IT department to remotely support administrative staff as well as the learning process;
- "Turnitin" - a plagiarism checking platform that is actively used by the administration and lecturers.

3. Databases and related software: the third direction of the university's information technology development policy concern the protection of the information collected in the databases. "Oris Manager" and the electronic university management program "PORTAL.GIPA.GE", as well as the library database "KOHA", case management databases and other databases, the systems of which are located on the "Grena" association virtual server.

4. Servers and Backups: ensuring the maximum efficiency of the university's server and backup copy production is the fourth direction of the university's information technology development, where the priority is the continuous improvement of server rooms and infrastructure in the wake of the development of technological processes.

The University owns/owns two physical servers which ensure smooth and continuous operation of the network. Also, the university uses virtual servers from "Grena" based on a service agreement. The "PORTAL.GIPA.GE" database, the "ORIS Manager" financial production system, the "ASSETS.GIPA.GE" logistics management program, the university's publicly published web pages, electronic services (koha, moodle, eduroam, etc.) are located on the mentioned servers.

"Grena" association is responsible for the security of virtual servers, risk determination and prevention which produces daily and weekly backups of sensitive and important information.

5. Computer equipment and peripheral devices

Effective operation of computer equipment and peripheral devices is the next priority of the information technology process, for which purpose the university constantly monitors and periodically updates the devices.

6. Internet services: "Eduroam" is not just an international simplified service of access to the wireless network, but an EU standard run by Consortium Géant, where GRENA Association is the Georgian member.

<p>7. Official web-page of the institution serves communication and information functions, contains contact and other useful information in Georgian and English languages, including mission of HEI, its activities, structure, catalogue of educational programmes, programmes and enrolment criteria, expected learning outcomes and qualifications to be granted, procedures for teaching-learning and assessment, administrative/academic/scientific staff, library electronic catalogue, regulation documents, strategic development plans. Information is regularly updated so that the interest to receive information in a timely manner is protected.</p>
<p>Evidences/indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-evaluation Report • Information Technology Development Policy of NNLE GIPA
<p>Recommendations:</p>
<p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the English version of the website annual reports, financial reports, basic statistics and employment opportunities could be added; • The expert panel suggests a better connection with the services provided by Grena, that could help the entire IT sector of GIPA
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p>
<p>Evaluation</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements</p>
<p>7.4 Financial Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Allocation of financial resources described in the budget of HEI is economically achievable ○ Financial standing of HEI ensures performance of activities described in strategic and mid-term action plans ○ HEI financial resources are focused on effective implementation of core activities of the institution ○ HEI budget provides funding for scientific research and library functioning and development ○ HEI has an effective system of accountability, financial management and control
<p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</p> <p>GIPA has developed and presented a commercial budget for the upcoming years. The forecasted income gradually increases, which is very realistic if we compare historical financial data for the institution. The expenditure part is relevant to its income. To realize that the financial plan is very realistic and achievable for GIPA and corresponds to its strategic development plan.</p> <p>Commercial income has different revenue streams, and the biggest portion comes from bachelor's degree programs. During the interviews, it was highlighted that GIPA plans to add several special, unique programs to the bachelor's degree due to the increased capacity of the institution and foreseen the strategic window that exists in the market not only in local but in regional level.</p> <p>The actual and forecasted budget growth rate is approximately 9% annually, considering a 5-year period. This indicates that GIPA continues to grow smoothly, and that the institution will maintain financial sustainability. Besides this, the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs is a non-governmental organization, and additional more than 20% of its income is generated from grants. Also, in the interviews, it was mentioned that the institution has already initiated a philanthropic platform where the contributors will be from the private sector. This would be an additional hedging mechanism for the institution to maintain its financial sustainability. Commercial budget is enough to run its main core activities for the institution.</p>

In the budget, there are separate parts for research, which is 3% of the whole budget, for the year 2027 the total cost for research is estimated by 370,907 GEL. This cost is sufficient for the implementation qualitative research partnership with other stakeholders. The HEI has organizational capabilities in project writing to attract additional sources which are not considered in the commercial budget and is another source of income for funding research. Considering the scope of the university, regional studies are often financed by donor organizations. This circumstances, declared during interviews, give us sufficient arguments to consider that research part will be strengthened by HEI. The library also has its own part of cost in budget, which is gradually growing. For example, in 2024–2025, funding for libraries is 1,5 times higher compared to the 2023–2024 year.

The institution has developed a very flexible and effective system of accountability, financial management and control. The general budget is constructed using a bottom-up approach. Every structural unit makes its own budget, and the financial office combines it, adding necessary expenditures as well. Additionally, every year, an external financial audit process is held, which is a good practice for assessing and controlling the financial process of the entity.

Also, external audit is done annually by the third party. In materials, there were given audit reports for 2018-2022. Reports are made by the authorized audit company KK Group and is evaluated positively. From Audit reports, full financial picture can be captured regarding budget, income, expenses for historical years. Despite the fact that HEI shared only commercial budget, from audit reports it is clear how additional incomes make the university financially sustainable. The audit reports can be easily found on GIPA's website.

Evidences/indicators

- External financial audit reports
- Interviews
- Self-evaluation document
- Budget
- Historical data of revenue streams tendencies. www.gipa.ge
- www.saras.gov.ge
- www.reportal.ge

Recommendations:

Suggestions:

- We suggest the budget to be more detailed.
- We suggest the cost of research to be gradually increased in the future from 3% to 10%

Best Practices (if applicable):

Evaluation

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