



## **Accreditation Expert Group Report on Cluster of Higher Education Programmes**

Psychology, BA  
Psychology (In English), BA

**LLC. International Black Sea University**

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Tbilisi

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### Information on the Higher educational Institution

Name of Institution Indicating its Organizational Legal Form	International Black Sea University, LLC
Identification Code of Institution	229275405
Type of the Institution	University

### Expert Panel Members

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## I. Information on the Cluster of Educational Programmes

	Programme 1	Programme 2
Name of the educational programme	Psychology	Psychology
Level of higher education	6	6
Qualification to be awarded	Bachelor of Psychology	Bachelor of Psychology
Name and code of the detailed field	0313: Psychology	0313: Psychology
Indication of the right to provide teaching of subject/subjects/group of subjects of the relevant level of general education <sup>1</sup>		
Language of instruction	Georgian	English
Number of ECTS credits	240	240
Programme Status (Accredited/Non-accredited/Conditionally Accredited/New/International Accreditation) Indicating Relevant Decision (number, date)	New	New

<sup>1</sup> In case of Integrated Bachelor's-Master's Teacher Training Educational Programme and Teacher Training Educational Programme

## II. Accreditation Report Executive Summary

- **General Information on the Cluster of Education Programmes<sup>2</sup>**

The BA Psychology and BA Psychology (in English) are two new programmes grouped in cluster submitted for accreditation from the International Black Sea University (hereafter IBSU). The programs are first-cycle bachelor level programmes (level 6) and include 240 ECTS credits, separated into 140 ECTS mandatory courses for the main specialty, 50 ECTS optional courses of the main specialty, 40 ECTS compulsory courses and a 10 ECTS bachelor thesis on a self-chosen thematic area. The programmes were developed following a labor market survey that assessed the popularity of a bachelor-level psychology program, the demand for psychological competencies in the labor market as well as the specific competencies the labor market requires. The results from the labor market research indicated a need for psychological competencies in the labor market with specific focus on the mastery of English language as an important and interesting factor for the local and international labor market. Thus, IBSU designed both a Georgian language Psychology BA program (hereafter called Psychology BA) and an English language Psychology BA program (Hereafter called Psychology (In English) BA).

- **Overview of the Accreditation Site Visit**

The accreditation visit happened 22-23 April 2024, in the premises of the International Black Sea University's (IBSU) buildings at Davit Agmashenebeli Alley, 13th km, 2 Postal code: 0131, Tbilisi, Georgia. The accreditation committee had meetings on the 22 April with the administrative staff, the self-evaluation team, the head of the programs, academic staff, the invited staff, and was given a presentation tour of the premises and buildings at IBSU before the last meeting of the day with potential employers. On 23 April the accreditation committee had meetings with related program students, alumni from related Ph.D.-program and staff from the Quality Assurance office before presenting some key findings in the last meeting of the day.

- **Brief Overview of Education Programme Compliance with the Standards**

**Program 1: Psychology, BA.**

Standard 1: Substantially complies the requirements

Standard 2: Substantially complies the requirements

Standard 3: Complies with requirements

Standard 4: Complies with requirements

Standard 5: Complies with requirements

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<sup>2</sup> When providing general information related to the programme, it is appropriate to also present the quantitative data analysis of the educational programme.

## **Program 2: Psychology (In English) BA**

Standard 1: Substantially complies the requirements

Standard 2: Substantially complies the requirements

Standard 3: Complies with requirements

Standard 4: Complies with requirements

Standard 5: Complies with requirements

### **▪ General recommendations of the Cluster**

#### **Standard 1.4**

- It is recommended that courses have clearly differentiable learning outcomes.

#### **Standard 1.5**

- It is recommended to add a course in Applied Behavior Analysis.
- It is recommended that individual courses that are a continuation of each other have learning outcomes that are clearly differentiable.

#### **Standard 2.3.**

- It is recommended that learning/teaching methods are written clearly in the syllabi and that the use of general wording is avoided.
- It is recommended that learning/teaching methods should be more adaptive to student needs and less uniform.

#### **Standard 2.4.**

- It is recommended that the evaluation weight given to presentation in the syllabi is adjusted to more ensure an equal distribution of points relative to other assessment criteria.
- It is recommended that the courses use assessment criteria that reduce the effect of subjective opinion on grading.
- It is recommended to clearly define the criteria for evaluating the seminar activity.

#### **Standard 4.4**

- It is recommended the institution enhance the training sessions with the students to provide detailed information on how to use the academic databases the library is currently subscribed to.
- It is recommended the university purchase at least one printed copy of each textbook for this study program and make them available through the university library, so that students can borrow the textbooks.
- It is recommended all the mandatory literature is searchable in the library catalog, so that students are informed regarding the informational resources.

## **Standard 5.2**

- It is recommended to define evaluation criteria for external collegial review, as the currently given feedback does not highlight either strengths or the weaknesses of the program, thus looks more formal rather than meaningful activity.

## **▪ Recommendations for Program 1 – Psychology BA (Georgian)**

### **Standard 4.4.**

- It is recommended that the mandatory literature in Georgian study program is given into Georgian language, while textbooks into English can be in supplementary list

## **▪ Recommendations for Program 2 – Psychology BA (English)**

### **Standard 4.4.**

- It is recommended the supplementary literature are updated considering the language skills of the target group for the study program.

## **▪ General Suggestions of the Cluster**

### **Standard 1.4.**

- It is suggested that all courses have the learning outcome categories “responsibilities and autonomy” are filled out in accordance with the European Qualification Framework level 6.

### **Standard 1.5.**

- It is suggested that the minor errors in structuring and/or placement of text in the learning outcomes (skills, knowledge, responsibilities and autonomy) should be corrected.

### **Standard 2.4.**

- It is suggested that the university creates a statement document that describes how students and staff at IBSU should related to the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in teaching and scientific activities.
- It is suggested that the faculty consider using an external examiner on an occasional basis for its courses as this will help control the quality and correctness of the grading procedure.
- It is suggested that the inter-rater reliability of the grading from the external examiner and the internal examiner is calculated and reported in the annual programme report.

#### **Standard 5.1.**

- It is suggested to promote the active participation of the academic staff in the self-evaluation process, to achieve the program goals and the quality assurance mechanisms to work effectively.

#### **▪ Suggestions for Programme Development for Program 2: Psychology (in English), BA.**

##### **Standard 1.1**

- It is suggested to add a 6th purpose to the Psychology (In English) BA program that states the purpose why it was chosen to establish a new English language program.

##### **Standard 1.2**

- It is suggested to add an additional learning objective to the Psychology (In English) BA program that details the importance of English language skills.



- **Information on Sharing or Not Sharing the Argumentative Position of the HEI**

Comments from the expert committee are listed in the same order as the document containing the HEI's argumentative position.

**Draft report p. 6 and p.46**

The university notes the grade "Substantially complies with requirements" was given for standard 4 even though only one substandard (4.4.) was given the grade "Substantially complies with requirements". The expert committee has corrected this in the final report. Standard 4 now has the grade "complies with requirements".

**Recommendations for 1.4 is incorrectly indicated as being for standard 1.3.**

The university noted that the recommendations on p.6 were incorrectly indicated as being for substandard 1.3 when it was for substandard 1.4. This is now corrected in the final report.

**Standard 1.4 (p. 18-19) and standard 1.5. (p. 21)**

The university states that none of the mentioned courses had very similar/similar or identical learning outcomes. They give examples from courses named "Fundamentals of Psychology 1 and 2" and "Cognitive Psychology 1 and 2". These examples are used as indicators that the LOs are different. The university then argues that this shows that recommendations for standard 1.4 and 1.5 on differentiating the learning outcomes is not valid.

The expert committee notes that the syllabi of courses that are presented as sequential, such as Basics of Psychology 1, Basics of Psychology 2, Cognitive Psychology 1, and Cognitive Psychology 2, do not clearly demonstrate the different skills that students acquire. The argument presented by the Black Sea University, where differences are highlighted with a marker, does not address our concern because merely studying different topics is not equivalent to developing new skills. For example, if students describe social, cognitive, developmental, biological aspects, and psychological processes within Basics of Psychology 1, then within Basics of Psychology 2 they describe higher cognitive processes, personality psychology, and mental health features. In that case, there is a difference in the topics covered. However, there is no clear difference in terms of the skills developed. While it is natural to have differences in topics over a two- semester course, this alone is insufficient to demonstrate different outcomes in skills.

Also, the examples used by the university<sup>3</sup> seem to stem from the course descriptions from the Georgian language program, since the learning outcomes presented in the university's

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<sup>3</sup> The expert committee notes that there is no mentioning of any courses named "Fundamentals of Psychology 1 and 2" in the evidences – neither in the program description nor in the syllabi, and the

argument do not correspond with the English version of the “basics of psychology 1 and 2” courses that was mentioned in the draft report. This indicates that the Georgian and English language versions of the course descriptions might not be identical. Because of the possible lack of clarity in the previous report the expert committee reevaluated the LOs of all compulsory specialty courses for both programs (both Georgian and English languages) and found that:

*“...we found that several of the individual courses had very similar– or identical learning outcomes (LOs). This was found to be particularly so for the English language program, where Developmental Psychology 1 and 2 had identical LOs, so had Basics of Psychology 1 and 2, as well as Personality Psychology 1 and 2.*

*For both programs it was found that the courses Cognitive Psychology 1 and 2 had identical course objectives and responsibilities and autonomy, and the skills were almost identical with only Cognitive Psychology 1 having one additional skill “Discusses the classical studies and applied methods that are central to cognitive psychology, the study of attention, memory, and perception processes.”. Also, the courses Research Methods 1 and 2 have partly similar descriptions on knowledge and understanding, and identical skills and responsibilities and autonomy. “*

Amendments have been made to the report to reflect and nuance these findings. The chair of the expert committee wants to apologize for any text that did not present this clearly in the draft report. The expert committee finds that several courses in both programs have levels of identity/similarity in the Learning outcomes that should be corrected to ensure that courses are clearly differentiable. That said, the expert committee leaves the recommendations for substandard 1.4 and 1.5 as they are.

#### **Standard 1.5 (p. 21).**

The expert committee is happy to hear that the university agrees with the recommendation to include a course in Applied Behavior Analysis to the courses.

#### **Standard 2.3**

The university commented upon the recommendation “It is recommended that learning/teaching methods are written clearly in the syllabi and that the use of general wording is avoided. » saying that “Each workshop activity is linked to a specified ("previous", "past" or "current") week of material covered. In the syllabus for teaching/learning methods, a separate column is used to specify the specific study or teaching methods employed based on the specifics of the course. And the description of these methods is given in the program. Therefore, the experts' opinion regarding the general formulation of teaching/learning methods is not considered valid.”

Regarding student assessment, the wording in the syllabi related to seminar activities is general, as outlined in the descriptive part. Additionally, the current recommendation regarding the description of seminar activities relies on general formulations such as "exercises

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committee assumes that the university translated the text from the Georgian language version of the course “Basics in Psychology 1 and 2” and that the name was altered somewhat in the translation.

related to previous material." It is unclear what specific types of exercises are being referred to and how the knowledge of the previous material is assessed. The definition could encompass various forms, including group work or individual tasks, written or oral inquiries, without specifying the format, which highlights the general and abstract nature of the wording. If seminar activities are to be described, they should be clear and understandable. That said, the expert team leaves the recommendation *"It is recommended that learning/teaching methods are written clearly in the syllabi and that the use of general wording is avoided,"* as it is.

**Regarding the recommendation that *"learning teaching methods should be more adaptive to students needs and less uniform"* which the university argues is invalid since the university have many different teaching/learning activities.**

The expert committee agrees that the university uses different and varied learning activities. However, the expert committee's point is not focused on the teaching methods as such, but rather on the specific skills for which points are awarded. The expert committee notes that the awarding of points given special presentations/abilities such as "speaks well" or "makes contact with the audience" does preclude some students from getting good grades. For example, requirements that reflect interpersonal and communication skills might preclude some students from getting good grades in specific courses, but not in the ones we have listed. Accordingly, if a student lacks these personal skills, they may lose 10- 15 points and, despite high performance in other activities, might still fail to receive an A grade. That said, the expert team leaves the recommendation as it is.

#### **Standard 2.4**

The university commented on the general recommendation *"It is recommended that the evaluation weight given to presentation in the syllabi is adjusted to ensure an equal distribution of points relative to other assessment criteria"* by stating that *"Evaluation of training courses is 100 points. In the specified courses, student activity and presentation are allocated 15 and 10 points, respectively, with the remaining 75 points designated for other assessment methods, such as quizzes, mid-term exams, and final exams. Accordingly, the student is certainly given the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge in another form."*

The expert committee comments on this: The argument that students can earn points based on other activities does not address the issue, as subjects like Research Methods or Cognitive Psychology do not require presentation skills as a necessary condition. We do not find it appropriate to deduct 10- 15 points from students for this reason. As for personal characteristics, descriptions such as "speaks well" or "makes contact with the audience", etc. reflect interpersonal and communication skills, which are essential in some subjects but not in the ones we have listed. Accordingly, if a student lacks these personal skills, they may lose 10- 15 points and, despite high performance in other activities, might still fail to receive an A grade. That said, the expert team leaves the recommendation as it is.

#### **Descriptive part of the standard pp 30 - 31**

The university also commented upon aspects of the descriptive parts of the report where prevention and detection of plagiarism is being discussed by saying *"The issue of indicating the*

*percentage of plagiarism is discussed in the draft conclusion. In further discussions, we fully agree with the experts, but the draft conclusion does not seem to reflect that the issues raised by the experts are considered in the assessment of plagiarism at IBSU. And since the report is an open and publicly published document, we believe it is important to provide comments on this matter as well. »*

The expert committee acknowledges this and has made amendments to the text to include the points mentioned by the university.

#### **Recommendation 4.4 (1)**

The university states that students have access to academic databases and that it provides trainings to students and staff. During the site visit it was mentioned that a training session for academic staff had been recently conducted. However, the expert team met both students and alumni of the related programs and since they mentioned not having sufficient information the recommendation was drafted. Students confirmed that they knew that such databases exist but explained that it would be better if some trainings and info sessions had been conducted. That said, the expert team leaves the recommendation as it is.

#### **Recommendation 4.4 (2)**

During the site visit the expert team visited the library and requested some randomly selected titles from the mandatory list of the syllabus. As it turned out all the requested books were as e-copies. Although the current accreditation standards do not define in which form the books should be, considering the best interests of the students, the expert team believes having one printed titles of the books would have positive impact. Not all students have personal computers to read the e-copies. The expert team leaves the recommendation as it is.

#### **Recommendation 4.4 (3)**

During the site visit the expert team checked the catalog of the library to find the information about the literature indicated as mandatory. Unfortunately, none of the books were accessible in the e-catalog, the official one that is given on the web page of the university. After getting the argumentative position of the university the expert team double checked hoping that the items are added to the catalog, unfortunately, they are still missing. For example, randomly selected those mandatory books – Qualitative Research Methods in Psychology; Qualitative Data Analyses with Nvivo; Developmental Psychology (in Georgian). Moreover, there is a section of the course readers on the webpage, but the reader by Prof. Doreuli is not searchable, this is the only and mandatory material in the syllabus. According to the international standards in Library and Information Sciences, e-catalog of the university should contain the information about all resources. This will have only a positive impact on the study programs development. The expert team leaves the recommendation as it is.

#### **Recommendation 4.4 for Georgian Program**

The university state that having textbooks only in English language in Georgian Language program is not a big issue, as the precondition of those courses is professional English. The

expert team was familiar with the fact, but the problem is that there are Professional English I and Professional English II, the precondition for those three courses is only Professional English I. If a student would have minimum competence in this course, would it be sufficient for the upcoming courses to have reading materials all in English?! The expert team leaves the recommendation as it is.

#### **Recommendation 4.4 for English Program**

The university states that supplementary literature is not an issue at all, and they do not see the reason for the given recommendation. The expert team is familiar that the supplementary reading resources are not mandatory for students to read, however, if the program will get 5 Georgian speaking students and five foreigners, for Georgians there will be supplementary reading list given in the syllabus and for foreigners there won't be any. For that reason, it is recommended to update the list considering the target groups of the programs. The expert team leaves the recommendation as it is.

#### **Recommendation 5.2**

The university states that it is not a common practice to design assessment criteria for external collegial evaluation. The expert team is familiar with the mechanisms, moreover it is not mandatory for the study programs to conduct such, but if the university decides to have one, it should guarantee its effectiveness. As described in the report, the given assessment does not really highlight any recommendation or suggestions. The expert team leaves the recommendation as it is.

### Evaluation approaches for the accreditation experts:

The components of the accreditation standards are evaluated using the following two approaches:

1. Cluster and individual evaluation<sup>4</sup>
2. Cluster evaluation<sup>5</sup>

Standard/Component	Assessment approaches:
<b>1. Educational Programme Objectives, Learning Outcomes and their Compliance with the Programme</b>	
1.1. Programme Objectives	Cluster and individual
1.2 Programme Learning Outcomes	Cluster and individual
1.3. Evaluation Mechanism of the Programme Learning Outcomes	Cluster
1.4 Structure and Content of Educational Programme	Cluster and individual
1.5 Academic Course/Subject	Cluster and individual
<b>2. Methodology and Organization of Teaching, Adequacy of Evaluation of Programme Mastering</b>	
2.1. Programme Admission Preconditions	Cluster and individual
2.2. The Development of Practical, Scientific/Research/Creative/Performing and Transferable Skills	Cluster
2.3. Teaching and Learning Methods	Cluster
2.4. Student Evaluation	Cluster
<b>3. Student Achievements, Individual Work with them</b>	
3.1. Student Consulting and Support Services	Cluster
3.2. Master's and Doctoral Student Supervision	Cluster

<sup>4</sup> **Evaluation Approaches:** Describe, analyse, and evaluate the compliance of each educational programme grouped in the cluster with the requirements of the corresponding component of the standard. Also, you can specify information about an educational programme that is different from the common and basic characteristics of educational programmes grouped in the cluster.

<sup>5</sup> **Assessment approaches:** In case of necessity, describe, analyse and evaluate compliance of each education programme in the cluster with the requirements of this component of the standard. Also, you can indicate the information on the education programme, distinguished from the general and major characteristics of the education programmes in a cluster.

<b>4. Providing Teaching Resources</b>	
4.1. Human Resources	Cluster and individual
4.2. Qualification of Supervisors of Master's and Doctoral Students	Cluster and individual
4.3. Professional Development of Academic, Scientific and Invited Staff	Cluster
4.4. Material Resources	Cluster and individual
4.5. Programme/Faculty/School Budget and Programme Financial Sustainability	Cluster and individual
<b>5. Teaching Quality Enhancement Opportunities</b>	
5.1. Internal Quality Evaluation	Cluster
5.2. External Quality Evaluation	Cluster
5.3. Programme Monitoring and Periodic Review	Cluster

### III. Compliance of the Programme with Accreditation Standards

#### 1. Educational Programme Objectives, Learning Outcomes and their Compliance with the Programme

A programme has clearly established objectives and learning outcomes, which are logically connected to each other. Programme objectives are consistent with the mission, objectives and strategic plan of the institution. Programme learning outcomes are assessed on a regular basis to improve the programme. The content and consistent structure of the programme ensure the achievement of the set goals and expected learning outcomes.

Educational programmes grouped in a cluster are logically interrelated to each other in line with the study fields and evolve according to the respective levels of higher education.

##### 1.1 Programme Objectives

Programme objectives consider the specificity of the field of study, level and an educational programme, and define the set of knowledge, skills and competences a programme aims to develop in graduate students. They also illustrate the contribution of the programme to the development of the field and society.

#### Summary and Analysis of the Compliance of the Educational Programmes Grouped in a Cluster with the Requirements of the Standard Component

The programme objectives for both programmes are relevant for the field of study and give a particularly flexible and broad overview of a wide set of thematic areas all relevant to modern psychological science. The study programs are in line with the IBSU's mission and objectives and strategic plan. The methods used in the programs for achieving the learning outcomes are varied and provide future students many ways of proving their competencies.

The learning objectives at programme level are described at the correct qualification level for a first cycle (Bachelor) higher education programme. The program description includes information on how graduates from the programs may contribute to society.

The programs are developed based upon an analysis of the local labor market and the needs of an international labor market – as is particularly shown through the English language programme where competencies in English is an important factor for the local labor market and for those students who want to work abroad. The focus on English language also supports the internationalization of the programme and of the university's ambitions in being involved in international collaboration.

#### Description and Analysis - Programme 1 (Psychology, BA (Georgian Language))<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Describe, analyze and evaluate the compliance of each educational programme grouped in the cluster with the requirements of the specified component of the standard. Also, you can specify information about the educational programme that is different from the common and basic characteristics of the educational programmes grouped in the cluster.

Please repeat the description and analysis field according to the number of programmes, for example, programme 2 (name, cycle), programme 3 (name, cycle) and so on. (Please consider this reference format when evaluating each subsequent component).



The two programs are almost identical in structure and form, except for the language requirements. The outline of the Georgian language program is relevant to the field of study and of correct level. The purpose of the study program is logically reflected in the learning outcomes and the learning outcomes are a clear function of the learning outcomes in the individual courses. As such it fulfills the requirements of the standard.

### **Description and Analysis - Programme 2 (Psychology (In English), BA)**

The two programs are almost identical in structure and form, except for the language requirements. The outline of the English language program is relevant to the field of study and of correct EQF level. The purpose of the study program is logically reflected in the learning outcomes and the learning outcomes are a clear function of the learning outcomes in the individual courses. As such it fulfills the requirements of the standard. The main difference between Programme 1 and Programme 2 is the teaching language and the curriculum. It also became clear during the meetings with administration, employers, students and alumni that proficiency in English is an important aspect of the study program which has (at least) two positive effects 1) *English proficiency is a competency that employers want both in Georgia and abroad*, and 2) *it supports the internationalization of study programs at IBSU (to access research collaboration, Erasmus+ exchange, and similar) and it provides graduates with an increased ability to interact with the world outside Georgia, something that allows for further collaboration across borders*. Based upon this the programme fulfils the requirements of the standard. Hence, the committee would suggest that the fact that the programme is taught in English language should be represented as a specifically stated purpose of the Psychology (In English) BA programme.

### **Evidences/Indicators**

- Course plans
- Self-evaluation report
- Document “Analysis of labor marked (years 2022–2023)
- Interview with employers
- interview with administration
- interview with students of similar programs
- interview with alumni from similar programs
- interview with academic staff

### **Recommendations and Suggestions according to the programmes:**

#### **Programme 2 (Psychology (in English), BA)**

#### **Suggestion:**

- It is suggested to add a 6th purpose to the Psychology (In English) BA program that states the purpose why it was chosen to establish a new English language program.

## Evaluation <sup>7</sup>

Component 1.1 – Programme Objectives	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies the requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
Programme 1 (Psychology, BA)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme 2 (Psychology (In English) BA)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 1.2 Programme Learning Outcomes

- The learning outcomes of the programme are logically related to the programme objectives and the specificity of the field of study.
- Programme learning outcomes describe knowledge, skills, and/or sense of responsibility and autonomy which students gain upon completion of the programme.

#### Cluster and individual evaluation

##### Summary and Analysis of the Compliance of the Educational Programmes Grouped in a Cluster with the Requirements of the Standard Component

The two psychology programs are grouped in a cluster with a Georgian language program (Program 1) and an English language program (Program 2). The two programs have identical descriptions and overarching learning outcomes. Thus, this section will therefore be written for both programs as seen together.

The learning outcomes of the programs are a natural operationalization of the objectives of the programs, and they cover skills, knowledge, autonomy and responsibilities that are of relevance to the field of study. The structure of the programs ensure that all objectives are covered multiple times and that the students get incremental knowledge in relation to the fulfillment of the objectives of the programs. In total, the learning outcomes of the programs are consistent with what one would expect for a first-cycle bachelor program in psychology.

The learning objectives of the programs are clearly established, realistic and achievable, and they can be measured with the teaching- and assessment methods detailed in the descriptions of the programs. The learning outcomes of the programs are relevant to the subject domain of general psychology and it are developed to fulfil the labor market requirements as described by prospective employers and as described in the labor market analysis. The learning objectives of the programs are in line with the expectations from prospective employers, and the programs will allow students to continue studying on a second-cycle master level psychology program.

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<sup>7</sup> Evaluation is performed for each programme separately.

The learning objectives at programme level are described at the correct qualification level for a first cycle (Bachelor) higher education programme. The program description also includes information on how graduates from the programs may contribute to society.

The program learning outcomes are public and accessible, and the learning outcomes are shared and agreed upon among academic and invited staff, students and administration.

The interviews detailed that administration, academic staff, invited staff, prospective students and potential employers have been involved in the development of the programs and stakeholders have been informed of the learning outcomes of the program. All news will be publicly shared on the university's web site and on social forums.

#### **Description and analysis – Programme 1: Psychology, BA (Georgian language)**

The programme learning outcomes are relevant and logically connected to the program objectives. The learning outcomes are measurable, realistic and achievable. The program objectives are developed according to the labor market analysis and allow students to continue studies on second-cycle master level psychology programs. Learning outcomes are relevant to the specificities of the research field. Stakeholders have been involved in the development of the programme.

#### **Description and analysis – Programme 2: Psychology (In English), BA**

The programme learning outcomes are relevant and logically connected to the program objectives. The learning outcomes are measurable, realistic and achievable. The program objectives are developed according to the labor market analysis and allow students to continue studies on second-cycle master level psychology programs. Learning outcomes are relevant to the specificities of the research field. Stakeholders have been involved in the development of the programme. The English language program also ensures that graduates have an additional language competency which have been shown to be of interest to the national and international labor market, and that makes it easier for students to seek further studies or work abroad. It is suggested to add this additional strength to the learning outcomes of the psychology (in English) program to further showcase the differences between the two psychology programs.

#### **Recommendations and Suggestions according to the programmes:**

##### **Programme 2: Psychology (in English), BA**

##### **Suggestion:**

- It is suggested to add an additional learning objective to the Psychology (In English) BA program that details the importance of English language skills.

#### **Evidences/Indicators**

- Program and Syllabi

- Map of program objectives and learning outcomes
- Interviews with administrative staff
- Interviews with students at related programs
- Interviews with academic staff
- Self-evaluation document
- Interview with prospective employers

## Evaluation

Component 1.2 Programme Learning Outcomes	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
Programme 1 (Psychology, BA)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme 2 (Psychology (In English), BA)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 1.3 Evaluation Mechanism of the Programme Learning Outcomes

- Evaluation mechanisms of the programme learning outcomes are defined. The programme learning outcomes assessment process consists of defining, collecting and analyzing data necessary to measure learning outcomes.
- Programme learning outcomes assessment results are utilized for the improvement of the programme.

## Summary and Analysis of the Compliance of the Educational Programmes Grouped in a Cluster with the Requirements of the Standard Component

The file “*Instruction for Evaluation of Educational Program’s Learning Outcomes*” describes the evaluation mechanisms of the learning outcomes of the programs, it details the administrative process by which programs should be evaluated, and describes four stages of evaluating program learning outcomes; 1) Defining of the learning outcomes of the programs; 2) The analysis of the curriculums; 3) Evaluation of the learning outcomes of the programs; 4) Applying evaluation results for improving the programs. This document also describes the setting of benchmarks/thresholds for the learning outcomes. Benchmarking is developed by comparison with other programs, and these benchmarks will be used in the assessment of the study programs. After the first assessment cycle these benchmarks will be updated and then used for the next assessment cycle.

The programs were developed in a collaborative manner between administration, academic staff, invited staff, and alumni, and students from associated programs and prospective employers were consulted and could contribute to the development of the programs. External assessors were used for assessing the drafts for the educational programs during the development of the programs.

The SER describes that assessment of whether the learning outcomes of the programs have been achieved is made by direct and indirect methods. Direct methods involve assessment of student's academic performances during courses and statistical analysis of these results. Indirect methods involve surveys of employers, representatives of practice facilities, students and graduates/alumni, as well as analysis of curriculum and comparison with similar programs.

Interviews with the academic and invited staff indicated that they had knowledge about the procedures for assessing the learning outcomes of the programs. Interviews with prospective employers indicated that they had been informed of the learning outcomes of the programs, and that they were interested in collaborating to assess whether the learning outcomes are achieved.

### Evidences/Indicators

- *Instruction for Evaluation of Educational Program's Learning Outcomes*
- Self-evaluation
- Interview with Quality Assurance staff
- Interview with academic staff

### Evaluation

Component 1.3 Evaluation Mechanism of the Programme Learning Outcomes	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
Programme 1 (Psychology, BA)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme 2 (Psychology (In English), BA)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### 1.4. Structure and Content of Educational Programme

- The programme is designed according to HEI's methodology for planning, designing and developing of educational programmes.
- The programme structure is consistent and logical. The content and structure ensure the achievement of the programme learning outcomes. The qualification to be awarded is corresponding to the programme content and learning outcomes.

### Summary and Analysis of the Compliance of the Educational Programmes Grouped in a Cluster with the Requirements of the Standard Component

The self-evaluation package including the program and syllabus presented to the accreditation committee shows that the compulsory and elective psychology courses are identical for both Programmes. The courses cover a total of 240 ECTS credits – in line with national and European requirements for a first cycle bachelor program. The two programmes cover 10 ECTS (2 x 5 ECTS) in psychological subdisciplines (Social-, Developmental-, Cognitive- and Personality

psychology) as well as 10 ECTS in basics of psychology, and number of other courses on research methods, data analysis and clinical psychology. Taken together the mandatory courses give a good coverage of modern psychology on a bachelor level which is in line with – and comparable to – other bachelor programs at European universities.

The elective courses cover several topics that are continuations of the mandatory courses (as is evident from the table of prerequisites in the English and Georgian program descriptions). Many of the courses have social psychology 2 as a prerequisite, while cognitive psychology 2, developmental psychology 2, and personality psychology 2 are prerequisites for much fewer courses, indicating a focus towards social psychology in these programs. Taken together, the compulsory and elective courses provide students with a good coverage of psychological theory and practice which is sufficient for a bachelor of psychology. The programs also have several elective courses which contribute to the individuality of the programs.

As evidenced by the learning outcome map in both the Georgian language program (Programme 1, Psychology BA) and the English program (programme 2, Psychology (in English) BA) the courses support the achievement of the program learning outcomes and ensure introductory, deepening and reinforcement (training) learning for all learning outcomes.

The structure and content of the educational programs are consistent with a bachelor level education in psychology. The programs utilize a wide range of teaching and assessment methods, and the relation between the content of the course, the learning outcomes and the assessment methods are logical and were well explained and argued for in the meetings with administration, academic and invited staff.

When it comes to the structure and logic of study programmes as operationalized in the individual courses, we found that several of the individual courses had very similar – or identical learning outcomes (LOs). This was found to be particularly so for the English language program, where Developmental Psychology 1 and 2 had identical LOs, so had Basics of Psychology 1 and 2, as well as Personality Psychology 1 and 2.

For both programs it was found that the courses Cognitive Psychology 1 and 2 had identical course objectives and responsibilities and autonomy, and the skills were almost identical with only Cognitive Psychology 1 having one additional skill “*Discusses the classical studies and applied methods that are central to cognitive psychology, the study of attention, memory, and perception processes.*” Also, the courses Research Methods 1 and 2 have partly similar descriptions on knowledge and understanding, and identical skills and responsibilities and autonomy.

Thus, several courses had learning outcomes that were overlapping or identical to such an extent that it would be very difficult to see these courses as being separate when considering the LOs. Each individual course should have learning outcomes that are clearly differentiable from the other courses in the study program – even though the courses are a continuation of each other. If different courses – with different learning plans and exams – have the same learning outcomes, then the courses cannot be said to have individual contributions towards the academic degree.

The educational programs, according to SER and interviews, are developed according to the procedures and regulations for development of educational programs at IBSU. The programs

were developed in a collaborative process between administration, academic- and invited staff, and with input from students and alumni from similar study programs, as well as from prospective employers. Information on the study programmes will be accessible on the University Web site.

### **Description and Analysis - Programme 1 (Psychology, BA)**

The focus on English language as a foreign language in the Georgian language program enables and eases the potential collaboration between students of Programme 1 and Programme 2. Increasing the English competencies of Georgian students also supports the internationalization of education, student and teacher exchange and research collaboration at IBSU.

### **Description and Analysis - Programme 2 (Psychology (In English), BA)**

The fact that there are only few other English-language educational programs in Georgia contributes to the individuality of Programme 2: Bachelor (in English) programme. The programme supports internationalization which is stated as a goal in the SER for the English language program in the meeting with the administration

#### **General recommendations of the cluster:**

- It is recommended that courses have clearly differentiable learning outcomes.

#### **General suggestions of the cluster:**

- It is suggested that all courses have the learning outcome categories “responsibilities and autonomy” are filled out in accordance with the European Qualification Framework level 6.

### **Evidences/Indicators**

- Interview with employers
- Interviews with administration
- Interviews with academic staff
- Interviews with invited staff
- Program and syllabi
- Self-evaluation document(s)
- Programme description(s)

### **Evaluation**

Component 1.4 Structure and Content of Educational Programme	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
Programme 1 (Psychology, BA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme 2 (Psychology (In English), BA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 1.5. Academic Course/Subject

- The content of the academic course / subject and the number of credits ensure the achievement of the learning outcomes defined by this course / subject.
- The content and the learning outcomes of the academic course/subject of the main field of study ensure the achievement of the learning outcomes of the programme.
- The study materials indicated in the syllabus ensure the achievement of the learning outcomes of the programme.

### Summary and Analysis of the Compliance of the Educational Programmes Grouped in a Cluster with the Requirements of the Standard Component

Most courses available to students of the programmes are 5 ECTS. The contents of each of the programs are relevant and of correct level for bachelor programs, and the hours allocated to teaching and learning activities are sufficient for achieving the learning outcomes of the individual courses as is evidenced by the programme descriptions and the course descriptions. The courses have relevant mandatory literature that is sufficient for achieving the program learning outcomes based upon recent understanding of psychological science and in line with what is used in other universities in Europe.

When it comes to the learning outcomes on the level of individual courses, we find that all courses of both study programmes in the course plans have learning outcomes that described in a language are in line with the EQF level 6 first cycle Higher educational programs. However, in some courses the learning outcomes are not divided into the categories “Skills”, “Knowledge”, and “Responsibilities and Autonomy”. The ECTS credits allocated for each course are in line with the learning outcomes, learning activities and assessment methods, and the number of hours allocated for teaching/individual work is in line with regulations for all courses as is indicated in the two program descriptions.

Even though all courses are in line with the correct level of the EQF the accreditation committee has some recommendations and suggestions for improvement in some of the learning outcomes and/or structure of the course plans.

One challenge for both programmes is the lack of courses on Applied Behavior Analysis. As the employers who were present during our meetings worked with people with learning- and/or mental disabilities where Applied behavior analysis would be of particular interest and of practical use for the students. This was supported by interviews with prospective employers, even though their state need for Applied Behavior Analysis was variable, it can be argued that implementing a course on Applied Behavior Analysis in this programme would be helpful to



reach programme objectives with respect to practical work with children and adults with learning- and/or mental disabilities.

Another general challenge is that several of the course plans include similar/identical learning outcomes, as well as lacking information on Responsibility and Autonomy as well as having the wrong content in the Learning Outcomes. A general recommendation is that the administration of both study programmes ensures that all LOs are written correctly, that all LOs are mentioned in all courses, and that all courses have clearly differentiable LOs. Below we specify the information found on each of the study programs, but since the findings for both programs are very similar, we have chosen to give recommendations and suggestions that are relevant for both study programmes.

### **Description and Analysis - Programme 1 (Psychology, BA)**

The similarities of the courses in the two programmes made it likely that the combination of courses and their learning outcomes in the Georgian programme are suited to fulfill the program learning outcomes. However, some challenges exist:

We found that several of the individual courses had very similar – or identical learning outcomes (LOs) as argued in substandard 1.4. Thus, several courses had learning outcomes that were overlapping to such an extent that it would be very difficult to see these courses as being separate when considering the LOs. Each course needs to have individual learning outcomes that are clearly differentiable from the other courses in the study program – even though the courses are a continuation of each other.

The courses Cognitive Psychology 1 and 2 lacked descriptions of Responsibility and autonomy in the course descriptions. Some courses use the same general catch phrase “*while studying adheres to the rules of academic integrity*” which is not specifically connected with the specific nature of the courses. For comparison, the European Qualification Framework (EQF) level 6 (first cycle higher education) lists the following text for area responsibilities and autonomy “*Manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts; take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups*”. It is recommended that all courses in both study programs list a relevant description of the expected responsibilities and autonomy which can be expected to be achieved by passing the individual course.

Another minor challenge which should be simple to correct is the mix-up of LOs in the course Research methods in psychology 1 where the headings of learning outcomes and the content of the LOs were mixed.

### **Description and Analysis Programme 2 (Psychology (In English) BA)**

The combination of courses and their learning outcomes in the English programme are suited to fulfill the program learning outcomes. However, some challenges exist:

For some courses which are a succession of each other the Learning Outcomes are identical even though the individual courses have separate final exams. This point is further discussed in substandard 1.4. The LOs of Basics of Psychology 1 and 2 were identical, the Los of

Developmental Psychology 1 and 2 were identical, and the Los of Personality Psychology were identical. The courses Research Methods of Psychology 1 and 2 had identical skills and responsibilities and autonomy. The courses Cognitive Psychology 1 and 2 had identical responsibilities and autonomy, and the skills were almost identical with only Cognitive Psychology 1 having one additional skill *“Discusses the classical studies and applied methods that are central to cognitive psychology, the study of attention, memory, and perception processes.”*. Since it is the basic course that have the additional – and more basic – LO it is difficult to see how in the LOs how Cognitive Psychology 2 will contribute with an additional learning above and beyond the more basic course Cognitive Psychology 1. It should be a general rule that Learning outcomes must clearly differentiate between what is taught on the program – so prospective applicants, students, stakeholders and others can understand 1) how the aim of each individual course relates to the whole of the study program, 2) what the unique contribution of each course is with respect to the programme-level learning outcomes, and 3) what students will learn in any given course.

Some of the courses have not written anything on the learning outcome categories “responsibility and autonomy” (examples are Cognitive psychology 1 and 2, personality psychology 1 and 2 and psychology of education), while several other courses use the same general catch phrase *“while studying adheres to the rules of academic integrity”* which not specifically connected with the specific nature of the courses. For comparison, the European Qualification Framework (EQF) level 6 (first cycle higher education) lists the following text for area responsibilities and autonomy *“Manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts; take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups”*. It is recommended that all courses in both study programs list a relevant description of the expected responsibilities and autonomy which can be expected to be achieved by passing the individual course.

The commission found when checking the course plans that the order and placement of text in the learning outcomes are wrong in the course “Research Methods in Psychology 1”, and that the course “Military Psychology” do not list the learning outcomes according to “knowledge”, “skills”, and “responsibilities and autonomy”. These minor errors should also be corrected to ensure a consistent outline of course plans in both study programs.

### Evidences/Indicators

- Self-evaluation document
- Interview with academic staff
- Interview with invited staff
- Program and Syllabus

### General recommendations for the cluster:

- It is recommended to add a course in Applied Behavior Analysis.

- It is recommended that individual courses that are a continuation of each other have learning outcomes that are clearly differentiable.

#### General suggestions of the cluster:

- It is suggested that the minor errors in structuring and/or placement of text in the learning outcomes (skills, knowledge, responsibilities and autonomy) are corrected.

#### Evaluation

Component 1.5 Academic Course/Subject	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
Programme 1 (Psychology, BA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme 2 (Psychology (In English), BA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### Compliance of the programmes with the standards

1. Educational Programme Objectives, Learning Outcomes and their Compliance with the Programme	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
Programme 1 (Psychology, BA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme 2 (Psychology (In English), BA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## **2. Methodology and Organisation of Teaching, Adequacy of Evaluation of Programme Mastering**

Prerequisites for admission to the programme, teaching-learning methods and student assessment consider the specificity of the study field, level requirements, student needs, and ensure the engagement achievement of the objectives and expected learning outcomes of the programme.

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### **2.1 Programme Admission Preconditions**

The HEI has relevant, transparent, fair, public and accessible programme admission preconditions and procedures that ensure the engagement of individuals with relevant knowledge and skills in the programme to achieve learning outcomes.

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#### **Summary and Analysis of the Compliance of the Educational Programmes Grouped in a Cluster with the Requirements of the Standard Component**

HEI has determined the prerequisites for the admission of students to new programmes, which is in accordance with the legislation of Georgia. The right to study on the programmes is given to a person with a complete general education, based on passing the unified national exams. Descriptive review and analysis of the prerequisites for admission to the presented programmes consider the specifics of admission to undergraduate programmes.

HEI has a student body planning methodology for the educational programme, which takes the specifics and resources of the programme into account and ensures the smooth educational process.

Admission of students to the programme occurs in compliance with the methodology of student body planning.

In the self-evaluation report of the cluster, it is mentioned that in case of accreditation, the prerequisites for enrollment will be posted on the university's website, and the information will also be disseminated through social networks and e-mail.

The self-evaluation report also indicates the list of mandatory subjects to be passed in the unified national exams, which include mathematics, history or biology according to the choice of the entrant.

The rule of enrollment of citizens of foreign countries is provided. Conditions for admission to the programme for citizens of foreign countries are available at <https://iro.ibsu.edu.ge/en/home>.

#### **Description and Analysis – Programme 1 (Psychology, BA)**

One of the mandatory subjects for the BA educational programme in Psychology at the unified national exams is: Mathematics or History or Biology. In addition, the applicant must pass the exam in one of the following foreign languages: English, German, French, Russian

#### **Description and Analysis – Programme 2 (Psychology (In English), BA)**

One of the mandatory subjects for the BA educational programme in Psychology (English) at the unified national exams is: Mathematics or History or Biology. For the English-speaking sector, an English language barrier of 50%+1 is provided.

### Evidences/Indicators

- BA educational programme in Psychology
- SER
- Results of interviews with programme heads, academic and invited staff
- university administration, self-evaluation group

### Evaluation

Component 2.1 Programme admission preconditions	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
Programme 1 (Psychology, BA)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme 2 (Psychology (In English), BA)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 2.2. The Development of Practical, Scientific/Research/Creative/Performing and Transferable Skills

Programme ensures the development of students' practical, scientific/research/creative/performing and transferable skills and/or their involvement in research projects, in accordance with the programme learning outcomes.

### Summary and Analysis of the Compliance of the Educational Programmes Grouped in a Cluster with the Requirements of the Standard Component

BA programmes in psychology include a 20- credit practice as a mandatory component, which means the student's practical work under the supervision of a mentor. A mentor is a specialist with appropriate qualifications. It is important that the practical component has a clearly defined criterion that determines the effectiveness of completing the practice. The assessment of practice is presented in the form of a corresponding report and documentation and is written in the syllabus. The pedagogical activity by the staff is monitored by several mechanisms – including student and staff surveys, students evaluate the teaching methods of staff and other components. The data from the student surveys are analyzed and results submitted by the quality assurance office to the head of program and administration who then makes decisions for changes in the program. During interviews with prospective employers, we heard that the three represented organizations in the meeting together had a large (20+) number of available practice positions for students, including scholarships and possibility for part-time employment. These forms of collaborations would support students in achieving the practice component of the program learning outcomes.

In the process of interviewing students, it was confirmed that the university provides them with information about international exchange programs and encourages their participation in

these programs. It is important that International Black Sea University invites students to participate in university projects and conferences, as well as in conferences planned by partner organizations or universities.

It is also important to have practical courses within elective courses, such as developmental disorders, psychology of mood, experimental psychology, inclusive education, psychology of interpersonal communication, stress management, etc.

The programmes contribute to the development of students' research skills within the framework of their undergraduate thesis. The mentioned course aims to form the practical habits of the student in planning, conducting research, drawing up research results and writing a report. The bachelor's thesis syllabus details the structure of the research paper, the rules and requirements for completing the paper.

### Evidences/Indicators

- Programme description and syllabi
- Mechanisms for evaluating learning outcomes of the programmes
- Guideline for the research thesis
- Memorandums/agreements with employers and objects of practice
- Results of interviews with the heads of the programmes
- Results of interviews with academic and invited staff, quality service representatives

### Evaluation

Component 2.2. The Development of practical, scientific/research/creative/performing and transferable Skills	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
Programme 1 (Psychology, BA)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme 2 (Psychology (In English), BA)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 2.3. Teaching and Learning Methods

The programme is implemented by using student-centered teaching and learning methods. Teaching and learning methods correspond to the level of education, course/subject content, learning outcomes and ensure their achievement.

### Summary and Analysis of the Compliance of the Educational Programmes Grouped in a Cluster with the Requirements of the Standard Component

The analysis of the syllabi of the BA programmes in psychology allows us to say that learning/teaching methods are diverse and mostly consider the criteria that determine the specificity of teaching at the undergraduate level. The teaching-learning methods of the theoretical academic courses correspond to the undergraduate (first) level of academic higher education, the content of the courses, learning outcomes and ensure their achievement. The methods described in the syllabi are mostly focused on the student and consider the

achievement of the results provided for in the course content. BA programmes in psychology include a variety of learning/teaching methods: Lecture, seminar/workgroup, practical learning, consultation, discussion/debate, group work, demonstration, explanation, case analysis.

Based on the study of the syllabi, the need for more clarity was identified in relation to subjects that involve two-semester studies. Learning/teaching methods are mostly similar, which may not contradict the goal to be achieved, although the difference in terms of outcomes is less clear.

In some cases, the learning/teaching methods described in the syllabuses are generally formulated and require more clarity. By general wording we mean, for example, the phrases such as "practical exercises relevant to the material" used to describe the form of the seminar activity. It is important for the learning/teaching methods to be clearly described in the syllabi.

Also, in some cases learning/teaching and assessment methods require more adaptability and diversity to consider the individual differences and needs of students. Also, the form of teaching specified in the syllabus, which includes practical and/or laboratory work, should be in accordance with the material and technical base of the university.

### Evidences/Indicators

- Programme description and syllabi
- mechanisms for evaluating learning outcomes of the programmes
- Interviews with the heads of the programmes, academic and invited staff, QA representatives
- Regulation of the educational process of IBSU Article 31\_1).

### General recommendations of the cluster:

- It is recommended that learning/teaching methods are written clearly in the syllabi and that the use of general wording is avoided.
- It is recommended that learning/teaching methods should be more adaptive to student needs and less uniform.

### Evaluation

Component 2.3. Teaching and learning methods	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
Programme 1 (Psychology, BA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme 2 (Psychology (In English), BA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 2.4. Student Evaluation

Student evaluation is conducted in accordance with the established procedures. It is transparent, reliable and complies with existing legislation.

## **Summary and Analysis of the Compliance of the Educational Programmes Grouped in a Cluster with the Requirements of the Standard Component**

Students are evaluated according to the established procedures which are transparent and comply with the legislation. Forms and methods of assessment of students in psychology undergraduate educational programmes of IBSU are known in advance to students and are transparent. Evaluation of academic courses consists of several components. The format and evaluation criteria of the midterm and final assessment components are determined according to the syllabus of each academic course/practice, considering their specifics and following the common criteria defined by the university. A detailed description and explanation of the components is given in the syllabus of the relevant course.

Interviews with students from adjacent programs indicated that the University has good practices of giving students formative feedback on their learning process. These practices should also be transferred into the new psychology program.

It is important that the student is given the opportunity to appeal the midterm and final exam evaluations within 5 (five) business days from the notification of the result. A special form (R03F99) has been developed by the HEI for the appeals procedure. Students are also able to give feedback on the pedagogical and assessment activity of the academic staff through student surveys which is analyzed by the QA office and the results submitted to head of program and administration who then make necessary changes.

Most of the syllabi consider the evaluation criteria developed by the International Black Sea University. However, it should be noted that the assessment forms in some syllabuses need to be clarified. This especially applies to the forms of seminar activity, which are often presented in a general formulation and, therefore – to the evaluation criteria.

Furthermore, the evaluation criteria in the syllabi of Cognitive Psychology 1 and Cognitive Psychology 2 deviate from the academic framework and are determined based on personal characteristics. Also, the activity and presentation of the student within the same subject are given 15 and 10 points, respectively, which in total, in terms of distribution, is quite high and creates one dimension of evaluation. Therefore, if the student does not have the skills necessary for presentation and active participation, he/she is not given the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge in another form. In the case of subjects that do not necessarily require presentation and activity skills, it is desirable that one-dimensional assessment criteria do not have such a high score. The same applies to the full assessment components of Personality Psychology 1 and Personality Psychology 2, as well as to the “basics of neuropsychology” – activity 10 points, presentation 10 points, and in the course “statistical methods in social sciences” – activity 10 points, presentation 15 points.

Based upon information gathered in the interviews with academic and invited staff it was clearly indicated that grading was done by one (and only one) lecturer. This use of only one person to grade exams creates a challenge with respect to the intersubjective norming of the grading procedure. On the other hand, all courses in the program have a multi-componential evaluation system with procedures for the grading of different assessment methods (e.g. oral presentation, written exams, participation in class) which somewhat reduces the possible subjective impact of the single lecturer who grades the exams. Irrespective of this the program



should consider using an external examiner on an occasional basis for its courses as this will help control the quality and correctness of the grading procedure.

In the description of the study programme (English Language) it states “*The acceptable norm of the similarity of the written work done by the student with another work is defined as max. If there is an error of 10% from the established norm, the work will be considered plagiarism and, accordingly, it will be evaluated with 0 points.*” (Self-evaluation, English program, section “Specificities of the Organization of the Teaching Process”).

The usage of percentage points of textual similarity is problematic because it is not the amount of text *as such* that defines whether plagiarism have occurred (if the references in the reference list is perfectly written in APA-standard the reference list may count for 10–20% textual similarity) but rather in *what way the text is similar*. In some cases, textual similarity can also occur in cases of correct quotations etc., and hence would not be seen as plagiarism. In principle each student paper needs to be assessed on an individual basis, and focusing on a given percentage of textual similarity as an absolute threshold will lead to some false positives (not cheating students who are given 0 points) and a lot of false negatives (students who borrows text without proper quotation or referencing (*sic. plagiarizes*) but who manages to come under the threshold who are awarded passing grades). The university acknowledges this and states that it evaluates each paper individually, so the evaluation is not solely based upon percentage of textual similarity. The expert committee approves of this approach but wants to point out the problems of using pre-defined percentage thresholds for accepting textual similarity.

It is understandable from an administrative point of view that one needs to have clear-cut thresholds for identification of plagiarism, but since plagiarism in itself is so multifaceted and there are so many different ways of plagiarizing - from cut-and-paste of text (the simplest variety), re-usage of data from other studies without proper referencing, to copying the philosophical or conceptual structure of a line of argument (a form of plagiarism that is very difficult to identify). Of course this needs to be adjusted to how plagiarism and theft of intellectual content is defined in Georgian Law (we will not go into that subject matter here), but the main point is that the usage of a simple observations of percentage similarity of text is not an adequate or acceptable measure for claiming that a student have plagiarized text, nor is it acceptable to use the percentages above a threshold as a singular guideline for failing students. The faculty should revise this part of the program plan to involve an understanding of the identification of plagiarism on a case-by-case basis which does not rely on perceptions of percentage points above-or-below a given threshold.

### Evidences/Indicators

- Bachelor’s Educational programmes in Psychology and syllabi
  - The regulation of the educational process of IBSU
  - interviews with academic staff
  - interviews with invited staff
  - course descriptions/curriculum
  - Self-evaluation
  - The rule of examination at IBSU
- <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UiKB7EGBafTmNZXfJqpOtxh4C2RK0S9i/view>

### General recommendations of the cluster:

- It is recommended that the evaluation weight given to presentation in the syllabi is adjusted to a more ensure an equal distribution of points relative to other assessment criteria.
- It is recommended that the courses use assessment criteria that reduce the effect of subjective opinion on grading.
- It is recommended to clearly define the criteria for evaluating the seminar activity.

### General suggestions of the cluster:

- It is suggested that the university creates a statement document that describes how students and staff at IBSU should relate to the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in teaching and scientific activities.
- It is suggested that the faculty consider using an external examiner on an occasional basis for its courses as this will help control the quality and correctness of the grading procedure.
- It is suggested that the inter-rater reliability of the grading from the external examiner and the internal examiner is calculated and reported in the annual programme report.

### Evaluation

Component 2.4 – Student evaluation	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
Programme 1 (Psychology, BA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme 2 (Psychology (In English), BA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Compliance of the programmes with the standard

2. Methodology and Organisation of Teaching, Adequacy Evaluation of Programme Mastering	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
Programme 1 (Psychology, BA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme 2 (Psychology (In English), BA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### **3. Student Achievements, Individual Work with Them**

The programme ensures the creation of a student-centered environment by providing students with relevant services; promotes maximum student awareness, implements a variety of activities and facilitates student engagement in local and / or international projects; proper quality of scientific guidance and supervision is provided for master's and doctoral students.

#### **3.1 Student Consulting and Support Services**

Students receive consultation and support regarding planning of the learning process, improvement of academic achievement, and career development from the people involved in the programme and/or structural units of the HEI. A student has an opportunity to have a diverse learning process and receive relevant information and recommendations from those involved in the programme.

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#### **Summary and Analysis of the Compliance of the Educational Programmes Grouped in a Cluster with the Requirements of the Standard Component**

The English and Georgian-language Psychology undergraduate programs at the International Black Sea University (IBSU) are dedicated to fostering a student-oriented environment aligned with the institution's overarching mission. Emphasizing quality education, professionalism, applied innovations, and internationalization, IBSU aims to equip students with the necessary skills for success in both local and international contexts.

Students enrolled in these programs will benefit from comprehensive support services designed to enhance their learning experience and facilitate their academic and professional growth. Prior to commencing their studies, students will participate in orientation meetings to familiarize themselves with the program's objectives and structure. Throughout their academic journey, they can receive ongoing guidance and assistance from program directors, faculty members, and university staff regarding academic planning, achievement improvement, and career development. However, during interviews and discussions with students the expert committee found that the students do not know how to use databases in the library system, and the students said that this has not been explained to them. The expert committee addresses this point more in chapter 4.4.

The foundation of the student support system at IBSU is the provision of diverse learning opportunities and relevant information dissemination. Students actively engage in scientific conferences, local and international projects, and other events organized by the university, fostering their participation in academic discourse and promoting interdisciplinary collaboration. The possibility of including students in faculty research projects with their lecturers helps students to deepen their knowledge through practice.

Moreover, the university prioritizes international collaboration, evident through memoranda with prestigious institutions, and participation in ERASMUS+ programs. Information dissemination about these opportunities conveyed through various channels such as email and the university's internal platform, enriches students' academic experiences, fosters global engagement, and prepares them for professional growth on an international scale.

## Evidences/Indicators

- Functions and duties of the head of the program and administrative staff
- Vision of internationalization
- Syllabi of study courses
- Self-assessment report
- Interviews conducted during the site visit

## Evaluation

Component 3.1 Student consulting and support services	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
Programme 1 (Psychology, BA)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme 2 (Psychology (In English), BA)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 3.2. Master's and Doctoral Student Supervision

A scientific supervisor provides proper support to master's and doctorate students to perform the scientific-research component successfully.

Within master's and doctoral programmes, ratio of students and supervisors enables to perform scientific supervision properly.

## Summary and Analysis of the Compliance of the Educational Programmes Grouped in a Cluster with the Requirements of the Standard Component

The substandard 3.2. is not relevant for this program

### Compliance of the programmes with the standards

3. Student Achievements, Individual Work with them	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
Programme 1 (Psychology, BA)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme 2 (Psychology (In English), BA)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 4. Providing Teaching Resources

Human, material, information and financial resources of educational programme/educational programmes grouped in a cluster ensure the sustainable, stable, efficient and effective functioning of the programme and the achievement of the defined objectives.

### 4.1 Human Resources

- Programme staff consists of qualified persons who have necessary competences to help students to achieve the programme learning outcomes.
- The number and workload of programme academic/scientific and invited staff ensures the sustainable running of the educational process and also, proper execution of their research/creative/performance activities and other assigned duties. Quantitative indicators related to academic/scientific/invited staff ensure programme sustainability.
- The Head of the Programme possesses necessary knowledge and experience required for programme elaboration, and also the appropriate competences in the field of study of the programme. He/she is personally involved in programme implementation.
- Programme students are provided with an adequate number of administrative and support staff with relevant competence.

### Summary and Analysis of the Compliance of the Educational Programmes Grouped in a Cluster with the Requirements of the Standard Component

Based on the presented documents, the self-evaluation report and interviews the clustered programmes are implemented by academic and invited staff with appropriate qualifications, staff qualification complies with the legislation and the internal regulations of the university, possessing necessary skills to implement the programmes and achieve the learning outcomes. Through reviewing the documentation that the university provided (workload of academic and invited staff at IBSU and at different universities, contracts, rules for academic staff selection, number of permanent and invited staff, etc.) and interviewing with the head of the programs (Programme 1 (Psychology, BA) and Programme 2 (Psychology (In English), BA)), the expert panel confirms that the number and workload of academic and invited staff will provide the proper development and implementation of the learning process, scientific works and other duties assigned to them. In general, the number of academic and invited staff is adequate for the number of students (25 students for each programme), the ratio between academic and invited staff ensures the sustainability of the programme.

As both programmes are new to IBSU and not accredited, the QA service provided IBSU's current students satisfaction survey from other programmes, and it should also be noted that IBSU students have a high level of satisfaction with the University.

Through reviewing the documentation, the expert panel would like to note that the qualification, experience, and competencies of academic and invited staff is confirmed by their scientific works, publishing, experience, and competencies that are described in their resumes and personal files (Programme 1"Appendix #6 of the SER; Programme 2, "Appendix #6 of the SER"). During the interview the staff demonstrated knowledge of the specifics of teaching, assessment methods and credit system, and knowledge of the student assessment system

existing at the university. The educational programmes are implemented with the support of administrative and all other structural units, which was revealed during the visit.

Based on documentation and interviewing with the head of the programmes, the expert panel would like to note that the head of the programmes (Programme 1 (Psychology, BA) and Programme 2 (Psychology (In English), BA) has the necessary knowledge, skills and experience required for programme elaboration. She is directly involved in the development of the programs (Programme 1 (Psychology, BA) and Programme 2 (Psychology (In English), BA), which was revealed during the interview. She has appropriate competencies in the field of the programs and a clear vision for the development of the programs.

The necessary knowledge and experience of staff (academic and invited lecturer) to help students achieve the programme learning outcomes is manifested by possessing professional qualifications in the field, participation at the conferences and the workshops. Each programme (Programme 1 (Psychology, BA) and Programme 2 (Psychology (In English), BA) is carried out by associate professors and invited lecturers with appropriate qualifications.

#### **Description and Analysis - Programme 1 (Psychology, BA)**

The staff of Programme 1 consists of 35 staff members, 10 of them holding PhD degrees in the sectoral direction, but only 5 of them are affiliated with university. Among 35 academic staff there is 1 professor, 9 associate professors and 4 assistant professors and 14 of them are affiliated with the University. The Number and capability of the staff (the balance between the academic and invited staff of the programme 1 - 14/21) ensure that the teaching faculty possesses the expertise and knowledge to deliver high-quality education in psychology (Among 35 academic staff there are 18 sectoral direction) ensuring the proper implementation of the learning process and achievement of program objectives.

<b>Programme 1 (Psychology, BA)<sup>8</sup></b>			
<b>Number of the staff involved in the programme (including academic, scientific, and invited staff)</b>	<b>Number of Programme Staff</b>	<b>Including the staff with sectoral expertise<sup>9</sup></b>	<b>Including the staff holding PhD degree in the sectoral direction<sup>10</sup></b>
<b>Total number of academic staff</b>	35	18	10
<b>- Professor</b>	1	0	0
<b>- Associate Professor</b>	18	10	5
<b>- Assistant-Professor</b>	5	4	0
<b>- Assistant</b>	0	0	0

<sup>8</sup> In case of necessity please add the appropriate number of tables for the educational programmes grouped in a cluster.

<sup>9</sup> Staff implementing the relevant components of the main field of study

<sup>10</sup> Staff with relevant doctoral degrees implementing the components of the main field of study

<b>Invited Staff</b>	21	9	5
<b>Scientific Staff</b>	0	0	0

Based on Labor market research, which was provided by IBSU has also revealed that the development of the English-language bachelor's program in psychology is clearly and clearly positively assessed by employers in the field and that studying the English-language Bachelor's program in psychology will significantly increase the student's ability to gain employment and future career advancement. The aim of the study was to substantiate the need to develop a bachelor's program in English-Language Psychology at the International Black Sea University and to indeterminate the circumstances to ensure the effectiveness of this program.

### **Description and Analysis - Programme 2 (Psychology (In English), BA)**

Programme 2 is carried out by academic and invited staff with appropriate qualifications, which is aligned with the qualification requirements, functions, and applicable legislation. Based on provided documentation and interviews academic and invited staff have the necessary knowledge and experience to help students achieve the programme learning outcomes, which is manifested by possessing professional qualifications in the field.

The head of Programme 2 is a prominent specialist in the field and possesses the necessary knowledge and experience required for program designing and elaboration according to the BA level of the program. She has relevant education in the field and practical experience. Although she does not teach at Programme 2, she is personally involved in program assessment and development, which was revealed during the interview.

The staff of Programme 2 consists of 34 staff members, 9 of them holding PhD degrees in the sectoral direction, but only 4 of them are affiliated with the university. Among 34 academic staff there are 9 associate professors and 4 assistant professors and 12 of them are affiliated with the University. The Number and capability of the staff (the balance between the academic and invited staff of the programme 2 - 12/22) ensure that the teaching faculty possesses the expertise and knowledge to deliver high-quality education in psychology in English Language (Among 34 academic staff there are 17 sectoral direction) ensuring the proper development and implementation of the learning process and achievement of program objectives.

<b>Programme 2 (Psychology (In English), BA)<sup>11</sup></b>			
<b>Number of the staff involved in the programme (including academic, scientific, and invited staff)</b>	<b>Number of Programme Staff</b>	<b>Including the staff with sectoral expertise<sup>12</sup></b>	<b>Including the staff holding PhD degree in the sectoral direction<sup>13</sup></b>

<sup>11</sup> In case of necessity please add the appropriate number of tables for the educational programmes grouped in a cluster.

<sup>12</sup> Staff implementing the relevant components of the main field of study

<sup>13</sup> Staff with relevant doctoral degrees implementing the components of the main field of study



<b>Total number of academic staff</b>	34	17	9
<b>- Professor</b>	0	0	0
<b>- Associate Professor</b>	18	9	4
<b>- Assistant-Professor</b>	5	4	0
<b>- Assistant</b>	0	0	0
<b>Invited Staff</b>	22	9	5
<b>Scientific Staff</b>	0	0	0

### Evidences/Indicators

- Self-evaluation report
- Personal data of the academic staff
- Quality Documents
- Interview results during the site-visit
- list of staff (Programme 1 (Psychology, BA) and Programme 2 (Psychology (In English), BA)
- List of Staff Workload (Programme 1 (Psychology, BA) and Programme 2 (Psychology (In English), BA)

### Evaluation

Component 4.1 Human resources	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
Programme 1 (Psychology, BA)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme 2 (Psychology (In English), BA)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 4.2 Qualification of Supervisors of Master's and Doctoral Students

Master's and Doctoral students have qualified supervisor/supervisors and, if necessary, co-supervisor/co-supervisors who have relevant scientific-research experience in the field of research.

The substandard 4.2. is not relevant for these programs.

### 4.3 Professional Development of Academic, Scientific and Invited Staff

- The HEI conducts the evaluation of programme staff and analyses evaluation results on a regular basis.
- The HEI fosters professional development of the academic, scientific and invited staff.



Moreover, it fosters their scientific and research work.

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### **Summary and Analysis of the Compliance of the Educational Programmes Grouped in a Cluster with the Requirements of the Standard Component**

According to the presented documentation IBSU on a regular basis evaluates staff and analysis data. Based on the interview and submitted documents, IBSU cares about the professional development of academic, scientific and invited personnel.

According to the presented budget of both programmes, the university provides financial support to the research activities of academic staff, as well as of invited staff. IBSU has a predetermined budget for financing scientific and creative projects (Appendix #10 of the SER).

The University periodically collects feedback from the staff through pre-designed questionnaires about satisfaction, in which the staff can express their views on different issues as: hourly workload, existing opportunities for professional development, salary policy, advanced form, rector, vice-rector, and quality management office rational and business relations with professors and teacher. There are presented 9 survey which were conducted in 2022-2023 years (Appendix #14 of the SER: Analysis of student survey results; Analysis of academic and visiting staff survey results; Analysis of student survey results; Analysis of newly recruited staff survey results; Effectiveness of Languages Teaching; Analysis of bachelor's, master's and doctoral programs students' survey registered for the bachelor's thesis and research component (master's thesis, dissertation); University academic and invited staff satisfaction survey). As already mentioned, the program is new, but the IBSU is gradually studying the work performance of academic and invited staff in current programmes, which is presented in Appendix #14. Based on interviews and presented documentations after evaluation results of survey the vice-rector in the direction of quality development periodically conducts trainings which provides professional improvement of academic, scientific and invited staff (Appendix # 14 of the SER-educational process evaluation). During the interviews academic staff as well as invited staff confirmed that university's Quality assurance service considers evaluation results when promoting and using the staff supporting mechanisms.

Based on the information provided, it can be said that to develop academic, scientific and invited personnel, the University constantly conducts staff training (Appendix #11 of the SER).

Through reviewing the documentation, the expert panel would like to note that IBSU's internationalization strategy is the inclusion of academic staff and students in exchange programs, scientific and educational cooperation, long-term visits by research and administrative staff for training, studies or participation in joint research projects (Appendix #12 of the SER: International policy of the IBSU (2018-2025), Memorandums with International Universities). The documentation presents scientific articles published by academic staff of the programs existing at the University, which are affiliated with the University (Appendix #6 of the SER).

#### **Evidences/Indicators**

- Educational Process Evaluation (Appendix 14)
- List of training (2019-2023)
- Budget (Appendix 10)

- Personnel Qualifications (Appendix #6)

## Evaluation

Component 4.3 Professional development of academic, scientific and invited staff	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
Programme 1 (Psychology, BA)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme 2 (Psychology (In English), BA)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 4.4. Material Resources

Programme is provided with necessary infrastructure, information resources relevant to the field of study and technical equipment required for achieving programme learning outcomes.

### Summary and Analysis of the Compliance of the Educational Programmes Grouped in a Cluster with the Requirements of the Standard Component

During the site visit the expert team visited the facilities at the university, where the programs in the given cluster should be delivered. The classrooms are equipped with projectors/smartboards, there is a conference hall and several PC Labs. As it turned out the university renewed/updated all the computers currently and installed all the required software, such as SPSS, Nvivo, R and a few more.

The library is open six days a week, with individual and group working spaces. The expert team visited the library and double-checked whether the literature indicated in the syllabi as mandatory reading materials were accessible. As it turned out the majority (almost all the textbooks) of them are in e-format and no printed resources are accessible in the library.

The expert panel had a few questions regarding the academic databases that are currently accessible for students in the field of psychology. As it turned out, the university has access to several databases, such as Elsevier's Scopus and ScienceDirect, Sage Publishing, Cambridge Journals, HeinOnline and EBSCO. The information is given on the university webpage together with the short instruction. As the library staff confirmed the access is available from both campus and remotely, using VPN for those reasons. In order to make sure students were familiar with this information, the expert team double checked this with the students. During the interviews students openly discussed the challenge they have. According to them, even if there is access to some databases, they do not know how to use the resources, and no one has explained these issues to them. The expert team recommends that the institution enhance the training sessions with the students to provide detailed information on how to use the academic databases the library is currently subscribed to.

### Description and Analysis - Programme 1 – Psychology, BA

The expert team double checked mandatory literature that is indicated in the courses. As it turned out most of the reading materials are searchable in the library catalog. The university representatives explained that there is a study information system within which the resources are being uploaded in e-format and all they are accessible in readable mode, that said, students cannot download the files. The expert team recommends that all the mandatory literature is searchable in the library catalog, so that students are informed regarding the resources. In addition to this, it is recommended that the university purchase some textbooks for the given study program. Even if the literature is currently available in readable mode only, it will be beneficial for both students and professors to have those titles as printed versions with a minimum of one copy. The expert panel noted that most of the syllabus indicated the reader as a mandatory resource, while some of the textbooks were given under the supplementary literature. In some courses the mandatory literature was given only in English language, that is not fair for the students of Programme 1 (Georgian) (for example: Environmental Psychology; Introduction to Psychotherapy; Work and Organizational Psychology), therefore it is recommended that the mandatory literature in Georgian study program is given into Georgian language.

The expert panel tried to find out when was the last time the university purchased some literature for the given program or what was the rule of acquisition for information resources. As was explained by the university, in this case there was no need to buy any title as all the given textbooks are accessible as scanned copies. Although the program budget indicates some funding that is planned to be spent on purchasing the books, the expert team is unable to assess future/planned activities, therefore the assessment is elaborated on the evidence collected during the site visit.

#### **Description and Analysis - Programme 2 – Psychology (in English), BA.**

The mandatory textbooks indicated in the course syllabi are not searchable in the library catalog. As it was found, the scan copies are given to students within the study information system, the expert panel asked if the university had the copyright on above mentioned textbooks, according to their explanation the scan copies are only in read mode, students cannot download the files, moreover the access is guaranteed only with university email addresses. During the site visit, an expert team asked for several textbooks to make sure they were accessible as printed copies. It was found out that none of the textbooks, indicated in the mandatory course syllabi as obligatory literature, was available in the library in a printed form. In addition to this, the institution declared that there was no need for the given study program to purchase the textbooks as the scan copies were accessible. The expert panel believes that even if the textbooks are available as scan copies, having them accessible only in readable mode does not fully guarantee all students will have equal access. The expert team recommends that the university purchase at least one printed copy of each textbook for this study program and make them available through the university library, so that students can borrow the textbooks.

While reading the syllabi of the given study program it was noted that in the majority (almost all) of the cases the additional literature was Georgian titles only. While the program aims to have international students it is unclear what is the reason to have supplementary literature into Georgian only, knowing that the foreign students are unable to read into Georgian. If the institution expects to have both Georgian and foreign students in the study program, giving the

additional sources only into Georgian will create unequal circumstances. The expert team recommends the supplementary literature are updated considering the language skills of the target group for the study program.

### Evidences/Indicators

- Self-Evaluation Report
- Interviews during the site visit
- University webpage
- Study programs and course syllabi

### General recommendations of the cluster:

- It is recommended the institution enhance the training sessions with the students to provide detailed information on how to use the academic databases the library currently subscribes to.
- It is recommended the university purchase at least one printed copy of each textbook for this study program and make them available through the university library, so that students can borrow the textbooks.
- It is recommended that all the mandatory literature is searchable in the library catalog, so that students are informed regarding the informational resources.

### Recommendations for Program 1 – Psychology BA (Georgian)

- It is recommended that the mandatory literature in Georgian study program is given into Georgian language, while textbooks into English can be in supplementary list

### Recommendations for Program 2 – Psychology BA (English)

- It is recommended the supplementary literature are updated considering the language skills of the target group for the study program.

### Evaluation

Component 4.4 Material resources	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
Programme 1 (Psychology, BA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme 2 (Psychology (In English), BA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### 4.5. Programme/Faculty/School Budget and Programme Financial Sustainability

The allocation of financial resources stipulated in programme/faculty/school budget is economically feasible and corresponds to the programme needs.

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##### Cluster and individual evaluation

##### Summary and Analysis of the Compliance of the Educational Programmes Grouped in a Cluster with the Requirements of the Standard Component

Based on the cluster's self-assessment report, the budget of both programs (Programme 1 (Psychology, BA) and Programme 2 (Psychology (In English), BA) considers acceptable income from students (399,000.00 GEL) (Appendix #10). The financial calculations of both programs rely on all the costs necessary for the full functioning of the program.

It should also be noted that in the case of a minimum number of students, the reserve fund of the university will fully cover the costs of the program. This statement is provided in the documentation presented by the university and confirmed by the order of the rector, which was also revealed by the head of the programmes during the interview.

##### Description and Analysis - Programme 1, (Psychology, BA)

Financial resources provided by the budget allocation to the program is economically achievable and ensures program sustainability.

Total cost of teaching, which includes the cost of the research directions and the cost of literature in Programme 1, is 162,084.80 GEL.

##### Description and Analysis - Programme 2 – (Psychology (In English), BA)

The budget provides financial support for the program sources, both periodic times, which ensures the sustainability of the program.

The total cost of teaching, which includes cost of the research directions and the cost of literature in Programme 2, is 185,085.34 GEL.

##### Evidences/Indicators

- Self-evaluation(Appendix #1)
- Budget (Appendix #10)

##### Evaluation

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Component 4.5 Programme/faculty/school budget and programme financial sustainability	<b>Complies with requirements</b>	<b>Substantially complies with requirements</b>	<b>Partially complies with requirements</b>	<b>Does not comply with requirements</b>
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Programme 1 (Psychology, BA)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme 2 (Psychology (In English), BA)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### Compliance of the programmes with the standards

4. Providing Teaching Resources	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
Programme 1 (Psychology, BA)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme 2 (Psychology (In English), BA)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 5. Teaching Quality Enhancement Opportunities

In order to enhance teaching quality, programme utilizes internal and external quality assurance services and also periodically conducts programme monitoring and programme review. Relevant data is collected, analysed and utilized for informed decision making and programme development.

### 5.1. Internal Quality Evaluation

Programme staff collaborates with internal quality assurance department(s)/staff available at the HEI when planning the process of programme quality assurance, developing assessment instruments, and implementing assessment process. Programme staff utilizes quality assurance results for programme improvement.

#### **Summary and Analysis of the Compliance of the Educational Programmes Grouped in a Cluster with the Requirements of the Standard Component**

According to the submitted documents, the standard approaches of internal quality assurance are used in the case of the educational programs given in this cluster. In particular, the mentioned process works like - "Plan, Do, Check, Act" cycle. This process includes both staff evaluations and analysis of student survey forms. Based on the obtained results, the quality assurance office submits recommendations to the heads of the programs and the governing body of the university, based on which interventions are planned if necessary.

The Programs Self-Evaluation teams include both academic and administrative staff at the faculty level and from different structural units providing university services. The expert panel had the opportunity to meet the staff involved in the self-evaluation process, where it was clear that they actively participated in the process of program implementation and development, and that their roles were distributed according to their competencies. However, it should be noted that the activity of the administrative staff in this process is more noticeable than that of the academic staff. After the interviews, the expert panel got the impression that the academic staff is more focused on the preparation of the syllabi of the courses and less on the achievement of program-wide goals and outcomes. It is suggested to promote the active participation of the academic staff in the self-evaluation process, to achieve the program goals and the quality assurance mechanisms to work effectively.

The expert team tried to find out the reason for the tendency for the assessment methods in several courses to be identical. Based on the interviews with academic and invited staff they regularly attend meetings and review course syllabus but could not recall a meeting/training that directly addressed assessment tools and topics related to it. The expert panel addressed the same question to the representatives of the quality assurance team of the university, as per their explanation they do not violate the principle of academic freedom and do not restrict the staff to use the assessment tools they consider appropriate and necessary.

The quality assurance office confirmed to be actively involved in preparation of the study programs in the given cluster, having meetings with heads of programs and academic staff, explaining details regarding the learning outcomes both on course and program level,

contributed to designing the course syllabus by providing general recommendations before they were submitted for the accreditation.

### Evidences/Indicators

- Self-evaluation report
- The mechanisms of Internal Quality Assurance
- The methodology of Planning and Implementing the Education Program
- The mechanism for evaluation the learning outcomes
- The survey forms created by the quality assurance team
- The outcomes of the interviews
- University webpage

### General Suggestions for the cluster:

- It is suggested to promote the active participation of the academic staff in the self-evaluation process, to achieve the program goals and the quality assurance mechanisms to work effectively.

### Evaluation

Component 5.1 Internal Quality Evaluation	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
Programme 1 (Psychology, BA)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme 2 (Psychology (In English), BA)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 5.2. External Quality Evaluation

Programme utilizes the results of external quality assurance on a regular basis.

### Summary and Analysis of the Compliance of the Educational Programmes Grouped in a Cluster with the Requirements of the Standard Component

According to the submitted documentation the university is working in two major dimensions when it comes to external quality evaluation of the programs given in the cluster. The first dimension is working on the recommendation the programs are given during the accreditation and/or university authorization process and second dimension is the external reviewers included in the assessment process. As these programs are submitted for the first time and are not functioning yet, the external quality assurance mechanisms were not used for the program development so far.

The given programs were sent for external evaluation to Georgian National University and Georgian International University, to pre-selected academic staff. The self-evaluation report describes that the reviewers had some recommendations that were considered by the heads of the programs. The expert team read the reports submitted by the external reviewers, both were



only half a page in length, saying that overall, the programs were assessed positively. None of the reports listed any suggestion or any recommendation. On the one hand the self-evaluation report of the programs said that some recommendations were considered, on another hand the reports written by the external reviewers do not point out any suggestion or recommendation. The expert team addressed both the heads of the programs and the quality assurance office to recall any recommendation that came from the external reviewers and perhaps to explain why the assessment was only half a page length. The heads of the programs could not recall any specific recommendation, saying that overall, the feedback was positive, while quality assurance representatives pointed out that it is up to the reviewer how they will structure the reviews and, in this case, they cannot do anything with the fact that both reviews were half-pages long.

The expert team noted that there was no benefit from those two reviews, even if the self-evaluation report describes so, the report itself does not indicate any. Therefore, the expert team recommends when sending the study program for external review, ask the reviewer to feel the predefined form or give detailed feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the program.

### Evidences/Indicators

- The Self-evaluation reports
- The mechanisms of external Quality Assurance
- The reports submitted by the external collegial reviewers
- Interview outcomes
- University webpage

### General recommendations of the cluster:

- It is recommended to define evaluation criteria for external collegial review, as the currently given feedback does not highlight either strengths or the weaknesses of the program, thus looks more formal rather than meaningful activity.

### Evaluation

Component 5.2 External Quality Evaluation	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
Programme 1 (Psychology, BA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme 2 (Psychology (In English), BA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 5.3. Programme Monitoring and Periodic Review

Programme monitoring and periodic evaluation is conducted with the involvement of academic, scientific, invited, administrative, supporting staff, students, graduates, employers and other stakeholders through systematic data collection, study and analysis. Evaluation results are applied for the programme improvement.

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#### **Summary and Analysis of the Compliance of the Educational Programmes Grouped in a Cluster with the Requirements of the Standard Component**

According to the submitted documentation, the monitoring and periodic evaluation of the programs given in the cluster are carried out in accordance with the rules and procedures at the university. Namely, academic and administrative staff, as well as students, graduates and employers are involved in this process. Based on meetings with them, the needs are identified, which are discussed in the program self-evaluation group, then at the faculty council, and if changes are needed, they are submitted to the academic council for approval.

The expert team was interested in how all interested parties are involved in the above-mentioned process. As a result of the interviews, it was identified that students and graduates mostly fill out questionnaires. The content of the questionnaire covers specific study courses, as well as university services. While the employers are having more informal communication with the program heads.

The university has implemented the principle of collegial evaluation (peer-assessment), in particular, the quality assurance office of the faculty and the Head of the Program at the beginning of each semester establish a list of academic staff whose lectures should be attended. If the academic staff member is invited for the first time to conduct classes they are being monitored as a mandatory, the feedback is being communicated with them right after the classes are delivered.

As it was noted during the meeting with the self-evaluation team, the given programs are compared to some local and international analogs. Although the self-evaluation report does not describe any specific information, the additional document describes that six programs were selected within the country while four were from foreign countries. The detailed analysis shows that this comparison was used to come up with the aims and objectives of the programs, as well as the content.

#### **Evidences/Indicators**

- Self-evaluation report
- The mechanisms of Internal Quality Assurance
- The methodology of Planning and Implementing the Education Program
- The mechanism for evaluation the learning outcomes
- The survey forms created by the quality assurance team
- The outcomes of the interviews
- University webpage

## Evaluation

Component 5.3. Programme Monitoring and Periodic Review	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
Programme 1 (Psychology, BA)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme 2 (Psychology (In English), BA)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Compliance of the programmes with the standards

5. Teaching Quality Enhancement Opportunities	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
Programme 1 (Psychology, BA)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme 2 (Psychology (In English), BA)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Attached documentation (if applicable):

Name of the higher education institution:

LLC. International Black Sea University

Name of Higher Educational Programmes, Levels:

Program 1: Psychology, BA

Program 2: Psychology (In English), BA

**Compliance of the programmes with the standards**

Contents Standard	1. Educational Programme Objectives, Learning Outcomes and their Compliance with the Programme	2. Methodology and Organisation of Teaching, Adequacy Evaluation of Programme Mastering	3. Student Achievements, Individual Work with them	4. Providing Teaching Resources	5. Teaching Quality Enhancement Opportunities
Programme 1 (Psychology, BA)	Substantially complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Complies with requirements	Complies with requirements	Complies with requirements
Programme 2 (Psychology (In English), BA)	Substantially complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Complies with requirements	Complies with requirements	Complies with requirements

Signatures

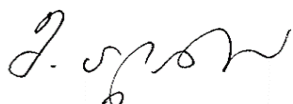
Chair of Accreditation Experts Panel

Kjell Ivar Øvergård,



Of the member(s) of the Accreditation Experts Panel

Mariam Alania,



Giga Khositashvili



Tamar Sekhniashvili,



Lika Kvinchia,

