



NATIONAL CENTER FOR
EDUCATIONAL QUALITY
ENHANCEMENT

Accreditation Expert Group Report on Higher Education Programme

"Small Business Management"
Master's educational program

LEPL - Shota Meskhia State University of Zugdidi

Evaluation date: 19.09.2024

Draft report submission date: 18.11.2024

Tbilisi

Information about a Higher Education Institution ¹

Name of Institution Indicating its Organizational Legal Form	Shota Meskhia State University of Zugdidi Legal entity under public law
Identification Code of Institution	220407888
Type of the Institution	University

Expert Panel Members

Chair (Name, Surname, HEI/Organisation, Country)	Prof. dr. Daiva Jurevičienė, Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, Lithuania
Member (Name, Surname, HEI/Organisation, Country)	Dr. Elene Jgarkava, Caucasus University, LLC, Georgia
Member (Name, Surname, HEI/Organisation, Country)	Prof. dr. Davit Sikharulidze, East European University, LLC, Georgia
Member (Name, Surname, HEI/Organisation, Country)	Prof. dr. Tamta Tskhovrebadze, International Black Sea University, LLC, Georgia
Member (Name, Surname, HEI/Organisation, Country)	Anzhela Abuladze, LEPL - Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

¹ In the case of joint education programme: Please indicate the HEIs that carry out the programme. The indication of an identification code and type of institution is not obligatory if a HEI is recognised in accordance with the legislation of a foreign country.

I. Information on the education programme

Name of Higher Education Programme (in Georgian)	მცირე ბიზნესის მართვა
Name of Higher Education Programme (in English)	Small Business Management
Level of Higher Education	Level 7
Qualification to be Awarded ²	Master of Small Business Administration 0413.2.4
Name and Code of the Detailed Field	0413 Management and Administration
Indication of the right to provide the teaching of subject/subjects/group of subjects of the relevant cycle of the general education ³	
Language of Instruction	Georgian
Number of ECTS credits	120
Programme Status (Accredited/ Non-accredited/ Conditionally accredited/new/International accreditation) Indicating Relevant Decision (number, date)	Accredited, 03.12.2019 №213
Additional requirements for the programme admission (in the case of an art-creative and/or sports educational programme, passing a creative tour/internal competition, or in the case of another programme, specific requirements for admission to the programme/implementation of the programme)	

² In case of implementing a joint higher education programme with a higher education institution recognized in accordance with the legislation of a foreign country, if the title of the qualification to be awarded differs, it shall be indicated separately for each institution.

³ 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 Education Programme⁴

The Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi plays an essential social role in the region, and the master's program in Small Business Management is unique in the Megrelian region and the entire Sakartvelo. The program got conditional accreditation in 2018 and full accreditation in 2020. Due to the changes in legislation, the program should be accredited again.

The program was created to encourage the establishment of small businesses in the region; however, according to the information provided by university members, only two graduates have their companies or are involved in family businesses. Other graduates work in banks and other institutions.

The program is designed in line with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) principles and is entirely student-centred. It is based on the academic workload required to meet the program's goals. The master's program consists of 120 ECTS and lasts two years of full-time study. Under the standard distribution, students complete 60 credits per year (30 credits per semester). However, the university allows students to plan their studies according to their needs so that the annual load may range from less and more than 60 ECTS to a maximum of 75 per semester.

The program comprises 68 credits of mandatory courses, 12 credits of optional subjects, 10 credits dedicated to Industrial practice and the research component of the master's is 30 credits. The program, in general, covers all key business areas following the qualifications to be awarded:

1. Marketing: Small Business Marketing, Small Business Advertising, Integrated Marketing Communications and Small Business;
2. Management: Human Resource Management and Organisational Behaviour, Innovative Management, Effective Business Communications (in English from 2024 accession), International Management, Operations Management;
3. Finance: Management Accounting.

University offers 10 optional subjects, which students can choose in any 1-3 semester according to their interests. Still, the subject is delivered according to the number of students who chose a particular one.

In summary, the program is organised logically, and the content is appropriate; however, some subjects need more relevant literature, especially international ones. The master's students have some lectures with SPSS. It is commendable that the university tries to involve students in project activities, and one student was involved in a small project with European financing and enjoyed participating.

⁴ When providing general information related to the programme, it is appropriate to also present the quantitative data analysis of the educational programme.

Interviews with stakeholders indicate that they were involved, to varying extents, in the program's development process. During the meeting with employers (4), we found that none of them had this master's program graduate, as the majority employers were representatives of municipalities or similar institutions.

▪ **Overview of the Accreditation Site Visit**

The visit was organised appropriately. During the meeting with the university's administration, the rector described its role in the region and their main achievements and presented plans for the future. During the meetings with all stakeholders, we found out that, in general, all are happy to have this master's study program, although we learned some insights about the program. Master program graduates were very active and were proud of the master's degree and the knowledge they obtained.

We were particularly impressed by how the university's premises have changed over the past years, including the classes, equipment (computer classes), systems, library and others.

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

The master's program in Small Business Management is created following current Georgian legislation and complies with the university's legal documents.

Recommendations

1.3 Evaluation Mechanism of the Programme Learning Outcomes

- It is recommended that the mechanism for evaluating the program's learning outcomes be improved and that indirect assessment-specific instruments be clearly defined

1.4 Structure and Content of Educational Programme

- Incorporating an Enterprise Finance course into the program's core curriculum is recommended. It is recommended that Integrated Marketing Communications and Small Business be established as a prerequisite for the Marketing in Small Business course. This alignment would ensure a more structured and logical progression of marketing-related content within the program.

1.5 Academic Course/Subject

- The course Business Research Methods is recommended to be substantially redesigned, as this is one of the most important subjects for master thesis preparation.
 - It is recommended that the university provide access to statistical databases, which are crucial for a master's thesis preparation, and more attention should be paid to the software involved in the study process, not only SPSS.

- It is recommended to periodically revise and update the study materials to ensure that students receive the most current and relevant knowledge.

2.4. Student Evaluation

- Masters theses supervisors should ensure that students properly cite literature sources and follow the rules of academic style in their master's thesis.

3.2. Master's and Doctoral Student Supervision

- The requirements for the master thesis should be updated. All master theses should follow basic requirements – theoretical, methodological, and practical (which relates to an investigation made by the author) parts.
- It is recommended that HEI develop additional mechanisms for comprehensive evaluation of the quality of the activities of the MA thesis' supervisor to ensure the supervision process's effective implementation and development.

4.3 Professional Development of Academic, Scientific and Invited Staff

- It is recommended that academic staff and supervisors prioritise and consider publishing their research results in international peer-reviewed journals, including scientific data based on CA or Scopus with impact factor.

Suggestions for Programme Development

2.1 Programme Admission Preconditions

- It is suggested that samples of the specialisation exam test be published on the HEI's webpage.

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

- Enhancing the involvement of employers in practical components is suggested.
- It is suggested that more students be involved in project activities.

2.3. Teaching and Learning Methods

- It is suggested that further discussion and observation of the learning and evaluation methods of the course “Industrial Practice” be conducted.

2.4. Student Evaluation

- It is suggested that lecturers increase the frequency of giving feedback to students on learning outcomes, as well as on improving the results of their own strengths and areas for improvement.

3.1 Student Consulting and Support Services

- It is suggested that students' engagement in local and international projects and exchange programs be increased.
- It is suggested that various seminars and workshops for students be facilitated and organised with the involvement of employers.

4.2 Qualification of Supervisors of Master's and Doctoral Students

- It is suggested to determine the maximum number of master students one supervisor can supervise.

4.4. Material Resources

- It is suggested to update the library resources with new editions regularly to ensure the program with relevant information resources.

5.1 Internal Quality Evaluation

- It is proposed that further student and graduate involvement in program and faculty development processes be encouraged.

▪ Brief Overview of the Best Practices (if applicable)⁵

● Information on Sharing or Not Sharing the Argumentative Position of the HEI

Recommendation - It is recommended to determine the maximum number of master's students that one supervisor is permitted to supervise - moved to **Suggestion, Standard 4. Providing Teaching Resources**. The standard has become as it complies with the requirements of the standard.

▪ In case of re-accreditation, it is important to provide a brief overview of the achievements and/or the progress (if applicable)

⁵ A practice that is exceptionally effective and that can serve as a benchmark or example for other educational programme/programmes.

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 HEI. 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.

1.1 Programme Objectives

Programme objectives consider the specificity of the field of study, level and 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 Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

The Master's program in Small Business Management aims to train highly qualified specialists who can successfully operate in the small business sector. The primary objectives of the program are:

- To provide students with a deep and systematic understanding of small business management, enabling them to earn a master's degree in this field.
- To equip students with competencies that meet both Georgian and international educational and labour market standards, ensuring their competitiveness.
- To foster students' adaptability in a rapidly changing, multidisciplinary environment, encouraging the development of new ideas and the exploration of original solutions to problems.
- To cultivate students' ability to conduct independent research, enabling them to critically evaluate and analyse values within the field of small business.
- To promote the development and reinforcement of values related to the small business sector among students.

By achieving these goals, the program will produce highly qualified specialists who will significantly contribute to the development of small businesses both locally and internationally.

The program's goals are clearly and comprehensively articulated, specifying the desired outcomes. Each objective is well-defined, focusing on specific results aligned with the expectations of a graduate-level program. These objectives reflect current requirements and trends in the field, balancing theoretical knowledge with practical skills, which are appropriate for a master's degree program.

The program is designed with attention to key criteria, including duration, structure, available resources, curriculum, and faculty. It aligns with labor market demands within the professional

fields of its graduates, while also providing a strong foundation for continued academic advancement at higher educational levels.

The program is shared by the persons involved in the program to varying degrees. The university's mission is to foster a knowledge and employment environment that satisfies the needs of students, staff, and other stakeholders while considering the evolving demands of the labour market. The university contributes to the stable, sustainable development of the region by offering educational programs that integrate learning and research, promote the application and internationalisation of research outcomes, and share innovations, all aimed at positively impacting society, business, and the state. This mission aligns with the purpose of the program. Mission analysis reveals that the educational program is consistent with the university's mission.

Evidences/Indicators

- Educational programme;
- Analysis of the demands of labour
- Market and employers;
- Website <https://zssu.ge/en>
- Interview results.

Recommendations:

Suggestions for the Programme Development

Evaluation

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
1.1 Programme Objectives	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<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 specifics of the study field.

➤ Programme learning outcomes describe knowledge, skills, and/or the responsibility and autonomy that students gain upon completion of the programme.

Summary and Analysis of the Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

The Master's program in Small Business Management has developed 10 learning outcomes. These outcomes align with the program's objectives and encompass core knowledge, skills, and aspects

of responsibility and autonomy. The learning outcomes are formulated in a manner that allows for objective assessment and measurement using specific methods. They are designed to be achievable within the program's framework, given the available resources and time.

The learning outcomes defined by the educational program align with the corresponding level of the qualifications framework, the specific characteristics of the particular field of study, and the academic degree awarded to graduates. This ensures that program graduates possess the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary for their professional and academic development in the relevant field.

The program's learning outcomes reflect:

1. The depth and complexity appropriate to the level of academic education.
2. The specific knowledge and skills characteristic of the field of study.
3. The requirements of the qualification to be awarded upon successful completion of the program.

The learning outcomes are consistent with the program's goals, students' abilities, and current industry demands. This ensures that the outcomes are both practical and effective, aligning with contemporary educational standards.

From the interviews, it was revealed that the learning outcomes were developed through collaboration with relevant stakeholders, who were kept informed throughout the process.

Evidences/Indicators

- Master's Program in Small Business Management
- Syllabus
- Map of Program Goals and Learning Outcomes
- Analysis of Labour Market and Employer Requirements
- Interview Results

Recommendations:

Suggestions for Programme Development

Evaluation

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
1.2 Programme Learning Outcomes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<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 evaluation cycle consists of defining, collecting and analysing data necessary to measure learning outcomes;
 - Programme learning outcomes assessment results are utilized for the improvement of the programme.
-

Summary and Analysis of the Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

The Master's program in Small Business Management outlines 10 learning outcomes. The higher education institution (HEI) has developed a comprehensive mechanism to evaluate these outcomes, consisting of three main components: the evaluation map, the relationship between objectives and outcomes, and the target indicators.

The institution has set a benchmark for each learning outcome, aiming for 65% of students to score above 50 points. However, this benchmark may not be sufficiently high to ensure the desired level of program quality.

The assessment mechanism includes both direct and indirect methods. However, the specific instruments used for indirect assessment are not clearly defined.

Additionally, for some learning outcomes, the logical progression of knowledge acquisition, deepening, and reinforcement is disrupted. For instance, according to the learning outcomes map, the first learning outcome ("Describes in depth the fundamental challenges of small business management, application of business models, human resource management, and modern leadership in the context of organisational behaviour, business processes, and their functions") is initially addressed in the course "Modern Business Models," which serves as an introductory course. Subsequent courses include "Small Business Management" for deepening, and "Human Resource Management and Organisational Behaviour" and "Marketing in Small Business" for familiarisation, among others.

However, it is important to note that "Human Resource Management and Organisational Behaviour" is taught in the second semester as an introductory course, while "Small Business Management" is taught in the first semester and serves as a deepening course. This suggests an illogical sequence, where deepening occurs before familiarisation. Similar inconsistencies are observed with other learning outcomes.

Interviews with stakeholders revealed that they were involved to varying degrees in the development of the learning outcomes and are generally aware of them.

Program staff receive support to enhance their skills in the design, measurement, and analysis of learning outcomes. This support includes regular training sessions and workshops, where staff are introduced to contemporary methods for formulating and assessing learning outcomes. The institution also provides advisory mechanisms, where experienced quality assurance specialists offer individual guidance, and makes program learning outcomes assessment analyses available to interested parties. These assessment analyses are used to inform and improve the program.

Evidences/Indicators

- Mechanism for Evaluating Program Learning Outcomes
- Program Learning Outcomes Map
- Target Benchmarks

Recommendations:

- It is recommended that the mechanism for evaluating the program's learning outcomes be improved and that indirect assessment-specific instruments be clearly defined.

Suggestions for the Programme Development

Evaluation

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
1.3 Evaluation Mechanism of the Programme Learning Outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.4. Structure and Content of Education Programme

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

Summary and Analysis of the Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

The HEI follows a higher education program planning and development methodology approved by the Academic Council of Shota Meskhia Zugdidi State Teaching University. The program is delivered in Georgian, and successful graduates are awarded the Master of Small Business Management degree (code 0413.2.4).

The program is designed in line with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) principles and is entirely student-centred. It is based on the academic workload required to meet the program's goals.

The Master's program consists of 120 ECTS credits. Under the standard distribution, students complete 60 credits per year (30 credits per semester), making the program duration typically two years or four semesters. However, the university considers students' individual needs and

capabilities. Therefore, the annual load may range from fewer to more than 60 credits, up to a maximum of 75 credits. This flexibility allows students to effectively plan their studies according to their personal and professional obligations.

Mandatory Components of the Educational Program: Modern Business Models, Business Research Methods, Small Business Management, Modern Corporate Law, Human Resource Management and Organisational Behaviour, Marketing in Small Business, Management Accounting, Innovative Management, Effective Business Communications (in English), Advertising in Small Business, Integrated Marketing Communications and Small Business, International Management, Operations Management, Industrial Practice, Master's Thesis.

The program covers all key business areas in accordance with the qualifications to be awarded:

1. Marketing: Small Business Marketing, Small Business Advertising, Integrated Marketing Communications and Small Business
2. Management: Human Resource Management and Organisational Behaviour, Innovative Management, Effective Business Communications (in English), International Management, Operations Management
3. Finance: Management Accounting

However, we believe the program will be strengthened by introducing a course in Enterprise Finance that focuses specifically on small business finance. Additionally, while the "Human Resource Management and Organisational Behaviour" course covers related topics, we recommend separating these into two distinct courses due to their importance and depth. Moreover, we recommend that "Integrated Marketing Communications and Small Business" be set as a prerequisite for the "Marketing in Small Business" course to ensure a coherent learning progression.

Nevertheless, in general, the structure of the program is consistent. Except for the remarks mentioned above, the preconditions for the next component of the program are adequate. The programme considers new research findings and modern scientific achievements. Depending on the specificity of the field of study and the programme's level, the programme's content envisages key issues of internationalisation. The HEI ensures the publicity and availability of the information on the program.

Interviews with stakeholders indicate that they were involved, to varying extents, in the program's development process.

Evidences/Indicators

- Educational programme
- Syllabi
- Curriculum map;
- Evidence of participation of stakeholders in the development of the programme;
- Website <https://zssu.ge/>
- Interview results.

Recommendations:

- Incorporating an Enterprise Finance course into the program's core curriculum is recommended.
- It is recommended that Integrated Marketing Communications and Small Business be established as a prerequisite for the Marketing in Small Business course. This alignment would ensure a more structured and logical progression of marketing-related content within the program.

Suggestions for the programme development

Evaluation

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
1.4 Structure and Content of Educational Programme	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<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 Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

As previously mentioned in the above described components, the relationship between the training courses and the learning outcomes is illustrated through the Learning Outcomes Map. This tool visually represents how each course contributes to the overall program outcomes. A detailed analysis of the learning outcomes of the individual courses demonstrates their alignment with the broader program learning outcomes. The content of each course, as presented in the syllabi, corresponds to the intended learning outcomes and supports their achievement. Every learning outcome of the academic course is assessed.

The number of credits assigned to each course is proportionate to both the content and the expected learning outcomes. The courses in the program typically carry 4 or 6 credits, determined by the course content and the students' workload. The balance between contact hours and independent study hours is appropriate and reflects the nature of the subject matter.

The evaluation system outlined in the syllabi includes detailed methods and criteria. This system is transparent, objective, and ensures a fair assessment of students' achievement of the learning outcomes.

The program also includes a Practice component, worth 10 credits, which allows students to develop practical skills in a real-world work environment. Additionally, the Master's Thesis is allocated 30 credits, reflecting the significance of independent research and the student's ability to present their findings in accordance with academic standards.

Upon reviewing the course syllabi, it was identified that the mandatory literature for some courses requires updating to maintain relevance and accuracy. For example, “**Advertising in Small Business**” proposes main literature: Beridze T., Kurashvili G., Goderdzishvili B., «Advertising in small business». Lecture course, 2017 and Mark Hoxie. 90 Days to Success Marketing and Advertising Your Small Business, 2010.

Evidences/Indicators

- Educational programme
- Syllabi
- Curriculum map;
- Evidence of participation of stakeholders in the development of the programme;
- Website <https://zssu.ge/>
- Course learning outcomes assessment
- results;
- Results of the interview.

Recommendations:

- The course Business Research Methods is recommended to be substantially redesigned, as this is one of the most important subjects for master thesis preparation.
- It is recommended that the university provide access to statistical databases, which are crucial for a master's thesis preparation, and more attention should be paid to the software involved in the study process, not only SPSS.
- It is recommended that the study materials be periodically revised and updated to ensure that students receive the most current and relevant knowledge.

Evaluation

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
1.5. Academic Course/Subject	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Compliance of the Programme with the Standard

1. Educational programme objectives, learning outcomes	Complies with requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Substantially complies with requirements	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

and their compliance with the programme	Partially complies with requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Does not comply with requirements	<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 achievement of the objectives and expected learning outcomes of the programme.

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.

Summary and Analysis of the Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

The self-assessment report submitted by the HEI, along with the supporting documentation and interviews conducted during the visit, indicates that the admission requirements for the Master's Program are largely logical, fair, and transparent. These prerequisites - English Proficiency B2 and specialisation exam, align with the educational level needed to ensure that applicants possess the relevant knowledge and skills necessary to meet the learning outcomes of the programs. The admission criteria and processes comply with Georgian law on Higher Education and the Ministry of Education and Science regarding the Unified Masters' Exams. The admission criteria are clearly articulated, and relevant to the program content; requirements and preconditions are public, and applicants can access the information through the HEI's webpage. To ensure applicants have a clear understanding of what kind of prerequisite knowledge they are required to have, it is suggested that they publish the sample of the specialisation exam test on the webpage. The HEI establishes a methodology for planning the student body of the educational program, taking into account the program's specific requirements and the institution's resources to ensure effective administration of educational processes. Student admissions to the program adhere to this established methodology for student body planning.

Evidences/Indicators

- Self-Evaluation Report
- Small Business Management Program
- Sample of the specialisation exam test

- Website of the university

Recommendations:

Suggestions for the programme development

- It is suggested that samples of the specialisation exam test be published on the HEI's webpage.

Evaluation

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
2.1 Programme Admission Preconditions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<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 Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

The Master's Programme ensures the development of students' practical and research skills. The practical component of the program is accumulated in the course "Industrial Practice" which carries a weight of 10 credits. This practice is a crucial and mandatory element of the program, essential for developing the practical skills necessary for successful professional careers. Industrial practice is scheduled for the second year, during the third semester of studies. Master Students are sent to the selected companies, with whom HEI has signed MoU's and students have a mentor from both sides.

Besides this practical component, other courses include practical classes alongside lectures and seminars, which, in conjunction with the production practice, will enhance the development of practical skills and ensure the achievement of the program's learning outcomes.

The HEI has signed memorandums with various practice facilities, including "VTB Bank Zugdidi Branch," "TBS Bank No. 1 Service Center," auditing firm "Finservice," "Cerera" LLC, auditing firm "J.B. Audit," LLC "Tavadi-1," LLC "Kaunats," LLC "MGM," LLC "Terminal," and LLC

"Euronat". During the interviews with the employers it was identified that graduates of this particular program have appropriate soft and hard skills and easily adapt to the working environment. It is suggested to involve the employers more actively during the "Industrial Practice" component, to better identify what are the specific field of activities students should work during the practice.

The development of research skills is supported by a 6-credit course titled "Business Research Methods," which focuses on planning, implementing, and applying research results, as well as the development and defence of a 30-credit master's thesis. This component deepens the student's research capabilities, enabling them to identify further research needs. Completion of the scientific-research component of the master's program is validated by the submission and defence of the master's thesis before a sectoral commission. It is important to highlight that after reviewing the submitted thesis papers, several issues need to be addressed. It is recommended to establish common guidelines for all students regarding the thesis, including aspects such as structure, methodology, research design, and other key components.

Evidences/Indicators

- Self-Evaluation Report
- Small Business Management Program and syllabuses
- Interviews with the alumni, students and employers
- Reviewed Master Thesis papers

Recommendations:

Suggestions for the programme development

- Enhancing the involvement of employers in practical components is suggested.
- It is suggested that more students be involved in project activities.

Evaluation

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantiall y complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
2.2.The Development of practical, scientific/research/creative/perf orming and transferable skills	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2.3. Teaching and Learning Methods

The programme is implemented by use student-oriented 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 Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

“Small Business Management” Master’s program adheres to student-centred teaching and learning methods, ensuring alignment with the level of education, course content, and intended learning outcomes. A variety of engaging teaching methods are utilised to actively involve students in the learning process. These methods include verbal instruction, written assignments, group work, discussions, cooperative learning, project presentations, demonstrations, brainstorming sessions, case studies, and expert evaluations. This diverse approach is well-suited to the course content and helps students achieve the specified learning outcomes outlined in each syllabus. Each course syllabus clearly details the teaching and learning methods employed, demonstrating a strong connection between these methods and the course objectives. The methods are not only varied but also flexible, enabling professors to adjust their approaches based on the unique needs of the course or individual students. Additionally, the program is designed to ensure interactive teaching methods that foster active engagement among students and between students and faculty. This interaction is crucial for developing critical and analytical skills, which are integral to the learning outcomes of the programs. The emphasis on interactive learning techniques, such as group discussions and case studies, ensures that students are not merely passive recipients of information but are actively involved in constructing their knowledge.

It is suggested to further discuss the learning and evaluation methods of the course “Industrial Practice”; according to the syllabi and interviews students are assessed through midterm and final examinations, and this could be the subject for discussion; the content of midterm exam could be changed according to the practical orientation of the component, namely, multiple choice questions are not quite relevant to access the practical skills and it’s preferable to make an interim presentation of performed tasks.

Evidences/Indicators

- Self-Evaluation Report
- Small Business Management Program and syllabuses
- Interviews with school invited and academic personnel

- Results of the surveys

Recommendations:

Suggestions for the programme development

- It is suggested that further discussion and observation of the learning and evaluation methods of the course “Industrial Practice” be conducted.

Evaluation

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
2.3. Teaching and learning methods	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<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 Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

The level of achievement of the student's learning outcomes of the Master's Educational Program in Small Business Management is evaluated following the current legislation of Georgia and principles, rules and procedures defined by the educational process regulation of the Shota Meskhia Zugdidi State University.

According to Article 19 of the regulation of the educational process of Shota Meskhia Zugdidi State University, the educational and scientific research components of the educational program are evaluated with a 100-point system. Each form of assessment (midterm and final) includes assessment components and methods chosen by the head of the training course.

Student knowledge is assessed through midterm and final assessments. It is not allowed to award credits using only one form (midterm or final assessment). The final evaluation is mandatory. The subject is considered to have been passed and credits are awarded only if the student has passed

the minimum competency thresholds for the midterm and final assessments and received a positive grade in each of them.

The minimum competence limit of the intermediate and final assessment components in each educational component is determined by the current legislation of Georgia, the "rules regulating the educational process" of the university, taking into account the specifics of the subject within the academic freedom of the academic/invited staff.

The maximum evaluation of the training course is 100 points, which includes midterm and final evaluations. There are five types of positive evaluation:

(A) excellent – 91-100 points; (B) very good – 81-90 points; (C) good – 71-80 points;
(D) satisfactory – 61-70 points; (E) Sufficient – 51-60 points.

Two types of negative evaluation:

(FX) failed – 41-50 points, which means that the student needs more work to pass and is allowed to take the additional exam once with independent work;

(F) Failed – 40 points or less, which means that the work done by the student is not enough and he has to study the subject again.

In the study component, in case of acceptance of FX, an additional exam will be scheduled at least 5 calendar days after announcing the final exam results. The number of points obtained in the final assessment is not added to the grade received by the student in the additional exam. The grade obtained on the additional exam is the final grade and is reflected in the final grade of the training component of the educational program. In the case of receiving 0-50 points in the final evaluation of the educational component, taking into account the evaluation received at the additional exam, the student is assigned an F-0 score.

For the scientific-research component, (FX) failed - if accepted, the master's student is allowed to submit the revised scientific-research component during the next semester, and (F) failed - if the grade is received, the master's student loses the right to submit the same scientific-research component.

The master's thesis is a research document undertaken by the master's student as part of the master's program. It serves as a comprehensive showcase of the student's research skills, demonstrating his/her capacity to independently conduct research, formulate, structure, publicly

present, and defend research. The master's thesis is individually undertaken by the Master's student, with due consideration of the guidance provided by the supervisor of the master's thesis. The master's student chooses a master's thesis topic based on his research interest. The dean of the faculty establishes the commission for the defence of master's theses.

During the visit, experts revised the master theses of students, in some of the MA theses there were few bibliographies and not academic sources, also, some of the thesis design and the list of used literature is made following the rules of academic style and some of the thesis have none, so, it is better to give more clear directions to students from master thesis supervisors about citation of literary sources and on compliance with using the rules of academic Style in the master thesis.

As a result of interviews with students and academic/invited staff, it was confirmed that assessment components, methods and criteria are introduced to students in advance, and lecturers inform students about assessment components in the first lecture.

Shota Meskhia Zugdidi State University has developed a master's degree regulation, which describes the structure of the master's thesis, the rules for citing the used literature, procedures for preparing, submitting and defending the master's thesis, evaluation criteria for the master's thesis, the mechanisms of plagiarism prevention, detection and response; etc. As a result of the interview, it was confirmed that the Academic and invited staff of the university informed students about the procedures for completing the master's thesis.

Procedures for appealing an exam are regulated by the rules of holding university exams and appealing exams. During the interview, it was observed that the students knew the appeal procedures in advance, but they did not use this mechanism. In case of disagreement due to the preliminary discussion with the training course provider and the student, the field commission will consider the complaint and draw a corresponding conclusion.

During the interview, it was noted that students receive feedback from the lecturers, and communication with the lecturer is quite easy for them, both by phone and direct communication. However, it should be noted that lecturers should give feedback to students on learning outcomes, as well as on improving the results of their own strengths and areas for improvement.

Evidences/Indicators

- The rules governing the educational process;

- Educational programme;
- Self-evaluation form;
- Rules of holding university exams and appealing exams;
- Evaluation methods and criteria reflected in the syllabi;
- Provision of master's degree;
- Webpage of the University;
- Interviews during site visits with different stakeholders.

Recommendations:

- Masters theses supervisors should ensure that students properly cite literature sources and follow the rules of academic style in their master's thesis.

Suggestions for the programme development

- It is suggested that lecturers increase the frequency of giving feedback to students on learning outcomes, as well as on improving the results of their own strengths and areas for improvement.

Evaluation

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
2.4. Student evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Compliance with the programme standards

2. Methodology and Organisation of Teaching, Adequacy of Evaluation of Programme Mastering	Complies with requirements	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Substantially complies with requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Partly complies with requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Does not comply with requirements	<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 involvement in local and/or international projects; proper quality of scientific guidance is provided for master's and doctoral students.

3.1 Student Consulting and Support Services

Students receive consultation and support regarding the planning of 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.

Summary and Analysis of the Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

Students from the educational master program receive appropriate consultations and support regarding the planning of the learning process. After enrolling at the university, students are given an orientation meeting with administrative and academic staff in the first week. Students are provided with all the information about teaching services. Also, students have all the necessary information at the university student's portal (Ini.ge program) from which the student has the opportunity to write to the lecturer of the subject, receive feedback from him/her, and use educational resources. During visit interviews, students expressed that they can communicate with lecturers in-person meetings or by email.

The student can also receive information, consultation and assistance necessary for planning the educational process and improving achievements from the faculty's administrative, support structural units and administrative staff: From the administrator of the educational process electronic management program (Ini.ge program), dean's office, quality assurance service, chancellery, educational process management service, etc.

Student services at the university are carried out under the coordination of the Center for life-long learning, including:

1. Using the resources and experience of the university for professional and personal development, raising qualifications, and acquiring new professional skills;
2. Career planning courses - career development centre;
3. Foreign language courses - foreign language learning centre;
4. Short-term training/retraining courses-Professional Education Development Service;
5. Legal issues - law clinic
6. Individual consultations with relevant structural units;
7. Individual study plans, consultation tables-faculty;

8. Mobility and restoration of student status/suspension/termination/academic leave-Faculty
9. Plagiarism-scientific service;
10. Academic writing courses-faculty;
11. Teaching methods - faculty;
12. Institution of curators in management;
13. Child Rights Center;
14. Center for Psychology;
15. Georgian-Abkhazian Relations Center;
16. A creative incubator;
17. Horizon Europe's grant office;
18. Academy of Gastronomy.

Individual work with students is provided in the workload scheme of the academic staff, and the conditions for receiving counselling for students are specified in each syllabus.

Students are given the opportunity to study a foreign language independently of the curriculum (English, German, French, Russian, including with special financial benefits) at the university. In the foreign language study centre of the teaching university to receive additional consultations for career planning and career education, the university has a career development centre that helps students to search for their own interests, values, personal characteristics, skills and professional opportunities; Contributes to bringing students closer to employers, which helps them achieve their professional goals, increasing students' employability in the labour market.

The university cooperates with various foreign universities. The International Relations Service provides students with information about exchange programs and international activities. The university cooperates with Angelus Silesius University in order to strengthen the cooperation between the scientific, educational, and research fields. Signed memorandum of cooperation for the future implementation of academic programs, personnel, exchange projects, research, teaching-learning and intercultural relations between two parties. Nevertheless, it is suggested that students' participation in local and international projects, as well as in exchange programs, be increased.

During visit interviews, employers expressed their satisfaction with the students. Within the framework of cooperation, students do internships. Employees express their readiness to communicate more with the students by sharing their knowledge. Accordingly, it is suggested that

various seminars and workshops for students be facilitated and organised with the involvement of employers. During visit interviews, students and alumni expressed positive attitudes regarding the programs. They are satisfied with the quality of teaching, the level of professors and teachers, teaching methods and student services.

The university carried out a study on the order of the local municipality to develop the culture strategy document for the Zugdidi municipality. The Small Business Management educational program student also participated in implementing the project. The 5 – year culture development strategy of Zugdidi reflects the city’s main cultural topics, priorities, goals, opportunities and perspectives for 2022-2026. Zugdidi outlined the following strategic directions: Zugdidi is a creative city with cultural heritage, innovation, craft, and gastronomy. The University is the leading partner of the City Hall in the project implementation process.

Evidences/Indicators

- Self–evaluation report;
- List of student activities;
- Student satisfaction survey report;
- The rule governing the educational process;
- Regulations of the Student Career Development Service;
- Webpage of the University;
- Interviews during site visits with different stakeholders.

Recommendations:

Suggestions for Programme Development

- It is suggested that students' engagement in local and international projects and exchange programs be increased.
- It is suggested that various seminars and workshops for students be facilitated and organised with the involvement of employers.

Evaluation

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
3.1 Student Consulting and	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<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 doctoral students to perform the scientific-research component successfully.
 - Within master's and doctoral programmes, ration of students and supervisors enables to perform scientific supervision properly.
-

Summary and Analysis of the Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

Shota Meskhia Zugdidi State University elaborated the regulatory documents: Selection Criteria for the supervisor of the master's thesis and Instructions for completing, submitting and evaluating the master's thesis, which reflected the rights and duties of the supervisor, the process of appointing, the process of the supervision/co-supervision, also Master thesis topic and supervisor selection procedures and approval procedure. The supervisor of the master's thesis can be a professor or associate professor of the university with a doctorate or equivalent academic degree or a specialist invited to the educational program (Doctor's academic degree or equivalent scientific degree), who has research experience in a scientific field related to the master's topic.

During visit interviews, the master's thesis supervisors told experts they regularly consult with the master's students. The frequency of consultations corresponds to the program's specifics and research topic (minimum once a week). The supervisor is mandated to supervise the work of the master's student, they guide students regarding: the research project, source selection, formulation of the research problem, and development of research questions and hypotheses. During visit interviews, alumni expressed a positive attitude toward their supervisors.

During visit interviews, the head of the QA service expressed that MA Students have the opportunity to assess cooperation with the scientific supervisor conducted by the university. Because this process can't show comprehensive information, it is suggested to develop mechanisms for evaluating the quality of the activities of the supervisor of MA theses to ensure the effective implementation and development of the supervision process.

Data related to the supervision of master's/ doctoral students

Quantity of master/PhD theses	7
-------------------------------	---

Number of master's/doctoral students	17
Ratio	7/17

Evidences/Indicators

- The rule governing the educational process;
- Self-evaluation form;
- Provision of master's degree;
- Survey of the students;
- Webpage of the University;
- Interviews during a site visit with different stakeholders.

Recommendations:

- The requirements for the master thesis should be updated. All master theses should follow basic requirements – theoretical, methodological, and practical (which relates to an investigation made by the author) parts.
- It is recommended that HEI develop additional mechanisms for comprehensive evaluation of the quality of the activities of the MA thesis' supervisor to ensure the supervision process's effective implementation and development.

Suggestions for the programme development

Evaluation

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
3.2. Master's and Doctoral Students Supervision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Compliance with the programme standards

3. Students Achievements, Individual Work with them	Complies with requirements	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Substantially complies with requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Partly complies with requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Does not comply with requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Providing Teaching Resources

Human, material, information and financial resources of educational programme ensure 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 with the necessary competencies to help students achieve the programme learning outcomes.
- The number and workload of the academic/scientific programme and invited staff to ensure the sustainable running of the educational process and the 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 the necessary knowledge and experience required for programme elaboration and also the appropriate competencies 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 of appropriate competence.

Summary and Analysis of the Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

The Master's program is supported by a team of qualified and experienced academic, visiting, administrative, and support staff who ensure effective and high-quality implementation of the program. Faculty members involved in the program have published scientific works in the relevant fields and possess the necessary qualifications. To enhance the development of educational programs and integrate innovative methodologies, some personnel involved in the program have received training in a master's program focused on small business management, as part of international projects aimed at strengthening institutional capacity, and have actively participated in relevant conferences.

The composition and workload of the academic and visiting staff involved in the program facilitate the educational processes as outlined in the curriculum while also fostering the development of its research component. The balance between academic and visiting faculty ensures the program's sustainability. Specifically, the program is supported by 1 professor, 7 associate professors, and 5 specialists, all holding appropriate academic degrees. Workload scheme provided for the academic staff is appropriate, the workload document provides information about their teaching hours in other HEIs as well. Some academic staff also hold administrative roles; however, their hours are balanced and appropriately distributed. Quantitative indicators related to both academic and invited staff contribute to the program's sustainability.

Majority of academic personnel involved in the program are affiliated with HEI and have specific agreements that ensure their engagement in research activities. During the interviews it was examined that the hiring of the academic as well as invited personnel is transparent and procedures are followed.

Leadership for the program is provided by a head and a co-head, both of whom possess the requisite knowledge and experience for its development and are actively engaged in its implementation. The ratio of administrative to academic staff within the university is conducive to maintaining educational quality. The university has established a "Management Policy" that delineates rules for personnel management efficiency, monitoring mechanisms for university activities, and procedures for analysing evaluation results and making recommendations for improvements. All personnel, including academic, administrative, and support staff, adhere to this "Management Policy," which encompasses the development of an organisational structure and management strategies that leverage quality assurance within the management process.

Number of the staff involved in the programme (including academic, scientific, and invited staff)	Number of Programme Staff	Including the staff with sectoral expertise⁶	Including the staff holding PhD degree in the sectoral direction⁷	Among them, the affiliated staff
Total number of academic staff	8	8	8	5
- Professor	1	1	1	1
- Associate Professor	7	7	7	4
- Assistant-Professor	0	0	0	0
- Assistant	0	0	0	0
Visiting Staff	5	5	4	0
Scientific Staff	0	0	0	0

Evidences/Indicators

- CV's of academic, invited, administrative staff;
- Academic personnel agreement samples and job descriptions;
- Workloads of academic and invited staff involved in the programme;
- Self-Evaluation Report
- Interview results

Recommendations:

Suggestions for Programme Development

Evaluation

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
------------------	-----------------------------------	---	---	--

⁶ Staff implementing the relevant components of the main field of study

⁷ Staff with relevant doctoral degrees implementing the components of the main field of study

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

The 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.

Summary and Analysis of the Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

Master's students are supervised by qualified academic or invited personnel. Supervisors are academic or invited staff members, holding PhD degrees in related fields and having publications in similar fields of master thesis (according to "Master Statue", article 14). The thesis supervisor offers consultations to students on their research topics, provides general scientific guidance, assists in using properly bibliographic resources, supports in preparing research papers, and engages students integration into both local and international academic contexts, which includes participation in scientific events, presenting research findings, and publishing articles in journals.

During the interviews with the alumni of the program, it was observed that students are selecting the thesis supervisor according to their research topic and the schedule of the consultation is provided to them. Graduates emphasised high and productive involvement of their supervisors during the preparation of thesis.

Upon reviewing all the relevant documents pertaining to this standard, it was not possible to determine the maximum number of master's students that one supervisor is permitted to supervise. It is suggested to set the maximum number of students.

Number of supervisors of Master's/Doctoral theses	Thesis supervisors	Including the supervisors holding PhD degree in the sectoral direction	Among them, the affiliated staff
Number of supervisors of Master's/Doctoral thesis	5	5	5
- Professor	1	1	1
- Associate Professor	4	4	4
- Assistant-Professor	0	0	0
Visiting personnel	3	3	0

Scientific Staff	0	0	0
------------------	---	---	---

Evidences/Indicators

- CV's of academic personnel
- Self-Evaluation Report
- Interview results

Recommendations:

Suggestions for the programme development

It is suggested to determine the maximum number of master students one supervisor can supervise

Evaluation

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
4.2 Qualification of Supervisors of Master's and Doctoral Students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4.3 Professional Development of Academic, Scientific and Invited Staff

- The HEI conducts evaluations of programme staff and analyses evaluation results regularly.
- The HEI fosters professional development of the academic, scientific and invited staff. Moreover, it fosters their scientific and research work.

Summary and Analysis of the Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

The University has elaborated the Evaluation Rules for Academic and Teaching staff, as well as mechanisms to assess scientific productivity. The university ensures that all staff members have access to professional development opportunities and that equal conditions are provided for all personnel categories. The HEI conducts, analyses and actively utilises the results of the evaluation of the programme staff and staff satisfaction surveys. To address the diverse needs of its staff, the university offers various professional development components, including participation in national and international scientific events such as conferences, symposia, seminars, and workshops, as well as grant opportunities and other training programs.

The evaluation results are considered while planning incentives to the staff development, as well as the responding mechanisms when defined benchmarks are not fulfilled. Evaluation of the

academic and research activities include: assessing the teaching process through feedback schemes and surveys of students, students achievements in courses and relevant disciplines, annual self-assessment report of the staff and peer evaluations, qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods of scientific productivity. Scientific productivity also considers H index and citation impact, which are different according to the rank of professors. Therefore, the HEI provides necessary conditions, including material and financial resources, for fostering scientific, research, creative/performing work of academic, scientific and invited staff.

Despite the fact the University has defined benchmarks for staff development and indicated the H index and citation impact to be the priority, it should be noted that the HEI has not specified the requirements for staff where to publish. Taking into consideration that the program evaluated is a master's degree program, the university will benefit to revise the requirements for the personnel (supervisors of master thesis and academic staff) to encourage them to publish their research results in international peer-reviewed journals included in such scientific data basis as CA with impact factor or Scopus. Currently, the majority of publications are presented in various conferences including international. Therefore, for attaining the benchmarks that are defined in terms of research objectives, it is recommended for the University to prioritise the high impact journals and enhance publishing in internationally peer reviewed indexed journals.

Evidences/Indicators

- Self-Evaluation report
- Quality Assurance Mechanisms
- Regulation for assessing scientific productivity for academic and invited staff
- Reports and analysis for staff performance assessment

Recommendations:

It is recommended that academic staff and supervisors prioritise and consider publishing their research results in international peer-reviewed journals, including scientific data based on CA or Scopus with impact factor

Suggestions for the programme development

Evaluation

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
4.3 Professional development of academic, scientific and invited staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4.4. Material Resources

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

Summary and Analysis of the Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

Program is provided by necessary infrastructure and facilities. Educational classrooms are fully equipped with the necessary modern technology, including computers with internet access, interactive boards, projectors, audio visual materials, making them readily available to all students and professors.

Additionally, there are conference halls and faculty offices. The library provides essential literature and other educational resources used in the syllabuses, including materials available in electronic formats. A reading room is also provided, equipped with computers connected to the internet; a research facilitation room is in the process of renovation, it will be equipped with additional computers with access to all library resources and researchers will have an additional space to work on their papers and collaborate with each other. Library has access to the scientific databases. It is very impressive that the university provides a special space - Kid's zone, equipped with all necessary supplements, for those students who are having trouble attending the classes because of their parental duties.

Moreover, HEI has suitable software to facilitate the teaching and learning process, students, administrative and academic staff have access to this platform on a daily basis.

As the program is delivered in Georgian, it is suggested to provide more updated books, support the professors to translate the new editions.

The available infrastructure and resources are largely aligned with the requirements of the educational program offered. The university's continual investments in enhancing facilities and technology, alongside the extensive support provided by its library and IT systems, foster a favourable learning environment.

Evidences/Indicators

- Site visit and interview results
- Library and digital resources

- Compliance of books in the library with the literature indicated in syllabi.

Recommendations:

Suggestions for the programme development

- It is suggested to update the library resources with new editions regularly to ensure the program with relevant information resources.

Evaluation

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
4.4 Material Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4.5 Programme/Faculty/School Budget and Programme Financial Sustainability

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

Summary and Analysis of the Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

The analysis of Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi Faculty 2024 budget reveals a structured approach to financial management. The financial support allocated to the faculty encompasses various components such as staff remuneration, expenses related to teaching and scientific events, including research grant internal opportunities and expenses for scientific activities separately, accounting for 200000 Lari. Budget also considers stipend and student participation fees in different academic events, as well as special subsistence funds for socially vulnerable students. Revenues of the university are mostly generated from the tuition fees, state grants and teaching grants. The university also supports faculty in case of necessity from the central budget special reserve funds. This multifaceted allocation, including annual adjustments to meet the evolving needs of the faculty, shows an effort to align financial resources with educational program specific requirements. Therefore, allocation of financial resources for the programme from the budget is financially feasible and ensures the sustainability of the programme.

Evidences/Indicators

- Self-evaluation report

- Budget of the faculty
- Interview results

Recommendations:

Suggestions for the programme development

Evaluation

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
4.5. Programme/Faculty/School Budget and Programme Financial Sustainability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Compliance with the programme standard

4. Providing Teaching Resources	Complies with requirements	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Substantially complies with requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Partly complies with requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Does not comply with requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Teaching Quality Enhancement Opportunities

In order to enhance teaching quality, programme utilises 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 Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

The Internal Quality Assurance mechanisms at Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi are defined and regulated by the “Quality Assurance Mechanisms” which includes: Evaluation and development of educational programs; Evaluation of academic and invited personnel involved in the implementation of educational programs and their professional development; Evaluation and improvement of the learning process; Evaluation and development of scientific research; Evaluation and development of internationalisation; Evaluating and developing a contribution to the advancement of society; Assessment and development of management processes; Assessment and efficient use of resources. Therefore, internal quality assurance includes the systemic surveys and evaluations of curricula, services, and resources.

The university's quality assurance mechanisms are coordinated at the faculty and central quality assurance levels and are targeted to assess all main processes at the university through annual surveys, various methods of involving all stakeholders to analyse assessment results to maintain effective monitoring, identify objectives and articulate development tendencies. Program quality assurance is based on the PDCA - “plan –do – check - act” principle. The process implies the involvement of all interested parties in the process of development of educational activities of the university, as the University prioritises students, graduates, employers, academic and invited staff involvement in the internal quality assessment process.

The process of program development is based on complex analysis and assessment and the final program is approved through following stages: Firstly, the program is reviewed by the programme heads, staff implementing the program, the faculty's quality assurance service, the university's quality assurance service, and other interested parties. Then the program is submitted to the faculty council together with the conclusion of the quality assurance service of the university. After review by the Faculty Council, the program is approved by the academic council of the university.

In accordance with the evaluation of the submitted documents and accreditation visit findings, the accreditation panel finds that programme evaluation is consistent at the university and assessment results are generally utilised for programme improvement. The QA office cooperates and encourages the involvement of the programme staff to ensure the evaluation process is constructive, therefore, a Self-Evaluation Report of the programme is prepared with the involvement of academic and administrative staff. Even though the institution shares information through emails and other communication channels to students and alumni, as well as students and graduates have been involved in the self-evaluation process, they still expressed willingness to be informed more concerning the programme content. It is suggested the institution works to develop a strategy to increase motivation and efficacy of graduates’ engagement in program and faculty development processes.

Necessity-based and need assessment surveys are used by internal quality evaluation processes for purposely identifying the problems and ensuring quality improvement interventions. These surveys are targeted to identify the satisfaction, needs, and wants of the students, as well as annual students and staff satisfaction surveys, are conducted for assessing the general administration of the programmes and availability of services.

Evidences/Indicators

- Self-Evaluation Report
- Quality Assurance Mechanisms
- Survey forms and results
- QA assessment analysis and utilisation for program development
- Report for Effectiveness of QA mechanisms
- Recommendations of Quality Assurance Service on development of the programme, improving study process and professional development of academic and invited staff
- Interview results

Recommendations:

Suggestions for the programme development

- It is proposed that further student and graduate involvement in program and faculty development processes be encouraged.

Evaluation

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
5.1 Internal quality evaluation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5.2 External Quality Evaluation

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

Summary and Analysis of the Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

External quality assurance at university is mainly carried out through the Accreditation and Authorization Processes maintained by the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement. The University Quality Assurance Office reviews recommendations and suggestions and the findings are introduced to the heads of the programmes and faculty for further consideration. In accordance with the submitted analysis for considering prior recommendations, the programme team has worked on implementing previous accreditation process findings in the process of programme development. The institution also uses external evaluation and the programme benefited from the peer reviews from local and/or international experts. The programme was evaluated by the external field experts in 2018 and 2019. The QA office ensures the compliance of the developments with the received recommendations.

Evidences/Indicators

- Self-Evaluation Report
- Quality Assurance Mechanisms
- Survey forms and results
- QA assessment analysis and utilisation for program development
- Report for Effectiveness of QA mechanisms
- Recommendations of Quality Assurance Service on development of the programme, improving study process and professional development of academic and invited staff
- Interview results

Recommendations:

Suggestions for the programme development

Evaluation

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
5.2. External Quality Evaluation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<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.

Summary and Analysis of the Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

For program development and service improvement, the QA Office at Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi ensures monitoring and periodic assessment. The assessment and evaluation process involves internal and external stakeholders. Surveys with staff, students, graduates, and employers are central tools for implementing monitoring of the educational programs of the university. At the end of every compulsory course, students evaluate the course by completing a course evaluation form, in case of necessity focus groups are also organised. Satisfaction and need assessment surveys are used to identify improvements and priorities, to ensure an effective monitoring process. Results of the evaluation process are distributed among the programme team and are used for the programme improvements.

HEI has implemented the practice of classroom observation, when evaluations are conducted with peers, as well as quality assurance service representatives with predetermined periodicity and procedure. One week before the beginning of the semester, a mutual attendance team is created, the members of the team are academic and invited staff of the university lead by the quality assurance service representative. The collegial attendance team prepares the mutual attendance schedule and teaching and learning evaluation criteria/indicators, through which the lecture/practical/laboratory teaching is evaluated.

At the end of each semester, the Quality Assurance Office monitors the students' academic performance, and the evaluation results are used by the university administration to improve educational processes. The institution has practice to assess the programme efficiency - the target indicators defined in the mechanism of evaluation of learning outcomes are considered as an indicator for the improvement of teaching and learning quality of the programme. Evaluation is oriented at identifying the causes of deviations (if existent) and implementing measures to eliminate them - making certain changes within the program and/or training course; modifying the teaching and learning methods; optimising the evaluation methods used within the syllabus of the training course; changing the literature used within the training course; establishing/changing the prerequisites of the training course and etc.

As there is no analogue programme in Georgia, the Small Business Management Master Program benefits from the practice of sharing international experiences that contributes to the programmes individualism, shared best practices and provides a platform for cooperative attitudes between the programme's staff and international colleagues. The programme team has got acquainted with analogue programmes in Europe and US. The Master Programme has been compared with the respective and related programmes at Groningen University and University of Florida. The analysis expresses significant alignment with the accredited similar programmes and academic courses, as well as compatibility with the existing industry requirements.

Evidences/Indicators

- Self-Evaluation Report
- Educational Program and Syllabi
- Quality Assurance Mechanisms
- Survey forms and results
- QA assessment analysis and utilisation for program development
- Report for Effectiveness of QA mechanisms
- Learning Outcomes Assessment
- Analogue Programmes Analysis

- Interview results

Recommendations:

Suggestions for the programme development

Evaluation

Component	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
5.3. Programme monitoring and periodic review	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Compliance with the programme standards

5. Teaching Quality Enhancement Opportunities	Complies with requirements	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Substantially complies with requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Partially complies with requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Does not comply with requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>

Attached documentation (if applicable):

Name of the Higher Education Institution: **LEPL - Shota Meskhia State Teaching University of Zugdidi**

Name of Higher Education Programme, Level: **"Small Business Management" Master's educational program**

Compliance with the Programme Standards

Evaluation Standards	Complies with requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially complies with requirements	Does not comply with requirements
1. Education Programme Objectives, Learning Outcomes and their Compliance with the Programme	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Teaching Methodology and Organisation, Adequacy Evaluation of Programme Mastering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Student Achievements, Individual Work with them	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Providing Teaching Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Teaching Quality Enhancement Opportunities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signatures:

Chair of Accreditation Expert Panel

Prof. dr. Daiva Jurevičienė



Accreditation Expert Panel Members

Dr. Elene Jgarkava



Prof. dr. Davit Sikharulidze



Prof. dr. Tamta Tskhovrebadze



Anzhela Abuladze

