



განათლების ხარისხის განვითარების ეროვნული ცენტრი
NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

**Higher Education Institution Authorisation Experts'
Report
Kutaisi University LLC**

Expert Panel Members

Chair: Vaidotas Viliūnas, Independent Consultant on Higher Education, Lithuania

Co-chair: Salma Soussi, Marrakesh University, Morocco

Members:

Ketevan Aptarashvili, East European University, Georgia

Ia Natsvlshvili, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Georgia

Tamar Berishvili, Tbilisi State University, Georgia

Khatuna Saganelidze, employer representative, Georgia

Beka Bendeliani, student

Tbilisi
2024

Authorisation Report Resume

General information on the educational institution

Kutaisi University LLC (UNIK) is the first private higher educational institution in Western Georgia. Kutaisi University LLC comes from Kutaisi Institute of Law and Economics, which was founded in 1991. Since 2010, the university has been operating under the name Kutaisi University LLC. Kutaisi University LLC, according to its vision statement, is an academic institution of regional and national importance. Kutaisi University LLC was authorized for a period of 6 years in 2018 (Educational Institutions Authorization Council, decision No. 71).

Kutaisi University LLC has 2 faculties: the Faculty of Social Sciences, Business and Law, and the Faculty of Medicine. Currently university providing 8 three levels educational programs, which include bachelor's, master's, one-cycle, and doctoral programs. Currently, university is preparing conditions for the medical program provision in the city of Tbilisi.

University currently has 804 students in all programs (450 of them are suspended): 500 Bachelor students (361 suspended), 30 Master students (25 suspended), 147 MD students (44 suspended), and 27 PhD students (20 suspended). 103 are international students (44 suspended).

UNIK personnel consist from 421 staff members: 102 of them are academic staff (32 Professors, 48 Associate Professors, 18 Assistant Professors, 4 Assistants), 12 scientific staff, 253 invited teaching staff, and 66 administrative and supporting personnel.

Kutaisi University LLC is a member of the European University Association (EUA), an institutional member of the GUNi innovation network, a member of the Businet global network, and an academic member of the European Association for Medical Education (AMEE).

Research institutes of economics and medicine are established at the university, and the internationally refereed journal "Economic Profile" is published. Kutaisi University LLC participates in EU funded projects.

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

The panel of experts had the opportunity to visit the Kutaisi University LLC campus and premises and facilities, prepared for the Medical Program in Tbilisi. Experts met with university representatives during 17th – 19th of June 2024. Before the visit, the panel received a Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and supporting documents to prepare for the site visit. However, due to deficiencies in this collection a number of additional documents (particularly English versions) were requested from UNIK before and during the site visit. These were partly provided to the panel during the visit.

Besides the presented documents, expert pool members observed and analysed the University's website as another source of information. However, the website was not containing completely all necessary information uploaded. Particularly quite a few English versions of documents were not accessible.

The meetings with University Rector, Vice-Rectors and Head of Administration, Self-Evaluation team, Governing Board, Quality Assurance Department, Deans, Heads of Administrative Departments, Employer Representatives took place during the June 17th (day 1).

Meetings with Heads of Programs, Academic and Invited Staff, Student Self-Government representative, students, including PhD and graduates took during the June 18th (day 2). Expert pool members were split into two groups to meet with colleagues from Medical Faculty and the Faculty of Social Sciences, Business and Law. Experts met with Heads of Programs, Academic affiliated and invited staff and students, including PhD students, and graduates (except the medical program).

Expert pool members visited university partner clinics: Ltd. West Georgia Medical Center, and Evex hospitals – JSC Viani and Krystyna Kiel Oncology Center in Kutaisi. University offered to visit Ltd. Western Regional Center for Modern Technologies also, but experts were convinced by the competence of the medical personnel and quality and sufficiency of the facilities of the above clinics visited before. Therefore, experts skipped the last visit. Experts travelled to Tbilisi at the end of the day 2.

3rd Day of the site-visit (June 19th) was devoted to visit a leased facility at M. Kostava St. No. 77, Tbilisi, 0160, which is prepared for the provision of one-cycle educational program for medical doctors. Partnering hospitals Ltd Kanveni, LLC Academician O.Gudushauri National Medical Center and NNLE Joe Ann University Hospital were visited during the June 19th as well.

The expert pool members drafted an initial finding of the site-visit and presented them to the Rector and members of university community at the end of the day 3.

Expert pool members reviewed the UNIK Authorisation Draft Report after careful analysis of an Argumentative Position of the UNIK and came into the final conclusions:

1. To accept the Kutaisi University LLC opinion and change Recommendation 3.3.1. into the Suggestion 3.3.1.
2. To decline other UNIK's arguments regarding the Recommendations (2.1.1.; 2.1.2.; 2.2.1.; 4.1.1.; 4.1.2.; 4.2.1.; 5.1.1., and 6.2.3.) and leave them as they were published in the UNIK Authorisation Draft Report. Above mentioned recommendations are evidence based and meet the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), adopted by the Ministers of higher education of Bologna Process countries, including Georgia.
3. To underline, that requirements for quality in all aspects of higher education provisions, research and services, as well as transparency in administrative and management processes should be equally respected in all Higher Education Institutions, regardless of their ownership.

Overview of the HEI's compliance with standards

1. Mission and strategic development of HEI – complies with requirements

The Mission of the Kutaisi University LLC corresponds to the Georgia and EHEA education goals in general and comply with the standard requirements. However, the requirements of the job market are changing much faster than University is capable to adapt. And, the university itself has a capacity and potential to be stronger and better. HEI can focus on the student competencies of creativity, capacity to implement and commercialize innovations, adaptability and resilience of changes, including critical thinking, digitalization and capacity as well as skills to use all available information resources and measures. University could facilitate the flexible and adaptable education provision. Therefore, it is suggested to discuss and update the university mission statement periodically.

UNIK Strategy (2021-2027) presents: mission statement, values, vision, strategic direction and priorities. Strategic directions and priorities are explained and tasks to achieve the results are defined. Document is well structured and clear. An Action plan (2023-2026), is developed for the implementation of the above Strategy. Action plan is focused to implement all UNIK strategic priorities. The above-mentioned documents are developed according to Strategic Planning Methodology of Kutaisi University LLC.

However, Rector's annual and monitoring reports were not presented in English. Therefore, it was difficult to see the full picture and understand to which extent University is monitoring and controlling the process and progress of strategy implementation, including to which extent PDCA cycle is in full consistency.

2. Organisational structure and management of HEI – substantially complies with requirements

The organizational structure of Kutaisi University LLC, approved in 2020 largely ensures the implementation of the activities outlined by the strategic development and action plans. During the development of the above structure, UNIK shared the structure of the European University.

The roles of the UNIK Vice-Rectors were not evenly distributed to encompass all the pillars. It is important to review the subordination of the structural units under the supervision of the Vice-Rectors and to increase delegation. It would be desirable for the scientific direction to be transferred under the Vice-Rector responsible for scientific affairs and to strengthen the research direction.

Functions and responsibilities of structural units of the institution are defined and divided, staff knows their functions well. However, the university's organizational structure needs to be reviewed. Some of the most important and influential bodies are missing in the presented organogram - the President/Assembly of Partners, Faculty Councils, and Research Centers should be included.

Respective attention to the English translation of the UNIK documents to avoid an ambiguity and misinterpretation should be assured.

UNIK has a solid internal quality assurance system, based on the PDCA principle. Institution has developed internal quality assurance mechanisms, periodically evaluates quality of its services and resources, they disseminate the results of the survey.

Additionally, university should review the internal regulations to avoid inconsistencies and technical errors in the documents. UNIK should ensure active participation of program leaders in Student Contingent Planning and Monitoring Procedures.

It is advisable to discuss the possibility of introduction of the process management methodology in organization quality management.

The University's "Code of Ethics and Disciplinary Responsibility" sets the basic principles and ethical standards and is publicly accessible and is universal for all UNIK community members. The University has implemented mechanisms for detecting and preventing plagiarism. However, it is crucial to establish mechanisms to safeguard against the potential threats posed by AI. An academic staff showed the familiarity with the principles of academic freedom; however, it is important to raise awareness of these principles among students as well.

3. Educational Programmes– substantially complies with requirements

The planning, design, implementing and developing of the educational program at UNIK is regulated by "Procedures for Planning, Development, Approval, Making Changes and Cancellation of Educational Programs" policy document. Any stakeholder including students, academic staff and employers, can make a demand for the amendment of the educational program. The students of the educational program can attend the meetings of the Committee of the educational program and their opinion is taken into account. UNIK has incorporated the recommendations made during the last NCEQE authorization process in 2018.

The development of the educational program is guided by the National qualification framework, HE sectoral legal acts and characteristics, other normative acts and international documents and conventions as well as internal legal acts and instructions of the university.

The credits system ECTS determines the working hours and volume required to achieve the learning outcomes all while taking into account the specifics of the field. The program defines the distribution of hours between practical and theoretical learning, independent and contact learning.

For each educational program, the institution has clearly created a document that details the prerequisite for admission, the learning outcomes, the teaching-learning methods and activities, the program volume and structure, the assessment system, the field of employment and opportunities for continuing education and the material and human resources for implementing the program.

Each program component is similarly mapped to the evaluation criteria, the working hours and the educational staff. The teaching methods used are modern and evidence-based, they are adequately mapped to the learning outcomes.

The Training Center for Innovative Teaching Methods (2020) organize various workshops and learning seminars to enhance academic staff theoretical expertise and practical skills.

However, the language barrier especially in the medical program, where students have to establish close contact with Georgian patients despite the institutions' efforts in adopting the national requirements of increasing language credits.

UNIK's evaluation system is regulated by the "Regulatory Rule of the Educational Process of Kutaisi University LLC", and is in accordance with Georgia's legislation related to the rule of calculation of programs by credits. The evaluation is thus based on midterm and final evaluations, with the final evaluation not exceeding 40% of the total evaluation. The institution uses multiple assessment methods that are comprehensive, modern and evidence-based (OSCEs, OSPEs, portfolio, quiz, oral surveys, clinic duties...etc).

The passing threshold is clearly defined by summing up the points obtained based on passing the minimum threshold established for the midterm assessment and the minimum threshold established in the final exam, which should be 51 points or more. The latter might be appropriate for economy and law; however, the university might consider opening the debate regarding the appropriateness of the threshold for the medical program.

An evaluation of the assessment methods is continuously carried out by the quality assurance office to ensure the adequacy of the methods used in achieving the learning outcomes according to the "Methodology for Evaluating Learning Outcomes of Educational Programs" (2020). This evaluation uses direct and indirect methods.

4. Staff of the HEI – substantially complies with requirements

The university has adopted and implemented a personnel management policy document approved by the Governing Board's Resolution No. 1 on August 12, 2020.

The selection of academic staff is conducted through an open competition and includes 2 stages: selection of applications and conducting a demonstration lecture by the candidate selected at the first stage and evaluating the candidate according to predetermined criteria.

The University ensures the involvement of staff in the decision-making process regarding educational, research and other important issues. Kutaisi University LLC systematically evaluates its personnel and analyses the results of the evaluation as well as regularly conducts employee surveys to determine their satisfaction with the organization.

However, the method of evaluation of the scientific staff was found, therefore, it is recommended to add a rule for scientific staff evaluation regulations. It is recommended also to increase the share of affiliated academic staff, and consider best international practice of planning academic staff/student ratio.

University should consider the best international practice in personnel planning methodology to ensure adequate number of respective academic staff members per program. University needs to put more effort to improve benchmarks for its staff in order to effectively carry out its educational and research activities. The university involves students in the planning of the educational process and assists in creating individual curricula for them.

5. Students and their support services – substantially complies with requirements

The rules for obtaining and changing student status, the recognition of education, and student rights are regulated by Kutaisi University LLC and prescribed in legal acts that comply with Georgian law. The Self-Evaluation Report and site-visit interviews demonstrate that Kutaisi University LLC effectively ensures legal and efficient procedures to protect students' rights and provide a smooth learning experience.

Kutaisi University LLC enables student mobility twice during the calendar year and internal mobility twice a year in the same time frame. UNIK promotes the career development and employment of students and graduates. HEI implements career support services and has relations with partners and potential employers. Moreover, University provides students with psychological service, facilitates student's adaption and ensures diverse student life. Kutaisi University LLC ensures proper delivery of all necessary services for students. Students receive adequate counselling and support from the faculty staff.

Kutaisi University LLC ensures financial support mechanisms for all students, and many students used financial benefits. Additionally, Kutaisi University LLC provides conditions to encourage students for receiving the scholarships.

UNIK has launched several projects and actively engaged students in them. Additionally, University participates in various institutional projects funded by the European Union, which is one of the most advanced in Georgia.

6. Research, development and/or other creative work – substantially complies with requirements

One of the strategic priorities of the UNIK is the development and internationalization of scientific research activities. To achieve this goal, the university tries to pay great attention to the promotion of the scientific and research process. The university has two research institutes: the Research Institute of Economics and the Research Institute of Medicine.

UNIK is publishing the scientific journal "Economic Profile" since 2006 in printed form (ISSN – 1512-3901), and in electronic form (eISSN – 2587-5310) since 2017. The journal is open access.

Kutaisi University LLC currently has only one doctoral program - the doctoral program in economics.

Despite the numerous grant applications, prepared by the UNIK academic staff, most of them were not funded, which necessitates careful attention to identifying the cause of the problem and devising solutions.

The Kutaisi University LLC has a Center for the Promotion of Scientific-Research Activities. The Center is sharing the information about national and international scientific conferences, research grant competitions, international individual scholarship competitions to the university staff. The regularly conducts trainings, workshops and information meetings. The university finances the publication of articles in paid international journals. The Center collaborates with the Quality Assurance Service to

assess the outcomes, analyse findings, and identify the needs related to enhancing scientific and research activities among academic staff.

7. Material, information and financial resources – substantially complies with requirements

Kutaisi University LLC owns and operates a dedicated educational building at A. Tsereteli St. No. 13, Kutaisi, 4600, providing a comprehensive infrastructure to support its academic mission. This facility encompasses a substantial area of 2730.01 sq.m., with clearly delineated spaces for both instructional and auxiliary purposes. The structure is equipped to handle the diverse needs of educational programs in the Faculties of Medicine, Social Sciences, Business, and Law, which all operate from this central location. Specialized labs are available for subjects such as chemistry, biochemistry, histology, pathology, microbiology, immunology, and physiology.

Kutaisi University's LLC comprehensive infrastructure, rigorous safety standards, and commitment to continuous improvement ensure that it meets the needs of its academic programs and student body. By regularly updating its facilities and responding to feedback, the university maintains a high standard of education and support, aligned with its mission and strategic goals.

The library at Kutaisi University LLC aims to provide a comprehensive and supportive environment for its students and staff. It offers a range of services and facilities to enhance the learning experience. Both library locations (Kutaisi, Tbilisi) are designed to meet the diverse needs of users by providing ample space for reading, studying, and collaborative work. The working hours ensure that students have sufficient access to the library resources throughout the week.

Information technology management policies and procedures ensure the effective utilization of computer and information resources and maintain information security within the university's educational and research activities.

The official university website provides contact information and details about programs, staff, and regulatory documents in both Georgian and English. To ensure the continuous development of these electronic services and systems, the university's IT service conducts periodic monitoring and provides reports on identified deficiencies.

According to the university's 2023-2024 budget, the income is 2,283,050 GEL. The budget of Kutaisi University LLC is decentralized and formulated with extensive input from its various structural units. University established "Rules for the Implementation of the Financial Management and Control System". It is recommended that the university develop detailed budgets for each program to accurately capture and reflect the financial realities associated with them.

Summary of Recommendations

2.1.1. It is recommended that the institution conduct a thorough review of its organizational structure. Additionally, this review should include the integration of the President, faculty councils, and research centers into the organogram.

2.1.2. The position, power, functions and responsibility of the president should be also defined in the UNIK documents and management structure of the university.

2.2.1. Ensure active participation of program leaders in Student Contingent planning and Monitoring Procedures.

4.1.1. It is recommended to add a rule for scientific staff evaluation to the staff evaluation rules/regulations.

4.1.2. It is recommended to increase the share of affiliated academic staff, which will contribute to the growth of the university's ranking and scientific image, further improvement of the educational process and research activities.

4.2.1. It is recommended to consider the best international practice in personnel planning methodology to ensure adequate number of professors, associate professors and assistant professors per program. University needs to put more effort to improve benchmarks for its staff in order to effectively carry out its educational and research activities. The University should consider the best international practice of planning academic staff/student ratio.

- 5.1.1. It is imperative for the university to ensure that all students are comprehensively informed about their rights related to learning procedures.
- 6.1.1. The reasons for the rejection of most of the grant applications need to be investigated and measures taken to eliminate this problem.
- 6.2.1. The internationalization component should be strengthened, in particular international cooperation and exchange programs should be activated.
- 6.2.2. The comparative research component should be strengthened in research projects and theses.
- 6.2.3. It is recommended for the university to offer its academic staff scientific activities related to the fields.
- 7.4.1. It is recommended that the university develop detailed budgets for each program to accurately capture and reflect the financial realities associated with them.

Summary of Suggestions

- 1.1.1. Discuss and reconsider the relevance of the Mission Statement for the coming strategic planning period.
- 1.2.1. It is advisable to have University annual and action plans as well as respective Rector's reports to be accessible for public in English as well.
- 2.1.1. Distribute the job description of Vice-Rectors more uniformly according to the strategy of the university.
- 2.1.2. Regularly assess the workload of top-level managers who hold multiple administrative positions to ensure they are not overloaded.
- 2.1.3. While the institution has developed an internationalization policy and supports the international mobility of students and staff, there is a need to enhance its involvement in international scientific activities.
- 2.1.4. It would be advisable to publish the real story of Kutaisi University LLC from the very beginning of the founding until nowadays, including the relations with the European University.
- 2.1.5. Draw attention to the English translation of the UNIK documents to avoid an ambiguity and misinterpretation.
- 2.2.1. Implement fully digitalized processes for interpreting survey data and preparing reports to optimize efficiency and accuracy.
- 2.2.2. Review the internal regulations to avoid inconsistencies and technical errors in the documents.
- 2.2.3. To discuss the possibility to introduce the process management methodology in organization quality management.
- 2.3.1. It is important for the institution to raise awareness of the principles of academic freedom among students. And, it is advisable to establish a Student Ombudsman position to further promote student counselling, provide assistance, protect students' interests, rights, and freedoms etc.
- 2.3.2. Institution should establish mechanisms to safeguard against the potential threats posed by AI.
- 3.2.1. The institution might consider creative and innovative solutions to enhance foreign students learning of the Georgian language like extra-curricular activities, in order to further improve their integration and learning experience, especially in Georgian hospitals.
- 3.3.1. The university should consider increasing the passing threshold defined at 51% in the medical field. The program needs to ensure that the achievement of the learning outcomes for a medical doctor reflect the desired health outcomes of the population he/she will serve in the future.
- 6.1.1. Develop clearer criteria for evaluating plagiarism and criteria for avoiding subjective decision-making.
- 6.2.1. The university might consider strengthening research training activities for students and making it more systematic.

Summary of the Best Practices

N/A

Summary Table of Compliance of HEI with Standards and Standard Components

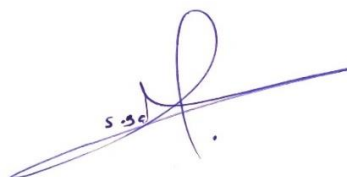
	Standard	Complies with Requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially Complies with Requirements	Does not Comply with Requirements
1.	Mission and strategic development of HEI	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.1	Mission of HEI	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2	Strategic development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Organisational structure and management of HEI	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.1	Organisational structure and management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.2	Internal quality assurance mechanisms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.3	Observing principles of ethics and integrity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Educational Programmes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.1	Design and development of educational programmes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.2	Structure and content of educational programmes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.3	Assessment of learning outcomes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Staff of the HEI	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.1	Staff management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2	Academic/Scientific and invited Staff workload	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Students and their support services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.1	The Rule for obtaining and changing student status, the recognition of education, and student rights	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.2	Student support services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Research, development and/or other creative work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.1	Research activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.2	Research support and internationalisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.3	Evaluation of research activities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Material, information and financial resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.1	Material resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.2	Library resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.3	Information resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.4	Financial resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signature of expert panel members

1. Vaidotas Viliūnas (Chair)



2. Salma Soussi (Co-chair)



3. Ketevan Aptarashvili (Member)

4. Ia Natsvlishvili (Member)

5. Tamar Berishvili (Member)

6. Khatuna Saganelidze (Member)

7. Beka Bendeliani (Member)

Compliance of the Applicant HEI with the Authorisation Standard Components

1. Mission and strategic development of HEI

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

1.1 Mission of HEI

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The Mission of the Kutaisi University LLC (UNIK) declares and defines its role in the local, national and international context:

- Training of personnel with competence and knowledge corresponding to the requirements of the international, national and regional labour market, who will be able to make their own contribution to the development of the society and the relevant field with ethical and social responsibility, as well as to economic reconstruction;
- Strengthening of the academic community at the local level, promoting the generation and sharing of new knowledge, taking into account both the university's resources and the peculiarities of the region.

The Mission of UNIK has quite general formulation not defying the characteristics of HEI and not determining its type/profile and main directions of its academic provisions leaving the room for the further institutional developments.

The Mission of the UNIK is not only shared by the community, but also represents an important unifying factor of the University team as it was mentioned in Self-Evaluation Report and this was proved during the meetings with student and staff.

The Mission of the Kutaisi University LLC is published on the website of the university.

The Mission of the Kutaisi University LLC corresponds to the Georgia and EHEA education goals in general and comply with the standard requirements. However, the university has a capacity and

potential to be stronger and better. Therefore, it would be advisable to focus first of all on the people, students and academic staff, and their future in the context of the development of their own personalities, city, region, country and Europe. It is advisable because the requirements of the world of work are changing much faster than University is capable to adapt, and develop or update the programs. It is necessary to focus on the most important students learning outcomes to act in such environment - the competencies of creativity, capacity to implement and commercialize innovations, adaptability and resilience of changes and critical thinking, digitalization and capacity as well as skills to use all available information resources and measures, including the AI tools. The global trend is flexible and adaptable higher education. Therefore, the university mission statement is advisable to be discussed and updated periodically.

Evidences/indicators

- Self-Evaluation Report with respective annexes;;
- Kutaisi University LLC Mission statement: <https://www.unik.edu.ge/Mission>;
<https://www.unik.edu.ge/PagePDF/4336a28a7b9724f1e6a28afb7055a6cb.pdf>;
- Strategy of Kutaisi University LLC (2020);
- Interviews with university community and employers during the site-visit.

Recommendations:

N/A

Suggestions:

1.1.1. Discuss and reconsider the relevance of the Mission Statement for the coming strategic planning period.

Best Practices (if applicable):

N/A

Evaluation

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

1.2 Strategic Development

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

Kutaisi University LLC has a Strategy for the period of 2021-2027, approved by the Governing Board on 29-12-2020. Strategy presents all respective components of such documents: mission statement, values, vision, strategic direction and priorities. Strategic directions and priorities are explained and tasks to achieve the results are defined. Document is well structured and clear. An Action plan 2023-2026, is developed for the implementation of the above Strategy. Strategy together with Action plan cover all main aspects of the operation of the University, namely institutional development, quality assurance, planning and provision of educational programs, student body planning, research directions and funding, HR and finance, student support services and infrastructure. Action plan is divided into missions and further on in concrete events, focused to implement all UNIK strategic priorities. Action plan indicates when respective events should start and to be finished. It is indicating responsible and supportive parties/units, possible risk and source of resources, explains the content and the outcome of event and indicates verification and financial provision. Planned results are achievable, time-bound and measurable.

University community, including students, Alumni, academic and invited staff and main stakeholders were involved and took an active part in the development of the Strategy and Action plans following the strategic planning methodology of Kutaisi University LLC (Resolution No.4 of the Governing Board of 9-11-2020).

UNIK contributes to the development of regional society and offer the lifelong learning possibilities. University organized the Sunday School in Mathematics and Computer Sciences (8 weeks) for students of IX-XII grades, free professional teacher trainings. Teachers were provided with training related to the topic of the new school model (2020-2021), and the training modules were related to qualification exams, as well as research and sustainable development issues from 2022. Kutaisi University LLC provided 507 teachers from 48 schools with free trainings related to the above-mentioned topical

issues. A new training module "Evaluation at school - Evaluation Tools and Strategies" was offered to 5 public schools (24 teachers attended) in 2023-2024 academic year. UNIK is opening free Chinese language classes in College "Iberia" and Kutaisi private school "Progress".

Strategic development documents presented and/or accessible in English create an assumption, that University is capable to assure the achievement of planned results. However, action plans 2021-2023 and 2022-2024 as well as respective implementation monitoring reports, including the measurable indicators (KPI's), were not presented to the expert's panel in English. Therefore, it is difficult to see the full picture and understand to which extent University is monitoring and controlling the process and progress of strategy implementation, including to which extent PDCA cycle is in full consistency. Higher Education is considered as a public good, and therefore, the information related to the quality assurance of education and strategy of the education provider should be publicly accessible regardless of the institution ownership (public or private), particularly when university declares internationalization policy.

Evidences/indicators

- Self-Evaluation Report and respective annexes;
- Strategy of Kutaisi University LLC (2020);
- Interviews with university community and employers during the site-visit;
- Kutaisi University LLC website <https://www.unik.edu.ge/>.

Recommendations:

N/A

Suggestions:

1.2.1. It is advisable to have University annual and action plans as well as respective Rector's reports to be accessible for public in English as well.

Best Practices (if applicable):

N/A

Evaluation

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

2. Organisational Structure and Management of HEI

Organisational structure and management of the HEI is based on best practices of the educational sector, meaning effective use of management and quality assurance mechanisms in the management process. This approach ensures implementation of strategic plan, integration of quality assurance function into management process, and promotes principles of integrity and ethics

2.1 Organisational Structure and Management

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

Regulation of UNIK (approved by the order of the Rector, No 260, 16-07-2020) defines the management principles of Kutaisi University LLC and the authority of structural units. This document quite well developed and explains the structure of the HEI, authority, functions and responsibility of all top managerial positions and structural units, except the president of the institution.

The organizational structure of Kutaisi University LLC largely ensures the implementation of the activities outlined by the strategic development and action plans. In 2020, the new structure of Kutaisi University LLC was approved. It should be emphasized that according to Self-Evaluation Report, during the development of the new structure, UNIK shared the structure of the European University that implements higher education programs (excluding Doctoral programs). Accordingly, the strategic

development document for 2021-2027 outlined one of the main directions – “Development and internationalization of scientific research activities”, however research direction is not strongly represented in the organizational structure.

The panel noticed that the roles of the Vice-Rectors were not evenly distributed to encompass all the pillars. There is three Vice-Rectors responsible for the Academics, Quality Enhancement and International Relations fields. Most of the offices are headed by the Vice-Rectors. It is noteworthy that, in addition to the Quality Assurance Office, which develops quality assurance mechanisms, implements them, conducts relevant studies, analyses the results of the research and, in close cooperation with the structural units, develops recommendations on areas for improvement, two additional structural units (the Training Center for Innovative Teaching Methods and the Center for the Promotion of Scientific-Research Activities) are under the Vice-Rector for Quality Enhancement. It is important to review the subordination of the structural units under the supervision of the Vice-Rectors and to increase delegation. For instance, it would be desirable for the scientific direction to be transferred under the Vice-Rector responsible for scientific affairs and to strengthen the research direction.

Functions and responsibilities of structural units of the institution are defined and divided, staff knows well their functions. The document attached with Self-Evaluation Report include all the functions and job descriptions of the three levels of management (top, middle and low). The top level includes the assembly of partners, the president, the rector, the vice-rectors, and the deans of faculties. However, the university's organizational structure needs to be reviewed. The panel noticed that some of the most important and influential bodies are missing from the current organogram. Specifically, it should reflect the inclusion of the President/Assembly of Partners, Faculty Councils, and Research Centers. Additionally, it is important to revise the visual representation of the structure to avoid technical inaccuracies in the hierarchical relationships between structural units (for example, the relationship between the faculty and the Strategic Development Office).

The “Provision of Kutaisi University”, accessible on the University webpage (<https://unik.edu.ge/PagePDF/87060b195f57ddbe459a3ec220889bf3.pdf>), is almost, but not the same structure and content, compare to the Regulation of Kutaisi University LLC (approved by the order of the Rector, No 260, 16-07-2020). The terminology used in the Provision document slightly differs from the Regulation. If Regulation is determining three Vice-Rector’s positions, the Provision mentions four Vice-Rector positions. Title of Governing Board is used in Regulation of UNIK, and the Board of Directors is used in Provision of University. The functions and responsibilities of the both units are almost the same.

All above mentioned observations can be the result of inaccurate translation. However, such mistakes can lead to ambiguity and reduce confidence of the institution from the international partner’s side.

During the interview session, the panel observed that several top-level managers hold multiple administrative positions at both in the UNIK and the European universities. However, staff members assured us that they are not overloaded and, if necessary, utilize online work formats to manage their responsibilities effectively.

The procedures of appointment or election in the management bodies of the university are transparent, fair and in line with the law. The university has a well-kept data base. The structure of the university permits elective and appointed positions. Throughout meetings with the various levels of employees, all expressed their confidence in the fairness of employment procedure at the university.

It should be mentioned that the institution will conduct teaching in Tbilisi, where the same top management will be represented, and the results of the interview confirm that the institution also plans to add administrative staff.

UNIK has a plan, which ensures continuity of all major business processes taking place at the institution. The plan takes into account all possible risks, mechanism for their prevention and in case the prevention is not possible, UNIK has a strategy for risk mitigation. Institution management uses electronic document processing system and maintains registry of educational institutions, as described in current legislation.

The panel recognizes that the UNIK mission and goals along with its leadership support the international cooperation of the institution and the process of internationalization. UNIK manages to attract large numbers of students from abroad, mainly in the field of medicine. Institution has elaborated internationalization policy and supports international mobility of students and staff; Kutaisi University LLC has a memorandum of cooperation with 61 foreign universities from 21 countries, 37 of which are located in EU member states. Kutaisi University LLC mostly plans internationalization activities in teaching-learning and extracurricular areas and university should enhance its involvement in international scientific activities (see the description and evaluation section of sub-standard "6.2. Research support and internationalization").

<p>Evidences/indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Evaluation Report and respective annexes: • Structure of Kutaisi University LLC; • Regulations of Kutaisi University LLC; • Provision of Kutaisi University LLC, accessible on the University webpage (https://unik.edu.ge/PagePDF/87060b195f57ddbe459a3ec220889bf3.pdf); • Regulations of the Governing Board of Kutaisi University LLC; • Statute of the Board of directors of European University; • Staff selection rules; • Management effectiveness monitoring mechanisms and evaluation system; • Business Process Continuity Plan; • Internationalization policy of Kutaisi University LLC and its implementation and evaluation mechanisms • Memorandums of mutual cooperation signed with foreign universities; Inter-institutional agreements; • Interviews with university community and employers during the site-visit; • Kutaisi University LLC website: https://www.unik.edu.ge/.
<p>Recommendations:</p> <p>2.1.1. It is recommended that the institution conduct a thorough review of its organizational structure. Additionally, this review should include the integration of the President, faculty councils, and research centers into the organogram.</p> <p>2.1.2. The position, power, functions and responsibility of the president should be also defined in the UNIK documents and management structure of the university.</p>
<p>Suggestions:</p> <p>2.1.1. Distribute the job description of Vice-Rectors more uniformly according to the strategy of the university.</p> <p>2.1.2. Regularly assess the workload of top-level managers who hold multiple administrative positions to ensure they are not overloaded.</p> <p>2.1.3. While the institution has developed an internationalization policy and supports the international mobility of students and staff, there is a need to enhance its involvement in international scientific activities.</p> <p>2.1.4. It would be advisable to publish the real story of Kutaisi University LLC from the very beginning of the founding until nowadays, including the relations with the European University.</p> <p>2.1.5. Draw attention to the English translation of the UNIK documents to avoid an ambiguity and misinterpretation.</p>
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p> <p>N/A</p>
<p>Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements
<p>2.2 Internal Quality Assurance Mechanisms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Institution effectively implements internal quality assurance mechanisms. Leadership of the institution constantly works to strengthen quality assurance function and promotes establishment of quality culture in the institution. ○ HEI has a mechanism for planning student body, which will give each student an opportunity to get a high-quality education.
<p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</p> <p>In accordance with the Law of Georgia on Higher Education, UNIK has a solid internal quality assurance system. The quality assurance system Of UNIK operates on the principle: plan, implement, evaluate,</p>

<p>develop (PDCA). Institution has developed internal quality assurance mechanisms, periodically evaluates quality of its services and resources, they disseminate the results of the survey.</p> <p>The panel has noticed through the Self-Evaluation Report and the various interviews that this mechanism is mainly based on a quality enhancement. The university allocates appropriate resources to support the effective implementation of its quality assurance mechanisms, ensuring continuous assessment and development of institution-wide activities and resources. This includes utilizing the SurveyMonkey platform for surveys, although there is a manual process for interpreting survey data and preparing reports. QA department generates a large amount of data. Enhancing digitalization in this area will optimize efficiency and effectiveness.</p> <p>Self-Evaluation Report and Interview results shows, that the Quality Assurance Service cooperates with all structural units of the university, academic and invited staff, students, employers and other interested parties to achieve the set goals. When discussing quality culture with staff, it was mainly described as an integral part of Kutaisi University's LLC daily activities and is considered the responsibility of all individuals involved in the process.</p> <p>The university has a well-defined mechanism for planning its student body, guided by established methodologies and institutional benchmarks. According to the mentioned Student Contingent Planning Methodology, based on the resource assessment of the educational program, the number of students that the university will be able to serve efficiently and effectively within the framework of the educational program will be calculated for each program. Within the framework of quality assurance mechanisms, the "Student Contingent Monitoring Procedure" has also been developed and is in effect. HEI periodically doing monitoring, however the involvement of program leaders should be ensured, as prescribed by the institution through this methodology.</p> <p>The current student quota at Kutaisi University LLC is 900 students. For re-authorization purposes, the university aims to increase this quota to 1500 students. The university has provided evidence supporting the calculation and monitoring of the student contingent in accordance with this methodology.</p> <p>Additionally, university should review the internal regulations to avoid inconsistencies and technical errors in the documents (for example, Governing Board statute of Kutaisi University Ltd (or LLC). Article 2. Definition of terms: B) Academic member of the Board – affiliated staff of European University; and C) – Board Graduate Member – a graduate of European University.)</p>
<p>Evidences/indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality assurance policy; • Quality assurance mechanisms and procedures for using evaluation results; • Student contingent planning methodology; • Student contingent monitoring procedure; • Rule of evaluation of academic and invited staff; • Research results, analysis of results and reports of response to results carried out within the framework of quality assurance mechanisms; • Self-Evaluation Report with respective annexes; • Interview Results.
<p>Recommendations:</p> <p>2.2.1. Ensure active participation of program leaders in Student Contingent planning and Monitoring Procedures.</p>
<p>Suggestions:</p> <p>2.2.1. Implement fully digitalized processes for interpreting survey data and preparing reports to optimize efficiency and accuracy.</p> <p>2.2.2. Review the internal regulations to avoid inconsistencies and technical errors in the documents.</p> <p>2.2.3. To discuss the possibility to introduce the process management methodology in organization quality management.</p>
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p> <p>N/A</p>
<p>Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements
<p>2.3. Observing Principles of Ethics and Integrity</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ HEI has developed regulations and mechanisms that follow principles of ethics and integrity. Such regulations are publicly accessible. ○ Institution has implemented mechanisms for detecting plagiarism and its prevention. ○ HEI follows the principles of academic freedom.
<p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</p> <p>The University's "Code of Ethics and Disciplinary Responsibility" sets out some basic principles and the ethical standards to be observed by staff and students. Staff and students confirmed that the Code is publicly accessible; staff also confirmed that the application of the Code is universal (governing the conduct of all members of the institution, including the Rector).</p> <p>The University has implemented mechanisms for detecting and preventing plagiarism. The relevant part of the "Procedures and Mechanisms for Plagiarism Detection, Prevention, and Response to Plagiarism Cases" provides a definition of plagiarism, information on citation and referencing, and explanation of the institution's arrangements for detecting and prosecuting offences, and the penalties that are to be applied when an act of plagiarism has occurred. These procedures apply to staff as well as students.</p> <p>University has developed the anti-plagiarism program "Strike Plagiarism" which is widespread. Academic staff and students mentioned that they know about this program and participated in the trainings which were organized by the university aimed to provide information about this anti-plagiarism program. Additionally, the university conducts training sessions on AI, specifically covering topics such as "What is AI", "How to Use AI in Teaching", and "How to Protect Against AI-related Risks". However, it is crucial to establish mechanisms to safeguard against the potential threats posed by AI.</p> <p>The Self-Evaluation Report and senior staff affirmed the University's commitment to academic freedom and this was confirmed by academic and invited staff.</p> <p>The Self-Evaluation Report and the interviews with academic staff and students showed that staff is familiar with and shares the principles of academic freedom, there is good dissemination of information on the academic freedom policies and that the academic process at the university is based upon these principles. However, it is important for the institution to raise awareness of these principles among students as well.</p>
<p>Evidences/indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of ethics and disciplinary responsibility of Kutaisi University LLC; • Procedures and mechanisms for plagiarism detection, prevention, and response to plagiarism cases; • Plagiarism detection electronic program: https://strikeplagiarism.com/; • Kutaisi University LLC website; • Self-Evaluation Report with respective annexes; • Interview Results.
<p>Recommendations:</p> <p>N/A</p>
<p>Suggestions:</p> <p>2.3.1. It is important for the institution to raise awareness of the principles of academic freedom among students. And, it is advisable to establish a Student Ombudsman position to further promote student counselling, provide assistance, protect students' interests, rights, and freedoms etc.</p> <p>2.3.2. Institution should establish mechanisms to safeguard against the potential threats posed by AI.</p>
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p> <p>N/A</p>
<p>Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements

3. Educational Programmes

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

3.1 Design and Development of Educational Programmes

HEI has a policy for planning, designing, implementing and developing educational programmes.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The planning, design, implementing and developing of the educational program at UNIK is regulated by "Procedures for Planning, Development, Approval, Making Changes and Cancellation of Educational Programs" policy document approved by the Rector's 2020 by order No. 14 of September 17.

Any stakeholder including students, academic staff and employers, can make a demand for the amendment of the educational program. The basis for considering a change is the following: important changes in the field; the results of internal and external evaluation of the program; legislative changes. Following a demand or suggestion for amendment of the program, there is a clear procedure adopted by the institution for approval and introduction of the necessary changes. The development is initiated by the Faculty Council who commends a market research report from the strategic development service. Once ready, the report is submitted by the dean to the faculty council and the governing board for approval and final decision. The latter will submit an official inquiry to the committee of the educational program to start planning and implementing the change. The quality assurance service will later evaluate the program in accordance with the institution's strategic development plan and develop recommendations for the committee of the educational program.

According to the policy document "Regulations of the Kutaisi University LLC Educational Program Committee" approved by Rector's Order No. 25 of September 18, 2020, the students of the educational program can attend the meetings of the committee of the educational program and participate into the discussions. Students' opinions are also taken into account through satisfaction surveys and based on evaluations of academic performance carried by the QA office.

In developing the new educational program, UNIK has also incorporated the recommendations made during the last NCEQE authorization process in 2018. Following the development of the "Procedures for Planning, Development, Approval, Development, Making Changes and Cancellation of Educational Programs" policy document approved by the Rector's 2020, changes have been incorporated to 6 educational programs. These programs have submitted for accreditation and they were all awarded unconditional accreditation. This goes to prove the efficiency of the policy document in the development and implementation of educational programs aligning with the national requirements.

According to Article 5 of the policy document "Procedures for Planning, Development, Approval, Making Changes and Cancellation of Educational Programs", in the case of a change of an educational programme, the university is obliged to protect the students' interests by providing the opportunity to complete education to the students of the relevant programme taking into account credits received under the modified programme. In case of cancellation of the educational programme, the university is authorized to complete the educational programme for the students enrolled in the programme, or make the necessary arrangements for students' transfer to a compatible programme.

Evidences/indicators

- Self-Evaluation Report with respective annexes;
- Procedures for planning, developing, approving, developing, making changes and cancelling educational programs (approved by Rector's order No.14 of September 17, 2020);
- Methodology for evaluating the learning outcomes of educational programs (approved by Rector's Order No. 15 of September 17, 2020);
- Regulations of the Kutaisi University LLC Educational Program Committee (approved by Rector's Order No. 25 of September 18, 2020);
- Educational programs operating at Kutaisi University LLC;
- Minutes of the meeting of educational programs committees;
- Interested parties' survey results, analysis of results and results utilization reports;
- Accreditation reports on the implementation of recommendations received in the process of accreditation of the master's degree program in accounting and audit, English-language one-cycle medical degree, bachelor's degree programs in economics, tourism and business administration;
- The report on the verification of the conditions of accreditation of business administration educational programs;
- Relevant decisions of the Board of Accreditation of Educational Programs;
- Results of research carried out within the framework of quality assurance mechanisms, analysis of results and reports on response to results.

Recommendations:

N/A

Suggestions:

N/A

<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p> <p>N/A</p>
<p>Evaluation</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements</p>
<p>3.2 Structure and Content of Educational Programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Programme learning outcomes are clearly stated and are in line with higher education level and qualification to be granted ○ With the help of individualized education programmes, HEI takes into consideration various requirements, needs and academic readiness of students, and ensures their unhindered involvement into the educational process.
<p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</p> <p>The development of the educational program is guided by the following important documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National qualifications framework; • "Rule of calculation of higher education programs by credits" approved by Order No. 3 January 5, 2007; • "Regulations on Accreditation of Educational Programs of Educational Institutions" approved by Order No. 65 May 4, 2011; • Sectoral characteristics of higher education; • Other normative acts and international documents/conventions in the field of higher education; • Internal legal acts and instructions of the university. <p>The credits system ECTS determines the working hours and volume required to achieve the learning outcomes all while taking into account the specifics of the field. The program defines the distribution of hours between practical and theoretical learning, independent and contact learning. It ensures that the hourly load fosters more practical learning following the recommendations of the students and employers. For example, in the medical program, the ratio of theoretical to practical is 1/2.7 and in the business administration program is 1/1.5.</p> <p>For each educational program, the institution has clearly created a document that details the following: the prerequisite for admission, the learning outcomes, the teaching-learning methods and activities, the program volume and structure, the assessment system, the field of employment and opportunities for continuing education and the material and human resources for implementing the program. This document gives a comprehensive overview of the program. The learning outcomes are defined in three levels of achievement: knowledge, ability, and responsibility.</p> <p>In parallel, the institution has elaborated multiples mapping annexes to ensure the cohesion of the learning outcomes with: the aims of the program, the program components, the teaching methods, the assessment methods. (Annexes 1,2,3,4)</p> <p>Each program component is similarly mapped to the evaluation criteria, the working hours and the educational staff. The teaching methods used (CBL, case study, simulation, PBL, discussion, bedside teaching...etc) are modern and evidence-based, they are adequately mapped to the learning outcomes. Going to greater detail, the syllabi for each semester and each module is mapping the specific credits, learning outcomes, prerequisites, teaching and assessment methods, evaluation criteria and literature references. For each module, an integrative approach is used that merges the basic sciences to their clinical counterparts. This model ensures unhindered involvement and adoption of the educational program by the students.</p> <p>To ensure its staff are adequately equipped with the knowledge and skills to implement the educational program, UNIK has created the Training Center for Innovative Teaching Methods in 2020. Ever since, a total of 167 academic staff (invited lecturers included) have participated to various workshops and learning seminars to enhance their expertise in the delivery of innovative teaching and assessment methods. The trainers are certified from internationally recognized medical education centers. The training is mandatory according the national requirement every two years. During the interviews led with academic staff of the institution, they declared feeling supported by the institution and the Training Center for Innovative Teaching Methods in their teaching activities and they all showed great enthusiasm for working in UNIK. They also expressed their satisfaction regarding the readiness of the Training Center to provide upon demand trainings.</p> <p>The institution developed online resources to provide its potential future students information on its programmes. The information is freely and easily accessible on the university's website from within and outside of Georgia. For each program, the following elements are provided with detail: the prerequisite</p>

for admission, the learning outcomes, the teaching-learning methods and activities, the program volume and structure, the assessment system, the field of employment and opportunities for continuing education and the material and human resources for implementing the program. A section comprises the novelty of the programme and is regularly updated. The university's website also provides a comprehensive overview of the study plan, the modules and their distribution over the semesters.

Each educational programme at UNIK provides an opportunity for the students to choose elective components. At the beginning of each semester, students are able to choose electives through the electronic system for managing the educational process. In the one-cycle medical program for example, while 320 credits are directed towards compulsory components, another 10 credits are awarded for elective components.

UNIK conducts regular surveys under the university student and alumni service center to study the graduate's employment rates and qualifications. The graduates are encouraged to give their feedback on their learning experience, the skills and knowledge they acquired, the way it translates in the job market, and are able to suggest improvement measures to the university. The employment rate of UNIK graduates has witnessed a sharp increase from 2019 to 2023 going from 58% to 86%.

The students' surveys showed good satisfaction with the educational programs content and structure, including the new teaching and assessment methods. During the interview, the latter was confirmed and the students expressed great enthusiasm in being part of the educational program at UNIK. They confirmed the institution's full support and readiness to provide individualized education plans for students in difficulty, and the accessibility of the lecturers and administrative staff alike. However, there seems to be some challenges related to the language barrier especially in the medical program, where students have to establish close contact with Georgian patients despite the institutions' efforts in adopting the national requirements of increasing language credits.

Evidences/indicators

- Self-Evaluation Report with respective annexes;
- Educational programs operating at Kutaisi University LLC;
- Interested parties' survey results, analysis of results and results utilization reports;
- Methodology for evaluating the learning outcomes of educational programs (approved by Rector's Order No. 15 of September 17, 2020);
- Analysis of the achievement of learning results implemented within the framework of educational programs, reports on the use of results;
- Research results, analysis of results and reports of response to results carried out within the framework of quality assurance mechanisms;
- The regulation of the educational process of Kutaisi University LLC (approved by Rector's order No. 382 of August 21, 2020);
- Results of the graduate survey on employment by the Student and Alumni Service Center;
- Research results of the training center for innovative methods of teaching on the topic of desired trainings for staff;
- Material confirming trainings conducted by the training center for innovative methods of teaching (issued certificates, other materials for conducting trainings).

Recommendations:

N/A

Suggestions:

3.2.1. The institution might consider creative and innovative solutions to enhance foreign students learning of the Georgian language like extra-curricular activities, in order to further improve their integration and learning experience, especially in Georgian hospitals.

Best Practices (if applicable):

N/A

Evaluation

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

3.3 Assessment of Learning Outcomes

HEI has law-compliant, transparent and fair system of learning outcomes assessment, which promotes the improvement of students' academic performance.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

UNIK's evaluation system is regulated by the "Regulatory Rule of the Educational Process of Kutaisi

University LLC" (approved by Rector's Order No. 382 of August 21, 2020). This document policy is in accordance with Georgia's legislation related to the rule of calculation of programs by credits, which requires the awarding of credits to be based on more than one evaluation. The evaluation at Kutaisi university LLC is thus based on midterm and final evaluations, with the final evaluation not exceeding 40% of the total evaluation.

The components, structure and methods of evaluation in both midterm and final are determined within the academic freedom of the implementing staff. An extensive work has been done to map the assessment methods to the learning outcomes for each study course in each module. The institution uses multiple assessment methods that are comprehensive, modern and evidence-based (OSCEs, OSPEs, portfolio, quiz, oral surveys, clinic duties...etc).

As mentioned earlier in the report, UNIK operates the one-cycle medical programme in Kutaisi and plans to start a similar programme in Tbilisi. The programme's content, structure and resources are identical in the two sites. Notably, the simulation center in both sites is appropriately equipped with computer technologies, mannequins and sufficient medical gear, it offers 8 simulation rooms that can arrange for 12 simulation stations during structured clinical examinations, but also to foster practical learning activities. These dispositions support the alignment with the national requirements for OSCEs.

The passing threshold is clearly defined by summing up the points obtained based on passing the minimum threshold established for the midterm assessment and the minimum threshold established in the final exam, which should be 51 points or more. The latter might be appropriate for economy and law; however, the university might consider opening the debate regarding the appropriateness of the threshold for the medical program.

An evaluation of the assessment methods is continuously carried out by the quality assurance office to ensure the adequacy of the methods used in achieving the learning outcomes according to the policy document "Methodology for Evaluating Learning Outcomes of Educational Programs" in force at the university (approved by the rector's order No. 15 of September 17, 2020). This evaluation uses direct and indirect methods.

For the direct methods, students' academic performance is evaluated through analysing the grades' distribution in each learning component for every student involved in the process. Another direct evaluation method is evaluating students' achievement of learning outcomes mapping tool (Appendix N-4). Amendments to the assessment methods can be made based on the results of the above-mentioned evaluations' results. During the visit, we have seen concrete examples of these changes.

As for the evaluation of the assessment methods using indirect methods, the institution uses satisfaction surveys of students, graduates and employers. Results are communicated to the heads of educational program who initiate modifications accordingly.

Additionally, the Training Center for Innovative Teaching Methods carries out training sessions for the academic staff guiding them in the process of elaborating modern and evidence-based assessment methods. The interviews led during the site visit demonstrated that the staff feels supported in this regard, and knowledgeable in state-of-art assessment methods.

Finally, the students are aware of their right for appeal for the final examination, however they seem to ignore their right for appeal in midterm examinations as well.

Evidences/indicators

- Self-Evaluation Report with respective annexes;
- The regulation of the educational process of Kutaisi University LLC (approved by Rector's order No. 382 of August 21, 2020);
- Rules for completing the master's thesis (approved by the rector's order No. 24 of September 17, 2020);
- PhD regulations (approved by the Governing Board's Resolution No. 4 of July 2, 2021);
- Methodology for evaluating the learning outcomes of educational programs (approved by Rector's Order No. 15 of September 17, 2020);
- Rules for administering the examination process (approved by Rector's Order No. 362 of August 14, 2020);
- Educational programs and syllabi operating in Kutaisi University LLC;
- Results of evaluation of educational programs by students, analysis of results and reports on the use of results;
- Analysis of the achievement of learning results implemented within the framework of educational programs, reports on the use of results;
- General student satisfaction survey results, results analysis and response reports;
- Report of the head of the examination center on cases of rewriting and appeals;

- Research results of the training center for innovative methods of teaching on the topic of desired trainings for staff;
- Material confirming trainings conducted by the training center for innovative methods of teaching (issued certificates, other materials for conducting trainings).

Recommendations:

N/A

Suggestions:

3.3.1. It would be advisable for the university to discuss the possibility of increasing the passing threshold defined at 51% in the medical field. The program needs to ensure that the achievement of the learning outcomes for a medical doctor reflect the desired health outcomes of the population he/she will serve in the future.

Best Practices (if applicable):

N/A

Evaluation

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

4. Staff of the HEI

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

4.1. Staff Management

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The university has adopted and implemented a personnel management policy document approved by the Governing Board's Resolution No. 1 on August 12, 2020. The document is accessible on university website <https://www.unik.edu.ge/LegalActs> . During the site visit interview, it became clear that all interested parties (academic, invited, research, administrative and support personnel) were informed on this policy and regulations with regard to personnel management.

Rules and procedures are developed and implemented for the management of human resources, namely: Staff selection rules; Adaptation textbook for new stuff; By-laws of Kutaisi University LLC; Job descriptions and qualification requirements of administrative staff; Administrative personnel competence assessment system; Academic and invited staff evaluation rules; Rules and conditions of affiliation of academic staff; Code of Ethics and Disciplinary Responsibility.

The selection of academic staff is conducted through an open competition and includes 2 stages: selection of applications and conducting a demonstration lecture by the candidate selected at the first stage and evaluating the candidate according to predetermined criteria. If two or more participants scores are equal s at the second stage, the commission conducts an additional interview with applicants. The selection of administrative stuff is based on: internal rotation, recommendation and open competition. The candidate is evaluated according to the selection procedure at the interview with the committee with pre-established criteria.

According university's Academic Staff Affiliation Rules and Conditions, "...affiliation means a written agreement between the university and a person holding an academic position, by which each person holding an academic position defines his/her affiliation only with Kutaisi University LLC, participates in the processes of community development and knowledge sharing on his/her behalf". The affiliation has the following advantages: the university allocates a specific amount in case of meeting the minimum

requirements established for the affiliated staff regarding the scientific-research activity. The minimum requirement refers to the specific number of points accumulated as a result of the annual evaluation, which is an indicator of the research activity of the academic staff.

The University ensures the involvement of staff in the decision-making process regarding educational, research and other important issues. The governing board of the university consists of vice-rectors, heads of structural units, students, graduate and affiliated academic staff. The Faculty Council consists of affiliated academic staff of the faculty. The faculty council discusses issues related to the management of the educational process and the strategic development of the faculty.

Kutaisi University LLC takes measures for the professional development of academic/invited staff, namely the training center for innovative teaching is established which systematically offers different training modules to academic and invited staff.

Kutaisi University LLC systematically evaluates its personnel and analyses the results of the evaluation. After the evaluation, if needed different services and support/trainings/ academic exchange opportunities are offered to the staff. Information about academic and invited staff ratings is posted on the website of the Kutaisi University LLC: <https://www.unik.edu.ge/FacultyOfSocialSciences/183>; <https://unik.edu.ge/FacultyOfMedicine/184>, which, according to the administration, increases the motivation of the staff to improve the evaluation results. The University also regularly conducts employee surveys to determine their satisfaction with the organization.

The rules for evaluating academic and invited personnel, the system for evaluating administrative personnel competencies is also developed, implemented in practice. It is also presented on the web page of the university. However, the method of evaluation of the scientific staff was not found by the expert group. The mentioned rule was additionally requested by the group of experts during the visit; however, it was not additionally provided. Therefore, it is recommended to add a rule for scientific staff evaluation to the staff evaluation rules/regulations.

The institution has 102 academic staff (including 35 affiliated staff), as well as 12 research staff, 253 visiting staff, 66 administrative and support staff. Among the academic and invited staff, the university employs 3 foreign staff. It is recommended to increase the share of affiliated academic staff, which will contribute to the growth of the university's ranking and scientific image, further improvement of the educational process and research activities.

According to the statistical information provided by the institution, out of 102 academic staff members, 62 staff members are women, 5 staff members are aged 65 years and above. The institution has 24 academic and scientific staff under the age of 40.

The self-evaluation report developed by the university presents the actual number of personnel and defines various benchmarks by 2030 for the staff of the university. For example, the Ratio of the affiliated staff number to the number of students currently is 35/254 (1/7.3). By 2030, the similar indicator/target is planned to be the 1/55. More specifically, at the Faculty of Medicine, the target marks are defined as follows:

Faculty name: Faculty of Medicine	Actual indicator	Target indicator	Expected date of target achievement ¹
The ratio of the number of academic, scientific, invited staff to the number of students	234/103 (2.3/1)	1/6	2030
The ratio of the number of affiliated academic staff to the number of students	12/103 (1/8.6)	1/100	2030

As evidenced by the above mentioned data, some target benchmarks (for example, Ratio of the affiliated staff number to the number of students, The ratio of the number of academic, scientific, invited staff to the number of students at The Faculty of Medicine) does not show a trend of improvement.

Evidences/indicators

- Staff management policy of Kutaisi University LLC <https://www.unik.edu.ge/LegalActs>;
- Staff selection rules;

¹ Expected date of achievement of the target mark should not exceed 6 years

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptation textbook for new staff; • By-laws of Kutaisi University LLC; • Job descriptions and qualification requirements of administrative staff; • Administrative personnel competence assessment system; • Academic and invited staff evaluation rules; • Rules and conditions of affiliation of academic staff; • Research funding rules; • Code of Ethics and Disciplinary Responsibility; • Guidelines for conducting satisfaction surveys; • Administrative personnel evaluation reports; • Academic and invited staff evaluation results and response reports; • Statistical analysis of annual reports of scientific and research activities; • Statistical data on staff; • Contract samples of staff (including contracts with affiliated and research personnel); • Number of applications on advertised job openings; • Benchmarks set by the university; • Survey results of students, academic, scientific, invited personnel; • Personal files (CV-s) of the staff; • Site visit interviews; • Self-Evaluation Report with respective annexes.
<p>Recommendations:</p> <p>4.1.1. It is recommended to add a rule for scientific staff evaluation to the staff evaluation rules/regulations.</p> <p>4.1.2. It is recommended to increase the share of affiliated academic staff, which will contribute to the growth of the university's ranking and scientific image, further improvement of the educational process and research activities.</p>
<p>Suggestions:</p> <p>N/A</p>
<p>Best Practices (if applicable):</p> <p>N/A</p>
<p>Evaluation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements</p>
<p>4.2. Academic/Scientific and Invited Staff Workload</p> <p>Number and workload of academic/scientific and invited staff is adequate to HEI's educational programmes and scientific-research activities, and also other functions assigned to them</p>
<p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</p> <p>Kutaisi University LLC has adopted and implemented workload scheme for academic and invited staff, that is renewable in every semester. The scheme includes teaching, research and other workloads depending on the functions and duties assigned to the personnel. The workload scheme indicators are regulated by the following regulatory documents: Methodology for Determining the Number of Academic and Invited Staff; Rules and Conditions of Affiliation of Academic Staff. The regulations also set the workload of affiliated academic staff at another university, which is limited to 10 hours.</p> <p>According the regulations of Kutaisi University LLC maximum hourly teaching workload per semester for professor is 315 hours (21 hours per week); for associate professor – 380 hours (24 hours per week), for assistant-professor - 405 hours (27hours per week), for assistant – 405 hours (27 hours per week). To observe the factual situation and compliance with restrictions regarding the hourly workloads</p>

of the staff at all educational programs, in every semester Kutaisi University LLC develops Academic and Invited Staff workload tables.

According to Methodology for Determining the Number of Academic and Invited Staff, at least 51% of the hours within the compulsory courses of the main field of study of the educational programs, are taught by the academic staff. This requirement is considered sufficient for ensuring the sustainability of the educational programs. Although, during the site visit interviews, arguments were not presented, which international best practice were used to set such indicator in the methodology of calculation personnel per program. Kutaisi University's LLC Methodology for Determining the Number of Academic and Invited Staff does not specify the share/number of professors/associate professors and assistant professors per educational program. Thus, theoretically, the educational program can be implemented only by assistants who might not have doctoral academic degree (By the Georgian Law of Higher education assistants also are considered as academic staff and it is not necessary for them to hold doctoral degree).

When determining the number of academic and invited staff for educational programs, the university also takes into account following issues: Number of students enrolled in the educational program; The maximum number of students admitted to the group during the lecture and practical training hours of the training courses; the number of hours of lectures and practical classes to be held per week during the semester in the mandatory courses of the main field of study; The maximum allowed number of hours to be spent by the academic staff; benchmarks established for academic and invited staff.

No program is allowed to be run by academic staff only. Therefore, it is mandatory to include invited specialists in the implementation of the program. The University presented the List of personnel by education programs which indicates that every educational program is implemented with the involvement of professors/associate professors/assistant professors and they are not run only by assistants and invited personal (as it theoretically could be according the university's Methodology for Determining the Number of Academic and Invited Staff).

It is recommended to consider the best international practice in personnel planning methodology to ensure adequate number of professors, associate professors and assistant professors per program. University needs to put more effort to improve benchmarks for its staff in order to effectively carry out its educational and research activities. The University should consider the best international practice of planning academic staff/student ratio.

Evidences/indicators

- Methodology for Determining the Number of Academic and Invited Staff;
- Rules and Conditions of Affiliation of Academic Staff;
- Academic and Invited Staff workload tables for the fall semester of the 2023-2024 academic year;
- Table of calculation of academic staff numbers according to educational programs, 2023-2024 academic year;
- List of personnel by education programs;
- Site visit interviews;
- Self-Evaluation Report with respective annexes.

Recommendations:

4.2.1. It is recommended to consider the best international practice in personnel planning methodology to ensure adequate number of professors, associate professors and assistant professors per program. University needs to put more effort to improve benchmarks for its staff in order to effectively carry out its educational and research activities. The University should consider the best international practice of planning academic staff/student ratio.

Suggestions:

N/A

Best Practices (if applicable):

N/A

Evaluation

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

5. Students and Their Support Services

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

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

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The rules for obtaining and changing student status, the recognition of education, and student rights are regulated by Kutaisi University LLC and prescribed in legal acts that comply with Georgian law. The self-evaluation report and site interviews demonstrate that Kutaisi University LLC effectively ensures legal and efficient procedures to protect students' rights and provide a smooth learning experience. Obtaining, suspending and terminating student status in bachelor's, masters and doctoral one-cycle programs are prescribed in the "Regulating Rule of the Educational Process" and "PhD Regulations" of Kutaisi University LLC and are in line with Georgian law.

Kutaisi University LLC enables student mobility twice during the calendar year and internal mobility twice a year in the same time frame. Moreover, Kutaisi University LLC is authorized to announce extraordinary internal mobility in accordance with the "Regulating Rule of the Educational Process" in cases where accreditation of an educational program is refused or cancelled, or if the university discontinues the program. Under the internal mobility rule, students are permitted to fill vacant positions starting from the second semester of study. The internal mobility process at the university is managed by the Educational Process Administration Service in collaboration with the relevant faculty.

The regulation of the educational process also addresses the calculation of the weighted average score (GPA) using the credits earned by the student. The GPA is determined by calculating the credit-weighted average of the grades obtained by the student in each academic course over a specific period (semester, academic year). A student's credit-weighted GPA is computed at the end of each semester and academic year, based on the grades received during the corresponding period. The GPA is calculated on a 4-point scale, where 1 point is equivalent to 0.04 points in the 100-point rating system. A student's GPA is used to assess their academic performance and progress.

Kutaisi University LLC ensures that students have the right to appeal midterm assessments, final assessments, and bachelor's/master's theses/projects. The university is also responsible for comprehensively informing all students about their rights and the possibility of appeal. However, during a meeting with MD students, it was revealed that students were only informed about the option to appeal final exams and they had no information that they can also appeal for midterm exams. As a result, the university failed to inform them that they also have the right to appeal midterm exams.

The university offers the opportunity for citizens of foreign countries who have completed general or equivalent education abroad to enrol. This also applies to foreign citizens who have studied or are studying and have received credits or qualifications from a recognized higher education institution in a foreign country. The university is responsible for checking students' proficiency in English through an examination. The examination process must adhere to the competency determination rules and ensure that a video recording of the examination is available for the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia. To assess the English language proficiency of the students, the university conducts internal exams. Passing the internal university exam in the specialty is required. The topics and evaluation criteria for the internal university exam will be posted on the university's website (www.unik.edu.ge) at least three months before the exams. For the internal university exam in English, it is mandatory to confirm English language proficiency at the B2 level, as determined by the English language exam. The process of determining English language proficiency follows the 'Rule for Determining the Language Competence of a Student of Kutaisi University.' Alternatively, B2 level proficiency can also be confirmed with a valid document certifying the appropriate level of English.

Overall, Kutaisi University LLC ensures protection of rights for students to receive a quality education and have equal access to all necessary material, technical, library, informational, and other resources provided by the university. Additionally, students are kept informed about the university's activities in accordance with the legislation of Georgia.

Evidences/indicators

- Self-Evaluation Report with respective annexes;
- Legal acts of Kutaisi University LLC;
- Site-visit interviews.

Recommendations:

5.1.1. It is imperative for the university to ensure that all students are comprehensively informed about their rights related to learning procedures.

Suggestions:

N/A

Best Practices (if applicable):

N/A

Evaluation

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

5.2 Student Support Services

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

According to self-evaluating report and interviews held bot with academic staff of Kutaisi University LLC and students, HEI ensures proper delivery of all necessary services for students. Students receive adequate counselling and support from the faculty staff. The dean, heads of educational programs, and managers of educational processes provide students with information and guidance on any matters related to their educational process. The university involves students in the planning of the educational process and assists in creating individual curricula for them. It ensures that students are informed about any changes to internal university regulations, their rights, and organizes counselling meetings when necessary. Curriculum managers keep students updated on curriculum-related issues through both email and text messages. The "Methodology of Individual Curriculum Development" operates at the university and its main purpose is to allow students to participate in study plan and present their preferences. Interviews with students revealed that they have utilized this procedure and feel positive about its outcomes. In line with the document, the university considers the needs of individuals with special educational requirements and strives to support their integration into the educational process. By following the methodology for developing an individualized curriculum, it is possible to customize teaching and assessment methods, as well as adjust examination schedules, based on the application submitted by the student with special needs and the accompanying assessment.

Kutaisi University LLC ensures financial support mechanisms for all students. The rules for the use of financial benefits by a student of Kutaisi University LLC are regulated by the "Rule of Scholarship Appointment and Individual Payment Schedule at Kutaisi University LLC" and "Support Mechanisms for Vulnerable Students of Kutaisi University LLC". According to the data provided by Kutaisi University LLC many students used financial benefits. Additionally, Kutaisi University LLC provides conditions to encourage students for receiving the scholarships.

Kutaisi University LLC promotes the career development and employment of students and graduates. HEI implements career support services and has relations with partners and potential employers. Data provided by the university and site interviews demonstrate that many students who used career support services successfully secured employment. To support the career development of students and graduates, the service center in the University conducts research on their academic and professional progress, analyzes the findings, and shares the information with relevant services and faculties. The results of the center's survey of graduates from the past five years are as follows: out of 183 graduates,

the center interviewed 108, which represents 59% of the total. Of those interviewed, 85 (79%) are employed, 56 (68%) are working in their field of qualification, and 13 (12%) have continued their studies.

Interviews with alumni also confirmed that the university played an important role in helping them find jobs suited to their qualifications. Notably, one graduate successfully secured employment at Kutaisi University LLC after completing their studies. According to data provided by the University, the indicators of graduate employment by qualification according to the programs are as follows: Business Administration, Finance, Economics, Economics (PhD), Tourism, and Accounting and Auditing. Training sessions are offered to students on resume preparation and interview skills.

Since February 2022, the Student and Alumni Service Center at Kutaisi University LLC has been organizing a series of online meetings called "Career Consultations." These sessions provide students with valuable information on creating effective resumes and cover letters, preparing for interviews, and navigating the job search process through presentations, discussions, and case studies. On October 17 and June 22, 2022, students also met with representatives from Credo Bank, including the Regional Recruiting Officer, to learn about career development opportunities at the bank. The representatives of the bank provided the students with information about the paid internship program and vacancies available throughout Imereti. In May 2023, meetings of the above-mentioned similar type were held by GPAI Holding.

Kutaisi University LLC also provided trainings for students to get more practical experience. On January 27, 2023, a training on the topic "First aid - CPR" was held for the students of the medicine program of Kutaisi University LLC. Within the framework of the training, students mastered the first management of a traumatized patient and cardiopulmonary resuscitation. Also, with the acquired knowledge, students will be able to assess the consequences of trauma and prevent the worsening of the disease.

It should be noted that across all educational programs offered at the university, significant time is allocated to practical work hours. This emphasis on practical skills is in line with the recommendations consistently made by employers, students, and other stakeholders, recognizing the need to substantially enhance student's practical abilities. Moreover, University provides students with psychological service, facilitates student's adaption and ensures diverse student life. Within the framework of the center, interesting meetings, master classes, and public lectures are organized in collaboration with the faculty, leading partner companies, and notable individuals sought after by students.

It is important to note that Kutaisi University LLC, taking into account that it plans to implement one of its educational programs in the city of Tbilisi. A visit and observation of Kutaisi University's LLC campus in Tbilisi demonstrated that the infrastructure, classrooms, library and lab rooms meet the necessary requirements to ensure an effective learning process for students in Tbilisi. Providing all necessary services for students in Tbilisi is also crucial. During a meeting with Kutaisi University LLC staff, it was clearly stated that the university, in collaboration with its partners and stakeholders, is committed to ensuring the delivery of essential student services in Tbilisi as well.

Kutaisi University LLC has launched several projects and actively engaged students in them. Additionally, Kutaisi University LLC participates in various institutional projects funded by the European Union, which is one of the most advanced in Georgia. In March 2024, information about the Lithuanian state scholarship competition was distributed to the students of the medical doctor education program of Kutaisi University LLC. The competition announced for the 2024-2025 academic year took into account both the scholarship offers and the full payment of tuition fees at any higher educational institution in Lithuania. The competition is ongoing. In February 2023, information about scholarship programs and summer schools announced by the Latvian State Agency for Education Development was shared with the students of Kutaisi University LLC. Both undergraduate, master's and doctoral students can participate in the competition announced for the 2023-2024 academic year. In 2022, Kutaisi University LLC students participated in the project - SPINNAKER-Brand Management on the International Market, which was implemented from November 7 to December 2. After the one-week lectures, the participants went through practical workshops in Poland. Students had the opportunity to get acquainted with the Polish experience of brand creation, they were given lectures at Siedlce University. In 2021, Kutaisi University LLC carried out the project - "Research on the Economic Development of the Regions of Georgia under the conditions of COVID-19" at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Business and Law of the University.

Evidences/indicators

- Self-Evaluation Report with respective annexes;
- Legal acts of Kutaisi University LLC;
- Kutaisi University LLC website
- Site-visit interviews.

Recommendations:

N/A

Suggestions: N/A
Best Practices (if applicable): N/A
Evaluation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements

6. Research, development and/or other creative work

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

6.1 Research Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ HEI, based on its type and specifics of its fields, carries out research/creative activities. ○ Ensuring the effectiveness of doctoral research supervision ○ HEI has public, transparent and fair procedures for the assessment and defense of dissertations which are relevant to the specifics of the field
<p>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</p> <p>According to the strategic development plan of the University of Kutaisi LLC, based on the assessment of the university's resources and existing environment, as well as on the basis of interviews with university representatives during the site visit, it can be said that one of the strategic priorities of the university is the development and internationalization of scientific research activities. To achieve this goal, the university tries to pay great attention to the promotion of the scientific and research process. The university has two research institutes: the Research Institute of Economics and the Research Institute of Medicine.</p> <p>The Research Institute of Economics was established in 2021, and before that, since 2010, a scientific-analytical center for economic problems was operating at Kutaisi University LLC, within the framework of which a number of research projects and international scientific conferences were carried out. Based on the presented documentation and interviews, it is determined that from 2021 to the present, the Institute of Economic Studies has carried out a number of scientific-research activities involving both academic staff and students.</p> <p>In addition, it should be noted that a number of grant applications were submitted by the institute to obtain both internal and external funding (Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia; Horizon Europe), most of which were not approved and funded.</p> <p>Kutaisi University LLC has been publishing the scientific journal "Economic Profile" since 2006 in printed form (ISSN – 1512-3901), and in electronic form (eISSN – 2587-5310) since 2017. The journal is open access. All issues of the journal are placed in electronic form in the National Library of the Parliament of Georgia ("Iverieli" Foundation). "Economic Profile" is registered in the following international databases: Crossref, DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals), ICI World of Journals global database, Academic Resource Index (ResearchBib).</p> <p>In order to promote scientific and research activities in the direction of medicine, the Research Institute of Medicine was established in Kutaisi University LLC in February 2024. According to the statute of the institute, the goal of the research institute is to study the problems of medicine, to organize scientific research activities focused on modern knowledge and quality.</p> <p>The Research Ethics Committee operates at Kutaisi University LLC, the purpose of which is to ensure the compliance of the studies planned by the university staff with the generally recognized ethical norms in accordance with the rules defined by the Georgian legislation and international norms in the field of research ethics.</p> <p>As for the involvement of university academic staff in scientific-research projects, based on the presented documentation and on-site interviews, it is determined that the university academic staff is involved in various research projects in the position of head and researcher, both in internal university grant projects and in local research projects. In addition, the university takes care of the development of its academic staff and regularly offers them various types of trainings and workshops, which is also proved by the submitted documentation and interviews with administrative and academic staff.</p>

Unfortunately, attendance at the trainings and workshops offered by the university is not high, despite the large number of people registered in advance; on average, 7-15 academic or invited staff attend these events.

It should be noted that Kutaisi University LLC has signed a number of Memorandum of cooperation with various universities, both at the national and international levels. The academic staff of Kutaisi University LLC, in collaboration with international partners, is involved in the preparation of various project proposals. For instance, the Kutaisi University Institute of Economic Research prepared a project proposal for the Horizon Europe Excellence Hubs program titled "Supporting Digital Transition and R&I Ecosystem Development in Georgia and Armenia" in 2024 (ID 101187134). This project proposal brings together 16 partner universities, private companies, and organizations from Georgia (European University, Kutaisi University LLC, Georgian Technical University, Shota Rustaveli State University of Batumi, Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport, GRENA, ICT Cluster Georgia, PMAG), Armenia (Vanadzor State University after H. Toumanyan, National University of Architecture and Construction of Armenia, National Polytechnic University of Armenia, 'Instigate Mobile' CJSC, Urbanlab), Malta (Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology, Ascend.Consulting.EU), and Italy (STEPS).

Kutaisi University LLC currently has only one doctoral program - the doctoral program in economics. In order to ensure the quality of the dissertation and research, Kutaisi University LLC has developed and operates the "Doctoral Regulations", where, among other necessary and important issues, the requirements for the supervisor of the dissertation, his main functions and duties, including consultation, feedback sharing, progress, are clearly defined. Evaluation, publication support obligations. The doctoral regulations clearly outline the procedures for submitting and defending a dissertation, along with the thesis evaluation system. This system is transparent and provides specific criteria for the defence committee members to assess the thesis. Additionally, the doctoral program includes an evaluation rubric for each criterion, detailing point distribution, which further enhances transparency and ensures fair evaluation.

Based on the presented documentation and the interviews conducted during the on-site visit, it was revealed that despite the preparation of numerous grant applications, most of them were not funded, which necessitates careful attention to identifying the source of the problem and devising solutions. thesis quality control, particularly prioritizing plagiarism detection initially. Since 2020, the university has implemented procedures and mechanisms regarding "Detection, Prevention, Reaction Procedures, and Mechanisms for Plagiarism," although it is not clearly defined how plagiarism is determined or designated as such. The decision of this depends only on a single decision, which may be a very risky, subjective decision-making process.

Evidences/indicators

- Self-Evaluation Report with respective annexes;
- Interviews On-site;
- Strategy document of Kutaisi University LLC for 2021-2027 (approved by Resolution No. 6 of December 29, 2020 of the Governing Council);
- Project applications prepared for participation in grant competitions;
- Publications implemented as a result of research projects financed within the framework of the internal grant research competition;
- Regulations of the Research Institute of Economics (approved by Rector's Order No. 173 of November 11, 2021);
- Kutaisi University LLC Scientific Journal "Economic Profile";
- Regulations of the Research Institute of Medicine (approved by Rector's Order No. 13 of February 2, 2024);
- Regulations of the Research Ethics Committee (approved by Rector's Order No. 190 of December 13, 2021);
- PhD regulations (approved by the Governing Board's Resolution No. 4 of July 2, 2021);
- Regulation of Detection, Prevention, Reaction Procedures, and Mechanisms for Plagiarism;
- Kutaisi University LLC website: <https://www.unik.edu.ge/>.

Recommendations:

6.1.1. The reasons for the rejection of most of the grant applications need to be investigated and measures taken to eliminate this problem.

Suggestions:

6.1.1. Develop clearer criteria for evaluating plagiarism and criteria for avoiding subjective decision-making.

Best Practices (if applicable):

N/A

Evaluation

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

6.2. Research Support and Internationalisation

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

Based on the self-evaluation report presented by the university, the documentation and the interviews conducted during the on-site visit, it is established that in order to promote the scientific-research activities of the staff, the Kutaisi University LLC operates as a center for the promotion of scientific-research activities. The center is constantly working in the direction of finding information about national and international scientific conferences, research grant competitions, international individual scholarship competitions and sharing it with the university staff. Also, the center advises university academic staff in connection with the preparation and submission of grant applications.

In addition to the above, the Center for the Promotion of Scientific-Research Activities regularly conducts trainings, workshops and information meetings, taking into account the needs and requirements of academic and guest personnel, which are determined as a result of an annual survey. During the interviews, it was established that both questionnaires and information about scientific events and grants are regularly sent to academic and visiting staff, including students and graduates. Also, in order to develop and promote students' research skills, the university constantly holds student conferences (2022, 2023).

A collection is published as a result of student conferences, and a monograph is prepared as a result of one of the grant research projects. In addition, the university finances the publication of articles in paid international journals. As part of research projects implemented since 2021, six scientific articles were prepared and published in scientific journals indexed in Scopus, Web of Science, Scimago, EBSCO and other international databases.

137,500 GEL has been allocated in the budget of the university for the academic year 2023-2024 for the purpose of financing and promoting the scientific-research activities of the academic staff of the university, of which 97,500 GEL has been allocated for the financing of the scientific-research activities of the affiliated academic staff, and 40,000 GEL has been determined for the financing of research projects initiated by the staff within the faculties.

According to the self-evaluation and submitted documents, in order to regulate research funding issues, Kutaisi University LLC has developed and operates the "Rule of Research Funding". This document outlines procedures such as funding sources for scientific research project applications, stages for reviewing and deciding on project competitions, initiation and announcement criteria, composition of competition commissions, and appeals processes. The university's funding matters are governed by these regulations. Research project evaluations adhere to defined submission and funding protocols. Budget allocations for these activities may increase in alignment with the university's strategic and research priorities.

Additionally, the Center for the Promotion of Scientific and Research Activities at the university regularly organizes informational sessions and workshops in both Georgian and English for academic staff and students across all levels. Moreover, to enhance student research skills, the faculties and the Center organize an annual "Science Week for Students," which has already seen two successful iterations.

Since 2020, Kutaisi University LLC has integrated into the EURAXESS Georgia network platform to bolster research internationalization efforts. This affiliation allows the university to post job openings, explore profiles of registered researchers, seek collaborations with foreign universities, and gather information on opportunities offered by various institutions (such as scholarships, job openings, and research projects). Moreover, it facilitates the attraction of talent, partnerships, and financial support for universities and research-focused organizations.

Furthermore, as part of its commitment to promoting international research collaboration, the university annually organizes international scientific conferences across various fields. For instance, Kutaisi University LLC co-organizes the "Education, Technology, and Innovation (ICETI)" conference, which has been held regularly since 2020. The latest conference involved participants from 7 countries: Georgia, Italy, Great Britain, Ukraine, Lithuania, Romania, and Bulgaria.

It should be noted that the university has signed more than 60 memorandums with various universities of the world and is also included in the Erasmus+ program, however, there is no active cooperation and joint events/projects corresponding to this number, which would further increase the

internationalization component and the competitiveness of the university. It is also important to support the academic staff in the research direction, not only by systematically sharing information and offering local trainings and workshops (which are mostly technical and not scientific), but it is desirable to focus on intensive scientific academic events, conferences, and exchange projects. It is also desirable to pay attention to comparative studies, for example, when doing a doctoral thesis, which would make the papers even more valuable and interesting.

All of the above is derived from a self-evaluation report, submitted documentation, and on-site interviews with administrative and academic staff, as well as students and alumni.

Evidences/indicators

- Self-Evaluation Report with respective annexes;
- Interviews On-site;
- Kutaisi University LLC Research Funding Rules (approved by the order of the Rector of the University No. 22 of September 17, 2020);
- Budget of Kutaisi University LLC for 2023-2024 academic year;
- Publications implemented as a result of research projects financed within the framework of the internal grant research competition;
- Annual reports of the Center for the Promotion of Scientific and Research Activities, 2021-2022, 2022-2023, 2023-2024 academic year;
- Kutaisi University LLC website: <https://www.unik.edu.ge/>

Recommendations:

6.2.1. The internationalization component should be strengthened, in particular international cooperation and exchange programs should be activated.

6.2.2. The comparative research component should be strengthened in research projects and theses.

6.2.3. It is recommended for the university to offer its academic staff scientific activities related to the fields.

Suggestions:

6.2.1. The university might consider strengthening research training activities for students and making it more systematic.

Best Practices (if applicable):

N/A

Evaluation

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

6.3. Evaluation of Research Activities

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

On the basis of the self-evaluation report questionnaire presented by the university, the documentation and the interviews conducted during the on-site visit, it is established that the evaluation of the productivity of the scientific and research activities of the academic staff at Kutaisi University LLC is carried out in accordance with the "Rules for the Evaluation of the Academic and Visiting Staff of the University of Kutaisi LLC", within which the possible scientific and research activities of the academic staff are determined. And for each activity a corresponding score is determined. Where minimum requirements are defined for each academic position - eg. An affiliated professor is obliged to annually accumulate at least 50 points, a professor - at least 30 points, an affiliated associate professor - at least 40 points, an associate professor - at least 25 points, an affiliated assistant professor - at least 30 points, an assistant professor - at least 20 points, affiliated assistant - at least 20 points, assistant - at least 10 points. If the minimum requirements are met, affiliated personnel at Kutaisi University LLC receive compensation ranging from 1500 to 3000 GEL, depending on their position. This financial support is intended to aid and encourage their scientific research efforts. The evaluation of academic staff's scientific and research activities is conducted annually at the university. From 2020 to 2023, a total of 117,000 GEL was allocated based on their scientific research activities.

The Center for the Promotion of Scientific and Research Activities collaborates with the Quality Assurance Service to assess the outcomes, analyse findings, and identify the needs related to enhancing scientific and research activities among academic staff. They strategize and plan the necessary initiatives and directions for promoting these activities.

Based on the self-evaluation report presented by the university, documentation and interviews conducted during site visits, as well as in accordance with the annual reports of scientific-research activities, among the scientific-research activities carried out by the academic staff in the academic year 2023-2024 is the publication of articles in impact-factor journals, Google Scholar journals, participation in local and international scientific conferences, leadership of a funded grant research project, participation, publishing/reviewing of a monograph/manual, editorship of a scientific journal, reviewership, etc. According to the submitted reports, a total of 274 above-mentioned activities were carried out by the academic staff, 123 by the academic staff of the Faculty of Medicine, and 151 activities by the academic staff of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Business and Law.

To monitor the advancement of funded grant projects and assess their impact on the university, Kutaisi University LLC has devised a quarterly report format specifically for evaluating the progress of these research grant initiatives. This assessment is conducted by the Center for the Promotion of Scientific Research Activities, utilizing reports provided by the faculties regarding the status or completion of their grant projects. The report enables an evaluation of the scientific output of the projects, such as the publication of research findings or the generation of other relevant outcomes. It also assesses whether the project results have been disseminated through various channels and measures.

The results of the university research projects carried out in 2020-2023 are as follows: within the framework of the research project "Research on the economic development of the regions of Georgia under the conditions of COVID-19", six scientific articles were prepared and published in scientific journals indexed in Scopus, Web of Science, Scimago, EBSCO and other international databases. As a result of the research project, two monographs were prepared and published: "Theoretical and practical approaches of regional economic policy" and "Strategies of socio-economic development and mechanisms of their implementation in the conditions of economic uncertainty and globalization changes", of the research project "Economic of military and political conflicts" Evaluation of the results using the synthetic control method on the example of Georgia" The results of the research were shared with the academic and visiting staff of the Kutaisi University LLC, which can be used in the training courses of educational programs in the relevant field (economic history, economic growth, quantitative research methods, regional economy).

It is important to note that in order to improve the results obtained on the basis of the above-mentioned evaluations and to promote the scientific-research activities of the staff, the Center for the Promotion of Scientific-Research Activities is constantly carrying out appropriate activities, such as researching needs, organizing and conducting relevant consultations, trainings, information meetings, and workshops.

All of the above is derived from a self-evaluation report, submitted documentation, and on-site interviews with administrative and academic staff.

Evidences/indicators

- Self-Evaluation Report and respective annexes;
- Interviews on-site;
- Rule of evaluation of academic, and invited personnel (the document was approved by the Rector's Order No. 51 of October 7, 2020);
- Annual reports of academic staff's scientific-research activity;
- Reports of the head of the Center for the Promotion of Scientific and Research Activities on the participation of the university staff in the grant competition;
- Publications implemented as a result of research projects financed within the framework of the internal grant research competition;
- Annual reports of the Center for the Promotion of Scientific and Research Activities, 2021-2022, 2022-2023, 2023-2024 academic year;
- Kutaisi University LLC website: <https://www.unik.edu.ge/>.

Recommendations:

N/A

Suggestions:

N/A

Best Practices (if applicable):

N/A

Evaluation

Complies with requirements

Substantially complies with requirements

Partially complies with requirements

Does not comply with requirements

7. Material, Information and Financial Resources

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

7.1 Material Resources

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

Kutaisi University LLC owns and operates a dedicated educational building at A. Tsereteli St. No. 13, Kutaisi, 4600, providing a comprehensive infrastructure to support its academic mission. This facility encompasses a substantial area of 2730.01 sq.m., with clearly delineated spaces for both instructional and auxiliary purposes. The structure is equipped to handle the diverse needs of educational programs in the Faculties of Medicine, Social Sciences, Business, and Law, which all operate from this central location. Specialized labs are available for subjects such as chemistry, biochemistry, histology, pathology, microbiology, immunology, and physiology. Each lab follows strict safety protocols, including proper storage for flammable materials and clearly posted safety guidelines. Simulation Center supports the medical program with 8 rooms equipped to host 12 simulation stations for OSCE exams, furnished with advanced medical mannequins, instruments, and computer technology. This center is crucial for modelling medical cases and conducting structured clinical examinations. Positioned on the fourth floor, Simulated Courtroom is tailored for practical law training, enhancing the educational experience for law students. A 211.88 sq.m. library offers a quiet study space, extensive resources, and access to academic databases. Available on the first and sixth floors, conference Rooms facilitate meetings, seminars, and conferences. Psychological Counselling Center provides mental health support and counselling services to students and staff. The university administration operates from this building, ensuring close coordination between academic and administrative functions.

In addition to the main campus, the university also utilizes a leased facility at M. Kostava St. No. 77, Tbilisi, 0160, which is dedicated to the one-cycle educational program for medical doctors. This location is secured through a lease agreement valid until 2034, covering an area of 1507.9 sq.m., with 875.7 sq.m. allocated for training, 76.5 sq.m. for a library, and 174.4 sq.m. for educational laboratories. This facility mirrors the main campus in providing well-equipped classrooms, simulation rooms, administrative offices, and laboratories essential for the medical program.

During the inspection of the premises of Tbilisi branch, it was observed that there were no air conditioners for cooling in several auditoriums, although the university presented documents for the purchase of air conditioners.

The university places a strong emphasis on maintaining a safe and healthy environment. Both buildings have central heating, individual cooling systems, and natural lighting in all study rooms. Health and safety protocols are rigorously followed, with clearly posted evacuation plans, fire extinguishers, and continuous supply of utilities including a backup generator for power outages. Medical rooms staffed by nurses are equipped to handle first aid and other medical needs.

Kutaisi University LLC is committed to inclusivity, ensuring that its facilities are accessible to all students, including those with special needs. Both buildings are equipped with elevators and adapted bathrooms, and there is designated parking for disabled individuals. It should be noted that the elevator on the Tbilisi campus is in a different wing, and the student must use the administrative building of Georgia Technical University to reach the classroom.

The university has developed mechanisms to create individualized study plans for students with special needs, as outlined in the "Methodology for Developing an Individual Curriculum of Kutaisi University".

To maintain high standards, the university employs quality assurance mechanisms. These include annual satisfaction surveys of students and staff, which guide improvements in material resources and facilities. Recent enhancements based on feedback include the installation of additional air conditioners, the construction of a cafeteria, and the development of a new stadium. These improvements demonstrate the university's commitment to providing an optimal learning environment.

Kutaisi University's LLC comprehensive infrastructure, rigorous safety standards, and commitment to continuous improvement ensure that it meets the needs of its academic programs and student body. By regularly updating its facilities and responding to feedback, the university maintains a high standard of education and support, aligned with its mission and strategic goals.

Evidences/indicators

- Self-Evaluation Report and respective annexes;
- Factual situation found during the site-visit;
- Interviews with UNIK staff;
- Invoices presented.

Recommendations:

N/A

Suggestions:

N/A

Best Practices (if applicable):

N/A

Evaluation

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

7.2. Library Resources

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The library at Kutaisi University LLC aims to provide a comprehensive and supportive environment for its students and staff. It offers a range of services and facilities to enhance the learning experience. Both library locations (Kutaisi, Tbilisi) are designed to meet the diverse needs of users by providing ample space for reading, studying, and collaborative work. The working hours ensure that students have sufficient access to the library resources throughout the week.

In addition to physical books, the library offers access to digital resources, including e-books and online journals, which can be accessed through the university's network. This hybrid collection supports various academic disciplines and research interests, ensuring that students and faculty have the necessary materials for their studies and scholarly activities.

The library staff plays a crucial role in maintaining the library's operations. They are responsible for cataloguing new acquisitions, assisting users in finding resources, and managing the borrowing system. The staff also organizes events and workshops to promote information literacy, helping students develop essential research skills.

Moreover, the library collaborates with other academic institutions and libraries to facilitate interlibrary loans and resource sharing. This collaboration expands the range of materials available to students and faculty, ensuring they can access specialized resources that may not be part of the university's collection.

The library also has a feedback system in place to continually improve its services. Users can provide suggestions and comments, which are reviewed by the library management to make necessary adjustments and enhancements. This responsive approach ensures that the library remains a dynamic and user-focused part of the university's academic environment. The electronic catalogue at Kutaisi University LLC enables all interested individuals to locate the available literature in the university library. It provides information on the number of copies issued and those remaining, as well as the format of the catalogued item - whether it is available in print, electronic, or both formats.

International electronic scientific databases are accessible to students and academic staff through EIFL (Electronic Information for Libraries), offering resources such as Cambridge Core, Elgaronline, The Royal Society Journals, and SAGE Journals. Under this package, university members can publish in journals like De Gruyter, European Respiratory Journal, Royal Society Publishing, and SAGE Publications Ltd for

free. Additionally, there's a 50% discount for publishing in open access journals from Brill, Cambridge University Press, Edward Elgar Publishing, Taylor & Francis, and World Scientific. Open edition Journals in humanities and social sciences and HeinOnline for legal resources are also available. Elsevier's databases, including ScienceDirect and Scopus, have been accessible since 2019 through support from the Rustaveli Foundation. These databases cover a wide range of disciplines from exact sciences to humanities and social sciences. Information about these resources and instructions for their use are regularly updated on the university's website and communicated via email. Orientation meetings are conducted to familiarize students and staff with library resources and database usage.

Access to the university's electronic databases is available from off-campus locations, allowing users to connect remotely. The institution has supplied a detailed report covering five years of usage statistics for the ScienceDirect and Scopus databases, demonstrating the extent and frequency of access by students and faculty during this period.

The library staff at Kutaisi University LLC are trained and possess the necessary expertise to offer guidance to readers on utilizing both the current library collection and international library databases.

Evidences/indicators

- Information technology management policy and procedures;
- Kutaisi University LLC website;
- Factual Situation;
- Students Interview results.

Recommendations:

N/A

Suggestions:

N/A

Best Practices (if applicable):

N/A

Evaluation

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

7.3 Information Resources

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

Information technology management policies and procedures have been established and put into practice at Kutaisi University LLC, as approved by Rector's Order No. 377 on August 19, 2020. These procedures ensure the effective utilization of computer and information resources and maintain information security within the university's educational and research activities. The document also outlines the rights and responsibilities of the university's information technology users. As the university's business processes expand and technology advances, the institution's infrastructure is continuously developed. Effective measures are promptly implemented based on identified needs.

The information technology infrastructure at Kutaisi University LLC is designed to support both educational and administrative functions effectively. With 92 computers dedicated to academic use in auditoriums, computer classes, and the library, students have ample access to the technology necessary for their studies. The two computer classrooms, each equipped with 30 computers, facilitate hands-on learning and computer-based instruction.

For administrative tasks, 37 personal computers and 14 notebooks ensure that staff can perform their duties efficiently. The presence of 20 projectors and 8 smart boards enhances the delivery of lectures and presentations, making it easier for instructors to engage students and present information dynamically. The 25 printers distributed across the university support both academic and administrative needs, allowing for convenient printing of documents and materials.

All classrooms are equipped with computers and projectors connected to the Internet, ensuring that digital resources and online tools are readily available for teaching. The university library, in addition to housing a vast collection of books and academic resources, provides computers with Internet access for student use, supporting research and study activities.

The internal IP phone system for administrative staff enhances communication within the university, facilitating efficient and effective coordination among departments.

The Synology NAS DS218 file server, with its two 2TB hard drives configured in Raid 1, offers robust data protection and ensures the security of the university's digital information. The server's Archive user access, limited to department heads, guarantees that sensitive documentation is securely stored and managed.

To support the university's ongoing expansion and technological advancements, the IT infrastructure is continually assessed and updated. Effective measures are promptly taken to address identified needs, ensuring that the university remains at the forefront of technological innovation and maintains a secure, efficient, and conducive environment for both learning and administration.

The university employs an advanced Internet distribution system utilizing professional, state-of-the-art wireless equipment from the innovative company "Ubiquity." This system allows for central management through a UniFi Cloud Key controller. It also supports wireless network management via VLANs and enables the creation of multiple SSIDs with varying traffic restrictions. Access points are strategically placed inside and outside the university building to ensure comprehensive coverage.

The building is equipped with optical Internet accessible to all students, academic staff, and administrative personnel. Currently, the Internet speed is 100/20MB, which is adequate for the university's needs. To ensure business continuity, the university also maintains a backup Internet connection with a speed of 15/10MB. This backup operates in parallel with the main connection, ensuring uninterrupted Internet service in case of any issues with the primary connection.

Additionally, the university has a document outlining the development mechanisms for electronic services and electronic management systems, approved by the Rector's order on October 6, 2020 (No. 46). The university continually strives to create a modern learning environment by implementing and enhancing electronic services and management systems, thereby ensuring efficient, effective, and accessible service and process management.

Kutaisi University LLC offers a comprehensive electronic system for managing various aspects of the educational process. Students can download and sign agreements and information confirmation sheets electronically. At the beginning of each academic year, students are notified of the academic calendar on their personal page within the educational management system, which also provides university bank account details. The Moodle platform is integrated into this system, allowing lecturers to post course materials, assignments, and electronic versions of textbooks. Moodle also serves as a communication tool between students and lecturers, with counselling hours schedules available electronically.

The system includes a page for uploading and distributing schedules for integrated programs, detailing the audience, day, and time for each sub-subject. Foreign students benefit from an insurance module within the educational process system, which notifies them when their insurance is about to expire. Lecturers can send text messages to specific students, and the educational base can disseminate information. Additionally, a "Message-box" service shares brief information from various structural units in response to survey findings to help lecturers identify students, the system features a function that displays a student's picture when hovering over their name.

The university also employs several key systems to enhance its operations. The Register of Educational Institutions systematizes information about university programs and enrolled students. Moodle is used as a learning platform for posting course materials and facilitating communication. The eFlow system handles electronic document circulation, ensuring secure creation, receipt, and transmission of documents. SurveyMonkey is utilized for conducting electronic surveys among students, academics, and staff. A plagiarism detection program (strikeplagiarism.com) helps identify similarities in texts and manage thesis checks.

For financial management, the university uses the Oris accounting system, which handles comprehensive financial accounting, including income, expenses, and liabilities. The Openbiblio library software manages up to 60,000 bibliographic records and automates library processes. The HR Soft system supports human resources management, including staff administration, evaluation, and payroll. Employee work hours and breaks are tracked through an employee tabulation program, which generates reports for further action. The QMS (Quality Management System) tracks information about academic, invited, and administrative staff, including their workload.

The official university website provides contact information and details about programs, staff, and regulatory documents in both Georgian and English.

To ensure the continuous development of these electronic services and systems, the university's IT service conducts periodic monitoring and provides reports on identified deficiencies. Regular meetings with representatives from various structural units help identify and improve gaps in the systems.

Surveys of staff and students gather feedback on electronic services, with results analysed and reported to the relevant authorities for appropriate action.
Evidences/indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University web-site; • Factual situation; • Information technology management policy and procedures.
Recommendations: N/A
Suggestions: N/A
Best Practices (if applicable): N/A
Evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements
7.4 Financial Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Allocation of financial resources described in the budget of HEI is economically achievable ○ Financial standing of HEI ensures performance of activities described in strategic and mid-term action plans ○ HEI financial resources are focused on effective implementation of core activities of the institution ○ HEI budget provides funding for scientific research and library functioning and development ○ HEI has an effective system of accountability, financial management and control
Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements <p>The university's 2023-2024 budget, as presented by the institution, categorizes financial data by faculties. According to the budget, the income is 2,283,050 GEL.</p> <p>The budget of Kutaisi University LLC is decentralized and formulated with extensive input from its various structural units. The main sources of university funding are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Tuition fees paid by students for educational services; b) State grant; c) A grant allocated by the state within the framework of the social program for students; d) Resources received through an international grant; e) Investments made by the parent company - European University. <p>University established "Rules for the Implementation of the Financial Management and Control System" (approved by the Rector's Order No. 95 of November 12, 2020), which ensures the correct planning of all internal financial management and control measures necessary to achieve the university's goals.</p> <p>According to Self-Evaluation Report, the distribution of total expenses is varied (refer to the university's budget for the academic years 2023-2024) and is aimed at enhancing the educational process and advancing the university in various aspects. This includes enhancing the material and technical infrastructure, establishing laboratories and simulation centers, undertaking infrastructure projects, continuously updating scientific research activities and library resources, and fostering internationalization through participation in international projects and student exchange programs, among other initiatives.</p> <p>25,700 GEL has been designated in the budget for employee professional development (including retraining, organizing various training courses, business trips, etc.).</p> <p>Scientific-research activity is financed with 149,500 GEL, which includes the promotion of scientific-research activity - 40,000 GEL, financing of affiliated scientific research activity - 97,500 GEL, the costs of publishing the journal of institutions - 2,000 GEL and expenses allocated for scientific conferences - 10,000 GEL.</p> <p>The library's financial reserve of 33,468 GEL (GEL (Faculty of Medicine – 20,000 GEL, Faculty of Social Sciences, Business and Law – 10, 000 GEL, Administration – 3468 GEL) is dedicated to maintaining and</p>

expanding its book collection, ensuring the availability of up-to-date and diverse resources for academic and research purposes. This fund plays a pivotal role in supporting the library's commitment to providing quality educational materials and meeting the evolving needs of its users.

The financial services department clarified that the university opted not to allocate specific budgets for individual programs, resulting in the current structure of the financial document. It is recommended that the university develop detailed budgets for each program to accurately capture and reflect the financial realities associated with them. This approach would provide clearer insights into the financial health and resource allocation needs of each academic program, facilitating better planning and decision-making across the university.

Evidences/indicators

- Self-Evaluation Report and annexes;
- UNIK Budget.

Recommendations:

7.4.1. It is recommended that the university develop detailed budgets for each program to accurately capture and reflect the financial realities associated with them.

Suggestions:

N/A

Best Practices (if applicable):

N/A

Evaluation

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