



განათლების ხარისხის განვითარების ეროვნული ცენტრი  
NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

Higher Education Institution Authorisation Experts' Report  
Batumi Navigation University, LLC

Expert Panel Members

Chair: Sander Limant                      Flensburg University, Maritime Studies, Germany

Members:

Shota Potolashvili	Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University
Kristine Akhaladze	LEPL Maritime Transport Agency of Georgia
David Sikharulidze	Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University
Givi Sanadze	LEPL Georgian National Defense Academy
Nino Gorgoshadze	LLC Oceangold Batumi, employee
Giorgi Merabishvili	student

Tbilisi  
2025

## Authorization Report Resume

### General information on the educational institution

Batumi Navigation University (BNTU) was founded in 1999. It is a private university as a legal entity established under Georgia's "Law on Entrepreneurs". BNTU does focus on the demand for seafarers and consists of Maritime-Engineering faculty, Business faculty and a Logistics faculty. Further one it does operate a maritime training centre and delivers vocational education as well.

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

Evaluation process of Batumi Navigation University (BNTU) took place in two stages:

1. The selected expert panel checked the documents of BNTU like self-evaluation report, Educational Programs, Policies, Rules and further documents concerning structure, equipment and the fulfillment of the HEI standards by BNTU.
2. Following this study a 3-day visit at BNTU from 19. November until 21. November 2024 was carried out. This visit was scheduled with interview sessions with different stakeholders, with the management, with students of different study programs and a facility tour around BNTU including the training vessel.

The panel of 7 persons, one as an international expert, focused on fulfillment of the seven institutional authorization standards set out by HEI.

In the end of the visit panel members conducted an internal meeting in regard of the main parts of the draft report which outcome was presented to management.

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

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

Organizational structure and management of the HEI is effective use of management and quality assurance mechanisms in the management process. This approach ensures the implementation of a strategic plan, and integration of quality assurance function into the management process, and promotes principles of integrity and ethics.

### Summary of Recommendations

#### Standard 2.1

- It is recommended that the functions of the university's governing bodies be clearly delineated, and interference in the decisions of bodies with distinct competencies be minimized.
- It is recommended that the university strengthen student participation in its governance processes.
- It is recommended that the university enhance support for the internationalization of scientific research processes through the necessary mechanisms and define specific target benchmarks for the internationalization process.
- It is recommended that the university enhance the level of participation of elected individuals in governing bodies and support the strengthening of the principle of independent operations.
- It is recommended that the university implement effective monitoring mechanisms for the electronic student system.

#### Standard 2.2.

- It is recommended that the monitoring of educational and research processes be conducted systematically, ensuring full compliance with all necessary stages, and that response to the outcomes are guaranteed and verifiable.
- It is recommended that students actively participate in the implementation of quality assurance mechanisms, and their involvement should contribute to improved outcomes.

#### Standard 2.3.

- It is recommended that the university develop additional mechanisms for plagiarism detection to ensure that the percentage similarity score is not the sole and rigid indicator.
- It is recommended for the university to raise awareness of ethics and academic integrity within the university community and to plan necessary activities for this purpose, which should not be limited to sharing information solely about plagiarism.

#### Standard 4.1

- Develop more targeted recruitment strategies to attract more staff from abroad. Regularly conduct staff satisfaction surveys to assess the effectiveness of current policies and identify areas for improvement in staff management.

#### Standard 4.2

- It is recommended to review and adjust the ratio of academic staff to invited staff to ensure a balanced and effective teaching and research environment;
- Constantly update staff workloads to ensure that staff have sufficient time for research, student support and professional development, alongside teaching responsibilities.
- Create more opportunities for staff to engage in research, and participation in academic conferences, which can contribute to professional growth.
- To strengthen the quality and relevance of BNTU's maritime education programs, it is essential to prioritize the recruitment of qualified and experienced active seafarers as academic staff.

Standard 5.1.

- It is recommended to review the university's internal regulations, specifically Appendix 11 – Supporting Foreign Students document, and restricting the probability of enrolling international students on the program without ensuring the high level of language of instruction.
- It is recommended that BNTU should follow Georgian High education Law, especially Order No. 224/N of Minister of Education and Science of Georgia considering student status termination rules and requirements.
- It is recommended to enhance students' involvement in decision-making processes related to academic aspects of the BNTU operation.

Standard 6.1.

- It is recommended that the university strengthen support mechanisms for academic personnel to increase publication of scientific papers in high-ranking journals.

Standard 6.2.

- It is recommended to enhance the quality of master's dissertations through reinforcement of their research components
- It is recommended to increase student engagement in scientific conferences

Standard 7.3.

- It is recommended that the University place all the required information on the website concerning financial reports, basic statistics, implemented research, and results. Also, it is to ensure that all information is equivalent in both languages Georgian as well as in English.

Standard 7.4.

- In order to have clear understanding and correct analysis of financial resources, it is recommended to reflect the main expenses, such as for training center and training vessel's operational expenses separately in the budget.

### **Summary of Suggestions**

Standard 1.2.

Despite the existence of a comprehensive and complete description of the goals and objectives of the strategic development of the BNTU, there appear to be contradictions in the practical implementation and daily application. It is suggested that management monitor the correct implementation in collaboration with all stakeholders, employees and especially students.

Standard 2.1.

It will be important for the university's business continuity plan to not be tied to a specific period and to be updated as needed.

#### Standard 2.3.

It is advisable for the university to raise awareness of ethics and academic integrity within the university community and to plan necessary activities for this purpose, which should not be limited to sharing information solely about plagiarism.

#### Standard 3.2.

It is advisable to give bachelor students the opportunity to study foreign languages other than English as part of their elective courses.

It is desirable that the credits of the Master's program in Transport Logistics are not the same (5 credits) and that they are determined taking into account priority, complexity and other criteria.

It is advisable to promote students design-innovation projects and integrate them into engineering programs as a practical component;

It is advisable to revise the need for academic writing courses at both (bachelor's and master's) levels of education or to revise them in order to avoid repeating topics;

It is advisable to distinguish clearly the status of a course in the curricula of bachelor's programs - to which field of study it belongs: to Main study field component (Compulsory part), Main study field component (Elective part), Free component (Compulsory part) or Free component (Elective part).

#### Standard 4.2.

Strengthen Staff-Student Engagement - Create more formal and informal opportunities for staff to engage with students outside the classroom, such as mentorship programs, office hours.

#### Standard 6.1.

It is suggested to establish formal research partnerships with economic agents through contractual agreements and memoranda of understanding.

It is suggested to improve mechanisms for attracting funding from external sources.

#### Standard 6.2.

It is suggested to enhance research internationalization by increasing collaborative publications and joint scientific projects with international university colleagues.

#### Standard 7.1.

For the sustainability and effective fulfillment of Maritime Educational programs it is suggested that University have to plan for arrangement of bridge and Engine simulators designated only for high educational maritime programs.

	Standard	Complies with Requirements	Substantially complies with requirements	Partially Complies with Requirements	Does not Comply with Requirements
1.	<b>Mission and strategic development of HEI</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.1	Mission of HEI	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2	Strategic development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	<b>Organizational structure and management of HEI</b>	<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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	<b>Educational Programmes</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.1	Design and development of educational programs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.2	Structure and content of educational programs	<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	<b>Staff of the HEI</b>	<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	<b>Students and their support services</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.2	Student support services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	<b>Research, development and/or other creative work</b>	<input 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	<b>Material, information and financial resources</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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. Chair: Sander Limant

2. Shota Potolashvili



3. Kristine Akhaladze



4. David Sikharulidze



5. Givi Sanadze



6. Nino Gorgoshadze



7. Giorgi Merabishvili



### 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

It is clearly recognizable that BNTU focus is the maritime sector, especially to meet the demand for seafaring personnel. As a private entity which does not get much support from governmental funds it is acceptable that this sector which does create the majority of financial funding's dominates the general alignment of management efforts.

Nevertheless the panel found that the missions at a whole, i.e. the efforts to develop as a scientific entity are integral to BNTU's strategic development plan. An ongoing strategic process ensures that BNTU's role and place in the Higher Education System are defined clearly. Efforts are recognizable to strengthen international cooperations.

<p>BNTU ensures, e.g. by visits and meetings with the maritime industry, that the changing needs of maritime industry are adapted in the strategic progress and development of the institution.</p> <p>One of the strategic missions does outline the importance of the development of human resources, i.e. the staff of BTNU, to improve the quality of education. This development towards modern standards and continuous learning, even in part-time according to students needs, ensures that BNTU students are competitive in the maritime market.</p> <p>BNTU's mission is to function as an educational center that trains competitive specialists in maritime and related fields. It is designed to reflect the academy's specific characteristics and priorities, including its type of institution and main functions and purposes.</p> <p>Efforts are undertaken to ensure that the entire BNTU community knows and supports the missions; nevertheless, here is room for improvement. Shared responsibility and commitment of all participants as scientific staff, non-scientific staff, students and administrative body to improve BNTU as a whole is a social approach, which is relatively new in academically institutions in Georgia. BNTU does take this mission seriously, as it has been confirmed during the interviews.</p>
<p><b>Evidences/indicators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BNTU -self-evaluation report;</li> <li>• documents</li> <li>• interviews at site-visit</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p>
<p><b>Suggestions:</b></p>
<p><b>Best Practices (if applicable):</b></p>
<p><b>Evaluation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements</li> </ul>
<p><b>1.2 Strategic Development</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HEI has a strategic development (7-year) and an action plans (3-year) in place.</li> <li>• HEI contributes to the development of the society, shares with the society the knowledge gathered in the institution, and facilitates lifelong learning</li> <li>• HEI evaluates implementation of strategic and action plans, and duly acts on evaluation results.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</b></p> <p>The BNTU strategic plan is not a static document, but a living one since all participants and stakeholders are involved in development continuously. The commitment of BNTU staff and management to improve and to incorporate best practices ensures that the strategic development</p>



plan outlined priorities, goals, mechanisms and expected outcomes for the next seven years, effectively guiding BNTU toward its objectives.

BNTU's goals are rooted in its mission and reflect its primary activities. These goals are structured to be realistic, with specific timeframes and measurable outcomes. The strategic plan, updated by the institution's mission, identifies strategic priorities that guide BSMA toward sustainable development.

BNTU employs a comprehensive strategic planning methodology tailored to strengthen epically the maritime sector but all other strategic fields as well. This methodology involves evaluating the current state, analyzing challenges and risks, and setting strategic initiatives and performance indicators. The institution's approach ensures systematic and evidence-based planning, with a clear framework for achieving its strategic objectives.

According to the SER, the strategic planning process at BNTU is highly participatory. It involves consultations with academic and administrative staff, students, graduates, employers, and regulatory bodies. This inclusive approach ensures that the strategic plan reflects the needs and perspectives of all stakeholders, fostering a sense of ownership and commitment to the institution's goals.

BBNTU's strategic development plan comprehensively addresses all critical aspects of the institution's operations. It includes strategies for institutional development, quality assurance, educational program planning and implementation, student body planning, research activities, human and material resources management, student services, and infrastructure development. This holistic approach ensures that all essential areas are considered, are developed and coordinated.

The action plan derived from the strategic plan provides detailed descriptions of future activities, specifying implementation timeframes, performance criteria, and the necessary resources. This level of detail ensures that activities are well-planned and financed, facilitating effective execution and monitoring.

BNTU actively contributes to societal development through various programs and events. These include social, cultural, economic, and environmental initiatives. BNTU organizes educational visits, invites future employers and other activities that foster knowledge dissemination and community engagement.

BNTU's academic and scientific staff address significant social issues, providing expert consultation services, maritime training etc. However, interviews have shown that issues as scientific work and research in practice or as a daily routine does give room for improvement.

Regular evaluations are conducted and results are presented in comprehensive reports to the management.

#### **Evidences/indicators**

- BNTU -self-evaluation report;
- documents
- interviews at site-visit

#### **Recommendations:**

#### **Suggestions:**

Despite the existence of a comprehensive and complete description of the goals and objectives of the strategic development of the BNTU, there appear to be contradictions in the practical implementation and daily application. It is suggested that management monitor the correct implementation in collaboration with all stakeholders, employees and especially students.

**Best Practices (if applicable):**

**Evaluation**

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

## 2. Organisational Structure and Management of HEI

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

### 2.1 Organisational Structure and Management

- Organisational structure of HEI ensures implementation of goals and activities described in its strategic plan
- Procedures for election/appointment of the management bodies of HEI are transparent, equitable, and in line with legislation
- HEI's Leadership/Management body ensures effective management of the activities of the institution
- 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**

The organizational structure of Batumi Navigation University (BNTU) is generally designed to facilitate the implementation of activities outlined in its strategic development plan and to achieve its objectives.

The functions and responsibilities of structural units are clearly defined and delineated. However, in certain cases, the allocation of responsibilities includes powers that do not align with the typical functions of specific structural units. These observations are supported by the provisions governing structural units and the job descriptions of personnel.

Specifically, according to the regulations in effect at the university, the Partners' Assembly holds the authority to suspend, amend, or revoke specific decisions made by the academic councils of faculties and departments of professional education, the Rector of BNTU, or the Chancellor (Head of Administration) based on a motivated decision following a review. Moreover, in cases where the Governing Body (Academic Council) fails to make a decision on the same matter twice consecutively—if this failure jeopardizes the uninterrupted implementation of educational processes

or the efficient functioning of BNTU—the Partners' Assembly is empowered to independently review the matter and render an appropriate decision. This arrangement, to some extent, limits the decision-making powers of the Academic Council and faculty councils in academic and educational matters. Furthermore, the regulations do not specify the circumstances under which the Partners' Assembly may intervene to alter or revoke a decision, creating ambiguity. On the other hand, structural units generally carry out their functions effectively and in coordination with one another.

However, during the interview phase, it was confirmed that, despite legal guarantees for student participation in management processes, no specific examples were cited where students had actively participated in decision-making processes. The rules and procedures for electing or appointing members to governing bodies are detailed in various documents, and each position is associated with specific qualification requirements. Based on the presented documents and interviews, these procedures are deemed transparent and fair.

Interviews revealed that Academic Council meetings are not held as frequently as might be expected. Nevertheless, documentation confirms that 12 meetings were conducted in 2024 alone, which is a significant number. Consequently, no delays or inefficiencies in decision-making by governing bodies have been identified.

Modern technologies are used in university management, including the e-governance system and the educational process administration platform <https://bntu1.ini.ge/>.

To ensure the continuity of key processes, the university has developed a plan. However, the plan is approved for a specific timeframe, and despite inquiries during interviews, the rationale behind this time limitation remains unclear.

It is noteworthy that the university maintains an electronic registry of students; however, as confirmed (detailed in Standard 5), the university did not issue the relevant legal acts in the name of students in a timely manner. Therefore, it is important to implement effective monitoring mechanisms to ensure that the maintenance of the electronic student registry complies with the requirements stipulated by law.

The university has made notable progress in the area of internationalization, significantly improving its performance during the reporting period. This is evidenced by reports on the implementation of internationalization initiatives. Nonetheless, the process cannot yet be considered sufficient or comprehensive. Enhancing internationalization, particularly in the field of scientific research, would be highly beneficial. Additionally, setting specific target benchmarks for internationalization could serve as a useful metric for evaluating the university's progress and achievements in this domain.

#### **Evidences/indicators**

- Internal Regulations of BNTU;
- Organizational Structure of BNTU;
- Functions and Responsibilities of Structural Units;
- Statutes of Governing Bodies;
- Rules and Procedures for the Election or Appointment of Governing Bodies;
- Rules for Document Management;
- [www.edocument.ge](http://www.edocument.ge);

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring and Evaluation System for Management Effectiveness (Rules and Analysis);</li> <li>• Business Continuity Plan;</li> <li>• Internationalization Strategy (2024–2030);</li> <li>• Interview Results.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>It is recommended that the functions of the university's governing bodies be clearly delineated, and interference in the decisions of bodies with distinct competencies be minimized.</p> <p>It is recommended that the university strengthen student participation in its governance processes.</p> <p>It is recommended that the university enhance support for the internationalization of scientific research processes through the necessary mechanisms and define specific target benchmarks for the internationalization process.</p> <p>It is recommended that the university enhance the level of participation of elected individuals in governing bodies and support the strengthening of the principle of independent operations.</p> <p>It is recommended that the university implement effective monitoring mechanisms for the electronic student system.</p>
<p><b>Suggestions:</b></p> <p>It will be important for the university's business continuity plan to not be tied to a specific period and to be updated as needed.</p>
<p><b>Best Practices (if applicable):</b></p>
<p><b>Evaluation</b></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><b>2.2 Internal Quality Assurance Mechanisms</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Institution effectively implements internal quality assurance mechanisms. Leadership of the institution constantly works to strengthen quality assurance function and promotes establishment of quality culture in the institution.</li> <li>○ HEI has a mechanism for planning student body, which will give each student an opportunity to get a high quality education.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</b></p> <p>The university has developed and approved a quality assurance policy document addressing key areas, including the following: the guiding principles of quality assurance policy; mechanisms for student support; quality assurance policies related to staff activities; quality assurance policies concerning scientific research and internationalization; mechanisms for quality evaluation and assessment, among others.</p> <p>The university emphasizes the existence of appropriate quality assurance mechanisms, including the comprehensive implementation of the PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) cycle. While the policy</p>

framework is clear and well-defined, both documentation and interviews have revealed instances where this cycle is not fully completed.

For example, an analysis was conducted regarding the master's educational program "Transport Logistics" offered by the Faculty of Logistics. This evaluation involved feedback from students, program implementers, graduates, and employers. Based on the analysis, specific recommendations were issued; however, there is no evidence of a monitoring component to track their implementation. While the existence of such monitoring cannot be entirely ruled out, neither additional documentation nor interviews provided confirmation of its presence.

Similarly, the Quality Assurance Service report on attendance at classroom activities in the Faculty of Business and Logistics (2022–23) and other reports lack specific recommendations. Although evaluations have been conducted, their purpose and impact may be diminished without corresponding recommendations and their implementation.

The university has also compiled reports on the scientific activities of academic staff, providing specific annual evaluations (low, medium, high). However, the purpose of these evaluations and the university's target benchmarks for future development remain unclear. As a result, it is evident that the PDCA cycle is not fully executed, and in some cases, the outcomes of evaluations may serve an informational purpose only, as the effective monitoring of issued recommendations is not always conducted. Additionally, survey results are not presented comprehensively.

On the other hand, the university employs various quality assurance mechanisms to evaluate its educational activities and resources, aiming to ensure continuous development, as evidenced by the activities carried out during the reporting period.

Furthermore, the university has developed systems for assessing staff performance and mechanisms for evaluating and improving educational programs. The Quality Assurance Service periodically assesses the quality of services and resources it provides. The results of these evaluations are used for further development; however, interviews have highlighted the importance of additional encouragement for active student participation.

The university has also developed and approved a methodology for planning the student body, which is based on an objective assessment of the resources available to the institution.

#### **Evidences/indicators**

- Quality Assurance Policy;
- Quality Manual (ISO);
- Survey Evaluation Analyses and Relevant Reports;
- Procedures for Utilizing Quality Assurance Outcomes and Corresponding Reports;
- Methodology for Planning Student Contingents;
- Supporting Documentation for Internal and External Evaluations;
- Interview Results.

#### **Recommendations:**

It is recommended that the monitoring of educational and research processes be conducted systematically, ensuring full compliance with all necessary stages, and that response to the outcomes are guaranteed and verifiable.

It is recommended that students actively participate in the implementation of quality assurance mechanisms, and their involvement should contribute to improved outcomes.

**Suggestions:**

**Best Practices (if applicable):**

**Evaluation**

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

**2.3. Observing Principles of Ethics and Integrity**

- HEI has developed regulations and mechanisms that follow principles of ethics and integrity. Such regulations are publicly accessible.
- Institution has implemented mechanisms for detecting plagiarism and its prevention.
- HEI follows the principles of academic freedom.

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

The university has developed codes of ethics and conduct for students and staff, along with procedures for addressing violations of these rules. These are integrated into BNTU's internal regulations.

However, the university does not maintain a permanent ethics/academic integrity committee. Instead, a temporary commission is established to investigate violations of academic integrity standards only under specific circumstances, such as:

- a) A substantiated conclusion or report from a thesis supervisor, reviewer, or other credible source about a breach of academic integrity standards.
- b) A formal appeal by the author of the work disputing the findings or reported facts.

This commission is temporary, created based on the subject or field of the work under review. The composition of the commission, including the chair and secretary, is determined by the rector's order.

During interviews, it was revealed that raising awareness of ethics and academic integrity principles requires active initiatives by the administration, including informational campaigns, as the university community—particularly students—lacks sufficient understanding of these principles.

To prevent plagiarism, the university utilizes Turnitin software, which is employed for plagiarism detection. This was confirmed during interviews. At the beginning of each academic year, BNTU's library, in collaboration with the Quality Assurance Office, conducts training and consultations on the use of plagiarism detection software.

The similarity thresholds for academic and scientific works at BNTU are differentiated as follows:

- Bachelor's thesis: no more than 30%
- Master's thesis: no more than 15%

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Papers presented at student conferences held at BNTU: no more than 15%</li> <li>• Academic works by faculty or affiliated staff, invited specialists, or external participants: no more than 10%.</li> </ul> <p>This approach may pose challenges, as the software is used to measure similarity rather than to identify plagiarism directly, which may not correspond precisely to actual plagiarism.</p> <p>According to the information provided by the university, no cases of ethical violations were reported or processed during the reporting period.</p> <p>The university's regulations ensure that academic and research activities conducted by staff are independent and adhere to the principles of academic freedom. Their work is free from administrative interference and safeguarded by professional standards.</p>
<p><b>Evidences/indicators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Codes of Ethics and Conduct;</li> <li>• Procedures for Detecting and Addressing Plagiarism;</li> <li>• BNTU's Internal Regulations (Disciplinary Violation Response Procedures);</li> <li>• Turnitin Software Usage Agreement for Plagiarism Detection;</li> <li>• University Website;</li> <li>• Regulations Governing Scientific and Research Activities;</li> <li>• Interview Results.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>It is recommended that the university develop additional mechanisms for plagiarism detection to ensure that the percentage similarity score is not the sole and rigid indicator.</p>
<p><b>Suggestions:</b></p> <p>It is advisable for the university to raise awareness of ethics and academic integrity within the university community and to plan necessary activities for this purpose, which should not be limited to sharing information solely about plagiarism.</p> <p>It is recommended for the university to raise awareness of ethics and academic integrity within the university community and to plan necessary activities for this purpose, which should not be limited to sharing information solely about plagiarism.</p>
<p><b>Best Practices (if applicable):</b></p>
<p><b>Evaluation</b></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>

### 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

<b>3.1 Design and Development of Educational Programmes</b>
HEI has a policy for planning, designing, implementing and developing educational programs.
<p><b>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</b></p> <p>Batumi Navigation University (BNTU) has the status of a “Teaching University” and implements two-level higher education educational programs. The university has two faculties: 1. Marine Engineering and 2. Business and Logistics. The following academic educational programs are implemented at these faculties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor’s educational program - Maritime Navigation (Georgian-language);</li> <li>• Bachelor’s educational program - Maritime Navigation (English-language);</li> <li>• Bachelor’s educational program - Ships Mechanics (Georgian-language);</li> <li>• Bachelor’s educational program - Ships Mechanics (English-language);</li> <li>• Bachelor’s educational program - Logistics (Georgian-language) in accreditation process;</li> <li>• Master’s educational program - Transport Logistics (Georgian-language) in reaccreditation process.</li> </ul> <p>The goals of the mentioned programs are fully consistent with the mission of the teaching university. Batumi Navigation University (BNTU) has developed the documents: "Regulations on Creation, Implementation and Development of Higher Education Programs" and “Higher educational programme planning, designing and development methodology”. The mentioned documents describe in detail the processes of planning, development, implementation and development of educational programs.</p> <p>All interested parties, such as academic staff, students, graduates, employers, professional associations, are involved in these processes. The university takes into account the requirements of the main regulatory institution of the sector - the “Maritime Transport Agency”. BNTU successfully uses the feedback of students, graduates and employers. It specializes in narrow areas of the sector and takes into account the requirements of the labor market and international practice. Batumi Navigation Training University has developed regulations and procedures for approving, amending and canceling educational programs in accordance with the current legislation. The institution duly takes into account the legitimate interests of students in the programs and provides students with the opportunity to complete the educational program.</p>
<p><b>Evidences/indicators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher educational programme planning, designing and development methodology;</li> <li>• Unified forms of curriculum, study course/component syllabus, education plan, maps of learning outcomes;</li> <li>• Educational programmes and learning course syllabuses;</li> <li>• Analysis of the labor market and employer’s requirements;</li> <li>• Survey of students, graduates, employers and analysis of results;</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procedures for approving, amending and canceling the programme;</li> <li>• Internal and external audit corresponding to the international quality standard ISO 9001:2015 and documentation confirming corrective actions;</li> <li>• EMSA-European Maritime Safety Agency external audit and documentation confirming corrective actions;</li> <li>• Self-evaluation report;</li> <li>• Interview results.</li> </ul>
<b>Recommendations:</b> -
<b>Suggestions:</b> -
<b>Best Practices (if applicable):</b> -
<b>Evaluation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements</li> </ul>
<b>3.2 Structure and Content of Educational Programs</b>
<p>Program learning outcomes are clearly stated and are in line with higher education level and qualification to be granted</p> <p>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>
<p><b>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</b></p> <p>The educational programs of Batumi Navigation University are developed taking into account the requirements of the national legislation and the guiding principles of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). The learning outcomes of the program are clearly stated and are in accordance with the qualification to be awarded. The learning outcomes of the program are based on the sectoral characteristics developed on the basis of the qualification framework, such as: Sector Benchmark of management, Sector Benchmark of higher education of marine sciences, Sector Benchmark of higher education of maritime engineering. Based on the specificity of the field, the programs take into account the requirements of the normative documents of the International Maritime Organization.</p> <p>The structure and content of the educational programs ensure the logical connection of all its components and the achievement of the learning outcomes envisaged by the program by a student with average academic achievements. The programs provide students with the opportunity to choose the main field of study of the educational program and courses within the framework of elective credits.</p> <p>The teaching methods used in the educational program take into account the specifics of the sector and ensure the achievement of the program's learning outcomes. BNTU operates an International Maritime Training Center, which is equipped with simulators and a training pool required by</p>

international legislation, which ensures the development of specific skills during the implementation of educational programs in "Maritime Navigation" and "Ship Power plant".

Information about educational programs is available to all interested parties. You can view the catalog of educational programs on the university's website. BNSU has a "Rule for Developing and Implementing an Individual Curriculum." With an individual curriculum, the institution ensures the provision of appropriate forms and conditions of learning and assessment, taking into account the different requirements, special educational needs and academic preparation of the student. The teaching university takes into account the characteristics of foreign students.

Georgian educational programs pay great attention to teaching English. This is reflected in the results. During the interview, students spoke English fluently, both on general and professional topics. However, students do not have the opportunity to study other foreign languages within the program. The students themselves expressed their desire to study other foreign languages.

Based on the above, it is advisable to give undergraduate students the opportunity to study other foreign languages besides English within the framework of elective courses.

In the Master's Program in Transport Logistics, all courses (except for practice) are given the same number of credits (5 credits). It is advisable to take into account the priority of the course, the difficulty of mastering it, and other features when determining the credits of the courses.

It is desirable to support student design-innovation projects at the teaching university and integrate them into engineering programs as a practical component.

It is advisable to review the need for academic writing courses at both undergraduate and graduate levels of education or to revise them to avoid repetition topics (e.g., plagiarism).

In the structure of the curricula of bachelor's programs, 240 credits are distributed among the following 4 parts:

- Main study field component (Compulsory part);
- Main study field component (Elective part);
- Free component (Compulsory part);
- Free component (Elective part).

However, the curricula do not clearly state which courses belong to which part, for example Bachelor's programs of Ship Mechanics and Maritime Navigation do not specify which subjects belong to Main study field component (Elective part), Free component (Compulsory part) and Free component (Elective part). The status of courses is indicated only in the curricula. Based on the above, it is advisable to clearly distinguish the status of a course in the curricula of bachelor's programs - to which field of study it belongs: to Main study field component (Compulsory part), Main study field component (Elective part), Free component (Compulsory part) or Free component (Elective part).

<b>Evidences/indicators</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational programmes and learning course syllabuses;</li> <li>• Master's thesis evaluation rule;</li> <li>• Catalogue of educational programmes;</li> <li>• Satisfaction survey of students, graduates, employers and analysis of results;</li> <li>• Personalized academic plan and its development methods;</li> <li>• Results of surveys, conducted by BNTU;</li> <li>• Self-evaluation report;</li> <li>• Interview results.</li> </ul>
<b>Recommendations:</b> -
<b>Suggestions:</b> It is advisable to give bachelor students the opportunity to study foreign languages other than English as part of their elective courses. It is desirable that the credits of the Master's program in Transport Logistics are not the same (5 credits) and that they are determined taking into account priority, complexity and other criteria. It is advisable to promote students design-innovation projects and integrate them into engineering programs as a practical component; It is advisable to revise the need for academic writing courses at both (bachelor's and master's) levels of education or to revise them in order to avoid repetiting topics; It is advisable to distinguish clearly the status of a course in the curricula of bachelor's programs - to which field of study it belongs: to Main study field component (Compulsory part), Main study field component (Elective part), Free component (Compulsory part) or Free component (Elective part).
<b>Best Practices (if applicable):</b> -
<b>Evaluation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> does not comply with requirements</li> </ul>
<b>3.3 Assessment of Learning Outcomes</b>
HEI has law-compliant, transparent and fair system of learning outcomes assessment, which promotes the improvement of students' academic performance.
<b>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</b>  The learning outcomes of educational programs correspond to the goals of the program, are measurable, realistically achievable. The learning outcomes assessment system takes into account the specifics of the field and includes adequate forms, components and methods of assessment. The assessment system is defined by the document: "Methodology of Planning, Development and Implementation of Higher Education Programs", is in compliance with the applicable legislative acts

in Georgia. Transparent criteria are used when assessing student knowledge, ensuring that the student is aware of the achieved results, shortcomings and ways to improve. The university has an assessment appeal system. Academic staff individually develops an assessment system for a specific component in accordance with the principle of academic freedom, which is spelled out in the syllabi. The assessment of the level of achievement of a student's learning outcomes at the educational university is carried out using a 100-point system and includes two forms - an intermediate assessment (max 60 points) and a final assessment (max 40 points). All educational programs are accompanied by an individual mechanism for assessing learning outcomes, which takes into account the specifics of the relevant educational program. BNTU has defined the „rules for achieving the learning outcomes planned for the internship object“ and "Evaluation of compliance with the requirements of the object of practice of educational programs". The master's thesis is assessed using a 100-point system. Assessment is carried out once with a final assessment.

BNTU has developed mechanisms for assessing the learning outcomes of the educational program. The process of assessing the learning outcomes of the educational program includes the determination, collection and analysis of data necessary to measure learning outcomes. Both direct and indirect methods are used. The learning outcomes of the program are assessed in the educational courses in which the learning outcomes of the program are reinforced according to the curriculum map. The assessment results are used to improve the program. For this, the results are compared with target indicators and analyzed.

#### **Evidences/indicators**

- Educational programmes and syllabuses;
- Learning outcome assessment mechanism;
- Internship regulations;
- Rule of preparation of the master's thesis;
- Methods of planning, designing and development of higher educational programmes;
- BNTU Internal Regulations;
- Self-evaluation report;
- Interview results.

#### **Recommendations:**

-

#### **Suggestions:**

-

#### **Best Practices (if applicable):**

-

#### **Evaluation**

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

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

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

#### 4.1. Staff Management

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

Batumi Navigation University (BNTU) has approved the "Personnel Management Policy" by the Rector's Order No. 01-25 of May 29, 2023, which defines the principles, approaches, and policy of management of BNTU human resources that ensures staffing of BNTU with required, high-qualified and professional employees. Personnel management policy is designed to support the effective implementation of its educational processes. This policy is consistent with the strategic objectives outlined in the university's strategic plan, ensuring that staff have the qualifications and skills to deliver quality education and services. Key components of the staff management policy include Recruitment and Selection: Procedures for hiring staff that are transparent, and equitable, ensuring that qualified candidates are selected for both academic and administrative roles.

Professional Development: Ongoing training and development opportunities to ensure staff stay up-to-date with the latest educational trends and institutional expectations.

Performance Evaluation: Regular assessments of staff performance.

Regular assessments of staff performance are an essential tool not only for identifying areas for improvement but also for improve employee development, enhancing productivity. Personnel Management Policy of BNTU determines the approaches and the rules for personnel evaluation, including personnel evaluation mechanisms – personnel self-evaluation, personnel skills evaluation , personnel performance evaluation. Personnel evaluation schedule is developed by HR service. In order to evaluate the staff, the approaches implying 360 degree personnel evaluation were used.

The institution has a rule for the affiliation of academic staff (Order of the Rector of the University No. 01-01 of January 3, 2023), which establishes the principles and rules for the affiliation of academic staff.

The documentation provided by the institution revealed that the institution has 26 affiliated persons. Academic staff of BNTU may be affiliated with it - a person with an academic position, who confirms his/her willingness to affiliation in writing, agrees with the terms and conditions, and undertakes the obligation of their fulfillment. The fact of agreement on an affiliation between BNTU and a person is confirmed by the signing of an Affiliation agreement. An Affiliated person is entitled to participate in BNTU development, sharing of knowledge, and decision-making process relating to educational, research activity, and other significant issues. Affiliation may be terminated in the following cases if the affiliated person is affiliated with another higher education institution.

According to the University's Personnel Management Policy, the selection of academic staff is regulated in accordance with the staff recruitment and training procedure. Human resources are the most important asset, therefore the selection of staff is done carefully and consistently in order to select the right staff for the right position. The selection of BNTU personnel and the holding of positions without competition in case of direct contracting are carried out by the HR Service by determining the

compliance of the candidate's qualifications with the requirements defined for the position. Selection of personnel on the basis of competition is carried out by a special commission.

The University has defined job descriptions and qualification requirements for academic and scientific positions, taking into account the current legislation. The qualifications of the personnel are in accordance with the qualification requirements defined by the University.

The University takes care of its personnel's continuous development and qualification improvement. The University ensures the involvement of personnel in training programs. The process of integration of a new employee in BNTU is carried out by BNTU's "Rule of Adaptation of a New Employee to Work and Integration with the Organization".

The staff evaluation system implies qualitative and quantitative evaluation, the evaluation takes place at least once a year and includes the evaluation of the quality of the work performed during the past year. The evaluation is carried out according to the performance indicators of the action plan/performance of the functions and duties described in the Job Descriptions, monitoring the activities of the managers/structural units and based on their reports, as well as on the basis of preliminary elaborated questionnaires, in accordance with the BNTU personnel evaluation mechanisms.

BNTU offers comprehensive maritime education programs aimed at preparing students for successful careers in the maritime industry. It is crucial for university to ensure that their educational programmes remain competitive, relevant, and of the highest quality. One effective way to achieve this is by recruiting international staff with specialized knowledge and diverse experiences. Involving international maritime professionals in the teaching process can enhance the university's programs, bringing fresh perspectives and expertise that align with the global demands of the industry.

During the interviews, it was determined that the university is focused on ensuring the long-term success and sustainability of its program by attracting staff from abroad.

**Evidences/indicators**

- Self-Evaluation Report;
- Personnel Management Policy;
- Staff recruitment and training procedure;
- Job descriptions and qualification requirements for BNTU staff
- Interview Results.

**Recommendations:**

Develop more targeted recruitment strategies to attract more staff from abroad. Regularly conduct staff satisfaction surveys to assess the effectiveness of current policies and identify areas for improvement in staff management.

**Suggestions:**

**Best Practices (if applicable):**

**Evaluation**

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

<input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements
<b>4.2. Academic/Scientific and Invited Staff Workload</b>
<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>One key component for the effective operation of the HEI is the proper management of the academic/scientific and invited staff workload. The workload of academic/scientific and invited staff varies based on their roles, responsibilities, and the specific context of the educational institution they work for. Managing and balancing this workload is critical for ensuring high-quality education, research, and professional engagement. In order to ensure the sustainability of the educational programme, when planning the number of academic and invited staff, the institution considers the current and planned contingent of students for each programme, taking into account the specifics of the educational programme. The workload of the academic and invited staff is regulated by the „Methodology for planning the number of staff, workload and performance evaluation” approved by the Rector Order N01-01, 03 January 2023. The workload of academic staff is properly defined and explained in the aforementioned document. The workload consists of both teaching and research components and the hours devoted to teaching.</p> <p>In order to ensure the conditions for staff recruitment and workload, the university has a personnel management policy. Currently, the staff/student ratio is satisfactory. Interviews with students showed that the workload of the staff ensures the proper fulfillment of their obligations.</p> <p>The workload of program implementers does not exceed 40 hours per week. The activities of the program implementing personnel are regulated by individual workload plans. The workload scheme of academic staff and the workload performance report are reviewed by the Faculty Council. The annual workload of academic staff on a full-time basis is min 1680 and max 1792 hours.</p> <p>The scientific and research activities of affiliated academic staff constitute an annual workload of 250-450 hours according to the individual plan, taking into account the type of scientific and research activities carried out. The teaching workload is balanced, with no individual staff member exceeding the recommended number of teaching hours per term.</p> <p>The institution places a strong emphasis on continuous professional development for its staff, offering opportunities for training, attending conferences, and engaging in collaborative research projects.</p> <p>BNTU emphasizes research and innovation as key components of its mission. Academic staff are provided with adequate time and resources to engage in research activities. Despite the aforementioned factors, it was evident during the authorization process that staff is lack on willing to engage in research activities. The institution should actively ensure that the conditions are conducive to such engagement. Institution should allocate specific hours where academic staff are not busy with teaching or administrative duties, allowing them to focus on research and Offering training programs to help staff enhance their research skills.</p> <p>The expert panel expressed concern regarding the ratio of academic staff to invited staff. The institution has more invited staff than academic staff, with many of these specialists brought in for short-term</p>

engagements. While the expertise provided by invited staff is valuable, the need for permanent academic staff, especially seafarers experience, remains a priority.

BNTU involves active seafarers as invited staff in their educational program. The institution should prioritize the recruitment of qualified seafarers as academic staff. This will enhance the maritime programs by ensuring a balance between academic theory and practical experience. The institute should create initiatives to attract more active seafarers. To strengthen the quality and relevance of BNTU's maritime education programs, it is essential to prioritize the recruitment of qualified and experienced active seafarers as academic staff.

#### **Evidences/indicators**

- Self-evaluation report;
- Methodology for planning the number of staff, workload, and performance evaluation;
- Results Report for Administrative and Support Staff Evaluation and Self-evaluation;
- Interview Results.

#### **Recommendations:**

- It is recommended to review and adjust the ratio of academic staff to invited staff to ensure a balanced and effective teaching and research environment;
- Constantly update staff workloads to ensure that staff have sufficient time for research, student support and professional development, alongside teaching responsibilities.
- Create more opportunities for staff to engage in research, and participation in academic conferences, which can contribute to professional growth.
- To strengthen the quality and relevance of BNTU's maritime education programs, it is essential to prioritize the recruitment of qualified and experienced active seafarers as academic staff.

#### **Suggestions:**

- Strengthen Staff-Student Engagement - Create more formal and informal opportunities for staff to engage with students outside the classroom, such as mentorship programs, office hours;

#### **Best Practices (if applicable):**

#### **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 Batumi Navigation University has developed regulations for, assignment, suspension, and termination of student status, mobility, qualification granting, and recognition of education. University's bachelor and master study levels' charters describe student's assignment procedures and qualification granting process, that is in line with Georgian high education legislation.

Suspension and termination of student status are explained in the university's Internal regulation (ბგ №2-010102) article 37, the process is transparent and fair. The mobility process is highlighted in Internal and external mobility rules.

However expert panel identified such case: Based on the letter from National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement number MES 9 24 0001144116 during 2022-2023 year period university has enrolled 15 Ukrainian students on the following bachelor programs, Maritime Navigation, Ships Mechanics and Logistics which language of instruction is Georgian; expert panels concern that those students do not possess Georgian Language. Also all those students after 6-10 months suspended or terminated students status, while during this period being active; which is violation of Order No. 224/N of Minister of Education and Science of Georgia. After a detailed examination of this case, the expert panel recommends reviewing the university's internal regulations, specifically Appendix 11 – *Supporting Foreign Students*. Special effort should be made to restrict the possibility of enrolling international students in the program without ensuring a high level of proficiency in the language of instruction.

The contract between students and the university is in accordance with the current legislation on education in Georgia. Students confirmed that they had the opportunity to read their agreements when they enrolled at the university.

The Batumi Navigation University ensures effective and timely implementation of the above-mentioned procedures to protect student rights and lawful interests. At the beginning of the academic year, the BNTU has an orientation day, during this period, the Dean and Student Service Department informs and instructs students about their rights and obligations included in the contract, which was also confirmed during the interviews.

The Batumi Navigation University has a mechanism for the protection of student rights, students' appeal mechanisms related to the study process, academic and administrative bodies that are highlighted in the University's internal regulation.

Students' surveys include questionnaires including evaluating the academic as well as the administrative staff of the university. Students are also asked to appeal if there is something that they do not agree with in the learning process. The Batumi Navigation University utilizes the student information system (students.bntu1.ini.ge), where students can register, select courses, review the program and address any kind of issue about the lecturer or the subject.

One of the mechanisms for protecting student rights is the Student Self-Governance consultation service. Students have representatives on both the faculty council and the academic council. During the

site visit, interviews with students revealed that they have a low interest in being involved in the decision-making processes of the faculty and academic councils.

#### Evidences/indicators

- The Batumi Navigation Teaching University's internal Regulation (500 №2-010102);
- A letter from the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement number MES 9 24 0001144116;
- Internal Regulation's Appendix 11;
- Self-evaluation report;
- Students Information System (students.bntu1.ini.ge);
- University webpage (www.bntu.edu.ge);
- The contract between BNTU and a Student;
- Interview results.

#### Recommendations:

It is recommended to review the university's internal regulations, specifically Appendix 11 – *Supporting Foreign Students* document, and restricting the probability of enrolling international students on the program without ensuring the high level of language of instruction.

It is recommended that BNTU should follow Georgian High education Law, especially Order No. 224/N of Minister of Education and Science of Georgia considering student status termination rules and requirements.

It is recommended to enhance students' involvement in decision-making processes related to academic aspects of the BNTU operation.

#### Suggestions:

#### Best Practices (if applicable):

#### 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

Students are offered comprehensive guidance and support in planning their educational journey and enhancing academic performance. Interviews with staff and students revealed that the Dean's office and Student Service Department organize and deliver consulting services at the start of each academic semester. Additionally, professors provide students with course-specific assistance, as outlined in the syllabus, which includes the course objectives, learning outcomes, content, teaching strategies, and assessment criteria.

The BNTU has career support service under the Student Service Department, which provides students with professional orientation and other information events regarding employment and career development. The Student Service Manager provides the students with information regarding current vacancies on a daily basis. Students are often provided consultation and given recommendations on this issue.

Employers are actively involved in the creation, development and implementation of educational programs in Batumi Navigation Teaching University. To identify the employers' requirements, the Student Service Manager is involved in the organization of focus groups. Feedback received from companies are considered during the development of the program curricula and specific courses. Above mentioned processes also were confirmed during the interviews with stakeholders.

Details about international mobility and various international projects are shared with students via email. The university offers multiple opportunities for students to engage in international mobility programs, such as ERASMUS+. Additionally, the institution provides avenues for students to participate in diverse projects and ensures they are informed about domestic and international initiatives and events taking place beyond the university.

The Batumi Navigation University ensures student information and involvement in various university, local or international projects and events that cover extracurricular activities – sports, arts, educational activities and supports students' initiatives by internal funding.

The institution has transparent and objective mechanisms for supporting low SES students and the information on these mechanisms are public and accessible (<https://bntu.edu.ge/ge/stsavla/studenttatvis/stsavlis-safasuri-da-finansuri-mkhardachera>)\_\_The rule about scholarships and grants claims that Batumi Navigation University does help its students in flexible paying as well as giving grants. During interviews, students confirmed about financial supporting mechanisms.

#### **Evidences/indicators**

- Self-evaluation report;
- Memorandums;
- Stakeholder Information Mechanisms;
- Completed and Planned Student Initiatives and Activities;
- Student Employment Support Mechanisms;
- Student, Alumni, and Employer Survey Result Analysis;
- University webpage; ([www.BNTU.edu.ge](http://www.BNTU.edu.ge))
- The contract between FUT and a Student;
- Interview results.

<b>Recommendations:</b>
<b>Suggestions:</b>
<b>Best Practices (if applicable):</b>
<b>Evaluation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements</li> </ul>

## 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

<b>6.1 Research Activities</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ HEI, based on its type and specifics of its fields, carries out research/creative activities.</li> <li>○ Ensuring the effectiveness of doctoral research supervision</li> <li>○ HEI has public, transparent and fair procedures for the assessment and defense of dissertations which are relevant to the specifics of the field</li> </ul>
<p>The university has established 49 memorandums with economic agencies. An analysis of these agreements reveals that they predominantly focus on fostering the professional development of students and integrating academic education with practical experience. This alignment aims to enhance the effectiveness of the educational process by combining theoretical knowledge with practical application. However, none of the memorandums explicitly include provisions for collaboration in research and development (R&amp;D), particularly in areas that contribute to economic, technological, industrial, or other innovative advancements.</p> <p>The university's vision as a research-oriented institution is articulated in its strategic plan, which integrates research activities into its broader institutional goals. The strategic plan for scientific and research activities is a comprehensive document encompassing eight key strategic directions. It emphasizes the development of a robust research and innovation strategy directly linked to institutional objectives and prioritizes specific research areas.</p> <p>To support research activities, the strategic plan highlights the allocation of adequate financial resources and the establishment of a transparent process for funding internal grant projects and distributing grants. For external grant projects, the plan outlines strategies for identifying and implementing opportunities, supporting academic staff in preparing grant proposals, and coordinating grant applications.</p>

The strategic plan also underscores the importance of collaboration and partnerships. It prioritizes cooperation with local research institutions and the establishment of international partnerships to enhance research capabilities. The integrity of research activities is safeguarded through adherence to ethical principles and the use of anti-plagiarism systems.

The commercialization of research is another critical component, with a focus on promoting applied research and encouraging the commercialization of innovative technologies and products. Dissemination efforts aim to effectively communicate research findings through publications, conferences, seminars, and social media, while also incentivizing academic staff to engage in these activities.

Finally, the evaluation component of the strategic plan establishes metrics for assessing the impact and productivity of research activities. It provides for regular evaluations and focuses on improving the quality of research outputs, ensuring alignment with institutional goals and global research standards.

Scientific and Research Development Strategy of Batumi Navigation Training University LLC (2024-2030, ND №2-030102-06-15.01.2024):

The university's Scientific and Research Development Strategy for 2024–2030 outlines 11 articles. Subparagraph 4.2.1 of the fourth article emphasizes that the priority area of annual faculty research is selected autonomously. However, these priorities must align with the university's profile and the interests of its students. Research activities involve faculty's academic and affiliated staff, students, and invited specialists as needed, under the leadership of a university professor.

During an interview with the university's top management, it was highlighted that the institution focuses primarily on applied research. Notable efforts include the development of a guide for the well-being of maritime personnel as part of a project initiative. Management and documented records confirm that scientific research activities are a university priority, with a recognized need to enhance the publication of articles in high-ranking journals. To address this, 192,000 GEL has been allocated for improvement initiatives.

Research Activities (2021–2023):

In the reporting period from 2021 to 2023, the BNSU Research Center facilitated planned activities, with participation from core university units, including both faculties, the Quality Assurance Service, the Department of Vocational Education, and other relevant services. These activities utilized both internal and external resources and were executed in alignment with predefined goals.

Research Strategy Development:

To refine its research strategy, the university identified key strengths and weaknesses. Addressing weaknesses involves fostering a competitive environment, optimizing costs, and prioritizing staff development and motivation.

Reporting on Research Activities:

The strategy implementation report includes comprehensive tables documenting all conferences and monographs with corresponding dates, locations, and publishers. Key achievements include: 56

international scientific conferences co-organized (2019–2024). 23 international monographs published (2019–2024).

Despite these accomplishments, there is a notable lack of publications in highly rated scientific journals. This gap has been acknowledged by university representatives and is a recognized area for improvement within the strategic framework.

#### Performance and Regulation of Scientific and Research Activities at Batumi Navigation University (2021–2024)

„The university's Report on the Performance of Scientific and Research Activities (2021–2024) highlights areas for improvement. Notably, except for some cases, the citation index of scientists/researchers and the number of publications in impact-factor journals remain relatively low (*p. 13*)“.

According to the head of the research center, research results are integrated into the syllabi of master's programs and shared through student scientific conferences. However, interviews with students reveal a need to enhance their involvement in such conferences, suggesting room for improved engagement strategies, Research Priorities and Internal Funding Mechanisms.

The university has established clear research priorities, which guide the announcement of internal competitions for project funding. This process is governed by the "Regulation on Scientific and Research Activities", a pivotal document designed to: Encourage scientific research, innovation, and creative thinking. Promote high-standard field research and increase international publications. Motivate young researchers and students to engage in scientific endeavors.

Projects are managed by a specially formed group led by a doctoral degree holder. The group includes key and supporting personnel, with mandatory participation from at least two students or master's students. External experts may also be included, though their participation is capped at 20% of the group.

Evaluation and oversight of projects are handled by a special competition commission, with progress monitored by the university chancellor and financial service. Project teams are required to submit interim and final reports, ensuring accountability.

The regulation details procedures, deadlines, and documentation requirements to ensure transparency and effective management throughout the process.

Additionally, the university conducts training programs and encourages academic staff participation in conferences. Since 2016, the university has published the journal *Innovative Economics and Management*, which is indexed in ERIHPLUS, furthering its academic contributions.

While the university has made notable strides in fostering research activities, key areas such as increasing the citation index, publishing in high-impact journals, and enhancing student involvement in conferences need attention. The existing framework, supported by comprehensive regulations and internal funding mechanisms, provides a strong foundation to address these challenges and further the university's research potential.

Despite the successes achieved, the university faces certain challenges. It is necessary to increase the number of publications in impact-factor journals and enhance the citation index. Additionally, increasing student involvement in research projects remain important priorities.

- 

#### evidences/indicators

- Scientific Research Development Strategy of Batumi Navigation Teaching University LLC 2024-2030 ND №2-030102-06-15.01.2024
- Information about cooperation with economic agents (contracts and memoranda)
- Institutional Strategy for Research Development
- Regulation on Scientific-Research Activities ND №2-030101-13
- Interview Results

#### Recommendations:

It is recommended that the university strengthen support mechanisms for academic personnel to increase publication of scientific papers in high-ranking journals.

#### Suggestions:

It is suggested to establish formal research partnerships with economic agents through contractual agreements and memoranda of understanding.

It is suggested to improve mechanisms for attracting funding from external sources.

#### Best Practices (if applicable):

#### 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.

The research component is a key strategic direction outlined in the internationalization strategy of Batumi Navigation University. An analysis of the document highlights the following main aspects of research internationalization: **International Scientific Cooperation:** Collaboration with foreign universities and research centers. Promotion of scientist mobility. Implementation of joint research projects.

**Scientific Activities:** Participation in international scientific conferences, forums, and symposiums. Publication of scientific papers in international journals.

**Support Mechanisms:** Funding for academic staff participation in international conferences. Encouraging involvement in international research projects. Developing researchers' competencies to integrate into the global scientific community through relevant training and masterclasses.

The strategy emphasizes that internationalization is a core mechanism for enhancing the scientific activities of academic staff. It aims to: Foster collaboration with partner institutions. Facilitate participation in international projects. Promote the sharing of modern approaches. Strengthen research capacity.

The strategy also includes provisions for monitoring and evaluating research activities to measure the effectiveness of goal achievement and to make necessary adjustments.

The university has made significant strides in international cooperation, boasting partnerships with over seventy international universities and membership in eight prominent sectoral organizations. Additionally, the institution has successfully secured ERASMUS+ grants.

Substantial infrastructural advancements have also been achieved, including: Renovation of research facilities. Procurement of modern equipment. Enhancement of library resources.

To ensure research quality, the university has introduced the Turnitin plagiarism detection system and implemented an updated research evaluation system, reflecting its commitment to fostering a robust research environment.

Several significant projects are currently underway at Batumi Navigation Training University, including the ERASMUS+ project on dual education development, the corporate social responsibility project, and the creation of a guide on the psychology of sailors. However, none of these initiatives represent a purely scientific output.

The university's future vision is clearly articulated, focusing on further establishing its position as a research-oriented higher education institution. To achieve this, specific steps have been outlined in the **Scientific and Research Development Strategy for 2024-2030**.

The university has implemented public, transparent, and equitable procedures for funding research, as stipulated in the *Regulation on the Grant Competition for Targeted Scientific-Research Projects* (ND №2-030101-29). This regulation governs the rules and procedures for the grant competition and is designed to: Encourage research activities, innovation, and creativity. Support research aligned with modern standards. Foster the development of young researchers' potential.

A key objective is to increase the number of publications in international peer-reviewed journals. The composition of project groups is also regulated, requiring: A supervisor with a doctoral degree. Key personnel and at least two students. Optional participation of external experts, whose numbers should not exceed 20% of the group. The regulation ensures transparency and efficiency in processes such as application submission, evaluation, funding, and reporting.

The **Scientific and Research Development Strategy for 2024-2030** serves as a foundational document, outlining the primary directions for developing scientific activities and specifying evaluation criteria. According to the strategy, scientific activities are structured into three main areas: **Annual Scientific Research of Faculties**. **Individual Research**. Each area is well-defined and tailored to the university's unique profile.

The strategy places significant emphasis on integrating teaching and research by: Strengthening the research component within educational programs. Organizing student scientific conferences. Actively



involving students in research projects. These measures reflect the university's commitment to fostering a robust research culture and advancing its academic and scientific objectives.

The document provides a comprehensive framework for evaluating academic staff, emphasizing both **quantitative** and **qualitative indicators**. The evaluation process accounts for factors such as the number and quality of publications, participation in scientific grants, and involvement in international conferences. The strategy outlines multiple funding sources for research, including: The university's own budget. Various scientific foundations. International grants. Internal grant funding. This multifaceted approach demonstrates a commitment to strengthening research capabilities.

The document details mechanisms for evaluating scientific activities, including procedures for addressing evaluation results. Continuous monitoring and evaluation ensure that research quality aligns with international standards and allow for necessary adjustments to the strategy over time.

While the university has made progress in various areas, certain gaps remain. For instance: The university has not developed **joint master's programs** with international partners. The practice of **joint supervision** involving foreign and local academic staff has yet to be implemented.

The university's research priorities are aligned with fields such as **green logistics** and **environmental safety in maritime industries**, determined at the faculty level. Seven researchers, including academic and invited staff as well as students, are actively involved in projects. However, the **total funding of 20,000 GEL** indicates room for expansion. The regulation emphasizes ethical issues, including the prevention of plagiarism and the promotion of academic integrity. It also provides clear sanctions for violations. Mechanisms such as plagiarism detection tools and rigorous evaluation criteria support these objectives.

The document underscores the importance of **student research activities**, with Article 4 detailing their organization and management. Key features include: Supervision by affiliated professors/associate professors, with optional co-supervisors. Opportunities for students to engage in ongoing research and use university resources such as laboratories and libraries. Funding and encouragement for active participation, including exchange programs, internships, conferences, and financial incentives. The supervisor plays a pivotal role by: Guiding research topics and methodologies, Monitoring progress and quality, Ensuring adherence to academic integrity standards. Students benefit from structured support but have expressed the need for enhanced mechanisms to facilitate participation in **scientific conferences**.

But Interviews with students and graduates revealed that while efforts have been made, the **research skills of master's students require improvement**. Notably, the university does not yet offer doctoral programs. An analysis of a sample of master's theses highlighted insufficient development of the research component in most cases.

- **Strengthen research competencies** among master's students by implementing targeted training, workshops, and mentorship programs.
- Enhance support for student participation in **scientific conferences** and other research activities.
- Develop joint master's programs with international partners and establish collaborative supervision practices.
- Expand funding opportunities to support more extensive and impactful research initiatives.

By addressing these areas, the university can further its mission of fostering research excellence and effectively developing students' scientific potential.

In terms of the internationalization of research, the university has made progress by promoting the participation of academic staff in international conferences, demonstrating positive dynamics. However, the rate of international cooperation in research activities and the creation of joint scientific products with foreign colleagues remains relatively low. This suggests that while the university is fostering academic exchange, there is room for growth in establishing collaborative research partnerships and developing joint publications or projects with international institutions. Enhancing such collaborations could further strengthen the university's research impact on the global stage.

#### **Evidences/indicators**

- Internationalization Strategy
- Regulation on Scientific Research Activities ND №2-030101-13
- Scientific Research Activity Performance Report (2021-2024)
- Interview Result

#### **Recommendations:**

It is recommended to enhance the quality of master's dissertations through reinforcement of their research components

It is recommended to increase student engagement in scientific conferences.

#### **Suggestions:**

It is suggested to enhance research internationalization by increasing collaborative publications and joint scientific projects with international university colleagues.

#### **Best Practices (if applicable):**

#### **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.

The University has developed the *Scientific and Research Development Strategy of Batumi Navigation Training University LLC for 2024-2030* (ND №2-030102-06-15.01.2024). Articles 6, 8, 9, and 10 of this document address the evaluation of research activities.

Article 8 outlines the system and procedures for evaluating scientific and research activities at the University. The central element of this evaluation system is the assessment of the research productivity of academic staff within the faculties. The evaluation process consists of three main stages: at the first stage, academic staff conduct a self-assessment reflecting their annual activities; at the second stage, a commission appointed by the rector evaluates the staff's activities according to the criteria outlined in the strategy; at the third stage, the results are communicated to the staff, deans, and program heads. An important component of this system is the sharing and promotion of best practices, coordinated by the university administration in collaboration with the Human Resources Department. The overall coordination of the process is managed by the Quality Assurance Department in cooperation with the

Research Center. This system ensures the systematic assessment and development of research activities in alignment with modern standards.

Article 9 provides a detailed description of the evaluation system for the scientific and research activities of the affiliated academic staff at Batumi Navigation Training University. The evaluation system is based on the individual workload scheme and annual reporting. The document defines the minimum mandatory standards for scientific and research activities, which cover three main areas: preparation of scientific papers/publications, participation in scientific grants, and participation in scientific conferences as a speaker. The assessment is carried out by a special commission created by the rector, consisting of heads of the Quality Assurance Service, Research Center, Human Resources Management Service, program heads, and invited specialists. The assessment procedure is regulated by the *Rules for the Assessment of Scientific, Practical and Research Activities*, ensuring transparency and standardization of the process.

Article 10 addresses the university's response mechanisms to the results of the assessment of scientific and research activities. The document highlights two key aspects:

1. **Sanctions** - Failure to fulfill scientific activity requirements by academic staff for two consecutive periods may result in the termination of the employment contract. However, the staff member will receive a prior warning before such action is taken.
2. **Monitoring and Response Process** - Based on the assessment results, deans prepare a response report, which outlines significant results and planned/implemented activities. This process is monitored by the Deputy Rector for Academic Affairs.

This system aims to motivate academic staff to engage in scientific activities while implementing improvement mechanisms based on the assessment results.

In line with this mechanism, the University regularly publishes reports. Specifically, the University has presented a report on the scientific activities of academic staff for the period 2019-2023. The report provides detailed information on academic staff's scientific activities, including articles, scientific research projects, books, and monographs. The University utilizes the results of the assessment process to continuously improve scientific research and creative activities.

#### Evidences/indicators

- The university has developed Batumi Navigation Teaching University LLC Scientific Research Development Strategy 2024-2030 ND №2-030102-06-15.01.2024;
- Implementation Report of the Scientific Research Development Strategy (2021-2023)
- [Interview Result](#)

#### Recommendations:

#### Suggestions:

#### Best Practices (if applicable):

#### 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**

Batumi Navigation University owns the necessary material resources to conduct the educational processes effectively and achieve the goal defined in its mission and strategic goal. The university legally possesses the main buildings and fixed & current assets that are proved by the extract from the registry. Presented registration and drawing documents confirm that the university owns the main 4-4-floor building with 5257 M<sup>2</sup>, the pool and fire-fighting appliances for training purposes, separate buildings where simulators are placed, laboratories and workshops are placed.

It has to be mentioned, that the University recently conducted renovation and repair works of the buildings and equipped them with modern, high-quality inventory and furniture that created a comfortable environment for the study process. This activity was defined as per one of their strategic goals from the previous plan.

University buildings have all the necessary compulsory sections to fulfill successful educational processes: there are Lobby and recreational spaces for students, classrooms for theoretical studies having natural and artificial lighting and equipped with sufficient chairs, tables, and projectors, designated rooms for administrative staff are equipped with necessary furniture and IT devices - computers, printers, and scanners.

The University has well-equipped library spaces, and a modern conference hall, with a capacity of 100 attendants. There is a designated special area for the archive. The documents are processed per archive rules, the room is protected from access by unauthorized persons, and safety is preserved by a fire-fighting system.

BNTU has a specific laboratory DUGEOR for the logistics program, there are pneumatic and hydraulic laboratories, and engineering workshops required by the framework document for the maritime engineering program. It also has specific simulators for the Engine room, Bridge, ECDIS, GMS, ARPA-RADAR, Cargo, and Ballast Handling simulators. All simulators were updated recently, which is proven with appropriate certificates, issued by the product-maker Wartsila. As it was underlined during the

site visit, Simulators are shared with the training center which exists within the Organization and they are also used for training purposes for active seafarers. BNTU explained that they are agreeing to the schedule of the educational learning courses with the training center and priority is given to the students. However, considering the capability of Bridge and Engine simulators where simultaneously only 4-5 students can practice, it could be insufficient to have only one bridge and engine shared with the training center. The University has presented students' quota 900, where most part take maritime programs. Currently, in maritime programs, there are 526 active students and 339 non-active students.

**Taking into consideration the numbers above, for the sustainability and effective fulfillment of Maritime Educational programs, it is suggested that University have to plan for arrangement of bridge and Engine simulators designated only for high educational maritime programs.**

University has in its ownership the training vessel – “ELITA”, which is used only for familiarization and basic trainings, as the Gross tonnage of the vessel is less than 500 GT and it does not comply with the conventional requirements for cadetship programs. Vessel is equipped with all safety equipment needed for the trainings. For providing the cadetship for Maritime programs university has concluded memorandums with different crewing/manning companies.

There are sufficient sanitary and hygienic units on each floor with ventilation and artificial lights, they have a constant supply of water, and hygienic conditions are at a good, satisfactory level. The whole building has a central heating and conditioning system.

BNTU provides a satisfactory level of health and safety environment for its staff and students. The whole perimeter of the university is monitored by video cameras, which are recorded on the server. The university developed special rules and a safety management system to ensure the safety of work and study at the university. Documents prescribe main obligations, regulations, and management systems for the protection safety environment within the organization. As per rules, they have specific staff to ensure the safety of the university. It has a first aid assistance appliance, a specific room, and a properly qualified doctor who can conduct first aid in case of necessity, updated medicines are provided in the cabinet.

Fire-prevention equipment is installed in the whole building, compliance of which is confirmed by the document issued by the appropriate authorities. Instructions and signs of evacuation are placed on the visible places, emergency exit doors are on each floor and they can be opened from inside to out. Training for protection in case of fire is arranged at least once in 6-month period.

The university created an appropriate environment for people with special needs. The university has ramps, and a lift that creates the possibility to move freely in the building. BNTU is flexible to create and offer individual teaching plans in case of necessity. There are specially adapted sanitary units for people with special needs as well as parking areas for them.

#### **Evidences/indicators**

- Internal dimensional drawing of buildings and structures; movable property ownership confirming documents;
- Immovable property ownership confirming documents, abstract from the Public Register;
- Educational programmes and list of material resources used for these programmes;
- Contract with internship object;
- Results of satisfaction survey of students and staff, conducted by BNTU;
- Receipts of utility bills (electricity, water and natural gas); a document confirming the proper operation of the heating and ventilation system and the period of operation; fire safety, first-aid treatment and order maintenance mechanisms;

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document confirming the approval of evacuation plans; documentation confirming possession of fire-fighting and medical equipment, security cameras;</li> <li>• Employment contracts signed with the person responsible for maintenance of order and first-aid treatment; Conclusions: on safety of buildings and structures, compliance with sanitary norms and fire safety.</li> <li>• Adapted environment and the plan for support of the persons with special educational needs;</li> <li>• Background facts.</li> <li>• Site-visit</li> </ul>
<b>Recommendations:</b>
<b>Suggestions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For the sustainability and effective fulfillment of Maritime Educational programs, it is suggested that University have to plan for arrangement of bridge and Engine simulators designated only for high educational maritime programs.</li> </ul>
<b>Best Practices (if applicable):</b>
<b>Evaluation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complies with requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements</li> </ul>
<b>7.2. Library Resources</b>
Library environment, resources and service support effective implementation of educational and research activities, and HEI constantly works for its improvement.
<b>Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements</b> <p>The university has a well-equipped, comfortable, and modern library. It has a Specific space for a Book archive, a reading hall with 46 sitting places, there is free access to 26 laptops dialed in the internet. There is Wi-Fi access, printers, copier, and scanner. The library can be provided for group meetings and has workspaces to arrange some cultural events and meetings. From 2019 up to 2024 there were organized wide spectrum of different events, trainings, meetings, and presentations for staff as well as for students.</p> <p>BNTU developed special documents and rules for using a library, which prescribed the regulations on how to use the library resources, rights, and responsibilities of students and staff. Appropriate instructions are visually presented in the library. Library staff has the space to work. Working hours of the library are 9:00 to 20:00 and working days are Monday-Saturday. Library staff is competent and has relevant qualifications for using international and national databases, they are supportive and assist students and staff. Books are processed in compliance with established regulations.</p> <p>The university provides diverse electronic and printed learning resources and funds, which correspond to the current developments of the maritime and logistics industry and can ensure the achievement of learning outcomes of the program and the possibility to do scientific research. By checking the</p>

randomly selected books can be confirmed that the books indicated in the program syllabuses are available in the library.

There are available international and national library databases based on the agreement concluded with the Georgian Library consortium: ScienceDirect, SCOPUS, Duke University Press journals ONLINE, ERIC, The ACM Digital library, and others. The university provides access to industry-specific materials such as WITHERBY and connection to International Maritime conventions and regulations.

The university has an electronic library catalog and electronic search system – open Biblio.

Management of the University always tries to respond to all needs for updating and renewing library resources as per staff and student requirements. They significantly updated library resources as it was planned from the previous strategic plan. The current strategic plan also contains the financial funds for adding, improving, and renewing library resources.

#### **Evidences/indicators**

- BNTU Library Regulations;
- Priority areas and tasks of BNTU library development;
- Inventory books, ownership documents;
- Statistics of use of library e-Databases;
- Memorandums
- BNTU website;
- Background facts
- site-visit

#### **Recommendations:**

#### **Suggestions:**

#### **Best Practices (if applicable):**

#### **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**

BNTU created a structural unit Technological Provision and Communication Service which within the scope of its competence shall provide uninterrupted functioning of BNTU. In its activity, Technological Provision and Communication Service shall follow, BNTU Internal Regulations and legislative and subordinate acts effective in Georgia.

The functions of this unit are:

- Adjustment and administration of BNTU information and communication resources;
- Introduction of new information systems and their integration with existing ones;
- Administration, monitoring, and provision of the smooth operation of BNTU communication networks;
- Installation, maintenance, and updating of required software;
- Installation, maintenance, and updating of special software;
- Contact with BNTU internet providers and monitoring of access quality;
- Administration, service, and updating of the BNTU web page;
- Training of BNTU staff for effective application of information and communication technologies.

BNTU developed and implemented the Information Technology Policy, which defines the main rules and procedures for how IT technology will be provided, secured, and protected within the university. Rules define the risk assessment process and actions for its prevention.

BNTU started renovation works of its IT infrastructure in 2021 and implemented a new stable network and communication system that covers all buildings of the university. The university provides free WI-Fi access for whole spaces of its buildings. Construction works have been carried out in stages and were finished in 2023. All cables, all computers, the server room, communication devices, and 103 CCTV cameras were installed, renewed, and updated. For today BNTU has two ISP channels: ISP SkyTel (100 Mbps) and ISP Silknet (20 Mbps), the wireless network connects 58 wireless access points. The current IT infrastructure of the University provides a stable environment for the continuous and constant functioning of its business and educational processes.

BNTU offers electronic services and electronic management systems to students and staff, which ensures the fulfillment of effective and efficient operational processes. The university uses corporate e-mails, an internal network, student database ini.ge, which provides students with data registration, communication with lecturers, and useful information regarding programs. The University uses an electronic platform for the placement of statutory documents.

BNTU has an official Website, which has been updated recently. On the web page is placed the main information regarding the institution, its Mission, strategy, regulatory documents, programs catalogues, e-library, student services, staff and other necessary information. However, there are missing some required information, as financial reports, ongoing and implemented research (results), basic statistics.

The University has PR who is responsible for the administration of the website. Information is presented on the web in both languages, Georgian and English. But some English information is missing and it is not the equivalent of Georgian.

#### **Evidences/indicators**

- IT administration policy and procedures;
- IT infrastructure (indication of standard in case of international standard); administration, responsibility and reporting rules;



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of IT infrastructure; Internet connection documents;</li> <li>• Implemented e-Services;</li> <li>• e-Management service;</li> <li>• Development mechanisms of e-Services and e-Management systems;</li> <li>• Results of interviews;</li> <li>• Domain, hosting, certificate;</li> <li>• Georgian and English web-site;</li> <li>• A person, responsible for web-site administration; rules of administration and corresponding job description;</li> <li>• Clear, accurate, complete, objective, stable, updated and easy access to information.</li> <li>• Site-visit</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fully complies with requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements</li> </ul>
<b>Recommendations:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is suggested that the University place all the required information on the website concerning financial reports, basic statistics, implemented research, and results. Also, it is to ensure that all information is equivalent in both languages Georgian as well as in English.</li> </ul>
<b>Suggestions:</b>
<b>Best Practices (if applicable):</b>
<b>7.4 Financial Resources</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Allocation of financial resources described in the budget of HEI is economically achievable</li> <li>○ Financial standing of HEI ensures performance of activities described in strategic and mid-term action plans</li> <li>○ HEI financial resources are focused on effective implementation of core activities of the institution</li> <li>○ HEI budget provides funding for scientific research and library functioning and development</li> <li>○ HEI has an effective system of accountability, financial management and control</li> </ul>
<p>The university has adopted the "<b>Regulation on Planning and Budgeting of Financial and Economic Activities, ND №2-010102/01.</b>" This document serves as the regulatory framework for the planning and budgeting of financial and economic activities at Batumi Navigation Training University and is developed as Appendix №01 to the Internal Regulations. Its primary goal is to ensure the continuous operation of the planning and budgeting system and to facilitate effective operational management decisions.</p>

According to the regulation, the university budget represents a balanced plan of income and expenses, structured into operational and development costs. The document provides a detailed outline of the mechanisms for financing both ongoing operational activities and strategic development initiatives.

The budgeting process comprises three main stages: **preparation, formation, and approval**. This process is grounded in a thorough analysis of the results from the previous period and forecasts for the upcoming period, while also considering the needs and requirements of all structural units.

**Control mechanisms** are given particular attention in the document. It specifies the rights, responsibilities, and duties of stakeholders, ensuring constant monitoring of budget implementation. A flexible mechanism for introducing changes is also provided.

Special emphasis is placed on the **effective allocation of financial resources**. The document elaborates on the principles of financing educational and scientific research activities, and it incorporates mechanisms for managing crisis situations.

The UAS has presented the budget dynamics of Batumi Navigation Training University for 2024–2025, providing insight into income and expenditure trends.

### **Budget Analysis (2024)**

An analysis of the 2024 budget in percentage terms reveals the following trends: The largest share of revenue (55.5%) is derived from **higher education programs**. Revenue from professional education programs constitutes a smaller share, at 3.6%. **Other revenues** account for a significant portion, totaling 40.9%.

On the expenditure side: **Supplies and service costs** represent 50% of total expenses, the largest category. **Labor remuneration** accounts for 35.3%, the second-largest expenditure. Investments in the development of material resources constitute 17.6% of expenses, reflecting the university's focus on infrastructure development. **Insurance costs** make up 5.9% of total expenses, and **utility bills** account for 2.1%. The university budget is planned to generate a **profit margin of 15.3%**, indicating financial sustainability. This balanced budget policy aligns the main income source—educational activities—with expenditure priorities that support both current operations and future development, yielding a positive financial outcome.

### **Research and Development Allocation**

The regulation allocates the following funds for research and development: **Research and development activities:** 192,000 GEL, **Research activities for professional students/pupils:** 4,000 GEL, **Total:** 196,000 GEL, representing approximately **3.9%** of the total budget.

### **Budget Dynamics (2024–2025)**

An analysis of the budget dynamics for 2024–2025 highlights notable changes in both income and expenditures:

#### **Revenue Dynamics**

- Revenue from higher education programs increases from 1,508,250 GEL in the first year by **7.2%** in the second year. Revenue from professional education programs grows by **8.5%**, reflecting a strengthening of this sector. Other revenues rise by **6.3%**. Overall, total revenues increase by **7.4%**.

#### **Expenditure Dynamics**

- Labor costs grow by **6.8%**. Allocations for material resource development rise by **9.2%**, demonstrating heightened investments in infrastructure. Insurance costs increase by **5.4%**, and utility bills by **4.8%**. Repair costs see a notable rise of **12.5%**, indicating active efforts to improve physical infrastructure. Stationery and utility expenses increase by **5.2%**.

The overall **average growth rate of expenses is 7.1%**, which aligns with the growth in income, reflecting balanced budget planning.

**Research and Development Expenses by Year: 2024:** 192,000 GEL, **2025:** 225,640 GEL, **2026:** 295,778 GEL, **2027:** 313,970 GEL, **2028:** 347,670 GEL. The annual growth rate ranges between **15% and 18%**, reflecting a strategic commitment to enhancing the university's research potential.

The analysis indicates that Batumi Navigation Training University maintains a balanced and forward-looking budget policy. The emphasis on infrastructure development and enhancing the quality of the educational process is evident in the higher growth rates of related expenditure items. This strategic approach ensures the university's capacity to sustain operational activities while prioritizing long-term development.

The University has a special unit for the management of the financial resources. The Budget is approved at the end to the year and it is based on the information collected from all units taking into consideration the strategic and action plans. The Budget is prepared by the financial department and approved by the Owners.

The budget presented by the University reflects the main income and expenses. Financial sources are diversified. University mainly is using incomes from tuition fees (bachelor, Master and vocational programs), training center, donations and private fund reserves in order to ensure effective risk management.

Expenses are allocated to cover all main processes planned by strategic and action plans. It includes activities related to teaching and educational processes as well as development of human resources and infrastructure. **However the Budget does not present separate expenses for training center (salary for instructors, materials, maintenance of simulators), expenses for maintenance of the training vessel that can create some uncertainty in the understanding and analysis of the budget.**

The University allocates the finances for research and scientific work, organizing the conferences, and the support regarding the issuance of articles. It also considers the funds for the library.

The presented financial audit report confirms the financial sustainability of the University for running the educational process without any problems.

#### **Evidences/indicators**

- Regulations on Planning and Budgeting of Financial and Economic Activities, ND №2-010102/01
- Annual Budget Dynamics of Batumi Navigation Training University for 2024–2025
- 2024 Budget Overview
- Interview Findings
- Immovable property ownership confirming documents, abstract from the Public Register;
- Movable property inventory materials;
- Contracts with internship/research objects;
- Fire-safety, first-aid treatment and order maintenance mechanisms;
- Documentation confirming possession book collection or inventory materials;
- Statistical data on application of e-library databases;
- Mechanisms for development and updating of library resources and services;
- IT management policies and procedures, IT infrastructure; Information about electronic services and electronic

<p>management systems and their development mechanisms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HEI budget;</li> <li>• Dynamics of financing in the last 5 years; financial statements of the current and/or previous reporting period</li> <li>• Financial management and control system implementation document; relevant evidences/indicators of the component, referring to relevant documents or other relevant evidence.</li> <li>• Site-visit</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In order to have clear understanding and correct analysis of financial resources, it is recommended to reflect the main expenses, such as for training center and training vessel's operational expenses separately in the budget.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Suggestions:</b></p>
<p><b>Best Practices (if applicable):</b></p>
<p><b>Evaluation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Complies with requirements</b></li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substantially complies with requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Partially complies with requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Does not comply with requirements</li> </ul>