განათლების ხარისხის განვითარების ეროვნული ცენტრი
NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

Higher Education Institution Authorisation Experts' Final Report

N(N)LE St. Tbel Abuserisdze University of the Georgian Patriarchate

Expert Panel Members
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Tbilisi

2025

General information on educational institution

Saint Tbel Abuserisdze University of Georgian Patriarchate (STAUGP) was established in 2008 by the Catholicos-Patriarch of all Georgia, Ilia II. Skhalta. Archbishop Spiridon has been the Rector of the University since its establishment. The University is located in the mountainous South Adjara region of Georgia, Shuakhevi municipality, village Khichauri, and it is the only University operating in the mountainous area of Adjara. The establishment of the University mainly facilitates the population of the area in having access to qualified higher education. To achieve this goal, the University provides all students with free (non-fee) education and a free plan.

The University consists of three faculties: Faculty of Humanities and Education, Faculty of Law and Public Administration, and Faculty of Agrarian Sciences and Business Administration. According to the self-evaluation report (SER), it currently has 21 educational programs (nine bachelor, ten master, one integrated Teacher Training Educational Program /300 ECTS/ and one Teacher training Program /60 ECTS/). Out of these programs, 16 are accredited. The University also offers three VET programs.

The total number of students is 656 (active status), 465 students have suspended status. The number of staff is as follows: the total number of academic staff is 63, there are 26 invited staff involved in teaching, and 42 administrative and support staff.

Research activity is gradually developing. To enhance and extend its research profile, the University established the Giorgi Mtatsmindeli Institute of Kartvelological Studies as part of its structure.

The campus of the University (the area used for academic purposes) is 5.164 square meters. The condition of the campus requires investment and care.

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

Prior to the site visit, the expert panel received the SER and other documentation of the University, and based on that later requested some additional documentation which was provided timely. The site visit was conducted on May 29-31, 2025. During these days, the expert panel had a good chance to meet representatives of all levels and positions across the University and beyond. Also, the expert panel had a chance to see the campus and its facilities, check the library, learning management system and other provisions.

The expert panel would like to express sincere thanks for the cooperation of all participants and their participation in the discussions during the visit.

Overview of the HEI's compliance with standards

Summary of Recommendations

1. It is recommended that activities/areas of activities formulated in the strategic plans as the main directions of the University development clearly fit under the headings, and do not duplicate.
2. It is recommended to elaborate fully on activities, responsible units, implementation period, planned budget and performance indicators in case of all activities, and all directions set up by the Action Plan.

3. It is recommended that the University establish key structural units, such as Strategic Development, Research Facilitation and Infrastructure Development Departments, to support capability assessment and strategic planning for future development, which will be reflected in the university's structure.

4. It is recommended that the University structure includes, as defined by the statute, the governing body of the main educational unit, as well as the key positions of the main structural units, also defined by the statute, with individuals who will actually be appointed to these roles.

5. It is recommended to improve management effectiveness and evaluation mechanisms and to involve all necessary units in this process.

6. It is recommended to update the information on human resources, including administrative staff, in the Registry of Educational Institutions (QMS) within the timeframe established by law.

7. It is recommended to update the business continuity plan to ensure that all key risk factors are identified and assessed, appropriate prevention mechanisms are in place, and a comprehensive risk mitigation strategy is developed.

8. It is recommended to strengthen the internationalization policy, expand the network of collaborations, and implement exchange programs for academic staff and students. This will enhance the University's visibility and enable the adoption of the best international practices.

9. It is recommended to develop a system for evaluating the effectiveness of quality assurance mechanisms, which will support process improvement and enhance overall quality.

10. It is recommended that stakeholders (academic and invited staff, students and alumni, and employers) be actively involved in the development of educational programs, in order to incorporate their expectations and better align the programs with current market demands. Relevant reports on evaluation results and subsequent feedback should be developed.

11. It is recommended to enhance transparency and strengthen stakeholder confidence; it is recommended that the university regularly prepare quality assurance evaluation reports along with summaries of the resulting actions and improvements.

12. It is recommended that the university hold informational meetings with academic staff, invited personnel, and students to raise awareness of plagiarism detection and academic integrity.

13. It is recommended to raise awareness of the principles of academic freedom among academic and invited staff of the University.

14. It is recommended to update and strengthen the programs by integrating modern teaching methods and practical components in order to increase the professional competencies of graduates and their relevance to the labor market.

15. It is recommended to strengthen standardization mechanisms in the curricula, which will facilitate competency-based and consistent education.

16. It is recommended to add a separate, specialized academic writing course to the programs, which will contribute to the future strengthening of students' research and writing competencies and professional preparation.

17. It is recommended to strengthen the teaching of English within the program, which will ensure the improvement of international communication skills of students and academic staff. This requires additional courses, intensive seminars and practical workshops that will enhance the active use of the language in professional and academic environments.

18. It is recommended to review and diversify the list of elective subjects in accordance with the demands of students, so that they can choose a subject not only within the framework of one specific program, but also from adjacent programs.

19. It is recommended to strengthen the subjects of the pedagogical module in programs that prepare general education of schoolteachers, in order to equip prospective teachers with the appropriate skills.
20. It is recommended to introduce a mechanism for developing individual curriculum, which will help strengthen student-tailored teaching practices and increase the flexibility of the academic process.
21. It is recommended to ensure that the research depth and quality of academic papers at the undergraduate and graduate levels are in line with international academic standards and the requirements of the Georgian National Qualifications Framework.
22. It is recommended to clarify the formal criteria for papers and develop a unified methodological manual, which will ensure the improvement of the quality of the research component.
23. It is recommended to establish well-defined remuneration and incentive systems that are aligned with staff performance evaluation outcomes.
24. It is recommended to provide formal, documented feedback based on student and managerial evaluations.
25. It is recommended to clarify and systematize staff evaluation criteria, benchmarks, and alignment with job descriptions.
26. It is recommended to develop and implement a multi-year professional development strategy, including international training.
27. It is recommended to increase the elective participation of staff in institutional governance and decision-making.
28. It is recommended to enhance support for staff to access research funding and international collaboration opportunities.
29. It is recommended to implement regular semester-based staff evaluations with formal, documented feedback.
30. It is recommended to develop incentive mechanisms linked to workload and performance.
31. It is recommended to enhance support for research activities and international collaboration.
32. It is recommended to enhance the efforts in international collaboration in order to create opportunities for student mobility.
33. It is recommended to improve the active functionality of the University website.
34. It is recommended to initiate the functioning of student self-government.
35. It is recommended that the Student Support Services ensure the creation of an employer database and regularly share updated information on employment opportunities and vacancies with students and graduates.
36. It is recommended to explicitly link research-support initiatives in the Action Plan with funding.
37. It is recommended to foster research cooperation of the University with economic and other agents.
38. It is recommended to ensure sufficient internal funding of research activities during the whole research process (starting with project proposals, conducting research, and then publication of research results).
39. It is recommended to train academic staff in the knowledge and skills of writing research proposals that would have a chance to succeed in external competitions.
40. It is also recommended to make effective steps toward improvement of English language proficiency of academic staff.
41. It is recommended to use the expertise of invited staff members for research networking.

42. It is recommended to establish target benchmarks for evaluating the scientific activities of academic/research staff and to conduct regular assessments of the results achieved, followed by appropriate responses based on the outcomes.
43. It is recommended that the University regularly publishes reports on implemented research and creative activities.
44. It is recommended to create a realistic plan for effective research management and development at the University.
45. It is recommended to improve student spaces and the university yard.
46. It is recommended to update some memoranda, taking into account accreditation requirements (duration of internship, number of students accepted for internship).
47. It is recommended to define a specific mechanism by which the material resources necessary for the quality implementation of educational programs will be determined and verified.
48. It is recommended to increase the amount of computer equipment, in case of an increase in the number of students.
49. It is recommended to improve the hot water supply and heating system of sanitary facilities and the medical office.
50. It is recommended to provide an environment adapted to modern standards for people with special needs.
51. It is recommended to increase work on the use of electronic library databases among students and staff.
52. It is recommended to continue working on updating learning resources and improving the catalog.
53. It is recommended to accelerate work on the university's Georgian and English websites and post public information required by authorization and accreditation standards to promote the principle of transparency in the institution's activities.
54. It is recommended to develop an indicative budget for the strategic and action plan, both in terms of revenue and expenditure, both at the level of the university as a whole and the budgets of the faculties.
55. It is recommended to allocate separate expenditure items in the university budget for library development and research implementation/promotion.
56. It is recommended to post financial statements and budgets on the university's website.
57. It is recommended to develop/implement a financial planning and monitoring mechanism that involves academic and administrative staff in budgeting for the achievement of the university's strategic goals, thereby making the process of distributing funds more participatory and transparent. This, in turn, will strengthen the effective distribution of funds, staff responsibilities, and mutual control.

Summary of Suggestions

- It is suggested that the actual composition of the Quality Assurance Office be incorporated into its statute.
- It is suggested that the University update the student body planning methodology to align with both the requested and actual marginal number of students.

- In the process of planning and reviewing the program, it is suggested to consider comparison with similar programs in Georgia and internationally, which will contribute to increasing the potential of the university for international connections and cooperation.
- It is suggested that students are given the opportunity to fully master practical courses in order to prepare highly qualified personnel in accordance with market requirements.
- It is suggested that the syllabi indicate detailed literature, which, as far as possible (based on the specifics of the subject), will be diverse and frequently updated.
- It is suggested that the modern teaching methods included in the curriculum be fully reflected in the syllabi.
- It is suggested to expand structured student feedback mechanisms to include graduate and master's students, ensuring comprehensive course evaluation data.
- It is suggested to explore opportunities for independent funding streams to reduce reliance on donors and enhance staff development financing.
- It is suggested to develop a formal system to document and share best practices from international collaborations and from collaboration with invited experts to enrich institutional knowledge.
- It is suggested to encourage more structured language training to reduce barriers in international collaboration.
- It is suggested to develop faculty-specific lists of preferred journals and conferences to guide research publication quality.
- It is suggested to promote incentives and recognition for staff who develop new courses and academic materials.
- It is suggested that greater emphasis be placed on raising awareness about the main information materials for students, namely a Student Handbook.
- It is suggested promoting a healthy lifestyle among students through their active involvement in various sports and clubs is essential.
- It is suggested to improve the conditions of university housing for students and teachers.
- It is suggested for the University chancellery to store information in physical form – in printed form. In addition, digital information is stored in computers on the "D" drive.
- It is suggested that the University pays special attention to improving its infrastructure. In particular, the following actions are advised: Develop designated common areas where students can gather and interact; Enhance and beautify the university yard and outdoor spaces; Create recreational zones such as green areas and small parks (squares) for students; Establish dedicated student spaces that promote engagement, collaboration, and well-being. These improvements would contribute significantly to a more student-friendly environment and enhance the University's overall image and student satisfaction.
- It is suggested that the information presented on the University website be accompanied by photo and video evidence and that the website design be refreshed.
- It is suggested to find additional sources of funding to plan and implement new tasks.

Summary of the Best Practices
- Tuition-free education.
- Support measures for incoming international students.

Summary Table of Compliance of HEI with Standards and Standard Components

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

Signature of expert panel members
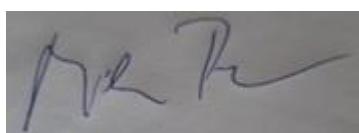
1. Milan Pol (Chair)

2. Diana Mtchedlishvili

3. Eka Lekashvili

4. Nino Jolia

5. Tamar Dzvelaia
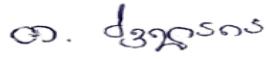
6. Mariam Burmistrova

Compliance of the Applicant HEI with the Authorisation Standard Components

1. Mission and strategic development of HEI

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

1.1 Mission of HEI
Mission Statement of the HEI corresponds to Georgia's and European higher education goals, defines its role and place within higher education area and society, both locally and internationally.
Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements The mission of the University is formulated as follows: "In order to promote the welfare, economic strength, spirituality and integration of the Georgian nation in the global community, the University creates a suitable environment for modern educational and scientific activities offers high quality educational programs; ensures the preparation of highly qualified specialists; promotes the formation of an individual with high national-civic consciousness and religious tolerance". (SER, p. 11) This can be agreed that the mission statement defines the University's role locally and internationally. It takes into consideration the need to develop active members of the society, to create and disseminate knowledge, facilitate students' personal development and their professionalism. Also, the mission statement explicitly aims at three pillars of higher education institutions, teaching/learning, research, and public reach (the third role). This can also be confirmed that the mission statement reflects the characteristics of the University. It was proven during the interviews to some extent that the mission statement is shared by the community of the University.

The mission statement is also made publicly available at the website of the University.

Evidences/indicators
- Self-evaluation Report
- Website of the University
- Interviews

Recommendations: None

Suggestions: None

Best Practices (if applicable): None

Evaluation:

    x Complies with requirements

    ☐ Substantially complies with requirements

    ☐ Partially complies with requirements

    ☐ Does not comply with requirements

1.2 Strategic Development

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The University has the Strategic Development Plan for the period 2019-2025 (approved in 2018 and updated in 2021). And on January 28, 2025, the University approved a new Strategic Development Plan for the period 2025-2031.

The strategic plan for the next years (until 2031) emphasizes principal values of the University functioning: Objectivity and Justness, Literacy, Protection of national values, Philanthropy. It also offers SWOT analysis of the University and provides information about the methodology of drafting the new strategic plan - working groups with the involvement of key stakeholders were established, mainly within the University. This is a standard procedure.

The 7-year Strategic Development Plan focuses on four main directions: 1. Educational and Scientific Research Activities. 2. Development Student Services. 3. Development of Human and Financial Resources. 4. Internationalization. These directions are further elaborated to some extent.

This can be agreed that the strategic plan is based on the mission and priorities of the University activities. This can also be agreed that the directions that the University emphasizes are relevant for

the institution´s development. Some of the activities/areas of activities are included twice (organizing conferences, updating classrooms with ICT), some others are located under the other heading (infrastructure development is under the Development of Human and Financial Resources). The elaboration of the four main directions is not time-bound and also lacks the possibility to measure the achievements in some cases.

The Action Plan (2025-2027) emphasizes seven directions (areas): 1. Development of academic programs; 2. Development of infrastructure; 3. Development of scientific research activities; 4. Development of student services; 5. Development of internationalization; 6. Development of Lifelong learning component (LLL); and 7. Development of personnel and administration (DPA). This set of directions/areas is relatively complex and covers the main development needs of the institution. These areas (not all but most of them - for instance, no concrete attention is paid to the lifelong learning agenda) are further elaborated into activities, with responsible units, implementation period, planned budget and performance indicators. This is not done consistently - for instance, the research agenda lacks the link to budgeting.

The University in its planning documentation includes contributions to the social development of the country, for instance by introducing/for further developing public lectures and other science popularization activities.

The section of the strategic plan informing about the methodology of drafting the plans also includes a paragraph on monitoring of the implementation of the plans. In concrete, it states that "Performance Monitoring Stage… involves the control of the issues provided by the Strategic Plan and relevant Action Plan of "Tbel University" through predetermined indicators. For this purpose, a monitoring group was established which is led by the University Rector or its representative. Members of the Group are: The Quality Assurance Service representative, Financial Service representative, a student. Monitoring is carried out twice per year, as well as according to the timeframe defined by the Action Plan. The monitoring Group draws the conclusion and submits to the Academic Council, which, if necessary, responds appropriately."

Evidences/indicators
- Self-evaluation Report
- Strategic Development Plan (2025-2031)
- Action Plan (2025-2027)
- Interviews
- Site-visit

Recommendations:
- It is recommended that activities/areas of activities formulated in the strategic plans as the main directions of the University development clearly fit under the headings, and do not duplicate.
- It is recommended to elaborate fully on activities, responsible units, implementation period, planned budget and performance indicators in case of all activities, and all directions set up by the Action Plan.

Suggestions:

None

Best Practices (if applicable):
None

Evaluation ☐ Complies with requirements ☐ Substantially complies with requirements x 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
o Organisational structure of HEI ensures implementation of goals and activities described in its strategic plan o Procedures for election/appointment of the management bodies of HEI are transparent, equitable, and in line with legislation o HEI's Leadership/Management body ensures effective management of the activities of the institution o Considering the mission and goals of HEI, leadership of the HEI supports international cooperation of the institution and the process of internationalization.
Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements The organizational structure of the University was approved by the Rector's order. The structure includes the main governing bodies defined by the university charter, as well as units that are structurally subordinated to the management bodies, such as departments and offices. The rule on 'Responsibilities, Functions, and Election Procedures of the University's Governing Bodies' is approved, which defines the authority of both the university's governing bodies and other units subordinated to them. The authorized representative of the University founder, the Rector, is the highest-ranking official in the University's governance structure and holds full representative and managerial authority over the university. These powers include, among others: approval of key university acts, establishment and dissolution of structural units, and oversight of budgetary resource management. The Rector represents the University both domestically and internationally in academic and scientific circles and, within the scope of the competence, makes decisions that facilitate the organization of the educational

process, recruitment and engagement of academic staff, implementation of scientific research activities, management of material resources, etc.

Quality Assurance Office functions to operate the effective and coordinated implementation of teaching and research activities. It develops mechanisms for evaluating the work of academic and research staff, conducts monitoring, and prepares proposals and recommendations that contribute to the planning of the new academic year, the transparency of interim and final assessments, and the improvement of teaching and learning processes.

The following structural units also operate at the University: the Human Resources Management Office, the International Relations Department, the Public Relations Office, the Student Support Service, the Information Technology Department, and others. It should also be noted that a Labor Safety Office has been established at the university. Within its scope of competence, this office conducts inspections of working conditions, develops, implements, and monitors the labor safety and environmental protection system; ensures risk assessment, prevention, and management in accordance with the specifics of higher and vocational educational programs; and regularly conducts labor safety training for the staff.

The institution's organizational structure generally supports the implementation of its strategic plan and the pursuit of its goals. Functions and responsibilities of structural units are clearly defined and carried out in a coordinated manner. However, to further enhance operational effectiveness and strategic alignment, there are several key areas where improvement is necessary.

Currently, the absence of certain critical structural units, such as Strategic Development, Research Facilitation, and Infrastructure Development Departments, limits the institution's ability to systematically assess capabilities, plan strategically, and optimize resources. It is recommended that these units be established and formally integrated into the organizational structure to better support long-term development and innovation. It should be also noted that the university statute defines the position of Deputy Head of Administration; however, at this stage, the University does not have anyone appointed to this position.

The collegial governing body of the University is the Academic Council, which includes representatives from all faculties. The Academic Council serves as the University's governing body and makes all decisions by a majority vote of its full membership. The Rector of the University chairs and leads the Academic Council. The Council promotes cooperation with other higher education institutions, academic mobility, and the implementation of scientific research. It also makes decisions regarding the approval and modification of higher and vocational education programs, as well as the university's strategic development and action plans, among others. Selection of Academic Council members is based on their involvement in the teaching and research processes, qualifications, experience, and general competencies.

The University structure should also incorporate the governing body (faculty council) of the main educational unit (faculty) and clearly define key positions within the main structural units, as required by the statute. This will enhance governance, further transparency and accountability.

The University recognizes the importance of transparent and legally compliant processes for the election and appointment of its management bodies. The institution ensures that appointments and elections to management positions are conducted in accordance with predefined, approved criteria, including provisions for assessing candidates' strategic visions and plans where appropriate. These

procedures are transparent, equitable, and aligned with national legislation and the university regulations.

The University has developed a mechanism for monitoring and evaluating management effectiveness. However, the document is limited in scope and requires a more detailed description of the processes. In addition, it is necessary to ensure that all relevant units and structural entities are involved in their review and implementation, as interviews did not confirm staff awareness or involvement in this process. Management effectiveness could be further strengthened by introducing comprehensive evaluation mechanisms that involve all relevant structural units. This will support a culture of continuous improvement and ensure alignment of administrative and academic management with institutional goals.

The University uses the electronic document management system 'e-document' for administrative recordkeeping. The university also uses an electronic system for managing the educational process, the „Electronic Journal". A corresponding agreement has been signed with LLC Posti.ge.

The institution follows the applicable legal requirements by maintaining a registry of educational institutions in accordance with current legislation. This practice reflects the institution's commitment to regulatory alignment and contributes to the transparency of its operations. However, information related to human resources, including administrative and academic staff, is currently not consistently updated in the Registry of Educational Institutions (QMS). To ensure full compliance with legal requirements and institutional standards, the institution should improve its data management processes to maintain accurate and timely records according to the current legislation.

Although a Business Continuity Plan exists, it requires regular updates that comprehensively identify and assess all relevant risks. The institution should develop and implement enhanced risk prevention and mitigation strategies to ensure continuity of critical processes under various scenarios. Particular attention should be paid to risks related to climatic factors, as well as the sustainability of financial and human resources.

Interviews revealed that certain activities have been planned to strengthen internationalization. A teacher has been hired to support the improvement of English language competency among personnel and students. An English-taught course has been introduced. The University participates annually in an international conference, and a memorandum of understanding is signed with the University of Konstanz. While the institution has made initial steps toward internationalization, it is essential to formalize and expand its internationalization policy. This includes the expansion of cooperation with European universities, promoting international mobility for students and staff, developing joint programs and projects, and increasing participation in international research networks. Effective leadership oversight and coherent implementation will be vital to maximize the benefits of internationalization and enhance the institution's profile.

Evidences/indicators

- Regulation of the University.
- Organizational Structure of the University.
- Regulations of Structural Units.
- Administrative Recordkeeping Rule of Tbeli University.
- Responsibilities, Functions, and Election Procedures of Governing Bodies.
- Management Effectiveness Monitoring Mechanism and Evaluation System.
- Confirmation of ownership of the Electronic Document Management System ("e-document").

- Self-evaluation report.
- Interviews.

Recommendations:

- It is recommended that the University establish key structural units, such as Strategic Development, Research Facilitation and Infrastructure Development Departments, to support capability assessment and strategic planning for future development, which will be reflected in the university's structure.
- It is recommended that the University structure includes, as defined by the statute, the governing body of the main educational unit, as well as the key positions of the main structural units, also defined by the statute, with individuals who will actually be appointed to these roles.
- It is recommended to improve management effectiveness and evaluation mechanisms and to involve all necessary units in this process.
- It is recommended to update the information on human resources, including administrative staff, in the Registry of Educational Institutions (QMS) within the timeframe established by law.
- It is recommended to update the business continuity plan to ensure that all key risk factors are identified and assessed, appropriate prevention mechanisms are in place, and a comprehensive risk mitigation strategy is developed.
- It is recommended to strengthen the internationalization policy, expand the network of collaborations, and implement exchange programs for academic staff and students. This will enhance the University's visibility and enable the adoption of best international practices.

Suggestions:

None

Best Practices (if applicable):

None

Evaluation

☐ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

x Partially complies with requirements

o ☐ Does not comply with requirements

2.2 Internal Quality Assurance Mechanisms

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The institution has made some progress in developing a quality assurance system that supports its strategic goals. As stated in the self-evaluation report, internal Quality Assurance is a continuous process of evaluating teaching and learning, research activities, institutional effectiveness, and, in particular, the implementation of the university's mission (especially its third component). This process is carried out by the relevant structural units of the university. The main goal of internal quality assurance is the ongoing improvement of educational activities and the strengthening of a quality culture within the university. This implies that every member of the university community takes responsibility for the quality of their own work and is actively involved in quality enhancement processes. During the interview, it was revealed that the staff is involved in the self-evaluation process. They receive relevant information and evaluation results; focus groups are formed to discuss the outcomes and identify existing needs to plan relevant development activities. In addition, internal quality assurance ensures the university's accountability to both internal and external stakeholders. Accountability to internal stakeholders is expressed through the transparency of quality assurance processes and the preparation of regular internal reports. Accountability to external stakeholders entails compliance with external quality assurance requirements, which is achieved through the development of self-evaluation reports for educational programs and the institution, and participation in external quality assurance procedures.

Furthermore, the institution allocates appropriate human, informational, and material resources to support QA activities, creating conditions for systematic and sustainable quality management. However, further development can enhance the system's overall effectiveness. In particular, it is recommended that the institution establish specific performance indicators to evaluate the impact of QA mechanisms. This would allow for a more structured assessment of the QA system's effectiveness and help ensure that quality-related efforts translate into measurable improvements. It should also be noted that the Quality Assurance Office has a head, a deputy, and one representative from each of the three faculties. However, this structure is not reflected in the regulation of the office. It is suggested that the actual composition of the Quality Assurance Office be incorporated into its statute.

The QA framework currently in place supports the regular evaluation and development of institutional activities and resources. Leadership demonstrates a commitment to decision-making by integrating QA results into planning and development processes. During the interview, it was noted that issues are discussed at the Faculty and Academic Councils in agreement with the Rector. The Rector consistently supports the decision-making process.

The institution has also developed a comprehensive staff performance evaluation system that encompasses academic, invited, administrative, and support staff. This tool plays an important role in promoting staff accountability and professional development. During the interview, it was revealed that staff surveys are conducted once a year. Staff members complete a self-assessment form, which is then reviewed by at least three administrative personnel. These administrators evaluate the staff's performance, identify their professional needs, and, if necessary, organize relevant training sessions. They have developed a 360-degree evaluation system, which they plan to implement.

Monitoring mechanisms for students' academic progress are in place and used to improve teaching practices. But, enhancing these mechanisms with stronger feedback loops, for instance, by systematically documenting how performance data inform changes, would increase their effectiveness

and impact. During the interview, it was noted that at the end of each semester, an analysis of students' academic performance is conducted. The results are presented to the Faculty Council, where decisions are made and immediate actions are taken in response.

In terms of program enhancement, the institution demonstrates effort in involving academic staff, students, and external stakeholders, including employers and alumni. Evaluation is mainly based on anonymous surveys, during which questionnaires are distributed to both students and staff for completion. According to students, they perceive that their needs are being addressed through actions taken during the process, for example, they requested a projector and later observed that it had been installed. Graduates also mentioned several courses that were added to the programs based on their recommendations. To further advance this area, it would benefit to formalize the collection and analysis of stakeholder feedback and establish clear procedures to ensure that this input is reflected in program design and improvement decisions. Clear communication of the outcomes of stakeholder engagement would also promote transparency and strengthen external trust. Accordingly, it is recommended that stakeholders (academic and invited staff, students and alumni, and employers) be actively involved in the development of educational programs, in order to incorporate their expectations and better align the programs with current market demands. Relevant reports on evaluation results and subsequent feedback should be developed.

The quality of institutional services and resources are evaluated on a regular basis, and the results are used to implement improvements. This ongoing review reflects a commitment to maintaining and enhancing standards. Nevertheless, preparing official reports of these evaluations and the changes implemented as a result could increase visibility and accountability. Making such information accessible would not only reinforce institutional accountability but also increase the visibility of QA efforts among stakeholders, including students, employers, and other partners. This practice would demonstrate the institution's commitment to continuous improvement and provide clear evidence of how evaluation results are used to inform decision-making.

The University elaborated a student body planning methodology that considers resource availability, thereby supporting strategic enrollment management. However, it is recommended that the university expand this practice by providing more detailed, program-specific enrolment data. This would facilitate more targeted planning and ensure a balanced allocation of resources across different academic programs. Additionally, it is noteworthy that the student body planning methodology stipulates a maximum of 2000 students across all academic programs. However, the current and required number of students stands at 2500. It is therefore advisable to revise the regulation to reflect the actual situation and ensure alignment between planning benchmarks and institutional realities.

In conclusion, while the University has established a solid quality assurance foundation, the implementation of these targeted recommendations and suggestions will further strengthen its QA framework. These actions will foster deeper stakeholder engagement, promote transparency, and enhance strategic decision-making, contributing to sustainable institutional development and improved educational outcomes.

Evidences/indicators

- Regulation of the Quality Assurance Office.
- Mechanisms for Enhancing the Quality of Teaching.
- Rule for Determining Mechanisms, Methodology, and Target Benchmarks for Planning Student/Professional Student Contingents.
- Rule for the Evaluation of Academic and Invited Staff Performance.
- Rule for Planning, Developing, Implementing, Evaluating, and Ensuring the Development of First and Second Cycle Higher Education Programs.
- QA evaluation results.
- Self-evaluation report.
- Interviews.

Recommendations:

- It is recommended to develop a system for evaluating the effectiveness of quality assurance mechanisms, which will support process improvement and enhance overall quality.
- It is recommended that stakeholders (academic and invited staff, students and alumni, and employers) be actively involved in the development of educational programs, in order to incorporate their expectations and better align the programs with current market demands. Relevant reports on evaluation results and subsequent feedback should be developed.
- It is recommended to enhance transparency and strengthen stakeholder confidence; it is recommended that the university regularly prepare quality assurance evaluation reports along with summaries of the resulting actions and improvements.

Suggestions:

- It is suggested that the actual composition of the Quality Assurance Office be incorporated into its statute.
- It is suggested that the University update the student body planning methodology to align with both the requested and actual marginal number of students.

Best Practices (if applicable):

None

Evaluation

☐ Complies with requirements

x Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

2.3. Observing Principles of Ethics and Integrity

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The observance of principles of ethics and integrity by students and staff is essential in university life. For this purpose, The University has adopted a Code of Ethics that applies to both students and staff. Procedures have been established to address violations of these regulations, providing a framework to maintain ethical standards throughout the institution. In accordance with university values, legislation, and other normative acts, it defines the standards of conduct for academic, administrative, support staff, teachers, invited lecturers, and the students, including possible ways of resolving ethical issues that may arise. The administration promotes these codes by organizing events and sharing the information, contributing to ongoing awareness and reinforcement of ethical norms. Measures established by the internal regulations and disciplinary liability rules of Tbeli University are imposed on academic staff, teachers, and invited lecturers for violations of ethical norms. Due to the specific nature of the university, there have been cases where remarks were made to students regarding dress style. Deans, the lawyer, and program coordinators inform newly enrolled students about the Code of Ethics and rules of conduct.

As it is stated in the self-evaluation report, academic integrity is given importance. This issue is monitored in accordance with the plagiarism policy and preventive measures outlined in the university's "Plagiarism Regulation". Students and staff are informed about these procedures in advance. The academic staff is familiar with this regulation.

Thesis are checked using special anti-plagiarism software. A contract has been signed for the use of this software. An acceptable similarity percentage has been established, and if it is exceeded, the work is returned to the student for revision in consultation with their supervisor. The work is then rechecked and cannot proceed to defense unless the issues are corrected. Students are aware that the rule exists and that it is posted on the university's website; however, no informational campaigns have been held to raise awareness about academic integrity. Both students and graduates are unable to clearly describe the principles of academic integrity violations and tend to focus only on cases of cheating. Additionally, mechanisms for prevention, avoidance of violations, and sanctions applicable to such cases have not been adequately explained.

The institution formally declares its commitment to the principles of academic freedom within its regulations. Staff and students demonstrate familiarity with these principles, reflecting a shared understanding and respect for academic freedom as a cornerstone of the institution's mission. During the interviews, consistent responses regarding the principles of academic freedom were not received from the university representatives.

To sum up, focusing on the improvement of the identified development areas will strengthen the institution's ethical climate, enhance academic integrity, and cultivate a robust culture of academic freedom, thereby supporting the institution's overall mission and quality assurance objectives.

Evidences/indicators
- Code of Ethics of Tbeli University.   - Statute of Tbeli University.   - The self-evaluation report.   - Interviews.
Recommendations:
- It is recommended that the university hold informational meetings with academic staff, invited personnel, and students to raise awareness of plagiarism detection and academic integrity.   - It is recommended to raise awareness of the principles of academic freedom among academic and invited staff of the university.
Suggestions:
None
Best Practices (if applicable):
None
Evaluation
☐ Complies with requirements x Substantially complies with requirements ☐ Partially complies with requirements ☐ Does not comply with requirements

3.   Educational Programmes

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

3.1 Design and Development of Educational Programmes
HEI has a policy for planning, designing, implementing and developing educational programmes.
Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements The Tbel Abuserisdze University of the Georgian Patriarchate embodies the ideal of a university that is not satisfied with just transferring knowledge - it strives for the preservation and preservation of critical thinking, spiritual and cultural heritage. In the mission document approved on June 7, 2022, we read: "For the well-being of the Georgian nation, the elevation of Orthodox Christian spirituality, the protection and strengthening of national values and self-awareness, and economic strength, the University: creates an appropriate environment for modern educational and scientific activities, where it is possible to master, change professions and improve qualifications in accordance with the increased and rapidly changing requirements of the labor market, taking into account individual needs and without age restrictions. Offers high-quality educational programs. Provides training and education of

qualified specialists throughout life. "It contributes to the formation of a person with a high sense of national and civic consciousness." The university represents a close union of students, professors, researchers, administrative and support staff, whose united, harmonious cooperation creates a unified area of teaching, creative development and scientific research.

The presented document, on-site visit and interviews with academic, invited staff and administration representatives showed that the HEI already has significant experience and purpose in this area.

A variety of activities have been carried out in various directions - cooperation with several important neighboring HEI within the country (including Sokhumi State University), organization and support of scientific or creative events and conferences, as well as the search for partner universities for international cooperation has begun, the process of lifelong learning has been promoted, and short-term educational programs have been developed and are being accepted. In addition, graduates confirm the role and importance of the HEI with their employment rate and professionalism, and their attitude towards higher education institutions, in which a sense of belonging and great gratitude is felt, is no less important.

The university has three faculties: Faculty of Humanities and Education; Faculty of Law and Public Administration; Faculty of Agrarian Sciences and Business Administration. Education is provided in 21 programs.

The Faculty of Humanities and Education offers 4 bachelor's degrees (Georgian Philology; History and Theory of Art; History; Journalism), 1 integrated (Integrated Bachelor's and Master's Degree Educational Program for Primary School Teacher Training, 300 credits), 6 master's degrees (Georgian Linguistics, Georgian Literature, History of Georgia, History and Theory of Art, Archaeology, Journalism) and teacher training educational programs (60 credits). The Faculty of Agrarian Sciences and Business Administration offers 3 bachelor's degrees (Mathematics, Business Administration, Agrarian Sciences / Agrotechnology, Plant Protection, Forestry), 3 master's degrees (Mathematics, Business Administration, Agrarian Sciences - Module: Agrotechnology, Food Technologies, Forestry) Case) programs. The Faculty of Law and Public Administration offers 2 Bachelor's (Law; Public Administration, 180 credits) and 1 Master's (Public Administration) programs. Educational programs aim to achieve learning outcomes and competencies, acquire sectoral, practical and transferable skills, a student-oriented, flexible curriculum that ensures the training of specialists according to the level of education. It should also be noted that the programs ensure the achievement of goals and learning outcomes. The document "On the development, approval, amendment and cancellation of educational programs" includes all the provisions that ensure the development of educational programs in higher education institutions and aims to improve the quality culture with the broad involvement of stakeholders. Also, the development of new educational programs that correspond to the mission and goals of the university.

From the self-assessment report, as well as interviews with staff, alumni and stakeholders, the expert group concluded that the university is trying to align its programs with the needs of the market and the national economy by balancing the pedagogical and research strengths of the university, its mission, common needs and academic staff. The university compares programs with similar programs in Georgia and internationally. In the process of planning and reviewing the program, it is necessary to share international experience, involve experts and familiarize yourself with the syllabi of similar programs, which will help increase the potential of the institution in terms of international connections and cooperation.

From a practical point of view, the university should also cooperate with the international market and implement external educational and scientific projects, however, due to the lack of financial support in this direction, it is not possible to plan group visits.

The learning outcomes of the study programs correspond to the 6th (BA) and 7th (MA) levels of the National Qualifications Framework. Based on the analysis of documents, as well as interviews with students, graduates, academic and invited staff, the expert group is convinced that the HEI provides quality education in accordance with the legislation of Georgia with the unity of knowledge, skills and attitudes. An indicative example that shows the compliance of one of the program outcomes with the National Qualifications Framework, the 7th level qualification descriptor is presented in the learning outcomes of the Master's program "Georgian Linguistics": "Aware of the national and international value of the Georgian language; acts in compliance with professional ethics, is able to evaluate and respect the opinions of others; adheres to the basic principles of teamwork; has the ability to update and deepen acquired knowledge, work independently and plan strategically" - which responds to and, in fact, fully corresponds to the descriptor of the National Qualifications Framework - "Autonomy and responsibility". Another example, level 6, "Agricultural Sciences / Module - Agrotechnology, Plant Protection, Forestry") After completing the program, the graduate: "Describes and knows the importance, place and role of plants, structure, biology, systematics, the diversity of living organisms and their use in a beneficial direction for humans... Has extensive knowledge in the basics of agrotechnology, plant protection and forestry, realizes the importance of the field in the sustainable development of agriculture and the environment" (knowledge and awareness).

When describing the way of developing, planning and developing educational programs, it is important to take into account market requirements. During the interview process with employers, several positive and corrective aspects of the programs were identified. In particular:

· During the interview process, the employer noted that graduates of public administration and law, in some cases, lack practical competencies, especially in areas such as practical knowledge of administrative procedures, decision-making skills in a real work environment, and effective communication techniques.

· Despite the fact that graduates are well versed in theoretical foundations and legal analysis, employers note a lack of practical skills in producing documentation. Accordingly, it is advisable to place more emphasis on the component of working with real administrative documentation (e.g., drafting applications, decrees, legal opinions, etc.).

· During the interview process, the employer made some remarks related to the graduates' practical readiness for documentation production. Despite the fact that they have solid theoretical knowledge and subject-specific competencies, difficulties were often noted in preparing administrative or museum documents (reports, descriptions, exposition texts). This aspect represents an important opportunity for growth and development and has already been taken into account in the process of revising the program modules, where it is planned to place more emphasis on practical work and documentation-related tasks.

· In the process of working with journalism students, certain opportunities have been noted that will contribute to their professional development: it is necessary to further refine the techniques of planning interviews and formulating questions more precisely, which will increase the depth of information and marketing relevance. It is useful to further improve the skills of verifying information and critically analyzing facts, which will help create high-quality and reliable material. It is recommended to practice time management strategies to dramatically increase the speed and efficiency of the publishing process. Also, systematic practical introduction and application of journalistic ethics and confidentiality issues is needed, which will contribute to full compliance with professional standards.

During the interview process (with students, staff and employers), it was confirmed that the institution can educate highly qualified personnel, however, several recommendations were voiced for this. Among them, the university has international ties, however, the majority of staff has a language barrier. They themselves noted that they need to learn English better for communication and for this it is necessary to provide enhanced language courses for students and develop a special educational program for staff.

Programs should be reviewed, and personnel training should be based on the requirements of the labor market. Although the syllabi are well described in compliance with the requirements of the labor market, however, during the interview process, employers spoke about problems that need to be eliminated. The volume and content of practical training courses should be increased, and students should be given a diverse list of elective subjects in the programs so that they can study related practical subjects of interest to them and understand the profession from a diverse perspective. Therefore, it is recommended to review and develop programs for training highly qualified specialists in demand in the labor market; it is also necessary to standardize all programs.

Academic writing is an important competence in the professional development of students and the realization of their scientific potential. Based on the evaluation of current programs, it was noted that, despite the general good theoretical knowledge, it is necessary to focus on strengthening the practical skills of expressing oneself in academic writing. It is recommended that the following areas be more actively implemented within the framework of the program's training modules: logical structuring and text organization techniques; analysis of research materials and critical use of sources; simplified teaching of correct citation standards; additional seminars and practical work to improve writing skills; continuous improvement of the language and style of academic writing.

Training more necessary and qualified personnel; standardization of all programs; highly qualified knowledge of a foreign language for students and staff. Interdisciplinarity of programs - there are obvious problems.

Evidences/indicators

- Interviews during the site visit
- Self-evaluation report
- Description of educational programs
- Mission and vision statement
- Educational programs/curricula
- Procedure for development, approval, amendment and cancellation of educational programs of a higher education institution
- Quality assurance policy
- Management effectiveness monitoring mechanisms and evaluation system
- On monitoring the academic performance of students of a higher education institution

Recommendations:

- It is recommended to update and strengthen the programs by integrating modern teaching methods and practical components in order to increase the professional competencies of graduates and their relevance to the labor market.
- It is recommended to strengthen standardization mechanisms in the curricula, which will facilitate competency-based and consistent education.

- It is recommended to add a separate, specialized academic writing course to the programs, which will contribute to the future strengthening of students' research and writing competencies and professional preparation.
- It is recommended to strengthen the teaching of English within the program, which will ensure the improvement of international communication skills of students and academic staff. This requires additional courses, intensive seminars and practical workshops that will enhance the active use of the language in professional and academic environments.

Suggestions:
- In the process of planning and reviewing the program, it is suggested to consider comparison with similar programs in Georgia and internationally, which will contribute to increasing the potential of the university for international connections and cooperation.
- It is suggested students are given the opportunity to fully master practical courses in order to prepare highly qualified personnel in accordance with market requirements.

Best Practices (if applicable):

None

Evaluation

☐ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

x Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

3.2 Structure and Content of Educational Programmes

o Programme learning outcomes are clearly stated and are in line with higher education level and qualification to be granted

o 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.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The University presents 21 higher education programs for consideration, at the VI and VII levels of education: Bachelor's degree 9; Master's degree 10; Teacher Training Educational Program (60 ECTS) 1; Integrated Bachelor's-Master's Educational Program for Primary Education Teacher Training (300 ECTS) 1. In terms of content and purpose, the programs correspond to the vision of the institution. All programs are in Georgian.

Educational programs are presented in the form developed by higher education institution. The design and structure of the programs correspond to the standard. Each program is given in the form of a curriculum and the courses included in it are distributed as follows: profiled core modules/courses (MC); core/university modules/courses (MC); general university courses (GC); Elective Courses (ECC). Each curriculum clearly describes a specific program based on its main characteristics. For example, in the description of the bachelor's program "History and Theory of Art" we read: 1. Program name - History and Theory of Art; 2. Level of education - Bachelor's degree; 3. Academic degree awarded: Bachelor of Art History and Theory; 4. Program volume: 240 credits; 5. Language of instruction: Georgian. 6. Concept and goal of the educational program: The educational program of History and Theory of Art combines a variety of artistic directions, which also covers a wide chronological range. The program is important in terms of a better understanding of cultural diversity and adequate understanding of national cultural values and national identity. The program will allow the student to analyze world and national artistic processes. An important component of the program is the opportunity to choose the educational program for the preparation of teachers of fine and applied arts (60 credits). It is provided to students in an integrated manner with the bachelor's program and, if selected, a corresponding certificate is issued. The teacher preparation program allows the student to master the profession of a teacher of fine and applied arts in the future. The program consists of 240 credits, which are distributed as follows: main subjects of the specialty (90 credits); elective subjects of related disciplines (20 credits); university disciplines (50 credits); additional specialty (60 credits).

One of the issues in the curriculum is whether the prerequisites for admission to the programs meet the existing regulations. Interviews with the administration and a review of the program descriptions showed that the admission policy for programs offered by the university with the status of a university complies with the regulations. Admission to the bachelor's program "History and Theory of Art" is carried out in accordance with the requirements specified in the legislation of Georgia and the regulations regulating the educational process of the Holy Tbel Abuserisdze Academic University of the Georgian Patriarchate. Those wishing to enroll in the program must successfully pass the Unified National Exams and register at the university. The right to obtain student status without the Unified National Exams is possible based on the rules established by the Ministry of Education of Georgia.

Students from other universities may obtain the right to study on the basis of mobility, in accordance with the legislation of Georgia and the regulations regulating the educational process of the university.

For example, a candidate wishing to enroll in the Master's program in "Public Governance" must successfully pass the national master's exams and the internal university exam in the specialty specified by the University.

The programs also cover the field of employment. A graduate of the Master of Public Administration program can successfully work and grow in his career: in government structures and other public institutions; in local government and self-government institutions; in managerial positions in

organizations of any form of ownership; in public and non-governmental organizations, etc.; conduct research in the field of governance and management.

The curriculum presents the goals and learning outcomes of the programs, methods and forms of achieving learning outcomes, the student's knowledge assessment system, the program structure, the list of courses, ECTS credits, contact hours (weekly and semester); prerequisites for admission to the course with reference to the semester of study. It also describes the material and technical base necessary for the implementation of the program and, finally, the necessary human resources, where it is stated that "academic and invited personnel of the relevant field are involved in the implementation of the program, which ensures the achievement of learning outcomes provided for by the course and program components." The implementation is facilitated by the educational process management service of the faculty and other structural units, administrative and support personnel. The document ends with a list of professors and teachers with an indication of their academic position. Each program is represented by training courses. The main part, 75-80%, is represented by mandatory courses, the content of which directly corresponds to the goals and objectives of the program. The objectives of the program are clearly defined, and the learning outcomes are related to them.

The programs of all three faculties are implemented and implemented through study courses. They include all courses that may be related to the programs. For example, the main study courses of the Bachelor's degree program in Mathematics are Information Technologies; Introduction to Mathematics; Introduction to Physics; Fundamentals of Programming; Mathematical Analysis 1-3; Theory of Functions; Analytical Geometry; Algebra 1-2; Fundamentals of Mathematical Logic, etc. (125 ECTS).

Elective courses of the specialty: Integral Equations; Fundamentals of Elementary Mathematics; Analytical Geometry II; Linear Algebra; Group Theory; Theory of Random Processes; Financial Mathematics. (10 ECTS).

General course: History of Georgian Literature; Academic Writing; History of Fine Arts; Introduction to Philosophy; Fundamentals of Psychology; Office computer programs; English language; English language; Russian language (40 ECTS), Additional specialty (60 ECTS).

According to the expert panel, all courses are relevant and contribute to the professional development and formation of students through these programs.

It should also be noted that the syllabi included in all programs is visually presented in the same format. Their structure and simple design facilitate the perception of the given information. The syllabi are well structured, each issue is fully formulated and presented: education stage, course status, semester. ECTS credits, contact hours, title, qualification, job position, lecturer contact information, consultation hours, course objectives, teaching and learning methods, admission prerequisites, course content, assessment, required literature, additional literature and other learning materials, learning outcomes, course content. However, the literature provided in the syllabi is often scarce. This means that the exact name of the textbook, pages of a specific topic in the given textbook are not specified. It is desirable that the syllabi indicate a specified literature, which, as far as possible (based on the specifics of the subject), will be diverse and frequently updated. Students should be given the opportunity to work on specific topics from several resources.

The additional program emphasizes the training of professionals in the relevant field, who also need pedagogical skills.

The employment of graduates of mathematics, Georgian literature, and art history specialties in general education schools is particularly relevant. It is desirable that the pedagogical module subjects be

strengthened in programs that also prepare general education schoolteachers in order to equip teachers entering schools with the appropriate skills. The list of subjects includes the study of general principles of pedagogy and psychology; however, it is desirable to add courses in classroom management, child psychology, and legal foundations of education, which are necessary for teachers entering the profession.

During the interview process with students, it was revealed that the list of elective subjects should be improved according to the programs, since they need to better see the connections between subjects. Students are often interested in practical subjects of related professions and do not have the opportunity to choose a subject according to their field of interest and need. It is recommended that the list of elective subjects be reviewed and diversified in accordance with student demand, allowing them to choose subjects not only within one specific program, but also from adjacent programs.

It is desirable that the modern teaching methods included in the curriculum be fully reflected in the syllabi. After interviews during the on-site visit, it was clear that they are used in the teaching process. For example, the description of the curriculum states as the methods of achieving learning outcomes: "Study is conducted using the following teaching and learning methods and forms: lecture and practical work using active teaching methods: demonstration, discussion, question-and-answer session, presentation. Problem-based learning, analysis and synthesis, explanatory method, etc. At the same time, the learning process includes the activity of the master's student's independent, self-educational process, which should be carried out through intensive familiarization and study of special literature, systematic study of archival (manuscript) materials and gaining empirical experience in practice within the framework of a specific topic to be developed. Also, the programs provide work on manuscripts, preparation of students for scientific conferences and other educational projects.

Relevance is confirmed by the activities of the higher education institution and the accompanying documents indicated in the evidence/indicators field.

During the interview process, it was revealed that students do not. They need to create an individualized learning plan or schedule. However, missed hours will be compensated with an additional hour.

The conditions of study and assessment forms are acceptable to students. They send to their personal emails the literature to be processed, instructions for the assignment, and all necessary information. Lectures are held in a face-to-face format; however, students note that they can contact teachers outside of lectures. Master's students speak with gratitude about the additional non-auditorium time that each student's supervisor spends individually with their student to overcome the material to be processed. A detailed inspection of the buildings revealed that students have appropriate conditions in both learning spaces. However, there are auditoriums locally that require repair work and constant updating of teaching equipment, but this is an integral part of the educational process, and the institution's leadership constantly takes care of resolving technical equipment and other necessary issues, which are within their capabilities.

Students, as well as invited and academic staff, noted during the interview process that a student who wants to consult another teacher is fully prepared in this regard, and any student can turn to a teacher who does not teach him in a specific case for help, however, the student needs information or advice. In this regard, the institution has a healthy environment and a positive attitude between teachers and students.

Students demand a diverse list of elective subjects, both from their specialty and from neighboring specialties, in order to be able to interestingly develop their own vision not only in a professional context.

Evidences/indicators

- Interviews during the visit
- Self-evaluation report
- Description of educational programs
- Faculty regulations
- Educational programs and syllabi

Recommendations:

- It is recommended to review and diversify the list of elective subjects in accordance with the demands of students, so that they can choose a subject not only within the framework of one specific program, but also from adjacent programs.
- It is recommended to strengthen the subjects of the pedagogical module in programs that prepare general education schoolteachers, in order to equip prospective teachers with the appropriate skills.

Suggestions:

- It is suggested that the syllabi indicate detailed literature, which, as far as possible (based on the specifics of the subject), will be diverse and frequently updated.
- It is suggested that the modern teaching methods included in the curriculum be fully reflected in the syllabi.

Best Practices (if applicable):

None

Evaluation

☐ Complies with requirements

X Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

3.3 Assessment of Learning Outcomes

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

According to the self-assessment report and the descriptions and syllabi of the presented programs, it is shown that at both educational levels, the learning outcomes of all 21 programs are assessed in accordance with the legislation of Georgia and in accordance with the standard. The outcomes in all programs are presented in the following form: knowledge, skills, responsibility and autonomy. The assessment of student achievements is carried out in accordance with the orders of the Minister of

Education and Science of Georgia No. 3 of January 5, 2007, and No. 785 of September 21, 2009 (taking into account the above-mentioned points).

The assessment system at the University is multi-level and multi-component. Additional criteria for assessing student achievements in the course of study are determined by the relevant syllabus.

The student's knowledge is assessed according to the following scheme in accordance with the legislation in force in Georgia:

(A) Excellent - 91-100 points

(B) Very good - 81-90 points

(C) Good - 71-80 points

(D) Satisfactory - 61-70 points

(E) Sufficient - 51-60 points

There are two types of negative assessments:

(FX)- Unsatisfactory - 41-50 points, which means that the student needs more work to pass and is given the right to take an additional exam after independent work.

(F) (F)- Failed - 40 points or less of the maximum assessment, which means that the work done by the student is not sufficient and he/she must retake the subject.

In the case of receiving FX in the educational component of the educational program, an additional exam will be scheduled no later than 5 calendar days after the announcement of the final exam results. The score received in the final assessment is not added to the student's grade received in the additional exam. The grade received in the additional exam is final and is reflected in the final assessment of the educational component of the educational program. In case of receiving 0-50 points in the final assessment of the educational component, taking into account the grade received in the additional exam, the student receives an F-0 score.

Each form and component of the assessment has its share in the final 100-point assessment. This information is provided in the syllabi, and the student is informed about it at the beginning of the academic semester. According to the university education assessment system, the student's assessment is the sum of the intermediate and final scores.

On the other hand, the intermediate assessment includes intermediate exam/current assessments or other components depending on the course of study.

The final assessment forms are as follows:

· Final exam.

· Evaluation of the qualification paper.

Forms of mid-term and final assessment include assessment components that determine the achieved level of student knowledge and understanding, skills, responsibility and autonomy. These forms are oral/written exam, oral/written survey, homework, practical/theoretical work, etc. The assessment component combines assessment methods (test, essay, demonstration, presentation, discussion, practical/theoretical assignment, group work, discussion participation, report, written assignment, etc.). The assessment method/methods are measured by assessment criteria - the unit of measurement of the assessment method, which determines the level of achievement of learning outcomes.

A student is awarded credit only in the case of receiving a positive assessment, and if it is awarded using more than one form of assessment.

The university has developed a form for assessing the qualification exam and a regulatory document.

The qualification thesis is especially noteworthy, because it fully reflects the acquired experience and the extent to which the learning outcomes have been achieved. Instructions for the preparation and defense of the master's research thesis are attached, which determine all the main requirements for the thesis, which are: The technical parameters of the thesis relate to the citation of literature, the defense procedure, and the evaluation of the qualifying thesis.

Learning outcomes are clearly stated in the given bachelor's and master's programs. However, it is desirable that the bachelor's and master's theoretical work should contain more elements of the research component, so that students, when creating a bachelor's work, study the elementary skills of scientific activity, and the master's work should represent a deep study of a specific issue. The depth of research and the methods used in bachelor's work are sometimes superficial. It is recommended to define clear standards that include the need for proper formulation of research objectives, methods and conclusions. At the master's level, significant attention should be paid to the correctness of the research design and methodological soundness. It is recommended that faculties develop mechanisms for scientific supervision in order to facilitate quality research.

It is recommended to clarify the formal criteria for papers and develop a unified methodological manual, which will ensure the improvement of the quality of the research component. Developing a unified methodological manual means that the program (or faculty) should develop a document or manual that will help students and supervisors properly plan and conduct research. The manual should specify what the research problem, hypothesis, and research questions are; how to choose research methods (quantitative/qualitative/mixed); how to conduct data collection and analysis; what ethical standards the student must adhere to; how to avoid plagiarism and use sources correctly; how and with what frequency the student should consult with the supervisor.

To ensure transparent and fair management of the research component, the University has clearly defined appeal mechanisms. The student has the right to file a complaint in the following cases:

· Regarding the assessment

to appeal the received assessment if he/she believes that the assessment does not comply with the criteria specified in the methodological manual; a procedural error has been formally made (e.g., the frequency of consultations was not observed, or the advisor's advice was not taken into account); the assessment contains subjectivity or unjustified bias.

· Problems with the supervisor: If a conflict or communication breakdown arises between the student and the supervisor, the student is informed that he/she can: contact the program director/dean's office with a request for an alternative supervisor; request the involvement of a mediator to resolve the problem.

· Procedural violations

The student is given the opportunity to report a violation of the process related to: the deadlines for submitting the thesis; Rules for documenting consultations; Regarding violations of ethical norms (e.g., misconduct, conflict of interest, etc.).

· Stages of the appeal procedure

Primary complaint – in writing, to the relevant program director or quality assurance service; Internal review – in the relevant commission or dean's office; Decision-making and communication – written

response of the commission within a reasonable period of time (e.g., 10 working days); Secondary appeal (if any) – possibility of applying to the university's appeals board.

Information received during the appeals process is completely confidential and all parties involved are obliged to comply with the norms of academic ethics.

The interview process revealed that students who systematically use consultations and responsibly approach the research process, as a rule, do not use appeal mechanisms – a successful relationship with the supervisor most often ensures the smooth and effective completion of the work.

Evidences/indicators

- Interviews during the visit
- Self-evaluation report
- Educational programs/syllabi
- Documentation of research activities

Recommendations:

- It is recommended to ensure that the research depth and quality of academic papers at the undergraduate and graduate levels are in line with international academic standards and the requirements of the Georgian National Qualifications Framework.
- It is recommended to clarify the formal criteria for papers and develop a unified methodological manual, which will ensure the improvement of the quality of the research component.
- It is recommended to introduce a mechanism for developing individual curriculum, which will help strengthen student-tailored teaching practices and increase the flexibility of the academic process.

Suggestions:

None

Best Practices (if applicable):

None

Evaluation

☐ Complies with requirements

X 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

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The HEI (hereafter referred to as the University) has established a comprehensive Staff Management Policy that aims to align staff management practices with the University's mission and strategic development goals. This policy defines transparent and equitable principles and procedures related to recruitment, employment, evaluation, and professional development of academic, invited, and administrative personnel.

The University demonstrates a clear commitment to attracting and retaining competent, motivated, and development-oriented staff. Recruitment processes for academic staff are conducted via open and transparent competitions accessible to all interested candidates, ensuring equal opportunity irrespective of gender, ethnicity, religion, or other backgrounds. Administrative and support staff appointments follow similarly competitive procedures, with an emphasis on internal career growth and professional development.

The recent introduction of an HR Department marks a significant step toward institutionalizing human resource management and fostering a systematic approach to staff affairs. The HR unit is tasked with overseeing recruitment, assessment, and staff development activities, thereby strengthening organizational capacity and ensuring alignment with best practices.

The University's 2025-2027 action plan includes targeted staff development initiatives for academic, administrative, and support personnel. Planned activities involve training in modern teaching methods, IT in education, strategic planning, and administrative processes.

The University has put in place regulations for staff evaluation that encompass self-assessment by staff on an annual basis via an electronic questionnaire, followed by managerial assessment and feedback. This process promotes reflective practice and accountability; however, it was noted that the feedback provided to academic and invited staff remains largely informal and indirect. Staff members do not receive formal, documented summary reports of student evaluations or comprehensive written feedback from the administration, which limits opportunities for targeted professional growth.

Staff evaluations are conducted on an annual basis; however, the lack of semester-based assessments limits the regular monitoring and timely feedback on staff performance. Staff job descriptions have been developed and agreed upon, yet some elements of the evaluation process remain somewhat unclear or under-implemented, particularly in terms of defining benchmarks, assigning scores, and linking performance outcomes with tangible rewards.

While the University supports staff participation in conferences and training sessions – providing partial funding and encouragement – financial resources for professional development and performance incentives are currently limited. Academic and invited staff expressed a desire for increased funding independence from donor sources and more robust financial motivation schemes. Establishing compensation and incentive mechanisms is strongly recommended to better align remuneration with performance and encourage higher engagement.

The University fosters a collegial and supportive work environment, emphasizing respect, fairness, and stability. The low turnover rate of qualified academic staff in a geographically challenging location

attests to effective retention policies. However, greater efforts are needed to engage staff more actively in institutional governance. Currently, staff appointments to decision-making bodies are mostly rector-appointed rather than elective, suggesting potential for enhancing academic voice and participatory governance structures.

Furthermore, the University's staff professional development strategy remains at an early stage. Although general policies and procedures exist, there is no comprehensive, actionable professional development strategy or a detailed multi-year action plan clearly articulated in institutional documentation. Staff involvement in research activities, particularly in securing grants (e.g., from the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation) and international projects, remain limited. The aspiration to invite foreign academic experts and increase international collaboration is evident but requires systematic support and improved funding mechanisms.

Student feedback mechanisms for course evaluation currently rely on informal, verbal comments from graduate students, with no structured feedback gathered from master's students. Moreover, the University does not yet provide comparative performance data or percentile rankings to staff based on student evaluations, limiting the potential for benchmarking and continuous improvement.

Evidences/indicators
- The Staff Management Policy, approved by Order #01-03/05 dated June 25, 2021.
- Staff Scientific Activity Report, 2019-2024.
- Regulations for Staff Evaluation.
- The University Regulation, approved by Order №01-03/10 dated June 17, 2022, and amended by Order №01-03/3 dated March 10, 2023;
- HR Regulation.
- The University Structure, approved by Rector's Order №01-03/24a dated November 10, 2021;
- Rule for Evaluating the Activities of Academic, Invited, Administrative, and Support Staff, Order №01-03/07 dated June 28, 2021;
- Self-Evaluation Report.
- Student Evaluation Results – Business Program – 2023–2024;
- Interviews with Academic, Scientific, Invited, Administrative, and Support Staff;
- Site Visit.

Recommendations:
- It is recommended to establish well-defined remuneration and incentive systems that are aligned with staff performance evaluation outcomes.
- It is recommended to provide formal, documented feedback based on student and managerial evaluations.
- It is recommended to clarify and systematize staff evaluation criteria, benchmarks, and alignment with job descriptions.
- It is recommended to develop and implement a multi-year professional development strategy, including international training.
- It is recommended to increase the elective participation of staff in institutional governance and decision-making.
- It is recommended to enhance support for staff to access research funding and international collaboration opportunities.

Suggestions:

- It is suggested to expand structured student feedback mechanisms to include graduate and master's students, ensuring comprehensive course evaluation data.
- It is suggested to explore opportunities for independent funding streams to reduce reliance on donors and enhance staff development financing.
- It is suggested to develop a formal system to document and share best practices from international collaborations and from collaboration with invited experts to enrich institutional knowledge.

Best Practices (if applicable):

None

Evaluation

☐ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

X Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

4.2. Academic/Scientific and Invited Staff Workload

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The HEI has established clear rules defining the number and workload of academic staff based on student population, program needs, and its geographic location. Staff workload complies with Georgian Labor Code limits, capped at 40 hours per week, with a minimum presence of two days per week to effectively deliver courses. The workload is assigned in accordance with staff qualifications and aligned to educational program requirements, ensuring compliance with legal frameworks and contractual agreements.

Current staffing includes 67 affiliated academic staff members (38 scientific and 25 invited), actively involved in teaching and research activities. The University plans to renew academic staff via competitive recruitment in 2025 to further enhance quality and relevance. Contractual and affiliation agreements clearly outline staff rights, responsibilities, and research obligations, contributing to transparency and accountability.

While the University has implemented evaluation rules for academic and scientific staff, these remain in early stages of development, lacking clearly defined benchmarks and measurable performance indicators. Evaluations are conducted annually but would benefit from more frequent assessments and explicit criteria tied to workload, research output, and teaching effectiveness.

Staff involvement in research activities and internationalization efforts has increased, including participation in conferences and scientific publications. However, challenges persist, notably limited engagement in grant applications (e.g., Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation) and language

barriers impacting international collaboration. The University's efforts to address these include language training, increased scientific staff training, and plans to host international experts.

In conclusion, while Tbeli University demonstrates compliance with the basic workload regulations and shows ongoing progress, strategic improvements in workload assessment, feedback mechanisms, research support, and staff participation in governance will significantly strengthen staff motivation, productivity, and overall institutional quality.

Evidences/indicators

- Employment and affiliation contracts for academic, scientific, and invited staff.
- Workload schedules.
- Staff qualification documents (CVs, diplomas, publications) that are confirming alignment with assigned teaching duties.
- Records of academic staff teaching hours per semester, including course distribution and related workload data.
- Staff evaluation rules, reports, and recent introduction of evaluation benchmarks for workload assessment.
- Action plan for 2025 academic staff recruitment and staff composition improvement.
- Self-Evaluation Report.
- Interviews with academic, scientific, invited, administrative, and support staff.
- Site visit.

Recommendations:

- It is recommended to implement regular semester-based staff evaluations with formal, documented feedback.
- It is recommended to develop incentive mechanisms linked to workload and performance.
- It is recommended to enhance support for research activities and international collaboration.

Suggestions:

- It is suggested to encourage more structured language training to reduce barriers in international collaboration.
- It is suggested to develop faculty-specific lists of preferred journals and conferences to guide research publication quality.
- It is suggested to promote incentives and recognition for staff who develop new courses and academic materials.

Best Practices (if applicable):

None

Evaluation:

☐ Complies with requirements

X Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

5. Students and Their Support Services

HEI ensures the development of a 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

- o 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.
- o HEI ensures the protection of student rights and lawful interests.

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The University has provided an approved regulation governing the educational process, which covers issues such as: student rights and responsibilities, student code of conduct, the right to study and the granting, suspension, and termination of student status, information about admission through mobility and internal mobility; the procedures for reinstating student status; student assessment and examination procedures; rules for completing the scientific research component, formatting and evaluating the research component; the process of awarding academic degrees, etc.

The University has also developed a Student Handbook, which is available on the university's website and includes information and additional documentation on topics that may raise questions for students. This handbook includes the regulation governing the educational process, which is subject to updates (the version uploaded on the website is approved by a 2017 order, while the version shared with the expert group is approved by a 2023 order). This information is available only in the Georgian language. Although the website can be switched to English, most of the documentation is not translated.

The University conducts annual orientation meetings for newcomers. According to information provided by students, during these meetings they are introduced to the university's mission, structure, dean, program heads, and administrative representatives.

The University has presented sample student contracts, which serve as the legal basis between the student and the higher education institution.

Evidences/indicators

- Self-evaluation report.
- Documentation submitted by the university.
- Website: tbeli.ge;
- Sample contracts between the university and the student.
- Site Visit;

Recommendations:

None

Suggestions:

- It is suggested that greater emphasis be placed on raising awareness about the main information materials for students, namely a Student Handbook.

Best Practices (if applicable):

None

Evaluation

x Complies with requirements

☐Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

5.2 Student Support Services

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The University has an electronic system for managing the educational process. Each course syllabus is uploaded to this system directly by the course lecturer, and students can also access their academic results through the same platform. Students are informed about the course specifics by the lecturer during the first meeting. Several syllabi were checked on a selective basis, and it was confirmed that consultation hours are defined, which students can use. However, it should be noted that students' responses regarding this matter were not clear.

Students receive the necessary information from the course lecturer, the program head, and the university administration (dean, quality assurance office, student support services).

All communication is carried out via chat, Messenger, and other platforms. Facebook groups are created and joined for this purpose. Additionally, there is an information board, although it does not exist in electronic form.

At the University there is a Student Support and Career Development Service. Higher education institutions should create a database of employers and regularly provide students and graduates with updated information regarding employment opportunities and vacancies. The expert group requested access to this database; however, it was not provided. Students are mostly informed about job opportunities through verbal communication. The university should ensure that the information-sharing mechanism is official and consistent (e.g., official Facebook page, email, university website).

According to information provided during interviews with both university administration and students, students have the freedom to initiate activities based on their interests and implement them

in agreement with the appropriate personnel. The representative of the university's Student Support Service could not recall specific activities organized by the university during the interview. However, a list of activities conducted and planned by the university was submitted, covering the period from January to May 2025, and includes the following events: Folklore creative event; Student conference; Creative event in the village of Didachara, Khulo municipality; Weekly poetry evenings; Sports marathon in various disciplines; Student projects "More Greening" and "Volunteering in Church Construction." Additionally, in June, a trip to historical Tao is planned with Tao-Klarjeti students (some students expressed dissatisfaction regarding the need for co-financing).

There is a statute of the student self-government at the University, but interviews revealed that such practice is not functioning.

According to information provided during the interviews; in order to strengthen international cooperation, the relevant representatives of the university have identified foreign partner universities and have signed memoranda of understanding. However, despite requests, these memoranda have not been presented to the expert group. It was reported that conferences are occasionally held, and to encourage student participation, co-authored academic papers are also produced—this was confirmed by students during the interviews.

The expert panel was interested in what effective steps had been taken to address the objectives outlined in the university's strategic development plan. Some of the weaknesses identified in the document include: low visibility in the academic/scientific field; low level of image and branding; absence of a student dormitory; need for improvement in university infrastructure; lack of a "one-stop-shop" approach for students and other stakeholders (no unified student space); need to enhance international cooperation; promotion of a healthy lifestyle among students through active involvement in various sports and clubs; and strengthening of student self-government. According to the information provided, these issues remain unchanged and are still listed as weaknesses in the current strategic plan.

Studies at the university are free of charge.

The University offers free dormitory accommodation for international students. These students are ethnically Georgian and come from neighboring countries. The university also provides them with a monthly stipend and free meals.

During interviews, students and alumni expressed a generally positive attitude toward the university and its academic programs. One respondent mentioned that philology was taught with a patriotic spirit; a journalism student said the university helped build their self-confidence and that they really liked the university environment. Some graduates emphasized the beauty of the surrounding nature, while others referred to the university as a sanctuary of spirituality and a temple of knowledge.

The University maintains close relationships with its alumni. Every year, graduates of Tbel Abuserisdze Teaching University are invited back to the institution. It is worth noting that some of the master's students had previously completed their bachelor's degrees at the same university, were familiar with the master's programs, and felt no need to consider other universities.

Evidences/indicators

- Documentation submitted by the University.
- Website: tbeli.ge;

- Facebook page.
- Site visit.

Recommendations:

- It is recommended to enhance the efforts in international collaboration in order to create opportunities for student mobility.
- It is recommended to improve the active functionality of the University website.
- It is recommended to initiate the functioning of student self-government.
- It is recommended that the Student Support Services ensure the creation of an employer database and regularly share updated information on employment opportunities and vacancies with students and graduates.

Suggestions:

- It is suggested promoting a healthy lifestyle among students through their active involvement in various sports and clubs is essential.
- It is suggested that the University pays special attention to improving its infrastructure. In particular, the following actions are advised: Develop designated common areas where students can gather and interact; Enhance and beautify the university yard and outdoor spaces; Create recreational zones such as green areas and small parks (squares) for students; Establish dedicated student spaces that promote engagement, collaboration, and well-being. These improvements would contribute significantly to a more student-friendly environment and enhance the University's overall image and student satisfaction.

Best Practices (if applicable):

- Tuition-free education.
- Support measures for incoming international students.

Evaluation

☐ Complies with requirements

☒ Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

6. Research, development and/or other creative work

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

6.1 Research Activities
o   HEI, based on its type and specifics of its fields, carries out research/creative activities.

o Ensuring the effectiveness of doctoral research supervision
o HEI has public, transparent and fair procedures for the assessment and defense of dissertations which are relevant to the specifics of the field

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

Research is a part of the mission statement as well as of strategic and action plans of the University. The plans are quite ambitious, yet it is not always clear how they are to be achieved. The Action Plan contains five activities with a number of tasks, but no explicit budget allocated to them.

This can be agreed that the University staff achieved some interesting and valuable research results. They especially contribute to the development of the regional and national levels. Also, there can be identified efforts to integrate (interlink) teaching and research to some extent, as was proven during the interviews, too. While some initiatives are worth appreciation (for instance some students´ involvement in research), the other indicators show a need of significant improvement (for instance, quality of some final works of the students).

The establishment of Giorgi Mtatsmindeli Institute of Kartvelological Studies can be viewed as a step to support research at the University. It involves four departments that unite different fields of research (Dept. of Social and Health Sciences, Dept. of Law and Public Administration, Dept. of Humanities and Education, and Dept. of Natural Sciences). The charter of the Institute determines its activities. And the planning documents are clearly directed to this Institute.

Also, there is not much evidence about cooperation of the University with economic and other external agents in the fields of research, be it fundamental or applied research.

Altogether, the research performance and results of the University are not very high, and there is a need for further improvement. In general, research activities require more concentrated focus, management and support.

Evidences/indicators
- Self-evaluation report
- Strategic plan (2025-2031)
- Action Plan (2025-2027)
- Interviews

Recommendations:
- It is recommended to explicitly link research-support initiatives in the Action Plan with funding.
- It is recommended to foster research cooperation of the University with economic and other agents.

Suggestions:

None

Best Practices (if applicable):
None

Evaluation
☐ Complies with requirements
x Substantially complies with requirements
☐ Partially complies with requirements
☐ Does not comply with requirements

6.2. Research Support and Internationalisation

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The University declares it supports research activities; at the same time, it admits this area is one of the main challenges. This can be agreed. An effective system for supporting research, development and creative activities is not fully in place.

As for the finances, according to the information from the University, research expenses (research institute, publishing activities) were supported by 20.000 GEL in 2020 as well as by the same sum in 2021, and by 40.000 GEL in each of the three upcoming years (2022, 2023, 2024). This shows that the financial support for research is gradually growing. The University also has developed the Competition Provision for Selecting Targeted Scientific Research Projects - its aim is to conduct sectoral and interdisciplinary research within the University, involving students and young researchers. Internal funding of the research remains crucial, since the University academic staff is not successful in competitions for external research funding in Georgia (Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation, and the like), or abroad. From this perspective the overall research support does not seem to be sufficient.

The University declares its plans to offer the academic staff relevant training to get better prepared for the competition for external research funding.

There is not much evidence that the University is successfully attracting new staff and involving them in the research activities.

Also, the international dimension of the research activities has a very low profile. The University has signed a memorandum of mutual cooperation with Ovidius University of Constance (Romania) and with Don State Technical University in Rostov-on-Don (Russia). It also declares that cooperation with several other international universities is planned. The intensity of cooperation with the above-mentioned institutions does not seem to be high. And the English language competences of many academic staff members are also lacking which seems to be another limiting factor for the development of international cooperation of the University.

Evidences/indicators
- Self-evaluation report

- Strategic Plan (2025-2031)
- Action Plan (2025-2027)
- Georgian Patriarchate St. Tbel Abuserisdze Educational University Funding Dynamics for the periods 2015-2019 and 2020-2024
- Interviews

Recommendations:

- It is recommended to ensure sufficient internal funding of research activities during the whole research process (starting from project proposals, conducting research, and then publication of research results).
- It is recommended to train academic staff in the knowledge and skills of writing research proposals that would have a chance to succeed in external competitions.
- It is also recommended to make effective steps toward improvement of English language proficiency of academic staff.
- It is recommended to use the expertise of invited staff members for research networking.
- It is recommended to create a realistic plan for effective research management and development at the University.

Suggestions:

None

Best Practices (if applicable):

None

Evaluation

☐ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

x Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

6.3. Evaluation of Research Activities

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The University has developed a procedure for evaluating the performance of academic, invited, administrative, and support staff, which also includes the assessment of their scientific and pedagogical activities. Specifically, the evaluation criteria are defined (such as participation in scientific conferences or similar events, scientific publications/inventions/patents, participation in winning or funded research projects, etc.), along with score levels (high, good, low). However, it is not specified how these levels are attained or what target indicators staff are expected to meet. As a result, the evaluation largely depends on the personal judgment of the evaluator.

During the interviews, it was revealed that the evaluation of research activities is mainly based on the updating of CVs and the assessment of whether the staff have participated in scientific conferences and published research papers.

The University has established a process for evaluating and analyzing the quality of its research and creative activities, as well as the performance of scientific-research units. However, while such evaluations are conducted, the lack of clearly defined target benchmarks for assessing the scientific activities of academic/research staff remains a critical shortcoming. The recommendation to establish target benchmarks and conduct regular, structured assessments is essential for enhancing both the credibility and effectiveness of this process. Benchmarks would enable comparative performance tracking, more meaningful analysis, and evidence-based improvements.

At present, the University demonstrates an intention to ensure transparency. However, the implementation of this practice appears to be inconsistent. The University should regularly publish reports on implemented research and creative activities, and adopt a formal reporting cycle (e.g., annually), ensure the reports are publicly accessible, and include comprehensive data on outputs, outcomes, and institutional priorities. These reports should also reflect progress against established benchmarks and identify areas for improvement.

To sum up, the University has taken steps toward institutionalizing research evaluation and reporting. However, the establishment of specific target benchmarks and systematic, outcome-based evaluations is essential for enhancing the effectiveness and credibility of its research quality assurance mechanisms. Responding appropriately to achieved or missed targets will also strengthen the institution's capacity to manage research performance proactively and strategically.

Evidences/indicators

- Procedure for evaluating the performance of academic, invited, administrative, and support staff.
- Personnel evaluation results.
- Self-evaluation report.
- Interviews.

Recommendations:

- It is recommended to establish target benchmarks for evaluating the scientific activities of academic/research staff and to conduct regular assessments of the results achieved, followed by appropriate responses based on the outcomes.
- It is recommended that the University regularly publishes reports on implemented research and creative activities.

Suggestions:

None

Best Practices (if applicable):
None

Evaluation
☐ Complies with requirements
x 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

- o 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.
- o HEI offers environment necessary for implementing educational activities: sanitary units, natural light possibilities, and central heating system.
- o Health and safety of students and staff is protected within the institution.
- o HEI has adapted environment for people with special needs

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The group of authorization experts studied the self-assessment report and attached documents, according to which the number of educational programs of the institution increases from 21 to 22 during the target period, and the number of students - from 1121 to 1500 by 2028-2030. It is planned to increase the number of affiliated personnel from 63 to 124. The real estate of the university in the form of educational space is 5164.01 square meters, and the auxiliary area is 3787.39 square meters.

The institution presented documentation confirming the ownership of real estate, which is a transaction concluded in written form: on the one hand, the Orthodox Church of the Apostolic Autocephaly of All Georgia, represented by the ruling Archbishop of the Skhalta Diocese, His Holiness Spyridon, and on the other hand - the St. Tbel Abuserisdze Teaching University of the Georgian Patriarchate (notarial deed N-129, certified on 02.12.2021), with the right to lease buildings and structures, through registration in the public register. The term of the lease agreement is 10 years. A cadastral plan with the code 24.07.03.385 is presented. The measurement drawing of the building and structure does not separate the educational and auxiliary areas. Information about the buildings and structures is presented in the Public Registry extract (N 882022290484 - 29/04/2022 12:31:32), where it is specified that the plot is for non-agricultural purposes, with a total area of 61776.00 sq.m. The document lists the buildings and structures by area. According to the self-assessment report, the total area of the institution is 8951.4 sq.m.

As a learning space, the university has classrooms, a conference hall, professorial offices where professors provide consultation to students, teaching/scientific-research laboratories, and a library.

The internal space of the building includes a foyer, theoretical lecture hall/halls, administrative storage/storage rooms, space for group work, sanitary facilities, library, laboratories corresponding to the specifics of the field, study rooms, and archive. The university has spaces for the accommodation of students and professors - free housing. A visual inspection revealed that this space requires improvement of conditions.

The expert group requested additional documentation, such as:

- Contracts on movable property.
- contracts signed with supporting administrative personnel.
- Student and staff satisfaction survey results; Receipts confirming payment for electricity, water and natural gas.
- Document confirming the proper functioning of the heating and ventilation system and the period of operation.
- Document confirming compliance with sanitary norms.
- Documentation confirming the purchase of resources.

The institution presented an inventory document, as well as an agreement on movable property, which has been transferred to the university for a period of 10 years with the right of withdrawal. The agreement contains a list of movable properties, which is simultaneously recorded in the inventory act.

During the authorization visit, when asked about the specific mechanism for verifying the compliance of the list of usable material resources specified in educational programs with the material resources of the university, it was noted that this is carried out by the heads of the programs together with the deans of the faculties, however, the expert group did not receive an answer about the specific monitoring mechanism. The inventory document for 2025 states that the university has 29 computer sets, 7 printers, 1 large printer, 5 projectors, 4 projector screens, 1 video camera, 19,079 units of book funds, etc. At this stage, the university has 656 active students, 465 - are on suspended status. Taking into account the information in the Tkoebikh agreement, there are a total of 58 computers, some of which are used to provide administrative services. According to the inventory act, there are 22 active students per 1 operating computer. In case the number of students increases to 1,500, it is advisable to expand the computer infrastructure.

The University has developed and operates rules and regulations for labor safety, fire prevention, emergency management, and first aid. Documentation confirming safety in educational/scientific-research laboratories. Safety standards are observed.

The University presented 37 memorandums signed with internship/research-scientific facilities, some of which were signed before the authorization period (2012-2018). In addition, some of the memorandums, which provide for the provision of internships for students, require renewal taking into account accreditation requirements (duration of internship, number of students accepted for internships).

The institution presented the results of the 2024 fall semester student and staff survey. The main objective of the survey was to assess the level of satisfaction of students and staff with the use and access to information and library resources at Tbeli University. The survey organizers assessed the access and use of information and library resources by students and staff as satisfactory.

During interviews with academic and visiting staff, it was noted that they would like to improve the internal courtyard.

The analysis of the authorization documents and the result of the visit shows that the given real and movable property, under the existing conditions, creates a minimal base for the implementation of the programs.

The institution materially presented receipts confirming the payment for electricity. Also, a contract with the utility company "Georgia Supply".

Water is free, as they pump it from their own well all year round. The University also has a water reservoir. A perpetual electricity supply contract has been signed with JSC "ENERGO-PRO Georgia" (No. 2821–1/7–12. 23.07.2012). However, the University also has an autonomous power supply system, through which electricity is supplied continuously. The need for uninterrupted electricity supply is due to climatic conditions and the fact that the construction of natural gas supply infrastructure in the Upper Adjara region has not yet been completed. Accordingly, in terms of heating, the university is completely dependent on electricity supply. Nevertheless, heating radiators are installed in the buildings. The institution also presented an agreement with "SOCAR Georgia Gas" LLC "On the purchase of natural gas (for non-domestic purposes)", dated April 25, 2025. The above conditions create the basis for improving heating conditions.

The University does not have a ventilation system and benefits from natural ventilation, which is achieved due to the favorable climatic and geophysical location. All classrooms/study areas have both natural and artificial lighting.

As a result of the inspection, it was confirmed that there are sanitary facilities on all floors of the building, with uninterrupted water supply. However, the possibility of hot water was not confirmed in the sanitary facilities and the medical office. Sanitary and hygienic standards are observed in the sanitary facilities; they are provided with uninterrupted lighting and natural ventilation. The institution submitted an act of inspection of the sanitary and hygienic and technical condition (April 11, 2025). As a result of the inspection, recommendations were issued, which included the repair of damaged taps in the sanitary facilities, replacement of lamps and repair - renovation of damaged heaters.
During the interview process with students, graduates, and academic and visiting staff, it was noted that it would be desirable for the university administration to pay more attention to the heating system.

The institution has fire safety, medical aid and order protection mechanisms. In particular, according to the inventory document, the institution owns 12 fire extinguishers, 15 evacuation plans, 5 electric heating boilers of various capacities, 8 garbage cans, 1 120-liter water heater, 1 medical cabinet, 104 large and small heaters, etc. During the inspection, the aforementioned inventory was located in the institution. The institution presented an agreement with LLC "Fire Safety" (12.05.2025), which confirmed the purchase of fire safety equipment of the appropriate quality. This was confirmed as a result of a visual inspection. In particular, fire safety equipment is installed in a visible place on all floors of the building -with detailed instructions for its use and the competent authority, LEPL - 112 Evacuation plans approved by the University. Fire extinguishers and emergency contact numbers are placed in a visible place, as well as signs prohibiting smoking in university premises.

The building has an additional evacuation exit with a wooden door that opens from the inside. The institution has developed mechanisms for fire safety, medical assistance and order protection, which are attached to the self-assessment report. In particular, the security service regulations, labor safety management rules and mechanisms, there is a relevant inventory, emergency management plan and medical assistance mechanisms. According to the aforementioned regulations, the provision of services is carried out by people hired under a contract. The regulations determine their rights, duties and responsibilities.

For the purpose of providing first aid, the institution has one medical staff doctor, who provides professional medical care and registers the medical care log. An agreement is presented, according to which the doctor provides medical services 6 days a week. The doctor also has a local resident assistant. Contact information about the medical office is posted in the educational buildings. Medical care is provided in the appropriate office, which is equipped with the necessary medicines and means/equipment for first aid. The medical office is constantly supplied with cold water. The medical office has natural artificial lighting.

The entire perimeter of the institution's building is secured by 2 security guards. Security is maintained according to appropriate mechanisms. In order to maintain security, the institution has installed 14 security cameras equipped with video recording functions throughout the entire internal and external perimeter of the buildings. According to the university, the video surveillance system is capable of recording for 72 hours.

The location of the institution's building provides a safe and conducive learning environment for students and academic/administrative staff. The building is surrounded by an ecologically clean environment. There is a workshop in the yard, which operates in a closed space and has no emissions.

The University has a substandard adapted environment for people with special needs. Although the University does not currently have a person with special needs, the adapted environment needs to be improved.

Based on the results of interviews with students and staff and a visual inspection, it was determined that basic health and safety conditions for students and staff at the University are being met.

According to the assessment of the authorization expert group, the material resources and environment owned or legally possessed by the institution partially meet the requirements for implementing educational programs and research activities, given the planned number of students.

Evidences/indicators
- Self-evaluation report
- Agreement with the Georgian Apostolic Autocephalous Orthodox Church (Notary Act N-129, certified 02.12.2021)
- Public Registry Extract (N 882022290484 - 29/04/2022 12:31:32)
- Moving Property Inventory Act
- Movable Property Claims Agreement (28.05.2025)
- Security Service Regulation

- Occupational safety management rules and mechanisms
- Emergency Management Plan
- Mechanisms for finding medical help
- Memoranda of Understanding with Practice/Research-Scientific Facilities
- Student and staff satisfaction surveys
- Evacuation plans and a document confirming their approval.
- Documentation proving ownership of fire-fighting and medical equipment, security cameras
- Electricity Agreement (No. 2821–1/7–12. 23.07.2012)
- With doctors Agreement (No. 01–22/110, 14.09.2018)
- Protection Agreement (No. 01–22/144, 14.09.2018; (No. 01–22/142, 14.09.2018)
- Order of the Rector of the University of Tbilisi "On Approval of Mechanisms for Maintaining Order" „About" (Order No. 01–03/19, 27.12.2018)
- Electricity bill receipts
- Agreement with "SOCAR Georgia Gas" LLC "For the purchase of natural gas (for non-domestic purposes)" (25.04.2025)
- Sanitary-hygienic and technical condition inspection report (11.04.2025)
- Interviews
- Visual inspection

Recommendations:
- It is recommended to improve student spaces and the university yard.
- It is recommended to update some memoranda, taking into account accreditation requirements (duration of internship, number of students accepted for internship).
- It is recommended to define a specific mechanism by which the material resources necessary for the quality implementation of educational programs will be determined and verified.
- It is recommended to increase the amount of computer equipment, in case of an increase in the number of students, It is recommended to improve the hot water supply and heating system of sanitary facilities and the medical office.
- It is recommended to provide an environment adapted to modern standards for people with special needs.

Suggestions:
- It is suggested to improve the conditions of university housing for students and teachers.

Best Practices (if applicable):

None

Evaluation

☐ Complies with requirements

☐ Substantially complies with requirements

x Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

7.2. Library Resources

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The total budget of the university in 2025 is 1,805,000 GEL. According to the dynamics of the University funding, since 2021, the expenses incurred on the improvement of the library (including the purchase of literature) have increased from 2021 to 2024 by 40,000 GEL. The library has a reading room and a book depository. The reading room is equipped with computers connected to the Internet, a printer, a copier and a scanner, which allows you to the library organizes educational and research activities. The ownership of the equipment in the library is confirmed by an inventory document.

The University has a workspace for library staff, a meeting and group work area. According to the three-year action plan of the university, the planned budget for library resources in 2025, 2026 and 2027 is 15,000 GEL per year. The performance indicator is considered to be the "list of new textbooks, books by years and educational programs". Also, every semester, emphasis will be placed on the development of the electronic library according to operating costs. This item of the action plan includes displaying literature in the electronic search system, digitizing literature and increasing the availability of PDF versions, increasing the availability of other digital search systems. The indicators are considered to be the number of books displayed in the electronic catalog and the rate of access to international scientific databases. In addition, annual renewal of membership in library networks is planned, for which 1,200 GEL is allocated from the budget annually.

The University has a library usage rule and informational instructions. The books in the library are processed in accordance with the library rules. There are alphabetical, subject and thematic catalogs. The library is available to students and staff at least 6 days a week, 60 hours, which was confirmed by a survey and an employment contract signed with the librarian.

The library operates in accordance with the library regulations. The institution has submitted documentation confirming the ownership of the book fund - an individual (inventory) registration form of library documents - an inventory book. During the interview with students and graduates, it was noted that the main literature specified in the syllabi is available in the institution's library; books are located on printed and electronic carriers. It was also noted that the library fund is constantly updated. During the interview, the head of the administration noted that in many cases the staff transfers books to the library free of charge, therefore they do not need an increased budget for the library. During the visit to the library, specific literature from the syllabi was requested by random selection. The university ensured the presentation of literature in material and electronic form, although in some cases books of old editions were presented.

The University website has an electronic catalog and an electronic literature search system. The institution has submitted documentation confirming its involvement in the international electronic library network - Agreement N 2025/17 on the transfer of scientific and technical products. The aforementioned agreement allows the university to participate in the project "Electronic Information for Libraries" to search for information on the designated databases, as well as to publish publications free of charge or at a discount.

According to statistics on the use of electronic library databases, activity is growing, although still very low. For example, according to the latest data from 2023, only 29 accesses were recorded to electronic library databases. During the interview process with the graduates, it was noted that they did not receive information about international electronic databases and the rules for their use. However, they do have information about the library's book format.

The library staff are qualified with many years of experience in relevant activities. According to the results of the student and staff satisfaction survey, the library services and the conditions of equipping the library with resources are satisfactory.

The book collection in the library is largely in line with the main literature specified in the educational programs.

Evidences/indicators

- Self-assessment questionnaire
- Moving Property Inventory Act
- Interviews on the three-year action plan of the University of Southern Georgia
- Information on library funding dynamics About
- Library regulations
- Library usage rules
- Movable Property Claims Agreement (28.05.2025)
- University website
- Documentation confirming involvement in the library network - Agreement N 2025/17 Electronic Catalog
- Statistics on the use of electronic library databases
- Book fund
- Interviews
- Visual inspection

Recommendations:

- It is recommended to increase work on the use of electronic library databases among students and staff.
- It is recommended to continue working on updating learning resources and improving the catalog.

Suggestions:

None

Best Practices (if applicable):

None

Evaluation

☐ Complies with requirements

x Substantially complies with requirements

☐ Partially complies with requirements

☐ Does not comply with requirements

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

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The information technology infrastructure of the Georgian Patriarchate Saint Tbel Abuserisdze University provides students and staff of the institution with wireless Internet, computer systems connected to the Internet, an electronic library, electronic services, an electronic journal and the university website. According to the inventory document, there are 29 computer systems at the university, however, during an interview with the head of the Department of Visual Inspection of the Environment and Information Technologies, it was noted that at the moment the university owns 58 computer systems, 23 with projector-screens. The purchase of 29 computers and computer accessories is confirmed by relevant signatures and payment receipts, and the remaining part is confirmed by a movable property purchase agreement. The university has 5 Internet modems, 12 Wi-Fi routers and 20 network switches.

The University has developed an information technology and electronic systems management policy, which defines information security management, mechanisms for implementing and developing electronic systems , electronic systems management procedures, information technology infrastructure and network management. Personnel data protection is carried out in accordance with the rules for processing personal data and protection mechanisms. In turn, the Information Technology Department operates on the basis of the relevant regulations, which defines the goals and objectives, functions and powers of the department.

The seven-year (2025-2031) strategic plan for the development of the University defines the arrangement of an auditorium equipped with high-tech computer technology (with the function of a multimedia center); updating the auditoriums with computer technology. The second point of the three-year action plan for the development of the university (2025-2027) defines the development of infrastructure, which considers the arrangement of an auditorium equipped with computer technology (for remote public lectures). The purchase of high-quality video glasses, a computer and a projector is defined.

During the inspection of the University's material and technical base, the institution presented the contract for the provision of the Internet, as well as payment receipts. As for the quality of the Internet, it is a defect, which is due to the geographical specificity of the region. The university's computer

equipment is connected to the university on the internal network and Attached Global Network. The global network is provided by Pro Service, Magticom, and Silknet.

As a result of interviews conducted by experts with students and staff, it was determined that information technology and resources are working properly, which was confirmed by visual inspection and selective inspection. It was noted that the functioning of computer technology is checked daily and, if necessary, repaired for proper operation. Students have access to computers if desired.

Information Technology Infrastructure The information technology infrastructure and software created at the university are consistent with the institution's business processes.

The University has implemented electronic services that ensure the efficiency and accessibility of service and process management. In particular,

- Electronic Services System (E-Journal)
- Academic Staff Register
- Student Registry
- Automated case management system
- International scientific bases
- Plagiarism program.

The University's strategy and action plans emphasize the goal of improving electronic services. In particular, the development of an electronic management system for the educational process, for which 1,000 GEL has been allocated monthly. "Tbeli University" The contract has been signed by LLC "Post G" - with On January 31, 2019, the learning process Management Electronic system Implementation For the purpose.

The electronic control system provides for such Modules Such as: students Unified Electronic Registry; Academic Registration (study) Courses Electronic Select); Printable Forms (beginnings, signs) sheet of paper, Personal card); export (Students) Unified Registry In Excel); applicants Online Registration. Educational Programs Upload Module; Training Courses and Their Prerequisites Module; Evaluation System; Electronic Testing Program; Syllabus Upload Module; Communication Module; Library Module; Tasks Module; Electronic Case Production.

Also provided is a copy of the email confirming the request for the procurement of the automated document management system (eDocument) service, dated January 24, 2025.

As a result of interviews conducted by experts with students and staff, it was determined that the aforementioned systems simplify relations with the administration and the educational process. A visual inspection of the electronic system confirmed the proper functioning of the systems. During the visual inspection process, selective testing of services was carried out.

According to the Business Continuity Plan Performance Indicator document as of September 2024, the risk factor for loss of business continuity information is assessed as "small". During the interview process, it was noted that electronic documents are stored only on the server. It is advisable for the information to be stored in the university chancellery in physical form – in printed form. In addition, digital information is stored in computers on the "D" drive.

The institution has presented a business continuity action plan, which includes the ability to manage specific emergency situations; a list of relevant persons, indicating their function and contact details; instructions for action in the event of a local or large-scale threat, etc.

The university's website address is: tbeli.ge. The action plan defines the effective functioning of the university's Georgian and English websites.

The self-assessment group was asked a question regarding the domain issue. The self-assessment report document presented is the agreement signed with Caucasus Online LLC - for the domain tbeli.ge service, which is valid until 19/03/2019. During the interview with the self-assessment group, it was noted that the agreement was renewed, and the expert group was provided with updated documents, namely, the agreement signed with GMM Studio LLC on January 3, 2025, on the provision of the tbeli.ge web domain and web hosting for the domain. The agreement is valid for 1 year.

The official website of the university performs a communication and information function, it contains the mission, structure, educational programs of the university , criteria for selecting students for these programs, expected learning outcomes of the program and qualifications to be awarded, teaching and assessment procedures, electronic library catalog, regulatory documents, strategic development and action plans, available services, contact information, etc.). The website has fields for posting information in Georgian and English. When checking the website, it was found that at the current stage, complete information is not posted. In particular, a list of academic/scientific personnel, which should be accompanied by their brief biographical data, annual reports of the institution, university budget, financial reports, results of planned, ongoing and completed research, etc. There is especially little information on the English-language website.

The Information Technology and Electronic Systems Management Policy Document states that the University has defined a list of public information to be published, persons responsible for publishing public information. The Information Technology Department is responsible for the functioning of the university website. Persons responsible for publishing information are obliged to ensure the publication of public information on the website/portal under their jurisdiction, to protect the accuracy, authenticity, updating within a reasonable time and easy accessibility of electronically published information. Along with public information, people responsible for administration are authorized to additionally publish other necessary public information of interest to the public and students. During the interview process with the self-assessment group, a question was raised regarding the functioning of the mentioned mechanism. During the interview process, it was revealed that the head of information technology does not control the posting of information on the university website. It was not possible to name a specific person who, according to the rules, will ensure the placement of information on the website, however, at the same time, the head of the administration noted that a person has been selected for a probationary period in the Information Technology Department, who is responsible for the information provision of the website, and they want to sign a contract with him. In addition, a one-year contract with the head of the Information Technology Management Department is presented, which is dated May 8, 2025. This indicates that the developed mechanism is at the initial stage of implementation.

During the interview process, it was clarified with the administration that the information provision of the bilingual website will be completed within a year. The chairman of the expert group emphasized that the information posted on the website is mainly textual in nature.

During interviews with academic and visiting staff, it was noted that they would like to see improvements in infrastructure, including upgrading and increasing the number of technological facilities.

Evidences/indicators
- Self-assessment questionnaire
- Moving Property Inventory Act
- Moving Property Requests Agreement (28.05.2025)
- Seven-Year (2025-2031) Strategic Plan for the Development of the University
- Three-Year (2025-2028) University Development Action Plan
- University Website
- Electronic Services System (E – Journal)
- Academic Staff Registry
- Students Registry
- Proceedings Automated System
- International Scientific Bases
- PLagiat Program
- Business Continuity Action Plan
- University Budget for 2025
- Internet payment receipts
- Information Technology and Electronic Systems Management Policy
- Personal data processing procedures and protection mechanisms
- Agreement with the Head of Information Technology Management Department
- Interviews
- Visual inspection

Recommendations:
- It is recommended to accelerate work on the university's Georgian and English websites and post public information required by authorization and accreditation standards to promote the principle of transparency in the institution's activities.

Suggestions:
- It is recommended for the University chancellery to store information in physical form – in printed form. In addition, digital information is stored in computers on the "D" drive.
- It is suggested that the information presented on the university website be accompanied by photo and video evidence and that the website design be refreshed.

Best Practices (if applicable):
None

Evaluation
☐ Fully complies with requirements ☐ Substantially complies with requirements x Partially complies with requirements ☐ Does not comply with requirements

7.4 Financial Resources

- o   Allocation of financial resources described in the budget of HEI is economically achievable
- o   Financial standing of HEI ensures performance of activities described in strategic and mid-term action plans
- o   HEI financial resources are focused on effective implementation of core activities of the institution
- o   HEI budget provides funding for scientific research and library functioning and development
- o   HEI has an effective system of accountability, financial management and control

Descriptive summary and analysis of compliance with the standard component requirements

The University's Strategic Plan is a 7-year development document for the institution, with defined goals and objectives. The self-assessment report is accompanied by a three-year action plan.

The 2025 budget includes GEL 1,385,000.00 for salaries, GEL 50,000.00 for meals, GEL 25,000.00 for medical expenses, GEL 8,000.00 for disinfectants and detergents, GEL 25,000.00 for transportation, GEL 80,000.00 for inventory, GEL 80,000.00 for stationery, utilities and other expenses, GEL 132,000.00 for construction expenses, and GEL 30,000.00 for repairs. According to the 2025 budget, administrative expenses are GEL 1,643,000, which is 91.02% of the total budget.

The University has developed a procedure for implementing and evaluating a financial management and control system, which should ensure the achievement of the University's main goals in the long term through effective financial planning and control.

The university presented the dynamics of planned finances by year (planned revenues by year, calculated in accordance with the authorization period). A(a)PE St. Tbel Abuserisdze Teaching University of the Georgian Patriarchate receives its main funding from the Patriarchate of Georgia. The university has received financial assistance from the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Georgia. Financial assistance is provided by the government structures of the Adjara Autonomous Region in relation to utility and authorization-accreditation-related expenses. Also, the university receives a grant in the amount of 560,000 GEL from professional programs.

During the interview, it was noted that the faculties have their own budgets. In particular, during the interview with the deans of the Faculty of Humanities and Education, the Faculty of Agrarian Sciences and Business Administration, and the Faculty of Law and Public Administration, it was noted that each faculty has a faculty budget, which presents the expenses allocated to the needs of the individual faculty. The presented university budget is not broken down into the expenses according to the budgets of the faculties. An item-by-item breakdown of the entire university budget is presented.

It is worth noting that education at Tbeli University is free. The university also offers free meals when needed, and free housing for foreign students.

The university's budget, funding dynamics, share of administrative expenses in the overall budget, the university's financial resources are largely sufficient to implement the activities outlined in the strategic development and action plans, however, diversification of funding sources is important to finance new development goals. Academic staff also expressed their views on this.

The strategic development plan does not include the operationalization of financial resources, while the action plan includes components of programs and cluster accreditation, as well as the development of the university's infrastructure (renewal of the library's book collection - 15,000 GEL annually; development of the electronic library; renewal of membership in library networks - 1,200 GEL annually; arrangement of an auditorium equipped with computer technologies; development of an electronic management system for the educational process - 1,000 GEL monthly; development of the university's basic and supporting infrastructure; development of means of communication with the public: bilingual website, activation of social networks, ZOOM platform); Development of scientific-research activities (Georgian Studies Research Center; arrangement of the auditorium of the Georgian Studies Research Center; introduction of a mechanism for financing internal targeted research projects of the "Tbeli University"; involvement of the scientific staff of the "Tbeli University" in competitive projects of the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation; popularization of science in society); development of student services; development of internationalization (establishing contacts with other universities through the initiative of the International Relations Service; development of bilateral relations with partner universities; attraction of students from neighboring countries of the South Caucasus); development of university administration (ensuring the implementation of the strategic plan; development of the effectiveness of teaching quality mechanisms: "Plan, implement, evaluate, develop"; development of academic and invited personnel).

Due to the specific rules of financing and monitoring, the authorization expert group makes an assessment only based on the empirical data presented and cannot comment on the accuracy, fairness, and completeness of the financial information.

The University's 2025 budget includes expenses such as: salaries, meals, medical expenses, disinfectants and detergents, transportation, inventory, stationery, utilities and other expenses, and repairs. The budget shows that funding is mainly directed towards meeting basic needs.

The financial resources of the university ensure the sustainable and further development of teaching/research/artistic-creative activities, human resources/infrastructure. Compared to 2015, the expenditure on research (research institute, publishing activities) increased 5 times in 2024, and the expenditure on library improvement (including the purchase of literature) increased almost 40 times. However, these items are not separately allocated in the 2025 budget. The document on financing dynamics provides information that 560,000 GEL is planned for education, science and professional programs annually from 2026 to 2029.

During the interview process with academic and visiting staff, it was noted that increasing financial capabilities by finding new sources of funding will facilitate the setting and achievement of additional new goals.

The report on the expenditure part of the budget is submitted only to the Patriarchate of Georgia at the end of each year. The funding institution is provided with information and relevant documentation on the direction in which the funds were spent. The authority of the university, including the delegation part, does not include the obligation to conduct an audit on the expenditure part and it is completely dependent on the decision of the Patriarchate of Georgia.

The responsibility for the proper functioning of financial management and control lies with the Rector of Tbeli University, who must ensure the correct distribution of relevant authorities and responsibilities within the university. The procedure for implementing and evaluating the financial management and control system determines the provision of financial information, objective analysis and recommendations to the management of Tbeli University. The document assists relevant services in issues of legality, efficiency and economy of financial management and control. The University's financial service is obliged to ensure the existence of a written explanation of financial procedures.

The University has diversified sources of funding, such as study grants/tuition fees, funding from the Ministry of Education of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara, state funding for the teacher training educational program, and state funding for the implementation of professional programs. However, during the interview process with academic and visiting staff, it was noted that it would be desirable to find additional sources of funding to plan and implement new tasks.

It is noteworthy that the website does not contain financial reports and the university budget.

The financial resources of the university largely ensure the implementation of the university's mission, strategic goals, and action plan.

Evidences/indicators

- Self-evaluation report.
- Seven-Year (2025-2031) Strategic Plan for the Development of the University
- Three-Year (2025-2028) University Development Action Plan
- University Website
- University Budget for 2025
- Receipts for payment of resources and internet purchases
- Rules for the implementation and evaluation of the financial management and control system
- Dynamics of finances by year
- Cost ratio
- Share of administrative expenses in the overall budget
- 2025 funding document from the Ministry of Education and Sports of the Adjara Autonomous Region
- Funding sources and audit information
- Inventory act
- Interviews
- Visual inspection

Recommendations:

- It is recommended to develop an indicative budget for the strategic and action plan, both in terms of revenue and expenditure, both at the level of the university as a whole and the budgets of the faculties.

● It is recommended to allocate separate expenditure items in the university budget for library development and research implementation/promotion. ● It is recommended to post financial statements and budgets on the university's website. ● It is recommended to develop/implement a financial planning and monitoring mechanism that involves academic and administrative staff in budgeting for the achievement of the university's strategic goals, thereby making the process of distributing funds more participatory and transparent. This, in turn, will strengthen the effective distribution of funds, staff responsibilities, and mutual control.
Suggestions: ● It is suggested to find additional sources of funding to plan and implement new tasks.
Best Practices (if applicable): None
Evaluation   □ Complies with requirements x Substantially complies with requirements □ Partially complies with requirements □ Does not comply with requirements