



**NATIONAL CENTER FOR
EDUCATIONAL QUALITY
ENHANCEMENT**

**Accreditation Expert Group Report on Doctoral Education
Programme**

PhD Educational Program in Public Administration

Doctoral, III Level of Higher Education

Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University

Evaluation Dates 15.-16.01.2026

02.02.2026

Tbilisi

Information about a Higher Education Institution ¹

Name of Institution Indicating its Organizational Legal Form	Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University, Limited Liability Company
Identification Code of Institution	204426834
Type of the Institution	University

Expert Panel Members

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

I. Information on the education programme

Name of Higher Education Programme (in Georgian)	საჯარო მმართველობა
Name of Higher Education Programme (in English)	Public Administration
Level of Higher Education	VIII
Qualification to be Awarded ²	Doctor of Public Administration
Name and Code of the Detailed Field	Management and Administration - 0413
Language of Instruction	Georgian
Number of ECTS credits	46
Programme Status (Accredited/ Conditionally accredited// Newly proposed /International accreditation) Indicating Relevant Decision (number, date)	Accredited, 24.06.2022 №781890
Additional requirements for the programme admission (For example Level of foreign language proficiency, research thesis/project, internal competition or other specific requirements for admission to the programme/implementation of the programme)	-

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

II. Accreditation Report Executive Summary

▪ **General Information on Doctoral Education Programme**

The Doctoral Program in Public Administration is a new program. The objectives of the programme include the creation of results-oriented research and new knowledge based on an in-depth scientific analysis of current issues in public administration; Training highly qualified researchers and academic staff with a focus on public administration challenges; Contributing to the development of public administration and civil service law through the production of high-quality scientific papers is fully in line with the mission of the HEI. The PhD program in Public Administration lasts at least 6 semesters (3 years).

The doctoral program in public administration consists of pedagogical and scientific research components. The volume of the study part comprises 46 ECTS credits, which are made up of compulsory and elective training courses. The total number of credit points for compulsory courses is 36 ECTS, for elective courses 10 ECTS. The scientific-scientific aspect includes the completion of a doctoral thesis. While working on the scientific-research component, the doctoral student completes three colloquia, which means that the part of the dissertation is written by prior agreement with the scientific supervisor and defended before the Sector Commission.

The final component of the doctoral program is the preparation and defense of a dissertation.

▪ **Overview of the Accreditation Site Visit**

The Accreditation Expert Group, established on the Order #341361 of the Director of the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement dated April 1, 2022, conducted an accreditation visit to HEI on January 15 and 16, 2026, to evaluate the Doctoral Program in Public Administration of Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University LLC.

During the accreditation visit, the expert group met with the Rector of HEI, the Vice-Rector, the Dean of the Faculty, the Director of the Program, the Head of the Quality Assurance Service, the Program Self-Assessment Group, the academic and invited staff of the program, students and graduates of the adjacent program, employers, and representatives of the library.

The material and technical base (library) was inspected directly during the accreditation visit. The meetings held during the visit and the evaluation of the documents attached to the programme were sufficient for the expert group to discuss compliance with accreditation standards in detail.

- **Brief Overview of Doctoral Education Programme Compliance with the Standards Standard 4 comply with requirements, Standard 2, Standard 3 and Standard 5 comply with requirements.**

The program is fully compliant with applicable accreditation standards.

▪ **Recommendations**

1.2 Programme Learning Outcomes

- It is recommended to include research outcome that specifies characteristics of applied public administration research, given public administration's applied nature.
- It is recommended to include outcome that describes expertise in broader field of public administration.

4.1 Human Resources

- It is recommended that the University further increases the involvement of locally based PhD degree holders in Public Administration as academic staff.

▪ Suggestions

1.1 Programme Objectives

- It is suggested to articulate the connection between public administration-specific research and its real-world applications, as well as preparation for international careers, within the programme objectives to strengthen the programme's value proposition.
- While the ongoing orientation towards international scientific rankings is positive, it is suggested to further broaden the programme's positioning to appeal to a wider range of international target groups in the future is advised.

1.3 Evaluation Mechanism of the Programme Learning Outcomes

- It is suggested that the program systematically implement collegial peer-to-peer evaluation mechanisms to drive continuous optimizations across teaching, supervision, and research components.

1.5 Academic Course/Subject

- It is suggested to integrate Mandatory Public Administration Foundation Module for students entering without public administration academic backgrounds, covering core public administration theories, governance systems, policy analysis and evaluation. This would ensure all graduates possess the systematic field knowledge that distinguishes them as public administration experts, not merely researchers who happen to study public administration topics.

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

- It is suggested that the programme expands its formal partnerships beyond higher education institutions to include international policy institutions, think-tanks, and non-profit organisations active in public administration. Such collaborations would provide structured opportunities for doctoral students to participate in applied research and practical projects, effectively bridging academic rigour with real-world professional practice.
- It is advised to pursue institutional membership in the Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe (NISPACE), as well as other prominent international networks such as EGPA or NASPAA. This strategic step would enhance academic exchange, strengthen research quality and publication output, and broaden international career prospects for students and faculty alike.

- **Quantitative Data Analysis of the educational programme in accordance with the requirements of the accreditation standards, for example:**

Data related to the supervision of doctoral students				
Number of PhD theses	22			
Number of doctoral students	12			
Ratio - supervisors of PHD theses/doctoral students	22/12			
Number of the staff involved in the programme (including academic, scientific, International, and invited staff)	Number of Programme Staff	Including the staff with sectoral expertise³	Including the staff holding PhD degree in the sectoral direction⁴	Among them, the affiliated staff
Total number of academic staff	35	21	10	16
- Professor	6	4	-	6
- Associate Professor	10	7	1	10
- Assistant-Professor	1	1	-	1
- Assistant	-	-	-	-
Visiting Staff	9	9	-	—
Scientific Staff	-	-	-	—
Including International Staff	9	-	9	-

- Analysis of other quantitative data provided in the self-assessment and annexes.

- **Brief Overview of the Best Practices (if applicable)⁵**

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

³ Staff implementing the relevant components of the main field of study

⁴ Staff with relevant doctoral degrees implementing the components of the main field of study

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

Recommendations

▪ 4.4 – Material Resources

We agree with this recommendation to point 4.4 Material Resources. The University will continue to ensure and further strengthen access to relevant international journals in the field of Public Administration, and will make such access clearly available to students and academic staff.

- **All other remarks are not accepted by the team**, as they are either already sufficiently addressed within the programme, based on an incorrect factual assumption, or do not correspond to the nature and objectives of doctoral education.
- **1.2 – Programme Learning Outcomes**

The recommendation to include an outcome specifying the characteristics of applied public administration research is not accepted. The programme objectives and learning outcomes already clearly reflect the applied research dimension through formulations such as results-oriented research, the creation of new knowledge, and the critical analysis of current issues in public administration practice and theory. In addition, the learning outcomes explicitly refer to identifying current issues, selecting appropriate research methods, and developing original and in-depth conclusions, which inherently include applied competencies such as policy analysis and policy evaluation.

- The recommendation to include an outcome describing expertise in the broader field of public administration is not accepted. The doctoral level is primarily intended to ensure research competence and the creation of new knowledge, rather than the acquisition of broad foundational knowledge, which is more characteristic of bachelor's and master's level education. Furthermore, the programme provides for targeted knowledge enhancement through mandatory courses where necessary, in accordance with the decision of the programme supervisor and the dissertation council. Accordingly, the programme is not designed to provide systemic general knowledge, nor is this required for the doctoral level.
- **Standard 4.1 – Human Resources**

The recommendation that the University should further increase the involvement of locally based PhD degree holders in Public Administration as academic staff is not accepted. In Georgia, the number of doctoral degree holders in Public Administration is limited, as only a small number of universities have offered such programmes. In addition, the interdisciplinary nature of Public Administration allows for the involvement of academic staff from related fields, and co-supervised research is regularly applied. External reviewers and evaluators with relevant qualifications are also involved in the dissertation process. Therefore, increasing the number of staff with doctoral degrees specifically in Public Administration is not a prerequisite for ensuring programme quality.

Suggestions

- **1.1 – Programme Objectives**

The suggestion to articulate more clearly the connection between public administration-specific research and its real-world applications, as well as preparation for international careers, is not accepted. The programme objective already explicitly states that it aims at results-oriented research and the creation of new knowledge based on in-depth scientific analysis of current issues in public administration practice and theory. This wording already reflects the relationship between research and practical application. In addition, the programme's employment and progression framework already provides for participation in postdoctoral programmes and access to national and international research and teaching opportunities.

- The suggestion to broaden the programme's positioning to appeal to a wider range of international target groups is not accepted. The current wording already emphasizes the programme's research orientation and its relevance to international academic standards. The comment that a clearer link between research and practical application would increase the programme's value is likewise not accepted, as this link is already embedded in the programme objective itself.

- **1.3 – Evaluation Mechanism of the Programme Learning Outcome**

The suggestion to systematically introduce peer-review mechanisms in teaching, monitoring, and research components is not accepted, as the University already applies collegial developmental evaluation by Georgian and/or international colleagues from other higher education institutions as part of its quality assurance framework. This mechanism is already in place and contributes to continuous programme improvement. Any future adjustment regarding frequency or intensity may be considered in line with programme needs.

- **1.5 – Academic Course/Subject**

The suggestion to introduce a mandatory Public Administration foundation module for students without a prior background in Public Administration is not accepted. Doctoral education is primarily research-oriented and is not intended to reproduce the function of foundational field education at bachelor's or master's level. Moreover, the programme already provides for the targeted completion of relevant courses from other university programmes where needed. In addition, this issue is already covered by the remarks under Recommendation 1.2.

- **2.2 – Development of Practical, Scientific/Research/Creative/Performing Transferable Skills**

The suggestion to expand formal partnerships beyond higher education institutions to include international policy institutions, think-tanks, and non-profit organisations is accepted. The University will continue working on this recommendation as part of its ongoing programme development.

- The suggestion to pursue institutional membership in NISPAcee and other international networks such as EGPA or NASPAA is accepted. The University will

continue working on this recommendation as part of its ongoing programme development.

- **In case of re-accreditation, a brief overview of significant achievements and/or progress (if applicable) during the accreditation period, as well as a review of the fulfillment of the recommendations received during the previous evaluation process.**

During the previous accreditation period (2022–2026), Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University made significant strides in its PhD program in Public Administration, notably expanding enrollment from initial cohorts to a stable progression of doctoral candidates, with five active students demonstrating consistent research output through three mandatory colloquia defenses. Key achievements included forging international partnerships, such as collaborations with the University of Zaragoza and nine European institutions, which enriched supervision with diverse expertise and elevated publication rates—achieving at least one peer-reviewed article per candidate in international-indexed journals. Infrastructure enhancements, like EBSCO and HeinOnline database access alongside StrikePlagiarism integration, bolstered research integrity and resources. Regarding prior recommendations, the program fully addressed calls for structured supervision by implementing 1:3 supervisor-to-student ratios, formalized contracts, and periodic formative feedback, while quality assurance surveys prompted new research methodology courses, ensuring substantial compliance and alignment with doctoral standards

III. Summary Table of Compliance of the programme with the standards

	Accreditation Standard	Doctoral Framework Standard	Compliance with Requirements
1.	1.1. Educational Programme Objectives, Learning Outcomes and their Compliance with the Programme	1. Doctoral Educational Programme	complies
1.1	Programme Objectives	1.1 Goal and Learning Outcomes	Complies
1.2	Programme Learning Outcomes	1.1 Goal and Learning Outcomes	Substantially
1.3	Evaluation Mechanism of the Programme Learning Outcomes	—	Complies
1.4	Structure and Content of Educational Programme	1.2 Contents of Doctoral Educational Programme	Complies
1.5	Academic Course/Subject	—	Complies
2.	Methodology and Organization of Teaching, Adequacy of Evaluation of Programme Mastering	1. Doctoral Educational Programme	complies
2.1	Programme Admission Preconditions	1.3 Admission Requirements of the Programme	Complies
2.2	The Development of Practical, Scientific/Research/ Creative/ Performance and Transferable Skills	—	Complies
2.3	Teaching and Learning Methods	—	Complies
2.4	Student Evaluation	1.4 Evaluation of a Doctoral Student	Complies
3.	Student Achievements and Individual Work with Them	2. Support Mechanisms and Supervision of Doctoral Students	complies
3.1	Student Consulting and Support Services	2.1 Support Services of Doctoral Students	Complies
3.2	Master's and Doctoral Student Supervision	2.2 Supervision of a Doctoral Student's Scientific-Research Work	Complies
4	Providing Teaching Resources	3. Resources	complies
4.1	Human Resources	3.1 Staff of Doctoral Educational Programme	Substantially
4.2	Qualification of Supervisors of Master's and Doctoral Student	3.2 Qualification of Scientific Supervisors	Complies

4.3	Professional Development of Academic, Scientific and Invited Staff	—	Complies
4.4	Material Resources	3.4 Material Resources	Complies
4.5	Programme/Faculty/School Budget and Programme Financial Sustainability	3.3 Financing of Doctoral Educational Programme	Complies
5	5. Teaching Quality Enhancement Opportunities	4. Quality Assurance	complies
5.1	Internal Quality Evaluation	4.1 Internal and External Quality Assurance	Complies
5.2	External Quality Evaluation	—	Complies
5.3	Programme Monitoring and Periodic Review	—	Complies

Requirements set by the [Framework of Doctoral Education](#) are used during the accreditation evaluation of the doctoral educational programme together with the [accreditation standards](#) of higher educational programmes.

[Guidelines and Standards \(See link\)](#)

[Accreditation Standards for Higher Education Programmes](#)

[Guideline for Assessment of Accreditation Standards of Higher Education Programmes](#)

[Framework for Doctoral Education](#)

[Alignment of the Accreditation Standards and Framework for Doctoral Education](#)

[Assessment criteria](#)

Definitions:

Recommendations - should be considered by the HEI in order to comply the programme with the requirements of the standard

Suggestions - non-binding suggestions for the programme development

IV. Compliance of the Programme with Accreditation Standards

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

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

1.1 Programme Objectives

Accreditation standards indicators

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

PHD Programme indicators

- The goals of the PhD educational programme are focused on the creation of new knowledge and/or development of existing one, promotion of knowledge realization and dissemination through the implementation of original, modern and innovative researches;
- The artistic-creative doctoral educational programme is a doctoral educational programme based on performing and/or creative practice, the goal of which is to create an original project of international level with a research component, which clearly shows the independent creative vision of the doctoral student, demonstrates his/her professional field competences and new knowledge obtained as a result of creative research;
- The goal of the doctoral program is to promote the preparation of doctoral students for independent research and scientific activities by enhancing research skills, as well as cooperation using interdisciplinary approaches, taking into account the research topic;
- The goals of the doctoral educational programme are in line with the implementation strategy of the scientific-research/creative research activities of the HEI/basic educational.

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

The programme objectives are clearly articulated and accessible through the programme documentation and on the University's webpage. Three objectives focus on: a) results-oriented research and new knowledge creation, b) training highly qualified researchers, and c) contributing to public administration development through high-quality scientific works. These objectives well-respond to the PhD program indicators as they demonstrate development of research skills, high quality works, and creation of new knowledge. The learning outcomes reinforce this through requirements to identify research problems independently, conduct independent critical analysis, and create original academic works. The program structure supports independence through progression from coursework to increasingly autonomous research via three colloquia. The objectives are also realistic given the 49 ECTS credit structure over 6 semesters and the systematic research component requiring three colloquia defences before final dissertation submission. The objectives are achievable within the doctoral framework, supported by structured coursework in research methods, academic writing, and specialized seminars.

The doctoral programme objectives are in line with the implementation strategy of the university's scientific research activities, as enshrined in the university's strategy and action plan. They well-align with the mission of Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University by prioritizing

research on current public administration challenges and educating highly qualified researchers and academic staff to produce high-quality scientific papers.

The objectives also well-reflect doctoral (Level 8) characteristics, emphasizing research, knowledge creation, and preparation for independent scientific activity. Although the objectives specifically mention the field of public administration, they could more explicitly describe the distinctive features of public administration as a field, that bridges theory and practice, such as policy analysis, policy evaluation, evaluative research, etc.

Even though objectives and outcomes articulate contribution to the development of public administration field through creation of “high quality scientific works” they do not address characteristics of applied - more field-specific research competences, such as policy evaluation, policy analysis, rigorous impact evaluation or other dimensions. For the employer’s perspective in HEIs, government, international or think-tank organizations, clearer connection between research and practical use could strengthen the program’s value proposition.

In term of meeting labour market demands, the program presents “Labour market analysis document” which is majorly based on desk research of local and international HEIs and two FGDs among representatives of PA department of Georgian Universities. The argument is that since the demand on undergraduate studies shows increasing trend from in 2018-2025, there is a demand on professionals holding PhD in public administration to accommodate increasing numbers of undergraduate students. This statement holds true in the field, however labour market analysis overlooks important players and potential employers in the field, such as international think-tanks or other multi-national organizations, non-profit sector and civil service. The focus falls solely on HEIs as though it is the only piece on job market. During the visiting interviews, the employers outlined “proficiency in high-quality research” as one of the major expectations when potentially hiring candidates from the program (PA PHDs in general). This could justify the program’s sole focus on research rather than on Public Administration-tailored research skills widely applied through the field internationally. However, more focus on aligning the program objectives and outcomes not only to local HEIs but to the wider job market could better position the program on the local and international spectrum of the labour market.

The program shows implicit internationalization in its objectives. While the learning outcomes require publication in peer-reviewed journals with foreign international index, the program objectives themselves do not mention preparation for international careers, cross-national research objectives or comparative public administration perspectives.

The interviews revealed that program objectives are widely shared among all involved persons such as students, academic personnel and potential employers. The program, including its objectives is accessible publicly on its webpage and is well-shared among the involved parties such as students, academic personnel and employers.

Evidences/Indicators

- PhD Program in Public Administration
- Labour market Analysis
- Interviews with Employers
- Interviews with Students

[Recommendations](#)

Suggestions for the Programme Development

- It is suggested to articulate the connection between public administration-specific research and its real-world applications, as well as preparation for international careers, within the programme objectives to strengthen the programme's value proposition.
- While the ongoing orientation towards international scientific rankings is positive, it is suggested to further broaden the programme's positioning to appeal to a wider range of international target groups in the future is advised.

Evaluation

Component	Evaluation
1.1 Programme Objectives	Complies

1.2 Programme Learning Outcomes

Accreditation standards indicators

➤ The learning outcomes of the programme are logically related to the programme objectives and the specifics of the study field.

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

PHD Programme indicators

- The learning outcomes of the doctoral educational programme are logically related to the goals of the educational programme and correspond to the classifier of the 8th level of qualification;
- The results of the doctoral thesis, creative/performing project at the local and/or international level have scientific-research/creative-research significance, are innovative and have practical/theoretical value.

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

The four learning outcomes of the program gives an indicator what graduates will be able to do after the completion of the program:

- (A) Identifies current issues in public administration, the need for their research, selects appropriate research methods and determines expected results
- (B) Researches and critically analyzes problematic issues in public administration, develops their own strategic, original, comprehensive and in-depth conclusions
- (C) Plans and conducts lectures and seminars using contemporary and innovative teaching methods, participates in scientific research discussions in the field of public administration
- (D) Creates and publishes high-level academic works while observing the principles of academic integrity and ethics, takes responsibility for research conducted under their supervision and its results.

These learning outcomes align well and contribute to the three objectives of the program, also visually presented via “Program objectives and learning outcomes map”.

The learning outcomes are realistic as well as measurable through research proposal quality, methodology selection approaches, dissertation quality, and required publications in peer-reviewed journals. They are also achievable within the doctoral timeframe, via programme structure, three colloquia and dissertation, as well as professional assistantship component. The dissertation and creative research projects have scientific significance on a local and international level, as they develop innovative approaches to public administration problems and provide theoretical and practical value, supported by publication requirements (3 articles, international conference participation).

Even though the learning outcomes explicitly mention "public administration," they lack the field-specific language that would demonstrate what makes public administration PhD program distinctive from the PhD programs in other fields. Similar to the objectives, it remains unclear what research skills are unique to public administration and how these differ from related fields like social studies or business administration as an example. Another significant concern is that the learning outcomes focus narrowly on research and teaching competencies, without reflecting the broader knowledge base expected in public administration. This is particularly problematic given that the program does not require applicants to have an academic background (undergraduate or master's degree) in public administration. Admission is based solely on the research proposal and interview, and while relevant professional experience is considered during the admission process, there is no specific examination or knowledge base assessment to verify candidates' foundational knowledge of public administration concepts, theories, or practices before enrolment.

Since the program curriculum includes no mandatory public administration coursework that would ensure students without a public administration background gain essential field knowledge, it offers voluntary MPA courses for students who wish to fill knowledge gaps. This optional approach does not guarantee that doctoral graduates will have comprehensive, systematic knowledge of the field. As a result, the learning outcomes don't reflect this broader knowledge base either. The risk here is that the program may produce high-quality researchers in very narrow areas within the field, but graduate public administration doctors who lack the broad, systematic understanding of public administration that should define their expertise.

The learning outcomes partially address labour market needs. They focus almost exclusively on one employment segment of the labour market – HEIs – while overlooking other important employers such as policy and administration think-tanks, international and multinational organizations, development cooperation agencies, and evaluation consultancies.

During site visiting interviews, when potential employers were asked what they expect from public administration doctoral graduates, they emphasized high-quality research skills. However, research skills alone are not unique to public administration, since a sociologist with strong research skills could easily fill similar roles. What distinguishes public administration doctoral studies should be the combination of advanced research capabilities with deep, systematic knowledge of the field. This distinctive combination is not currently reflected in the learning outcomes.

Development of outcomes is a collaborative process described in the “Methodology of planning, formulating and developing educational programme and its approval procedure” and the involvement of students, academic personnel and potential employers has been verified during the interviews.

Evidences/Indicators

- PhD program in Public Administration

- Labour Market Analysis
- Interviews with Employers and Program Heads

Recommendations

- It is recommended to include research outcome that specifies characteristics of applied public administration research, given public administration's applied nature.
- It is recommended to include outcome that describes expertise in broader field of public administration.

Suggestions for the Programme Development

Evaluation

Component	Evaluation
1.2 Programme Learning Outcomes	Substantially

1.3 Evaluation Mechanism of the Programme Learning Outcomes

Accreditation standards indicators

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

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

The evaluation mechanisms of the Learning Outcomes (PLO) programmes of the PhD programme in Public Administration at Sulxhan-Saba Orbeliani University are clearly defined and comply with accreditation standards. The evaluation cycle includes the definition of the PLO, the collection and analysis of relevant data in direct and indirect assessment, and the use of the results for program development.

The document "Quality Assurance Mechanisms, Evaluation Results and their application" describes the process in two main approaches: analysis of the achievement of target benchmarks and evaluation of student performance. Once the PLO has been determined, a "Map of Program Mandatory Courses and Program Learning Outcomes" is created, which represents the contribution of each mandatory course (e.g., acquaintance, deepening, practice, consolidation) to the PLO. Each event has specific objectives; if it is reached, it shall be deemed to have been passed.

The annual evaluation is carried out at the end of the year by comparison with previous year's data. An achievement report contains the implementation of the previous year's plan, quality assessments, causes of deviation (determined via focus groups and interviews) and recommendations of the Dissertation Council. Direct methods use ECTS rankings (target: 10% A, 25% B, 30% C, 25% D, 10% E); Aggregate grades to PLO via Competency Map. Indirectly, stakeholder surveys (students, graduates, staff, employers) are carried out semesterly. The program undertake structured benchmarking against comparable international doctoral programs in public administration to refine and sharpen its quality assurance and development system.

Deviations lead to adjustments such as modification of target benchmarks or teaching-learning methods. Survey data results in recommendations from the Program Director/Doctoral School, which the Quality Service reviews and submits to the Academic Council, which creates action plans with stakeholders and deadlines. Examples: Technical database improvements or adding courses (Quantitative/Qualitative Research Methods) based on feedback.

Supporting documents include. The PDCA cycle (Plan-Do-Check-Act) ensures continuous improvement;) have been implemented.

While internal quality assurance mechanisms are structured and functional, the programme does not yet systematically incorporate collegial peer review mechanisms among academic staff for supervision practices, research design review, and course content evaluation. The introduction of structured peer-to-peer academic evaluation would further strengthen reflective academic culture and align the programme with best European doctoral practices. Peer-to-peer learning among professors greatly enhances teaching practices by enabling the exchange of innovative pedagogical strategies and classroom experiences, leading to more effective and student-centered instruction. In research, it fosters collaborative idea generation and critical feedback loops within the faculty circle, accelerating project development and improving the quality of scholarly outputs. Additionally, it proves invaluable for collegial case consultations, where professors can draw on collective expertise to address complex challenges, optimize decision-making, and build a supportive professional community.

Evidences/Indicators

- quality documents,
- survey results,
- PLO maps, and
- PhD program documents
- external accreditation recommendations

Recommendations

Suggestions for the Programme Development

- It is suggested that the program systematically implement collegial peer-to-peer evaluation mechanisms to drive continuous optimizations across teaching, supervision, and research components.

Evaluation

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

Component	Evaluation
1.3 Evaluation Mechanism of the Programme Learning Outcomes	Complies

1.4. Structure and Content of Education Programme

Accreditation standards indicators

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

PHD Programme indicators

- The basis for the development of the doctoral educational programme is the research potential of the higher education institution, the existence of previous scientific-research activity experience in the relevant direction, successful practice and research results;
- The doctoral educational programme contributes to the development of scientific-research activities at the HEI and the formation of field-related, scientific collaboration and professional connections;
- The contents of the doctoral educational programme, depending on the peculiarities of the study area, ensures the intellectual, social, cultural, economic, technological, industrial and/or other types development of science/field, state and/or society;
- The teaching component of the doctoral educational programme contributes to the implementation of the scientific-research component of the doctoral student in an appropriate degree through the development of transferable skills and/or by deepening the knowledge of the doctoral student on current issues/trends in the field. It also provides methodological guidelines for the proper planning and implementation of the research component;
- The content of the doctoral educational programme leads to the formation of important innovative approaches, that will contribute to the development of cooperation between scientific fields using interdisciplinary approaches, taking into account the specifics of the research field;
- The doctoral education programme promotes the development of such competences and transferable skills for doctoral students as: planning and implementation of research-scientific activities, finding and administering grants, project management, planning and implementation of creative/performing projects, engaging into the technological transfer through implementation of the research outcomes, leadership, supervision, career development planning, critical analysis of scientific literature, data analysis, teaching (pedagogical skills), expressing opinions in popular scientific language, etc.;
- To effectively implement the research component of the doctoral education programme, the HEI has developed: the mechanism for selecting and changing the research topic and implementing/presenting the scientific-research component, which, following the research field/fields of the educational programme and taking into account the interests of the doctoral students, ensures that the scientific-research component is performed by the doctoral student at an appropriate level, taking into account the adherence of academic integrity mechanisms;

- The individual research plan of the doctoral student takes into account - research aim, the structure of the doctoral thesis and the estimated schedule/timetable of the research implementation, research methodology and so on. The research plan supports the doctoral student to conduct his/her activities in accordance with the research topic and to complete the doctoral thesis within the time limit established by the law;
- The ethical norms of scientific-research activity are adhered to in the HEI, which take into account the local and international standards of research ethics in the relevant field.

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

The PhD program in Public Administration at Sulkhani-Saba Orbeliani University fully meets the accreditation standards for the structure and content of the educational program. The feasibility of studying and the requirements can be assessed as positively feasible from the on-site interviews. It has been developed in accordance with the College's internal methodology for planning, designing, and developing educational programs and has a consistent, logical structure that ensures the achievement of program learning objectives. The Doctor of Public Administration qualification to be awarded fits the programme in terms of content and objectives. The possibilities of international short-term mobilities and the corresponding networks of lecturers and the existing mentoring program as well as internationally oriented conferences should also be emphasized.

The program follows the school's methodology for program development, including analysis of Georgian and international doctoral models such as the University of Illinois at Chicago, University of Bologna, and Leiden University. The structure comprises 49 ECTS credits in compulsory (39 ECTS) and elective courses (10 ECTS) over three semesters, supplemented by a research-oriented component without credits, including three colloquia on the dissertation. Contents such as Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods, Academic Writing and Modern Teaching Methods ensure the achievement of learning objectives in research and pedagogy.

1. PhD-specific indicators: research potential

The development of the programme is based on the research potential of the university, underpinned by 20 years of teaching and research experience as well as dozens of ongoing projects (e.g. on migration, rule of law, renewables). There are verifiable scientific activities, such as publications in SCOPUS-indexed journals, conference participations, and faculty books. The program strengthens research-related activities through mentoring, publication incentives, and collaborations with institutes such as the Center for Crime and Criminal Justice.

2. Development and Skills

The programme promotes scientific cooperation through international partnerships (Erasmus, bilateral exchanges) and networks. Content contributes to the intellectual, social and technological development of the public administration field, e.g. through practical research on current Georgian challenges. The teaching component develops transferable skills such as Research Planning, Data Analysis, Grant Management and Pedagogical Skills via courses such as Professors Assistantship and Research Seminar; it provides methodological guidelines for research.

3. Research Component and Ethics

Interdisciplinary approaches are created through electives (e.g. Philosophy of Higher Education) and additional courses from other programmes. Competencies such as Project Management, Leadership, Critical Analysis and Technology Transfer are promoted through compulsory courses and publication obligations (3 articles, international conference). Mechanisms for topic selection, modification and presentation of research include supervisor approval, individual plans (objective, structure, schedule, methodology) and colloquia; these ensure quality while taking into account academic integrity via StrikePlagiarism.com. Ethical norms follow local and

international standards, with anti-plagiarism rules and public dissertation defenses, especially in times of AI use.

Evidences/Indicators

- quality documents,
- PhD program documents
- external accreditation recommendations

Recommendations

Suggestions for the Programme Development

Evaluation

Component	Evaluation
<u>1.4 Structure and Content of Educational Programme</u>	Complies

1.5. Academic Course/Subject

Accreditation standards indicators

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

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

The content of the individual courses in the PhD program Public Administration as well as the assigned ECTS credits (a total of 49 ECTS, of which 39 are compulsory courses) ensure the achievement of the course-specific learning objectives. These objectives are derived directly from the programme objectives and promote core competencies such as research methodology (e.g. Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods), academic writing (Academic Writing and Dissertation Architecture) and pedagogical skills (Modern Teaching Methods, Professors Assistantship).

The learning objectives and content of the core subject courses contribute significantly to the achievement of the overarching programme learning outcomes, which are based on the National Qualifications Framework (Level 8) and include knowledge, skills and responsibility/autonomy. The breadth of the range of subjects is very broad due to the interdisciplinarity and should include a needs analysis as a mechanism for domain-specific focal points. A detailed map of Program Mandatory Courses and Program Learning Outcomes visualizes the logical link, with courses such as Research Seminar deepening the development of research and presentation skills, thus securing the Doctor of Public Administration qualification. The free attendance of Master's courses for the parallel fulfilment of the admission requirements is expedient.

The study materials specified in the module handbook (syllabi) – including current monographs, articles and primary literature from international databases – are accessible in the University Library (physically and electronically via EBSCO, HeinOnline) and are specifically tailored to the achievement of the programme learning objectives. Quality Management Service Quality Assurance verifies the relevance of the sources, which are based on the latest research results, and thus ensures the implementation of the accreditation standards.

Evidences/Indicators

- quality documents,
- PhD program documents
- external accreditation recommendations

[Recommendations](#)

[Suggestions for the Programme Development](#)

- It is suggested to integrate Mandatory Public Administration Foundation Module For students entering without public administration academic backgrounds, covering core public administration theories, governance systems, policy analysis and evaluation. This would ensure all graduates possess the systematic field knowledge that distinguishes them as public administration experts, not merely researchers who happen to study public administration topics.

Evaluation

Component	Evaluation
1.5. Academic Course/Subject	Complies

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

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

2.1 Programme Admission Preconditions

Accreditation standards indicators

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

PHD Programme indicators

- The admission requirements of the doctoral programme are public, they include information on the programme, admission deadlines and documentation to be submitted, as well as information on the research interests of supervisors and support/encouragement mechanisms for studies conducted by doctoral students and other information;
- Admission requirements of the doctoral programme takes into consideration an assessment of the applicants' experience and capabilities, required for successful completion of the doctoral programme.

- When enrolling in the doctoral education programme, the strategy of the scientific research/creative research activity of the HEI/basic educational unit is also taken into account;
- Admission of doctoral students to the doctoral educational programme is ensured on a commission basis;
- The HEI defines the rules for determining the composition, activities, and decision-making of the committee involved in the admission process of the doctoral education programme, which ensures the evaluation of the people wishing to be enrolled in the programme - in compliance with the principles of objectivity, fairness, and transparency;
- A candidate wishing to enroll in a doctoral educational programme shall submit a research/creative research thesis/project to the Commission in accordance with the rules established by the HEI. A candidate is also required to have a previous paper/publication in the relevant field and/or to participate in scientific-research projects and events and/or to have at least 2 years of work experience in the relevant field. The established requirements should provide an opportunity to evaluate the candidate's research skills;
- At the time of admission to the doctoral educational programme, the level of foreign language proficiency is determined. Taking into account the specifics of the field, the person in the programme must have knowledge of the English language at least B2 level or knowledge of one of the other Western European foreign languages at least B2 level and English language knowledge at least B1 level;
- Admission to the doctoral education programme takes into account the human, financial, and research resources available at the HEI, including the ratio of doctoral supervisors to doctoral students. Also, the results of the analysis on the timely completion of the programme by the doctoral students enrolled will be taken into account by the HEI.

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

The admission requirements of the doctoral programme are publicly available and include comprehensive information on the programme, admission deadlines, required documentation, research interests of potential supervisors, and institutional support mechanisms for doctoral research.

The admission framework ensures an assessment of applicants' academic background, research potential, professional experience, and competencies necessary for the successful completion of doctoral studies. Admission decisions are aligned with the scientific research strategy of the HEI and the relevant basic educational unit.

Doctoral admissions are conducted by a designated admissions commission, whose composition, responsibilities, and decision-making procedures are defined by the HEI in accordance with the principles of objectivity, fairness, and transparency.

Applicants are required to submit a research project to the admissions commission in line with institutional regulations. In addition, candidates must demonstrate research capacity through prior publications and/or participation in research projects and academic events and/or relevant professional experience.

Foreign language proficiency is assessed at the time of admission. Applicants must demonstrate proficiency at B2 level in English or another Western European language (French, German), and in cases where the primary language is not English, at least B1 level proficiency in English, taking into account the specifics of the field.

Admission to the doctoral programme is determined in consideration of the HEI's available human, financial, and research resources, including the supervisor-to-doctoral student ratio, as well as institutional analysis of doctoral students' timely programme completion.

Evidences/Indicators

- PhD Programme in Public Administration
- Self-Evaluation Report
- Doctoral Studies Regulation
- The Rule on Recognition of Credits

Recommendations

Suggestions for the Programme Development

Evaluation

Component	Evaluation
2.1 Programme Admission Preconditions	Complies

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

Accreditation standards indicators

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

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

The program is primarily aimed at developing scientific-research-related skills that students must apply during the preparation of the doctoral thesis. The strong commitment towards developing research skills is obvious through two research courses (Qualitative Research Methods and Quantitative Research Methods) Academic Writing and Dissertation Architectonics courses, and a Research Seminar component. The three-colloquia structure ensures progressive development of independent research capabilities under qualified supervision, and the dissertation ultimately verifies these competencies. In addition, students must publish three research articles and participate in an international conference.

However, the curriculum firmly focuses on academic research methods while providing limited exposure to applied formats such as policy briefs, impact assessments, or public works/program evaluations that employers in the field require heavily. While graduates possess strong theoretical and methodological foundations, they may lack practical experience conducting research under real-life scenario constraints and timelines that are so typical for government, non-profit and international organization settings.

The program's research component is well-organized, following logical progression from foundational coursework through three colloquia to final dissertation defense and aligns well with the qualification level. The focus primarily falls on academic orientation while structured mechanisms to engage students with external research contexts such as field placements in professional settings such as think-tanks, non-profit or consultancies, remain limited. University strongly encourages collaborative projects with partner universities, and several cases were discussed during the interviews. However, these collaborations majorly remain in the academic settings.

Practical and transferable skills are promoted through components such as Modern Teaching Methods and Professors Assistantship, which teach pedagogical practice and creative teaching methods. Collaborations with international HEIs enable research mobilities and skill

workshops, while the mentoring program supports joint publications with supervisors. These elements ensure the transfer to professional contexts such as teaching and administration.

Creative and executive skills develop above all in the research components, where students work on developing original analyses and solutions. The creative workshop approach in seminars, combined with presentation exercises and feedback rounds, strengthens performative aspects. International conferences and publication obligations round off the creative implementation, tailored to the learning outcomes.

The university has established several MoUs with international academic institutions including European universities (University of Malta, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Palacký University Olomouc, Sofia University, etc.) and other international partners that provide for joint research projects, faculty and student exchange, and collaborative research activities. The agreements primarily facilitate academic mobility and research collaboration between universities but contain no provisions for supervised practical placements in internships with policy institutes, or collaborative applied research projects addressing real-life public administration challenges. Considering closer links with professional associations such as Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe (NISPACEe) could potentially widen the collaborative efforts with EAPAA (European Association for Public Administration Accreditation) accredited public administration programs.

However, there is still the room for improvement through extending cooperations with international policy institutions, think-tanks and or other non-profits working in the field to reinforce the applied part of the doctoral competences to contribute to the development of administrative praxis in the field.

Evidences/Indicators

- PhD program in Public Administration
- MoUs
- Interviews with academic personnel and students

Recommendations

Suggestions for the Programme Development

- It is suggested that the programme expands its formal partnerships beyond higher education institutions to include international policy institutions, think-tanks, and non-profit organisations active in public administration. Such collaborations would provide structured opportunities for doctoral students to participate in applied research and practical projects, effectively bridging academic rigour with real-world professional practice.
- It is advised to pursue institutional membership in the Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe (NISPACEe), as well as other prominent international networks such as EGPA or NASPAA. This strategic step would enhance academic exchange, strengthen research quality and publication output, and broaden international career prospects for students and faculty alike.

Evaluation

Component	Evaluation
2.2. The Development of practical,	Complies

2.3. Teaching and Learning Methods

Accreditation standards indicators

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

The PhD program employs student-centered teaching methods that meet the requirements of the doctoral level of studies (8 level), align with the subject content, learning objectives and outcomes, and their achievement. The methods consider the individual needs of the doctoral students and promote commitment as well as the development of research- and teaching-related skills. Both courses (Qualitative and Quantitative) in research methodologies combine lectures on methodological foundations with practical step-by-step exercises and learning-by-doing approaches that help students to build research and data analysis skills by immediately applying what they have learned. Academic writing uses simulated dissertation components as progressive practical exercises. The Research Seminar employs colloquium format for students to present and defend research before subject committees, and Professorial Assistantship provides teaching experience through supervised delivery of lectures and seminars. This combination well-supports the four learning outcomes, developing capabilities in research design, critical analysis, teaching delivery, and academic publication.

The program combines classic and modern methods such as dialogic lectures, seminars with weekly presentations, brainstorming, problem-based learning and the "Creative Workshop" approach. Experienced professors share practical knowledge through demonstration, feedback and learning-by-doing approaches to stimulate critical thinking and original problem-solving and thus secure learning goals. This diversity of approaches allows for flexible adaptation to learning styles and encourages active participation at doctoral level.

As presented in the "Methodology of planning, formulating and developing educational programme and its approval procedure" the institution applies an individual academic approach through the development and implementation of individual study plans with a set procedure, aimed at ensuring inclusive participation of students in the educational process. Individual study plans are designed in response to students' diverse academic backgrounds, learning needs, and special educational requirements, with the objective of supporting equal access to learning and academic success. The process for developing an Individual Study Plan is student-initiated and requires the submission of relevant supporting documentation that substantiates the need for an individualized academic arrangement. This was verified during the interviews with program heads, but no such need and cases have been initiated or administered during the 3-year run of the program to date, apart from the rarely delivery of additional and consultancy meetings remotely in case of necessity.

The program does not enroll international students, and the distance learning is not part of its formal structure.

Evidences/Indicators

- PhD program in Public Administration
- Methodology of planning, formulating and developing educational programme and its approval procedure
- Interviews with Program Heads and Quality assurance personnel
- Course syllabi

[Recommendations](#)

Suggestions for the Programme Development

Evaluation

Component	Evaluation
2.3. Teaching and learning methods	Complies

2.4. Student Evaluation

Accreditation standards indicators

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

PHD Programme indicators

- Doctoral students are evaluated according to the procedures established in the HEI, that are transparent, reliable and comply with the current legislation;
- The teaching component of the doctoral programme curriculum is assessed with the methods appropriate to the content of the teaching component and the requirements of the doctoral degree, which provides assessment of the student's knowledge and skills, including analytical and critical thinking, selection and independent application of research methodology, substantiated expression of an opinion, and other skills;
- The doctoral education programme provides the requirements for admission of a doctoral student to the defense of a dissertation/creative/performing work, or other research project/paper. This envisages periodic formative assessments of the student's progress;
- Before submitting the dissertation/creative/performative work for the academic degree, the doctoral student is required to publish at least two scientific articles from the relevant research field, one of which must be published in a peer-reviewed journal with a foreign international index.
- The supervisor periodically monitors the progress of consistent performance of a research component by the doctoral student, provides formative assessment, and feedback.
- Requirements of the academic style of the doctoral thesis, methods and criteria for evaluating the doctoral thesis, which take into account the specifics of the field, are known in advance to the doctoral students and are taken into account during the evaluation of the doctoral theses.
- While evaluating the scientific-research component, HEI uses the mechanisms of academic and research ethics, academic integrity, plagiarism prevention, detection and response mechanisms;
- The defense of doctoral theses is performed in accordance with the HEI procedures of evaluation and defense of a doctoral thesis which is in compliance of the current legislation.
- The evaluation of the doctoral thesis is carried out in a commission manner - by the commission/commissions;
- The procedures for the evaluation and/or defense of the doctoral thesis provide for the conclusions of the competent institution (local and/or foreign university, scientific-research institute), local and international reviewer (the conclusion of the international reviewer is not mandatory for the following fields of study: Georgian philology, Abkhazian philology, also, if the doctoral candidate has an international supervisor), who evaluates the novelty of the scientific research/creative work of the dissertation and readiness for the defense of the dissertation;

- A local reviewer is a staff member of a local university, scientific-research institute/center, or a person with emeritus status, who is equipped with the latest knowledge in the field, has actively participated in scientific research, and has published at least 1 scientific work (in artistic directions - creative/performance project) in a peer-reviewed journal with a foreign international index within the last 3 years. This work corresponds to the general topic/field of research of the doctoral student's doctoral work;
- An international reviewer is a staff member of a foreign university, scientific-research institute/center, or a person with emeritus status, who is equipped with the latest knowledge in the field, has actively participated in scientific research, and has published at least 1 scientific work (in artistic directions - creative/performance project) in a peer-reviewed journal with a foreign international index within the last 3 years. This work corresponds to the general topic/field of research of the doctoral student's doctoral work;
- Mechanisms and processes for the selection and appointment of doctoral thesis reviewers by the university should be transparent, impartial, and objective. When selecting reviewers, their anonymity should be ensured, which contributes to the preparation of an unbiased, fair and objective conclusion;
- The defense commission(s) consists of representatives of academic/scientific staff from the relevant field, whose competence allows for in-depth and thorough evaluation of the paper and the originality of the research/creative research and its results;
- Participation of external evaluators is ensured in the composition of the defense commission(s); The supervisor/co-supervisor of the doctoral student does not participate in the work of the defense commission(s);
- Considering the specifics of the field, the defense commission(s) includes (if necessary) an international evaluator(s) with relevant qualification and competence, and a representative(s) of the governmental/non-governmental sector and the labor market;
- Defense of doctoral thesis is public and open; The abstract/summary of the doctoral thesis in Georgian, English and the languages of the programme implementation is public and available to everyone;
- The doctoral educational programme provides the appeal of evaluation results of the doctoral students' enrollment to the programme as well as procedures of dissertation defense. The rules of appeal are publicly available in advance and ensure that an objective and fair decision is made;
- Mechanisms for searching, and appointing reviewer and determining his/her activities are ensured by HEI;
- Information about the topics of current theses and defended theses are published by the HEI on a unified electronic portal.

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

Students in the PhD programme in Public Administration at Sulkhani-Saba Orbeliani University are assessed transparently, reliably and in accordance with Georgian higher education law and established procedures. This includes continuous assessments during courses and periodic formative reviews in the research component.

The evaluation of students follows the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and the Georgian Higher Education Act. It is based on a combination of intermediate and final examinations with transparent criteria, which are defined in the syllabus of each course and communicated before the start of the semester. The university uses an electronic management system for instant feedback and plagiarism checks via StrikePlagiarism.com to ensure integrity; Rules on prevention, detection and response to counterfeiting are publicly available. Appeal procedures are regulated and announced, with immediate announcement of results.

These procedures align with Georgian higher education legislation, ensuring transparency, reliability, and fairness through established university rules that are publicly available in advance.

The doctoral educational programme explicitly provides appeal mechanisms for evaluation results of doctoral students' enrollment and dissertation defense procedures. Rules are announced via official documents like the Self-Evaluation Report, syllabi, and the electronic database (student.sabauni.ge), with immediate announcement of results to maintain objectivity.

This setup guarantees an objective and fair decision-making process, as evidenced by supporting documents such as "The procedure for appealing evaluation results" and "The regulation of the educational process".

Doctoral candidates are assessed according to established, transparent procedures that are legally compliant. The teaching component is assessed with methodologically appropriate assessments that capture knowledge, analytical thinking, application of methods and expression of opinion. The program requires three colloquia as formative progress checks before the dissertation, as well as the publication of at least three articles, including in international conferences. Admission to the Defense requires positive colloquium evaluations and periodic progress monitoring by the supervisor.

The supervisor periodically monitors research progress, provides formative feedback, and documents mandatory consultations monitored by the Graduate School. The ratio of supervisor to doctoral candidate is a maximum of 1:3 (active) in order to ensure intensive support. Doctoral rules define academic standards, methods and criteria for the dissertation in advance, adapted to the specifics of the discipline. Academic ethics, integrity, and plagiarism mechanisms are applied in the evaluation of the research share.

The dissertation is reviewed by peer review and colloquia before it expires; at least two publications are required, one in an international peer-reviewed journal. The defense follows university proceedings: publicly, by commission with external experts (at least one from another institution). Local reviewer (local academic with current publication in international index) and optionally international reviewer evaluate novelty and defense readiness anonymously and objectively. Commission contains expert representatives, external evaluators (not a supervisor); international or practical members if required.

Reviewers are selected transparently and anonymously; Topics of current and defended dissertations are published on a uniform portal. Summary of the thesis is publicly available in Georgian, English and the language of instruction. Appeal rights against admission or defense decisions are publicly regulated and ensure fair trials. Quality assurance includes semester-by-semester surveys among stakeholders for continuous improvement.

Evidences/Indicators

- Self-evaluation report;
- Descriptions of study programmes;
- Syllabi;
- Electronic database (student.sabauni.edu.ge);
- The procedure for appealing evaluation results;
- The regulation of the educational process;
- Interview results.

[Recommendations](#)

[Suggestions for the Programme Development](#)

Evaluation

Component	Evaluation
2.4. Student evaluation	Complies

3. Student Achievements, Individual Work with Them

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

3.1 Student Consulting and Support Services

Accreditation standards indicators

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

PHD Programme indicators

- Taking into account the specifics of the field, within the framework of the doctoral programme, the HEI cooperates with local and international scientific research institutes/centers/HEIs, doctoral schools, public and private sector/industry and other potential employers to implement a scientific- research component, to integrate graduates into the labour market and promote their career advancement;
- The higher education institution creates appropriate conditions and environment for the doctoral educational programme to encourage international mobility and/or participation in international conferences, seminars and other scientific/creative activities, which aims to develop a strong and inclusive research environment and promotes the formation of best research practices, internationalization of the research, and implementation of joint research projects.
- HEI provides doctoral students with additional support mechanisms in the form of extra-curricular events and activities aimed at the doctoral student's personal, professional and career development;
- Within the framework of the doctoral educational programme, the higher education institution has developed supporting measures for doctoral students, which allows the doctoral student to complete the doctoral thesis within the timeframe established by the law;
- HEI provides indicative information to the doctoral student about scientific publications/databases with an international index corresponding to the specificity of the field for the publication of an international scientific publication; in the artistic field it provides information about artistic and creative events (concert, festival, competition, master class, exhibition, biennial and others);
- HEI periodically analyzes the indicators of career development of the graduates of the doctoral educational programme, the results of which are aimed at the development of the programme, resources and supporting mechanisms for doctoral students;
- HEI provides doctoral students with information about support services.

Summary and Analysis of the Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard Statement zu S3.1 Student Consulting and Support Services

Sulxhan-Saba Orbeliani University offers comprehensive advice and support for doctoral candidates in the Public Administration PhD program aimed at planning the learning process, improving academic performance, and career development. These services are provided by specialised structural units such as the Student Affairs Office and the Doctoral School, which provide individual and group counselling and integrate students into the labour market.

The Student Affairs Office coordinates career counselling, internships and job placement through cooperation with government, private and civil society organisations. It organises employment forums, practical training on CV creation, interviews and time management, as well as annual needs assessments to tailor offers to student needs. It also supports student initiatives through grant programs and clubs that develop leadership and teamwork skills.

The Doctoral School and the Program Coordinator continuously inform doctoral students about credit accumulation, evaluation criteria, electives, and progress in academic work. Academic supervisors provide mandatory office hours, supervise the dissertation and support publications and conference participation, with a maximum supervisor-doctoral ratio of 1:3.

Taking into account the discipline, the university cooperates with local and international research institutes, universities and employers in order to strengthen the scientific component and integrate graduates into the labour market. This includes internships, research missions, and industry collaborations that promote career progression. The International Department organises mobility programmes such as Erasmus+ and scholarships (e.g. DAAD, Visegrad), with concrete examples such as exchanges at the University of Zaragoza.

The university creates conditions for international mobility through Erasmus KA171, summer schools, conferences and study visits, e.g. to the European Court of Human Rights. Extras such as grant competitions, Universiades and StudFests promote personal, professional and career development. Doctoral candidates receive information on publication databases with international indices, suitable for the field of Public Administration.

Supportive measures such as colloquia, supervisor feedback and flexible elective subject regulations enable the completion of the dissertation within legal deadlines. HEI periodically analyzes graduate career indicators – despite the lack of an up-to-date cohort through surveys and market research – and adjusts program resources.

Evidences/Indicators

- Self-assessment report;
- Workload, functions, responsibilities and job descriptions of staff;
- List of conducting student support services;
- Information on student involvement in various projects and activities;
- Information about students' participation in exchange programs;
- Websites; (<https://www.sabauni.edu.ge/>; student.sabauni.edu.ge)
- Interview results.

Recommendations

Suggestions for the Programme Development

Evaluation

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

Component	Evaluation
3.1 Student Consulting and Support Services	Complies

3.2. Doctoral Student Supervision

Accreditation standards indicators

- A scientific supervisor provides proper support to doctoral students to perform the scientific-research component successfully.
 - Within doctoral programmes, ration of students and supervisors enables to perform scientific supervision properly.
-

PHD Programme indicators

- The supervisor coordinates the performance of the scientific-research component of the doctoral student;
- The HEI has developed the documents regulating the appointment and change of supervisor/co-supervisor of the doctoral student and implementation of supervision/co-supervision;
- The HEI has developed a sample of agreement/contract to be signed between the doctoral student, his/her supervisor/co-supervisor and the HEI, which defines the rights and responsibilities of all parties; The supervision of the doctoral student is included in the overall university workload of the relevant academic/scientific staff;
- The terms of the agreement/contract facilitate the effective implementation of the activities by the supervisor/co-supervisor and the completion of the thesis by the doctoral student within the timeframes;
- During the research process the supervisor has regular consultations with doctoral students on methodological, structural, conceptual and other issues related to the research/creative research. The frequency of the consultations corresponds to the specifics of the research topic and the individual needs of the doctoral student. A supervisor provides consultations over the following topics during the research: research design and project management, research methodology, professional development, the process of writing a thesis/scientific-research work/dissertation, integration process within the local and international scientific/creative network, the processes of participation in local and international scientific/creative events and presentation of the results; publication of scientific articles in peer-reviewed journals, etc.;
- Co-supervisor (if any) supports the doctoral student in the implementation of the scientific-research component through the mutual agreement with the supervisor and the doctoral student;
- Taking into account the specifics and needs of the research, the university promotes the involvement of the staff of a foreign university, scientific-research institute/center, or a person with emeritus status including a compatriot person living abroad, as a supervisor/co-supervisor in the research/creative research process of the doctoral candidate;
- To ensure the doctoral programme sustainability, the HEI, when planning the number of the doctoral thesis supervisors, considers the workload of the supervisors, the amount of existing and future doctoral students, specifics of the programme and best international practices;
- HEI has developed a methodology for the ratio of the doctoral thesis supervisors to doctoral students in the doctoral educational programme, thus ensuring the effective implementation of the supervision;
- The ratio determined by the HEI between the supervisor and his/her active doctoral students does not exceed - 1:3, within the framework of one higher education institution; A ratio of 1:5 between the supervisor and his doctoral students with active status is allowed if a suspended doctoral student requires reinstatement of status to submit a thesis/creative/performance work to be awarded an academic degree. The mentioned ratio can be determined differently depending on the conditions of the scientific grant/project;
- The HEI has developed mechanisms for evaluating the activities of the supervisor/co-supervisor of the doctoral thesis, which ensures the effective implementation of the supervision/co-supervision;

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

Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University ensures comprehensive supervision of doctoral students by qualified scientific supervisors who support the successful completion of the scientific research component. The ratio of supervisors to active doctoral students is a maximum of 1:3 and is extended to 1:5 when suspended students are reactivated to submit their work, allowing for effective supervision.

Scientific supervisors provide appropriate support for the scientific-research part of the doctoral students. Within the doctoral programmes, the supervisor-student ratio enables the supervision to be carried out properly, as stipulated in the Doctoral Studies Regulation. The University has developed documents that govern the appointment, modification and implementation of supervision by main and co-supervisors.

The supervisor coordinates the scientific-research part of the doctoral student and conducts regular consultations on methodology, structure, conception and topics such as research design, project management, professional development, publications and network integration. There is a template for the contract between doctoral candidate, supervisor and HEI, which defines rights and obligations and promotes timely completion; care is integrated into the overall workload of the staff. Co-supervisors support the research process by arrangement, and the university sponsors foreign or emeritus supervisors.

For sustainability, HEI plans the number of supervisors, taking into account the workload, existing and future PhD students, and international best practices; a methodology for the ratio (max. 1:3) ensures effective implementation. Mechanisms for evaluating supervisor activities, including surveys and quality controls by the Quality Management Office, ensure transparency and improvement. The supervisors have relevant publications and experience, often with international collaborations.

Data related to the supervision of doctoral students	
Number of PhD theses	22
Number of doctoral students	12
Ratio - supervisors of PHD theses/doctoral students	22/12

Evidences/Indicators

- Self-assessment report;
- Documents confirming the qualifications of supervisors of Doctoral students;
- Procedure for Planning, Completing, and Assessing Doctoral thesis;
- Regulation on the procedure for checking plagiarism;
- Interview results.

[Recommendations](#)

[Suggestions for the Programme Development](#)

Evaluation

Component	Evaluation
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4. Providing Teaching Resources

Human, material, information and financial resources of educational programme ensure sustainable, stable, efficient and effective functioning of the programme and the achievement of the defined objectives.

4.1 Human Resources

Accreditation standards indicators

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

PHD Programme indicators

- The doctoral education programme involves at least 5 affiliated academic staff of the relevant field, including at least 3 professors/associate professors. If available, the institution should involve scientific staff in the programme implementation;
- The qualification of the academic/research staff of the doctoral educational programme is confirmed by a scientific paper published in the peer-reviewed journals with the international index during the last 3 years and/or a practical/creative/performing project, which confirms his/her competence in the relevant field;
- HEI promotes the participation of foreign university, scientific-research institute/center staff, or a person with emeritus status in the process of implementing the doctoral educational programme;
- The Head of the doctoral programme has the necessary knowledge and experience for the design and development of the programme, as well as the appropriate competence in the field of study of the programme. He/she is directly involved in the implementation of the programme and is the affiliated academic and/or scientific staff of the institution;

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

The Doctoral Programme in Public Administration is implemented by a sufficiently resourced academic staff. The qualifications and field-specific competence of the academic and research staff are confirmed by international publications within the last three years and/or by participation in applied research, professional relevant to public administration. The university mandates that professors publish at least one article annually in Scopus-ranked journals to uphold academic standards and enhance institutional visibility. To support compliance, it provides financial assistance covering publication fees, open-access options, and related research costs. This policy fosters a culture of high-impact research while ensuring faculty have the resources needed to meet these expectations.

The programme involves **6 professors, 10 associate professors, and 1 assistant professor**. In addition, the programme is supported by **9 invited specialists with substantial professional experience in public administration**, ensuring integration of academic and practice-oriented perspectives.

The University actively promotes the involvement of foreign academic staff and senior scholars from partner institutions in programme implementation, strengthening its international dimension. During the site visit, interviews were conducted with programme heads and academic staff confirming active involvement of international partners in supervision, joint publications, guest lecturing, and academic exchanges. The Doctoral Programme in Public Administration is supported by a highly qualified and internationally diverse academic staff affiliated with leading European higher education institutions (through Erasmus Programme). **The international academic team consists of 5 professors and 4 associate professors holding doctoral degrees in Public Administration.** Their research expertise spans core areas of contemporary public administration, such as public governance and management, public finance and budgeting, public procurement and regulatory governance, transparency and human resources management in the public sector, local and regional governance, metropolitan and urban administration, EU regulatory frameworks, and post-Soviet governance and digital diplomacy. This breadth and depth of expertise ensure strong supervision capacity, access to comparative and interdisciplinary research perspectives, and alignment with international academic standards, thereby supporting the effective implementation and scientific quality of the doctoral programme.

Both heads of the Programme have relevant field related experience:

Programme Head 1 is an affiliated professor at Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University, holding a doctoral degree in Law, with over 20 years of teaching experience and extensive professional practice in higher education administration, legal advocacy, and cooperation with state institutions. He is actively involved in international academic activities, has participated in international research and mobility projects, received external grants, and publishes regularly in international journals.

Programme Head 2 is an affiliated associate professor at Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University with a doctoral degree in Public Administration, combining 12 years of academic experience with over 20 years of professional practice in public administration and state institutions. Her expertise includes human resources management, personal data protection, election administration, human rights, and social security. She holds significant leadership experience in professional training institutions, actively engages in international academic activities, and publishes regularly in internationally indexed journals.

The evaluation confirms that the University is consistently strengthening the Doctoral Programme in Public Administration through the involvement of highly qualified academic and invited staff with relevant expertise and professional experience in the field, including strong engagement of international and partner university professors. This approach contributes positively to the academic quality, internationalisation, and research capacity of the programme.

At the same time, it is recommended that the University further enhance the sustainability and contextual relevance of the programme by increasing the involvement of locally based PhD degree holders in Public Administration as academic staff. Strengthening local academic capacity would support deeper integration with national public administration practice, and long-term development of the programme, while complementing the existing international expertise.

Number of the staff involved in the programme (including academic, scientific, International, and invited staff)	Number of Programme Staff	Including the staff with sectoral expertise ⁶	Including the staff holding PhD degree in the sectoral direction ⁷	Among them, the affiliated staff
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⁶ Staff implementing the relevant components of the main field of study

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

Total number of academic staff	35	21	10	16
- Professor	6	4	-	6
- Associate Professor	10	7	1	10
- Assistant-Professor	1	1	-	1
- Assistant	-	-	-	-
Visiting Staff	9	9	-	—
Scientific Staff	-	-	-	—
Including International Staff	9	-	9	-

Evidences/Indicators

- CVs of Academic and Invited Staff
- Interviews Conducted during the visit
- Additional Documents Provided During the Visit

Recommendations

- It is recommended that the University further increases the involvement of locally based PhD degree holders in Public Administration as academic staff.

Suggestions for the Programme Development

Evaluation

Component	Evaluation
4.1 Human Resources	Substantially

4.2 Qualification of Supervisors Doctoral Students

Accreditation standards indicators

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

PHD Programme indicators

- HEI has developed qualification requirements for scientific supervisor/co-supervisor, which respond to the specifics of the programme and international best practice;
- Due to the specifics and development of the field, the scientific supervisor of each doctoral student is equipped with the latest knowledge, has the academic degree in the relevant field, has experience of supervision/co-supervision, or has completed a relevant activity (training, seminar, professional development course, etc.), as well as actively participated in scientific research and/or has published a scientific work (in the field of art - creative/performing project) which corresponds to the general topic/research field of the doctoral thesis;

- Due to the specifics and development of the field, the doctoral student's supervisor has published at least 1 scientific paper (in the field of arts - creative/performing project) in the foreign peer-reviewed journal with the international index defined by the HEI during the last 3 years, and this paper corresponds to the general topic/research field of the doctoral student's doctoral thesis;
- The supervisor of the doctoral student, as well as in the case of several supervisors, one of the supervisors, is an academic (professor, associate professor) and/or scientific staff of the HEI with doctoral degree or equivalent to the doctoral degree. The requirement in the section on holding an academic position does not apply to an international supervisor/co-supervisor;
- The doctoral student's supervisor has professional connection with the local and international scientific/artistic community (joint researches/grants/projects, scientific associations/unions/educational/scientific institutions);
- The qualification requirements of the co-supervisor correspond to the topic/research field of the doctoral student's doctoral thesis;
- HEI periodically provides the doctoral thesis supervisor with such activities (training, seminar, workshop, etc.) that facilitate the effective implementation of supervision;
- HEI has developed mechanisms to encourage doctoral students' supervisors in the doctoral education programme.

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

Statement zur Qualifikation der Betreuer von Doktoranden

Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University has established a comprehensive regulatory framework defining the qualification requirements, selection criteria, and appointment procedures for scientific supervisors and co-supervisors, ensuring transparency and fairness. These provisions are set out in the *Doctoral Studies Regulations*, which specify the competencies, responsibilities, and standards of activity applicable to doctoral supervision.

A key strength of the doctoral supervision system is the active involvement of highly qualified professors from partner European universities. Scientific supervisors and co-supervisors are appointed from among scholars holding doctoral degrees or equivalent academic qualifications, with proven research expertise or internationally recognized publication records aligned with the doctoral student's research topic. As a mandatory requirement, supervisors must have at least one research publication related to the dissertation topic published in an internationally indexed foreign journal within the last three years.

The scientific supervisor plays a central role in guiding the doctoral student's academic and research development, providing continuous consultation on research design, methodology, publication strategy, and professional advancement, as well as supporting integration into international academic and research networks. Supervisors oversee the implementation of the individual study and research plan, assess periodic progress reports, and ensure research-oriented academic conditions conducive to high-quality doctoral work.

To further reinforce the international dimension of doctoral education, the University (when necessary) offers co-supervisors from partner European higher education institutions. These foreign co-supervisors are selected on the basis of their recognized academic excellence and sustained research output in highly ranked international journals. Their involvement enhances comparative and interdisciplinary perspectives, promotes international co-publication and mobility opportunities, and contributes significantly to the quality, visibility, and global integration of doctoral research conducted within the programme.

Number of supervisors of Doctoral theses	Thesis supervisors	Including the supervisors holding PhD degree in the sectoral direction	Among them, the affiliated staff

Number of supervisors of Doctoral thesis	35	10	16
- Professor	6	-	6
- Associate Professor	10	1	10
- Assistant-Professor	1	-	-
Visiting personnel	9	-	—
Scientific Staff	-	-	—
Including International Staff	9	9	-

Evidences/Indicators

- CVs of the personnel implementing the programme
- Doctoral Studies Regulations
- Interviews conducted during the visit

Recommendations

Suggestions for the Programme Development

Evaluation

Component	Evaluation
4.2 Qualification of Supervisors of Doctoral Students	Complies

4.3 Professional Development of Academic, Scientific and Invited Staff

Accreditation standards indicators

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

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

The University conducts the regular evaluation of academic and invited personnel, covering both teaching performance and scientific-research activities, in accordance with its *Quality Assurance Mechanisms, Evaluation Results and Their Application* and the *Rules for Planning, Evaluating, and Supporting Scientific-Research Activities*. Teaching competence is assessed through a combination of self-evaluation, student feedback, and programme-specific evaluation instruments adapted to doctoral-level education. Evaluation results are systematically processed by the Quality Management Office and reviewed by the Academic Council, which adopts follow-up operational measures and monitors their implementation on a semester basis.

The evaluation of scientific and research activities is regulated through a structured workload system that defines minimum annual and cumulative research requirements for academic staff. Research performance is assessed on the basis of publications, participation in research projects, and academic development activities, with particular emphasis on outputs published in internationally indexed journals, including Scopus and Web of Science. The University applies incentive mechanisms linked to evaluation results, including monetary bonuses, research funding, priority access to international mobility, conferences, publication support, and research missions.

The HEI actively fosters the professional development of academic, scientific, and invited staff through targeted training programmes, needs-based professional development plans, and broad access to international projects, research grants, and academic mobility opportunities. Participation in Erasmus+ teaching and research mobility, international conferences, and collaborative research initiatives with partner institutions is systematically encouraged, with priority given to affiliated personnel through transparent competitive procedures.

In addition, the University supports staff research activities through institutional research centres, access to national and international funding opportunities, publication platforms, and academic journals indexed in international databases. Regular monitoring of research plans, annual reporting, and performance analysis ensure continuous improvement of research quality and sustainability. The effectiveness of these mechanisms is reflected in increasing staff participation in international projects, publications in high-impact journals, and growing academic visibility of both staff and doctoral students.

Evidences/Indicators

- Quality Assurance Mechanisms, Evaluation Results
- Their Application and the Rules for Planning, Evaluating, and Supporting Scientific-Research Activities
- Interviews conducted during the accreditation visit

Recommendations

Suggestions for the Programme Development

Evaluation

Component	Evaluation
4.3 Professional development of academic, scientific and invited staff	Complies

4.4. Material Resources

Accreditation standards indicators

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

PHD Programme indicators

- The doctoral education programme is equipped with the necessary research and artistic-creative infrastructure and technical equipment (scientific laboratory, computer resource, information resource, digital resource, individual working spaces for doctoral students, etc.), which are necessary for the implementation of the educational and scientific-research

- components of the educational programme and for the achievement of the learning outcomes;
- Library book fund, latest scientific periodicals, international electronic library bases both from the university territory and from any other location are available for doctoral students, which allow them to have access and get to know the scientific resources of the relevant research field to achieve the learning outcomes of the programme;
 - In order to implement the scientific-research component, the HEI promotes the sharing of scientific- research infrastructure both within the institution and among other higher educational and scientific institutions outside it;
 - HEI constantly takes care of the renewal and development of scientific-research/creative research infrastructure.

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

The doctoral programme is equipped with the necessary infrastructure, information resources and technical equipment to achieve the learning objectives. Sulkhani-Saba Orbeliani University provides students with full access to buildings, rooms and equipment, including modern lecture halls with projectors, computers and special facilities for students with disabilities.

The program provides scientific labs, computer resources, digital tools, and individual workspaces for doctoral students that are essential for implementing the education and research components. The university promotes the exchange of research resources internally as well as with external universities and institutes in order to strengthen the scientific component. Continuous renewal of the infrastructure ensures up-to-dateness and efficiency. Training courses such as how to use AI have also been established.

Doctoral candidates have unlimited access to a comprehensive library collection of approx. 26,530 units, including current academic periodicals and international electronic databases such as EBSCO, HeinOnline and Elsevier, both on-site and remotely. The electronic catalogue OPEN BIBLIO facilitates research, and the library is regularly updated with new literature on the subject of public administration. These resources provide access to relevant research sources and support the achievement of the programme's objectives. Your own university press is explicitly to be considered positive, as this is a unique selling point in a benchmark comparison.

The university has an electronic teaching management system (<https://student.sabauni.edu.ge>), internet-connected computers, multifunction printers and special workrooms for academic staff. These facilities are optimized for conducting research, teaching, and dissertations and meet the highest standards of accessibility and security. Regular investments ensure the sustainability of technical resources. While the University provides access to major academic databases such as EBSCO and HeinOnline, access to leading internationally recognized journals in the specific domain of public administration is currently limited. The university maintains a strong focus on national literature and its own publications, but currently does not provide direct access to leading international reference journals indexed in Scopus, largely due to financial and licensing constraints that affect many institutions worldwide. As a result, students and researchers may face limitations in engaging with the most recent global findings, which can hinder full participation in international scholarly debates and negatively influence research visibility, citations, and career advancement. To mitigate these challenges, the institution actively encourages the use of open-access resources and interlibrary cooperation, and it continually explores consortium models and alternative licensing options to strengthen international literature access over time. Strengthening subscriptions in this direction would enhance doctoral research competitiveness and international publication capacity.

Evidences/Indicators

[Suggestions for the Programme Development](#)

Evaluation

Component	Evaluation
4.4 Material Resources	Complies

4.5 Programme/Faculty/School Budget and Programme Financial Sustainability

Accreditation standards indicators

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

PHD Programme indicators

- The budget of the HEI/faculty/school/programme provides support and funding mechanisms to the doctoral students for implementation of the teaching and research components of the doctoral education programme.
- The budget of the HEI/faculty/school/programme provides sources/mechanisms of financial support to facilitate the implementation of research by academic and/or research staff, including funding for
- publishing scientific articles in peer-reviewed journals with international index, for participation in scientific conferences, research trips and research/creative projects, for publication monographs and other research, creative/performing activities;
- The budget of the HEI/faculty/school/programme for the effective implementation of the doctoral education programme envisages the development of scientific-research/artistic infrastructure;
- The HEI facilitates the search for external funding sources for targeted research within the doctoral education programme.

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

The allocation of financial resources in the budget of the PhD program in Public Administration at Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University is economically feasible and covers the program's needs. The program budget plans funds to support staff and student research activities, including continuous updating of materials engineering resources, replenishment of library collections, access to international electronic resources, compensation of academic staff, and funding of missions, conferences, public lectures, seminars, research activities, and scholarly publications. In addition, funds are earmarked for unforeseen expenses. Financial sustainability is ensured by income from tuition fees, government teaching and social grants, private grants, donations and other economic activities of the university.

The budget of the HEI/faculty/programme provides funding mechanisms for doctoral students to implement the teaching and research components, such as scholarship competitions, international exchange programmes (Erasmus+ KA171, bilateral exchanges) and study trips (e.g. European Court of Human Rights). Doctoral students benefit from student grant programs and mobility opportunities coordinated by the Doctoral School Coordinator.

Financial support for academic and research staff includes publications in internationally indexed journals, participation in conferences, research trips, monographs and creative projects, through incentive schemes such as one-off payments, priority for conference funding and research missions in accordance with the rules for planning, evaluation and support of scientific activities. The university shares information on local and international grant competitions and prioritizes affiliated researchers.

The budget provides for the development of scientific-research-related infrastructure, including modern buildings, IT equipment (projectors, laptops, smartboards), library resources (over 26,000 units, access to international databases) and electronic teaching process management system. Targeted grants from donors are used to improve infrastructure.

The HEI facilitates the search for external funding for targeted research in the PhD program by providing information on foundations (e.g., Visegrad, DAAD, government scholarships), collaborations with partner universities, and active support for applications for research projects, and should focus on a balance between a high level of student expertise and an appropriate cohort size to enable peer-to-peer learning.

Evidences/Indicators

[Recommendations](#)

[Suggestions for the Programme Development](#)

Evaluation

Component	Evaluation
4.5. Programme/ Faculty/School Budget and Programme Financial Sustainability	Complies

5. Teaching Quality Enhancement Opportunities

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

5.1 Internal Quality Evaluation

Accreditation standards indicators

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

PHD Programme indicators

- Internal quality assurance mechanisms of the doctoral educational programme include the evaluation of the scientific-research component, resources, and support mechanisms of the doctoral student. Evaluation results are applied for the improvement of the HEI's activities and the doctoral programme.
- The activities of the staff implementing the teaching and scientific components of the programme, including the supervisor/co-supervisor of the doctoral thesis are evaluated within the framework of the monitoring of the doctoral educational programme and the evaluation results are used to improve the staff performance;
- The doctoral education programme regularly uses formative peer review to improve the doctoral programme and the research environment;

- In order to develop a doctoral programme, all the interested parties (doctoral student, graduate, staff, doctoral student's supervisor, co-supervisor, employer, etc.) are involved in the evaluation of the doctoral programme implementation.

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

The PhD program in Public Administration at Sulkhani-Saba Orbeliani University meets the accreditation standards for internal quality assurance and specific PhD indicators through close cooperation with the Quality Assurance Department and systematic evaluations. Programme staff actively works with the Quality Management Office to plan quality assurance processes, develop assessment tools and use results for improvements, such as adapting courses based on surveys.

The program team cooperates closely with the internal quality assurance department in the planning of QA processes, the creation of assessment tools and the implementation of evaluations. Internal quality assurance includes the systemic surveys and evaluations of curricula, services, and resources. According to the QA statute, the assessment of an educational program aims to determine whether the educational program:

fully meets the requirements of a potential employer and envisages opinions of academic or invited personnel

the educational program is in line with the university's internationalization strategy
 an educational program fully complies with authorization and accreditation standards and
 program envisages the educational process and academic personnel ensure the quality of education necessary to achieve the evaluation objectives.

Results from surveys of students, graduates, staff and employers are analysed and translated into operational plans, for example by adding new courses such as Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods to strengthen research-related skills. This ensures continuous program improvement in accordance with the PDCA principle.

Internal QA mechanisms include the evaluation of the scientific-research-based component, resources, and support structures for PhD students; Results are incorporated into the optimization of HEI activities and program. The staff, including supervisors and co-supervisors, is evaluated on a semester-by-semester basis – through self-assessment, student feedback and analysis of scientific achievements – with the use of the results to improve performance via training and incentives. Therefore, educational program evaluation questionnaire by academic/Invited staff, Research Seminar Supervisor Evaluation Questionnaire, Assistant Professor Evaluation Questionnaire, Doctoral Thesis Supervisor Evaluation Questionnaire are used for evaluating proper implementation of the program, as well as implementation of the research component.

Regular formative peer reviews are implicitly carried out through colloquia before expert commissions, discussions in the Dissertation Council and external collegial evaluations (e.g. by professors from Zaragoza, Lyon and Gdansk). All stakeholders – PhD students, graduates, staff, supervisors, employers – participate in evaluations via focus groups, surveys and self-assessment teams, whose feedback improves the programme process.

Evidences/Indicators

- Self-Evaluation Report;
- Quality Assurance Mechanisms, Assessment Results and their Application Procedure;
- Survey reports and forms;
- Methodology of planning, formulating and developing educational programme and its approval procedure;
- Interview results.

Recommendations

Suggestions for the Programme Development

Evaluation

Component	Evaluation
5.1 Internal quality evaluation	Complies

5.2 External Quality Evaluation

Accreditation standards indicators

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

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

The program regularly uses the results of external quality assurance procedures to ensure continuous improvement.

External quality assurance mechanisms include accreditation by the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement. The University generally reviews recommendations and suggestions, and the findings are introduced to the head of the programmes for further consideration. The QA Office ensures compliance of the developments with received recommendations. External evaluation mechanisms also include peer evaluation by Georgian and/or international colleagues and in the case of English-language/joint educational programs, the authorization and accreditation standards of the relevant national and/or internationally recognized accreditation institutions.

The Public Administration Doctoral Program received accreditation on June 24, 2022, with the requirement to submit a report within two years.

In June 2024, the university presented a comprehensive report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Educational Program Accreditation Council. This report documented all measures taken to meet the requirements and changes to the program.

The program was peer-reviewed by experts from the University of Zaragoza (Spain), Catholic University of Lyon (France) and University of Gdansk (Poland). They expressed high positive assessments of the quality of the content, the learning objectives and the conformity with international standards.

To strengthen the practical component, cooperation memoranda were concluded with external partners. These measures ensure the regular integration of external quality assurance results into the development of the programme.

Evidences/Indicators

- Self-Evaluation Report;
- Quality Assurance Mechanisms, Assessment Results and their Application Procedure;
- Peer Evaluations;
- Survey reports and forms;
- Methodology of planning, formulating and developing educational programme and its approval procedure;
- Interview results.

[Recommendations](#)

[Suggestions for the Programme Development](#)

Evaluation

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

Component	Evaluation
5.2. External Quality Evaluation	Complies

5.3 Programme Monitoring and Periodic Review

Accreditation standards indicators

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

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

The programme monitoring and periodic evaluation of the PhD programme in Public Administration at Sulkhani-Saba Orbeliani University is carried out systematically with the participation of all relevant stakeholder groups. The Quality Management Department conducts surveys of academic, scientific, invitee, administrative and support staff, students, graduates, and employers on a semester-by-semester basis to collect, analyze, and identify trends.

The university has implemented the practice of a four-stage questionnaire analysis. Initially, data is collected by individual questionnaires. Then, received data is compared with the corresponding components of a benchmark year and the previous reporting. On the third stage, mid-term assessment results are grouped and compared to the corresponding mid-term results of the benchmark year and the previous reporting period. And finally, quality assessment results are produced and compared with those of the benchmark year and the reporting period. Results of the evaluation process are distributed among the stakeholders and are used for the programme improvements.

This systematic data collection includes standardized questionnaires on courses, learning outcomes, teaching methods, and program content, supplemented by focus groups, academic performance analyses, and self-assessments. The results are summarised by the quality office in evaluation reports, compared with previous year's data and weaknesses and strengths are identified, which leads to operational action plans.

The evaluation is used directly for program improvement: Based on stakeholder feedback, for example, two new compulsory courses (Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods) have been introduced to strengthen research competencies and technical adjustments have been made to the electronic database. The plans will be presented to the Doctoral Council and Academic Council to define concrete measures with responsible parties and deadlines, such as training on online teaching methods during the pandemic. This ensures continuous quality improvement and adaptation to market and educational needs.

Stakeholder Involvement

1. **Broad involvement:** Self-assessment group includes staff, students, employers; Focus groups with external experts.
2. **Regular surveys:** Anonymous, semester-by-semester, cover all groups (e.g. employers on competency matching).
3. **Feedback loops:** Results are incorporated into the doctoral council and action plans.

Examples of improvement

Action	Triggers (feedback)	Result
New Research Courses	Student recommendations on research skills	Strengthening of scientific Competencies
Training on teaching methods	Staff surveys (e.g. flipped classroom)	Increased teaching effectiveness
Accreditation recommendations	External Council (2022/2024)	Increased publications, more qualified staff

The QA office has used the lecture observation mechanism with predefined criteria due to the irrelevancies in data gathered through different QA feedback loops. However, the formal process of lecture observation is not defined in the Quality Assurance Mechanisms, Assessment Results and their Application Procedure, it would be suggested to include the process in the formal assessment mechanism to better inform interested parties concerning the procedure.

The HEI ensures benchmarking for the best available practices to develop a competitive and individual programme. The programme takes into consideration the experiences of the local and foreign universities – Georgian Institute of Public Affairs, Georgian Technical University, The University of Chicago, University of Bologna, Leiden University. Through the analysis of analogue programs, many common features and priorities have been observed that affected the elaboration process of the programme, the programme team also reviewed and amended the programme in accordance with the international and local practices. Therefore, the programme team has considered local Georgian realities and demands and incorporated both local and international practices and requirements.

Evidences/Indicators

- Self-Evaluation Report;
- Quality Assurance Mechanisms, Assessment Results and their Application Procedure;
- Survey reports and forms;
- Evaluation reports;
- Methodology of planning, formulating and developing educational programme and its approval procedure;
- Labor market and employers demand analysis for the doctoral programme;
- Interview results.

[Recommendations](#)

[Suggestions for the Programme Development](#)

Evaluation

Component	Evaluation
<u>5.3. Programme monitoring and periodic review</u>	Complies

Attached documentation (if applicable):

Signatures:

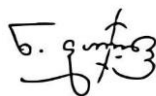
Chair of Accreditation Expert Panel

Christian Schachtner,



Accreditation Expert Panel Members

Nino Parsadanishvili,



Nodar Kherkheulidze, signature



Tamta Tskhovrebadze, signature



Giorgi Merabishvili, signature

