



NATIONAL CENTER FOR
EDUCATIONAL QUALITY
ENHANCEMENT

Accreditation Expert Group Final Report on Higher Education Programme

Preschool Education, Level VI

Sokhumi State University

Evaluation Date: May 19, 2026

Report Submission Date: June 5, 2026

Tbilisi

Information about a Higher Education Institution ¹

Name of Institution Indicating its Organizational Legal Form	Sokhumi State University, legal entity under public law
Identification Code of Institution	205224700
Type of the Institution	University

Expert Panel Members

Chair (Name, Surname, HEI/Organisation, Country)	Milan Pol, Masaryk University, Czech Republic
Member (Name, Surname, HEI/Organisation, Country)	Irma Mesiridze, International Black Sea University, LLC, Georgia
Member (Name, Surname, HEI/Organisation, Country)	Maia Chkotua, International Black Sea University, LLC, Georgia
Member (Name, Surname, HEI/Organisation, Country)	Tamta Tskhovrebadze, Branch Of Non-Entrepreneurial Legal Person the Branch of Webster University, Inc. in Georgia
Member (Name, Surname, HEI/Organisation, Country)	Ana Mikhelidze, Caucasus University, LLC, Georgia

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)	სკოლამდელი განათლება
Name of Higher Education Programme (in English)	Preschool Education
Level of Higher Education/programme	Bachelor's degree
Qualification to be Awarded ²	Bachelor of Preschool Education
Name and Code of the Detailed Field	0112 Training for Pre-school Teachers
Indication of the right to provide the teaching of subject/subjects/group of subjects of the relevant cycle of the general education ³	
Language of Instruction	Georgian
Number of ECTS credits	195
Programme Status (Accredited/ Non-accredited/ Conditionally accredited/ Newly proposed/International accreditation) Indicating Relevant Decision (number, date)	New
Additional requirements for the programme admission (in the case of an art-creative and/or sports educational programme, passing a creative tour/internal competition, or in the case of another programme, specific requirements for admission to the programme/implementation of the programme)	N/A
The quota for MD students requested by the HEI (In the case of Medical Doctor one-cycle educational programme)	

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

³ In case of Integrated Bachelor's–Master's Teacher Training Educational Programme and Teacher Training Educational Programme

II. Accreditation Report Executive Summary

▪ General Information on Education Programme

The programme is submitted as a new programme, but there is a tradition of providing preschool education-related programmes in the past dated to 1934 at the Sukhomi State University (SSU). The current programme was prepared with regard to this tradition and experience of the institution, but also in cooperation with Polish partners of the university. Inputs from several international projects of the education development nature were also provided to the programme preparation process. The programme was prepared in 2020 with new standards for the first time, the change of sectoral benchmarks of preschool education temporarily postponed the programme's launch. The programme was finalized after sectoral benchmarks were approved.

▪ Overview of the Accreditation Site Visit

Before the site visit, the preparatory meeting of the panel and NCEQE coordinator was held online on May 15, 2026. This helped the panel to plan and organize its work accordingly.

The accreditation site visit was conducted on May 19, 2026 in a hybrid mode. While the chair of the panel was present online, all other panel members were physically present at the university site. The panel was provided with sufficient evidence prior to the site visit, and some additional documentation requested by the panel was also submitted timely. The site visit agenda made it possible for the panel to meet and interview all key stakeholders related to the programme, from the SSU and beyond. Also, the panel had a good chance to see the infrastructure planned for the proposed programme at the SSU. This all helped the panel to get a clear picture of the programme and draft the evaluation report.

▪ Brief Overview of Education Programme Compliance with the Standards

▪ Recommendations

1. It is recommended to ensure that the staff gets sufficient information on how the course level outcomes are contributing to the achievement of the programme level learning outcomes. (sub-standard 1.3)
2. It is recommended to ensure that the staff is sufficiently involved in the systematic alignment and evaluation of the learning outcomes process. (sub-standard 1.3)

3. It is recommended to formally address the shortfall in the practical component by either restructuring the programme to meet the 40 ECTS minimum established by *The Subject Benchmark Statement of Preschool Education*, or by seeking an official clarification from the relevant national authority regarding the applicability of this requirement to programmes with a reduced total credit volume. Pending resolution, this gap should be treated as a condition for remediation. (sub-standard 1. 4)
4. It is recommended to revise the syllabi of all English Language courses that span two CEFR levels within a single semester, demonstrating through explicit learning outcomes, assessment criteria, and instructional design documentation that the allocated workload is sufficient for the full intended level progression, and that this design is grounded in established second language acquisition research or CEFR implementation guidance. (sub-standard 1. 5)
5. It is recommended to renew and standardise memoranda with all individual partner kindergartens to specify a number of students placed, practice objectives, expected outcomes, and duration. Introduce a standard template for all memoranda. (sub-standard 2.2)
6. It is recommended to establish programme-specific benchmarks and strengthen programme-level quality assurance monitoring by systematically evaluating the attainment of programme learning outcomes, assessing programme efficiency and ensuring that programme is modified based on the analysis of assessment results, in order to ensure its continuous improvement. (5.3)

▪ **Suggestions**

1. It is suggested to treat the expansion of doctorally qualified staff in the sectoral direction as a prioritised objective within its human resources development strategy. (sub-standard 4.1)
2. It is suggested to take measures ensuring that academic staff are adequately informed of their statutory entitlement to paid scientific leave (sabbatical) and the procedures for exercising it. (sub-standard 4.3)
3. It is suggested to make electronic databases (e.g. SCOPUS, Thomson Reuters, and EverGreen) accessible for external use to ensure equal access for all students and staff. (sub-standard 4.4)
4. It is suggested to the institution to formalize an onboarding and orientation process related to quality assurance for students and staff through establishing a structured

introductory mechanism that will further facilitate understanding of quality culture, strengthen stakeholder awareness of their role in evaluation processes, and support more systematic participation in continuous quality improvement. (5.1)

- **Brief Overview of the Best Practices (if applicable)⁴**

- None

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

The panel took the argumentative position of the university into a consideration and made one small change in the final report: in case of standard 4.4 the recommendation related to access to databases was changed into a category of suggestions. All the other recommendations and suggestions remained the same.

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

- **Staff and Supervisors** - Number of the staff involved in the programme (including academic, scientific, international and invited staff), including the staff holding PhD degree in the sectoral direction; ratio of the academic/scientific staff and invited staff; ratio of the affiliated and academic staff; ratio of Master's students to supervisors; supervisors' workload scheme;

The programme is implemented by 29 personnel, 20 academic staff and 9 invited staff all possessing qualifications and experience aligned with the programme's learning outcomes. The academic body comprises 4 affiliated professors, 13 affiliated associate professors, 2 affiliated assistant-professors, and 1 affiliated assistant. No scientific or international staff are currently engaged. The ratio of academic to invited staff stands at 20:9 (approximately 2.2:1), and all academic staff hold affiliated status (100%).

Of the 29 staff, 9 hold a doctoral (PhD) degree in the sectoral direction. Among invited staff, 5 hold doctoral degrees and 4 are recognised subject-area specialists. As a developmental priority, the institution is encouraged to increase the number of staff holding doctoral qualifications specifically in the field of education or pre-school education, particularly at professorial rank.

As the programme is seeking initial accreditation and has not yet commenced delivery, data on supervision ratios and supervisors' workload schemes are not applicable at this stage and will become measurable following the commencement of the first academic cycle.

⁴ A practice that is exceptionally effective and that can serve as a benchmark or example for other educational programme/programmes.

- **Scientific/Research Indicators** - Scientific/research index of the individuals, involved in the programme (for the last 5 years): quantitative data papers published in peer-reviewed journals with an international index; Staff participation rates in local and international conferences; other scientific/research indicators;

Over the past five years, staff involved in the programme have generated a combined total of 252 scientific/research outputs. The breakdown is as follows:

- 104 papers published in local (Georgian) peer-reviewed journals
- 34 papers published in international journals
- 51 presentations delivered at local conferences
- 63 presentations delivered at international conferences

The ratio of international to local journal publications is approximately 1:3, suggesting that while domestic scholarly engagement is strong, there is meaningful and growing international publication activity. International conference participation (63) notably exceeds local conference participation (51), which reflects a positive orientation toward engagement with the global academic community in the field of early childhood and pre-school education. No additional scientific/research indicators (e.g., monographs, grants, creative projects) have been recorded in the presented documentation.

- **Academic Staff Turnover Rate** (for the last 5 years) (e.g. the number of retired staff, the number of staff who left the institution and the number of new staff, etc.);

Over the five-year reference period, 6 new academic staff members joined the programme while 3 departed, resulting in a turnover rate of approximately 14% and a corresponding retention rate of approximately 85%. This indicates a stable and largely continuous academic workforce, conducive to programme sustainability and coherent delivery of learning outcomes. The invited staff picture is similarly stable: with only 1 departure offset by 5 new appointments, turnover remains low and the invited staff complement has grown over the period.

Overall, the turnover data suggests that the programme enjoys considerable personnel continuity, which is conducive to programme sustainability and coherent delivery of learning outcomes.

- **Data on the Individuals Enrolled** (for the last 5 years; in case of active programmes); number of student places announced for the programme; student progression by academic years;

Since the programme is seeking initial accreditation and has not yet commenced delivery, data on enrolled students, student progression, and distribution by academic year are not available

at this stage. The maximum student intake envisaged by the programme is set as 30 students per academic year.

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

- **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.**

II. Summary Table of Compliance of the programmes with the standards

	Standard	Evaluation
1.	1.1. Educational Programme Objectives, Learning Outcomes and their Compliance with the Programme	Substantially complies with requirements
1.1	Programme Objectives	Complies with requirements
1.2	Programme Learning Outcomes	Complies with requirements
1.3	Evaluation Mechanism of the Programme Learning Outcomes	Substantially complies with requirements
1.4	Structure and Content of Educational Programme	Substantially complies with requirements
1.5	Academic Course/Subject	Substantially complies with requirements
2.	Methodology and Organization of Teaching, Adequacy of Evaluation of Programme Mastering	Complies with requirements
2.1	Programme Admission Preconditions	Complies with requirements
2.2	The Development of Practical, Scientific/Research/ Creative/ Performance and Transferable Skills	Substantially complies with requirements
2.3	Teaching and Learning Methods	Complies with requirements
2.4	Student Evaluation	Complies with requirements
3.	Student Achievements and Individual Work with Them	Complies with requirements
3.1	Student Consulting and Support Services	Complies with requirements
3.2	Master's Student Supervision	N/A
4	Providing Teaching Resources	Complies with requirements

4.1	Human Resources	Complies with requirements
4.2	Qualification of Supervisors of Master's Student	N/A
4.3	Professional Development of Academic, Scientific and Invited Staff	Complies with requirements
4.4	Material Resources	Complies with requirements
4.5	Programme/Faculty/School Budget and Programme Financial Sustainability	Complies with requirements
5	5. Teaching Quality Enhancement Opportunities	Complies with requirements
5.1	Internal Quality Evaluation	Complies with requirements
5.2	External Quality Evaluation	Complies with requirements
5.3	Programme Monitoring and Periodic Review	Substantially complies with requirements

Guidelines and Standards (See link)

[Accreditation Standards for Higher Education Programmes](#)

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

[Suggestions on the evaluation of the methodology for determining the threshold number of student quotas on a higher education institution educational programme of a certified medical doctor](#)

[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

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

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

There are formulated three main programme objectives:

- (1) “To prepare a specialist equipped with interdisciplinary theoretical knowledge and practical skills necessary for professional activity in preschool education; possessing knowledge of child development characteristics in early and preschool age, relevant developmental theories, inclusive and child-rights-based approaches; and recognizing the importance of quality early childhood education and the promotion of holistic child development.”
- (2) “To ensure the preparation of a specialist who plans, implements, and evaluates a child-centered educational process; creates a safe and development-oriented environment; conducts observation and assessment of children’s progress; and collaborates effectively with parents, colleagues, and the wider community.”
- (3) “To prepare a Bachelor with a high level of civic responsibility who acts in accordance with the principles of multiculturalism, inclusion, and social justice; takes into account cultural and linguistic diversity and the legal framework in the process of protecting children’s rights; and conducts practice-based research for the purpose of professional development and improvement.” (SER, p. 7-8).

The objectives cover the professional profile of the graduate, emphasise interdisciplinary nature, the nexus of theory and practice, complexity of up-to-date approaches and the context in which preschool education takes place. Also, civic responsibility of the graduate is rightly pointed out. This can be confirmed that the programme objectives are clearly established, realistic and achievable.

Also, this can be confirmed that the programme objectives reflect well the specificity of preschool education field, the level and the educational programme.

The programme objectives in the formulations provided reflect what knowledge, skills and competences the programme intends to develop in graduate students, and as already mentioned, the contribution to the field and the society is also included in programme objectives.

The programme objectives can also be seen in line with the mission, objectives and strategy of the SSU, its Faculty of Education.

During the interviews it was proved that the programme is an attempt to respond to existing labour market needs and trends.

With regard to the involvement of international experts in the preparation of the programme, this can also be assumed that the programme reflects main issues of internationalization in preschool education.

The programme is submitted as new and it is not accredited yet, therefore the information about the programme objectives are not made largely public and accessible. However, they seem to be shared by those involved in the programme preparation, as shown during the interviews.

Evidences/Indicators

- Self-evaluation report
- Preschool Education programme
- Mission, objectives and strategy of the SSU
- Website of the SSU
- Interviews

Recommendations:

- None

Suggestions for the Programme Development

- None

Evaluation

Component	Evaluation
1.1 Programme Objectives	Complies with requirements

1.2 Programme Learning Outcomes

- The learning outcomes of the programme are logically related to the programme objectives and the specifics of the study field.
- Programme learning outcomes describe knowledge, skills, and/or the responsibility and autonomy that students gain upon completion of the programme.

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

Altogether, there are nine learning outcomes of the programme. Four of them relate to knowledge and understanding, three to skills, and two to responsibility of autonomy. This can be agreed that the learning outcomes of the programme are in correspondence with the objectives of the programme. They cover main knowledge, skills, and responsibility and autonomy envisaged by the content.

Also, the learning outcomes of the programme can be seen as clear, achievable and realistic. In their formulations, they are consistent with the bachelor level of qualification, field descriptors and the qualification to be awarded.

Also, they seem to be in line with sectoral benchmarks.

This can also be agreed that the learning outcomes of the program Preschool Education are in consistency with employment demands of programme graduates, and they also enable graduates to continue their education onto the next level of education.

The learning outcomes of the programme are also consistent with peculiarities of the field of preschool education and labour market needs.

During the interviews, it was proven that the process of developing learning outcomes was a collaborative one and it involved key stakeholders related to the programme. The stakeholders were informed about the learning outcomes.

Evidences/Indicators

- Self-evaluation report
- Preschool Education programme
- Interviews

Recommendations:

- None

Suggestions for the Programme Development

- None

Evaluation

Component	Evaluation
1.2 Programme Learning Outcomes	Complies with requirements

1.3 Evaluation Mechanism of the Programme Learning Outcomes

- Evaluation mechanisms of the programme learning outcomes are defined; the programme learning outcomes evaluation cycle consists of defining, collecting and 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 SSU has a practice of evaluating programme learning outcomes and this is assumed for the newly prepared program Preschool Education, too. The plan for evaluation of the learning outcomes includes a description of learning outcomes. The list of learning courses that lead to three levels of learning outcomes (Introduction, Practice, Mastering) contains 14 courses (subjects) and they can be seen as a kind of a curriculum map. The courses (subjects) include theoretical subjects, practice in kindergartens, and bachelor thesis.

Timing and periodicity of evaluation of learning outcomes are also a part of the process, mainly with an annual frequency.

The SSU has a set of methods for evaluation of learning outcomes of the programmes, both direct and indirect. However, this needs to be stated there are some areas for improvement in this case. As also mentioned in the 4.5 of this report, the use of clearly defined and measurable indicators and criterion-based methods for evaluation of programme learning outcomes should be strengthened here.

Evaluation of learning outcomes is also connected with possible improvement steps, and these can include re-use of benchmark analysis, in case of need.

The engagement of external stakeholders in evaluation of learning outcomes was indicated to some extent in the documentation of the SSU and in the interviews.

The staff related to the programme is expected to get assistance in the development of skills necessary for elaboration, measurement and analysis of learning outcomes. As it appears now, the staff do not always possess sufficient information on how the course level outcomes are contributing to the achievement of the programme-level learning outcomes.

The SSU plans to ensure familiarization of stakeholders with the analysis of evaluation of learning outcomes. So far, the program staff have shown limited involvement in the systematic alignment and evaluation of the learning outcomes process, which may reduce consistency in understanding how course-level learning outcomes support broader program-level competencies.

Evidences/Indicators

- Self-evaluation report
- Preschool Education programme
- Mechanism for Evaluating Learning Outcomes of Programmes
- Interviews

Recommendations:

- It is recommended to ensure that the staff gets sufficient information on how the course level outcomes are contributing to the achievement of the programme level learning outcomes
- It is recommended to ensure that the staff is sufficiently involved in the systematic alignment and evaluation of the learning outcomes process.

Suggestions for the Programme Development

- None

Evaluation

Component	Evaluation
1.3 Evaluation Mechanism of the Programme Learning Outcomes	Substantially complies with requirements

1.4. Structure and Content of Education Programme

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

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

The Bachelor's Degree Programme in Preschool Education at Sokhumi State University (SSU) was designed in accordance with the institution's established methodology for planning, designing, and developing educational programmes. The SSU methodology prescribes a clearly defined procedural chain: the programme is developed by academic staff, reviewed by the Faculty Quality Assurance Service, validated by the University Quality Assurance Service, discussed at the Faculty Council, and finally approved by the Academic Council. The current programme was approved by the Academic Council on 13 February 2026 (Resolution No. 05/01-342), confirming compliance with institutional procedures.

The programme is 195 ECTS credits in volume and is structured over six semesters. It comprises three principal components: (I) a Faculty Module of 39 ECTS credits covering general and transferable competencies, including English language, the state language, and digital literacy; (II) Compulsory and Elective Specialisation Courses totalling 126 ECTS credits; and (III) a Field-Specific Practical Skills and Competencies Module of 30 ECTS credits, which includes Action Research (3 ECTS), four sequential Pedagogical Practice placements in kindergarten settings (21 ECTS), and a Bachelor's Thesis (6 ECTS). The structure is logically

sequenced, with clear prerequisite requirements between courses, and the semester load is proportionally distributed — 30 ECTS per standard semester, with higher loads of 36 ECTS in the 4th and 5th semesters reflecting the intensification of specialisation and practice.

The programme content is well-aligned with its three stated objectives and nine programme learning outcomes spanning knowledge and understanding, skills, and responsibility and autonomy. The mapping of course learning outcomes to programme learning outcomes (Annex 3) demonstrates a systematic progression from introduction (I) through practice (P) to mastery (M) across the curriculum. Core disciplinary courses (e.g., Foundations of Preschool Pedagogy, Theories of Development and Learning, Early Inclusive Education, Child Development) provide the theoretical foundation in early semesters, while the later semesters build applied and research competencies. The awarded qualification — Bachelor of Preschool Education (NQF Level VI) — is consistent with the programme content and learning outcomes.

A substantive gap has been identified in relation to the practical component of the programme. *The Subject Benchmark Statement of Preschool Education (2024)* explicitly states that the practice/internship component of preschool education higher education programmes must constitute **a minimum of 40 ECTS credits**. The current programme allocates **30 ECTS credits** to the Practice and Practice Research Module (comprising Action Research — 3 ECTS; Pedagogical Practice I–IV — 21 ECTS; and Bachelor's Thesis — 6 ECTS), which falls short of the benchmark requirement by **10 ECTS credits**.

During the site visit, the programme management acknowledged this discrepancy but argued that the sectoral benchmark was originally drafted in the context of a 240 ECTS bachelor's programme, and that Georgia's higher education system is currently undergoing reform — with bachelor's programmes now operating at 180 or 195 ECTS — rendering proportional application of the 40 ECTS threshold debatable. While this contextual argument has some merit, it does not constitute a formal basis for non-compliance, as the Benchmark document remains a legally binding regulatory instrument and contains no explicit provision adjusting the practical credit requirement for programmes with a reduced total volume.

The programme should address this gap explicitly and formally. The institution is advised to either: (a) increase the practical component to at least 40 ECTS credits through restructuring of the programme, or (b) to initiate a formal dialogue with the relevant national body regarding the interpretation and applicability of the Benchmark requirement in the context of programmes operating under a reduced total credit volume. In the interim, the accreditation panel should document this non-compliance as a condition requiring remediation, while acknowledging the programme management's awareness of the issue and the broader reform context as a mitigating factor.

Evidences/Indicators

- Educational programme and syllabi
- Market research
- Internal and external evaluations
- HEI regulations
- Interview results

Recommendations:

- It is recommended to formally address the shortfall in the practical component by either restructuring the programme to meet the 40 ECTS minimum established by *The Subject Benchmark Statement of Preschool Education*, or by seeking an official clarification from the relevant national authority regarding the applicability of this requirement to programmes with a reduced total credit volume. Pending resolution, this gap should be treated as a condition for remediation.

Suggestions for the Programme Development

- None

Evaluation

Component	Evaluation

**1.4 Structure and
Content of Educational
Programme**

Substantially complies with
requirements

1.5. Academic Course/Subject

- The content of the academic course / subject and the number of credits ensure the achievement of the learning outcomes defined by this course / subject.
 - The content and the learning outcomes of the academic course/subject of the main field of study ensure the achievement of the learning outcomes of the programme.
 - The study materials indicated in the syllabus ensure the achievement of the learning outcomes of the programme.
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Summary and Analysis of the Education Programme's Compliance with the Requirements of the Component of the Standard

The programme is organized into three main structural blocks. Each ECTS credit corresponds to 25 hours of student workload, distributed between contact hours (lectures, seminars, practicum) and independent study. Standard courses carry 3 or 6 ECTS credits, with contact hours of 35 or 65 respectively, and independent study hours of 40 or 85 respectively. This ratio is consistent across the curriculum and is appropriate for Level VI programmes.

The practice module accounts for 30 ECTS, comprising four stages of Pedagogical Practice in Kindergarten (3, 6, 6, and 6 ECTS in semesters 3–6), Action Research (3 ECTS), and the Bachelor's Thesis (6 ECTS).

An examination of the course list reveals that credit allocations are broadly proportionate to the complexity and scope of each course's learning outcomes. Foundation and integrative courses (e.g., Foundations of Preschool Pedagogy – 6 ECTS; Theories of Development and Learning – 6 ECTS; Literacy, Thinking, and Communication in Early Education – 6 ECTS; Sociology of Education – 6 ECTS) are appropriately weighted to support in-depth theoretical engagement.

Focused, application-oriented courses (e.g., Methods of Teaching Drawing – 3 ECTS; First Aid – 3 ECTS; Early Childhood Education Curriculum – 3 ECTS) carry 3 ECTS, which is consistent with their narrower, skill-focused scope. The practice progression from Pedagogical Practice

I (3 ECTS) to Practices II, III, and IV (6 ECTS each) mirrors a well-designed scaffolding approach from orientation to mastery, corresponding to the $I \rightarrow P \rightarrow M$ levels reflected in the course-outcome mapping.

The programme's prerequisite chain is generally well-constructed. The foundational course Foundations of Preschool Pedagogy (EDUC PE BA 005) serves as the primary gateway for the majority of specialization courses, while Theories of Development and Learning (EDUC PE BA 007) acts as a second-tier prerequisite for several methodological and applied courses. This creates a coherent two-tier foundation.

Academic Writing for the Bachelor's Programme (EDUC PE BA 026) in Semester 1 appropriately precedes Research Methods in Education (EDUC PE BA 027) in Semester 5, which in turn is prerequisite to Action Research in Early Childhood Education (EDUC PE BA 045) in Semester 6. This chain ensures that research competencies are developed progressively before the culminating thesis work.

The mapping of all courses against the nine program learning outcomes using a three-level progression notation: Introduction (I), Practice (P), and Mastery (M) is provided which demonstrates satisfactory breadth of coverage across all nine learning outcomes.

The elective course module (36 ECTS) broadens and deepens coverage of specific outcomes: for example, Children's Rights in Preschool Education strengthens LO4 and LO8; Leadership and Management in Early Childhood Education deepens LO7; and Language, Speech, and Communication in Early Childhood consolidates LO4. This architecture gives students meaningful choice while maintaining program coherence. The institutional infrastructure for supporting student access to study materials is well-developed.

The identified gap concerns the credit and content structure of the English Language courses within the Faculty Free Components Module. The two-track design — Track I for students who passed a language other than English in the Unified National Examinations, and Track II for students who passed English — is a legitimate differentiation based on documented prior learning and raises no concern. The issue lies within each track individually.

In both tracks, each semester-length course spans two distinct CEFR proficiency levels within a single 6 ECTS unit (Track I: A1/A2, A2/B1, B1/B2; Track II: B1+, B2.1/B2.2). This is significant because consecutive CEFR levels are not gradations of a single competency stage but independently defined benchmarks with discrete descriptors across all four language skills. A course claiming level progression of this scope within one semester carries a substantive pedagogical burden of proof.

Combined-level language instruction is not categorically impermissible; intensive, well-resourced programmes operating under recognized frameworks do achieve this. However, three conditions must be demonstrably met: (1) the allocated workload — 65 contact hours and 85 independent study hours — must be sufficient for a student entering at the lower level to reach the upper level by course completion; (2) learning outcomes and assessment criteria must address both levels explicitly, enabling verification of the full progression rather than performance at a single mid-point; and (3) the instructional design must document how the within-course level transition is managed, including attainment thresholds, pacing, and the response to within-cohort variation.

When queried by the accreditation panel, the course coordinator explained that combining two CEFR levels within one course supports more effective language learning. This intention is understood and appreciated; however, for accreditation purposes, a course design that directly affects whether students can achieve the stated learning outcomes needs to be supported by more than a general pedagogical rationale. Specifically, it is expected to reference established research in second language acquisition, relevant CEFR guidance, or evidence from the program's own student outcomes. The panel encourages to formalize and document this justification accordingly.

Evidences/Indicators

- Educational programme
- Syllabi
- Interview results

Recommendations:

- It is recommended to revise the syllabi of all English Language courses that span two CEFR levels within a single semester, demonstrating through explicit learning outcomes, assessment criteria, and instructional design documentation that the allocated workload is sufficient for the full intended level progression, and that this design is grounded in established second language acquisition research or CEFR implementation guidance.

Suggestions for the Programme Development

- None

Evaluation

Component	Evaluation
1.5. Academic Course/Subject	Substantially complies with requirements

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

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

2.1 Programme Admission Preconditions

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

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

The Bachelor's Programme in Preschool Education at Sokhumi State University (SSU) has a long institutional history dating to 1932, when preschool education was one of the inaugural programmes at the Pedagogical University in Sokhumi. The programme was most recently approved by the Academic Council under Resolution No. 05/01-342 (13 February 2026) and comprises 180 ECTS credits across 6 semesters.

The programme is delivered by a substantive team of academic and invited staff across three curricular modules: the Faculty Component, the Specialization Compulsory and Elective module, and the Practice and Research module. Three programme coordinators bear responsibility for overall academic oversight and the alignment of staff with the programme's nine defined learning outcomes.

The documentation review confirms that the admission prerequisites for the Early Childhood Education bachelor's programme are fully consistent with the programme's content, the bachelor's level, and the awarded qualification - Bachelor of Early Childhood Education — which is mapped to Level VI of Georgia's National Qualifications Framework (NQF). This alignment is not merely formal: the prerequisite structure reflects a coherent progression logic appropriate to a programme preparing specialist practitioners in a regulated professional field.

Admission is conducted exclusively through the national Unified National Examinations (UNE), in full compliance with current Georgian legislation. This mechanism ensures that selection is objective, nationally standardised, and immune to institutional discretion at the point of entry. The interview panel findings complement and extend the documentary picture. The panel confirmed that the annual student intake operates within a state-defined quota of 20–30 students. All prerequisites, criteria, and procedures are publicly available on the university's official website, satisfying the transparency requirements of the accreditation standard.

The programme documentation (Annex 4 – Academic and Invited Staff by Courses) demonstrates a clear, deliberate alignment between the academic qualifications of each staff member and the subject matter of the courses they deliver.

The programme defines nine learning outcomes across three domains: Knowledge and Understanding (LO1–LO4), Skills (LO5–LO7), and Responsibility and Autonomy (LO8–LO9). Annex 3 of the programme document maps each course to these outcomes using a three-level

progression schema (Introduction, Practice, Mastering). The analysis of the provided documentation confirms that staff qualifications are aligned with the outcomes they are responsible for developing.

The programme benefits from the active international engagement of its staff. Academic personnel have participated in Erasmus+, Tempus, UNICEF, and USAID-funded projects, attended international conferences, and undertaken research. Staff CVs and individual workload documents confirm current academic activity. The programme's digital learning tools course was developed within the EU DITECH project framework; a peace education elective was developed within the EU PeaceEdu project. This ensures the programme remains current with European developments in early childhood education.

Evidences/Indicators

- Educational programme
- Self- evaluation report
- External assessment findings
- Student body planning methodology
- SSU website
- Interview results

Recommendations:

- None

Suggestions for the Programme Development

- None

Evaluation

Component	Evaluation
2.1 Programme Admission Preconditions	Complies with requirements

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

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

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

The programme's Annex 3 - the Mapping of Course Learning Outcomes and Programme Learning Outcomes - traces the progression of each of the nine PLOs from Introduction to Practice to Mastery across the full course of the programme. This document demonstrates that practical skills (LO5, LO6, LO9) are introduced in the first and second semesters, deepened through the practice-oriented compulsory courses in Semesters 3-5, and assessed at Mastery level in Practice IV and the Bachelor's Thesis in Semester 6. Research skills (LO7, LO9) follow a similar arc, from Academic Writing in Semester 1, through Research Methods and Action Research in Semesters 5-6, to their synthesis in the Thesis. Creative skills (LO5, LO6) are introduced through the specialist creative courses in the first four semesters and practised through the design and delivery of creative activities during Practicum III and IV. Transferable skills (LO2, LO7, LO8, LO9) are distributed across almost every course in the programme - from the language courses that develop communicative competence to the sociology, ethics, and policy courses that develop professional and civic values.

The most substantial and structurally central component of the programme's approach to Standard 2.2 is its Practice Module, which carries 30 ECTS credits — more than 15 per cent of the total programme volume — and spans all six semesters. This is not incidental fieldwork appended to theoretical study; it is a progressively structured professional formation pathway that constitutes the primary mechanism through which students develop and demonstrate practical competency in real early childhood education settings.

The interviews provided important operational details on how the practical component functions in practice. A central development, confirmed by the panel, was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Kindergarten Agency on 5 May 2024. This MoU

formally establishes that all kindergartens affiliated with the Agency are available as placement sites for SSU students and as venues for the professional retraining of existing staff.

The panel also noted that day-to-day links with kindergartens are maintained through direct personal relationships between academic staff and kindergarten practitioners - an informal channel that complements the formal MoU and reflects a professional community of practice around the programme.

Even though the programme has signed memoranda with partner kindergartens, individual memoranda with partner kindergartens do not consistently specify student numbers, practice objectives, learning outcomes, and duration of placement. Consequently, the memoranda do not fully meet the requirements of sub-standard 2.2 evaluation criteria to fully ensure the achievement of the programme's learning outcomes.

On the research dimension, the submitted documents and panel discussion confirmed that students are actively participating in the Peace-Edu international educational research project, providing a real-world research context beyond the classroom. A national and international co-presentation conference is held twice per academic year, giving students structured opportunities to communicate their research findings to broader audiences - an important element of transferable skills development. The 2025–2026 collection of student-authored articles published on the mastsavlebeli.ge portal provides additional, internationally credible evidence of research engagement that extends beyond the institutional environment and contributes to the national professional discourse.

Evidences/Indicators

- Educational programme
- Self- evaluation report
- External assessment findings
- Interview results

Recommendations:

- It is recommended to renew and standardise memoranda with all individual partner kindergartens to specify a number of students placed, practice objectives, expected outcomes, and duration. Introduce a standard template for all memoranda.

Suggestions for the Programme Development

- None

Evaluation

Component	Evaluation
2.2. The Development of practical, scientific/research/creative/performing and transferable skills	Substantially complies with requirements

2.3. Teaching and Learning Methods

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

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

Teaching and Learning: SSU's Teaching and Learning Process Regulation provides a robust and detailed framework for student-centred teaching. The Faculty actively implements Universal Design for Learning, offers diverse and flexible teaching forms, provides individualised study plans for students with special needs, and equips students and staff with contemporary digital tools through the 2026 AI Usage Guide.

The assessment system is transparent, coherent, and aligned with learning outcomes. It applies a 100-point grading scale with clearly defined positive and negative thresholds, mandatory minimum competence requirements for each assessment form, standardised examination, a structured appeals procedure, and an Anti-Plagiarism Policy. The research component (master's and doctoral) is assessed through a holistic defence procedure with multiple evaluators.

The methodological list documented in syllabuses includes:

- Problem-Based Learning (PBL) — developing analytical and solution-oriented competencies
- Case Study analysis — contextualising knowledge in realistic professional scenarios
- Role-play and simulation — enabling safe rehearsal of professional interactions with young children
- Group work and discussion — cultivating collaborative and communicative competencies
- Project-Based Learning — integrating knowledge and skill in sustained, goal-directed activity
- Portfolio method — building reflective self-documentation and evidence of professional growth
- Reflective assignments — systematically developing the practitioner's reflective capacity
- Action research — integrating enquiry and practice in real professional settings

This methodological profile is particularly well suited to the early childhood education discipline. The discipline demands practitioners who are simultaneously knowledgeable about child development theory, technically skilled in pedagogical practice, reflective about their own teaching, responsive to individual children's needs, and capable of working inclusively across diverse groups. The methods listed above collectively address all of these demands. Of particular note is the emphasis on simulation and role play: these allow students to rehearse professional situations with young children - including challenging scenarios - in a safe, supervised environment where mistakes are learning opportunities rather than consequences for real children.

The panel discussion significantly enriched the documentary picture of teaching and learning methods, adding operational and contextual depth. The panel confirmed that the teaching structure is organised according to the programme's disciplinary profile, which pre-determines the balance between theoretical and practical elements across courses - a design principle that ensures methodological coherence rather than leaving the theory-practice balance to individual lecturer discretion.

A notable strength confirmed by the panel is the integration of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles into the programme's pedagogical approach. UDL is not treated as an add-on or a compliance requirement: it is embedded in course delivery, and the inclusive education course is delivered by a specialist who has participated in a dedicated research project in this area. Academic staff have undergone UNICEF-supported training in inclusive and early childhood practices and have direct personal experience of working in kindergarten environments. This combination of formal training, specialist knowledge, and contextual experience places the programme in a strong position to model inclusive practice credibly.

On digital infrastructure, the panel confirmed that the programme uses the Stadla Learning Management System (LMS) and an electronic examination platform. Lecturers employ digital individual feedback, peer assessment, and real-time commentary through multiple platforms - practices that reflect active rather than passive use of digital tools. For students with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, teaching materials are translated into simplified Georgian, and two individual consultation hours per week are made available. These provisions demonstrate institutional awareness of the linguistic diversity of the student body - a particular consideration in the Georgian educational context. .

Evidences/Indicators

- Educational programme
- Teaching - learning methods
- Documentation for Individual plans
- Electronic resources utilized to implement the programme in the HEI
- Interview results

Recommendations:

- None

Suggestions for the Programme Development

- None

Evaluation

Component	Evaluation
2.3. Teaching and learning methods	Complies with requirements

2.4. Student Evaluation

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

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

Student evaluation at Sokhumi State University is carried out in accordance with clearly defined and consistently applied procedures, ensuring that all students are assessed under equal conditions. It fully complies with all relevant laws, regulations, and institutional policies, upholding academic integrity and accountability throughout the assessment process. Evaluation components, methods, and criteria are transparent, accessible, and known in advance to the student.

At Sokhumi State University, the achievement of learning outcomes within educational programmes is evaluated in accordance with Georgia's national higher education credit system. The assessment of student performance at the university consists of two main components: intermediate and final evaluations, with a maximum score of 100 points. The structure and methods of assessment are determined by the course lecturer (syllabus author), who selects appropriate forms of evaluation based on the specific nature of the subject. By decision of the Faculty Board of Educational Sciences, the minimum competency threshold for the cumulative midterm assessments is 11 points (15 points in specific cases), while the minimum threshold for the final assessment/examination is 50% of the final assessment (20 points).

Sokhumi State University communicates information about its academic programmes — including their structure, content, teaching approaches, and evaluation methods — through various channels. These include programme descriptions and catalogs, course syllabi available in the electronic learning management system (Studlab), as well as consultations with administration and academic staff. Since this programme is new, the information was confirmed by students from other programmes.

Students are also given the right to appeal the evaluation of their learning. The relevant procedures are explicitly detailed in the regulation governing the learning process. Student

awareness of these rules is ensured through the public availability of information and dedicated informational meetings. The students confirmed this information and expressed their satisfaction.

Students receive regular, constructive feedback on their learning, enabling them to clearly understand their academic progress and level of achievement. This feedback not only reflects their performance against established criteria but also supports their ongoing development by identifying individual strengths and areas that require further improvement. Students confirmed the availability and usefulness of this feedback and expressed a high level of satisfaction with both the process and its impact on their learning and development.

Evidences/Indicators

- Self-evaluation report
- Electronic student assessment system (Studlab)
- Educational programmes, syllabi
- Regulation on the learning process provision
- Interview results

Recommendations:

- None

Suggestions for the Programme Development

- None

Evaluation

Component	Evaluation
2.4. Student evaluation	Complies with requirements

3. Student Achievements, Individual Work with Them

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

3.1 Student Consulting and Support Services

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

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

The university fosters a student-centered learning environment for prospective Bachelor of Preschool Education students by providing comprehensive academic and support services. In accordance with internal regulations, students are offered guidance in academic planning, enhancement of academic performance, career development, and employment opportunities. These services are designed to support students' educational progression and professional integration.

To further support educational planning and academic success, students at the Sokhumi State University receive comprehensive guidance and support from multiple institutional structures, including faculty administration, academic personnel, and invited staff members. To facilitate academic development, the university utilizes an electronic learning management system that allows students to regularly track their academic performance, accumulated credits, and administrative activities.

To strengthen and improve student support services, the university systematically conducts student surveys to gather feedback on various aspects of the overall student experience. The analysis of this feedback enables the institution to identify its strengths and determine areas requiring further development, thereby ensuring that student needs are effectively addressed.

During interviews, both current students from other programmes and alumni highlighted the importance of these surveys, emphasizing that their participation in the feedback process has led to noticeable improvements in student services over time. The insights gained through this process allow the university to better align its support mechanisms with student expectations and to continuously adapt to their evolving needs.

Evidences/Indicators

- Regulatory documents
- Web-page
- Interview results
- Self-evaluation report

Recommendations:

- None

Suggestions for the Programme Development

- None

Evaluation

Component	Evaluation
3.1 Student Consulting and Support Services	Complies with requirements

3.2. Master's Student Supervision

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

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

Data related to the supervision of master's students	
Number of master theses supervisors	
Number of master's students	
Ratio - supervisors of master's theses/master's students	

Evidences/Indicators

- Component evidences/indicators, including the relevant documents and interview results

Recommendations:

- Proposal (s), which should be considered by the HEI, the programme to meet the requirements of the standard

Suggestions for the Programme Development

- Non-binding suggestions for programme development

Evaluation

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

Component	Evaluation
3.2. Master's Students Supervision	Select Appropriate

4. Providing Teaching Resources

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

4.1 Human Resources

- Programme staff consists of qualified persons, 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.

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

The programme is implemented by a total of 29 personnel, comprising 20 academic staff and 9 invited staff, all of whom possess qualifications and experience corresponding to the competences required for achieving the programme's defined learning outcomes. The programme is interdisciplinary in nature, drawing on expertise across education sciences, pre-school education, psychology, physiology, humanities, and natural sciences.

Of the 29 staff involved, 29 demonstrate sectoral expertise, while 9 hold a doctoral (PhD) degree in the sectoral direction. Within the academic body, the rank distribution is as follows: 4 affiliated professors, 13 affiliated associate professors, 2 affiliated assistant-professors, and 1 affiliated assistant, supplemented by 9 invited lecturers. Among the invited staff, 5 hold doctoral degrees in relevant fields, while the remaining 4 are recognised subject-area specialists bringing practitioner competences in pre-school pedagogy, fine arts, physical education, and English language instruction. All 20 academic staff members hold affiliated status, and no international staff are currently engaged in the programme.

It is noted that among the 4 professors and 14 associate professors, only 4 associate professors hold a doctoral degree in the sectoral direction, while none of the professors currently holds such a degree, which represents an area identified for further development. It is therefore advisable that the institution prioritises, as a medium-term strategic objective, the engagement of at least one professor holding a doctoral (PhD) degree in the field of education or pre-school education within the programme.

The University applies a formally approved workload allocation rule consistent with Georgian legislation. Individual workload schemes, updated each semester and approved by the SSU Academic Council, encompass teaching, research, and other institutional duties. Where staff hold concurrent positions at other institutions, these are incorporated into the scheme, ensuring full transparency. Student consultation hours are explicitly included in each staff member's workload scheme. The annual intake of 30 students served by 29 programme staff

is considered adequate. The high proportion of affiliated academic staff ensures institutional continuity and a stable research orientation, while invited lecturers complement the programme with field-specific expertise. Staff turnover is monitored through internal quality assurance processes.

The scientific-research component of staff workload is supported through an annual reporting mechanism administered by the Department of Scientific Research and Development, with outputs externally evaluated by the Georgian National Academy of Sciences. During the current accreditation period, research outputs of staff involved in Faculty of Education Sciences programmes have consistently received the highest expert evaluations.

The programme is led by three academic staff members. *Prof. Lia Akhaladze* (Affiliated Professor, Doctor of History) has served as Head of the SSU Quality Assurance Service, Dean of the Faculty of Education Sciences (2008–2020), and currently heads the Department of Scientific Research and Development and leads the EU Erasmus+ project PeaceEdu. She is the author of over 100 scientific publications, serves on the editorial board of an internationally indexed journal, and participated in all major preschool education training programmes conducted in Georgia between 2016 and 2020. She teaches and authored the course "Diverse, Multiethnic and Multicultural Georgia." *Prof. Tamar Shinjiashvili* (Dean, Faculty of Education Sciences) has led the faculty's educational and research processes since 2020, serving as Financial and Administrative Manager for four EU Erasmus+ projects and the USAID Basic Education Programme. She established the SSU Children's Rights Centre, which forms the institutional foundation of the Preschool Education programme, and is the author of approximately 80 scientific works. She is also directly involved in the instructional process. *Dr. Lali Akhaladze* (Invited Lecturer, Doctor of Biology — Physiology; Associate Professor, Georgian Sports University) contributes specialist expertise in child physiology and development, with research focused on psychogenic stress in children and physiological aspects of learning. She participated in the EU Erasmus+ project DARE and UNICEF educational projects at SSU, and developed several programme courses including "Child Physiology with Hygiene," "Characteristics of Child Development and Learning in Early Education," and "Interaction with Children with Special Needs."

Together, the three programme leaders demonstrate sustained personal involvement in programme design, course development, and delivery. The programme is administered within the Faculty of Education Sciences through a team comprising the Dean, Deputy Dean, Faculty Quality Assurance Service, Educational Process Management Service, and Student Registry Management staff. This structure is further supported by central university services, including the Quality Assurance Service, the Department of Scientific Research and Development, and the Horizon Europe Grant Office. This multi-level framework ensures students have adequate institutional support across academic, registry, and quality assurance functions.

While the current staffing composition reflects a broadly qualified and experienced team, the proportion of staff holding doctoral (PhD) degrees specifically in the sectoral direction warrants attention. Given the academic level and disciplinary scope of the programme, it would be advisable to gradually increase the number of staff, particularly among academic ranks, who hold doctoral qualifications directly aligned with the field of education and pre-school education. This would strengthen the programme's scholarly foundations, enhance the research-informed delivery of teaching, and ensure closer alignment with the qualification benchmarks expected under accreditation standards. Accordingly, the institution is encouraged to treat the expansion of doctorally qualified staff in the sectoral direction as a prioritised objective within its human resources development strategy.

Number of the staff involved in the programme (including academic, scientific, and invited staff)	Number of Programme Staff	Including the staff with sectoral expertise⁵	Including the staff holding PhD degree in the sectoral direction⁶	Among them, the affiliated staff
Total number of academic staff	29	29	9	20
- Professor	4	4	0	4
- Associate Professor	14	10	4	13
- Assistant-Professor	2	2	2	2
- Assistant	1	1	0	1
Visiting Staff	9	4	5	0

⁵ Staff implementing the relevant components of the main field of study

⁶ Staff with relevant doctoral degrees implementing the components of the main field of study

Scientific Staff	0	0	0	0
Including International Stuff	0	0	0	0

Evidences/Indicators

- Educational Programme documentation
- Personal files and CVs of academic and invited staff
- SSU Academic Council workload approval documents
- SSU Affiliation Rule and affiliation agreements
- Academic staff competition materials
- Annual scientific reports of the Faculty of Education Sciences
- Quantitative indicators (Annex 1)
- SSU Website (www.sou.edu.ge)

Recommendations:

- None

Suggestions for the Programme Development

- It is suggested to treat the expansion of doctorally qualified staff in the sectoral direction as a prioritised objective within its human resources development strategy.

Evaluation

Component	Evaluation
4.1 Human Resources	Complies with requirements

4.2 Qualification of Supervisors of Master's Students

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

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

Describe, analyse and evaluate the compliance of the education programme with the requirements of the component of the standard, based on the information collected through the self-evaluation report (SER), the enclosed documents and site-visit.

Evidences/Indicators

- Component evidences/indicators, including the relevant documents and interview results

Recommendations:

- Proposal (s), which should be considered by the HEI, the programme to meet the requirements of the standard

Suggestions for the Programme Development

- Non-binding suggestions for programme development

Evaluation

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

Component	Evaluation
4.2 Qualification of Supervisors of Master's Students	Select Appropriate

4.3 Professional Development of Academic, Scientific and Invited Staff

- 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

SSU demonstrates a systematic, institutionally supported approach to staff professional development, consistent with the requirements of Standard 4.3.

The SSU Quality Assurance Service and the Faculty of Education Sciences QA Service conduct regular evaluations covering teaching effectiveness and research activity. Student evaluations are carried out anonymously at the end of each semester, with results communicated transparently and applied to improving the teaching-learning process. Annual staff activity reports are submitted to the Department of Scientific Research and Development and forwarded for external evaluation to the Georgian National Academy of Sciences, whose field specialists assess research outputs using domain-appropriate structured questionnaires. The evaluations are returned to staff and used to address identified gaps. Notably, research outputs of staff involved in the Preschool Education programme have consistently received the highest evaluations from the Academy throughout the current accreditation period. Staff satisfaction surveys are also conducted as part of the internal QA cycle.

The 2026 SSU budget includes specific allocations for training, workshops, and conference participation. The University statute grants academic staff the right to a six-month paid scientific leave (sabbatical), exercisable once every five years, with budget allocations in place. However, during the site visit interview it became apparent that staff are insufficiently aware of this entitlement — questions about the mechanism were interpreted as relating to practical absence logistics rather than a formally established right. Since the sustainability of this provision depends on staff initiative, it is advisable that the University take measures to raise awareness of the sabbatical entitlement and the procedures for exercising it.

Since 2022, SSU has maintained a Horizon Europe Grant Office supporting staff engagement with international funding opportunities, including grant identification, portal registration, and application development.

The Department of Scientific Research and Development coordinates and monitors research outputs. SSU's scientific publications have been registered with the DOI international open digital repository, enhancing their international visibility and citability. Staff are supported financially for publications, conference participation, and project engagement.

The Faculty of Education Sciences holds an annual national scientific-practical conference on international educational projects and contemporary educational paradigms, held nine times to date and on several occasions involving international participants. The Faculty has also hosted major international events, including the International Scientific Conference on Inclusive Education (November 2017, ten countries). Staff participate annually in SSU's International Science Day. Academic staff involved in the Preschool Education programme have presented at international conferences within Georgia and abroad, contributed to peer-reviewed journals and monograph series, and participated in numerous international educational and scientific projects that have directly shaped the programme's content, pedagogy, and assessment approaches.

Evidences/Indicators

- Self-evaluation report
- Interview results
- Academic and invited staff CVs
- Scholarly outputs of programme staff, including peer-reviewed articles, monographs, and evidence of participation in national and international conferences
- Research performance data and external evaluations of academic personnel
- Records of scientific conferences available on the university website: <https://www.sou.edu.ge/content/3/11/147/86/15>
- Documentation of International Science Day conferences available on the university website: <https://www.sou.edu.ge/content/3/11/147/86/50>

Recommendations:

- None

Suggestions for the Programme Development

- It is suggested to take measures ensuring that academic staff are adequately informed of their statutory entitlement to paid scientific leave (sabbatical) and the procedures for exercising it.

Evaluation

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

Complies with requirements

4.4. Material Resources

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

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

Physical infrastructure: The programme operates from modern, purpose-equipped lecture rooms aligned with the requirements of child-centred pedagogy instruction. The university is comprehensively equipped with information and communication technologies. Both buildings have internet access. Available equipment includes computers, projectors, photocopiers, printers, and scanners. Reading rooms, interactive classrooms — are available to both students and academic staff in both university buildings. The library operates dedicated reading rooms, with computer access for students and a separate workstation area for academic staff. However, a dedicated early childhood education simulation laboratory - equipped with age-appropriate toys, didactic materials, children's literature, and musical instruments - does not yet exist.

Information and digital resources: Students and academic staff have access to an electronic library providing digital resource collections. The programme provides access to international academic databases including SCOPUS, enabling both students and staff to engage with cutting-edge international scholarship in early childhood education. Core syllabus literature is accessible through library holdings. Library staff hold relevant competences, actively participate in professional training, and conduct student awareness sessions and consultations. However, remote access to electronic databases (SCOPUS, Thomson Reuters, EverGreen) from outside of university premises has not always been confirmed as available or enabled.

Practical component resources: For the Early Childhood Education programme, the partner kindergarten network is in many respects the most important material resource, because it is

the environment in which the programme's most distinctive competencies are actually developed. Students' access to real professional settings in which to conduct their 24 ECTS of staged practice and 6 ECTS of action research is both an infrastructural and a pedagogical resource of the first order.

International project resources: The programme's integration into Erasmus+, UNICEF, DITECH, and PeaceEdu projects provides access to additional resources — including digital tools, methodological frameworks, and international networks — that extend the programme's resource base beyond what institutional funding alone could provide.

The interviews confirmed the physical and digital resource base described in the documentation review and added contextual detail on how resources are used in practice. Panel participants confirmed that the Stadla LMS and digital examination platform are actively in use as part of everyday teaching, not merely available in principle. The partner kindergarten network, anchored by the May 2024 MoU with the Kindergarten Agency, was highlighted by all panel participants as the programme's most significant practical resource.

Evidences/Indicators

- Self-evaluation report
- Infrastructure inspection results
- Interview results
- Access to international electronic library databases
- Book collection in the library

Recommendations:

- None

Suggestions for the Programme Development

- It is recommended to make electronic databases (e.g. SCOPUS, Thomson Reuters, and EverGreen) well accessible for external use to ensure equal access for all students and staff.

Evaluation

Component	Evaluation
4.4 Material Resources	complies with requirements

4.5 Programme/Faculty/School Budget and Programme Financial Sustainability

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

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

The university's funding sources include tuition fees, educational and research grants from national and international funds, state funding and other income generated through permitted economic activities.

The total budget estimated for the Preschool Education bachelor's degree programme is 146,318 GEL. The costs included in the programme budget include the direct and indirect expenses – improvement of learning resources, funds for staff development activities, funding of student activities, salaries (academic, administrative, invited), staff incentive funds, scholarships and benefits for students, costs for internal and external evaluation, etc.

The programme budget includes financial support for students to participate in scientific conferences and various research activities. The budget analysis shows that proportion of budget is allocated for student's research activities (3000 GEL) and extracurricular activities (3000 GEL), as well as Expenses related to staff training, retraining, qualification improvement and internships (6000 GEL), business trips inside the country (2000 GEL), and expenses for purchasing equipment, normative acts, special literature, magazines and periodicals (4500 GEL).

Allocating the financial resources provided for in the budget for the programme is economically achievable and ensures the sustainability of the program to a large extent. The budget includes sources of financial support for the program, both periodic and one-time. The institutional reports indicate that the overall volume of income from these sources has been increasing annually. In addition, the institution expresses readiness to support newly introduced educational programmes through the consolidated university budget, which demonstrates financial capacity for program implementation and sustainability.

Evidences/Indicators

- Self-evaluation report
- Programme budget
- Interview results

Recommendations:

- None

Suggestions for the Programme Development

- None

Evaluation

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

5. Teaching Quality Enhancement Opportunities

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

5.1 Internal Quality Evaluation

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

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

The internal quality assurance processes on the programme level at Sokhumi State University are organized in accordance with the Methodology of Planning, Elaboration and Development

Methodology and Mechanism for Evaluation of Teaching Quality Development. The quality assurance statute centralizes principles of continuous improvement, transparency, accountability and cooperation in the quality assurance processes. Therefore, internal quality assurance includes systemic surveys and evaluations of curricula, services, and resources. QA Office focuses on semester and annual surveys, involving all stakeholders to analyze assessment results to maintain effective monitoring and identify development tendencies. In accordance with the evaluation of the submitted documents and accreditation site visit findings, programme evaluation is conducted regularly and assessment results are generally utilized for programme improvement.

Programme quality assurance is based on the PDCA, “plan – do – check - act” principle. Programme evaluation ensures inclusiveness of programme staff that collaborate with the internal QA and share the principles and mechanisms to ensure proper internal quality evaluation of the programme. The working group for developing Preschool Education has been developed ensuring engagement of academic and administrative staff, industry representatives and programme leaders. The programme benefitted from field expert evaluations and the evaluation of the internal quality assurance office. Besides, assessment surveys are used by internal quality evaluation processes for purposely identifying the problems. These surveys are targeted at identifying the needs, and wants of the students and staff, as well as general satisfaction for assessing the administration of the programme and availability of services.

The institution generally ensures students, graduates, employers, academic and invited staff are involved in the internal quality assessment process. The QA office cooperates and encourages the involvement of all stakeholders to ensure the constructive evaluation process; therefore, a self-evaluation report of the programme is jointly prepared especially with the active involvement of academic, administrative staff and students. Although information sessions, open-access regulations, and the StudLab database contribute to the dissemination of relevant information, these practices seem to function as supportive tools rather than as part of a structured orientation framework. Awareness and engagement depends more on informal communication or individual initiative, which may affect consistency in stakeholder participation. It would be helpful for the institution to formalize an onboarding and orientation process related to quality assurance for students and staff. Establishing a structured introductory mechanism - supported by regular training sessions or digital guidance materials - would help to strengthen a common understanding of quality culture, support stakeholder’s greater awareness of their role in evaluation processes, and support more systematic participation in continuous quality improvement.

Evidences/Indicators

- Self-evaluation report

- Methodology for Planning, Elaboration and Development of Educational Programs
- Self-assessment group meeting minutes
- Methodology for Planning, Elaboration and Development of Educational Programs;
- Internal and external evaluation results
- Survey results and forms
- Interview results

Recommendations:

- None

Suggestions for the Programme Development

- It is suggested to the institution to formalize an onboarding and orientation process related to quality assurance for students and staff through establishing a structured introductory mechanism that will further facilitate understanding of quality culture, strengthen stakeholder awareness of their role in evaluation processes, and support more systematic participation in continuous quality improvement.

Evaluation

Component	Evaluation
5.1 Internal quality evaluation	Complies with requirements

5.2 External Quality Evaluation

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

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

External quality assurance at the SSU is carried out through Accreditation and Authorization Processes, maintained by the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement. The institution generally reviews the recommendations and suggestions, and the findings are introduced to the programme staff. The QA and senior management ensure compliance of the developments with the received recommendations. The Preschool Education Bachelor's Programme is new; however, the programme team expresses readiness for continuous

improvement and considering recommendations concerning the further development perspectives.

The educational programmes of the institution are periodically evaluated by external experts. The Preschool Education programme was developed with the active consideration of the local experts' experiences and positions, therefore ensuring compliance with the subject benchmark requirements. Field expert from Akaki Tsereteli State University has positively evaluated the programme, as well as underlined its strengths and importance for preparing qualified professionals, structure and content of the programme, a balance within theory and practice, courses affiliated with various international projects (DITECH, PeaceEdu) human resources, teaching-learning methods. Recommendations issued by the expert have also been considered by the programme team while working on the self-evaluation of the programme, notably recommendations related to development of partnership and integrating digital pedagogy.

Evidences/Indicators

- Self-evaluation report
- Methodology for Planning, Elaboration and Development of Educational Programmes
- Self-assessment group meeting minutes
- Methodology for Planning, Elaboration and Development of Educational Programmes;
- Internal and external evaluation results
- Interview results

Recommendations:

- None

Suggestions for the Programme Development

- None

Evaluation

Component	Evaluation
5.2. External Quality Evaluation	Complies with requirements

5.3 Programme Monitoring and Periodic Review

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

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

For the programme development and service improvement, the QA Office at the SSU coordinates monitoring and periodic assessment. The assessment and evaluation process involves internal and external actors. Surveys with academic and administrative staff, students, graduates, and employers are central tools for programme monitoring and periodic review. At the end of every compulsory course, students evaluate the course by completing a course evaluation form.

Assessment surveys are used to identify improvements and priorities, to ensure an effective monitoring process. The labour market analysis is the integral part of the programme planning and monitoring. Results of the evaluation process are distributed among the stakeholders and are used for the programme improvements. The programme development group and the Faculty Council are responsible for the content of the programme, and reflect the field's current achievements and trends in the programme. The Quality Assurance Department regularly reviews students' academic performance on a semester basis, which provides a general mechanism for monitoring educational effectiveness. The programme is attached with the map of evaluating learning outcomes, which define the Gaussian distribution and set respective benchmarks with periodicity and responsible persons.

Using a Gaussian (normal) distribution as the primary basis for assessing programme learning outcomes may not provide a sufficiently accurate measure of students' actual achievement of intended competencies. Grade distribution reflects relative performance within a specific course and even though course learning outcomes are connected to the program level learning outcomes, it does not necessarily indicate whether students have genuinely attained the knowledge, skills, and competences expected at the programme level. Programme learning outcomes should be assessed through direct, criterion-based evaluation methods that measure achievement against clearly defined and measurable indicators and it is an essential component in the modifying and developing a programme on the basis of assessment result analysis.

The institution has a practice of periodic academic and invited staff evaluation through pre-determined classroom observation practice. The classroom observation is conducted by peers from the same and/or different programme, including representatives from Faculty and Quality Assurance Office. The aim of the evaluation is to provide a platform for sharing

experiences, observe the quality of the delivered lectures, compliance with the syllabi, predefined teaching and learning methods and to articulate development tendencies and provide relevant activities.

The institution ensures benchmarking for the local and international practices. The programme development group has benchmarked a number of similar programmes provided at Georgian and international universities – Shota Rustaveli Batumi State University (Georgia), Akaki Tsereteli State University (Georgia), Shota Meskhia Zugdidi State University (Georgia), Tallinn University (Estonia), University of Barcelona (Spain). The review identified several common features as well as multiple development opportunities that have positively influenced the further elaboration of the programme. The programme incorporates both international and local requirements and practices in preschool education, and the benchmarking analysis demonstrates that comparable programs show more than 80% compatibility in terms of structure, content, and relevance.

Evidences/Indicators

- Self-evaluation report
- Methodology for Planning, Elaboration and Development of Educational Programmes
- Self-assessment group meeting minutes
- Methodology for Planning, Elaboration and Development of Educational Programmes;
- Internal and external evaluation results
- Benchmarking of analogue programmes
- Survey results and forms
- Interview results

Recommendations:

- It is recommended to establish programme-specific benchmarks and strengthen programme-level quality assurance monitoring by systematically evaluating the attainment of programme learning outcomes, assessing programme efficiency and ensuring that programme is modified based on the analysis of assessment results, in order to ensure its continuous improvement.

Suggestions for the Programme Development

- None

Evaluation

Component	Evaluation
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5.3. Programme
monitoring and
periodic review

Substantially complies with
requirements

Attached documentation (if applicable):

Signatures:

Chair of Accreditation Expert Panel

Milan Pol



Accreditation Expert Panel Members

Maia Chkotua



Irma Mesiridze



Tamta Tskhovrebadze



Ana Mikhelidze

