



NATIONAL CENTER FOR  
EDUCATIONAL QUALITY  
ENHANCEMENT

## **Accreditation Expert Group Report on Higher Education Programme**

For educational programmes implemented within the first and second levels of higher education and Georgian language preparation educational programme

**Comparative and International Education, Master's**

**Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University**

Evaluation Date(s)

20 May 2026

Report Submission Date

17 July 2026

Tbilisi  
2026

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### Information about a Higher Education Institution <sup>1</sup>

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

### Expert Panel Members

|                                                          |                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Chair</b> (Name, Surname, HEI/Organisation, Country)  | Petros Pashiardis, Open University of Cyprus, Cyprus |
| <b>Member</b> (Name, Surname, HEI/Organisation, Country) | Diana Mtchedlishvili, Caucasus University, Georgia   |
| <b>Member</b> (Name, Surname, HEI/Organisation, Country) | Revaz Tabatadze, The University of Georgia, Georgia  |
| <b>Member</b> (Name, Surname, HEI/Organisation, Country) | Tamta Lekishvili, East European University, Georgia  |
| <b>Member</b> (Name, Surname, HEI/Organisation, Country) | Ana Mikhelidze, Caucasus University, Georgia         |

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<sup>1</sup> 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)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | შედარებითი და საერთაშორისო განათლება    |
| Name of Higher Education Programme (in English)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Comparative and International Education |
| Level of Higher Education/programme                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Master's Studies                        |
| Qualification to be Awarded <sup>2</sup>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Master of Education Science             |
| Name and Code of the Detailed Field                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Education Science, 0111                 |
| Indication of the right to provide the teaching of subject/subjects/group of subjects of the relevant cycle of the general education <sup>3</sup>                                                                                                                                                 |                                         |
| Language of Instruction                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Georgian                                |
| Number of ECTS credits                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 120                                     |
| Programme Status (Accredited/ Non-accredited/ Conditionally accredited/ Newly proposed/International accreditation) Indicating Relevant Decision (number, date)                                                                                                                                   | New Programme                           |
| 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) |                                         |
| The quota for MD students requested by the HEI (In the case of Medical Doctor one-cycle educational programme)                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                         |

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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

Based on what we have read in the Self Evaluation Report as well as what we have seen in other documentation provided, and then what we have heard during the discussions with the various officials and representatives, on the evaluation day, we established that the Comparative and International Education Master's program was developed as a result of the active involvement of both local as well as international partners. Specifically, as described in the Self-Evaluation Report, two field experts participated in the external evaluation: a professor from The Education University of Hong Kong, who leads the Master's program in Global Higher Education at the same university, and an associate professor from The University of Hong Kong, who also leads the Master's program in Comparative and Global Studies in Education and Development. The selection of specialists from these two Hong Kong universities was based on their internationally recognized experience in developing and researching educational programs in comparative and international education. Both professors noted the multidisciplinary approach of the program, and how this would prepare students to develop a deep understanding of global challenges in education and to acquire the competencies necessary for international collaboration. Additionally, they stressed that the program has all the prerequisites to successfully integrate theoretical knowledge with practical experience through the active incorporation of international perspectives. In addition, they underlined the importance of the inclusion of courses in qualitative and quantitative research, as well as elective courses focused on gender, human rights, and sustainable development.

Finally, the program was modified in order to meet Georgian society needs. As mentioned in the Self-Evaluation Report, the Master's Program in Comparative and International Education represents a new offering in the field of higher education in Georgia and it is the first such degree of its kind. The program aims to prepare specialists who are able to analyze contemporary education systems in a rapidly changing global context and critically assess educational practices across different countries. Moreover, as mentioned, in the contemporary era, when education systems worldwide face rapid transformations and challenges resulting from internationalization, alongside increasing demands for quality and access, the MA Program in Comparative and International Education equips students with global focus, strong research skills, and links between policy analysis and practice.

### ▪ Overview of the Accreditation Site Visit

The Team of Experts produced this evaluation report after taking into account the Self-Evaluation Report of the Program as well as additional requested documents which were provided and, of course, the on-site visitation and meetings with officials. The on-site visitation took place on 20 May 2026 with physical presence for all members of the Team of Experts, except for the Chair, Professor Pashiardis, who participated in the whole process remotely.

We met with about 50 persons during the visit at the Sul Khan-Saba University, either with physical presence or online. These persons included members of the University Administration (the Vice-Rector, the Chancellor, the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences as well as the Head of Quality Assurance). Moreover, we met with the Self-Evaluation Team, the Supervisors for the MA theses, the Academic Staff, the Invited Staff, as well as the Employers, with current Students and finally, with representatives of the Alumni (albeit these students and alumni were from the Master's

Program in Law, since this is a new program). Then, we had a Campus tour of the facilities, such as the library, classrooms, computer rooms and other facilities of the university.

Finally, we met with the authorities of the university, at the end of the day, in order to briefly present our key findings.

#### ▪ **Brief Overview of Education Programme Compliance with the Standards**

Overall, the programme seems to have been prepared according to the University's vision and the mission seems that it will be realistically fulfilled through this programme in the long term. The personnel involved in designing and then implementing the program are quite enthusiastic about it and truly motivated. Moreover, the Law students and alumni seem to be very satisfied with the university and its services, and the employers are happy with the end result, as they were involved from the beginning in the design and development of the new program. It seems that, overall, we have a promising program, and especially quite innovative for the higher education landscape of Georgia. The University has managed to have international collaborations with Hong-Kong Universities, albeit some more efforts are needed towards internationalization in order to get into a really international trajectory, both in terms of research as well as in terms of publications in high calibre refereed journals.

The recommendations and suggestions we have are merely intended to strengthen and further enhance the quality of the new program even more, and to help it become a truly international one. Thus, they should be seen in this light, that they are recorded and offered by the accreditation expert committee in order to enhance the academic quality as well as the efforts of the university for more internationalisation. Based on what we have seen in the various documentations provided, and what we have heard from the various stakeholders during the interviews, and also during our on-site visitation, we believe, in summary, that the standard, **Educational Programme Objectives, Learning Outcomes and their Compliance with the Programme** substantially complies, whereas the other four, namely, the **Methodology and Organization of Teaching, Adequacy of Evaluation of Programme Mastering**; the **Providing Teaching Resources**; the **Student Achievements and Individual Work with Them**; the **Teaching Quality Enhancement Opportunities** comply with the accreditation requirements, as can be seen in the summary table below, albeit with some recommendations and suggestions included as well in the Recommendations and Suggestions sections. Therefore, we have the following recommendations and suggestions.

#### ▪ **Recommendations**

##### **1.4 Structure and Content of Educational Programme**

- It is recommended to refine the curriculum of the Master's programme "Comparative and International Education" to ensure closer compliance with the programme's sectoral specificity, goals and learning outcomes. In particular, it is recommended to replace the course "Innovations and Technologies in Education" with the course "Educational Systems and Reforms in a Comparative Perspective" and to add the course "International

Organizations and Educational Governance" to the block of mandatory subjects of the programme.

### **1.5 Academic Course/Subject**

- It is recommended to strengthen the issues of general education policy and quality management in the courses "Education Policy" and "Quality Management in Education" in order to ensure a more balanced presentation of general and higher education contexts.

## **2.2 The Development of Practical, Scientific/Research/Creative/Performance and Transferable Skills**

- It is recommended that the University ensure a sufficient number of qualified Master's thesis supervisors with doctoral degrees, relevant research experience in the field and appropriate experience in supervising Master's theses, in accordance with the planned number of admitted students and the internal limit on the number of students supervised by one person.
- It is recommended that the University clearly defines and apply transparent criteria for appointing Master's thesis supervisors and for using exceptions to the doctoral degree requirement, ensuring that each exception is well justified and that the supervisor's qualification, research experience and field expertise correspond to the topic and direction of the Master's thesis.
- It is recommended that the University provide targeted training and methodological support for potential Master's thesis supervisors, especially for those who have limited or no previous experience in supervising Master's theses to ensure the effective implementation of the research component.
- It is recommended that the university ensure that all the agreements/memoranda and/or their appendices signed with practice organizations clearly envisage the number of students to be hosted, the objectives, expected outcomes and duration of the practice component, and demonstrate how the practice component supports the achievement of the programme learning outcomes.

### **4.1 Human Resources**

- It is recommended that the university increase the proportion of academic and invited staff holding doctoral degrees in education or closely related fields.

#### **▪ Suggestions**

### **1.2 Programme Learning Outcomes**

- To facilitate the observation and evaluation of learning outcomes, it is suggested to formulate them using measurable verbs aligned with the appropriate levels of Bloom's taxonomy. This approach ensures the clarity, evaluability, and effective monitoring of the learning process.

### **4.2 Qualification of Supervisors of Master's Students**

- It is suggested that more efforts should be made towards the increase of the number and the quality of the publications in top rated international journals of the respective sub-

fields under the broad umbrella of Education Sciences, as this will enhance the capacity of the academic staff to supervise Master's Theses.

#### **4.3 Professional Development of Academic, Scientific and Invited Staff**

- It is suggested that more efforts should be made towards the internationalization and enhancement of the quality of the program through the participation of academic staff in international conferences of merit, and through the provision of tangible assistance and guidance in order to produce more publications in Q1 journals of the respective sub-fields under the broad umbrella of Education Sciences.

#### **4.5 Programme/Faculty/School Budget and Programme Financial Sustainability**

- It is advisable that the university further detail future programme budgets by clearly indicating financial resources allocated for the practice component, Master's thesis supervision, student research activities and programme-specific internationalization activities.

- **Brief Overview of the Best Practices (if applicable)<sup>4</sup>**
- **Information on Sharing or Not Sharing the Argumentative Position of the HEI**
- **Quantitative Data Analysis of the educational programme in accordance with the requirements of the accreditation standards, for example:**

**Number of the staff involved in the programme (including academic, scientific, and invited staff)**

| <b>Number of the staff involved in the programme (including academic, scientific, and invited staff)</b> | <b>Number of Programme Staff</b> | <b>Including the staff with sectoral expertise<sup>5</sup></b> | <b>Including the staff holding PhD degree in the sectoral direction<sup>6</sup></b> | <b>Among them, the affiliated staff</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <b>Total number of academic staff</b>                                                                    | 11                               | 7                                                              | 4                                                                                   | 8                                       |
| Professor                                                                                                | 1                                | 1                                                              | 1                                                                                   | 1                                       |
| Associate Professor                                                                                      | 7                                | 3                                                              | 3                                                                                   | 4                                       |
| Assistant-Professor                                                                                      | 0                                | 0                                                              | 0                                                                                   | 0                                       |
| Assistant                                                                                                | 3                                | 3                                                              | 0                                                                                   | 3                                       |

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



|                               |    |   |   |   |
|-------------------------------|----|---|---|---|
| Visiting Staff                | 12 | 7 | 4 | 0 |
| Scientific Staff              | 0  | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Including International Staff | 0  | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Academic and invited staff involved in the program as Supervisors of Master's students can be seen in the following table:

| <b>Comparative and International Education MA</b>        |                           |                                                                               |                                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Number of supervisors of Master's/Doctoral theses</b> | <b>Theses supervisors</b> | <b>Including the supervisors holding PhD degree in the sectoral direction</b> | <b>Among them, the affiliated academic staff</b> |
| <b>Number of supervisors of Master's/Doctoral theses</b> | 7                         |                                                                               | 3                                                |
| Professor                                                | 1                         |                                                                               | 1                                                |
| Associate Professor                                      | 1                         |                                                                               | 1                                                |
| Assistant *                                              | 1                         | PhD candidate in education                                                    | 1                                                |
| Invited Staff *                                          | 4                         | 1 (+2 PhD candidates in education)                                            |                                                  |

### III. Summary Table of Compliance of the programmes with the standards

|           | Standard                                                                                                         | Evaluation           |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>1.</b> | <b>1.1. Educational Programme Objectives, Learning Outcomes and their Compliance with the Programme</b>          | <b>Substantially</b> |
| 1.1       | <a href="#">Programme Objectives</a>                                                                             | Complies             |
| 1.2       | <a href="#">Programme Learning Outcomes</a>                                                                      | Complies             |
| 1.3       | <a href="#">Evaluation Mechanism of the Programme Learning Outcomes</a>                                          | Complies             |
| 1.4       | <a href="#">Structure and Content of Educational Programme</a>                                                   | Substantially        |
| 1.5       | <a href="#">Academic Course/Subject</a>                                                                          | Substantially        |
| <b>2.</b> | <b>Methodology and Organization of Teaching, Adequacy of Evaluation of Programme Mastering</b>                   | <b>Complies</b>      |
| 2.1       | <a href="#">Programme Admission Preconditions</a>                                                                | Complies             |
| 2.2       | <a href="#">The Development of Practical, Scientific/Research/ Creative/ Performance and Transferable Skills</a> | Substantially        |
| 2.3       | <a href="#">Teaching and Learning Methods</a>                                                                    | Complies             |
| 2.4       | <a href="#">Student Evaluation</a>                                                                               | Complies             |
| <b>3.</b> | <b>Student Achievements and Individual Work with Them</b>                                                        | <b>Complies</b>      |
| 3.1       | <a href="#">Student Consulting and Support Services</a>                                                          | Complies             |
| 3.2       | <a href="#">Master's Student Supervision</a>                                                                     | Complies             |
| <b>4</b>  | <b>Providing Teaching Resources</b>                                                                              | <b>Complies</b>      |
| 4.1       | <a href="#">Human Resources</a>                                                                                  | Substantially        |
| 4.2       | <a href="#">Qualification of Supervisors of Master's Student</a>                                                 | Complies             |
| 4.3       | <a href="#">Professional Development of Academic, Scientific and Invited Staff</a>                               | Complies             |
| 4.4       | <a href="#">Material Resources</a>                                                                               | Complies             |
| 4.5       | <a href="#">Programme/Faculty/School Budget and Programme Financial Sustainability</a>                           | Complies             |
| <b>5</b>  | <b>5. Teaching Quality Enhancement Opportunities</b>                                                             | <b>Complies</b>      |
| 5.1       | <a href="#">Internal Quality Evaluation</a>                                                                      | Complies             |
| 5.2       | <a href="#">External Quality Evaluation</a>                                                                      | Complies             |
| 5.3       | <a href="#">Programme Monitoring and Periodic Review</a>                                                         | Complies             |

**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

In alignment with the mission of the university, faculty regulations, and the university's strategic development plan, the programme is designed to prepare researchers, leaders, and practitioners who will:

1. acquire in-depth theoretical and conceptual knowledge in the field of comparative and international education, through understanding historical development trends, key theories and methodologies, as well as contemporary educational debates at the national, regional and global levels;
2. develop the ability to critically analyze educational systems, policies and practices within their historical, socio-political, economic and cultural contexts;
3. develop contemporary research competencies in planning and conducting qualitative and quantitative research, as well as in data analysis, in accordance with academic writing standards and research ethics;
4. develop the ability to apply theoretical knowledge of comparative and international education in practice, engage in professional communication, demonstrate ethical responsibility and pursue continuous professional development in academic and professional environments.

Furthermore, as indicated in the Self-Evaluation Report, the programme responds both to local labor market demands and to international trends in the field of global education. Accordingly, it prepares graduates for various professional roles within the Georgian education sector (both public and private), international governmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as for research activities in comparative and international education.

To realize these objectives, the programme integrates a synthesis of theoretical and practical academic coursework. It is mentioned that graduates will be equipped for employment in managerial and leadership roles within international governmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as for research activities in comparative and international education, supporting national and international organizations, as well as research institutions related to Global Education.

Moreover, to achieve the program objectives, the following activities are planned for students and staff, as stated in the Self-Evaluation Report:

- Student academic mobility at partner universities;
- Staff mobility between Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University and partner universities;
- Organization of events: International scientific conferences are regularly held at Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University and partner institutions, with participation of academic staff. Papers are published in conference proceedings.

Information regarding the programme's goals, objectives, and admission criteria is publicly accessible via the university's official website.

#### Evidences/Indicators

- Master's Program in Comparative and International Education
- Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University Strategy 2023–2029
- Website: [www.sabauni.edu.ge](http://www.sabauni.edu.ge)
- Interview results

#### Recommendations:

- None

#### Suggestions for the Programme Development

- None

#### Evaluation

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

| Component                                | Evaluation |
|------------------------------------------|------------|
| <a href="#">1.1 Programme Objectives</a> | Complies   |

#### [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**

As we were informed, and it is also evident from the data and other documentation presented, the learning outcomes of the Master's Program in Comparative and International Education are aligned with the program's objectives, the descriptors of the relevant level of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education, and the qualification to be awarded. The learning outcomes are clearly and explicitly formulated. Moreover, as mentioned in the Self-Evaluation Report, they are measurable, achievable, and realistic. Further, they clearly define the knowledge, skills, responsibilities, and autonomy required in the field.

Additionally, we were informed, that the Quality Management Office supported the program working group in the process of defining and formulating the learning outcomes. Furthermore, stakeholders were actively involved in the development of the learning outcomes of the Master's Program in Comparative and International Education, including academic and invited staff, prospective students, graduates with qualifications in education sciences from similar programs, and employers. As a result, the program learning outcomes reflect both the specifics of the field and labor market demands.

Moreover, it was stressed that, based on the way they learning outcomes were developed, they address the needs of potential employment fields for graduates in a variety of diverse environments, including international organizations focused on education (UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank, and various NGOs); universities, schools, and research centers; education consulting organizations; and organizations focused on education monitoring and evaluation. In addition, the research competencies developed in the program enable graduates to continue their studies at the doctoral level both in Georgia and at international universities.

The program includes eight learning outcomes to be achieved upon successful completion, as follows:

### **Knowledge and Understanding**

The Graduate:

- (A) possesses deep and systematic knowledge of key theories, concepts, methodological approaches and contemporary debates in comparative and international education and critically analyzes educational systems, policies and practices across diverse national, regional and global contexts;
- (B) demonstrates in-depth understanding of educational traditions, philosophies and theories of teaching and learning, and analyze their role in shaping contemporary educational practices and addressing current educational challenges;
- (C) demonstrates fundamental knowledge of research paradigms, qualitative and quantitative research methods, academic writing conventions, and ethical standards.

### **Skills**

The Graduate:

- (D) critically analyzes and compares educational policies, systems, innovations and practices using comparative, intercultural and interdisciplinary approaches, as well as relevant analytical frameworks;

- (E) independently conducts qualitative and quantitative research using appropriate software tools;
- (F) communicates complex ideas, research findings and arguments related to education and educational policy to academic, professional and wider audiences through oral and written formats, using relevant academic and digital tools and in accordance with academic ethics.

### Responsibility and Autonomy

The Graduate:

- (G) demonstrates professional, ethical and social responsibility in research, policy analysis and educational practice by upholding the principles of equity, cultural diversity, academic integrity and research ethics;
- (H) manage their own professional development based on principles of reflective evaluation of acquired academic and practical experience.

Thus, the learning outcomes of this Master's program are formulated so that they reflect the specifics of the Comparative and International Education area and align both with the program content and the qualification to be awarded. They are stated clearly and realistically, but in some cases, it would be better to phrase them in a way that facilitates and simplifies their measurability and evaluation. In particular, to facilitate the observation and evaluation of learning outcomes, it is suggested to formulate them using measurable verbs aligned with the appropriate levels of Bloom's taxonomy. This approach ensures the clarity, evaluability, and effective monitoring of the learning process.

### **Evidences/Indicators**

- Master's Program in Comparative and International Education
- Self-Evaluation Report of Higher Education Programme
- Program syllabi
- Mapping of program objectives and learning outcomes
- Quality assurance mechanisms, assessment results, and their application procedures (survey)
- Forms for students, graduates, employers, personnel);
- Website: [www.sabauni.edu.ge](http://www.sabauni.edu.ge)
- Interview results

### Recommendations:

- None

### Suggestions for the Programme Development

- To facilitate the observation and evaluation of learning outcomes, it is suggested to formulate them using measurable verbs aligned with the appropriate levels of Bloom's taxonomy. This approach ensures the clarity, evaluability, and effective monitoring of the learning process.

## Evaluation

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

| Component                                       | Evaluation |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <a href="#">1.2 Programme Learning Outcomes</a> | Complies   |

### 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 University has developed a document entitled “*Quality Assurance Mechanisms, Assessment Results, and the Rules for Their Application*,” which outlines the programme assessment process. This process is implemented in two directions: first, through the analysis of the achievement of target indicators, and second, through the analysis of students’ academic performance.

Following the development of the educational program’s learning outcomes, a “*Map of the Program’s Mandatory Courses and Programme Learning Outcomes*” is created. This document determines the contribution of individual courses to the achievement of specific learning outcomes. It also reflects the status of each course and its relationship to the programme learning outcomes.

According to the “*Quality Assurance Mechanisms, Assessment Results, and the Rules for Their Application*,” learning outcomes are assessed at the end of each academic year. The data obtained are compared with those from the previous year, on the basis of which a report on the achievement of learning outcomes is prepared. The report includes:

1. the operational plan for the reporting period and its implementation indicators;
2. conclusions regarding the results of the quality assessment conducted during the current reporting period;
3. the causes of deviations from the target indicators, which are identified through additional activities, such as focus groups and in-depth interviews with staff and students.

The assessment of learning outcomes is further verified through a direct assessment method based on the analysis of students’ academic performance, which is measured using ECTS ranking points. The target indicator for the effectiveness of academic performance results is the ECTS ranking scale. In cases where deviations are identified through the analysis of academic performance, various response mechanisms are employed:

1. Modification of the target indicators of learning outcomes;



2. Review of the teaching and learning methods used in the relevant courses and, where necessary, their revision.

The indirect assessment of learning outcomes involves surveying stakeholders and analyzing the results obtained. Considering the specific characteristics of the program, surveys are conducted among students, graduates, academic staff, and employers using a pre-developed structured questionnaire. Stakeholder surveys are administered by the Quality Assurance Service on both a semester and annual basis. The surveys are anonymous and address various issues related to the structure of the programme and its components from the perspectives of different stakeholder groups.

### Evidences/Indicators

- Interviews
- Comparative and International Education - Master's Program
- Map of Programme Objectives and Learning Outcomes
- Quality Assurance Mechanisms, Assessment Outcomes and How to Use Them

### Recommendations:

- None

### Suggestions for the Programme Development

- None

### Evaluation

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

| Component                                                                   | Evaluation |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <a href="#">1.3 Evaluation Mechanism of the Programme Learning Outcomes</a> | Complies   |

### 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 Master's Programme in Comparative and International Education offered by Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University is structured in accordance with the regulations established by Georgian

legislation and aligned with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). The content and complexity of the programme correspond to the second cycle of higher education. The university's educational programme regulations comply with the relevant legal requirements, and the programme accordingly comprises 120 ECTS credits (3,000 astronomical hours). The compulsory courses within the main field of study account for 102 ECTS credits, including a practical component of 12 credits and a Master's thesis worth 30 credits. Elective courses within the main field of study account for 18 ECTS credits, enabling students to select courses either from the elective offerings of the Master's Programme in Comparative and International Education or from elective courses available within other Master's programmes at the university.

Depending on the volume of the programme, one academic year consists of two semesters (fall and spring) and comprises 32 weeks. Each semester generally consists of 16 weeks, including 13 teaching weeks, two final examination weeks, and one additional examination week. The standard workload for students is 30 ECTS credits per semester and 60 ECTS credits per academic year. However, depending on the specific characteristics of the programme and the individual workload of the student, the annual credit load may be less than or exceed 60 ECTS credits, but may not exceed 75 ECTS credits.

The courses offered within the programme are appropriate to the level of study. The curriculum incorporates both theoretical and practical components, which effectively support the achievement of the programme's objectives. The inclusion of practice-oriented components ensures that theoretical knowledge is contextualized and applied to practical, institution-based problem-solving. Students acquire the research competencies necessary for the successful completion and defense of their Master's thesis through various courses, including *Qualitative Research Methods*, *Quantitative Research Methods and Data Analysis Using SPSS*, and *Academic Writing for Master's Students*, thereby establishing a logical and progressive sequence of academic development.

According to the presented curriculum, students undertake elective courses during the first and second semesters of study. A detailed analysis of the curriculum indicates that all courses within the current elective block are assigned either 3 or 6 ECTS credits.

Considering the goals and content of the Master's Programme in Comparative and International Education, it is recommended that the curriculum be aligned even more closely with the specific characteristics of the field. In this regard, it is considered important to replace the course *Innovations and Technologies in Education* with *Educational Systems and Reforms in a Comparative Perspective* and to introduce an additional course entitled *International Organizations and Educational Governance*.

First, it should be noted that *Innovations and Technologies in Education* addresses an important topic; however, it does not directly represent a core component of the field of comparative and international education. This course is commonly included in programmes across various educational disciplines, and its content is not specifically related to either the comparative analysis of educational systems or the study of international educational processes. Consequently, its contribution to the achievement of the programme's first and second objectives appears relatively limited.

In contrast, the course *Educational Systems and Reforms in a Comparative Perspective* directly reflects the essence, title, and objectives of the programme. The first programme objective

emphasizes the acquisition of advanced theoretical and conceptual knowledge in the field of comparative and international education, while the second objective focuses on developing students' ability to critically analyze diverse educational systems, policies, and practices. This course would provide students with the opportunity to examine educational systems in different countries, governance models, financing mechanisms, reform experiences, their outcomes and challenges, the centralization and decentralization of education systems, issues of educational access and equity, international large-scale assessment studies (PISA, TIMSS, and PIRLS), as well as the transfer of educational policies and the adaptation of best practices within diverse national contexts. The course "*Innovations and Technologies in Education*" could be integrated in the block of elective courses.

The inclusion of such a course would substantially strengthen the identity of the programme as a specialized programme in the field of comparative and international education and would more clearly distinguish it from other Master's programmes within the broader field of education.

Furthermore, within the contemporary international educational landscape, the role of international organizations such as UNESCO, OECD, the World Bank, UNICEF, the Council of Europe, and the European Union has become increasingly significant. These organizations shape a substantial portion of the global educational agenda, establish international standards, conduct monitoring activities, and exert considerable influence on the formulation and reform of national education policies. Accordingly, the introduction of the course *International Organizations and Educational Governance* would significantly strengthen the programme's international dimension. This course would provide students with an opportunity to examine the mandates, structures, and activities of international organizations, the mechanisms through which they influence educational development, global educational initiatives, Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), international education indicators.

This course is particularly important for achieving the first and second objectives of the programme, as it would provide students with a comprehensive understanding of global educational processes, international governance structures, and policy-making mechanisms. Furthermore, the course would contribute to the development of students' analytical and research competencies, thereby fully supporting the achievement of the programme's third objective. Information regarding the programme is publicly available and accessible through the university's official website, thereby ensuring transparency and visibility.

### **Evidences/Indicators**

- Methodology for planning, developing, and approving an educational program
- Master's programme in "Comparative and International Education"
- Programme syllabi
- Interviews
- Document confirming the participation of interested parties involved in the development of the program
- Website: [www.sabauni.edu.ge](http://www.sabauni.edu.ge)

### **Recommendations:**

- It is recommended to refine the curriculum of the Master's programme "Comparative and International Education" to ensure closer compliance with the programme's sectoral

specificity, goals and learning outcomes. In particular, it is recommended to replace the course "Innovations and Technologies in Education" with the course "Educational Systems and Reforms in a Comparative Perspective" and to add the course "International Organizations and Educational Governance" to the block of mandatory subjects of the programme.

#### Suggestions for the Programme Development

- None

#### **Evaluation**

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

| Component                                                          | Evaluation    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <a href="#">1.4 Structure and Content of Educational Programme</a> | Substantially |

#### **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.

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

The syllabi of the courses integrated into the educational programme include information on the course status, authors, lecturers, course objectives, number of credits and distribution of hours, prerequisites, teaching and learning methods and related activities, forms, components, methods and criteria of assessment, learning outcomes, and required and supplementary literature. The courses offered within the Master's Programme in Comparative and International Education at Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University generally correspond to the programme learning outcomes, considering the learning outcomes specified within individual courses. Furthermore, the course learning outcomes are aligned with the requirements of the Master's level of study.

The distribution of credits among the courses is, for the most part, consistent with the content and workload of the respective courses. For example, core courses such as *Qualitative Research Methods* (6 ECTS) and *Contemporary Theories and Methods of Teaching and Learning* (6 ECTS) are appropriately allocated credits in accordance with their scope and academic requirements. In most cases, the ratio between contact hours and independent study hours within the programme's core courses is appropriate and corresponds to the course content. For instance, the course *Education Policy* carries 6 ECTS credits (150 hours), of which 40 hours are contact

hours (lectures – 26 hours; seminars/practical work – 2 hours), while 110 hours are allocated to independent student work.

The expert group paid particular attention to several core courses due to their objectives, learning outcomes, and content. In particular, the course *Education Policy* was identified as requiring further consideration. According to the course objectives, *Education Policy* aims to develop students' ability to critically analyze policy issues in both general and higher education at the national and international levels, identify existing challenges, and develop policy documents. An analysis of the course topics and required literature indicates that considerable attention is devoted to higher education policy, particularly the development of the European Higher Education Area, the Bologna Process, the transformation of post-Soviet higher education systems, and contemporary issues in higher education policy. Although aspects of general education policy are addressed within the course, their scope and depth are comparatively limited when compared to the higher education dimension.

Accordingly, the balanced coverage of both general and higher education policy, as stated in the course objectives, is not fully reflected in the course content. Therefore, it is recommended that a more balanced representation of general and higher education policy issues be ensured within the *Education Policy* course so that the course content, topics, and learning resources are fully aligned with the stated course objectives and learning outcomes.

A similar observation applies to the course *Quality Management in Education*. The course objectives and learning outcomes explicitly state that students should acquire in-depth knowledge of internal and external quality assurance systems in both general and higher education institutions and develop the ability to analyze national and international quality management frameworks. However, an analysis of the course content demonstrates that a substantial proportion of the topics, as well as almost the entire international dimension of the course, focus primarily on quality assurance in higher education. Consequently, it is recommended that issues related to quality assurance and quality management in general education be further strengthened within the *Quality Management in Education* course. Such enhancement would ensure that the course content, learning resources, and thematic coverage are fully consistent with the stated course objectives and learning outcomes.

### **Evidences/Indicators**

- Master's Programme in Comparative and International Education
- Interviews
- Map of Programme Objectives and Learning Outcomes and Curriculum Map
- Syllabi
- Educational Process Regulation

### **Recommendations:**

- It is recommended to strengthen the issues of general education policy and quality management in the courses “Education Policy” and “Quality Management in Education” in order to ensure a more balanced presentation of general and higher education contexts.

### **Suggestions for the Programme Development**

- None

## Evaluation

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

| Component                                    | Evaluation    |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <a href="#">1.5. Academic Course/Subject</a> | Substantially |

## 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 admission preconditions of the Master's Programme in Comparative and International Education are relevant, transparent and accessible. The programme admits candidates who hold a Bachelor's degree or an equivalent qualification. Admission is based on the results of the Unified Master's Examination and internal university examinations, or, in cases defined by the Law of Georgia on Higher Education, in accordance with the established legal procedures, following administrative registration and the issuance of the Rector's order.

The internal university examinations are designed to assess two important aspects: the candidate's general knowledge in the selected field of specialization and English language proficiency at B2 level. Considering the programme's international and comparative focus, as well as the use of international academic literature and research-oriented components, the requirement of English language proficiency at B2 level is justified and logically linked to the programme content and expected learning outcomes. The possibility of waiving the English language examination for candidates who present valid internationally recognized certificates or who have completed a degree programme or at least one semester of academic study in English is also appropriate and ensures flexibility while maintaining the required language standard.

The admission preconditions are linked to the Master's level of study, the qualification to be awarded and the language-related needs of the programme. Since the programme is open to graduates of any Bachelor's field, the internal examination in the chosen field of specialization plays an important role in ensuring that admitted students possess the minimum knowledge and readiness necessary for successful participation in the programme.

The programme also indicates that information on internal interviews, examination topics/tests and student assessment criteria will be published on the University's website at least one month before the examinations. This contributes to the transparency, publicity and accessibility of the admission process and allows prospective students to prepare in advance. Admission through mobility and transfer from a recognized foreign higher education institution is also regulated in accordance with the established procedures and relevant decisions of the competent authority.

Overall, the admission preconditions and procedures are consistent with the requirements of the programme, the Master's level, the qualification to be awarded and the applicable legislation. The presented mechanisms create a reasonable basis for admitting students with relevant knowledge, skills and competences necessary for achieving the programme learning outcomes.

In addition, the University has submitted a methodology for determining the number of academic and invited staff by educational programmes. The methodology establishes principles for determining the ratio between students and academic/invited staff, considers the workload of academic and invited personnel, and provides a framework for ensuring that the planned number of students is compatible with the human resources available for programme implementation. Therefore, the planned admission to the programme can be considered in connection with the institution's resource planning approach. Considering that the programme is new and historical data on admission, enrolment, student progression and academic performance are not yet available, it is advisable that after the first admission cycle the University analyzes the actual admission results, applicants' profiles, student progression and academic performance.

### **Evidences/Indicators**

- Master's Program in Comparative and International Education
- Methodology for Determining the Number of Academic and Invited Personnel According to Educational Programs
- University Website: <https://www.sabauni.edu.ge>
- University self-evaluation report
- Interview results

### **Recommendations:**

- None

### **Suggestions for the Programme Development**

- None

### **Evaluation**

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

| Component | Evaluation |
|-----------|------------|
|           |            |



## **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 Master's Programme in Comparative and International Education includes relevant curricular components for developing students' practical, scientific/research and transferable skills in accordance with the programme objectives, learning outcomes and the requirements of the second cycle of higher education. The programme structure demonstrates a logical connection between theoretical preparation, practical application and research development. The programme includes courses aimed at strengthening students' research and analytical competences, including Academic Writing for Master's Students, Qualitative Research Methods, and Quantitative Research Methods and Data Analysis Using SPSS. The self-evaluation report also indicates that students will use research and data analysis tools such as SPSS and NVivo, develop research instruments, conduct fieldwork, analyze literature, prepare research papers, develop policy documents and complete practical assignments. These activities are relevant for the programme profile and support the development of research, analytical, communication and academic writing skills.

The programme includes a compulsory practice component of 12 ECTS credits, implemented after the completion of the compulsory courses of the first two semesters. The practical component is designed to enable students to apply acquired theoretical knowledge in real professional environments. The programme documentation indicates that students may complete practice in educational institutions, university structures, research centers and other relevant organizations. The practice component is planned through a dual-supervision model, involving a representative of the host organization and a university supervisor. This model is appropriate for supporting the planning, monitoring and evaluation of students' practical activities.

The programme also includes a 30 ECTS Master's thesis, which is intended to consolidate students' research and analytical competences. The thesis component is particularly important for this programme, as the programme aims to prepare graduates who are able to conduct research, analyze education systems and policies, and produce evidence-based conclusions in the field of comparative and international education.

At the same time, the evaluation revealed certain challenges related to the human resources available for the proper implementation of the research component. According to the information obtained during the evaluation process and interviews, only two potential thesis supervisors hold a doctoral degree in the relevant field, and only one of them has previous experience in supervising Master's theses. Other potential supervisors are doctoral students, and some of them have experience mainly in reviewing theses rather than supervising them. The programme plans to admit 15 Master's students, while the internal regulation provides that one supervisor may supervise no more than five Master's students at the same time. Therefore, the current number of supervisors with relevant qualification and supervision experience may not be sufficient to



ensure proper supervision of all students, especially considering that the Master's thesis is a substantial 30 ECTS research component.

The University's Master's thesis regulation indicates that, as a rule, a thesis supervisor should hold a doctoral degree; however, exceptions are also allowed. While such flexibility may be acceptable in specific justified cases, it is important that exceptions do not become the main mechanism for ensuring supervision in a research-oriented Master's programme. During the evaluation process, it was also noted that the institution did not consider the existing situation problematic and that supervisors from related fields, such as history or sociology, could also be involved. Although the interdisciplinary nature of the programme may justify the involvement of supervisors from related fields, the qualification and research experience of supervisors should be clearly aligned with the topic and direction of the Master's thesis and with the field of education. In addition, no specific training has been conducted for those potential supervisors who do not have previous experience in supervising Master's theses.

The University has also submitted information on career development mechanisms. The Student Affairs Manager provides students and graduates with career-related services, including career and information meetings, employment fora, dissemination of active vacancies and internship opportunities, professional development activities, and graduate employment surveys. In the 2025–2026 academic year, the University organized career-related meetings, employment forums and trainings, including trainings on the proper use of artificial intelligence. These mechanisms support students' and graduates' employability and the development of transferable skills.

Overall, the programme includes relevant mechanisms for developing practical, scientific/research and transferable skills. However, the limited number of qualified and experienced thesis supervisors creates a risk for the effective implementation of the Master's thesis component and for the full achievement of the programme's research-related learning outcomes. Therefore, improvement is required in this regard.

The University has submitted signed memoranda of cooperation with relevant external organizations intended to support the implementation of the practical component of the programme. The memoranda are concluded with organizations whose profiles are linked to research, education, analysis, social sciences and policy-related activities, including university-based and non-governmental/research-oriented organizations. The submitted memoranda define the general purpose and scope of cooperation, the possibility of placing students in practice/internship settings, the responsibilities of the parties, coordination mechanisms, confidentiality requirements and the validity period of cooperation. One of the submitted memoranda also specifies the possible number of students to be hosted during the spring semester, which is important for assessing the feasibility of the practical component in relation to the planned student intake.

At the same time, considering that the programme is new and the practice component has not yet been implemented, it should be noted that the self-evaluation report provides information regarding the organization of practice, including its objectives, duration, supervision and the number of students to be hosted by practice organizations. However, in accordance with the requirements of the standard, the university should ensure that this information is clearly and consistently reflected in all practice-related documentation, including memoranda and/or their appendices. In particular, before the beginning of practice, the relevant documentation should

clearly specify the number of students to be accepted by each host organization, the practice objectives, expected outcomes, duration, assessment responsibilities and feedback mechanisms. This will support the consistent implementation of the practice component and ensure that practical training contributes effectively to the achievement of the programme learning outcomes.

### Evidences/Indicators

- Master's Program in Comparative and International Education
- Memoranda
- University self-evaluation report
- Interview results

### Recommendations:

- It is recommended that the University ensure a sufficient number of qualified Master's thesis supervisors with doctoral degrees, relevant research experience in the field and appropriate experience in supervising Master's theses, in accordance with the planned number of admitted students and the internal limit on the number of students supervised by one person.
- It is recommended that the University clearly defines and apply transparent criteria for appointing Master's thesis supervisors and for using exceptions to the doctoral degree requirement, ensuring that each exception is well justified and that the supervisor's qualification, research experience and field expertise correspond to the topic and direction of the Master's thesis.
- It is recommended that the University provide targeted training and methodological support for potential Master's thesis supervisors, especially for those who have limited or no previous experience in supervising Master's theses to ensure the effective implementation of the research component.
- It is recommended that the university ensure that all the agreements/memoranda and/or their appendices signed with practice organizations clearly envisage the number of students to be hosted, the objectives, expected outcomes and duration of the practice component, and demonstrate how the practice component supports the achievement of the programme learning outcomes.

### Suggestions for the Programme Development

- None

### Evaluation

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

| Component                                                                                                          | Evaluation    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <a href="#">2.2. The Development of practical, scientific/research/creative/performing and transferable skills</a> | Substantially |

### 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.

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

The Master's Programme in Comparative and International Education is implemented through teaching and learning methods that are generally consistent with the level of education, programme content, course learning outcomes and the intended programme learning outcomes. The programme applies a combination of teaching and learning methods, including lectures, working group activities, practical work, seminars, teaching with electronic resources and other relevant methods. These methods are appropriate for a second-cycle educational programme and support the development of theoretical knowledge, analytical thinking, research skills, practical competences and transferable skills.

The selected teaching and learning methods correspond to the interdisciplinary and research-oriented profile of the programme. The programme aims to prepare students who are able to analyze education systems, policies and practices in comparative and international contexts, conduct qualitative and quantitative research, communicate complex ideas and demonstrate professional and ethical responsibility. Accordingly, the teaching and learning process includes methods and activities that promote students' active engagement, critical analysis, independent reasoning, academic communication and practical application of knowledge.

The programme documentation and self-evaluation report indicate that students will be engaged in diverse learning activities, such as analysis of academic literature, article reviews, text-based critical discussions, preparation and presentation of research papers, development of education policy documents, design and presentation of research projects, demonstration lectures, fieldwork, development of research instruments, collection and processing of data, and use of research/data analysis software, including SPSS and NVivo. These activities are relevant to the programme learning outcomes and support the development of critical, analytical, research, communication and digital competences.

The structure of the programme also supports the gradual development of students' competences. The first year of study is mainly focused on theoretical and conceptual foundations, including comparative and international education, education policy, educational traditions, teaching and learning theories, quality management, international development, innovations and technologies in education. In the following stages, students deepen their research and practical competences through academic writing, qualitative and quantitative research methods, practice and the Master's thesis. This sequencing supports the principle of gradual progression from general to more specific and from simpler to more complex learning activities.

The teaching and learning methods also support interaction between students and academic/invited staff, as well as interaction among students. The use of seminars, working group activities, discussions, presentations, practical assignments and project-based activities

creates opportunities for students to participate actively in the learning process and to develop autonomy and responsibility appropriate to the Master's level.

The University uses electronic learning and administrative resources to support the educational process. The availability of the electronic learning management system, ICT resources and electronic materials supports the effective implementation of the programme and enables lecturers to present learning materials electronically. This is relevant for the programme, especially considering its focus on international education, research methods, digital tools and contemporary educational technologies.

Overall, the teaching and learning methods are student-centered and correspond to the programme content, education level and intended learning outcomes. They support students' active participation, development of critical and analytical thinking, research competence, communication skills and professional autonomy. At the same time, since the programme is new, the effectiveness of the teaching and learning methods should be assessed after the first implementation of the programme based on student feedback, academic performance and analysis of learning outcomes achievement.

It should also be noted that the university has mechanisms to support students with diverse needs, special educational needs and different levels of academic preparation. According to the self-evaluation report, the university develops individual study plans to ensure students' full participation in the educational process. These plans take into account students' individual needs, academic background and special educational requirements. In addition, students are provided with individual consultation meetings with lecturers, which supports their academic progress and enables them to receive additional guidance when needed. This approach is consistent with the student-centered nature of the teaching-learning process and reflects the flexibility of teaching and learning methods.

### **Evidences/Indicators**

- Master's Program in Comparative and International Education
- Syllabi
- University self-evaluation report
- Interview results

### **Recommendations:**

- None

### **Suggestions for the Programme Development**

- None

### **Evaluation**

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

| Component | Evaluation |
|-----------|------------|
|-----------|------------|

## **2.4. Student Evaluation**

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

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

Student evaluation at Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University is governed by clearly defined, rigorously standardized, and consistently applied procedures designed to guarantee equitable assessment conditions for all students. The university's evaluation framework strictly aligns with national higher education legislation, regulatory mandates, and internal institutional policies, thereby safeguarding academic integrity and institutional accountability across all assessment modalities. The evaluation architecture is characterized by transparency and accessibility, ensuring that all assessment components, methodological approaches, and grading criteria are predetermined and explicitly communicated to students prior to the commencement of the instructional period.

The evaluation of student learning outcomes within educational programmes conforms to the National Credit System of Higher Education in Georgia. Student academic performance is quantified using a 100-point maximum scale, which is divided into two core dimensions: intermediate evaluations and final evaluations. The specific structure, tools, and weight distribution of these assessments are determined by the respective course lecturer or syllabus author, allowing faculty to tailor evaluation methodologies to the distinct pedagogical requirements of each discipline while effectively balancing the measurement of both theoretical knowledge and practical competencies. Minimum competence thresholds for both intermediate and final assessments are explicitly codified within each individual syllabus.

To facilitate student awareness and academic planning, Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University leverages an electronic learning management system through which students can review course syllabi during the registration phase, ensuring upfront clarity regarding assessment expectations. Furthermore, this digital portal serves as a continuous monitoring tool, allowing students to track their cumulative grades in real time and proactively manage their academic progress throughout the semester.

The university employs a multi-channel communication strategy to disseminate comprehensive information regarding the structure, content, and evaluation criteria of its academic offerings. This information is systematically accessible through official programme descriptions, academic catalogues, course syllabi institutionalized within the electronic system, and direct advisory consultations with administrative and academic personnel. For newly established academic programmes where direct cohort data may be limited, institutional consistency and the efficacy of these communication channels have been validated through student feedback from related programs.

To protect student rights and ensure grading equity, Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University provides a formalized academic appeals mechanism. The protocols and procedural steps for contesting an evaluation are explicitly detailed within the university's governing academic regulations, and institutional mechanisms to ensure student awareness of these rights include the publicity of regulatory documents and targeted informational orientations. Feedback from the student body confirms the efficacy of these measures and indicates high satisfaction with the transparency of the appeals process.

Finally, a central component of the university's educational strategy is the delivery of regular, formative, and constructive feedback. This evaluative dialogue allows students to accurately gauge their academic standing relative to established benchmarks, fostering continuous student development by diagnostic identification of individual strengths and targeted areas for academic growth. Student indicators demonstrate high satisfaction with the utility, availability, and pedagogical impact of this feedback on their overall academic progression.

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#### Evidences/Indicators

- Master's Program in Comparative and International Education
- Self-evaluation report
- Electronic student assessment system
- Syllabi
- Regulation on the learning process provision
- Interview results

#### Recommendations:

- None

#### Suggestions for the Programme Development

- None

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

| Component                               | Evaluation |
|-----------------------------------------|------------|
| <a href="#">2.4. Student evaluation</a> | Complies   |

### 3. Student Achievements, Individual Work with Them

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

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### **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 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 Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani 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.

The University's Student Affairs Office actively supports students and graduates in their career development and employment. It provides both individual and group career counseling services, assisting students in identifying their professional interests and developing effective career plans.

The Student Affairs Manager fosters partnerships with organizations across the public, private, and civil sectors, creating valuable internship and employment opportunities for students. In addition, the office regularly informs students and alumni about available job openings and career opportunities. In addition, students are provided with practical training sessions designed to enhance the competencies required in today's labor market. These sessions help students develop essential career skills, including CV and motivation letter writing, job interview preparation, professional communication, and effective presentation techniques.

Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University organizes an annual student grant competition to encourage student initiatives and strengthen academic, professional, and practical competencies. Through this program, students can develop and implement projects independently, in teams, or together with academic staff, allowing them to apply theoretical knowledge in practice and enhance skills relevant to their future careers. The university also promotes active student engagement through student clubs, providing opportunities for students to create organizations based on their interests and lead various initiatives with institutional support.

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

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

#### Recommendations:

- None

#### Suggestions for the Programme Development

- None

#### Evaluation

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

| Component                                                   | Evaluation |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <a href="#">3.1 Student Consulting and Support Services</a> | Complies   |

#### **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**

Master's thesis supervision is governed by both Georgian legislation and internal institutional regulations, including the official procedures that define the planning, execution, and evaluation of master's theses, as well as contractual frameworks that clearly outline the rights, duties, and responsibilities of supervisors and co-supervisors.

Students are required to select their thesis topic and supervisor during the fourth semester, with formal registration completed alongside the approval of the research project. Changes to the appointed supervisor may be requested up to three weeks prior to submission, provided there is a justified rationale and approval from the Faculty Dean and Program Head. As a general rule, one supervisor is assigned to a maximum of five master's students; however, exceptions may be granted based on workload considerations and academic management decisions. In addition, co-supervisors may be appointed, with their supervision load calculated according to established equivalency principles. Throughout the semester, supervisors provide structured and regular—



typically weekly—consultations aimed at guiding students through all stages of the research process, including research design, literature review, methodology selection, and data analysis. Supervisors also continuously monitor student progress, offer feedback, and support the refinement of the thesis until the final defense stage. Students are expected to conduct independent research, actively participate in consultations, prepare for and successfully defend their thesis, and fulfill all related academic requirements.

In parallel, the Master's Program Director organizes scheduled consultation meetings to ensure consistent academic support and coordination. Furthermore, quality assurance mechanisms include the systematic collection and analysis of graduate feedback, which is reviewed by the Quality Management Service and used to inform continuous program improvement and strategic development.

Interviews with students from related programs and faculty representatives revealed that supervisors actively engage with their students, offering tailored guidance and support across various aspects of the research process. Students mentioned that supervisors share valuable insights on research design and methodology, thereby fostering an environment conducive to academic growth. Many students expressed satisfaction with their supervisors, particularly highlighting their accessibility and responsiveness.

#### **Evidences/Indicators**

- Educational process Regulations
- Procedure for Planning, Completing and Assessing Master's Thesis
- Master's thesis syllabi
- Interview Results

#### **Recommendations:**

- None

#### **Suggestions for the Programme Development**

- None

#### **Evaluation**

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

| Component                                          | Evaluation |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <a href="#">3.2. Master's Students Supervision</a> | Complies   |

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

The Master's Programme in Comparative and International Education at Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University is delivered by a team of 23 academic and invited staff members, including 11 academic staff and 12 invited lecturers. Of the total number of staff involved in the programme, 9 are affiliated academic personnel. According to the reviewed documentation and information confirmed during interviews, the majority of the academic staff possess relevant pedagogical qualifications. However, only a limited number of staff members hold doctoral degrees and possess substantial practical expertise in the field of education.

Several faculty members are actively engaged in research and consultancy activities within educational institutions, thereby enhancing the practical relevance of the programme. At the same time, the level of research engagement among other faculty members appears to be less active.

The qualifications of the academic and scientific staff are evidenced by their involvement in scholarly activities, including the publication of scientific articles, book chapters, monographs, and textbooks during the past five years. Nevertheless, research productivity remains uneven across the academic staff, with a noticeable disparity between a small number of highly active researchers and others whose scholarly output is comparatively limited.

In this regard, it is recommended that the university increase the proportion of academic and invited staff holding doctoral degrees specifically in education or closely related fields in order to strengthen academic integrity and ensure greater alignment between staff qualifications and the subject area of the programme.

The workload of the teaching staff is balanced and includes dedicated hours for student consultation and Master's thesis supervision. Furthermore, the ratio of academic to administrative staff was found to be adequate, contributing to operational sustainability and the provision of effective support services for students.

Academic staff are selected through transparent competitive procedures, while invited lecturers are appointed in accordance with the university's established regulations and procedures. The qualifications of the Heads of the Programme, Giorgi Tavadze and Nano Pachkoria, were

confirmed during the evaluation process and were found to be consistent with the practical expertise required for effective programme leadership and management.

Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University systematically monitors key staff-related indicators, including staff composition, affiliation status, and turnover rates. The collected data are utilized to assess programme sustainability and support informed staffing decisions. While current staffing levels appear stable, a more systematic analysis of long-term staff engagement and retention could further strengthen future strategic planning processes.

However, as noted above, the majority of staff members holding doctoral degrees are not specialized in education or in fields directly related to education. In addition, despite recent positive developments, staff research productivity and publication output remain relatively limited. Therefore, it is further recommended that the university provide structured institutional support mechanisms, such as targeted research grants, publication mentoring schemes, and incentives for participation in academic conferences, in order to enhance staff research productivity and foster a more active research culture. Such measures would also contribute to strengthening the qualifications of Master's thesis supervisors by increasing the number of staff members actively engaged in educational research, externally funded projects, and peer-reviewed scholarly publications within the field of education (see 4.3.)

| <b>Number of the staff involved in the programme (including academic, scientific, and invited staff)</b> | <b>Number of Programme Staff</b> | <b>Including the staff with sectoral expertise<sup>5</sup></b> | <b>Including the staff holding PhD degree in the sectoral direction<sup>6</sup></b> | <b>Among them, the affiliated staff</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <b>Total number of academic staff</b>                                                                    | 11                               | 7                                                              | 4                                                                                   | 8                                       |
| Professor                                                                                                | 1                                | 1                                                              | 1                                                                                   | 1                                       |
| Associate Professor                                                                                      | 7                                | 3                                                              | 3                                                                                   | 4                                       |
| Assistant-Professor                                                                                      | 0                                | 0                                                              | 0                                                                                   | 0                                       |
| Assistant                                                                                                | 3                                | 3                                                              | 0                                                                                   | 3                                       |
| Visiting Staff                                                                                           | 12                               | 7                                                              | 4                                                                                   | 0                                       |
| Scientific Staff                                                                                         | 0                                | 0                                                              | 0                                                                                   | 0                                       |
| Including International Staff                                                                            | 0                                | 0                                                              | 0                                                                                   | 0                                       |

### **Evidences/Indicators**

- Personal files of academic and visiting staff
- Interviews
- “Methodology for determining the number of academic and visiting staff according to the educational program”
- “Methodology of the educational programme and the procedure for its approval”
- “Regulations on conducting a competition for filling academic positions”
- Workload scheme for academic and visiting staff
- Affiliation rules

#### Recommendations:

- It is recommended that the university increase the proportion of academic and invited staff holding doctoral degrees in education or closely related fields.

#### Suggestions for the Programme Development

- None

#### **Evaluation**

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

| Component                           | Evaluation    |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| <a href="#">4.1 Human Resources</a> | Substantially |

#### **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**

As we are informed through the Self Evaluation Report, at Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University, the "Procedure for Planning, Completing and Assessing Master's Thesis" have been developed, which define the qualification requirements and selection procedures for supervisors and co-supervisors. The regulations provide detailed descriptions of the supervisor's qualifications, responsibilities, and selection criteria. According to the university's regulations, a master's thesis supervisor may be a person holding a doctoral degree or an equivalent academic qualification, as well as a person holding a master's degree or an equivalent qualification who possesses relevant practical and/or research experience in the field related to the topic of the master's thesis.

This regulation is fully consistent with the national standards governing higher education qualifications and academic activities, including Standard 4.2 of the Accreditation Standards (*Qualification of Master's and Doctoral Supervisors*). In accordance with this standard, considering the specificity and development of the field, each master's/doctoral supervisor is equipped with up-to-date knowledge, actively participates in scientific research, and has published scholarly works corresponding to the general thematic direction of the master's/dissertation thesis. Furthermore, where applicable, co-supervisors are likewise equipped with up-to-date knowledge and actively engaged in scientific research or possess relevant professional experience corresponding to the thematic direction of the thesis.

Based on the Self Evaluation Report, as well as the interviews and CVs of the staff, it seems that at Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University the qualifications and experience of the personnel involved in the program implementation provide the necessary competences for achieving the goals and learning outcomes of the program to some extent. One of the Heads of the program holds a Ph.D. degree and is a Professor, whereas the other one holds a Master's degree and is a Doctoral student. Moreover, according to the information obtained during the evaluation process and interviews, and as mentioned in part 2.2 of this report, only two potential thesis supervisors hold a doctoral degree in the relevant field, and only one of them has previous experience in supervising Master's theses. Thus, the current number of supervisors with relevant qualification and supervision experience seems to be limited at its current stage.

The academic and invited staff involved in the program have relevant practical experience, theoretical knowledge, and knowledge of teaching methods and other professional skills, but we feel that there is more need for persons specializing in Education Policy and other areas of education and not so many in Philosophy and History. Thus, in terms of academic staff, the sustainability of the programs is ensured to some extent.

Moreover, during the interviews, as well as from the CVs, it became obvious that in some academic areas, some of the main journals and/or conferences in the Education Sciences could not be named. It is suggested that more efforts should be made towards the internationalization of the program and the publications in Q1 journals of the respective sub-fields under the broad umbrella of Education Sciences.

In any case, we were assured that the scientific productivity of the program is constantly evaluated, which includes quantitative and qualitative analysis of publications, involvement in research projects and participation in conferences. This process is supported by regular assessments.

More specifically, the academic and invited staff involved in the program as Supervisors of Master's students can be seen in the following table:

| <b>Comparative and International Education MA</b>        |                           |                                                                               |                                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Number of supervisors of Master's/Doctoral theses</b> | <b>Theses supervisors</b> | <b>Including the supervisors holding PhD degree in the sectoral direction</b> | <b>Among them, the affiliated academic staff</b> |
| <b>Number of supervisors of Master's/Doctoral theses</b> | 7                         |                                                                               | 3                                                |
| Professor                                                | 1                         |                                                                               | 1                                                |
| Associate Professor                                      | 1                         |                                                                               | 1                                                |
| Assistant *                                              | 1                         | PhD candidate in education                                                    | 1                                                |
| Invited Staff *                                          | 4                         | 1 (+2 PhD candidates in education)                                            |                                                  |

## Evidences/Indicators

- Procedure for Planning, Completing and Assessing Master's Thesis
- Self Evaluation Report
- Interviews
- Staff personal data and CVs

## Recommendations:

- None

## Suggestions for the Programme Development

It is suggested that more efforts should be made towards the increase of the number and the quality of the publications in top rated international journals of the respective sub-fields under the broad umbrella of Education Sciences, as this will enhance the capacity of the academic staff to supervise Master's Theses.

## Evaluation

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

| Component                                                             | Evaluation |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <a href="#">4.2 Qualification of Supervisors of Master's Students</a> | Complies   |

## **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**

As we were informed during the interviews and through the Self Evaluation Report, the evaluation of the university's academic and invited staff involves assessing both their teaching and research activities. The procedures for evaluating academic and invited staff are governed by the university's "Quality Assurance Mechanisms, Assessment Results and their Application Procedure" and "The Rules of Planning, Evaluating and Supporting Scientific-Research Activities". According to the "Quality Assurance Mechanisms, Assessment Results and their Application Procedure," the following methods are used to assess the teaching competence of academic and invited staff: a) Self-assessment by academic/invited staff and monitoring of the

educational program. b) Student evaluation of the educational program and its implementers, and, in the case of a master's program, additionally a questionnaire assessing the master's thesis supervisor. The processing and analysis of this information is conducted by the Quality Management Service. The evaluation of academic/invited staff is conducted once per semester.

Following, and based on the HR manager's recommendations, staff who have successfully and fully completed the minimum research workload are rewarded through these mechanisms:

- a) One-time monetary bonus (amount specified in the Rector's order)
- b) A formal expression of gratitude
- c) Commemorative gift
- d) Priority in participation in international exchange programs
- e) Priority in funding for conferences and research
- f) Priority in funding for publications of articles and books
- g) Funding for research trips.

Additionally, we are informed that the professional development of staff is divided into two parts: the first part involves activities defined in a plan based on evaluation results, and the second part is determined according to a needs analysis for professional development through training. Moreover, as we were informed, the university recognizes the importance of staff retention and satisfaction for its successful functioning and therefore conducts an annual staff satisfaction survey. Based on the analysis of results, areas for improvement are identified and considered in the work plan for the following year. According to the 2024 survey, the satisfaction rate among academic and invited staff is 72%. Satisfaction regarding professional development is 77%.

The university provides multiple developmental training sessions for staff. The topics of these trainings are determined based on needs identified through staff surveys. For instance, organized by the university, the faculty annually hosts the international conference Societies in Transition. In 2025, this conference was held for the second time. In addition, the university organizes other international conferences, such as the International Conference on Development Studies, hosted by the Development Studies Institute, which last year (2025) took place for the seventh time. The Development Studies Institute operates within the framework of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, aiming to strengthen and develop scientific research. Staff involved in the program have the opportunity to use this platform for conducting research, presenting at conferences, and publishing in scientific journals.

Thus, as can be concluded, academic staff is offered opportunities to participate in exchange programmes and there is an opportunity to get financial support for participation in scientific conferences. However, this does not seem to transform itself into actual and tangible publications and participation in scientific conferences of high value which are refereed and international in nature. Thus, more effort should be placed on these issues.

#### **Evidences/Indicators**

- CVs of the educational program implementing staff
- Self Evaluation Report
- Interviews with academic and invited staff

- The Rules of Planning, Evaluating and Supporting Scientific-Research Activities
- Staff-related policy
- Quality Assurance Mechanisms, Assessment Results and their Application Procedure
- Results of academic and invited staff satisfaction surveys
- University website: [www.sabauni.edu.ge](http://www.sabauni.edu.ge)
- Activities implemented for professional development of staff
- Information on academic, research, and invited staff research activities

#### Recommendations:

- None

#### Suggestions for the Programme Development

- It is suggested that more efforts should be made towards the internationalization and enhancement of the quality of the program through the participation of academic staff in international conferences of merit, and through the provision of tangible assistance and guidance in order to produce more publications in Q1 journals of the respective sub-fields under the broad umbrella of Education Sciences.

#### **Evaluation**

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

| Component                                                                              | Evaluation |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <a href="#">4.3 Professional development of academic, scientific and invited staff</a> | Complies   |

#### **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**

The programme is delivered in contemporary, purpose-designed lecture rooms that support the principles of student-centred pedagogical practice. The university is well equipped with modern information and communication technologies, and campuses provide reliable internet connectivity. The available infrastructure includes computers, projectors, photocopiers, printers, and scanners.

In addition, reading rooms and interactive learning spaces are accessible to both students and academic staff. The library offers dedicated reading areas, providing students with computer access to support research and academic work.



In the library of the university there is mandatory literature defined by the syllabus and other educational materials (including those available on electronic media), which ensure the achievement of the learning outcomes of the educational programme. The library has access to international library databases.

The university permanently monitors the availability of the basic literature in the library specified in the syllabi of the teaching courses. During the site visit, we requested randomly selected materials be included in the library catalogue, and they were available.

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#### 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

- None

#### Evaluation

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

| Component                              | Evaluation |
|----------------------------------------|------------|
| <a href="#">4.4 Material Resources</a> | Complies   |

#### **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 has submitted the budget of the Master's Programme in Comparative and International Education, approved by the Rector's order. The budget covers the first two academic years of programme implementation and reflects both the expected income and the planned expenditures related to the programme. According to the submitted budget, in the 2026-2027 academic year the programme plans to admit 15 students. The annual tuition fee is defined

as GEL 3,300, resulting in planned income of GEL 49,500. The planned expenditures for the same academic year amount to GEL 32,000. The expenditure items include salary of academic staff, printing of manuals, books, magazines, periodicals and readers, purchase of electronic resources, conferences, workshops, public lectures and other research activities, funding of research activities of academic staff, and unexpected costs.

For the 2027-2028 academic year, the budget envisages 15 first-year students and 12 second-year students. The planned total income amounts to GEL 89,100, while the planned expenditures amount to GEL 56,000. The expenditure structure remains linked to the main needs of programme implementation, including academic staff remuneration, teaching and learning resources, electronic resources, research-related activities, public lectures, seminars and other supporting activities.

The self-evaluation report states that the financial planning of the programme is aimed at supporting the full implementation of the Master's Programme, renewal of material and technical resources, updating of the library collection with relevant literature, ensuring access to international electronic resources, remuneration of academic staff, and support for conferences, public lectures, seminars, research activities and scholarly outputs. The report also indicates that the financial sustainability of the programme is supported through revenues generated by the university from educational and other activities, including tuition fees, state educational and social grants, private grants, donations, income from other economic activities and other sources.

The submitted budget demonstrates that the planned income exceeds the planned expenditures in both academic years, which indicates the economic feasibility of the programme. The budget lines are generally aligned with the needs of the programme, particularly considering its research-oriented and international profile. The allocation of funds for academic staff remuneration, teaching materials, electronic resources, conferences, public lectures and research activities is relevant to the programme objectives and learning outcomes.

At the same time, considering that the programme is new and includes significant practical and research components, it would be advisable for the university to further specify in future budget planning the financial resources allocated for the implementation of the practice component, Master's thesis supervision, student research activities and programme-specific internationalization activities. Such specification would make the connection between the programme budget and the specific components of the programme even clearer.

Overall, the submitted budget is economically feasible and generally corresponds to the needs of the programme. The available financial planning provides a sufficient basis for ensuring the sustainability of the programme.

### **Evidences/Indicators**

- Program budget
- University self-evaluation report
- Interview results

### **Recommendations:**

- None

### Suggestions for the Programme Development

- It is advisable that the university further detail future programme budgets by clearly indicating financial resources allocated for the practice component, Master's thesis supervision, student research activities and programme-specific internationalization activities.

### **Evaluation**

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

| Component                                                                                    | Evaluation |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <a href="#">4.5. Programme/ Faculty/School Budget and Programme Financial Sustainability</a> | Complies   |

## **5. Teaching Quality Enhancement Opportunities**

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

### **5.1 Internal Quality Evaluation**

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 Master's Program in Comparative and International Education demonstrates a structured and functional internal quality assurance system. The university's quality assurance policy is fundamentally based on the "Plan, Do, Check, Act" (PDCA) principle. This cycle is evident in the systematic planning of annual activities by the Quality Management Service (QMS), the implementation of assessment procedures, the checking of results against target benchmarks, and the subsequent formulation of recommendations for program development.

Program staff collaborate closely with the internal Quality Management Service throughout the quality assurance cycle. This collaboration includes the planning phase, the creation of assessment instruments (such as structured questionnaires for students, staff, and employers), and the analysis of the resulting data. Evidence shows that quality assurance results directly inform program-related decisions. For instance, feedback regarding the need for modern teaching methods led to the implementation of professional development workshops on "Flipping the Online Classroom" and training for electronic database management.

The elaboration of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) for this program was a highly collaborative process involving a broad spectrum of stakeholders. Based on Rector's Order №75-25, a self-evaluation group was established that included administrative staff, academic personnel, a student representative, and an employer. Specific responsibilities were assigned, such as the Librarian identifying new physical and electronic literature, and the employer representative providing advice on program learning outcomes.

The institution demonstrates a commitment to eliminating identified weaknesses through the creation of Action Plans. When the Fall 2024 semester evaluation revealed a slight decline in quantitative indicators (from 93% to 90%) and highlighted issues with technical resources (computers and projectors), the QMS formulated a "recommendation package". This led to an operational plan where the Chancellor and Material Resources Management Service were responsible for upgrading equipment and arranging workspaces.

The university has adapted its internal quality assurance mechanisms to monitor the electronic learning process. The Academic Affairs Service strengthens these mechanisms by systematically verifying assessment entries in the electronic learning management system throughout the semester. Students can monitor their grades in real-time, and lecturers are required to reflect scores in the electronic gradebook promptly to ensure transparency.

### **Evidences/Indicators**

- Self-Evaluation Report
- "Quality Assurance Mechanisms, Assessment Results and their Application Procedure"
- Rector's Order №75-25 establishing the Self-Evaluation Team (SET)
- Methodology for Planning, Formulating, and Developing Educational Program
- Conclusion on the evaluation of the educational process (Fall 2024 and Spring 2025)
- Internal survey instruments (Labor Market, Student Evaluation, Staff Self-Assessment)
- Action Plans approved by the Academic Council for addressing identified gaps
- Electronic learning management system records and gradebook monitoring reports
- Interview Results

### **Recommendations:**

- None

### **Suggestions for the Programme Development**

- None

### **Evaluation**

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

| Component                                       | Evaluation |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <a href="#">5.1 Internal quality evaluation</a> | Complies   |

## 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

The Master's Program in Comparative and International Education demonstrates systematic utilization of external quality assurance mechanisms to ensure program development and international competitiveness. The institution's quality assurance policy explicitly includes national accreditation by the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE) and international peer reviews as essential components of its external evaluation cycle.

For the development of this specific program, the university utilized highly qualified international field experts for developmental peer reviews . Specifically, the program was evaluated by a professor from The Education University of Hong Kong and an associate professor from The University of Hong Kong. These experts were selected based on their internationally recognized experience in comparative education research. The reviewers confirmed that the program's multidisciplinary structure and objectives align with international expectations and better position Georgia within global knowledge production networks. The experts also validated the program's focus on intercultural perspectives and the inclusion of advanced research methodology courses as global best practices.

External quality is further ensured through a comprehensive benchmarking process. During the program's formulation, a comparative analysis was conducted against five accredited Georgian programs and five high-ranking international programs from universities such as the University of Oxford, University of Glasgow, Stockholm University, and Stanford University. This analysis verified that the program is unique in the local Georgian landscape due to its specific focus on comparative education and its deep integration of research components.

The results of these external evaluations and peer reviews were directly used to improve the program during its formulation phase. Feedback from international specialists was incorporated into the final version of the curriculum and syllabi before being submitted to the Faculty Council and Academic Council for final approval. The university's regulations require these external evaluations to be conducted periodically to maintain the program's relevance and to modernize the research environment.

### Evidences/Indicators

- Self-evaluation Report
- Quality Assurance Mechanisms, Assessment Results and their Application Procedure
- External evaluation reports provided by experts from The Education University of Hong Kong and The University of Hong Kong

- Comparative analysis (benchmarking) document comparing the program with local and international partner higher education institutions
- Program development records showing the transition from working drafts to the final approved version based on expert feedback
- University Internationalization Policy ensuring alignment with global standards
- Interview Results

#### Recommendations:

- None

#### Suggestions for the Programme Development

- None

#### **Evaluation**

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

| Component                                        | Evaluation |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <a href="#">5.2. External Quality Evaluation</a> | Complies   |

#### **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**

The Master's Program in Comparative and International Education maintains a systematic and multifaceted system for program monitoring and periodic review. This process is deeply integrated into the university's internal quality assurance framework and ensures the involvement of all relevant stakeholders. Program monitoring is a collaborative effort involving academic, scientific, invited, administrative, and supporting staff, along with students, graduates, and employers. Information is systematically collected through structured surveys and analyzed annually by the Quality Management Office (QMO). These surveys cover course delivery, teaching methods, and environmental factors such as library resources and technical infrastructure. At the end of each academic year, the university also conducts a graduate satisfaction survey to assess program content and career development utility.

The institution effectively utilizes monitoring results to adapt and modernize the curriculum. A clear example of this "Act" phase is the transformation of the "Comparative Education Practicum"

into a course titled "Practice". This change was directly triggered by feedback from staff, students, and employers to better align the learning outcomes with professional market requirements. Furthermore, internal regulations allow for program modifications to be introduced two weeks before any academic semester based on the results of systematic internal and external evaluations.

The university conducts a teaching evaluation of academic and invited staff once per semester. This evaluation includes a classroom observation component and student evaluations of lecturers based on clarity of explanation, delivery, and grading objectivity. Results are processed anonymously, and aggregated data is shared with faculty deans to develop recommendations and professional development operational plans.

Master's students are specifically empowered to evaluate the scientific-research component and their scientific supervision through dedicated questionnaires. These evaluations measure satisfaction with supervisor recommendations, the value and timeliness of feedback, and the time allocated for consultations. Findings from the Spring 2024–2025 period revealed areas for improvement, specifically a score of 60/100 for "getting information about necessary sources from the supervisor," which has led to institutional recommendations for supervisors to undergo retraining and more clearly understand their duties.

Periodically, the program is compared with analogous programs at foreign universities to ensure alignment with international best practices. During its development, the program was benchmarked against five high-ranking international Master's programs, including those at the University of Oxford, University of Glasgow, and Stanford University. This comparative analysis confirmed that the SABAUNI program is unique in the Georgian landscape for its specific focus on international development and deep integration of research.

### **Evidences/Indicators**

- Self-evaluation Report
- The results of the evaluation of the educational program
- Master Thesis/Project Supervisor Evaluation result
- Benchmarking Document: Comparative analysis of local and international master's programs
- Syllabus for "Practice": Evidence of program modification based on feedback
- Quality Assurance Mechanisms: Documented procedures for PDCA cycles and survey implementation
- Interview Results

### **Recommendations:**

- None

### **Suggestions for the Programme Development**

- None

## Evaluation

Please, evaluate the compliance of the programme with the component

| Component                                                     | Evaluation |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <a href="#">5.3. Programme monitoring and periodic review</a> | Complies   |

Attached documentation (if applicable):

### Signatures

#### Chair of Accreditation Experts Panel



**Petros Pashiardis**

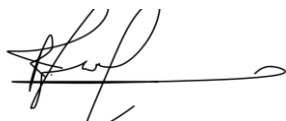
Full name, signature

#### Accreditation Expert Panel Members



**Diana Mtchedlishvili**

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**Revaz Tabatadze**

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**Tamta Lekishvili**

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**Ana Mikhelidze**

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