



"Promoting the implementation of
the procedure for the recognition
of education received by refugees
in practice"

LEPL - National Center for Educational Quality
Enhancement

2023



Introduction

The LEPL - National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (hereinafter – Center) succeeded in a small grant competition announced by the Council of Europe, to facilitate the realization of the Lisbon Recognition Convention. The grant competition aimed to support specific countries (Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Vatican, Kazakhstan, Monaco, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, San Marino, Ukraine, UK) and to the Information Centers (ENIC - Centres) participating in the educational program of Council of Europe in the process of implementing the obligations stipulated by the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

In the name of Georgia, the LEPL - National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement participated in the grant competition and submitted the following project - "Promoting the implementation of the procedure for recognizing the education received by refugees (persons with international protection status) (hereinafter: refugees) in practice".

The grant application submitted by the Center was highly evaluated by the Competition Commission of Council of Europe. As a result, the Center obtained full financial support for the aforementioned project. The official grant awarding ceremony took place in Strasbourg on March 27, 2023.

The preceding document provides a brief description and outcomes of the activities carried out within the framework of the mentioned project.



Abbreviations

ENIC-NARIC - ENIC: European Network of Information Centres in the European Region

EQPR - European Qualifications Passport for Refugees



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Chapter I: Practices for the Recognition of Education Received by Refugees, International Experience

The aim of this initiative - project is to provide assistance to refugees and individuals with refugee status (including those with international protection status, asylum seekers, or refugee-like situation status) in the recognition of their education. Additionally, the project seeks to evaluate and enhance Georgia's legal framework in this regard. Within the framework of the above-mentioned project, a **policy analysis document** has been created to examine the best practices for recognizing education obtained by individuals

Refugee – An individual considered refugee who entered the territory of Georgia and lacks the Georgian citizenship, for whom Georgia is not a country of origin and who was forced to leave his country of citizenship or permanent residence. This could be due to persecution based on race, religion, nationality, affiliation with a specific social group, or political beliefs, and the individual may not wish to avail themselves with the protection offered by this country due to the associated risks.

with international protection status. The analysis focuses on Poland, Turkey, Norway, Italy, and Sweden as examples of countries with established practices. It is essential to study and understand these practices to implement the best international standards. In addition, the situation in Georgia was studied, as well as reviewed relevant regulatory acts concerning the recognition of education received by refugees. Based on the analysis of international practice, the main findings have been identified:



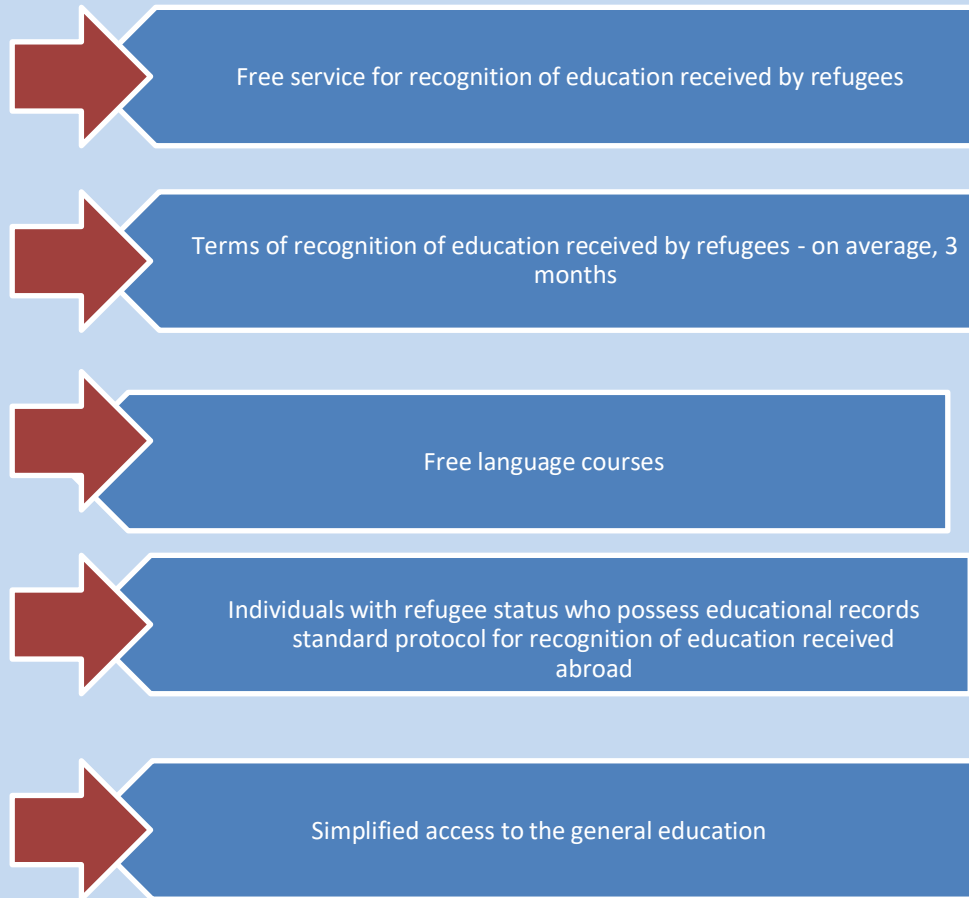


Figure 1



The analysis of global practices has demonstrated that, with regard to the recognition of refugees' general secondary and higher education, the aforementioned nations do not have any distinct laws or policies. The same procedures and guidelines are followed when recognizing the education received by the refugees, regardless of level. Additionally, the aforementioned procedure is free of charge in the majority of countries.

The following suggestions were created for the LEPL - National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (as the procedure implementer/service provider) and the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia (as the policy-making body) to improve the processes. These recommendations were based on an analysis of international practice and Georgia's current legislative framework.

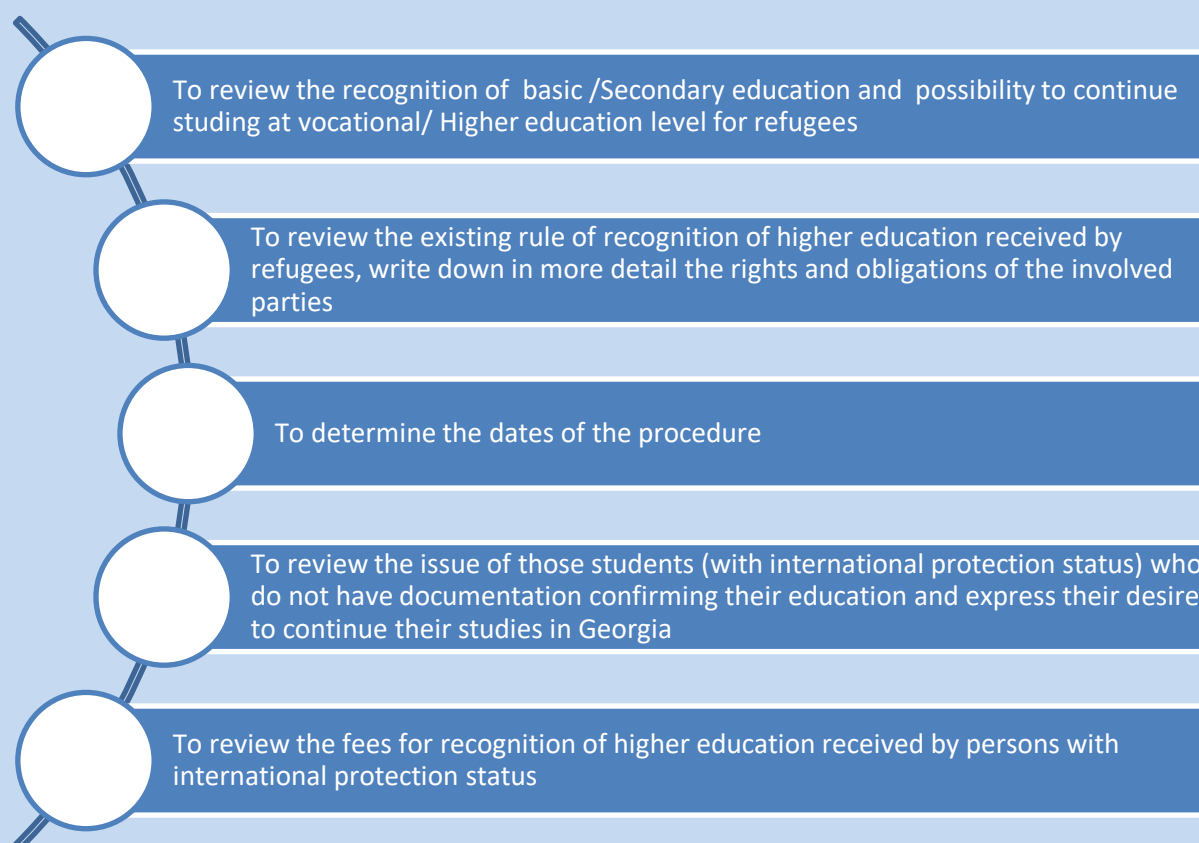


Figure 2

EQPR- European qualification passport for refugees

The Council of Europe, UNESCO, and several European nations collaborated in the development and implementation of the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR), that conveys the principles from the Lisbon Convention's Section VII outlines the recognition of qualifications held by refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation. EQPR will be awarded to those individuals who have been displaced due to armed conflicts or severe political turmoil, but who aspire to continue their education for the purpose of advancing learning or employment. Countries carry out special procedures with the involvement of universities and education experts who assess refugee's education, language proficiency, literacy, or verbal skills through written or verbal examinations, interviews, and discussions. All the necessary identifying information about the owner is contained in the document that is issued as a result of the process. Additionally, details regarding: professional skills, work experience, language proficiency, and qualification equivalency. The owner of this document is able to use it internationally for work or educational purposes in any of the project's partner countries.

On March 15, 2023, Georgia joined the European Refugee Qualification Passport and became the 22nd partner country.



Chapter II- Preparation of the draft of amendments to the normative act, regulating the procedure of recognition of education received by a person with the status of international protection

Within the project's framework, a draft of amendments to the normative act regulating the process of recognizing education received by the refugees was prepared based on an analysis of international practice. The universities were informed about the project, and it was discussed at the training session held for higher educational institutions, because they have to play a major role in the process. The version of the project of changes processed based on the received feedback was shared with the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia. Their input was considered, and the project underwent further refinement to arrive at its final version of changes.

Based on the draft amendments:

- Interested parties may apply to the center for consultation on the matter of recognition of education received by refugees
- Specific deadlines for the procedure were determined for both the center and the universities
- A comprehensive written agreement outlining the rights and responsibilities of all parties involved, including the applicant, the center, and the universities
- The languages in which the exams can be conducted were determined
- Since, together with the decision of the administrative proceedings, the center establishes an information card, the form of an information card was created
- A person with international protection status can proceed their education in the higher educational institutions without passing the unified national exams or common master's exams
- The procedure for recognizing education received abroad by a persons with international protection status should be conducted without any charge, and the fee that was previously determined should be waived



Chapter III - Research of the needs of higher educational institutions operating in Georgia regarding the recognition of education received by persons with international protection status

The study conducted by the working group at LEPL - National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement has examined the practices of higher education institutions in Georgia and explored the potential challenges associated with recognizing the education of persons with international protection status. The research unfolded in three distinct stages:

- **In the first stage** an online survey of secular higher educational institutions operating in Georgia was conducted using a questionnaire
- **The second step** involved inviting representatives of the higher education institutions to participate in focus groups that were conducted remotely, taking into consideration the limited time and sharp geographic distribution, as well as the diversity of practices and approaches and the status and geographic representativeness of these institutions as indicated by the survey.
- **The third stage** involved conducting one-on-one interviews with international partner organizations that have many years of experience recognizing the education of refugees. During these interviews, the primary issues found in the quantitative and qualitative research were identified.



Following a series of questionnaires and focus groups with Georgian higher educational institutions, the Center's research team summarized their findings as follows:

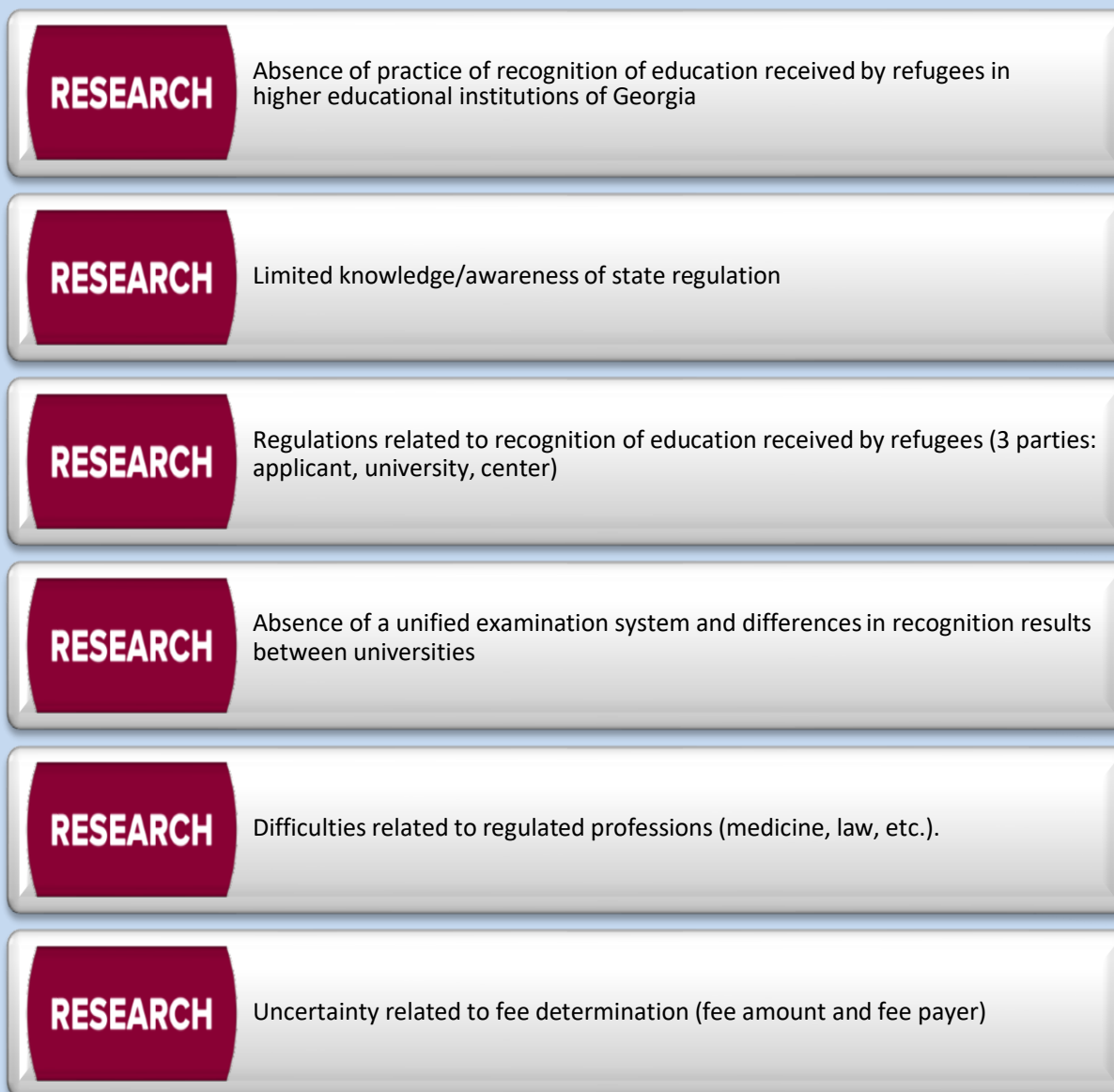


Figure 3



Chapter IV- Training: „Recognition of education received by persons with international protection status – legal framework and procedures“

Within the framework of the project: "Promoting the implementation of the procedure for recognizing the education received by refugees in practice", a training module was developed on the topic „Recognition of education received by refugee – legal framework and procedures“, which purpose was raising awareness regarding the above mentioned procedures and improving recognition practices. Three sessions were conducted as part of the training with the representatives of Georgia's accredited higher educational institutions (54 participants) and center's staff (51 participants). The dates of the trainings were: August 29–30 and September 2, 2023.

The trainings included the following stages:

- Filling out a special questionnaire developed by the working group by the participants
- Sharing the results of the analysis of international practice, the project of changes, and the results of research
- Performance of practical tasks developed by the working group
- Discussion/repetitive completion of the question

The training sessions were fruitful, and the following issues were revealed, according to the results of the analysis of the training.

- Insufficient awareness of the procedure for recognition of education received by refugees
- Inadequate awareness of the existing legal regulation in Georgia regarding the recognition of education received by refugees
- The issue of distribution of responsibilities of the parties involved in the process

- Difference of opinions of the representatives of higher educational institutions regarding the determination of service fees
- Need to determine the exam and teaching language

Chapter V – Guidance document and information brochure on the procedure for recognition of education received abroad by the persons with international protection status

The center has created an information brochure for prospective applicants in Georgian, English, Arabic, and Ukrainian, as well as a guidance document for higher educational institutions regarding the recognition of education received abroad by the persons with international protection status. This is based on an overview of the data gathered from international practice, research, and training.

Comprehensive information about how to recognize the education received by the refugees who are residing in Georgia currently is included in the guide. It will assist in creating standard/common procedures in the application review and decision-making process, as well as increasing awareness among universities about the recognition process.

The informational brochure encompasses details regarding the protocols for validating educational qualifications obtained by refugees. It is of utmost importance to ensure accessibility in languages comprehensible to them, namely Georgian, English, Arabic, and Ukrainian. The brochure provides a comprehensive overview of the legal process, outlining each step in detail. It includes a list of essential documents, contact details, and the names of institutions that individuals can approach to initiate the education recognition procedure. This encompasses both: to the regular procedure of recognition of foreign education and to the procedure of recognition of education obtained by individuals with a specific status.

In addition, the Center has prepared a sample of the information card to be issued together with the decision on the recognition stipulated by the legislation.

where indicated:



- a) The date of drawing up the card
- b) A personal identification data of a person with international protection status (name, surname, etc.)
- c) A data on qualifications to be assessed
- d) An additional information provided by the applicant (about foreign language skills, work experience, etc.)
- e) Information about the educational institution that conducts/evaluates the exam and the results of the evaluation. The information card is issued in Georgian and English languages and is given to the applicant together with the document of recognition/partial recognition/refusal of education.

Appendix. 1 Guide

Guideline on the Procedure for Recognition of Education Received by a Person with International Protection Status For Higher Educational Institutions -

<https://eqe.ge/res/NewFolder%209/Guide%20on%20the%20Procedures%20for%20recognition%20of%20education%20received%20by%20refugees%20For%20HEIs.pdf>



Appendix.2 Brochure

THE SERVICE FEE CAN BE PAID AT THE CENTER VIA ATM OR BANK TRANSFER.

DETAILS FOR MONEY TRANSFER TO THE TREASURY:

NAME:	LEPL NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL QUALITY ENHANCEMENT
ID CODE:	202330566
BENEFICIARY BANK NAME:	STATE TREASURY
BENEFICIARY BANK CODE:	TRESGE22
TREASURY CODE:	707637113 (PAYMENT FOR SERVICES OF LEPL NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL QUALITY ENHANCEMENT)



NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

ATTENTION! ALL FOREIGN DOCUMENTS MUST BE SUBMITTED AS NOTARIZED GEORGIAN TRANSLATIONS.

THE LIST OF AUTHORIZED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IS AVAILABLE ON THE CENTER'S WEBSITE.



CONTACT:

#2, ALEKSIDZE STREET, SECOND LANE, TBILISI 0193, GEORGIA
TEL/FAX: (+995 322) 200 220
EMAIL: INFO@EQE.GE
WEB: WWW.EQE.GE



FOREIGN EDUCATION RECOGNITION

THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF FOREIGN EDUCATION ARE SUBJECT TO RECOGNITION:

- 1. GENERAL EDUCATION;
- 2. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION;
- 3. HIGHER EDUCATION.



DOCUMENTS TO BE SUBMITTED AT THE CENTER:

1. Application (application form);
2. Copy of the applicant's identity document (notarized translation of a copy of a foreign citizen's passport);
3. In case the application is submitted by another person - a document confirming the authority (power of attorney);
4. If the application is submitted by a parent - a notarized copy of the minor child's birth certificate;
5. Notarized translation of a copy of the education document;
6. A receipt confirming payment of the relevant fee:
 - standard procedure (one month): **GEL 60**
 - expedited procedure (15 working days): **GEL 80**
 - 5 working days: **GEL 120**
 - 1 working day: **GEL 250**
7. For the recognition of education obtained during the study period (school grades/credits), the conclusion of the host educational institution on the relevance of the education obtained during the study period abroad must also be submitted.
8. Those wishing to enroll in a university must also have the approval of the host educational institution for the vacancy.

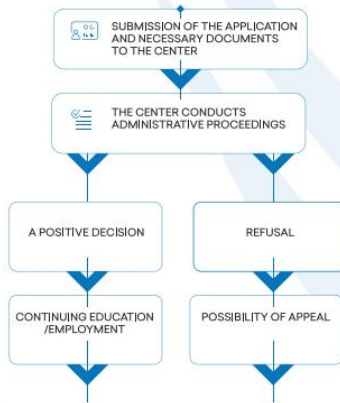


THE FOLLOWING ARE EDUCATIONAL DOCUMENTS:

- secondary (full) general education diploma (attestati) and its annex; basic education diploma (attestati) and its annex; primary education document (progress report);
- Vocational education diploma and its annex, progress report;
- Higher education diploma and its annex, progress report;
- Document confirming the academic qualification awarded.



FOREIGN EDUCATION RECOGNITION



RECOGNITION OF EDUCATION OBTAINED BY A PERSON WITH INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION STATUS

The Center recognizes foreign higher education obtained by persons with international protection status, which means establishing the fact of education obtained by these persons and the compatibility of foreign qualifications with those in Georgia.

THE PROCEDURE SHALL BE USED ONLY IF A PERSON WITH INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION STATUS CANNOT PROVIDE THE CENTER WITH A DOCUMENT CONFIRMING HIS/HER FOREIGN EDUCATION.

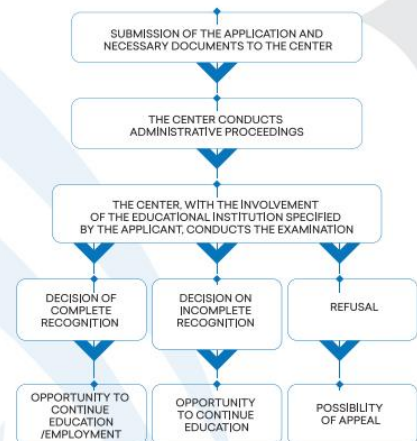


DOCUMENTS TO BE SUBMITTED AT THE CENTER:

1. APPLICATION (APPLICATION FORM);
2. COPY OF THE APPLICANT'S IDENTITY DOCUMENT;
3. IN CASE THE APPLICATION IS SUBMITTED BY ANOTHER PERSON - A DOCUMENT CONFIRMING THE AUTHORITY (POWER OF ATTORNEY);
4. NOTARIZED COPY OF THE DOCUMENT CONFIRMING THE INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION STATUS;
5. ALL DOCUMENTS ATTESTING TO THE EDUCATION RECEIVED BY THE PERSON WITH INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION STATUS AND/OR THE APPLICANT MUST GIVE REFERENCE TO THESE DOCUMENTS.
6. A RECEIPT CONFIRMING PAYMENT OF THE RELEVANT FEE OF 70 GEL FOR THE RECOGNITION OF FOREIGN EDUCATION BY A PERSON WITH INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION STATUS DEFINED BY THE LAW OF GEORGIA "ON INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION". THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION CONDUCTING THE EXAMINATION ASSESSMENT PROVIDED FOR IN THE PROCEDURE MAY SET ADDITIONAL FEE TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE SPECIFICS OF THE QUALIFICATION/LEARNING OUTCOMES BEING ASSESSED



RECOGNITION OF EDUCATION OBTAINED BY A PERSON WITH INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION STATUS



Appendix 3. Information Card

Information Card	
Date and place of drawing up the card:	
Personal information of the cardholder:	
Name:	Surname:
Father's name:	Mother's Name:
Date of Birth:	Place of Birth:
Nationality:	Gender:
Information about education/qualification received abroad:	
Name of the educational institution in which the education was received:	
Country where the educational institution was located:	
Name of educational program:	
Name of qualification awarded:	
Years of education:	
Name of the educational institution conducting/evaluating the exam:	
Results of evaluation	
Additional information about the applicant:	
Language skills:	
Work experience:	
Other:	
Signature:	

