

Annual Report 2021

LEPL - National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement

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CONTENTS

Introduction	6
Chapter I. Institutional Development	7
Coordinating Council	7
Document Management	7
Human Resources Management	8
Strategic communications	8
Provision of Material-Technical Base and Software	9
Information Security	10
Protection of Personal Data	11
State Internal Financial Control System	11
Management of Financial Resources	12
Internal Quality System Development	13
2022 Action Plan	13
Thematic Analysis	14
Other Studies and Methodological Documents	14
Annual International Conference of the Center	17
TWINNING Conference	19
Chapter II. Implemented Activities	20
Higher Education Quality Assurance	20
Experts' Visits to Higher Education Institutions, Administrative Proceedings	20
Support Activities for Higher Education Institutions (Training, Consultations, Workshops, Textbooks, etc.)	22
Development of Authorization and Accreditation Processes	22
Pool of Experts for Authorization of Higher Education Institutions and Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes	23
ENQA Recommendations and Work Carried out by the Center	24
Other Significant Activities	24
Vocational Education Quality Assurance	25
Experts' Visits to Educational Institutions, Administrative Proceedings	25
Manuals, Forms Required for Administrative Proceedings	26
Conducted Trainings, Consultations, and Workshops	27
An information meeting was held on February 17, 2021, for the new members of the Authorization Council of Vocational Educational Institutions	29

Pool of Experts for Authorization of Vocational Educational Institutions _____	29
Informal Education _____	30
Other Significant Activities _____	30
General Education Quality Assurance _____	31
Reform of the General Education Quality Assurance System _____	31
Experts' Visits to Educational Institutions, Administrative Proceedings _____	32
Developed Documents _____	32
Pool of Experts for Authorization of General Education Institutions _____	33
Conducted Workshops/Training _____	33
Other Significant Activities _____	33
Development of National Qualifications _____	34
Administration of Vocational and Higher Education Sectoral Councils _____	34
Changes to vocational framework documents _____	34
Management and Monitoring of National Qualifications Framework _____	35
Developed Documents _____	36
Workshops and Consultations _____	37
Other significant activities _____	37
Services Development _____	39
Development of Educational Services _____	39
Accreditation of the Professional Development Programme of the Public Official _____	41
Internationalization _____	42
WFME _____	42
ENQA _____	43
BFUG _____	43
CEENQA _____	44
Twinning _____	44
Projects _____	44
ERASMUS + _____	45
DEQAR CONNECT _____	45
Cooperation with Quality Assurance Agencies _____	46
AQAS _____	46
EKKA _____	47
Analysis of Unfulfilled Activities of the 2020 Action Plan _____	47

Abbreviation Used

AQAS - German Agency for Quality Assurance through Accreditation of Study Programmes

BFUG - Bologna Follow-up Group

BICG - Bologna Implementation Coordination Group

CAF - Common Assessment Framework

CEENQA - Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education

CIMEA - Information Centre on Academic Mobility and Equivalence

Crafting Future - British Council Programme

DAAD - German Academic Exchange Service

DEQAR CONNECT - Project funded by Erasmus+

EACEA - Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency

ECA - European Consortium for Accreditation in higher education

ECVET - the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training

EDU LAB - Education Lab - a project funded by the Alumni Association of the International Education Center

EKKA - Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education

ENQA - European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

EQAR - European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education

ETF - European Training Foundation

EUA - European University Association

EuNIQ - Project funded by Erasmus+

INQAAHE - International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education

IPSAS - International Public Sector Accounting Standards

ITEAC - Quality Assurance Congress organized by the Turkish Quality Assurance Agency

LLL - Lifelong learning

MICROBOL - Obligations linked to micro-credentials in the European Higher Education System, taking into account the Bologna key commitments

PLA - Prior Learning Assessment

PROFFORMANCE - A project funded by Erasmus

RURD - A project funded by Erasmus

SQUARE - A project funded by Erasmus

Staff Mobility - A staff exchange programme

TPG A on QF - Thematic Peer Group A on Qualifications Framework development

TPG B on RLC - Thematic Peer Group B on the Lisbon Recognition Convention

TPG on QA - Thematic Peer Group on Quality Assurance

Twinning - Twinning Project of Public Services “Strengthening Capacities for Quality Assurance and Governance of Qualifications”

WFME - World Federation of Medical Education

INTRODUCTION

This document presents the activity report of the LEPL - National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement, which covers the reporting period from January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021. The report integrates the work performed by the Center's structural units in relation to the activities outlined in the 2021-2025 Strategy and 2021 Action Plan on Strategy Implementation of the Center. The report also provides the stakeholders with the additional information on the significant activities and achievements of the Center, which are not outlined in the strategic documents, but address the mission and key strategic objectives of the Center.

The present report consists of three chapters. *The First Chapter* discusses the activity report of the Center in accordance with the main strategic goals. *The Second Chapter* presents the report on the implementation of the 2021 Action Plan for the Strategy of the Center.

In accordance with the Rule on Development, Monitoring and Evaluation of the Strategy and Strategic Action Plan of the Center, the Planning, Research and International Relations Department of the Center coordinated the development of the Center's progress reports. The presented report was prepared as a result of cooperation with the structural units of the Center.

CHAPTER I. INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Coordinating Council

The Coordinating Council is a collegiate body designed to ensure involvement of the stakeholders in the Center's management, activities and development processes of education quality assurance mechanisms. In 2021, a change was made to the Statute of the Center regarding the status and powers of the Coordinating Council. These changes significantly increased the role of the Center's Coordinating Council in management, activities and development processes of education quality assurance mechanisms.

The new composition of the Coordinating Council of the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement was appointed by the Order of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia of April 13, 2021, for a two-year term. The Council consists of local and international education experts, representatives of higher education institutions, representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, representatives of international and local civil society organizations and a student of higher education institution.

The new composition of the Coordinating Council held 3 meetings in 2021, where the Council discussed a total of 9 issues related to quality assurance in higher education, information security of the Center, strategic documents and the budget of the Center. Evaluation methodology, which ensures the improvement of the Council's activities were also discussed at the session of the Coordinating Council. Information about the members of the Coordination Council and the minutes of the meetings are public and available on the Center's website.¹

Document Management

Based on the results of a survey conducted in 2020, a standard was created for the administration of the official e-mail of the Center, which aims to provide relevant services (receiving/issuing information electronically) to the users who receive the Center's services remotely, also, to define general rules on conduct and communication.

In 2021, the processing of archive documents for 2016-2018 was completed in an archival format.

In accordance with the law, the records and the Act of Destruction of expired documents were reviewed and approved by the Experts Commission of the Center, also, it was reviewed and approved by the National Archives Expert Inspection Commission. Then, the mentioned records and the Act of Destruction were approved by the Director of the Center.

¹ <https://eqe.ge/ka/page/static/992/sakoordinacio-sabtchos-skhdomis-ogmebi>

In 2021, the documents of 2006-2018 to be stored permanently and for a long time in the archives of the Center were digitized. In particular:

- Authorization materials of educational institutions (2006-2018);
- Accreditation materials of educational programmes (2006-2018);
- Decisions and protocols (2016-2018) of the Councils operating in the Center;
- Orders of the Director of the Center on main activities (2010-2014);
- Orders of the Director of the Center on Personnel (2010-2014);
- Labor contracts of the employees of the Center (2006-2016).

Human Resources Management

With the active involvement of the Human Resource Management and Documentation Department, the new internal regulation of the Center was developed and approved, and meetings were held with the structural units to get acquainted with them. A policy document of human resource management was developed, which is a set of processes, approaches, values and principles related to the selection, employment, professional development and retention of qualified, highly potential people at the Center and is in line with current legislation, the mission, vision and Strategic Development Plan of the Center. The policy is based on the recognition of the great importance of human resources at all levels of the Centre's activities. The Center believes that human resources are a key force in strategic potential.

At the same time, the "Rule on Covering an Internship at the Legal Entity of Public Law - National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement" was developed and approved. Internship competitions were held at the Center. Subsequently, 13 interns were selected in eight structural units, and three interns were employed at the Center after the completion of the internship. During the reporting period, 11 competitions were completed. Of these, ten competitions were related to staff positions, one - to non-staff positions, and ten candidates were selected for the announced vacancies. In addition, seven employees of the Center were appointed to new positions through career development.

During the reporting period, qualification requirements and job description documents were created for the non-staff and staff positions of the Center.

Strategic communications

On March 5, 2021, the Center published the first e-journal - "Education Quality Digest", which was published on the Center's website, also, the information about the publication was posted on the Facebook page of the Center. The journal presents articles on quality assurance processes in education, examples of best practices at the local and international levels, a brief analysis of changes in legislation, and a variety of information for the stakeholders. By the Order of the Director of the LEPL National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement, an Editorial Board of the electronic journal was created, the

members of which are employees of various structural units of the Center. Articles prepared by the Editorial Board members and other staff of the Center were published in the electronic journal.

In addition, a concept document for the system of frequently asked questions (FAQ) was developed to make the Center's activities transparent and to provide the information to the stakeholders about the Center's activities. The purpose of creating the concept document is to provide citizens with relevant and comprehensive answers to the most frequent questions through the FAQ on the official website of the LEPL National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (www.eqe.ge). The document outlined the responsibilities of the employees of the relevant structural units, defined the terms of monitoring and information delivery.

During the reporting period, the Center actively cooperated with various media outlets. Among them are the following media sources: interpressnews.ge, the newspaper “Akhali Ganatleba”, Radio Imedi, Radio Kommersant and the Public Broadcaster. The Director of the Center was invited to various thematic programmes. Also, articles and news prepared by the staff of the Center about the activities, achievements and future plans of the Center were disseminated.

The Center developed a media relations plan for 2021. The media relations plan lists all the important activities to be implemented by the Center.

In June 2021, a working meeting was held with media representatives working on education topics. The purpose of the working meeting was to provide complete information about the activities, ongoing projects, achievements, challenges and future plans of the Center. The following thematic presentations were presented to the media: activities and future visions of the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement; quality assurance activities in general, vocational and higher education and practices in public relations. The working meeting was attended by the staff of the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement, representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and 16 media outlets.

Provision of Material-Technical Base and Software

A compliance survey of the Center's material base was carried out to ensure the institutional sustainability and efficiency of the Center through its organizational arrangement, resources and ongoing processes. Compliance of material resources with the functions and responsibilities of all structural units is assessed through the survey. The purpose of the survey was to determine the satisfaction of the Center's staff with the material resources, working environment, supply of necessary stationery and office equipment, maintenance of computer equipment, office furniture and other needs. The survey was conducted in January-March 2021 and was based on the results of an online survey of the employees. The survey identified the needs of material resources and developed recommendations to address the identified challenges.

An electronic tender to purchase the renovation services of the office space of the building was announced as a result of the mentioned survey by the Procurements and Logistics Department of the Center. Through this tender, the repair/rehabilitation works of the first, 4th and 5th floors of the office space belonging to the Center were successfully carried out. Besides, part of the office space was equipped with new furniture: with office chairs, tables, wardrobes and built-in furniture. After the completion of the renovation, at several places in the foyer of the office space and in the work space, an image corner of the Center was arranged with appropriate branding. Also, in the foyer of the 4th floor, the so-called "green space" was arranged with natural plants. To provide preventive measures against the existing Covid pandemic, disinfection barriers were installed in the building of the Center to prevent the spread of the Covid infection, electronic equipment for measuring stationary temperature was installed at the entrance, antibacterial liquid with appropriate dispensers was placed in several places of the office space to disinfect hands.

In terms of hardware and software, the following State procurement were implemented in 2021: a) database software development package and b) development of software for printing the documents certifying qualification. The desktop computers in the Center office were enhanced by increasing the RAM, also, various computer peripherals such as webcams, headphones, speakers, keyboard, mouse, etc. were purchased. By 2021, the Center was provided with zoom communication and multimedia packages, through which the Center's structural units organized their working meetings and other meetings within the Center and with various interested or invited parties. During 2021, 123 public procurement contracts were signed, with a total value of 670,906 GEL (six hundred and seventy thousand, nine hundred and six).

By the Order of the Director of the Center issued on November 17th, 2021, the Annual Public Procurement Plan of the Center for 2022 was approved. The basis for drawing up the Public Procurement Plan was the procurement request forms filled in and submitted by the heads of the structural units of the Center.

Information Security

In February 2021, the Action Document for Information Security Management System (ISMS) of the Center was approved.

Meetings of the ISMS Council were held periodically. A document on dissemination area of the information security system of the Center was developed and approved. This document includes a general provision, purpose, and organizational arrangement, as well as the business processes that are the carrier of critical information and the dissemination area of the information security. The document also provides a justification for the dissemination area. The document was submitted to the LEPL Digital Governance Agency and the Coordinating Council of the Center for consideration before approval. A new work plan for the implementation of the ISMS was developed in line with the change in the dissemination area of the Center.

During 2021, various documents of the Center were periodically reviewed and brought in compliance with the norms of information security. Among them, a technical task for the security of the Center's website and portal of electronic system of monitoring was prepared. Also, the policy for consumption of the electronic services and devices of the Center was developed.

A fishing test simulation was performed at the Center. Based on the test, a syllabus of relevant training courses was also developed.

During the reporting period, the security of the Center's computer and network systems was actively checked and relevant recommendations were prepared for the technical groups to achieve a high standard of security. The policy for consumption of the electronic services and devices of the Center was developed.

Protection of Personal Data

A personal data registration form was developed, which shall reflect the information about the disclosed personal data.

The structural units of the Center were trained on important issues of personal data protection. Experts from vocational education institutions were also trained.

During the reporting period, all persons employed at the Center were sent informational letters on various personal data issues to their official e-mail. Also, various legal acts of the Center, including the internal regulation, were amended/supplemented with regard to various regulatory norms on personal data.

State Internal Financial Control System

To facilitate the effective implementation of the State internal financial control system, the Internal Audit Department identified the key risks in December 2020 based on the tasks and objectives of the organization. For the identification and evaluation of these key risks, indicators were developed and evaluated with scores, also, substantive weights were determined. Based on all of the above, 2021-2023 Strategic Plan and 2021 Annual Plan were developed.

In 2021, four scheduled audits were performed.

The staff of the Internal Audit Department of the Center actively participate in the training and work webinars organized by the State Internal Control Department of the Ministry of Finance of Georgia. During these meetings, local and international experts, representatives/auditors of internal audit entities share with each other the methods of conducting audits, best practices, as well as experience in implementing the State internal financial control system.

To effectively implement the risk management system in the Center, the Internal Audit Department also issues the relevant recommendations. In accordance with the scheduled events, the Internal Audit Department of the Center conducted training on the risk

management system. This training was conducted for the structural units of the Center, their managers (Head/Deputy Head), as well as the Deputy Directors. Within the training, the following issues were discussed: essence of risk, its analysis and evaluation methods, risk categories, risk management models, evaluation matrix, the essence of control and response measures.

In order to implement the internal quality assurance system, the Internal Audit Department actively cooperates with the Internal Audit Department of the Ministry. They have elaborated the relevant draft guiding document, which will be introduced by the Internal Audit Department of the Center after approval, taking into account the specifics of the activity.

At the end of 2021, the Internal Audit Department conducted a risk assessment, based on which the relevant changes were made in the Strategic Plan of the Internal Audit Department of the Center for 2021-2023. Also, the annual internal audit plan of the Center for 2022 was approved, with 5 audits planned, including 2 systematic, 2 compliance, and 1 performance audits.

Management of Financial Resources

In 2021, the 2022 budget of the Center was agreed with the Ministry of Education and Science in the amount of 8,231,300.00 GEL. The following issues were agreed: 2022 staff schedule of the Center, the limits of the cost of fuel and communication (telephone and cellular communication) expenses and the funds to be allocated for the salaries and material incentives of the employees (employed at staff and non-staff positions). The budget of the Center, the staff list and the salary fund were agreed with the Government of Georgia. Draft Decrees of the Georgian Government were developed on allowing exceptions in relation to the restrictions envisaged under the Law of Georgia on Remuneration in Public Institutions. Decrees of the Government of Georgia were issued on the mentioned exceptions. The reports on the implementation of State budget for 3, 6, 9 months of 2021 year and for 2020 year as well as the budget application forms for 2022-2025 prepared in accordance with the requirements of Articles 35 and 36 of the Budget Code of Georgia were submitted The Ministry of Education and Science.

The financial report for 2020 was prepared and submitted to the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia. *(Balance)*.

The calculation of separate administrative proceedings related to the implementation of the vocational training and vocational retraining programmes was established and the following was prepared:

- a) Draft administrative proceedings fee related to the correction of a defect by an expert/experts panel.
- b) A draft fee for increasing the marginal number of places for vocational training and vocational retraining programmes.

During 2021, the Financial Division provided the necessary activities to be performed within the proceedings of the Departments of Higher Education Quality Assurance, Vocational Education Quality Assurance, General Education Quality Assurance and Services Development and for the proper functioning of the Center.

Internal Quality System Development

To implement the internal quality assurance system in accordance with the international practice, the Center prepared a document of Internal Quality Assurance Policy and a list of the basic and supportive business processes of the Center with the involvement of the structural units.

The methodological document was developed which takes into account the internationally established approaches to business processes description. The methodology is based on the RASCI (Responsible - Accountable - Supportive - Consulted - Informed) principles and includes part of the risk analysis. The methodology was developed within the framework of the EU Twinning project.

An action plan for describing business processes was developed, according to which 15 processes were described during the year. Each structural unit/responsible person analyzed at least one process. As part of the activity, an analysis of the work performed was prepared, based on which an updated list of business processes was reviewed and submitted to the Director.

An electronic system for monitoring the implementation of the Strategy and the Annual Action Plan on Strategy Implementation was launched at the Center. Instructions were created for the use of the system and the structural units were trained. Strategic documents were integrated on the portal, users were added to the system and other preparatory works of the portal were carried out.

The portal prepares a report on each activity, the Planning, Research and International Relations Department of the Center assigns intermediate statuses to completed activities, while the final status is assigned by the curators of the activities - Deputies to the Director and by the Director. Quarterly and annual reports are prepared with the use of the information published on the portal.

During the year, a portal improvement concept was revised and developed to suit the needs of the Center.

2022 Action Plan

The Strategy (2021-2025) Implementation Action Plan (2022) of the Center was developed in accordance with the Rule on Developing, Monitoring and Evaluating the Strategy and Strategy Implementation Action Plan approved by the Director of the Center. In the second half of September 2021, the structural units of the Center were trained on the activities for the Strategy Action Plan, the development of relevant indicators and evidence, the deadlines for the development of a document and the basic principles of scheduling the

activities. In line with the Strategy and its objectives, the departments developed activities, indicating timelines, indicators, evidence and resources. The draft Action Plan was presented to the stakeholders after agreement with the Center's management. The meetings were attended by about 300 individuals, including representatives of general, vocational and higher education institutions, representatives of resource centers, members of Councils and members of the Pool of Experts of the Center. The draft Action Plan was also shared with the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and the LEPL - Education Management Information System. After the meetings, the feedback of the stakeholders was reflected in the draft. A consolidated version of the draft was submitted to the Coordinating Council of the Center for approval. The final document was submitted to the Director on December 15, 2021 for approval. It is noteworthy that the 2022 Action Plan outlines 72 activities for 25 objectives of 6 goals. Monitoring and evaluation of the 2022 Action Plan will continue through the electronic monitoring portal. The 2022 Action Plan is published on the Center's website: <https://bit.ly/3A3Ilhq>

Thematic Analysis

To introduce a systematic approach to research-based decision-making, a thematic analysis methodology was developed within the framework of the EU Twinning project. Through thematic analysis, the Center reflects on the existing external quality assurance mechanisms and, taking into account the results of the analysis, plans to continuously improve the processes and further develop the system as a whole.

During the reporting period, based on the developed methodology, with the involvement of international experts, the Center completed work on three thematic analyzes:

- Content changes in the fields of study of vocational education in Georgia and their compliance with the European Qualifications Framework;
- Challenges related to the recognition in Georgia of the general education programmes recognized abroad and ways to solve them;
- Thematic analysis of quality assurance in medical education, including clinical teaching.

The results of the thematic analysis were presented to the stakeholders at the final conference of the EU Twinning Project, which took place on 15 June.

Other Studies and Methodological Documents

In collaboration with the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement and Grant Project of the Alumni Association of the International Education Center - Educational Lab (EDU LAB), a survey was conducted on the professional development needs of the members of the Pool of Experts of the authorization of higher education institutions and the accreditation of programmes of educational institutions and PLA activities were carried

out. The survey identified the professional needs of higher education experts and developed recommendations. As a result of the main findings of the survey and communication with the management of the Center, Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) activities were planned on three topics: evaluation of the internal quality assurance system/evaluation of quality development capabilities of teaching, external evaluation of the structure and content of the educational programme and evaluation of internationalization. During the organization, the local as well as international experience was taken into account with the involvement of local and international experts. PLA sessions were held in August. Representatives of the Center shared with the experts the main challenges of assessing these issues from the perspective of the Center. The experts presented the main challenges in the evaluation process from the perspective of an expert and an institution. An international speaker shared information on international experience in evaluating programme contents and quality assurance mechanisms. After the presentations, a discussion was held on these issues. It needs to be noted, that the representatives of the Estonian Quality Assurance Agency (EKKA), the European Students' Union (ESU), the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) and the German Quality Assurance Agency (AQAS) were involved in the sessions. Besides, the local and international experts, representatives of the ENQA Quality Assurance Agency, German Agency for Quality Assurance through Accreditation of Study Programmes (AQAS) and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) participated in the PLA events.

During the reporting period, several studies were conducted in the format of working groups at the initiative of structural units on the following topics: survey of the needs of educational institutions in terms of developing new Qualifications Framework, evaluation survey of material-technical and software of the Center and survey of the needs of vocational educational institutions. Besides, customer satisfaction survey was conducted, which aimed to assess the satisfaction of individuals and legal entities receiving the services of the Center and to promote the improvement of the quality of services. To achieve this goal, the survey had the following objectives: a) assessment of satisfaction with the services based on the data already available at the Center (collected during the reporting year) as well as additional data (collected within this survey); b) identification of the main challenges and development of recommendations to improve the quality of the services. The survey covered the activities of the Center in the following areas: a) general education, b) vocational education, c) higher education, d) educational services and e) communication. An individual methodology was developed to evaluate the Center's activities in each area, and it was defined according to the survey questions, the type of respondents and the information available. In the survey, qualitative as well as quantitative methods were used, including: desk study, focus groups, telephone interviews, online

surveys. The main findings of the survey are presented as a report. Survey reports are available on the Center's website².

During the reporting period, the methodology was developed for evaluating the activities of the Authorization Council of Educational Institutions and the Accreditation Council of Educational Programmes. The methodology takes into account the main requirements of the concept for evaluation of the activities of the Councils developed by the Center. The concept was discussed with international experts in the framework of the EU Twinning Project. In the process of working on the methodology, presentations were made for the management of the Center and the members of the Authorization Council of Vocational Education Institutions. Various aspects of the evaluation methodology, including periodicity of activities, questionnaires, etc., were reviewed on the basis of oral and written feedback received from the stakeholders. After reconciling the final versions of the methodology and tools, a pilot plan was developed. The Authorization Council of Vocational Education Institutions (VEIs) was selected for the purposes of piloting the methodology. July-December 2021 was determined as the evaluation period. The following data collection methods were used in the evaluation process: survey (source of information: experts participating in the meetings of the Authorization Council; representatives of education institutions; representatives of the Secretariat of the Council); monitoring of quantitative data (source of information: protocols of sessions); discussion meetings of the Council (participants: members of the Authorization Council of Vocational Education Institutions and its Secretariat). Based on the analysis, recommendations were developed to improve both the activities of the Council and the evaluation methodology.

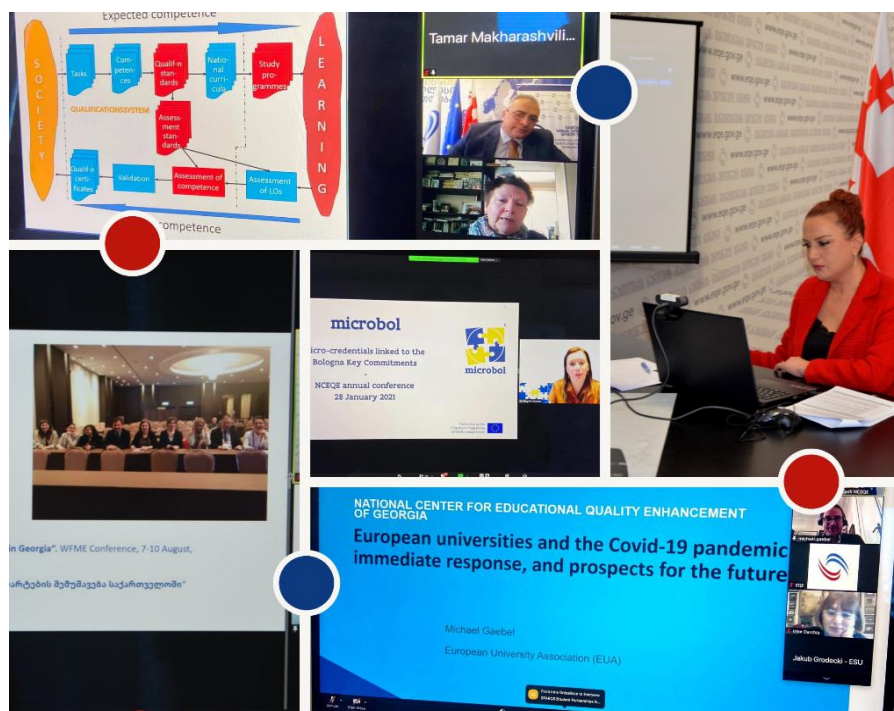
²<https://eqe.ge/res/NewFolder%204/NewFolder/%E1%83%9E%E1%83%A1%E1%83%93%20%E1%83%99%E1%83%95%E1%83%9A%E1%83%94%E1%83%95%E1%83%90%20-%2028.04.2021.pdf>

Annual International Conference of the Center

On January 28, 29 and February 1, 2021, in an online format (using the ZOOM platform), the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement organized an annual international conference on “Development of Education Quality Assurance System: Achievements and Challenges”. On the first day of the conference, the following issues were discussed: achievements and challenges in the development of the higher education quality assurance system, the main directions of the European Higher Education Area, the impact of the Bologna Process on the Georgian higher education system after Rome Ministerial, European and National experience of recognizing microcredits in higher education, improving the quality of medical education in accordance with the updated requirements of the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME); ensuring the quality of e-learning and hybrid learning-teaching in higher education during the state of emergency, the role of students in the development of the quality assurance system of education.

Annual International Conference of the Center

The conference was attended by the representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, the Parliamentary Committee on Education, Science and Culture, representatives of higher, vocational and general education institutions, local and international partner organizations, experts from 20 countries, members of the Authorization, Accreditation and Appeals Councils, as well as students, employers and other stakeholders.



The second day of the conference was dedicated to general education, and the following issues were discussed: the progress and prospects of general education reform, challenges and solutions to teacher professional development, quality assurance of international general education programmes, development of general education quality assurance system: achievements and challenges.

The second day of the conference was also dedicated to higher education, when the conference participants discussed the quality assurance of e-learning and hybrid learning-teaching in higher education.

On the third day of the conference, the following matters were discussed: the achievements and challenges in the development of the quality assurance system of vocational education, introduction of new standards for the authorization of vocational education institutions and the results of self-assessment analysis, development of the adult education system in Georgia/analysis of the introduction of vocational training and vocational retraining programmes - achievements and challenges, credits in the field of vocational education (ECVET) and international experience, quality development of vocational qualifications, challenges of implementing a work-based learning system under COVID-19 conditions.

TWINNING Conference

On 15 June 2021, the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement and the EU Twinning Project "Strengthening Capacities for Quality Assurance and Governance of Qualifications" jointly held a conference on: "Cluster Accreditation and Thematic Analysis in Georgia". The speakers at the event spoke about the experience gained from piloting cluster accreditation in Georgian higher education institutions and from conducting thematic analysis based on new procedures related to higher, vocational and general education institutions.

The introduction of cluster accreditation as a European best practice was recommended by the Twinning project experts. In the future, by transition to cluster accreditation, Georgian higher education institutions, based on the National Qualifications Framework, will be able to accredit clusters of programmes instead of individual educational programmes in a relatively short period of time, using less human and financial resources.



TWINNING Conference

During the conference, the stakeholders discussed the future prospects of cluster accreditation and thematic analysis in Georgia, taking into account the recommendations of the Twinning project experts and best European practices and policies.

The event was attended by representatives of higher, vocational and general education institutions of Georgia, members of the Twinning project and the members of the Pool of Experts of the Center and the beneficiary institution, representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and other relevant agencies.

CHAPTER II. IMPLEMENTED ACTIVITIES

Higher Education Quality Assurance

Experts' Visits to Higher Education Institutions, Administrative Proceedings

During the reporting period, due to the risks of the COVID-19 pandemic, authorization and accreditation visits were conducted in a hybrid mode, which included conducting interviews online, through the Zoom platform, and inspection of material resources on site, while the Council sessions were conducted remotely. During the reporting period, meetings of the Authorization and Accreditation Councils were held, including 17 meetings of the Authorization Council of Higher Education Institutions, 93 meetings of the Accreditation Council of Educational Programmes and 13 meetings of the Appeals Council.

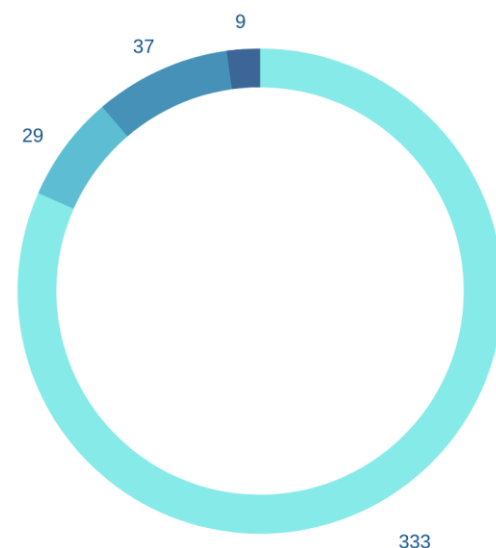
The Accreditation Council of Educational Programmes reviewed 391 issues, and, subsequently, made the following decisions: accreditation was granted to 280 educational programmes; conditional accreditation was granted to 25 educational programmes; accreditation was denied for 8 educational programmes; as a result of the monitoring, proceedings were stopped for 29 educational programmes; review of the report on the implementation of the recommendations for 37 educational programmes; defect correction - 12 decisions.

Diagram N1. Higher Educational Programme Accreditation

Programme Accreditations

Data for 2021

- TECHNICAL AMENDMENT
- FOLLOW-UP REPORTS (BASED ON EXTERNAL EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS)
- MONITORING
- ACCREDITATION



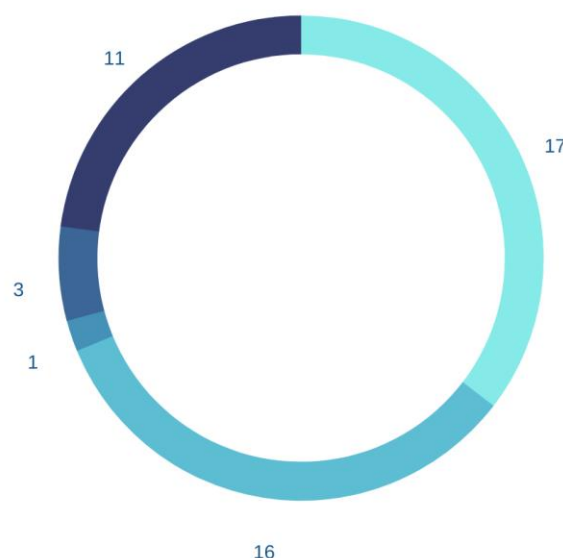
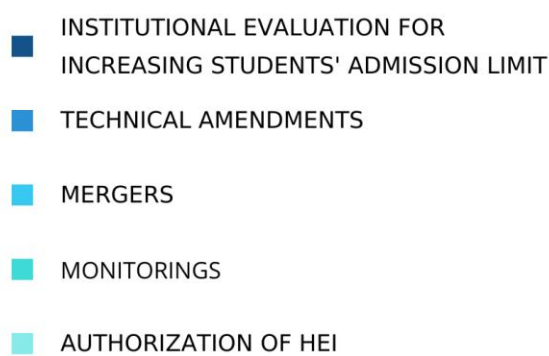
ACCREDITATION COUNCIL MEETINGS - 93

The Authorization Council of Higher Education Institutions made 39 decisions. Among them are the following: 16 decisions on granting authorization to higher education institutions, 1 decision on refusal of accreditation, 16 decisions on termination of administrative proceedings of monitoring; merge - 1, defect correction - 3; increasing the marginal number of student places - 2 decisions.

Diagram N2. Authorization of Higher Education Institution

Institutional evaluation of HEIs

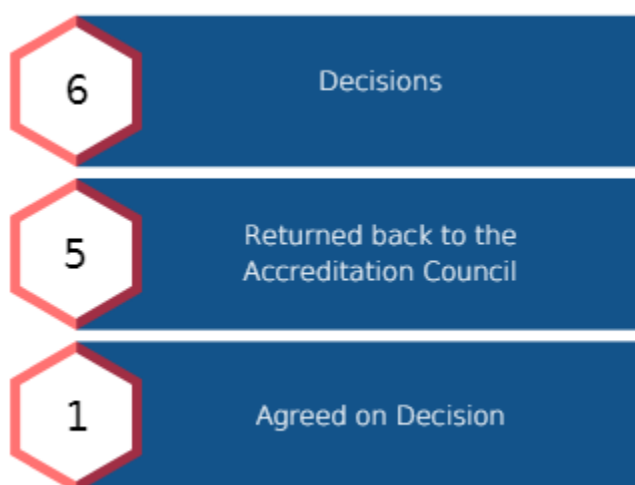
Data for 2021



AUTHORIZATION COUNCIL MEETING - 17

The Appeals Council received 6 decisions: five decisions were related to the return of the decision made by the Accreditation Council of Educational Programmes to the Accreditation Council; 1 decision concerned the sharing of a decision made by the Accreditation Council of Educational Programmes.

Diagram N3. Appeal Claim



Support Activities for Higher Education Institutions (Training, Consultations, Workshops, Textbooks, etc.)

Topics were identified in which higher education institutions would like to be offered training by the Center.

The Center is also involved in two international projects funded by the European Commission (PROFFORMANCE, SQUARE) thus supporting the development of tools for improving the quality of education in higher education institutions. During the reporting period, within the PROFFORMANCE project, work was performed to develop a self-evaluation tool for the academic staff members. In May, the Center organized a PLA under the project, with the participation of students and experts from 10 countries. Within the SQUARE project, the Higher Education Quality Assurance Department promotes the relevance and quality enhancement of the “third mission” of higher education institutions. In addition, during the reporting period, 4 consultative meetings were held with higher education institutions on the issues of international accreditation, the Qualifications Framework and accreditation.

Development of Authorization and Accreditation Processes

From 2022, the Center plans to switch to a cluster accreditation system for higher education programmes. This system has been introduced in many European countries, and the recommendation for its introduction in Georgia was prepared by international experts within the framework of the EU Twinning Project. During the reporting period, the concept of cluster accreditation and the Action Plan for the transition to the cluster accreditation were developed. With the support of the EU-funded Twinning Project (TWINNING), the cluster accreditation was piloted at three universities in collaboration with the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education (EKKA) and the German Agency for Quality Assurance for Higher Education (AQAS). These three universities were the following: Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Akaki Tsereteli State University and Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University. Both local and international experts from Germany, Estonia and the United Kingdom were involved in the pilot.

For piloting, a number of changes were made to the Accreditation Regulation, accreditation standards, the self-evaluation document of an institution and experts' report document. The results of the pilot were shared with the stakeholders, which is an important experience for the introduction of the cluster accreditation process.

In order to introduce the cluster accreditation, draft amendments to the Laws of Georgia “On Higher Education” and “On Education Quality Improvement” were developed. According to the changes, the cluster accreditation of higher education programmes will be introduced in 2022, and the accreditation will become mandatory for all levels and types of higher education programmes.

To improve the existing quality assurance mechanisms, significant work has been done in terms of analyzing the standards and procedures operating at the Center. In particular, a

thematic analysis of quality assurance in medical education, including clinical teaching, was developed. The analysis results and the developed recommendations were shared with the representatives of higher education institutions and other interested groups within the framework of a joint conference of the Center and the EU Twinning Project. Besides, it should be noted, that renewal of the document on Sector Benchmark of Medicine has been launched, which envisages the results of the thematic study, the recommendations of World Federation for Medical Education (WFME), and of international and local experts in the field of medicine.

Criteria for evaluating doctoral programmes were developed, with particular emphasis on the programme admission requirements, programme contents, objectives of learning component, dissertation defense procedures, and programme implementing staff.

Also, the structure of certain standards for accreditation of higher education programmes has been changed. In particular, a number of components of the standard have been combined with components of other standards. This approach ensured the integration of even more similar components within a single standard in terms of content and facilitated the existence of an equal number of components in different accreditation standards. In order to prevent the spread of the New Coronavirus, based on the practice of electronic management of the educational format, special criteria were developed on how a higher education institution can ensure the evaluation of the quality of the online educational process. In particular, an institution should have appropriate internal quality assurance mechanisms to evaluate the online educational process.

Pool of Experts for Authorization of Higher Education Institutions and Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes

The National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement and the Grant Project funded by the Alumni Association of the International Education Center - Education Lab (EDU LAB) conducted a survey to identify the professional development needs of Pool of Experts of Authorization of Higher Education Institutions and Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes. The survey was conducted using a thematic analysis methodology developed by experts from the EU-funded Twinning project. The survey identified the professional needs of higher education experts and developed recommendations. More than 300 experts, employees of the Higher Education Quality Assurance Department of the Center and members of the Councils of Authorization/Accreditation were involved in the survey. Also, during the analysis, evaluations of the activities of the experts of higher education institutions within the completed proceedings were taken into account. Upon completion of the survey, an experts' advisory group was set up with the involvement of local and international experts, which prepared the following three Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) activities using the survey results: evaluation of the internal quality assurance system/evaluation of quality development capabilities of teaching, external evaluation of the structure and content of the educational programme and evaluation of

internationalization. During the organization, local as well as international experience was taken into account with the involvement of local and international experts. More than 200 experts participated in these activities.

Appropriate steps were taken to develop an Pool of Experts for authorization and accreditation, in particular, the certification of experts from humanities was announced, and a competition was announced to recruit experts in the same field. Also, a competition was announced to select experts for the accreditation of higher education programmes.

ENQA Recommendations and Work Carried out by the Center

On April 19, 2021, the Center successfully passed the evaluation process carried out by the monitoring group of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). The monitoring verified the implementation of the recommendations of the ENQA experts' panel by the Center, which was reflected in 2019 external evaluation report of the Center. In particular, the changes made in the regulations of the Authorization, Accreditation, and the Center's Provision during the last two years were discussed in detail and in-depth at the meeting. In addition, special attention was paid to the ongoing activities of the Center, as well as the measures implemented aiming for professional development of local and international experts of authorization, and accreditation, establishment of a systematic approach to thematic analysis, and the participation of the stakeholders in the management system of the Center.

According to the monitoring group, the recommendations made in the report of the ENQA expert's panel were followed by the Center. Besides, the international experts positively assessed the Center's future vision for further refinement of the quality assurance processes and the development.

Other Significant Activities

It should be noted, that since 2021, as a result of participation in the DEQAR CONNECT project, an automatic reflection system of reports and decisions drawn up in the framework of external quality assurance in higher education has been developed in the EQAR database (DEQAR). The decisions made by the Accreditation Council of Educational Programmes and the Authorization Council of HEIs in 2021 and the reports developed by the experts are uploaded on the electronic portal. This database is synchronized with the database of European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) and automatically sends data to the EQAR database (<https://www.eqar.eu/qa-results/search/by-institution/?query=&country=63>). The system was demonstrated at the EQAR Webinar on September 24, 2021, where it was presented as a good practice, and the Center shared experience and challenges in working with the system.

During the reporting period, as part of the Erasmus+ project PROFFORMANCE, the Center participated in the second working meeting on sharing experience among experts and organized the third meeting, which took place on May 27 and June 7, 2021.

Vocational Education Quality Assurance

Experts' Visits to Educational Institutions, Administrative Proceedings

During the reporting period the Vocational Education Quality Assurance Department administered 257 cases under the Authorization Regulation, including the following: VET Institution authorization - 6; obtaining the right to implement vocational education programmes by HEIs - 4; increase the number of vocational student places in the vocational education programme - 40; change of place/area of implementation of vocational education programme - 9; adding programme – 113; integration of secondary education outcomes in secondary vocational education programmes - 32; examinations/monitoring of the authorization standards of vocational education institutions - 53;

In terms of vocational training/vocational retraining programmes there were 37 obtaining eligibility and 118 registration proceedings. 98 programmes were registered, 20 were rejected. In terms of eligibility, 33 programmes obtained eligibility, while 4 were rejected. During the reporting period, 20 sessions of the Vocational Education Institutions Authorization Council were held, and 279 decisions were made; 16 sessions of the Council for Obtaining the Right to Implement Vocational Training and Vocational Retraining Programmes were held, at which 58 issues were discussed, and 41 decisions were made.

Diagram N4: Vocational Education Quality Assurance

EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE - IVET

STATISTICS FOR 2021

AUTHORIZATION COUNCIL MEETINGS - 20

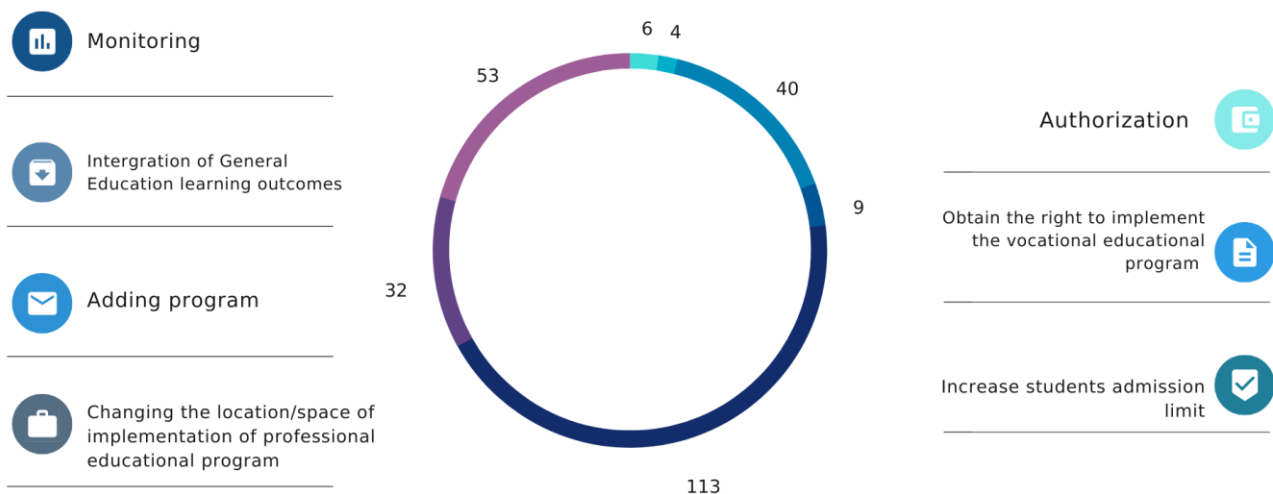
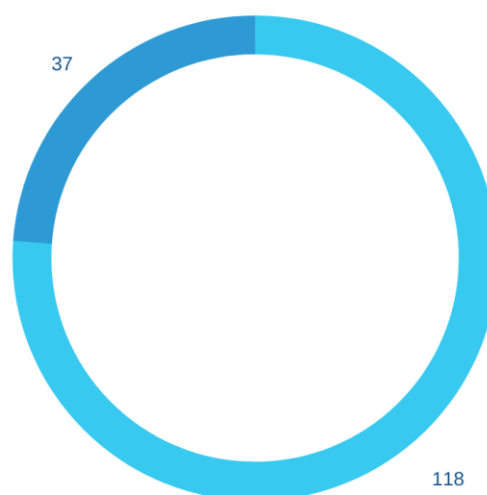
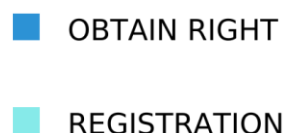


Diagram N5 Vocational training/retraining programmes

THE QUALITY ASSURANCE OF PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND RETRAINING (CVET)

Statistics for 2021



THE QUALITY ASSURANCE OF PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND RETRAINING
COUNCIL MEETING - 16

Manuals, Forms Required for Administrative Proceedings

During February-April 2021, the Center analyzed the support services provided to educational institutions in implementing vocational education programmes and vocational training/vocational retraining programmes. The working group established for conducting the analysis carried out three workshops and received feedback from 85 respondents of 73 institutions by the developed research tools. Of these, 35 institutions, besides long-term vocational programmes, offer to students vocational training/retraining programmes. From all surveyed institutions, only six have implemented vocational training/vocational retraining programmes. Among the respondents were 6 entities that did not implement a professional programme but received a consultation from the Center in 2020. The data obtained will be used to improve the consulting service. The Institutions Satisfaction Survey was conducted in July and December 2021 on the activities delivered during the year. The data obtained was used by the Center for implementing capacity-building measures and improving consulting services.

A document analyzing the self-evaluation reports implemented by educational institutions in 2020 and reviewed by experts in support of vocational education institutions was developed in January-February 2021 and submitted to the Center. The initial version of the analysis was presented to the stakeholders at the International Conference of the Center. The analysis was completed in February 2021 and also introduced to the stakeholders. Based on this document, measures to strengthen the capacity of educational institutions implementing vocational education programmes concerning authorization standards were taken in 2021, both at the systemic and institutional levels.

Herein, it should be noted that an analysis document was prepared in the third quarter, to verify the validity and transparency of existing practices regarding the authorization of vocational education institutions, as well as the right to implement vocational training and vocational retraining programmes, and standards and procedures for obtaining the eligibility. The document also reflects private sector involvement.

Conducted Trainings, Consultations, and Workshops

For reviewing the needs identified at the systemic level of vocational education institutions, the capacity-building and informing, a workshop was held with 138 representatives of the institutions, where the self-evaluation analysis of vocational education institutions, the scheme of the vocational education programme evaluation process, and the draft forms used in the external quality assurance process discussed.

The meetings discussed the self-evaluation analysis, the scheme of the programme evaluation process, and the draft forms used in the external quality assurance process. Under the UNDP programme, colleges were allowed to be involved in the integrated programmes supporting process. In this regard, agreements concluded with five experts who studied integrated programmes submitted by institutions at an individual level (LEPL - Ilia Tsinamdzgvrishvili College, Georgian Business Academy - SBA, LEPL - College "Aisi", LEPL - College "Iberia", LEPL - College "Mermisi", LEPL - College "Spectri") and gave the relevant recommendations. After the mentioned activity, the institutions officially submitted applications to the Center. Based on the letter of the Georgian Academy of Business - SBA (N230836 from 15/03/2021), a training - "Evaluation system and quality assurance in vocational education" was held. A meeting on simulation monitoring was held on April 27, during which 7 institutions will be allowed to receive individual support for the re-authorization process (in 2022). The simulation Council sessions were held for the mentioned institutions in November-December, where the experts presented their reports and issued recommendations. Also, an information meeting was held for the colleges on the Rules of the enrollment to the professional programme approved by the Minister Order #42/N of July 2. A meeting on student and alumni employment research methodology and results from the analysis was held on September 24.

Training "Assessment system and quality assurance in vocational education" for private and public institutions implementing vocational education programmes was conducted online, using the platform Zoom. More than 300 participants attended the training. Under the auspices of the United Nations Development Program, the Vocational Education Quality Assurance Department in the second quarter of this year conducted a two-day training on the 4th Authorization Standard (Human Resources) and covered the following topics: Human Resource Management Issues, Authorization Standard - Human Resource Management, Recruitment, Staff Management Policy, Professional Development, and Labor Law. Also, a workshop within the Standard 3 - Improving Alumni Research Methodology has been conducted. The training was provided to institutions on evidence-

gathering approaches for evaluating authorization standards of Vocational Educational Institutions. 59 representatives of 50 institutions participated in the training. 114 trainees attended the training "Confirmation of the learning outcomes of the secondary level of General education" in August-September. An evidence guide was also developed in June. An information meeting for strengthening the capacity of field specialists was held in March 2021. The meeting was attended by up to 70 experts of the field. A seminar in September on definitions of standards and current practice was attended by 54 experts of the field. Also, with the support of the UN Development Project, training of field experts on definitions of evaluation of the authorization standards of Vocational Educational Institutions was attended by 65 experts of the field.

A thematic analysis was developed in terms of content changes in the fields of vocational education in Georgia and their compliance with the European Qualifications Framework. Simultaneously, the Vocational Education Quality Assurance Department provided workshops and consultations to those interested in the authorization and obtaining the right to implement vocational training/retraining programmes. The Department conducted up to 160 consultations and workshops in 2021. The Department organized the process of preparing the recommendation frameworks for vocational training/retraining programme for home care, energy efficiency, and guide programmes - in a total of 9 meetings were held. Evaluation methodology and tools were developed for Councils, through which the evaluation of the Authorization Council of Vocational Education Institutions was piloted. The following are participating in the evaluation: educational institutions, experts, and the Secretariat of the Council.

During the reporting period trainings were held for the educational institutions/legal entities in terms of capacity-building which attended by more than 200 participants.

For the capacity-building of vocational training/retraining institutions/legal entities implementing vocational training/vocational retraining programmes, training was carried out on issues of obtaining the right to become vocational training/retraining programmes provider, focusing on teaching and assessment methods, work-based teaching forms, informing the public about educational services, student selection procedures, labor market analysis/research, sharing an experience on data reflection in the electronic system, issuing a certificate and its supplement. The training was attended by 45 representatives of vocational training/vocational retraining programme implementing institutions.

An information seminar was held on March 30, 2021, for the capacity-building of the Councils for Confirming the right and/or Obtaining Eligibility to implement vocational training and vocational retraining programmes. The meeting once again reviewed the standards for obtaining the right to implement a vocational training/retraining programme, in the framework of which a discussion was held on work-based training, setting a maximum number of students, programme title, safe work environment, labor market requirements study, and quality assurance mechanisms.

An information meeting was held on February 17, 2021, for the new members of the Authorization Council of Vocational Educational Institutions, where the members of the Council briefed about the activities of the Authorization Council in a presentation form. Also, on April 16, May, and June, training was conducted for the capacity-building of the Authorization Council Of Vocational Educational institutions. During the training, the Chairman of the Council shared his current practice with the new members of the Council. Attention also was paid to the rights and responsibilities of the Authorization Council and its mandate. During the meeting, the methodology and criteria for evaluating the activities of the Councils, developed by the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement, were discussed, which will be piloted this year. It is important to note that the meeting hosted the staff of the Estonian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher and Vocational Education (EKKA), which shared its practice with the Georgian colleagues.

Pool of Experts for Authorization of Vocational Educational Institutions

The quality assurance specialists of vocational education in 2021 were certified by the Center in two stages. The certificate was obtained by 47 specialists represented in the new Pool of Experts of the authorization of vocational education institutions and vocational training/vocational retraining programmes with a quota of experts in quality assurance of vocational education. In 2021, the Center strengthened its Pool of Experts with an additional 29 field competencies holder experts selected through a competition. Currently, Pool of Experts for the authorization of vocational education institutions and vocational training/vocational retraining programmes consists of 45 experts in quality assurance of vocational education and 140 experts in the field.

In 2021, an analytical document reflecting the workload of authorization experts in 2020 was developed. In 2021, the difference between the maximum and minimum workload of the Pool of Experts members' participation in the administrative proceedings is decreased compared to 2020; The maximum number of expert visits in 2020 was 16, and the minimum number was 1; in 2021, the maximum number of visits is - 4, and the minimum number is 1. As of December 2021, the minimum difference between the maximum and minimum workload of the Pool of Experts is still maintained, envisaging a number of circumstances. For the capacity-building of experts in quality assurance of vocational education, a workshop was held remotely on December 21, 2021. The following issues were discussed during the meeting: challenges related to the activities of vocational education quality assurance experts; changes in the rules of selecting, activities, and termination of membership of the Pool of Experts for authorization of vocational education institutions and vocational training/vocational retraining programme; conflict of interest of experts; refusal to perform functions by an expert; analysis of cases of failure of draft reports performed by quality assurance experts of vocational education.

Informal Education

During the reporting period, a competition was announced for the selection of informal education recognition consultants, which included 4 stages: submitting and selecting an application, conducting testing electronically, conducting training, and completing an assignment electronically. A total of 837 applications were submitted within the competition, out of which 471 candidates were admitted to the testing stage. 61 candidates successfully passed the testing. After stages of training and completion of the assignment, the status of certified consultant for the recognition of informal education was awarded to 42 persons. The consultants' data was reflected in the relevant electronic register. According to the data of 2021, the right to recognize informal education has been obtained by four legal entities. Informal education recognition services are available in 8 areas: Business and Administration, Information and Communication Technologies, Personal Services, Engineering, Security Services, Education, Healthcare, Architecture, and Construction.

The working group approved by Order of the Director of the Center developed a concept for the quality assurance of recognition of informal education in vocational education, aiming the creation of a unified vision for conducting the recognition process fairly/transparently, including defining quality assurance standards, procedures, and responsibilities. Also, to improve the mechanisms for obtaining the right for recognition of informal education within the vocational education, to increase their efficiency, to ensure the transparency, credibility, and objectivity of the process of informal education recognition. In drafting the document, the group relied on the following applicable regulations: The Law of Georgia on Vocational Education, by-laws, government decrees, and modern European approaches to the quality assurance of informal education recognition.

Other Significant Activities

To share the best European practice in the introduction of the Center's Vocational Education Quality Assurance System, the Vocational Education Quality Assurance Department has started to analyze the VET system through the indicators of the European Network for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education (EQAVET), as well as their compliance.

The evaluation methodology and research tools of a quality assurance system were developed according to EQAVET indicators. The document aims to adjust the indicators of the European Network for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education (EQAVET) to the reality of Georgia and to identify sources and methods of data retrieval. Recommendations were also developed per EQAVET indicators (according to five indicators). The Center will evaluate the quality assurance system in 2022.

General Education Quality Assurance

Reform of the General Education Quality Assurance System

A new concept of the General Education quality assurance enhancement, which envisages updated authorization standards for the General Education institutions, was developed in 2021. The concept was presented in a presentation format to the following stakeholders: Members of the Authorization Council of General Educational Institutions, Private General Education Institutions, Representatives of Private School Associations, Educational Resource Centers, Public Schools, and members of the Pool of Experts of Authorization of General Education Institutions and Accreditation of General Educational Programmes. In the framework of the work on the concept, a study of the transparency and reliability of the authorization process was carried out, which assessed both the existing quality assurance mechanisms and planned modifications. The survey interviewed an audience of various target groups (Council members, experts, representatives of the institution) and identified issues for improvement of external mechanisms of the General Education quality assurance.

According to the concept, standards of the general education institutions authorization refer to the following: 1. School philosophy; 2. School curriculum; 3. Administrative and infrastructural support of the learning process; 4. Student support. The standards are presented within the framework of the initiated amendments to the Law of Georgia on Quality Development of Education. Work on the standards' content was carried out jointly with representatives of the Department of Preschool and General Education Development of the Ministry of Education and Science and members of the Standards Development Working Group.

Herewith, the subprogramme for the development of institutional self-evaluation of general education institutions was approved by Order of the Director of the Center. The basis for the approval of the subprogramme was the entry in the Law of Georgia on General Education, which envisages the gradual authorization of public schools by the Ministry before the 2026-2027 academic year. The subprogramme aims the capacity-building for institutional self-evaluation to activate external and internal quality assurance mechanisms in public and private general education institutions. Within the framework of the subprogramme, a detailed guide to the draft of new authorization standards, procedures, and evidence, the concept of certification of quality assurance specialists was developed by the relevant specialists. Qualification requirements for specialists and a training package for their preparation were established, and a competition was announced for the certification of general education quality assurance specialists. In addition, a self-evaluation form of the general education institution, a description of the business process of self-evaluation implementation, and a diagnostic assessment platform were developed;

a technical assignment for the electronic self-evaluation system was prepared. These activities were carried out in broad consultation with stakeholders and the context of intensive public awareness.

In 2021, work was underway on draft amendments to the relevant legislative and by-law acts.

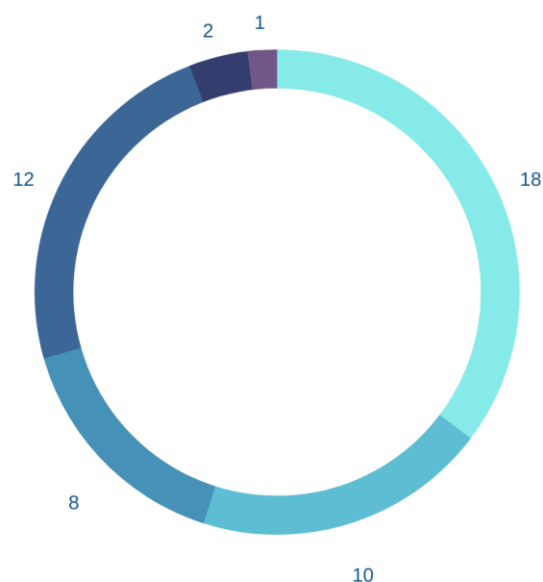
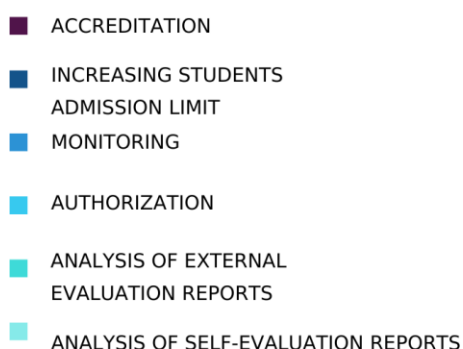
Experts' Visits to Educational Institutions, Administrative Proceedings

9 sessions of the Authorization Council of General Education Institutions and 1 session of the Accreditation Council of General Educational Programmes were held during the year. The following administrative proceedings were carried out: Authorization - 8; Increase the threshold number of student places - 2; Monitoring - 12; Accreditation - 1.

Diagram 6. General Education External Quality Assurance

General Education - External Quality Assurance

Data for 2021



AUTHORIZATION COUNCIL MEETINGS - 9
ACCREDITATION COUNCIL MEETINGS - 1

Developed Documents

New forms of the self-evaluation report and the accreditation report for the general education programme accreditation have been prepared. Draft amendments to the agreements for the recognition of general educational programmes recognized abroad were prepared, according to which changes were made in 2 agreements by consensus of the parties.

Pool of Experts for Authorization of General Education Institutions

Following the general education quality assurance enhancement concept, developed during the reporting period, it was planned to combine the accreditation process with the authorization and strengthen the programme evaluation within the authorization process. After changes, Pool of Experts will be formed as follows: a) Quality assurance experts; b) Subject experts. At the same time, work is underway on the concept of Pool of Experts composition, which will envisage the involvement of experts with a wide range of experience in the school evaluation process following the content of the updated standards.

A two-day training was conducted for the capacity-building of the Pool of Experts members in the authorization of general education institutions and programme accreditation. The topics of the training included the legal acts related to general education, which are envisaged in the "Rules for Selection, Activities of Authorization and Accreditation Experts, and Termination of Pool of Experts Membership" (hereinafter referred to as the Rules of Experts Activity) approved by the Order #170 of March 7, 2018 of the Director of the Center.

Attestation of experts of general education institutions authorization and programme accreditation was carried out, within the framework of which from the existing Pool of Experts was assessed the compliance of 22 members with the qualification requirements defined by the rules of Experts Activity. Attestation included registration, theoretical survey (testing), and interview.

Conducted Workshops/Training

Meetings were held with 2085 public schools, 224 private schools, 69 educational resource centers, the Authorization Council, and Pool of Experts to familiarize them with the concept.

During the reporting period, a two-day training was conducted for the General Educational Institution Authorization and Programme Accreditation Pool of Experts members, as well as for members of the Authorization Council of General Education Institutions.

For capacity-building purposes, training/information meetings were held with the members of the Authorization Council of General Education Institutions and up to 80 consultative meetings with the representatives of the institutions. Five meetings of the working group established on the authorization standards of the general education institutions were held as well.

Other Significant Activities

With the support of the twinning project (TWINNING), the Working Group prepared a thematic analysis on the educational programmes recognized abroad (hereinafter - the programme) - "Challenges related to the recognizing in Georgia educational programmes recognized abroad and ways to solve them."

Development of National Qualifications

Administration of Vocational and Higher Education Sectoral Councils

Sectoral councils of Higher Education in 8 directions (History, Archeology, Philosophy, Language skills, Georgian Philology, Civil engineering, Social work, Special education (teacher education), and two Working Groups (in Health and Lexicography) were established. Continues the work one Sectoral Council of Higher Education (in Business and Administration direction);

Under the cluster accreditation, according to the updated National Qualifications Framework, the sectoral characteristics of 5 directions (History, Archeology, Philosophy, Language Acquisition, Georgian Philology) were developed and approved;

Sectoral characteristics of Building Systems Engineering, Tourism, Special Education training programme, Information and Communication Technologies, Business and Administration, and Social work were approved;

A total of 86 sessions of the Higher Education Sectoral Councils were held; Approved sectoral characteristics of Higher Education are published on the official website of the Center: <https://eqe.ge/ka/page/static/946/umaghlesi-ganatilebis-kvalifikaciebis-ganvitareba>.

Simultaneously, the Qualifications Development Department of the Center has prepared a detailed fields of study analysis, following the requirements of the documents on the “International Standard Classification of Education” and the “Detailed Description of the Fields of Education and Training”, which also includes the analysis at the National level. The following detailed areas are discussed in the analysis document: Religion and Theology, History and Archeology, Philosophy and Ethics, Language Proficiency, Literature and Linguistics. Also, the international experience in the field of cluster accreditation was analyzed, including the approaches of individual countries, the documents of "International Standard Classification of Education" and "Detailed Description of the Fields of Education and Training", local classifier of the fields of study, statistical data requested from LEPL - National Center for Assessment and Examinations and LEPL - Education Management Information System. The analysis was carried out at the National level.

Changes to vocational framework documents

Changes were introduced and approved to 21 Vocational Education Framework documents, including significant substantive changes to 8 Vocational Education Framework documents (Financial Services, Nursing Education, Office, and Event Management, Electricity, Railway Operation, Transportation Infrastructure Construction,

Railway Transport, Pharmacy). Changes were introduced to "Georgian Language A2" and "Georgian Language B1" modules. A total of 21 sessions of vocational sectoral councils have been held;

The updated module of "Civic Education" has been approved. The mentioned module will completely replace the General Civic Education module currently operating in the vocational education system by June 1, 2022. Besides, under the auspices of the British Council's programme Crafting Futures, with the participation of the representatives of Plymouth College of Arts, a Creative Thinking module has been developed and approved that promotes creative thinking in vocational students and the search for innovative ways to solve problems.

In addition, 13 framework documents set out the possibilities for remote evaluation of learning outcomes.

On April 29, 2021, the Non-profit (non-commercial) Legal Entity - Vocational Skills Agency was established, which will be responsible for the formation and development of vocational qualifications. Consequently, the LEPL - National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement will no longer be authorized to develop vocational education standards and create a methodology for their development. Based on the above, the Statute of the Center, the Internal Regulations of the Qualifications Development Department, the Strategic and Action Plans of the Center (Objective 5.3 of 2021-2025 Strategy of the Center, and all activities of the Objective 5.3 of 2021 Action Plan of Strategy Implementation) were amended, and the functions, strategic goals, and objectives that were transferred to the Vocational Skills Agency were removed.

Management and Monitoring of National Qualifications Framework

During the reporting period, with the broad involvement of Twinning project experts, „Rules for the Establishment and Activities of the Advisory Board for the Introduction and Development of the National Qualifications Framework and the Classifier of Fields of Study“ was developed and approved by the Director of the Center. It defined the issue of representation of sectoral ministries, employers, trade unions, non-governmental organizations, associations, students, educational institutions in the Advisory Board. Per the same rule, an Advisory Board was established to introduce and develop the National Qualifications Framework and the Classifier of Fields of Study. The Board is composed of representatives from the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, LEPL - Unified National Accreditation Body - Accreditation Center, LEPL - State Employment Promotion Agency, Georgian Association of Student Organizations, Georgian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, LEPL - Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, and LEPL - National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement. Herewith, for the capacity-building of the Board members in May of the current year a three-day information seminar was held that was participated by international experts. Two workshops were also held, on which the 2022

Action Plan of the Qualifications Development Department and the document "Analysis of the National Qualifications System" was agreed with the members of the Board.

Developed Documents

The National Qualifications System analysis was carried out by the Working Group approved by the Director of the Center to determine the compatibility of the National Qualifications Framework with the criteria set out in Annex III of the Council of Europe Recommendation on Lifelong Learning for Higher Education and the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning. The working group consisted of internal and external stakeholders, and the work process was conducted in a subgroup format. The working group within the set timeframe completed the work on the analysis document, which was discussed at the meeting of the Advisory Board on December 16, 2021. The Advisory Board developed recommendations based on the analysis document that was considered, and the final version of the document was submitted to the Director of the Center. By the resolution of the Director of the Center, the analysis document was published on the Center's website (<https://bit.ly/3s6eLpl>).

During the reporting period, the methodology for awarding credits (ECVET) in the vocational education field was developed and approved by Order of the Director of the Center; "Rules for elaboration, amendment, and cancellation of the vocational standard, educational programme framework document and modules" has been modified and approved by Order of the Director of the Center.

Herewith, thematic analysis was developed within the framework of the Twinning project: „Content changes in the fields of study of vocational education in Georgia and their compliance with the European Qualifications Framework “. The developed document was presented at an international conference organized by Twinning. Following the cluster accreditation plan, a detailed analysis of the field of study was prepared in the international context.

The Qualifications Development Department conducted an analysis and drafted a reference action plan consisting of three main parts. The first part reflects the preparatory work for the beginning of the referencing. The second part describes the activities to be performed directly in the referencing process, while the third part describes the commitments to be performed after the referencing process. Each activity to be performed is accompanied by an appropriate referencing criterion. The Action Plan has been prepared according to the 10 referencing criteria set out in Annex III to the Recommendations of the Council of Europe of 22 May 2017 on the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF-LLL). The 2022 Action Plan of the Center envisages the continuation of work on the draft plan and its agreement with the Advisory Board established for the introduction and development of the National Qualifications Framework and the Classifier of the Fields of Study.

A presentation on the European Project Microcredit (MICROBOL) was prepared for the management of the Center. Further steps were identified to communicate with higher education institutions and other stakeholders on this topic. At the 2021 Annual International Conference of the Center, an Adviser to the Ministry of Education and Training of the Government of Flemish (Belgium) presented a report entitled "MICROBOL: Microcredits and their relation to the principal commitments of the Bologna Process in the countries of the European Higher Education Area", and provided information to the conference attendant higher education institutions and other stakeholders on microcredits, related to microcredits commitments in the European higher education system and European experience in this field. At the same conference, representatives of Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, Akaki Tsereteli State University, and Caucasus University presented a report entitled "Certificate and Short-term Training Courses in Higher Education Institutions: Challenges and Development Opportunities", in which they talked about the experience of their institutions and discussed opportunities for further development in the field of certification and short-term courses. After that, the Qualifications Development Department began working on the issue of surveying HEIs. On September 6 of this year, the Department sent a semi-structured electronic questionnaire to 64 authorized higher education institutions in Georgia to receive feedback on the current practices of the microcredit system in the field of education. 42% of the authorized higher education institutions, for a total of 27 institutions in Georgia, took part in the electronic survey. A report was prepared based on the feedback received.

Order N69/N of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia of April 10, 2019, "On the Approval of the National Qualifications Framework and the Classifier of Fields of Study" was amended, based on which a new field of study "Building Systems Engineering" was added to the Classifier of Fields of Study.

Workshops and Consultations

7 public hearings were held during the given period to discuss the projects of the higher education sectoral characteristics. Also, 18 public discussions were held with educational institutions implementing vocational education programmes concerning the change of framework documents/modules. 5 presentations were made for the stakeholders on the approved sectoral characteristics of higher education. Those interested in the National Qualifications Framework and Fields of Study, formation and development of new qualifications (higher/vocational) were consulted.

Other significant activities

This year a study was conducted on the topic: "Identify support services tailored to the needs of educational institutions." In the course of the study, using both quantitative and

qualitative methods, 51 institutions implementing higher education programmes and 72 institutions implementing vocational education programmes were interviewed, thus making it possible to identify the basic needs of these institutions and the support services tailored to them. Based on the results of the survey, a consultation day was set for educational institutions. Also, a form for informing the Center on the technical deficiencies found in the framework documents and modules was developed for the educational institutions implementing vocational education programmes. A report on the results of the study was prepared. The findings were shared with the staff of the Center and educational institutions. The document was published on the Center's website.

In February, June, and September, the Master's questionnaire was validated - more than 500 questionnaires were verified from about 50 higher education institutions.

A database of vocational standards was established, and deadlines for their processing were defined. A database of framework documents has been created with their approval/amending dates indication.

A Working Group was set up to bring the Rule of the Higher Education Programme Credit Calculation, approved by Order #3 of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia of January 5, 2007, in line with international standards, in the framework of which 4 workshops were held.

This year, work began on the formalization of existing directions in the field of art education. A Working Group in the field of Art Education to develop the relevant concept was set up, within the framework of which 2 workshops were held. Due to the fact that the issue of vocational qualifications was removed from the authority of the Center, the mentioned Working Group ceased functioning.

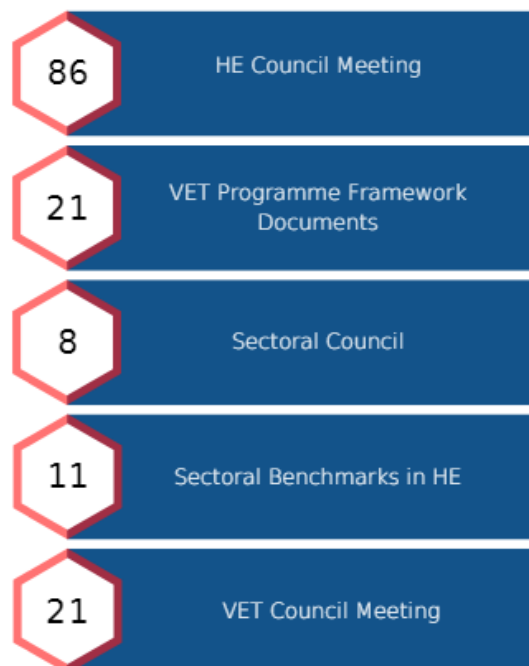
In addition, the Vocational Education Management Information System (e-vet.emis.ge) reflected all the changes made to the framework documents.

During the reporting period, the Center worked and continues to work on the Microbol project, initiated within the Quality Assurance Thematic Expert Group (TPG on QA) of the Bologna Process Implementation Group (BICG), which is implemented by organizations such as the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the European Registry for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (EQAR), the European University Association (EUA), the Information Center on Academic Mobility and Equivalence (CIMEA), Flemish (Belgium) Ministry of Education and Training, and the Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland.

It should be noted that at the 2021 Annual International Conference of the Center, an Adviser of the Ministry of Education and Training of the Government of Flemish (Belgium) presented a report entitled "MICROBOL: Microcredits and their relation to the principal commitments of the Bologna Process in the countries of the European Higher Education Area", and provided information to the conference attendant higher education institutions and other stakeholders on microcredits, related to microcredits commitments in the European higher education system and European experience in this field. At the same

conference, representatives of Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, Akaki Tsereteli State University, and Caucasus University presented a report entitled "Certificate and Short-term Training Courses in Higher Education Institutions: Challenges and Development Opportunities", in which they talked about the experience of their institutions and discussed opportunities for further development in the field of certification and short-term courses. The Department, using electronic means of communication, ensures informing all authorized higher education institutions on existing international practices for the use of Microcredits (MICROBOL), as well as conducted an electronic survey on the current practice in this area in Georgia.

DIAGRAM N7: Development of National Qualifications



Services Development

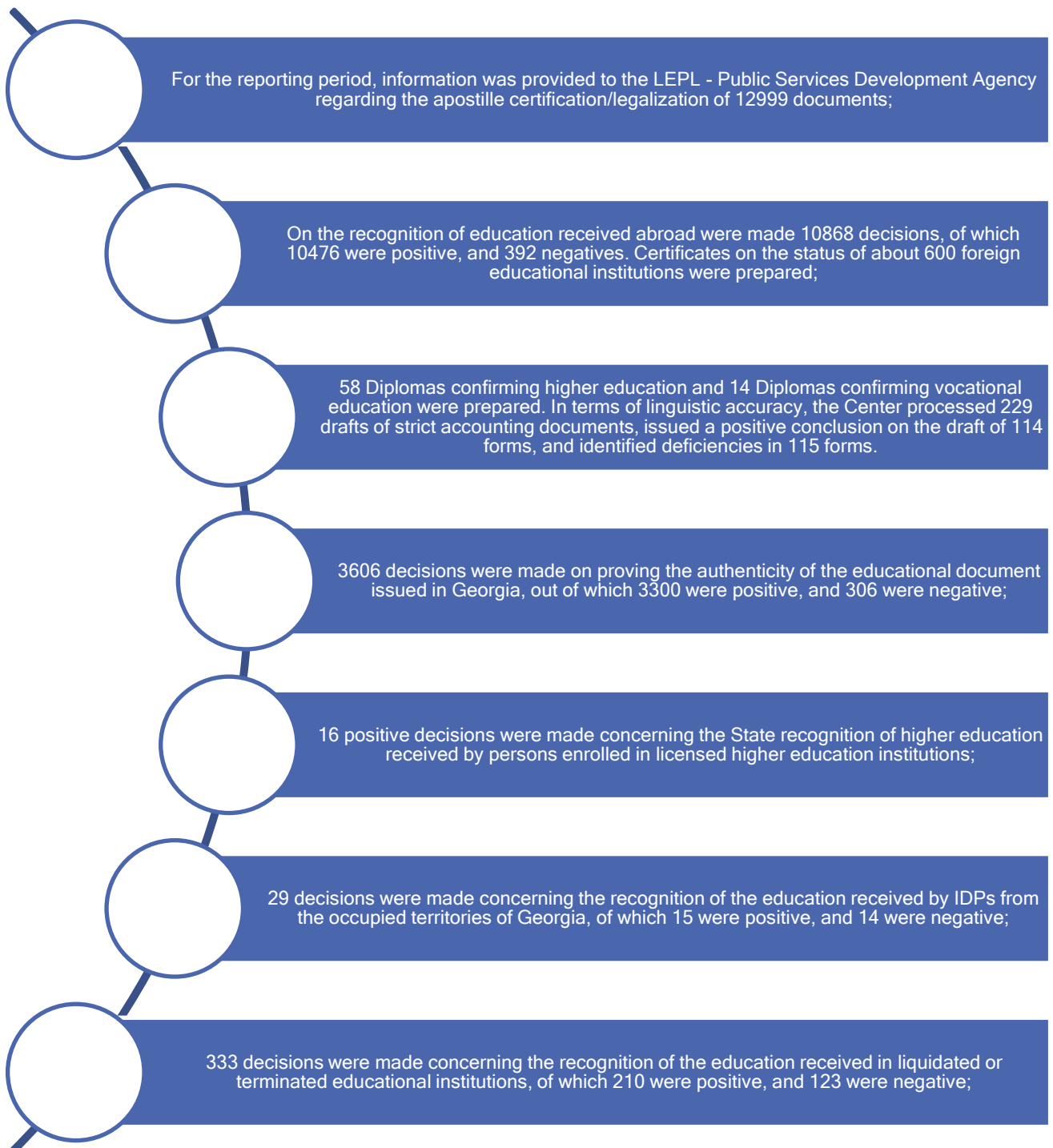
Development of Educational Services

In 2021, to improve and refine the educational and content services of the Center, several important concepts have been developed, aiming at the following issues:

- Development of qualifications in the process of authentication;
- Procedure for the recognition of education (occupied and licensed) acquired in Georgia;
- Accelerated Diploma issuance service;

Existing practices and challenges were analyzed within the framework of concept development, and solutions have been developed. Herewith, the Center was providing services at full capacity.

Diagram N8. Educational Services



Accreditation of the Professional Development Programme of the Public Official

One session of the Accreditation Council for the Professional Development Programme of Professional Public Official was held. Decisions were sent to the Civil Service Bureau and the programme implementing institutions. They will also be published on the Center's website. 5 consultation meetings were held with the institutions desiring to implement the programme.

To ensure the transparency and credibility of the procedures and standards for the accreditation of the Professional Development Programme of the Professional Public Official, existing practices on standards and procedures are being reviewed and analyzed by an independent expert with the support of UNDP and the involvement of the Civil Service Bureau. 9 workshops/in-depth interviews were conducted on existing standards and procedures with the following stakeholders: Institutions implementing accredited Professional Development Programme of the Professional Public Official, members of the Pool of Experts, members of the Accreditation Council, and representatives of the Electronic Platform Concept Development Team. The study of the programmes existing external quality assurance mechanism is ongoing. At this stage, a working document regarding the study of programmes' quality assurance is presented in electronic form/method that envisages issues, which may be additionally reflected in existing standards. After the presentation of the final product of the study, it will be discussed by the Center and other stakeholders for further response (possible changes in the Accreditation Regulations).

In addition, the analysis of the ratings of the accredited professional development programmes for 2019-20 and the evaluation of trained public officials was carried out. This activity is carried out by an independent researcher, with the support of UNDP and the involvement of the Civil Service Bureau. The study is ongoing because of a large number of trained public officials. The quantitative survey data processing is underway at this stage. After the presentation of the final product of the study, it will be discussed by the Center and other stakeholders for further response.

The composition of the Accreditation Council for the Professional Development Programmes of Professional Public Officials has been renewed and planned to conduct its training on accreditation standards, procedures, and specifics of the Council's activities.

Internationalization

For bringing closer the education quality assurance system of Georgia to European and international standards, the Center actively utilizes the best international experience. For this purpose, it maintains membership in the international and European networks of higher education quality assurance agencies and expands its cooperation with other quality assurance agencies. The Center's Planning, Research, and International Relations Department has conducted the desk study and developed recommendations for future collaboration with quality assurance agencies of particular countries. The strategic goal of the Center concerning the implementation of international services, in particular, international accreditation of medical programmes, is considered in this process. The study also envisages analysis document of "assessing the capabilities of the Center as an International Service Provider: strengths and challenges" and priorities of international evaluations identified in the framework of the EU-funded TWINNING workshops. 11 quality assurance agencies from 10 countries were identified within the analysis.

WFME

A thematic analysis of quality assurance in medical education, including clinical teaching, was developed. At the first stage of the work, a study action plan was created, which detailed the timelines of the various activities. The Working Group initially collected and analyzed the quantitative data from accreditation applications to the Center, as well as memoranda between clinics and universities. After that, a coordination map was created between WFME and accreditation standards. As a result, the analysis of the reports for 2019-2020 was carried out according to the mentioned map. In addition, statistical information was requested from EMIS. At the final stage, two focus groups were held with field experts. The project was shared with the Center and international experts from the TWINNING project, representatives of higher education institutions, and other stakeholders. The analysis was edited according to the feedback received. The final version of the analysis was published on the Center's website, in Georgian and English.³

A renewal of the medical sectoral benchmarks document has been launched, which envisages the results of the thematic study, the recommendations of WFME, and international and local experts in the field of medicine.

³ https://eqe.ge/res/docs/2020/TA_NCEQE_MEDICINE_GEO_2021.pdf;
https://eqe.ge/res/docs/2020/TA_NCEQE_MEDICINE_ENG_2021.pdf

ENQA

On April 19, 2020, the online monitoring visit of ENQA experts was conducted, and the results of the work carried out by the Center concerning the ENQA recommendations were evaluated. At the meeting, the staff of the Center presented the self-evaluation report of the Center, the results achieved by the Center, and visions for future development. In particular, at the meeting, the changes made in the regulations of the Authorization, Accreditation, and the Center Provisions for the last two years were discussed in detail and in-depth. In addition, special attention was paid to the current activities of the Center, as well as the measures implemented aiming for professional development of local and international experts of authorization, and accreditation, the participation of stakeholders in the management system of the Center. According to ENQA experts, the recommendations set out in the report of ENQA Experts Panel in 2019 have been implemented by the Center. International experts also positively assessed the Center's future vision for quality assurance processes and the institutional development issues. In 2019-2020, the Center carried out significant work to implement the ENQA recommendations. Together with the staff of the Center, German and Estonian experts who were involved in the process by the invitation of the EU Twinning project actively participated in the working process.

BFUG

The Center continues to work closely with the Bologna Process working groups. Georgia has been selected to co-chair the Thematic Peer Group A on Qualifications Framework (TPG A on QF) of the Bologna Follow-Up Group. Co-chairmanship of the Thematic Peer Group A on Qualifications Framework (TPG A on QF) is a significant opportunity for Georgia to cooperate with the working structures of the Bologna Process. Holding a Co-Chair status, Georgia will participate in the planning and implementation of the European Qualifications Framework Development Policy, in line with the key commitments of the Bologna Process. The significance of this issue is highlighted in the 2020 Rome Communiqué.

On June 7, the first workshop of the Bologna Process Implementation Group (BICG) Thematic Peer Group on Qualifications Framework (TPG A on QF) was held. The meeting, along with Georgia, was co-chaired by the representatives of Austria and Latvia. Georgia was asked to organize and administer this significant event. Accordingly, the meeting was organized and chaired by the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement. The meeting was attended by representatives of 31 countries of the Thematic Expert Group and representatives of relevant EU structures with a consultative function in the Bologna Process, which reviewed the activities of the Thematic Expert Group in 2018-2020 and future visions for 2021-2024. Mutual assistance within the group member countries in the process of sharing experiences and developing national qualifications was declared as one of the priorities.

The Center, as a member, also cooperates with the Lisbon Convention Recognition (TPG B on RLC) and Quality Assurance Thematic Peer Groups (TBG C on QA), and other working groups.

CEENQA

For the reporting period, the staff of the Center informed the members of the network on the strategy of the Center for 2021-2025 and the planned activities for the enhancement of higher education quality. Quality assurance agencies were particularly interested in introducing a Cluster Accreditation System. With this in mind, the Center's Higher Education Quality Assurance Department prepared an article on cluster accreditation piloting, which was published in the network's regular e-journal. In this way, the Center shared the results of the cluster accreditation pilot with network members.

Twinning

The EU-funded public service twinning project "Strengthening Capacities for Quality Assurance and Governance of Qualifications" (TWINNING) has been completed. The twinning project started in July 2019 and was implemented by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) in collaboration with the Estonian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher and Vocational Education (EKKA).

In the conference, held on June 15, the results of the cluster accreditation pilot were shared with stakeholders, and the results of the thematic analyzes conducted within the project were presented. On June 16, the project was closed online. The speakers presented the results of the 24-month work of the project and discussed their sustainability and prospects.

The project carried out 120 missions with the participation of EU experts, aiming at human capital development promotion related to Lifelong Learning (LLL) through quality assurance, transparency, skills, and qualifications management. Within the framework of the project, EU experts assisted their Georgian colleagues in harmonizing the Center's policies and guidelines with European standards, considering the best European practices and Georgia's national peculiarities related to the implementation of the EU Education Strategy.

Projects

The Center is actively involved in the MICROBOI, EuNIQ, and Staff mobility projects of the Bologna Process Thematic Peer Group on Quality Assurance (TPG C on QA). Within the framework of these projects, the staff of the Center is introduced with the best European practices and the priorities of the European Higher Education Area policy in the field of quality assurance.

ERASMUS +

The Center is involved in several ERASMUS + projects as a project partner and affiliate member, including PROFFORMANCE - Assessment tool and incentive systems for developing higher education teachers' performance; SQUARE – Strengthening the quality and relevance of the Third Mission in Georgian universities and RURD – Role of universities in regional development.

On July 4-8, 2021, the staff of the Center participated in a workshop and training organized within the framework of the SQUARE project in Batumi, where the project partners discussed the current and future activities of the "Third Mission" of higher education institutions, and issues of ensuring uniform approaches to the process of identifying these activities, as well as opportunities for synergies for the further development of the "third mission" of higher education institutions. During the meeting they also discussed project management issues, including financial reporting and quality assurance, and the next steps envisaged by the project.

Within the framework of the RURD project, on July 9, 2021, a representative of the Center attended an event dedicated to establishing the Conference of Rectors of Georgian Regional Universities, which was held in the city of Kutaisi. 11 Georgian regional universities joined the Memorandum on establishing the Conference. The Conference is an advisory body that unites the regional universities of Georgia, deals with the problems of regional universities, considers the problematic issues of the region, and submits them to the Ministry of Education and Science, LEPL - National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement and relevant structures.

The Memorandum is based on the close cooperation between Georgian regional universities. The Conference is a platform for further close cooperation between the regional universities of Georgia to identify and study the existing problems in the regions of Georgia. It was planned to develop joint Strategic and Action plans of the Regional Conference of Rectors. In addition, to promote multilateral cooperation in fields of education and science, universities will constantly develop contacts and hold consultations.

DEQAR CONNECT

Work has been completed on the integrated system of the Center's renewed website (<https://eqe.ge/ka/deqars>), where the reports of external higher education quality assurance (authorization and accreditation) and the decisions made by the Councils has been uploaded since February 15, 2021. This database is synchronized with the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) databases and automatically transmits the data. This website has already transmitted 95 decisions of the Accreditation and HEI Authorization Councils' and experts panel reports elaborated within the proceedings to the EQAR database ([https://www.eqar.eu/qa-results/search/by-institution/?query=&country=63](https://www.eqar.eu/qa-results/search/by-institution/?query=&country=63;));).

The system was demonstrated at the EQAR Webinar on September 24, 2021, where it was presented as a good practice, and the Center shared experiences and challenges in working with the system.

Cooperation with Quality Assurance Agencies

Cooperating with European Quality Assurance Agencies, the Center responds to both the Bologna Process and its commitments under the Association Agreement with the European Union to enhance European cooperation for the internationalization of the Higher Education Quality Assurance System.

The Center's International Services Development Concept and Action Plan have been developed by the Planning, Research, and International Relations Department. The discussion of the documents was carried out with Estonian and German experts within the framework of the Twinning project. Regulatory documents will be revised by the end of the year, and measures to strengthen the Center's staff will be planned. A mapping methodology for quality assurance agencies has been developed, considering key aspects of the concept. Based on pre-selected criteria, recommendations were developed for cooperation with quality assurance agencies of particular countries.

AQAS

On June 30, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Center and the German Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (AQAS). The German Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (AQAS) is a European Quality Assurance Agency with many years of experience in assessing the quality of higher education both in Germany and abroad. The German Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (AQAS) is a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and is registered in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR). The Agency is also a member of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE). It is important to note that the Agency is one of the co-founders of the European Accreditation Consortium (ECA).

The purpose of the Memorandum of Understanding is to establish cooperation, information, experience, and best practices exchange between the Parties on the issues of higher education quality development. As part of the joint activities, methodological and consulting, organizational, and support measures, including staff mobility, will be implemented between the parties.

The Agency representatives actively participated in the PLA activities for the Professional Development Needs of the Pool of Experts for Higher Education Institutions Authorization and programme Accreditation implemented within the collaboration of National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement and the Grant Project Educational Lab (EDU LAB) of the Alumni Association of the International Center for Education.

EKKA

Within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding, representatives of the Estonian Higher and Vocational Education Quality Assurance Agency shared their experience with members of the Center's Vocational Education Authorization Council and made a significant contribution to the successful implementation of the trainings organized by the Vocational Education Quality Assurance Department.

The Center has delivered speeches at significant international forums, including a conference organized by the European Training Foundation (ETF) and the Quality Assurance Congress organized by the Turkish Quality Assurance Agency (ITEAC).

EKKA representatives also actively participated in the PLA activities of the Professional Development Needs of the Pool of Experts for Higher Education Institutions Authorization and programme Accreditation implemented within the collaboration of National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement and the Grant Project Educational Lab (EDU LAB) of the Alumni Association of the International Center for Education.

Analysis of Unfulfilled Activities of the 2020 Action Plan

Several activities outlined by the Departments in the 2020 Action Plan failed to materialize, and the performance of part of them has shifted to 2021. Information about that was submitted to the Director of the Center by the structural units at the end of 2020. In January-June 2021, part of them has been completely implemented, and work on the rest is underway.

In particular, the work on the Human Resources Management Policy document was completed by the Human Resources Management and Documentation Department. Structural units have reviewed the document and envisaged part of the feedback received. It should be noted that the policy document is in line with the Center's Mission, Vision, and Strategic Goals.

Herewith, in 2020 was planned to improve the staff appraisal system. That failed in 2020. The introduction and implementation of the staff appraisal system is envisaged in the 2021 Action Plan. Work on job descriptions has been completed in the current period. Description of staff and non-staff functions and qualification requirements have been developed for all positions according to their priority. Based on the analysis and evaluation of a separate function, its share was determined. That is the first stage for evaluating the work performed. To introduce an evaluation system, an eHRms-employee performance evaluation module has been found. According to this module, staff will be involved in the system. At this stage, work is underway on the evaluation rule.

Due to the epidemic situation in the country, information meetings with media representatives could not be held in 2020. In June of the current year, the Public Relations and Organizational Division ensured information meetings with media representatives to provide complete information on the Center's activities, current projects, achievements,

challenges, and plans for the future. The meeting was attended by the staff of the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement, representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, and 16 media outlets.

Due to the situation caused in the country by the pandemic, one of the internal audit activities by the Internal Audit Department was moved to the 2021 plan and was carried out in January of the reporting period. Information on the change was submitted to the Director of the Center. It was also planned to create an internal quality assurance document to strengthen the quality of risk management and implemented control mechanisms. It should be noted that the Internal Audit Department of the Center closely cooperates with the Internal Audit Department of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia. Work on this issue continues together with the Ministry. At this stage, the Ministry is working on a document, the distribution of which is planned for all, included in the system, internal audit entities.

The preparation of a self-evaluation report for ENQA on the implementation of the recommendations developed by ENQA was postponed for the first quarter of 2021. The report was prepared by the Working Group and sent to ENQA in the first quarter of the reporting period. The Center successfully passed the evaluation process done by the monitoring group of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) in April of the current year.

In the field of vocational education, expert training/certification piloting was planned in 2020; The deadline has been moved to 2021, and, accordingly, the competition for the selection of certified quality assurance experts has been completed during the reporting period. Also, the formation of a new Experts Pool in vocational training/vocational retraining programmes has been completed.

A competition for informal education recognition consultants has been announced for 2021, which included 4 stages: submitting and selecting an application, conducting testing electronically, conducting training, and completing an assignment electronically. As a result of the competition, 42 persons were awarded the status of Certified Consultant for the Recognition of Informal Education.

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