LEPL – IVANE JAVAKHISHVILI TBILISI STATE UNIVERSITY

ANNUAL

REPORT

2021

Quality Assurance Service

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

Quality Assurance Service (hereinafter – Service) of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University (hereinafter – University), is one of the governing bodies of the University. The aim of its activity is the continuous development of the quality of the University services. The Service operates in accordance with the Articles 25 and 31 of the Law of Georgia on Higher Education, University Charter and Regulations of the Quality Assurance Service. Within the frames of its activities, the Service is guided by the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area developed by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education and National Authorization and Accreditation Standards.

The main areas of activity of the service are the following:

   a) Promoting the quality of learning / teaching and research at the University and the protection of academic integrity;
   b) Organizing a self-evaluation process for authorization and cluster accreditation processes;
   c) Preparations for external evaluation of programs to ensure national and international accreditation;
   d) Promoting the introduction of modern teaching, learning and assessment methods;
   e) Intensifying international cooperation and promoting the integration of the University into the European educational space for improving quality assurance processes, sharing international best practices, and introducing innovations in the educational area;
   f) Enhancing quality culture at the university, through the increased inclusion and awareness raising of internal actors and especially students into the quality assurance processes.

Based on the multi-profile expert experience of the University, the Quality Assurance Service actively cooperates with various structural units of the University, for further development of the Institution. Of particular importance is its collaboration with the Quality Assurance Services available at the faculties, which are part of the Quality Assurance System of the University. However, their activities are, to a certain extent, based on the specifics of various subject areas of the faculty, which often provides the basis for making independent decisions.

This report covers the current situation concerning the development of teaching/learning and research, as well as quality of University services for the reporting period from December 2020 to December 2021; furthermore, it represents the development plan and prospects for the next year.

The challenges of the previous reporting period, which the University successfully addressed institutionally, moved to a different phase in 2021. The already established forms of distance learning were retained in many cases. Certain programmes, however (at the faculties of Exact and Natural Sciences; Social and Political Sciences; Medicine) continued to be delivered in a hybrid format, especially courses with clinical practice curriculums. During the autumn semester of 2021, the Examination Centre, upon the academic staff's request, conducted up to 10 sessions (including intermediary and final exams) – which was the result of strict adherence to COVID-19 regulations by the University's academic and administrative staff and high vaccination rate (89%) among them.

The University's institutional space once again came under the external evaluation process, within the framework of monitoring, when the University submitted to the LEPL National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement a three-year self-evaluation report prepared on the basis of authorization experts' recommendations and advice regarding the increase of the maximum number of students in 2018 and 2019. Based on the materials of the interim report, the experts presented the strengths of the Institution in a broad format by positively assessing and accentuating the effectiveness of the activities of the Quality Assurance Service and its due and targeted focus on institutional development. The real results of the management system of the Quality Assurance Service, also recognized as the strengths of this institution, are: the greater recognizability of the University (based on concrete projects and various scientific researches); gradual improvement of awareness on academic integrity – as the basis for highly-qualified and high-rated study; preparatory phase for the support of institutional development and quality awareness raising - personnel development and measures supporting these processes. All the aforesaid results form the effective and solid foundation for the development of the Institution.

Experts' assessment set the Institution new tasks, including attracting young lecturers and researchers and thus increasing the share of young people within the academic staff; continuously renovating the infrastructure and material-technical resources and adapting them to the modern education and research requirements.

Based on the experts' opinion, the Quality Assurance Service worked continuously in 2021, together with the administrative entities of the University, academic communities and scientific-research institutions under the umbrella of the University, on the aforesaid recommendations that were reflected in various projects and activities included hereunder.

As of December 2021, **217 educational programmes** are operating at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, including the following: 63 bachelor's, 97 master's, 49 PhD, 1 Georgian language learning; 13 vocational education, 8 vocational training and 1 vocational retraining, 4 one-step, 2 integrated teacher training and 1 teacher training programmes; Also of importance are 26 foreign language educational programmes (18 **English language programmes:** 7 bachelor's, 7 master's, 2 PhD; 4 **Russian language programmes:** (2 bachelor's, 2 master's), 2 Georgian-French, 2 Georgian-Russian programmes). (A total of 11 bachelor's, 11 master's, 3 PhD, 1 one-step programmes). The national and international accreditation process envisaged by the 2021 Action Plan of the Service, 66 educational programmes have been reaccredited (62 national, including 15 bachelor's, 30 master's, 15 PhD; 2 one-step; 4 international, including 2 bachelor's and 2 master's). Three new master's programmes were added to the University's catalogue of educational programmes. Re(accreditation) is a continuously ongoing process at the University as the academic personnel, based on researches and international experience, constantly tires to incorporate novelties into the learning/teaching process, in order to expand the internationalization network both in the education and research areas and to attract young people who are interested in latest science developments and various fields of research. These processes were active during the 2021 reporting period and will also continue into 2022. Details in this regard, shall be presented in this Report.

As compared to the 2020 reporting period, the objectives of the University have changed in many areas; Aspects and directions of the main work have not, however, been modified, only certain areas have undergone transformation due to the existing challenges and rapidly changing realities. New visions on raising quality and culture awareness have led the Quality Assurance Service to adopt a new approach and position in the following areas:

- Compliance with the principles of freedom in education and research;
- Development and establishment of a high level of quality awareness and a strong sense of self-responsibility among the University's academic and administrative staff, cooperation in the respective area of quality culture;
- Transformation/reduction of bureaucracy and central control mechanisms as part of increasing the level of self-responsibility.

This new concept and position were supported by the Quality Assurance Service through the exchange of information and communication within the institutional space, participation and responsibility, constructive and critical dialogue as well as sharing of best practice and experience. This concept was accepted by the University community, which. In many cases, led to a more effective cooperation with it.

New approaches to the development of quality culture in the institutional space contributes to the phased **institutional development** of the higher education institution, which is planned by the Quality Assurance Service at the beginning of each reporting year, in compliance with the team principles and in the institutional dialogue format. Every new task set forth by the Quality Assurance Service is based on the research, which is essentially important for addressing the weaknesses identified within the Institution, for developing a new strategy of action, and for duly solving the emerging tasks and problems. The permanent improvement of the Quality Assurance Service's activities is based on regular communication at various levels of the Institution, which is further supported by the proper development of human and infrastructural resources.

The foreign foundations and international organizations provided the high level of support for the implementation of various important projects of the Quality Assurance Service during the 2021 reporting period. The Quality Assurance Service was engaged in and managed 9 institutional development projects, including 4 internal and 5 international grant applications, of which 7 is active for 2022. Besides, up to 5 new applications are currently prepared for 2022.

During the reporting period, the Quality Assurance Service of the University incorporated new approaches into its action strategy. More specifically, within the scope of academic freedom, it helps the academic personnel to independently monitor the education, research and service provision processes and to focus on the best Georgian and foreign sectoral practices, which can be seen as a certain stimulus to decentralization and a transfer of greater responsibility to academic personnel and faculty management. The new approach to the management process, for its part, contributes to raising quality

awareness and improving quality culture with due regard for the field specifics, and consequently, to independent development of fields. In 2021, the Service newly conceptualized and planned **events contributing to professional development.** More specifically, seminars, workshops, trainings were planned effectively and on an individual basis, upon request of the persons responsible for the implementation of the educational programmes. Within the current reporting period, with the involvement of Georgian and international experts, the following events have been conducted: up to 78 meetings for the purpose of professional development (for academic and administrative personnel (762 participants)) and 64 trainings (for 574 students).

During the reporting year, in addition to the planned activities, such as improving the quality of teaching and research at the University, external evaluation, including submitting an interim self-evaluation report and organizing accreditation processes, international cooperation and promoting the integration of the University into the international educational space and further development of the quality assurance system at the University, the Institution planned and implemented various important activities based on its new approaches and visions, more specifically, undertook cooperation with internal and external quality actors, to launch new initiatives at the Institution as part of efforts to raise quality awareness and improve quality culture - for studying, reviewing, recommending and supporting legislative initiatives regarding engagement in international programmes and projects, which will be covered in detail in this Report.

2. PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

After increasing the maximum number of students in 2021, 23817 students are enrolled at 7 faculties of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. The largest number of students is registered at the Faculty of Economics and Business (5692), followed by the Faculty of Humanitarian Sciences (4702), Faculty of Exact and Natural Sciences (3541) and the Faculty of Law (3308) (other faculties: Faculty of Social and Political Sciences - 2820, Faculty of Medicine – 2032, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences – 1722). Last year, the growing number of students were admitted to the Faculty of Psychology and Educational and Humanitarian Sciences, as well as the Faculty of Economics and Business. The greatest number of graduates are registered at the Faculty of Humanitarian Sciences (980), the Faculty of Law (922) as well as the Faculty of Economics and Business (840).
Three faculties of the University: Faculty of Exact and Natural Sciences, Faculty of Psychology, Educational and Humanitarian Sciences and Faculty of Economics and Business offer state-funded educational programs (physics, chemistry, biology, mathematics (400)/philology, history, archaeology, philosophy, ethnography (400)/educational science (25)/economics (400); among them, the Faculty of Economics has the largest number of state-funded student places, and the Faculty of Exact and Natural Sciences has the largest number of highest-funded students.

Despite the given number of state-funded students at the faculty of educational sciences, the University administration allocated funding to an additional number of 25 students of the faculty of educational sciences in 2021, as the Institution is fully aware that this field holds an important place on the present-day educational market. Students of the faculty of humanitarian sciences (philology and history) were provided with financial support as well and this can also be explained by the high demand for specialists of this field on the labour market.

Student status of 36% (8588) of students was suspended in the four-semester distance and hybrid learning process in 2020-2021, due to the social situation resulting from the pandemic.

It needs to be highlighted that the University's international network expanded: namely, in 2021, the University's educational programmes were attended by 805 international students, with the largest number of international students (648) enrolled at the medical faculty.

At the end of 2021, 217 Georgian-language and 26 foreign language educational programs at all three levels of higher education operated at 7 faculties of the University. Detailed statistics related to the faculties is presented on the relevant website of the Quality Assurance Service of the University.

Educational programmes are supported at the University in two main directions:
  ➢ Internal quality assurance;
  ➢ External quality assurance.

2.1 INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Quality Assurance Service of the University attaches paramount importance to internal quality assurance, which is aimed at providing the holistic assessment of the Institution in several areas:
  - Peer review of educational programmes;
  - Academic performance analysis;
  - Surveying students, academic and invited personnel;
  - Regarding the updated format of the work of the educational programme development committees;
  - Student participation in programme quality assurance mechanisms;
  - Adaptation of normative documents.

2.1.1 PEER REVIEW OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

Since 2021 the Quality Assurance Service of the University has intensively applied the internal evaluation and monitoring processes established within the Institution over the past few years. Internal quality evaluation is in fact the everyday reality of the Institution. The result of such evaluation is initially reviewed by the Faculty Council, while the changes made to educational programmes for their

further improvement are transferred, through the University Quality Service, to the Academic Council for their further consideration. The changes are incorporated into the programmes immediately upon the entry into force of the decision of the Academic Council.

In 2021, through the involvement of the institutional development and authorization department of the Quality Assurance Service, and in cooperation with the department of technologies of the University, the work is actively underway to develop an electronic portal for evaluation of educational programmes, which will allow the Service to make automatic the internal evaluation processes and to observe in stages the development of educational programmes.

As part of constant communication with the faculty quality assurance services, the peer review of educational programmes is conducted during both semesters, which, for its part, enhances quality culture, raises quality awareness and increases the level of the University community's self-responsibility in the academic processes.

During the reporting period, the peer reviews were conducted smoothly through the involvement of field experts employed at programme committees and structural entities of the University, as well as students, graduates and, in some cases, employers. Renewed activities in the internal evaluation system have contributed to the following:

- Raising the quality awareness and quality culture in the University space;
- Expanding the scope of independent activities of the faculty quality assurance services, minimizing bureaucracy and weakening central control mechanisms within the scope of enhancing self-responsibility and the University community's self-responsibility;
- Active involvement of students in the Programme evaluation and development process;
- Active participation of employers and heads of practice objects in the educational programmes evaluation process;
- University alumni's broad interest in the processes planned to improve the Programme;
- Diversity and increased workload of the committee supporting programme planning and development.

The modified internal evaluation system has been optimized over the past few years and is establishing an increasingly stronger presence within the Institution. Several years' experience has shown clearer to the Quality Assurance Service of the University the necessity of the processes, and this approach is shared by the persons implementing the educational programmes or interested in them. The procedure already developed on the basis of the widely tried and tested practice, appeared to be in need of some clarification and perfection at certain levels, which implied involvement of trainees of the master's degree programme in educational sciences in the activities of the Quality Assurance Service. A working protocol of the Programme Committee being one of the important and permanently functioning bodies facilitating the processes ongoing within the educational programmes has been worked out in detail. This guiding document is currently being reviewed at the faculty entities. Finally, it will be laid on the table for public discussions and will be integrated into the activities of the Committee.

Due to the epidemiological situation in the country during the reporting period, internal evaluations were planned in a hybrid format for those educational programmes that:

- Were in the process of reaccreditation;
- Required modification in relation to the new qualification framework.
- Were prepared for submission to the foreign agency for reaccreditation.

Therefore, the internal evaluation was carried out for the following educational programmes:

- January-February 2021: 5 educational programmes (including: 2 – bachelor's, 2 master's, 1 - doctoral);
- March-April 2021: 4 educational programmes (including: 1 – bachelor's, 2 master's, 1 - doctoral);
- May-June 2021: 6 educational programmes (including: 2 – bachelor's, 3 master's, 1 - doctoral);
- July-August 2021: 23 educational programmes (including: 5 – bachelor's, 13 – master's, 5 - doctoral);
- November-December 2021: 3 educational programmes (including: 1 – bachelor's, 1 – master's, 1 - doctoral).

In 2021, 46 educational programmes were subject to internal evaluation. 782 people participated in the evaluation process. Discussions were held via zoom electronic platform. They were attended by representatives of various levels of the faculty administration, program managers, academic and invited personnel, students and alumni, employers and interns /trainees. The abovementioned meetings were attended by 4 students of the master's programme in **Educational Science** who undergo an annual internship in the Quality Assurance Service.

2.1.2 ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

The Quality Assurance Service of Tbilisi State University actively conducts surveys based on interviews and analysis, i.e. data analysis, for which it applies a variety of survey tools through which it is possible to regularly assess the essential aspects of teaching and learning, to determine a maximum benchmark for learning outcomes, to correct various details and to define new limits. One of the important issues is the analysis of academic performance of students that can be monitored through programme.

An analysis of learning outcomes is regularly prepared in every semester[1] and processed by the committee supporting programme planning and development. An increasingly greater attention was paid to such analysis during the pandemic, given that educational programmes lack in the data, which the University's examination centre used to submit in the form of reports in every semester[1], and which allowed comparative analysis of learning outcomes. The primary data analysis is provided by the learning process regulating system (lms.tsu.ge), which makes it possible to analyze students' academic performance based on various training courses.

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[1] Examination Centre's analyses are available at:
https://old.tsu.ge/ge/government/administration/departments/examcenter/about/r2ewgq1iswdybjnvs/

The most broadly-based analysis of students' academic performance in 2021 was prepared according to various educational programmes at the faculties of Exact and Natural Sciences; Social and Political Sciences; Economics and Business. At the given stage, a detailed comparative analysis of academic performance is being done at the faculty of humanitarian sciences. On the basis of such analysis, educational programmes are prepared in the format of cluster accreditation, which calls for different approaches to research processes.

In the process of analysis, the faculties use different methodologies and mechanisms including: the Gaussian type distribution integrated in the LMS portal, monitoring over the faculty introductory courses or over the data of individual training courses, during which respective statistical methods and the optimum number of students to be evaluated within the group will be taken into account. Given below are concrete examples of analysis taken purposefully from those educational programmes, which were prepared for external evaluation and, respectively, underwent peer review. Studies prepared under the programme became important in the sense that they form the basis for monitoring the learning outcomes of the programme, for identifying areas that need improvement and for planning active measures based on concrete recommendations.

- ✓ *The Faculty of Economics and Business has analyzed the exam results of the semester following the 2020-2021 academic year. Data of final exams in 42 bachelor's, 55 master's and 9 PhD training courses were analyzed and students' grades were compared to normal distribution curve. For a large majority of training courses, students' grading curve appeared to be skewed considerably to the normal distribution curve (see diagram, annex 2), so-called "grade inflation" - i.e. higher scores compared to the pre-pandemic period- was also observed. As the diagram shows, this analysis was prepared based on the Gaussian curve.*

- ✓ *The Faculty of Social and Political Sciences provided analysis fundamentally differs from the present analysis. The research was based on the processing of statistical information. The data are presented in a tabular format. They are based on compulsory and optional courses under the master's educational programme as shown in the first table (see Annex 3) and on students' learning outcomes based on 6 types of evaluations. Comparison is drawn between the data of three semesters.*

  Main findings from the analysis of the data can be seen as the important result of the research. According to these findings: students' academic performance for compulsory as well as optional courses does not differ substantially. With respect to a majority of courses, the Gaussian curve remains the same, with the exception of definite easy-to-learn subjects for students. This analysis also focuses its attention on the so-called "grade inflation", which can be explained by the transfer to the first stage of online learning. The aforesaid process became regulated already in the spring semester of 2021, to which attest additional regulations and techniques developed at the University and incorporated into the educational process. Activities aimed at the improvement of the learning outcomes can be referred to as yet another significant component of this analysis. The given researches were prepared by the academic personnel itself and the programme committee. Therefore, based on the analysis results, the academic personnel

periodically adjusts the benchmarks for the learning outcomes of the courses, which allows for the improvement of the educational programme. The analogous research was carried out for the bachelor's and doctoral educational programmes of the same area. Also of importance are the results of the academic analysis of PhD students, which are given below (see the Matrix, Annex 3). The research methodology is the same in this case, only main findings are different, according to which: students' academic performance is largely graded as excellent (A). The author of the research explains this by the fact that PhD students are offered courses that are largely field-specific or field-related, in which PhD students have high interest and motivation. Interdisciplinary and methodological studies courses are given an equal evaluation. As for the grade inflation, to avoid it, the concrete component in each course is viewed in relation to the achievability of the learning outcomes.

- ✓ **At the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences**, *researches were carried out during the reporting period as well. Based on the researches done, the faculty presented a collated faculty analysis of the learning outcomes of the 146 courses, according to which there is a tendency of 62.2% positive and 15% negative deviation, 19% - close to normal distribution, and 9% - multimodal distribution (see diagram, Annex 4)*

- ✓ **At the Faculty of Humanitarian Sciences**, *students' academic achievements are studied in every semester. At the given stage, however, as the faculty is preparing for cluster accreditation, the Quality Assurance Service of the Faculty is working on systematization and analysis of academic achievements of students of those educational programmes that are clustered based on the concrete method of data analysis, which will be fully presented at the end of 2022.*

- ✓ **The Faculty of Exact and Natural Sciences** *evaluated during the current year the academic performance of students at all the three levels of the educational programmes. The evaluation results have made it clear that compared to 2020, students' academic performance is returning to the same level as before the transition to distance learning. Students' academic performance already makes a concrete difference.*

Analysis of students' academic performance is important for the orderly consuction of the academic processes. It is also essential to the development of the educational programme. At the given stage, however, educational programmes are confronted with concrete challenges, namely: external evaluation processes call for holistic observation of higher education programmes at all levels and for planning of measures contributing to this principle.

2.1.3 SURVEYING STUDENTS, ACADEMIC AND INVITED PERSONNEL

Surveys of students, employers, alumni play an increasingly greater role at the higher education institution and serve as an important mechanism for observation, as well as for planning further

activities. Many researches have been carried out at the University over the recent period, to bring into action both concrete projects and quality assurance mechanism. It needs to be highlighted that these researches are part of everyday activities of the Quality Assurance Service.

In cooperation with respective faculty services, the Quality Assurance Service of the University annually updates its survey instruments, including various types of thematic questionnaires. For conducting surveys, the Service actively uses an electronic learning portal of the University, as well as corporate e-mail, telephone surveys, social networks and other media facilities. Concrete target surveys and respective analyses carried out in specific areas are published on the Service's website. In addition they are shared with target groups.

Besides thematic and target surveys, certain surveys, especially those relating to internal and external quality evaluation of educational programmes, are prepared directly by the programme committee and faculty quality assurance services – this is yet another proof of academic and administrative freedom at the University, which implies surveys based on faculty or field specifics. Such cooperation enhances day by day the level of quality culture and quality awareness, as well as a sense of self-responsibility of individual members of the University.

During the reporting period, surveys were intensively conducted within the framework of external evaluation of educational programmes. Close cooperation with the faculty quality assurance service has made it clear that a realistic picture is only created when surveys regarding educational programs are carried out by the committees supporting such educational programmes, which means that not only field specifics of the educational programmes but also peculiarities of concrete educational level is considered during the survey process.   Based on new regulations applying in Georgian educational space, cluster accreditation is an absolutely new challenge facing the faculty of humanitarian sciences. As for the surveys conducted at university faculties, they can be grouped as follows:

- ✓ Student satisfaction survey;
- ✓ Survey of academic and invited personnel;
- ✓ Survey of alumni
- ✓ Survey of employers.

Surveys conducted during the reporting period within the scope of educational programmes had a more or less successful outcome. Main questionnaires were developed through cooperation with the academic personnel and doctoral students of the Faculty of Psychology. Those questionnaires were offered to the faculties. As for questionnaires of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, they were adjusted, in terms of their focus on field-specific themes, by the faculty of sociology.

The largest number of surveys were conducted at the faculties of Exact and Natural Sciences; Social and Political Sciences; Psychology and Educational Sciences; Economics and Business. We will try to give an analysis of the results of the survey conducted within the scope of concrete educational programmes.

Analytical material on the surveys conducted during the reporting period was prepared within the frames of the educational programme in economics. The material analyzes the statistical data in detail and highlights the general provisions and findings that are essential to the improvement of the programme.

In 2021, 3 educational programmes (in economics) were prepared for re-accreditation, and their portfolio included several types of surveys, including:

- **Alumni survey**, which involved 2019 and 2020 alumni, among whom graduates of master's degree programmes (96%) outnumbered graduates of bachelor's degree programmes (75,5%). The following can be considered as a main finding of the Alumni survey: strengthening the practical learning component in the learning courses (e.g. carrying out an applied/research project, increasing a share of practical cases, updating the literature, holding meetings with representatives of the practical domain, organizing employment forums, expanding practice objects, expanding internship/exchange programmes and supporting student participation in them; inviting representatives of the private and public sectors to attend lectures and seminars);

- **Employer survey** was conducted in the form of questionnaire survey and involved 14 persons from both: public sector and private companies (public sector accounting for 71,4%, private companies - 14,3% and international organizations - 7,1%). 7,1% of employers surveyed reported a shortage of qualified staff; 92,9% of employers referred to **analytical thinking** as the most important competence for alumni (see the diagram of competences). In case of employer survey too, the main finding appears to be: strengthening the learning course with the practical learning component; active involvement of representatives of the private and public sectors in scientific-research conferences, workshops).

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Diagram 10: Name three key competences a person (e.g. a University alumni) needs to be employed at your organization:

Competence	Percentage
Decision making skill	7.1%
Creativity	7.1%
Analytical thinking	92.9%
Knowledge of foreign language(s)	35.7%
Self-presentation skills	7.1%
Ability to work independently	21.4%
Teamwork skills	50.0%
Theoretical knowledge	42.9%
Practical knowledge	57.1%
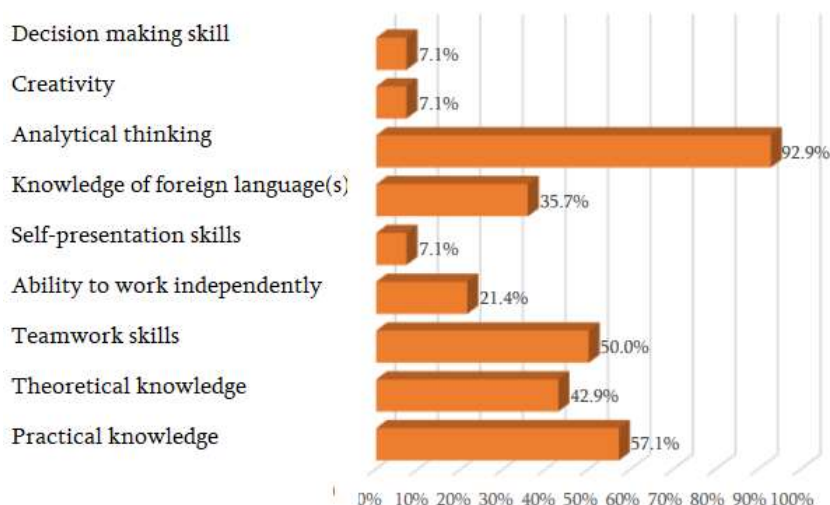
- **Student satisfaction survey** involved 216 bachelor's degree students, 32 master's degree students and 59 – doctoral students. The highest satisfaction rate with their university education was reported by doctoral students, whereas the lowest rate (31%) was reported by bachelor's degree students. Based on the findings of the survey at all the three levels of education: the University's

material-technical base call for upgrading; the survey's respondents are also interested in strengthening the practical component and expanding the scope of internship.

For additional probing, student focus groups were formed for the following questions: expansion of internationalization, active use of the hotline, strengthening of critical thinking, research project/abstract writing skills; creating an application for faculty webpage; increasing employer engagement in developing programmes and making changes thereto.

Personnel satisfaction survey involved 89 persons. The following themes were accentuated as survey findings: expanding a list of monetary and non-monetary incentives; improving the level of personnel engagement in trainings and seminars, experience-sharing among colleagues (this passage indicates that the personnel's awareness of quality keeps increasing). If positions of certain surveyed groups are collated, it will become clear that practically all groups focus their attention on the following: Students' getting into the labour market through their practical skills; improvement of material-technical infrastructure; close cooperation between the programme-implementing and interested personnel and sharing of planned activities - still being areas that need improvement.

Analogous methodology was used in carrying out surveys at all those faculties where educational programmes were re-accredited.

The key challenge facing the 2022 surveys will be the cluster accreditation ongoing at the faculty of humanitarian sciences, for the preparation of which it is important to work out a specific methodology and to determine communication channels and survey mechanisms to get full-scale survey results.

2.1.4 REGARDING THE UPDATED FORMAT OF THE WORK OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES

Educational programme is rapidly developing in the current educational process. This is due to the changes actively ongoing within the education system. The educational programme development results should be duly reflected in the curriculum. The processes taking place within the educational programme should be accessible to all interested persons involved in implementing the educational programme. Therefore, the development of educational programmes at the University is constantly monitored by the committees supporting the planning and development of the educational programme, which has been operating since 2018 and is engaged in the process of the development of educational programmes. The functional description of these committees is included as Annex (3) in the procedure

for planning, evaluating and developing educational programmes (Resolution N:100/2019, updated on 24 February 2020, see Resolution of the Academic Council N16)[2].

The Programme Committee is a permanent representative body, which is constantly involved in the educational programme development process. Its composition is multiprofile and is recruited in such a way as to be able to cover, through its activities, all standards of accreditation. The Programme Committee is a cycle:

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                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │    Programme    │
                    │    Committee    │
                    └─────────────────┘

┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐
│ Educational  │   │Self-evaluation│   │Self-evaluation│
│ Programme's  │   │    Group     │   │   Portfolio  │
│  Portfolio   │   │              │   │              │
└──────────────┘   └──────────────┘   └──────────────┘
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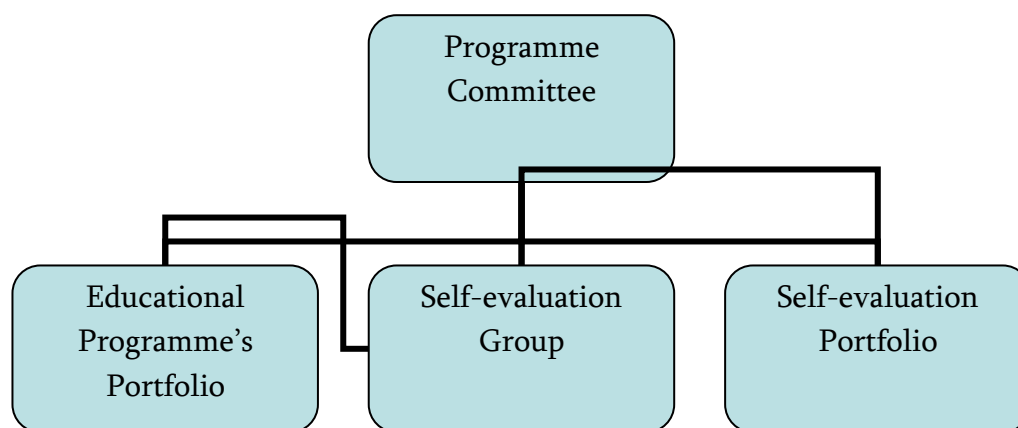
Programme committee – Educational Programme Portfolio – Self-evaluation Group – Self-evaluation Portfolio are part of the cycle where the programme is launched or developed, programme portfolio is prepared and transferred to the self-evaluation group, which submits a self-evaluation portfolio. The accredited educational programme is then returned to the programme committee and continues to function.

The Committee expanded its scope of activities in 2021. Currently, its involvement in internal evaluation processes is frequent, whereby the novelties and findings suggested by the committee members are often reflected in an updated version of the programme. The Quality Assurance Service prepared **a protocol of the educational programme committee**, which serves as a guide for the programme committee's scope of activities.

In 2021, 18 programme committees were involved in the internal evaluation process of educational programmes (including: Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences – 2, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences – 7, Faculty of Economics and Business – 4, Faculty of Exact and Natural Sciences – 4 committees, Faculty of medicine - 1, Faculty of Humanitarian Sciences - 1). The activities of the committee facilitate and lay the foundation for programme renewal. The issues developed by the committee constitute an important guiding document in the process of preparing an external evaluation for the self-evaluation group of the educational programme.

The Educational Programme Committee Protocol is a detailed document consistently laying down the functions, tasks and scope of activities of the programme committee. Within the scope of the Protocol,

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[2] Available at: https://tsu.ge/ka/legalakad/15843

educational programme portfolio is prepared, which is then transferred to the self-evaluation group for preparing a self-evaluation report and a portfolio of attached documents. (Re)accredited educational programme is returned to the Programme Committee and enters the development phase.

2.1.5 STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAMME QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS

During the reporting period the Quality Assurance Service continued cooperation with different thematic peer groups thus contributing to the transparent and speedy conduction of University-related processes, active integration of different generations of learners into the academic processes and opinion exchange between them, equipping University students with relevant knowledge and competence.

Student Self-Government at Tbilisi State University actively participates in the development of certain issues of University policy, but this is only a part of the students delegated from the faculties. During the 2021 reporting period, the University Quality Assurance Service has been actively cooperating with student self-government representatives, student-interns. Based on this cooperation, students:

- Participate in the works of the educational programme re-accreditation, planning and development support committees (51 programme committees are involved in the work of 217 educational programmes within the University); including 150 students of all three levels;
- Are actively involved in the internal evaluation processes of educational programmes. Namely, in 2021, 79 students as members of programme support committee and 11 students as participants were engaged in the internal evaluation process;
- During the 2021 reporting period, participated online in the project *"Improving Student's Capacity to Ensure Their Involvement in Quality Assurance Process at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University".* From 2022, the main topics of the project will be shared to student groups of other faculties;
- During 2021, students of Master's Programme in *Educational Sciences* were undergoing internships both in University and faculty quality assurance services. Namely, 4 students underwent internship at University Quality Assurance Service. Students participating in the internship undergo the relevant study discipline and starting from the second week of the training course, observe the practical part of the training course at both central and hierarchically lower levels of the University Quality Assurance Service.

Based on a combination of all the activities listed above, for the new reporting period the University Quality Assurance Service plans to *expand student participation in Quality Assurance Service Report mechanisms.*

2.1.6 FOR STUDYING, COMMENTING AND REVIEWING NORMATIVE DOCUMENTS

For the purposes of studying, commenting and reviewing normative documents the University Quality Assurance Service makes an important contribution to the changes and innovations ongoing in the country's educational system; is constantly involved in reviewing the new developments, and participates in the process of implementing pilot projects; shares and introduces new directions, research and innovative methods from the European educational space into the university space and culture, which is facilitated by active cooperation of the Quality Assurance Service with the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and the LEPL National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement.

In 2021, the Quality Assurance Service actively worked on updated local normative documents, as well as documents developed by external quality actors and submitted by international institutions. These materials were studied within the frames of the Service, certain recommendations were also prepared and documents – revised, many of which were considered by the partner institution.

The University Quality Assurance Service studied and attached its comments to the following:

- ✓ Revised National Qualifications Framework and Learning Fields Classifier was approved by Order N69/n dated 10 April 2019 of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia;
- ✓ Draft Doctoral Educational Programmes Assessment Framework Document;
- ✓ Draft "Credit Accumulation Rule for Higher Educational Programmes" approved by Order N3 dated 5 January 2007 of the Minister of Education and Science;
- ✓ Document Determining Third Compulsory Subject to be passed within National Unified Exams;
- ✓ Draft Document of Cluster Accreditation Standards for Higher Education Programmes;
- ✓ Draft Procedures for Cluster Accreditation;
- ✓ Draft Rule regulating the Selection and Activities of Authorization and Accreditation Experts and the Suspension ad Termination of their Membership in the Experts Corps

Through active involvement of the University professors, Higher Education Sector Benchmark was developed for the following fields:

- Georgian language philology
- History
- Archaeology
- Foreign Language Acquisition
- Philosophy

Recommendations and opinions of the University's experts and the Quality Assurance Service were submitted in writing to the External Actors' respective services. They were actively involved in the public discussion of documents as well.

2.2 EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE (EQA)

External quality assurance, which involves the periodic evaluation and promotion of ongoing teaching-learning, research, the University's third mission and institutional effectiveness, is a complex and concluding activity. Its perfect management is largely due to the creation of a complete and effective internal quality assurance mechanism in the higher educational institution. The activities of the University in these processes largely depend on transparency of and accountability to internal and external stakeholders. The external quality assurance process at Tbilisi State University is developing in two directions:

- External development assessment cycle at the University;
- Preparation for the (re)accreditation process of the educational programmes.

2.2.1 EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATION CYCLE AT THE UNIVERSITY

Given the changes ongoing within the Georgian educational system, in the 2021 reporting period, the University Quality Assurance Service introduced an external development evaluation cycle at the level of educational programmes. The process involved education and field experts.

The University Quality Assurance Service planned to process a number of programmes for accreditation during the reporting period, a number of which would be submitted:

- In the format of individual accreditation (in case of individual submission of new or modified educational programmes);
- In the format of cluster accreditation (in case of all three levels, or at least two levels of educational programmes, which will be discussed within the same code of the qualification framework);
- To evaluate in Peer Review format.

In the re-accreditation process:

- The educational programmes supporting committees of **the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences** submitted for external evaluation 21 educational programmes, of which 17 are evaluated by foreign experts, and 11 – by Georgian experts;
- The educational programmes supporting committees of the **Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences** submitted for external evaluation 6 educational programmes, of which 1 (Bachelor's degree educational programme in psychology) is evaluated by foreign experts, and 5 (Master's degree educational programmes) – by Georgian experts;
- The educational programmes supporting committees of the **Faculty of Economics and Business** submitted for external evaluation 6 educational programmes, of which 5 (including

2 Bachelor's and Master's degree educational programmes in economics) are evaluated by the foreign accreditation agency – FIBAA), and 3 – by Georgian experts;

- The Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral Degree educational programmes in philosophy of the **Faculty of Humanitarian Sciences** were submitted for pilot external developmental cluster evaluation. The evaluation was conducted by foreign ad Georgian experts;
- Master's Degree educational programmes in public administration of the **Faculty of Law** were submitted for external evaluation by the foreign accreditation agency – FIBAA. The same year they were accredited by the LEPL National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement.

In 2021, 68 educational programmes underwent external evaluation, on which international experts' opinions are presented in 27 self-evaluation packages and Georgian experts' opinions – in 15 self-evaluation packages. The opinions were processed in the programme committees and the self-evaluation groups. Based on them, next steps for improvement of the educational programmes were planned.

2.2.2 EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES RE(ACCREDITATION) PROCESS AT THE UNIVERSITY

The evaluation of the educational programme combines internal and external evaluation. This process is not a one-time procedure, rather, it takes on various forms at the University. Before re(accreditation) of the educational programmes, the TSU Quality Assurance Service, in cooperation with the faculty service and the educational programme committees, plans in every reporting period the educational programme evaluation process, which can be implemented:

- In the form of self-evaluation, which is carried out annually by the programme implementing persons;
- Due to the challenges facing the educational sector, or to the labour market demands or to the changes ongoing in the field;
- Based on the internal monitoring;
- As part of extraordinary monitoring;
- In line with mandatory external monitoring (based on requirements of accreditation procedures).

The Accreditation, Evaluation and Analysis Division of the University Quality Assurance Service, faculty quality assurance services, programme accreditation experts employed in different structural units of the University, educational programme implementers, students and other stakeholders participate in the process management.

The updated accreditation procedures during the reporting year and the replaced legislative and regulatory documents, the expiring accreditation of the University educational programmes, as well as requirements of the academic personnel formed the basis for working meetings organized by the University Quality Assurance Service. The meetings were scheduled to be held for both: specific

educational programmes and target groups (academic personnel, students, faculty quality assurance service staff). The topics discussed during trainings and seminars include:

- Cluster accreditation and related procedures;
- Renewed forms of educational programme self-evaluation;
- Forms of self-evaluation reports on compliance with National Qualifications Framework and Learning Fields Classifier;
- Forms of report on compliance with recommendations of the Educational Programmes Accreditation Council;
- Documents and application forms to be submitted within the framework of extraordinary monitoring to ensure compliance with National Qualifications Framework;
- Forms of opinion regarding the report submitted by the higher education institution;
- Cluster accreditation portfolio.

Following the study of the updated materials, the academic personnel of the educational programmes, through the involvement of the University Quality Assurance Service, also received qualified consultations from respective services (accreditations division, qualifications department) of the LEPL National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement. Within the framework of this format, 4 meetings were scheduled to be held on various themes. Of particularly topical importance were meetings on cluster accreditation and related issues (cluster accreditation time-limits, accreditation application fee, cluster systematization methodology)

In compliance with the modified documents as required by updated standards during the reporting period and in line with new communication procedures, the University prepared and submitted 69 educational programmes to gradually undergo relevant procedures (See Annex 5)

- For the purposes of accreditation – 3 new master's degree educational programmes *(Eurasian and Caucasus Studies, Psychology of Influence and Communication, Human Resources Management)*;
- For the purposes of re-accreditation - 7 Bachelor's Degree educational programmes *(Psychology, Economics, Sociology, Politicalm Sciences, Journalism, International Relations, World's Social-Political and Tourism Geography)*; 16 Master's Degree educational programmes *(Public Health, Political Sciences, Sociology, Gender Studies, Conflict Analysis, Social-Political and Economic Geography, Child and Adolescent Psychological Assessment and Counseling, Applied Social Psychology, Educational Psychology, Labour and Organizational Psychology, Diplomacy and International Politics, Digital Media and Innovations, Economics, Finances (International School of Economics - ISET), Media Studies, Public Administration)*; 6 Doctoral degree educational programmes *(political Sciences, Sociology, Mass Communications, Conflict Analysis and Management, Social Geography, Economics)*;
- For the purposes of monitoring – 8 educational programmes (*3 Bachelor's degree educational programmes in Social Work, Computer Sciences, Ecology*), 3 Master's Degree Educational

programmes (in *Social Work*, *Computer Sciences, Public Health*), and 1 Doctoral Degree Educational programme *(in Social Work)*;

- For the purpose of submission of report regarding the recommendations of the Accreditation Council – 12 educational programmes (3 Bachelor's Degree programmes in **Business Administration, Occupational Therapy, Chemistry**; 2 Master's Degree educational programmes in **Business Administration, Chemistry, Chemical Expertise**, and 1 Doctoral Degree educational programme in **Educational Sciences**).

Out of the educational programmes of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences – 21, Medicine –7, Law – 1,– 3, Psychology and Educational Sciences – 6, to be submitted in the planned (re)accreditation process in 2020, during the reporting period:

- Accredited: 3 new educational programmes – 1 new one-year Master's Degree educational programme;
- Re-accredited: 2 one-step educational programme in Georgian and English (Medicine); 7 Bachelor's educational programmes; 15 master's degree educational programmes (including in Computer Sciences and Electrical and Electronic Engineering); 6 PhD educational programmes;
- Waiting for the visit of accreditation experts: 2 Mater's Degree educational programmes (Digital Media and Innovations, Finances (ISET);
- 1 new educational (foreign language) programme has been developed:
  - The Faculty of Economics (International School of Economics (ISET) Master's Educational Programme in *Finances*);

The work performed by the Quality Assurance Service is presented in the form of an independent matrix.

For the new reporting period, the University Quality Assurance Service prepares 8 clusters at the Faculty of Humanitarian Sciences, within the framework of cluster accreditation.

2.2.3 EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES DATABASE

The development of educational programmes and their phased accreditation calls for periodic adjustments to the Educational Programmes Database, which, for its part, should be synchronized with the databases of LEPL Education Management Information System and LEPL National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement. This database for 2021 reflects all important details of the educational programmes, on the basis of which the Quality Assurance Service will gradually:

- Prepare and include changes into the educational programmes;
- Submit educational programmes in the (re)accreditation process;

- Prepare and submit a report, in compliance with the resolution of the Educational Programme Accreditation Council;
- Prepare an interim report on educational programmes for submission to the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement.

During the reporting period, the University's Educational Programmes Internal Database was updated four times in synchrony with the databases of LEPL Education Management Information System and LEPL National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement. Based on the internal database, a catalogue of educational programmes is constantly updated on the Service website[3].

This database serves as the basis for verifying accreditation time-limits, as well as for determining a reasonable period for preparing educational programmes for accreditation. All documents pertaining to the past accreditation process, namely, accreditation experts' opinions, Accreditation Council's decisions and protocols, on which the self-assessment team bases its analyses while carrying out pre-accreditation works became fully accessible for the senior officers and executive staff of the educational programme accredited during the past reporting period.

In the 2021 reporting period, educational programmes reaccreditation process was planned in line with the present database. Accredited Programmes' expert opinions were added as one more option to the database during the reporting period.

3. ON INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As centres of teaching and learning, research and society development, universities play an important role in the development of the country and take an active part in public life. In this view, the University is a leading institution, which is considered in formulating the national as well as international profile of the country. The institutional profile of the university is clearly reflected in its strategic development plan. However, the ongoing developments both within the modern education system and across the world, not rarely call for the revision of fundamental principles of institutional development and step-by-step changes. In order for the university to assume a clearly defined institutional profile, to create Intra-institutional cluster vision and network connection between teaching and learning, research, services and management activities, to develop high institutional quality culture, to expand the internationalization and mobility network for gaining and sharing experience, and to bring teaching-learning and research processes closer to the modern high-tech academic processes, the Quality Assurance Service, based on the applicable European methods and systemic experience, and within the scope of its competence, coordinates various processes ongoing at the University, focusing attention on important topics and collecting and analyzing various data. An important role, in this process, is played by the regular institutional assessment, which can be complemented by concrete topical issues and general overview findings.

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[3]https://tsu.ge/assets/media/files/65/Quality_Assurance/TSU_programebis_catalogi_2019-2020.pdf Last update: .2021

During the reporting period, the Service, within the framework of institutional development, attached priority importance to such issues as:

- Submission of three-year authorization report;
- Assessment of the University's Strategic Development Plan;
- Projects administered by the University's Quality Assurance Service:
  - SQUARE: Strengthening the role of the University in community development;
  - SPARQS: Student Participation in Quality Assurance Mechanisms;
  - Cooperation with the Times Higher Education World Universities Rankings;
  - LOTUS: EUA-funded Project: Leadership and Organisation for Teaching and Learning at European Universities;
  - arCc: British Council-funded project: Assuming Responsibility for Climate Change;
  - PROFFORMANCE: Assessment Tool and Incentive Systems for Developing Higher
  - Education Teachers' Performance;
  - Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness;
  - Supporting the University's Participation in International Grants Competitions;
  - INTEGRITY: Academic Integrity for Quality Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Institutions in Georgia – Activities to ensure the sustainability of Project results;
  - Participation in the Conference: The University Purpose and Institutional Autonomy: Challenges and Their Impact on Georgia.
- Support for Staff Development;
- Novelties at the Centre of Vocational Education;
- Cooperation with the Quality Assurance Services of the Faculty;
- Website of the University Quality Assurance Service

3.1 ON THE SUBMISSION OF THREE-YEAR SELF-EVALUATION REPORT ON AUTHORIZATION

With a view to monitoring the compliance with the recommendations issued as a result of authorization in 2018, as well as with the recommendations issued by experts regarding the increase in the maximum student enrolment rates, a three-year self-evaluation report was prepared and submitted to the LEPL National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement in August 2021.

Based on Order №1115775 dated on 20 October 2021 of the Director of the LEPL National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement, the group of experts, which was created to assess compliance with authorization standards, carried out monitoring over the University's compliance with authorization requirements. The monitoring, which was based on the University-provided materials, was carried out with respect to the 1st and 2nd standards, 3.2 and 3.3. components of the 3rd standard, 4.1. component

of the 4th standard, 5.2 component of the 5th standard, 6.3 component of the 6th standard and 7.1 and 7.4 components of the 7th standard of the Authorization.

The group of experts identified the following as the strengths of the Ivane Javakhishvili State University:

- High degree of the University's international recognizability and the University community's sharing of its mission;
- Diverse mechanisms for raising academic integrity awareness and for fight against plagiarism;
- The Quality Assurance Service was recognized as a strong governing body;
- Positive appraisal was given to the activities aimed at personnel development, as well as at implementing the life-long learning principle.

The group of experts issued the following recommendations:

- Approval of the personnel policy document within reasonable time-limits and timely implementation of the young personnel employment regulations;
- Timely implementation of the activities aimed at determining science productivity assessment criteria, analysis and strategy;
- Improvement of the TSU research and education infrastructure.

Based on the advice of the group of experts:

- It is advisable to conduct a training for the heads of administrative and major educational entities to ensure the submission of an annual report in line with the University's strategic goals and objectives and to improve the strategic plan monitoring process;
- Active work should continue towards implementing the measures aimed at modernizing the organizational structure and management processes in line with the University's plan;
- Efforts need to be made to increase the personnel involvement in trainings and to develop engagement motivation schemes.

3.2 ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY'S STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

It is already the third year that the Quality Assurance Service submits its analysis on the implementation of the strategic plan to the monitoring group, which was created for the strategic development of the LLEP Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University and for the fulfilment of the Action Plan (Rector Order №131/0101 of 4 June 2018, amendment to Order №46/01-01 of 15 February 2019). The aim of the group is to amend/improve the University's strategic development, to monitor the implementation of the action plan and to present respective recommendations to the Academic and Representative Councils. In the spring of 2021, the Quality Assurance Service prepared an analysis of monitoring over the work of the University's administrative entities based on the reports provided by them:

- ✓ Annual reports of the administrative structures were submitted to the head of the administration. A total of 17 structural entities submitted their reports;

✓ Based on the reports submitted, a table of coverage of strategic tasks was prepared. Out of 71 strategic tasks, 57 (80%) were covered. The faculties – major educational entities – did not, however, submit their reports, which would have made more complete the coverage of the University's strategic tasks;

✓ Most reports were submitted in the form defined by the monitoring methodology approved by the Academic Council on 22 July 2019. The reports, however, did not contain quantitative data, which made it difficult to provide full-scale evaluation of the work performed with respect to the goals of the strategic plan.

✓ Most of the reports submitted did not identify any link to the University's strategic goals, which made difficult the evaluation process – the reports indicated everyday activities of the services without reference to the objectives of the strategic plan.

Based on the tendencies outlined in the evaluation, members of the monitoring group developed recommendations for the Academic Council.

3.3 PROJECTS ADMINISTERED BY THE UNIVERSITY'S QUALITY ASSURANCE SERVICE

The University Quality Assurance Service participates in various activities and administers projects in the area of institutional development. Of those activities and projects, note should be taken of:

✓ SQUARE: Strengthening the role of the University in community development;
✓ SPARQS: Student Participation in Quality Assurance Mechanisms;
✓ Cooperation with the Times Higher Education World Universities Rankings;
✓ LOTUS: EUA-funded Project: Leadership and Organisation for Teaching and Learning at European Universities;
✓ ARCC: British Council-funded project: Assuming Responsibility for Climate Change;
✓ PROFFORMANCE: Assessment Tool and Incentive Systems for Developing Higher Education Teachers' Performance;
✓ Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness;
✓ Supporting the University's Participation in International Grants Competitions;
✓ INTEGRITY: Academic Integrity for Quality Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Institutions in Georgia – Activities to ensure the sustainability of Project results;
✓ Participation in the project "Bologna Hub Peer Support" funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and Erasmus +.

3.3.1 SQUARE: STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The project "Strengthening the Quality and Relevance of the Third Mission in Georgian Universities", planned and coordinated by the TSU Quality Assurance Service won the 2020 Erasmus + call for Institutional Cooperation Projects – Capacity Building in the field of Higher Education (CBHE). The fundamental function of the University, in addition to learning-teaching and research, is to make its own contribution to the community development. This can be done in a variety of forms: knowledge transfer, expertise, environmental protection activities, others. It is the close connection and cooperation between the academics and the community that, in the final analysis, leads to the community development. The project "Strengthening the Quality and Relevance of the Third Mission in Georgian Universities" will contribute to raising awareness of the Third Mission in Georgian Universities and will improve the University community's ability to plan third mission activities and to evaluate their results. It is also important that Third Mission strategic plan will be developed and Third Mission project will be piloted in each university of the Project Consortium, which will ensure the launch and development of the Third Mission at the institutional level. The Ministry of Education and Science and the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement, for their part, will update the quality assurance system and will integrate the evaluation of Third Mission activities into the Quality Assurance Standards.

For information regarding the project activities please visit the website of the University Quality Assurance Service [4] and the website of the Square Project [5].

The Kick-Off meeting for the project was organized on 17 and 18 February 2021 and was attended by representatives of eight Georgian and three European Universities, as well as by members of the EFMD Accreditation Council (Belgium). Among participants of the meetings were: Rector Giorgi Sharvashidze, Minister of Education and Science of Georgia, Mikheil Chkhenkeli; Minister of Economics and Sustainable Development of Georgia, Natia Turnava, Director of the LEPL – National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement of Georgia, Tamar Makharashvili and Coordinator of the National Erasmus+ Office in Georgia Lika Ghlonti[6].

On 22 and 23 February 2021, the training was delivered online, by the European partners of the consortium – namely, Le CNAM (France) and the University of TURKU (Finland)[7]. As the COVID-19 pandemic restricted traveling, the training, initially planned for 3 days, was split into two phases. The issues discussed by the trainers during the first phase of training were: The history behind the third mission; Driving Forces of the 3rd Generation University; Justifications and Benefits of 3M; 3M and university's identity, etc. (Detailed information can be found in Agenda). During the training, CNAM

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[4] https://www.tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/University-3rd-mission-SQUARE-

[5] http://square.tsu.ge/

[6] http://square.tsu.ge/en/text/68/66

[7] http://square.tsu.ge/en/text/68/67

and UTU presented the overview of 3M in France (and CNAM) and Finland (and namely, UTU). At the end of the training, activity to be carried out by each Georgian university was discussed. For the second part of the training, each university should prepare a chart map, identifying one's position regarding 3M, specify and identify 3M projects and assets (current, as well as possible).

The first meeting of the Project Management Team (PMT) was held online on April 13, 2021[8]. The PMT members discussed the progress of the project implementation and further steps. The dates for training, phase 2 were set. The PMT also approved the Quality Board and discussed other project-related issues – deadlines for the activities, the timeline of the project, etc.

A meeting with the Georgian universities in the SQUARE consortium was held on 23 April 2021[9]. The meeting was conducted in a hybrid format. Some participants met face-to-face and they were hosted by the project coordinator - Tbilisi State University. Due to the epidemiological situation, the Consortium members were given the opportunity to join the meeting via Zoom. The participants of the meeting discussed the progress in the implementation of the project, in particular, the current activity, third mission activities and issues related to drafting the mapping chart. They also shared their opinions and experience with each other. The aim of the meeting was to contribute, through a dialogue and exchange of experience, to finalizing the current activity successfully and effectively.

On 5 - 7 July 2021, Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University hosted the training under Erasmus+ project SQUARE. The Minister of Culture and Sport of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara Maia Khajishvili, the First Deputy Head of the Tourism and Resorts Department of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara, Tamar Kaikatsishvili, the Head of the TSU Quality Assurance Service, Irma Grdzelidze and the BSU Deputy Rector, Tamar Siradze greeted the participants of the meeting and delivered opening speeches.

The working meeting lasted for three days. The first two days – 5 and 6 July, were dedicated to the training[10] conducted in a working group format. The third day – 7 July – was devoted to project management issues[11]. The participants of the meeting discussed the progress made by far in the implementation of the project activities, mostly, following WPs– Preparation, Management, Dissemination and Exploitation and Quality Plan. The coordinating institution - TSU presented the summary of the activities implemented throughout the project, as well as the activities needed to be completed by the members of the consortium. The changes in workplan, caused by the Covid-19 crisis and subsequent restrictions were discussed. The plan for the future implementation of the project was discussed with the consortium members and agreed upon. The second presentation by TSU was dedicated to financial management and reporting. The European partner, EFMD presented the midterm quality evaluation of the project and discussed with the partners the areas that need particular attention

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[8] http://square.tsu.ge/en/text/68/71
[9] http://square.tsu.ge/en/text/68/73
[10] http://square.tsu.ge/en/text/68/74
[11] http://square.tsu.ge/en/text/68/75

from the partners. At the end of the management meeting, the partners finalized their discussions about the future implementation of the project.

On 5 and 6 July, the training was delivered by the project's Europeam partners from CNAM and UTU. The training was conducted in a hybrid format, as the project partners from Finland and Portugal could not attend the training in persons, due to the COVID regulations. Georgian partner institutions had the chance to reflect on their third mission activities, the mapping of 3M activities prepared before the training and the 3M skills and resources. Discussions were held and the European partners presented their feedback and view about the 3M projects, skills and resources. The Georgian partners will continue working to finalize the 3M maps.

In the framework of the ERASMUS+ funded SQUARE project, representatives of the Belgian Accreditation Agency EFMD - Dr. Christophe Terrsasse and Jean-Baptiste Maillarad visited Tbilisi State University on 24 November 2021[12]. During their meeting with the TSU Rector, Giorgi Sharvashidze and the Project's working group, the European partners discussed the ongoing projects and activities of TSU, as well as the vision for strengthening the university's third mission activities and the future plans within the project.

As part of efforts to disseminate information regarding the Third Mission activities and the ERASMUS+ SQUARE project, the head of the TSU Quality Assurance Service, Irma Grdzelidze delivered on 22 January 2022 a report at an annual international conference of the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement, which lasted online for three days, via ZOOM application[13]. Earlier, on 8 July, Dr. Irma Grdzelidze disseminated the information regarding the project at the Rector's Standing Conference[14]. The conference was held at Batumi State University. Dr. Irma Grdzelidze Dr. Irma Grdzelidze spoke about the third mission as the integral role of the universities, presented the needs analyses, based on which the project idea was developed, she also overviewed the project goals and objectives, partners, activities, etc. The participants of the meeting noted the contribution the project will make to the Georgian HE, as well as to the community development, as a whole. The presentation was intended to disseminate the information regarding third mission activities and the project SQUARE.

3.3.2 SPARQS: STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS

University students closely cooperate with the Quality Assurance Service of the University by undergoing internship at the Quality Assurance Service, as well as by participating in the work of the

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[12] http://square.tsu.ge/en/text/67/78

[13] ews/პროექტი-SQUARE-განათლების-ხარისხის-განვითარების-ეროვნული-ცენტრის-წლიური-საერთაშორისო-კონფერენციაზე

[14] http://square.tsu.ge/en/text/68/76

educational programme supporting committees and the self-evaluation groups. In 2021, the Project "Trainings for Course/Programme Representatives" became one of the winners of the TSU student projects competition. The project was submitted by the Master of Educational Sciences, Elene Beberashvili. The project was carried out in cooperation with the Scottish organization SPARQS and through the support of the TSU Quality Assurance Service. The aim of the Project was to train course/programme representatives of the Faculty of Education and Sciences, to launch this practice in cooperation with the Administration and to increase student engagement at the educational programme elaboration, evaluation and development stages. More than 50 students were chosen to form four different groups and attend online English-language trainings[15]. During the trainings (November 2021), students received detailed information about the role of student representative, importance of student involvement in the programme development, ways of data collection, as well as future plans for development. The training was interactive and was characterized by high level of student engagement thanks to the use of practical exercises.

The position of course/programme representative was successfully launched earlier, at the Faculty of Exact and Natural Sciences, through cooperation between the Quality Assurance Service and SPARQS, and with the IECAA's funding. The development of this practice is all the more important for students of those faculties that grant degree in organizational psychology or education science, as this provides them with additional professional experience.

3.3.3 COOPERATION WITH THE TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION WORLD UNIVERSITIES RANKINGS

The issue of university rankings has taken on an increasingly greater importance over the past years. High ranking serves as a visiting card for the University in terms of its cooperation with other universities across the world. The reputation gained by being ranked high solidifies the University's position in the employment market as well. The Tbilisi State University has cooperated with the Times Higher Education Ranking Group since 2019. As a result of long-term communication of the Quality Assurance Service with the representatives of the Times Higher Education World Universities Rankings (THE) and the active support of the university administration, Tbilisi State University will benefit from certain THE services for one year (starting from 2020). In particular, Tbilisi State University will gain access to the Times Higher Education database, which will allow the university to monitor its own progress in various directions and plan appropriate measures. In addition, for one year, representatives of the Times World University Rankings will help the university to better position itself in the international higher education market, increase its global reputation and awareness.

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[15] https://tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/სტუდენტების-ჩართულობა-ხარისხის-უზრუნველყოფის-მექანიზმებში--Spraqs-

It should also be noted that representatives of the Times World University Rankings organized four online trainings for the university staff[16]. Based on the data from THE data points, a report was prepared, which will be used while making management decisions.

The profile of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University was updated on the official web-page of THE (see the link) and in the 2021 flipbook of The World University Rankings the one-page Artwork about TSU was published (see the link).

3.3.4 LOTUS: EUA FUNDED PROJECT - LEADERSHIP AND ORGANISATION FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING AT EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES

Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University became a participant of the project - LOTUS (Leadership and Organisation for Teaching and Learning at European Universities) funded by the European Universities Association (EUA). The Project involves universities of Europe, which were selected via an open competition, based on the application. The LOTUS project aims to contribute to capacity building in order to develop and introduce structured and systemic approaches to learning-teaching quality development. Within the framework of the project, the Universities will work on various priority issues relating to learning-teaching development, such as: integration of research and education, professional development of the academic staff, student-oriented learning-teaching, etc. The Project objective is help universities to direct changes towards the development of learning/teaching, and to implement the strategic priorities.

The first meeting with the institutions participating in the Project was held on 4 and 5 October 2021, in an online format. The meeting brought together 81 representatives from over 26 universities of Europe, the European Universities Association, European Students Union. Each selected university will work for 9 months on the learning-teaching implementation plan reflecting the priorities and challenges facing them[17].

On 24 November 2021, the working group held its first meeting within the framework of the Lotus Leadership project. The facilitator of the working group established within the project meeting was Dr. Claire McAvinia, Education Developer, who has been working at the Center for Learning, Teaching, and Technology at Technological University Dublin (Ireland) since 2013. The working group includes representatives of various European Universities. From the Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University (Georgia): Irma Grdzelidze - Head of Quality Assurance Service at TSU, Nino Chikhladze - Head of Quality Assurance Service, Faculty of Medicine; University of Nicosia (Cyprus) - Panayiotis Angelides - Vice-Rector for Academic Affair; Tampere University (Finland): Sanna Kivimäki - Director of Education and Training Programs Project; University of Life Sciences in Poland (Poland): Marta Mendel - Vice-

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[16] https://tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/თანამშრომლობა-Times-Higher-Education--THE--სთან
[17] https://tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/LOTUS---Leadership-and-Organisation-for-Teaching-and-Learning-at-European-Universities

Rector for International Cooperation, Mariusz Maciejczak - Director of the Institute of Economics and Finance; From the University of La Laguna (Spain): Rodrigo Trujillo - Assistant to Vice-Rector.

The participants of the meeting highlighted the importance of leadership in teaching, the challenges of institutionalization of student-centered teaching, and key issues in improving learning/teaching strategies through project opportunities. Representatives of various institutions shared their experiences.

The priority directions of the working group established within the project are as follows:

- Continuous professional development (CPD) for teachers
- Promoting and implementing student-centered learning (SCL)
- The link between research and teaching.

Working group meetings will be regular. The materials will be shared via TSU Quality Assurance Service website.

3.3.5 ARCC: BRITISH COUNCIL-FUNDED PROJECT - ASSUMING RESPONSIBILITY FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University participated in the British Council-funded project - arCc (Assuming Responsibility for Climate Change), which involved 14 partner universities from 13 countries around the world. Within the framework of the project, on 4 October 2021, Tbilisi State University Quality Assurance Office, which is the project coordinator from Georgia, hosted the second webinar. The webinar dealt with the management of universities during the Covid-19 pandemic and the post-pandemic period[18].

The aim of the project was to unite representatives of different countries and disciplines around joint initiatives focused on the environment, taking responsibility for and mitigating climate change. The participating universities will exchange their experience and resources by preparing webinars and micro-courses, as well as involving students in the project.

3.3.6 PROFFORMANCE: Assessment Tool and Incentive Systems for Developing Higher Education Teachers' Performance

The project - PROFFORMANCE Assessment Tool and Incentive Systems for Developing Higher Education Teachers' Performance has been carried out since 2019, through co-funding of the European Commission and in partnership with the LEPL National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement.

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[18] https://tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/arCc---Assuming-Responsibility-for-Climate-Change

The goal of the project is to support the development of the self-evaluation instrument and incentive system for the teaching personnel at higher education level. The Project is carried out in 6 countries of Europe: Hungary, the Czech Republic, Austria, Croatia, Serbia and Georgia. The Head of the TSU Quality Assurance Service, Irma Grdzelidze and Irina Darchia were involved in the Project as experts from the Tbilisi State University.

The PROFFORMANCE project team developed an original version of the self-evaluation instrument for the teaching personnel at higher education level, which would be possible to use at higher education institutions. These instruments were piloted during the reporting period. Tbilisi State University as a potential user of this instrument participated in a pilot survey. The pilot survey was coordinated by the TSU Quality Assurance Service. The feedback we received plays an important role in the further development of the evaluation instrument.

- The pilot survey involved 16 academic personnel of various faculties and students (a total of 42 students) of at least one training course. The survey was anonymous;
- As part of the pilot survey, 3 types of English-language anonymous surveys were developed: for academic personnel: Self-review, Peer-review; and for students - Student-review;
- All details and steps required for piloting were set forth in instructions prepared by the project coordinator;
- Heads of Faculty Quality Assurance Services monitored the full-scale conduction of the piloting process.

3.3.7 EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

While reviewing the statement on increasing the maximum number of students in the previous reporting period, the Authorization Board's experts referred to the development of institutional effectiveness indicators as one of the best practices within the Georgian educational system. Important steps were taken during the reporting period as part of the institutional effectiveness evaluation project. More specifically:

- Work was completed on the groups of evaluation indicators, shares of indicators and relevant sub-indicators, as well as on their calculation rules. The working group which expanded in 2021, prepared a final version of the project and discussed it with a respective group, which, along with the University Rector, Deputy Rector and administrative personnel, involved the University's academic personnel, research personnel and students. The group's feedback was used to finalize the list of data and indicators;
- The institutional effectiveness evaluation project/programme incorporated a new function: SWOT analysis, analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of educational

programmes/faculty/University; monitoring over the dynamics of development of educational programmes/faculty/University; rankings of sub-indicators; determining and automatic monitoring over benchmarks and forecasting their fulfilment. The Analytical function currently envisaged by the project will allow the University to evaluate its own activities and to take management decisions through saving time and human resources, based on quantitative data and analysis;

- Irma Grdzelidze, the Head of the TSU Quality Assurance Service and Tinatin Gabrichidze, a chief specialist prepared an article on the TSU institutional Effectiveness Project „Measuring and Improving Institutional Effectiveness and Establishing Quality Culture at Universities through rigorous data collection and weighted indicators (Case of Georgia, TSU)", which was submitted to 15th International Technology, Education and Development Conference (INTED 2021). Due to COVID-19 regulations, the conference was conducted on 8 and 9 March 2021. The full text of the article was published in the conference materials. This will contribute to sharing the University's best practices and raising awareness about the activities carried out within the international educational space[19].

- Tinatin Gabrichidze, a chief specialist of the TSU Quality Assurance Service submitted a presentation to the European Quality Assurance Forum, on 19 November. The European Quality Assurance Forum is conducted annually. The Forum 2021 was entitled "Building trust and enhancement: from information to evidence". The Forum was attended by over 300 participants from the European Universities, Quality Assurance Agencies and European Students Association, including by higher education and quality assurance experts.

3.3.8 SUPPORTING THE UNIVERSITY PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL GRANTS COMPETITIONS

At the initiative of the Quality Assurance Service, and in cooperation with the relevant administrative structures of the university, a rule for submitting an international grant application within the framework of "Erasmus +" (Key Action 2; Key Action 3; Jean Monnet) was developed and approved on behalf of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University (Order: 24.12.2019, 22/04). The purpose of this rule is to ensure high quality, reliability, efficiency of the projects carried out on behalf of the University, as well as to ensure university priorities and compliance with its needs; to assist the university in systematizing grant applications, controlling and avoiding unproductive costs. The rule defines those requirements that an international grant application must meet in order to be nominated on behalf of the university or to be involved in the project as one of the participants. At a subsequent stage, the Commission assumed one more function: conducting periodic meetings with project coordinators with

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[19] https://www.tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/დონისძიებები, https://library.iated.org/view/GRDZELIDZE2021MEA

the goal of supporting the persons participating in the international grants projects, carrying out activities under the TSU project and ensuring the achievement of the project goals.

At the initiative of the TSU Quality Assurance Service, the aforesaid Order was amended in 2021 (Order 1/04, 12/01/2022). More specifically, new programmes were added to a list of Erasmus programmes, which incorporated vocational education domain as well. The composition of the commission was approved a new, composed of heads of various administrative structural units (Order 4/01-01, 14/01/2022), who evaluate the project within their competence, including Quality Assurance Service, Finance Department, International Relations Department, Scientific Research and Development Department, Personnel Management Department, Legal Department. The Commission reviews the projects submitted by the grant applicants/group of applicants in an approved form. This procedure contributes to the high quality of projects implemented on behalf of the University/with the participation of the University, their compliance with the priorities and needs of the University. It will also prevent the university from making such commitments that can be problematic to carry out, while providing support to applicants in the form of advice and recommendations.

A total of 14 project applications were considered (including 2 Jean Monnet and 12 Erasmus + applications (KA2 – Capacity Building in Higher Education). Out of those projects, one was prepared through coordination of the University Quality Assurance Service. The Commission conducted meetings in January and February 2022. In parallel, personal consultations were held and additional support mechanisms were offered to applicants.

3.3.9 INTEGRITY: ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT UNDER THE PROJECT "ACADEMIC INTEGRITY FOR QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING IN GEORGIAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS" TO ENSURE THE SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT RESULTS

The Erasmus-funded Institutional Development Project INTEGRITY was completed in 2020. The activities carried out during the reporting year aimed at following up on the Project results, i.e. regularly holding trainings, various working or informational meetings, awareness raising, the University's financial support to buy/renew Turnitin licences.

- ✓ Turnitin programme integrated with Moodle system in July 2018. Licences were valid until July 2020 under the project;
- ✓ At the initiative of the TSU Quality Assurance Service, from July 2020, 9000 Turnitin licences were acquired for the University, for a period of 3 years, with 100000 file upload capacity per year;
- ✓ Turnitin software is integrated into the electronic portal: e-learning.tsu.ge to check various training assignments, as well as BA/MA/PhD papers for plagiarism;
- ✓ 8379 Turnitin licences were activated by the end of 2021;

✓ Over 6028 training courses are up and running on Moodle e-learning platform, of which 2885 were modified during the last week.

Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University celebrated International Day against Plagiarism on 19 February 2022[20]. At the initiative of TSU Quality Assurance Service, a number of activities were planned and implemented within the framework of the Erasmus Institution Development Program "Academic Integrity for Quality Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Institutions in Georgia (INTEGRITY)":

1) 3 video lectures on scientific integrity, big data processing and types of academic misconduct (fabrication, falsification, plagiarism) were prepared by Edwin Constable, Professor at the University of Basel (Switzerland), President of Euresearch, EUA CDE Board Member, Expert. Video lectures were uploaded to the TSU YouTube page and delivered to students via LMS;

2) Online training was planned and conducted in cooperation with the National Science Library on the topics of protection of academic integrity and prevention of plagiarism. Also, the online public speech of the Deputy Director of the National Scientific Library Nino Pavliashvili was held, during which students were provided with information about the library book fund, electronic resources and academic support services. 160 students registered for the event;

3) All TSU students were provided with learning resources (guidelines, video lectures, video tutorials, etc.) developed within the INTEGRITY project through the LMS.

The reporting period was also important in terms of launching students' academic support services. Since September 2021, a series of training sessions have been conducted at the National Science Library of TSU to promote the development of the academic writing and academic integrity culture at the University; contracts were signed with respective trainers to provide TSU students at all three levels with academic support services in a continuous mode, upon request.

• Since September 2021, 2 trainings have been conducted (a total of 16 hours), attended by 110 students in total.

3.3.10 PARTICIPATION IN THE CONFERENCE: "THE UNIVERSITY PURPOSE AND INSTITUTIONAL AUTONOMY: CHALLENGES AND THEIR IMPACT ON GEORGIA"

Representatives of TSU Quality Assurance Service were actively involved as members and speakers of the of the organizational and programme committees in the work of the international conference "The University Purpose and Institutional Autonomy: Challenges and their Impact on Georgia" organised by Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University and East European University[21].

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[20] https://www.tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/ტრენინგები-და-შეხვედრები--Integrity-
[21] https://conference.edu.ge/post/item/153/ka

Irma Grdzelidze, Head of Quality Assurance Service submitted reports "Preliminary study in institutional autonomy in Georgia", co-authored by Tamar Sanikidze and "Challenges of accountability: How does the external accountability affect the University activity evaluation system? Example of TSU" co-authored by Tinatin Gabrichidze. Irma Grdzelidze also acted as the conference moderator at the session of 30 October[22].

3.3.11 PARTICIPATION IN THE PROJECT "BOLOGNA HUB PEER SUPPORT" FUNDED BY THE GERMAN ACADEMIC EXCHANGE SERVICE (DAAD) AND ERASMUS +

The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) carries out Erasmus +-funded project "Bologna Hub Peer Support". The main objective of the project is to foster the implementation of the Bologna key commitments at higher education institutions throughout the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Based on the individual needs of higher education institutions, the Bologna experts will provide tailor made counselling during on-site visits at those institutions that apply for a Bologna expert peer support mission.

Higher Education Institutions should have completed an application to participate in the project. Around 30 institutions from Spain, France, Germany, Sweden, Poland, Austria, Albania, Ukraine, Estonia, Kazakhstan and Georgia were selected. Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University (TSU) is among the selected universities.

Based on the application prepared by TSU quality assurance service and further consultations, main directions for collaboration were identified. Namely, student-centered learning and TSU internationalization strategy. The University of Salzburg emeritus professor, EHEA expert from Austria, Ms. Gabriele Abermann was assigned to provide consultations to TSU.

On 23 June, Ms. Abermann led a training/workshop on implementation of student-centered learning. The meeting brought together up to 40 participants: TSU academic and invited personnel and students. The aim of the meeting was:

- Sharing opinions on student-oriented learning;
- Analyzing and evaluating learning outcomes; interconnection between learning methods and evaluation methods;
- Discussing the ways to put into practice the student-oriented learning based on participants' fields of study;
- Identifying best practices and challenges;

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[22] https://eeu.edu.ge/portfolio/internationalconference-eeu-tsu/

- Discussing the possible format of sharing experience (informal) between peers.

25 June, a meeting chaired Ms. Abermann was held on TSU internationalization strategy. The meeting was attended by representatives of the TSU Administration. The goal of the meeting was to discuss various areas of TSU internationalization and to draw up a plan of the strategy. The implementation of the activities planned during the meetings will be evaluated at the second stage of the project scheduled for May 2022.

3.4 PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

Supporting the professional development of the academic personnel is one of the priorities of the Quality Assurance Service. Large-scale trainings that were planned and conducted during the previous reporting year dealt with both: various aspects of the educational programme and the use of Moodle, e-learning.tsu.ge, Zoom, ElectionBuddy and other electronic resources. Respective guides and presentations were created and posted on the website for wide use[23].

Consultations continued with interested groups of the University's various faculties in 2021, within the framework of the Quality Assurance Service. More specifically, the following consultations were conducted:
- Development of Educational Programme (May);
- Evaluation of outcomes of Educational Programme (May);
- Anonymous voting with the use of ElectionBuddy's online voting software;
- Use of Moodle e-learning.tsu.ge for student evaluation (May, July);
- Use of Turnitin software for Master's and Doctoral thesis check (May

3.5 INNOVATIONS AT THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION CENTER

Since 2019, the Vocational Education Center (hereinafter referred to as the Center) has been operating independently at LEPL Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University (hereinafter referred to as the TSU) at two locations (Tbilisi and Kutaisi). The Center carries out independent management; however, it constantly coordinates its activities with the Quality Assurance Service of the university, receives recommendations, actively uses the innovations introduced by the Service.
Currently, the Center administers 13 vocational education programmes in Tbilisi and Kutaisi. At the end of 2021 and in January 2022, 9 new vocational training programmes and 1 vocational re-training programme were added to the portfolio of the Center:

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[23] https://tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/მასალები-და-გზამკვლევები

▸ Location of Tbilisi: vocational retraining programme – "Laboratory Health and Safety"
▸ Location of Kutaisi: vocational training progarmmes - "Storehouse Logistics Operator", "Planning Festive Events", "Cashiering Transactions at Trading Facilities", "Drafting Informational and Management Documents", „Working on Financial Documents and Office and Economic Supplies", "Accounting in line with International Standards", „Production of Primary Accounting Documents and Tax Declaration", "Customs Declaration".

Based on Order №42/N (02/06/2021) of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia (on Terms and Conditions for Enrolment at Vocational Programme), the Centre developed a new rule for selection of applicants. The Centre ensured that commissions for selection of applicants are set up in Tbilisi and Kutaisi and amendments are made to the rules regulating the learning process under the vocational education programme. The Centre also developed new regulations for the full-scale administration of the aforesaid process. The selection commissions interviewed up to 1200 applicants in two locations (Tbilisi, Kutaisi). As a result:

- 235 students were enrolled at vocational education programmes in autumn of 2021;
- 123 graduates were awarded qualification in 2021;
- As of today: 378 students are enrolled at vocational education programmes: 167 – Tbilisi location and 211 – Kutaisi location;
- As of 4 March 2022, 55 persons are involved in the vocational training and retraining programmes: 8 – Tbilisi location and 37 – Kutaisi location.

▸ Conducting the learning process under the vocational education programmes

The learning process under the vocational education programmes was conducted in a hybrid format in 2021. To ensure the effective conduction, organization and coordination of the learning process in such format, the Centre ensures:

- Adaptation of educational programs employing e-learning elements;
- Intense use of modern technologies in a synchronous/asynchronous form (ZOOM, Moodle, etc);
- Development and enforcement of relevant e-learning regulatory documentation;
- Provision of e-services to vocational students;
- Training of staff implementing vocational education programs in respect of utilization of modern technologies.

▸ Adaptation of educational programs employing e-learning elements

The working group created on the basis of Decree N08/127-01 (11.09.2020) of the Head of the TSU Vocational Education Center, actively works with teachers and vocational students to ensure maximum support for the administration and use of e-learning elements in the learning process. The working group administers the following areas: technical support to the vocational students and teachers in the learning process; monitoring of lessons; implementation of recommendations; the process of conducting

definitive evaluations; vocational education programmes based on the place of their implementation, etc.

Teachers are trained permanently to ensure the effective implementation of e-learning.

▸ **Intense use of modern technologies in a synchronous/asynchronous form (ZOOM, Moodle, etc)**

The TSU Vocational Education Center uses synchronous form and in particular ZOOM program for basic lecturing. Based on collaboration between the TSU and the Bank of Georgia, the licenses of ZOOM were acquired for lecturing, training, and meetings with the students and teachers of vocational programs.

For introducing an asynchronous form of learning, the Center started the use of the Moodle e-learning portal. Email addresses were created for each vocational program student at the following domain: tsu.ge. The staff members of vocational education programs also use TSU email addresses. Through these electronic addresses, the vocational program students and personnel can register on the said platform to get access to learning materials envisioned by the modules of vocational education programs.

▸ **Provision of e-services to the students of vocational education programmes**

The Vocational Education Center makes effective use of modern technologies for communication with its students and for the provision of different services. Vocational students can contact the Center via hotline, telephone, mail, and an official page on social media. Vocational students get advice on integration into a learning process remotely; certificates or other similar documents are sent to them via email.

As stated above, individual email addresses were created for the students of vocational education programmes (on the domain @tsu.ge) through which they could register at electronic platforms designed for both synchronous and asynchronous learning. At the same time, Vocational students receive the literature and other materials used in the learning process through these emails.

In addition, within the scope of vocational education programmes, special groups are set up in social media, where students can interact with other students, teachers, and administrative personnel.

▸ **Internationalization of learning process - sharing experience of international colleagues about the specifics of distance learning**

One of the key priorities of the TSU Vocational Education Center is sharing international experience and best practices for assuring the quality of the teaching/learning process. Even amid the pandemic, the Center actively worked towards this end: Throughout 2021, at the initiative of the TSU Quality Assurance Service and the TSU Vocational Education Center, and together with Ida-Virumaakutsehariduskeskus Vocational Education Center (Estonia), a series of meetings were held on: "Distance learning opportunities and challenges in vocational education" where Estonian colleagues shared their experience. The webinar aimed at supporting distance learning in Georgia in the field of

vocational education. In December 2021, representatives of Ida-Virumaakutsehariduskeskus Vocational Education Center paid a visit to TSU where Estonian colleagues got acquainted with the TSU Centre's infrastructure, vocational programmes, and held official meetings with the TSU administration and partner colleges.

▸ **Training of staff implementing vocational education programs in respect of utilization of modern Technologies**

The TSU Vocational Education Center strives to support the skill building of personnel implementing Vocational education programs in both Tbilisi and Kutaisi for ensuring a smooth e-learning process. The Center developed instruction on how to use ZOOM for both students and teachers. The Center intensely employs the guides and manuals concerning e-learning, which are developed by the TSU Quality Assurance Service. The Center permanently retrains teachers about procedures envisioned by "The Rule for E-learning at Vocational Education Programs of Tbilisi Ivane Javakhishvili State University".

3.6 COOPERATION WITH THE QUALITY ASSURANCE SERVICES OF THE FACULTIES

A faculty is one of the key components of the quality assurance system of universities. Respectively, faculties are governed in a polysystemic way, taking into account specifics and features of individual programs, based on the harmonization principle within the faculty. Thus, 7 pluricentric faculties coexist at the university within the constantly reformed structure of Georgian education space.

Thus, the TSU Quality Assurance Service has to accomplish tasks that are even more difficult. This Service should work not only on permanent accreditation, assessment, and development of educational programs, but also on many important and often urgent processes, which are vital for institutional development. This justifies the university's decision to decentralize its quality assurance system, which is another distinction of academic freedom at the university. Consequently, the quality assurance services of faculties can form their specific systems and through such a system make the profile of the faculty more visible, enrich the university's academic image, while the strength of the higher educational institution relies on academic diversity.

The approach of the University Quality Assurance Service, which consists in treating the Faculty Quality Assurance Services as primus inter pares becomes even more visible in the external evaluation process where educational programmes highlight their opportunities in greater detail and more critically, within the scope of self-evaluation portfolio.

Another important approach of the University Quality Assurance Service in terms of its cooperation with the Faculty Quality Assurance Services is that, as Georgian and foreign experts have repeatedly emphasized, the quality product in the University space is created through mutual cooperation, and by sharing best and substantial findings.

Cooperation with the Faculty Quality Assurance Services within the scope of developing, (re)accreditation and peer review of educational programmes was a priority in the reporting period. Administrative entities of the faculties showed high level of engagement in the aforesaid processes. Important results were achieved in terms of cooperation with academic and invited personnel, as well as with administrative staff, mostly in the process of external evaluation, which developed in parallel to internal evaluation processes. With the support of the Quality Assurance Service, not only the academic personnel but also students showed increased level of interest. Their involvement in the ongoing processes is significant and visible.

The accreditation preparation processes respectively underwent transformation. Representatives of the education processes showed an interest in the development of educational processes and constantly sought for such channels of internationalization that opened for them prospects of international openness and latest best experience in the international educational space.

The system of infrastructure monitoring in the course of (re)accreditation was modified to a certain extent, based on the COVID-19 regulations applying within the University. The administrative personnel of faculties, coordinated by quality assurance services, got actively involved in this process. The processes gradually transitioned to a hybrid mode allowing the programme implementing persons to highlight, to the maximum possible extent, the strengths of the educational programme.

Within the competence of the Service, the following issues were intensely reviewed in 2021:

- ✓ Modification of educational programmes to adjust them to new accreditation regulations;
- ✓ Revision of the internal database and the catalog of educational programs to bring them into compliance with the newly accredited and updated qualification framework;
- ✓ Modification of survey questionnaires and updating of surveys, preparations for cluster accreditation processes;

  Work on joint educational programs; (in 2021, a new Master's Educational Programme in *Digital Media ad Innovations* was prepared together with Shota Rustaveli Batumi State University; Georgian-French Bachelor's Educational Programme in *Computer Sciences* was updated;

- ✓ The website of the University Quality Assurance Service includes the maximum possible amount of Georgian- and English-language information, its international visibility is ensured;
- ✓ Topics of targeted trainings are developed and offered by the programme committees;
- ✓ The consortium of Georgian universities, including Tbilisi State University, made a fresh start within the framework of the academic integrity project, during the 2021 reporting period, new measures and activities were planned in this regard;
- ✓ Recommendations were developed on the basis of systematized data based on indicators worked out within the framework of University Effectiveness Project; such recommendations were shared at various levels of the administration;
- ✓ The Quality Assurance Service plans new working phases, after the phase of study of normative documents developed for preparation of cluster accreditation and pilot accreditation (the project

involved higher education programme (at all three levels) in ***Philosophy***), in cooperation with the quality assurance service of the Faculty of Humanitarian Sciences;

✓ During the reporting period, the Service successfully completed 2 international projects and prepared 5 new applications;

✓ The Service keeps monitoring international ranking data, in intense communication with the Times group;

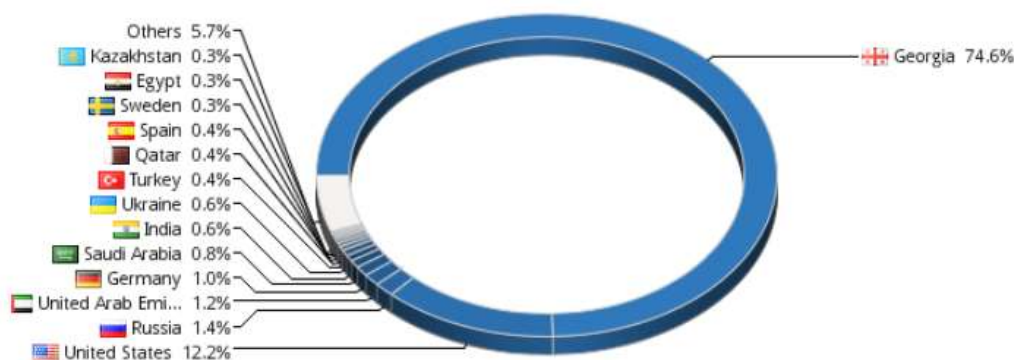✓ Enhancement of students' inclusion in the process of support for quality assurance.

The TSU Quality Assurance Service worked on the above topics based on the good teamwork principle, by maintaining active communication with the quality assurance services of the faculties, academic personnel and students.

3.7   WEBPAGE OF THE TSU QUALITY ASSURANCE SERVICE

All activities of the Quality Assurance Service are fully reflected on the updated webpage of Tbilisi State University, in particular, on respective pages of the Service [24]. They are used not only for communication with the university community, but also for providing information about innovations within the modern educational area, carrying out university researches, studying, analyzing and sharing university research results with stakeholders, providing professional support to academic personnel, providing manuals and documents developed within the Service to the wider public both at local and international level.

The Quality Assurance Service webpages are operating in Georgian, as well as English languages. International actors' interest in the Service's activities keeps constantly increasing, to which attests statistical information. More specifically, the Service website is viewed by visitors from 71 countries.

71 different countries have visited this site. 93 flags collected. View all details »

Others 5.7%	Georgia 74.6%
Kazakhstan 0.3%	
Egypt 0.3%	
Sweden 0.3%	
Spain 0.4%	
Qatar 0.4%	
Turkey 0.4%	
Ukraine 0.6%	
India 0.6%	
Saudi Arabia 0.8%	
Germany 1.0%	
United Arab Emi... 1.2%	
Russia 1.4%	
United States 12.2%	

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[24] Webpage of the Quality Assurance Service is available at: https://tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance;
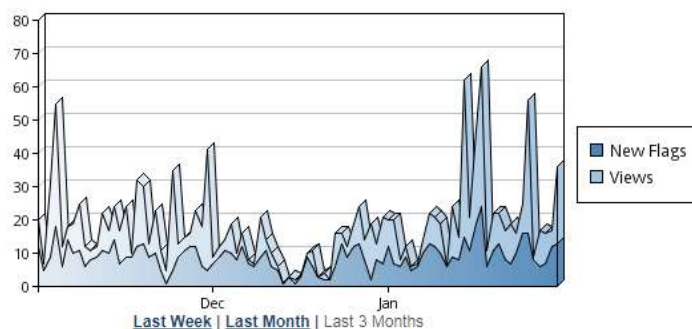
This counter has been viewed 5,741 times by 2,836 visitors!

Information about the work of the TSU Quality Assurance Service is divided into 11 basic parts and is deposited in respective sections of the menue[25]:

- **About Us**[26]
    - o Regulation of the Quality Assurance Service
        - o Structure and Staff
        - o Action Plan and Reports
        - o Internship, Employment, Vacancies
        - o Archive
- **Internal Quality Assurance**[27]
    - o The Elaboration and Development of Educational Programs
    - o Peer Review of Educational Programs
    - o Rankings and Ratings
        - ▪ Ranking Systems Methodology
        - ▪ Ranking Annual Reports
    - o Surveys and Questionnaires
        - ▪ Questionaries

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[25] Site map is available at: https://www.tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/საიტის-რუკა;

[26] Site map on section "About Us" is available at: https://tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/ჩვენს-შესახებ-ხარისხი;

[27] Internal Quality Assurance is available at: https://tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/ხარისხის-შიდა-უზრუნველყოფა;

- ▪ [Analysis](#)
  - o [E-Learning](#)
    - ▪ [Materials and Guidelines](#)
- • **External Quality Assurance**[28]
  - o [Authorization](#)
  - o [Accreditation](#)
- • **Professional Development**[29]
  - o [Guides and Manuals](#)
  - o [Training Calendar](#)
- • **International Projects and Events**[30]
  - o [Ongoing Projects](#)
    - ▪ [Assessing Institutional Efficiency](#)
    - ▪ [Cooperation with the Times Higher Education (THE)](#)
    - ▪ [Supporting the University's Participation in International Grant Competitions](#)
    - ▪ [LOTUS - Leadership and Organisation for Teaching and Learning at European Universities](#)
    - ▪ [arCc - Assuming Responsibility for Climate Change](#)
    - ▪ [Spraqs: Involvement of Students in Quality Assurance Mechanisms](#)
    - ▪ [Strengthening Quality Culture at Tbilisi State University (Funded by AUF)](#)
  - o [Completed Projects](#)
    - ▪ [Academic Integrity for Quality Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Institutions in Georgia (INTEGRITY)](#)
      - ▪ [Trainings and Meetings](#)
      - ▪ [Awareness-Raising PR Campaign](#)
      - ▪ [Resources](#)
      - ▪ [Regulaions](#)
      - ▪ [Training Calendar for Students](#)
    - ▪ [EUA Learning and Teaching Thematic Peer Group "Meeting the Skills and Employability Demands"](#)
  - o [Events](#)
  - o [Subject-specific Projects](#)
- • **Strengthening the QUAlity and RElevance of the 3rd mission in Georgian Universities - SQUARE**[31]
  - o [Project Meetings](#)
  - o [SQUARE Trainings](#)
  - o [Resources](#)
- • **The Quality Assurance Thematic Group**[32]
  - o [The Structure of the Thematic Group](#)
  - o [Thematic Group Meetings](#)
  - o [Thematic Group Resources](#)
- • **International Cooperation**[33]

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[28] External Quality Assurance is available at: https://tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/ხარისხის-გარე-უზრუნველყოფა

[29] Professional Development is available at: https://tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/პროფესიული-განვითარება

[30] International Projects and Events are available at: https://www.tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/საერთაშორისო-პროექტები-და-ღონისძიებები

[31] Project informationa is available at: https://tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/მესამე-მისიის-ხარისხის-და-შესაბამისობის-გაძლიერება-საქართველოს-უნივერსიტეტებში--SQUARE-

[32] The Quality Assuarance Thematic Group is available at: https://tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/ხარისხის-უზრუნველყოფის-თემატური-ჯგუფი

[33] International Cooperation is available at: https://tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/საერთაშორისო-თანამშრომლობა

- o [Ongoing Events](#)
- o [Completed Events](#)
- **Quantitative Indicators**[34]
  - o [Catalog of Educational Programs](#)
  - o [Statistical Data](#)
- **Vocational Center**[35]

Besides, the Main Page includes a rubric for news[36].

The webpage of the Quality Assurance Service is constantly updated. The Institutional Development and Authorization Department manages and edits the webpage, in cooperation with the Accreditation Assessment and Analyses Department and quality assurance services of faculties. By constantly updating the informational content of the website, the Quality Assurance Service promotes the transparent work of the university. The information posted on the website is available to any interested person.

4. COMMUNICATION WITH QUALITY ASSURANCE EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS AND INSTITUTIONS

Successful management of quality assurance at a higher education institution is directly connected to the quality assurance services of faculties. As to external stakeholders, they are understood to include external evaluators and the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement, as well as international institutions.

As an author of several initiatives, Tbilisi State University, along with other higher education institutions, plays an important role in the Georgian educational area.

In the 2021 reporting period, the Quality Assurance Service interacted with relevant external stakeholders:

- ✓ Working meetings within the competence of the quality assurance thematic group;
- ✓ Communication with the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and the LEPL National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement;
- ✓ Communication with the European University Association (EUA).

4.1 WORKING MEETINGS WITHIN THE COMPETENCE OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE THEMATIC GROUP

The quality assurance thematic group set up in 2019 at the initiative of the University Quality Assurance Service and under the aegis of the board of rectors did not stop its work even during the global

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[34] Quantitative Indicators are available at: https://tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/რაოდენობრივი-მაჩვენებლები

[35] Vocational Education Center is available at: https://tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/პროფესიული-განათლების-ცენტრი

[36] https://tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance

pandemic. The quality assurance thematic group was set up on 6 September 2019, at the second session of the permanent conference of rectors. The group consists of 85 members representing 44 higher educational institutions. The quality assurance thematic group is a platform for discussing quality assurance topics. It enhances cooperation between the higher educational institutions and collaborates with external stakeholders at the national and international levels. The mission of the quality assurance thematic group of the higher educational institutions is to support the enhancement of quality culture at higher educational institutions, through sharing accumulated experience and the best practices, discussing challenges, and building capacities for professional development.

The thematic group is chaired by the Head of the Quality Assurance Service of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Irma Grdzelidze. Since its establishment by the permanent conference of rectors, the quality assurance thematic group of the higher educational institutions has held 10 working meetings[37] of which three were held in the reporting year[38]:

> **The eighth** working meeting of the Quality Assurance Thematic Group of Higher Education Institutions, established by the Standing Conference of Rectors, was held on 9 February 2021, through the electronic portal Zoom. The meeting was attended by 40 members of the thematic group from state and private higher education institutions. **The aim** of the meeting was to discuss the draft version of the cluster accreditation self-evaluation report sent by the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (Center) to universities and to prepare feedback document for the Center. **As a result** of the meeting, the feedback document was drafted and sent to the Center.

> On 24 June 2021, the **ninth** working meeting of the Quality Assurance Thematic Group of Higher Education Institutions was held. 30 members of the thematic group from both state and private higher education institutions and the representative of the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (Center) attended the meeting. **The aim** of the meeting was to discuss cluster accreditation piloting. Cluster accreditation was piloted at three state HEIs; Namely, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Akaki Tsereteli State University, and Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University. Representatives of each university talked about their experience with the preparation for cluster accreditation, the process of accreditation itself, and the challenges and advantages of the process. The representative of the National Center of Educational Quality Enhancement also made a presentation summarizing the process of piloting and shared vision and plans of the Center regarding cluster accreditation. **As a result** of the meeting, the feedback document about cluster accreditation was drafted and sent to the Center.

> On 16 July 2021, the tenth working meeting of the Quality Assurance Thematic Group of Higher Education Institutions was held. The meeting was held at Vano Sarajishvili Tbilisi State Conservatoire in a hybrid format. The main topics of the meeting were summarizing and analyzing the work of the thematic group, discussing its future plans and priorities, and

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[37] The Thematic group meetings are available at: https://www.tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/თემატური-ჯგუფის-შეხვედრები
   The Thematic group materials and resourses are available at: https://www.tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/თემატური-ჯგუფის-მასალები
[38] https://tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/თემატური-ჯგუფის-შეხვედრები

discussing the issues of quality assurance of e-learning. Each presenting university shared their specific experience of shifting their international quality assurance procedures to adjust to e-learning requirements.

Prof. Irma Grdzelidze, Head of TSU Quality Assurance Service shared with the thematic group information about Erasmus + project "Strengthening the Quality and Relevance of the Third Mission in Georgian Universities (SQUARE)". Prof. Nino Okribelashvili, a Vice-Rector for Research, shared with the group information about another Erasmus + project – "Raising Research Capacity of Georgian HEIs Through Developing R&D Units (HERD)".

4.2 PARTICIPATION OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE SERVICE IN THE ORGANIZATION AND WORK OF THE CONFERENCE

Representatives of TSU Quality Assurance Service as members and speakers of the organizational and programme committees actively participated in the joint international conference "THE UNIVERSITY PURPOSE AND INSTITUTIONAL AUTONOMY: CHALLENGES AND THEIR IMPACT ON GEORGIA" organised by East European University and Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University[39].

Irma Grdzelidze, Head of Quality Assurance Service submitted reports "Preliminary study in institutional autonomy in Georgia", co-authored by Tamar Sanikidze and "Challenges of accountability: How does the external accountability affect the University activity evaluation system? Example of TSU" co-authored by Tinatin Gabrichidze. Irma Grdzelidze also acted as the conference moderator at the session of 30 October[40].

4.3 COMMUNICATION WITH THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE OF GEORGIA AND LEPL NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

Cooperation with the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement, as well as with the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia was more intensive In 2021. The expansion of communication was the result of the increased transparency and publicity of the work of the above agencies.

Through the mediation of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, within the 2021 reporting period the following actions were planned and implemented:

– Elaboration of Document Determining Third Compulsory Subject to be passed within National Unified Exams;

[39] https://conference.edu.ge/post/item/153/ka
[40] https://eeu.edu.ge/portfolio/internationalconference-eeu-tsu/

– Issuance of permit for the implementation of educational programs in a foreign language
– (English) – (educational programmes: ***public administration, finances (ISET), European studies***);
– Change in the tuition fee;
– Legislative amendments that are shared thematically with the higher education institutions:

> ‣ Revised National Qualifications Framework and Learning Fields Classifier approved by Order N69/n dated 10 April 2019 of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia;
> ‣ Draft Doctoral Educational Programmes Assessment Framework Document;
> ‣ Draft "Credit Accumulation Rule for Higher Educational Programmes" approved by Order N3 dated 5 January 2007 of the Minister of Education and Science; Amendments to the Law of Georgia on Distance Learning, on Higher Education and on Vocational Education.

The Service has constant contacts and intensive cooperation with the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement. In 2021, within the mandate of the Service, numerous analytical papers were worked out with respect to the Centre; different types of documents were analyzed and up to 50 educational programmes were referred to the relevant services of the Center, including:

- Preparing educational programmes for (re)accreditation;
- Preparing and submitting reports regarding the Accreditation Council's decision and of documents relating to special monitoring carried out to assess compliance with the qualification framework;
- Conducting a visit of authorization and accreditation experts;
- Delivering a report on the accreditation process and on assessing the degree of engagement of the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement in this process;
- Preparing an argumentative response to the opinion of accreditation experts;
- Participating in the review of new legislative initiatives and projects;
- Organizing working meetings, seminars and trainings and discussing topical issues (working meetings to discuss certain details of the qualification framework);
- Adjusting time-limits for accreditation (for educational programmes at the faculties of humanitarian sciences);
- Nominating the University's academic personnel to the Council determining sectoral benchmarks (medicine, social work, educational sciences, philology, archaeology, history, language learning, philosophy – 35 experts);
- Recommending and nominating candidates to educational programmes' accreditation, authorization and appellate councils, as well as candidates to the group of medical experts;
- Providing Analysis of documents developed for cluster accreditation; exchanging recommendations and views;
- Presenting educational programmes accredited by foreign accreditation agencies for recognition;

- Nominating accreditation experts based on sectors and expert students;

The aforesaid processes and activities are carried out in compliance with the plan, in a consistent, smooth, and result-oriented manner, based on the actors' high sense of responsibility and professionalism.

4.4 COMMUNICATION WITH THE EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY ASSOCIATION (EUA)

The European University Association (EUA) is the most important European policy-making body for Georgian universities. This organization plays an active role in the Bologna Process and makes recommendations for the network of European universities. Accordingly, the EUA is the most prominent actor in external quality assurance for any educational institution.

During the reporting period, Tbilisi State University in cooperation with University College Cork (Ireland) and University of Shefield (Great Britain), submitted EUA Thematic Group Report on Educational Programmes/Extra-curriculum Activities and their Supporting Measures to the EUA Learning and Teaching Forum. The Report was drawn up by the thematic group, based on cooperation between the seven universities of Europe.

Irma Grdzelidze, Associated Professor, Head of the TSU Quality Assurance Service and Tinatin Gabrichidze (Quality Assurance Service) joined the work of the Thematic Group virtually. TSU's participatory approach to planning curriculums was appraised as one of the best practices by the Forum.

In 2021, Tbilisi State University participated in the Focus Group "Internal Quality Assurance during the COVID-19 Crisis". In 2020 TSU joined the discussions on development of students' entrepreneurial skills. Tbilisi State University closely cooperates with the European University Association. The Thematic Group Report 2019 was prepared through the University's active involvement and deals with evaluation of students[41].

5. OTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE SERVICE

The TSU Quality Assurance Service carries out its activities based on institutional cooperation. Its work covers the scope of activities of different administrative units of the University and follows clearly defined internal procedures. Any administrative unit of the University is considered to be an internal actor for the Quality Assurance Service. During the 2021 reporting period, the Service closely cooperated with internal actors and carried out the following work:

- Analyzing external and internal correspondence turnover and preparing responses;
- Archiving office documents of the Service;
- Initiating and drafting resolutions for academic and representative councils.

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[41] For the detailed report see the link at: https://bit.ly/3qUPFXe;

5.1 ANALYZING EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL CORRESPONDENCE TURNOVER AND PREPARING RESPONSES

During the reporting period, TSU Quality Assurance Service received up to 2050 official letters, of which 1922 were responded back. The main themes of the correspondence were as follow:
- Issues relating to accreditation processes of educational programmes;
- Issues relating to the regulation of the educational process by faculty and central administrations;
- Mobility of students and recognition of credits;
- cooperation between universities;
- issues related to grants and projects;
- correspondence with external and internal quality actors;
- communication with foreign colleagues, experts, and institutions;
- Communication with citizens.

A large part (approximately 1232) of incoming and outgoing correspondence (both internal and external) dealt with accreditation of educational programs; 8 of them were questionnaires to assess the accreditation processes. The number of letters related to the recognition of

credits insignificantly increased due to the removal of pandemic-related restrictions on external mobility. However, the Service drafted up to 161 credit recognition documents.

The number of letters with both central and faculty administrations about the regulation of the learning process remained the same and can be set at - 4231.

During the reporting period, the quantity of incoming and outgoing letters was high (the number of outgoing letters totalled – 1826 and the number of incoming letters – 3587).

The high level of correspondence was reported during the reporting period, as evidenced by the aforesaid figures.

5.2 ARCHIVING OFFICE DOCUMENTS OF THE SERVICE

Authorization documents of 2018 drawn up both in electronic and material forms within the mandate of the Quality Assurance Service and due for submission to the Archive by 2021 are already systematized and will be transferred to the respective institution.

5.3 INITIATING AND DRAFTING REGULATORY DOCUMENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY

During the reporting period the Quality Assurance Service has not initiated any issue within its mandate, which would form the basis for issuing any normative act.

6. SELF-ASSESSMENT OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE SERVICE AND ITS DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS

The launch of the result-oriented quality assurance system of the University facilitated the orchestration of concrete quality assurance objectives and support for their implementation, based on the higher educational institution's action plan. The regulation of three most important levels plays an important role in these processes:

1. Societal level - impact of results on the society, impacts and outcomes);
2. Institutional level (formulation of common goals and general principles for interaction; thoroughly detailed communication within the institution);
3. Service level (communication with employees and synchronization of their activities within a specific competency).

Under the mandate of the Quality Assurance Service, self-evaluation is carried out upon the accomplishment of every stage of the work, to evaluate the responsibility the Service assumed for assuring the quality of the processes ongoing at the organization, on the one hand, and on the other, for sharing and submitting the results both within the institution, and to external actors. The scope of evaluation includes such areas as competencies, qualification, the development of the Service and the work fulfilled within its scope. For its turn, self-evaluation is based on:

– understanding the scope of action and its systemic analysis;
– analysis of the consequences of needs-based and ongoing activities;
– identifying a new result-oriented area of action;
– identifying strengths and weaknesses of action areas;
– constant monitoring of actions as defined by the plan; risk identification, analysis of the
– results;
– analysis of shortcomings impacting the results, sharing the best practices;
– analysis of the degree of involvement and performance of the persons engaged in the achievement of the Service objectives, their support and encouragement.

Based on the analysiss of the finalized results of self-evaluation, the Service updates its goals and objectives.

6.1 SELF-EVALUATION BY THE TSU QUALITY ASSURANCE SERVICE

The TSU Quality Assurance Service plans its activities based on the evaluation of annual work, which is an inseparable part of the strategic plan of the University. The Quality Assurance Service prepares an annual action plan and annual report, like other structural units of the university. This is the best practice for the formulation of a new action plan and creates the background for institutional

development in general. This intense evaluation process has been underway at the University during the last year. The Quality Assurance Service analyzes reports drawn up systematically by administrative units and shares respective results; consequently, a new results-based and future-oriented action plan is developed. The goals of the Service are based on the holistic approach and its work is carried out in consideration of the hierarchy of difficulties; within the competence of the staff.

The analysis of the work carried out in the 2021 reporting period revealed:

➢ Possibility of supporting the Institution to adapt to the rapidly changing environment;

➢ Constant support for the professional development of the University's academic and administrative staff; improvement of their competence through the Service's active involvement;

➢ Growing demand by the staff of the Service, the quality assurance services of faculties, as well as by the administrative and academic personnel of the University and their readiness for sharing the best experience in higher education quality enhancement and for putting such experience into practice;

➢ Experience of the Service to introduce innovations, important themes and activities, and to address the present-day challenges;

➢ Attempt to introduce an integrated holistic approach to the University's specific problems and community challenges, based on institutional cooperation;

➢ Attempt to introduce new approaches and to work on important tasks based not only on institutional cooperation but also on collaboration between external actors, with the goal of enhancing quality culture and awareness-raising;

➢ Expansion of the Service's experience in crisis management. This was referred to as the best practice in the external evaluation process;

➢ Attempt to provide broad support to discussions by the actors involved in teaching/learning, research processes, and accordingly, promotion and support to the internationalization of teaching/learning, research, and administration processes;

➢ Maximum use of quality assurance instruments and their adjustment to the institutional process, for enhancing quality culture and raising awareness at the institutional level, and for establishing self-responsibility.

In 2021, the Quality Assurance Service modified to a maximum extent and fulfilled the major goals and objectives under the Service's action plan. Various activities of the Service reflect well these efforts. The work carried out by the Service ensures the achievement of every goal set forth by the plan, to which attest opinions of Georgian and international experts. The Quality Assurance Service's activities were described as the best practice by expert Maria Scott within the framework of external evaluation 2021:

„Quality Assurance Department developed a remarkable approach to strategic and operative inspection processes, which are not only comprehensive but also give valuable data. Inspection results translate into actions that involve not only staff but also students. The team has ambitious plans regarding quality

improvement initiatives in the future, which are not only innovative but also contribute to the establishment of international high standards".

6.2 DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS OF THE TSU QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

In 2021, certain actions to be taken within the competence of the Quality Assurance Service set forth by the action plan were modified to some extent and supplemented with specific activities. Such changes were dictated by the necessity of ensuring the proper management of extraordinary processes caused by the pandemic crisis. The Service planned and transformed its basic work in an extraordinary format, trained its staff and the University's academic and administrative personnel, developed and modified certain normative documents and specific regulations. Thus, the Service had to make quick changes to the already scheduled actions.

In the crisis management process during the reporting period, the quality assurance thematic group acquired an important function. The group tried to bring the work processes into a discussion format and develop an integrated approach to the resolution of particular problems.

Within the reporting period, the Quality Assurance Service focused on another significant topic, so called "the third mission" of the university, which was one of the important goals not only of Georgian but also of foreign universities. In particular, the Service worked to research its essence and role in the development of society.

Based on the analysis of the work planned and implemented in 2021, external evaluation, recommendations, university reviews and consultations, the following priorities were identified for 2021:

- ✓ Enhancement of quality culture at the University, particularly by increasing the involvement of internal actors and especially students in, and by raising their awareness of, the quality assurance processes; active involvement of students in the assessment of particular education programs, as well as in the University's work and services; *establishment of the students' corps within the university space;*
- ✓ Continuous improvement/development of educational programmes and learning process; testing relevant procedures and developing a protocol for the program development committee aimed at elaborating university standards;
- ✓ Preparations for external evaluation of programmes to ensure national and international accreditation; stage-by-stage support to cluster accreditation;
- ✓ Intensification of international cooperation for improving quality assurance processes at the University, sharing international best practices, and introducing innovations in the educational area;

- ✓ Improvement of teaching/learning instruments (peer review, evaluation of a new employee by the supervisor, attendance at lectures, etc.) and their inclusion in the development of educational programs;
- ✓ Regular analysis of the satisfaction survey of students, academic and administrative staff for enhancing the efficiency of quality culture in the university space; determining prospects for University services;
- ✓ Introduction of research evaluation mechanisms; supporting the development of scientific research evaluation instrument based on the HERD project (Raising Research Capacity of Georgian Higher Education Institutions) implemented within the scope of the EU funded Erasmus+ KA2 Program;
- ✓ Further promotion of the academic integrity at the University;
- ✓ Capacity development within the frame of different international projects, for the improvement of learning and research at the doctoral level;
- ✓ Cooperation for introducing quality assurance mechanisms and supporting the Bologna Process, and planning the thematic topics with international organizations and foundations, including the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), Volkswagen-Stiftung, AUF Tbilisi Office, the British Council;
- ✓ Development of crisis management strategic document and University regulations with due regard for particular conditions;
- ✓ Introduction of institutional efficiency evaluation system; the evaluation of action plans and reports drawn up by the structural units of the University in the context of a strategic plan; creation of the software for comparative analyses of research results.

7. ANNEXES

Statistical data on students following the increase of the maximum number of students

Code	Faculty	Number of active students	Number of suspended students	Number of graduates	Number of foreign students
11	Exact and Natural Sciences	3541	1452	565	12
12	Humanitarian Sciences	4702	1979	980	37
13	Social and Political Sciences	2820	1030	411	59
14	Economics and Business	5692	1888	840	22
15	Law	3308	1086	922	26
16	Medicine	2032	518	167	648
17	Psychology and Educational Sciences	1722	635	322	1
Total		23817	8588	4207	805

Annex 2

Abstract from the results of the Autumn Semester of the Faculty of Economics and Business for the 2021-2022 academic year

(Results of exams in one of the disciplines - distribution of students' grades and its comparison to normal distribution)

Distribution of students' grades

Grade	Number	Percent
A	181	11.13%
B	298	18.33%
C	359	22.08%
D	244	15.01%
E	150	9.23%

Total	Zeros	Percent
1626	166	10.209%

Total	0<&<51	Percent
1626	228	14.022%
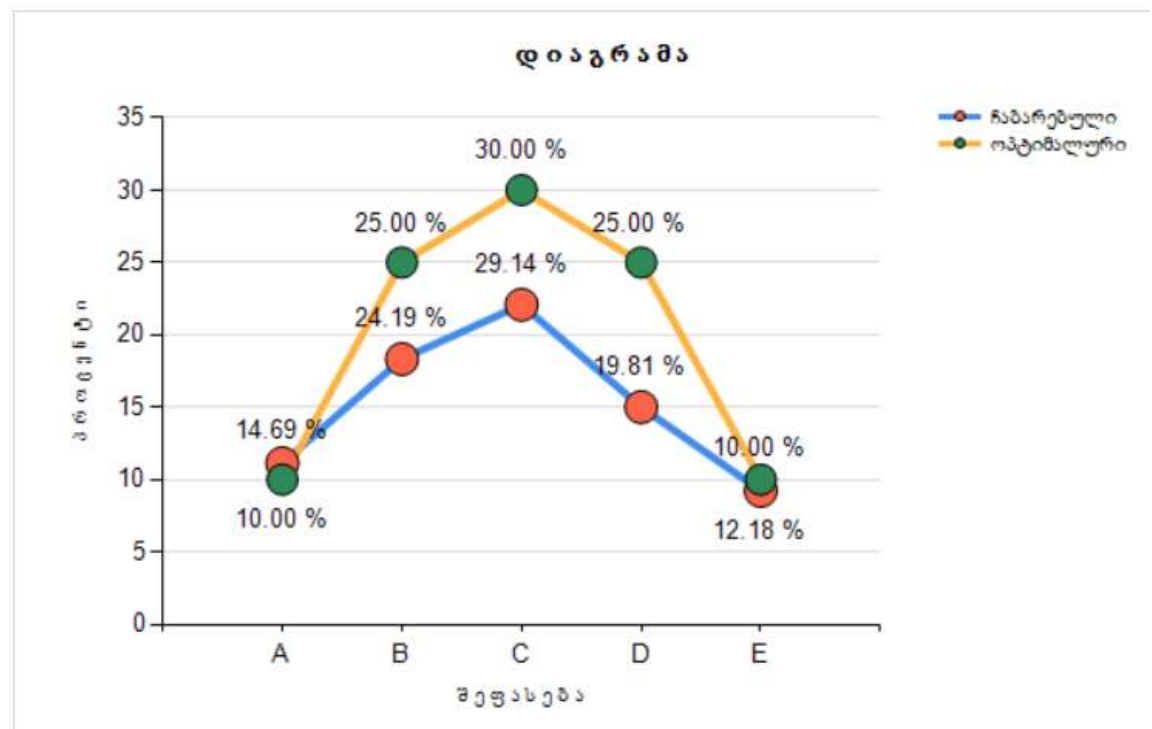
Annex 3

Master's Educational Programme

In Political Sciences

Training course	Semester	A	B	C	D	E	Failed
Political sciences: schools and concepts	Spring 2021	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Autumn 2020	14%	19%	24%	19%	15%	9%
	Spring 2020	-	-	-	-	-	-
Government and political process in Georgia	Spring 2021	22%	12%	18%	16%	16%	15%
	Autumn 2020	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Spring 2020	25%	18%	25%	15%	14%	3%
Ethical aspects of politics	Spring 2021	20%	25%	22%	18%	6%	9%
	Autumn 2020	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Spring 2020	25%	30%	20%	10%	9%	6%
Quantitative research methods	Spring 2021	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Autumn 2020	12%	25%	20%	20%	15%	130%
	Spring 2020	-	-	-	-	-	-
Qualitative research methods	Spring 2021	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Autumn 2020	16%	22%	24%	16%	10%	12%
	Spring 2020	-	-	-	-	-	-
Master's course in research design	Spring 2021	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Autumn 2020	24%	28%	20%	10%	10%	8%
	Spring 2020	-	-	-	-	-	-
Theories of political elites and leadership	Spring 2021	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Autumn 2020	28%	28%	20%	10%	10%	4%
	Spring 2020	-	-	-	-	-	-
Political ideologies: nationalism	Spring 2021	25%	19%	22%	17%	7%	10%
	Autumn 2020	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Spring 2020	20%	30%	25%	8%	12%	5%
Political ideologies: social democracy	Spring 2021	15%	20%	21%	10%	18%	16%
	Autumn 2020	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Spring 2020	20%	24%	18%	12%	14%	12%

Political ideologies in Georgia: anarchism	Spring 2021	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Autumn 2020	25%	20%	20%	13%	12%	10%
	Spring 2020	-	-	-	-	-	-
Georgia's foreign policy challenges	Spring 2021	17%	19%	23%	18%	13%	10%
	Autumn 2020	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Spring 2020	24%	26%	20%	15%	10%	5%
Main problems of political theory	Spring 2021	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Autumn 2020	10%	13%	35%	20%	18%	14%
	Spring 2020	-	-	-	-	-	-
Terrorism and counter-terrorism in post-Soviet period	Spring 2021	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Autumn 2020	18%	22%	20%	7%	18%	15%
	Spring 2020	-	-	-	-	-	-
Political consulting	Spring 2021	13%	20%	18%	15%	16%	18%
	Autumn 2020	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Spring 2020	18%	22%	16%	12%	16%	16%
Political marketing and election campaign	Spring 2021	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Autumn 2020	16%	20%	22%	18%	12%	12%
	Spring 2020	-	-	-	-	-	-
Electoral relationship: strategy and tactics	Spring 2021	13%	20%	18%	15%	16%	18%
	Autumn 2020	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Spring 2020	18%	22%	16%	12%	16%	16%
Leader and Organization	Spring 2021	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Autumn 2020	15%	20%	22%	20%	11%	12%
	Spring 2020	-	-	-	-	-	-

Doctoral Educational Programme in Political Sciences

Training course	Semester	A	B	C	D	E	Failed
Empirical social research methods	Spring 2021	50%	30%	20%	0%	0%	0%
	Autumn 2020	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Spring 2020	40%	40%	20%	0%	0%	0%
Sectoral seminar	Spring 2021	70%	20%	10%	0%	0%	0%
	Autumn 2020	80%	10%	10%	0%	0%	0%
	Spring 2020	70%	20%	10%	0%	0%	0%
Office of assistant professor	Spring 2021	70%	20%	10%	0%	0%	0%
	Autumn 2020	80%	10%	10%	0%	0%	0%
	Spring 2020	80%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Faculty of psychology and educational sciences

Analysis of Students' academic performance

Annex 5
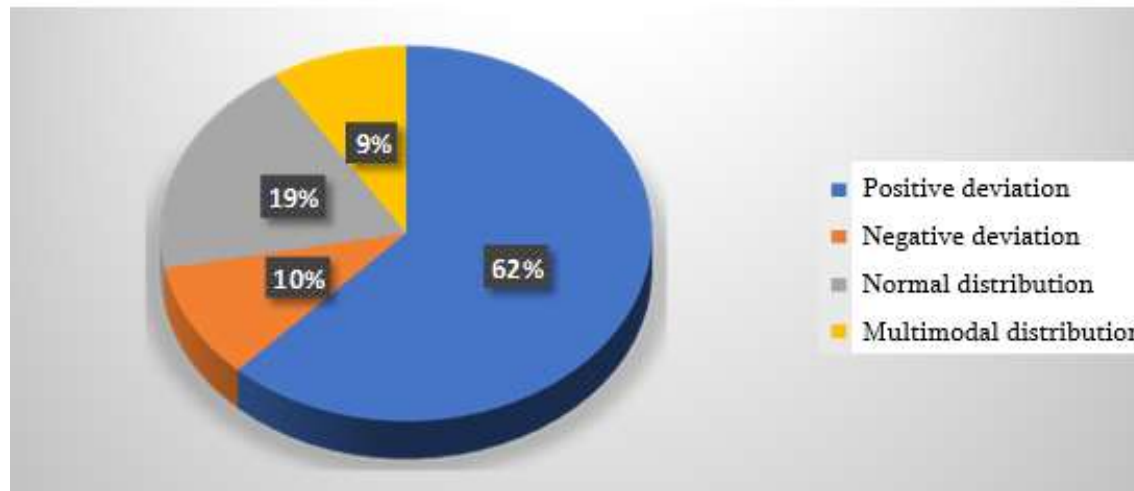
External Evaluation phases	Quantitative Index											
	Educational level					Faculty						
	Bachelor	Master	One cycle programme	Doctoral	Sum	Exact and Natural Sciences	Humanitarian sciences	Social and political sciences	Psychology amd Educational Sciences	Economics and Business	Medicine	Law
Accreditation	-	5	-	-	5	-	-	2	1	2	-	-
Including foreign language	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Re-accreditation	8	16	2	7	33	-	-	18	5	5	3	1
Including foreign language	1	3	1	-	5	-	-	-	-	2	2	1
A total of 38 educational programmes developed												
Accredited	-	3	-	-	3	-	-	1	1	1	-	-
Including foreign language	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
(Re) accredited Pending the visit of accreditation experts	16	34	2	14	66	31	-	16	5	5	3	3
International developmental cluster evaluation	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-
Report submitted regarding the decision of the foreign accreditation agency – FIBAA	1	1	1	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-
Monitoring	1	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
Accredited	1	2	-	1	4	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Including foreign language	2	1	-	2	5	2	-	3	-	-	-	-
Outcome: 69 educational programmes												