LEPL - Ivane Javakhishvili

Tbilisi State University

Annual Report

2022

Quality Assurance service

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION

The Quality Assurance Service (in the future referred to as "the Service") of the Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University (in the future referred to as "the University") represents one of the management bodies of the University. The purpose of its activity is the continuous development of the quality of university services. The service operates according to Articles 25th and 31st of the Law of Georgia "On Higher Education", the charter of the University, and the regulation of the quality assurance service. In its activities, the service is guided by the document "The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" developed by the European Quality Assurance Network and national authorization and accreditation standards. The most critical areas of activity of the service are:

a) Further promotion of increasing the quality of studying and teaching and research and preservation of academic integrity in the University;

b) Organization of self-assessment process for authorization, individual and cluster accreditation, monitoring, and extraordinary reporting processes. Preparation for external evaluation of educational programs to obtain national and international certification;

c) Promotion of the introduction of modern methods of learning, teaching, and assessment;

d) Promotion of international cooperation and university integration in the common European educational space to improve quality assurance processes, share global best practices, and introduce innovations in the academic area;

e) Strengthening the quality culture in the University by increasing the involvement and awareness of internal actors, especially students, with their participation in quality assurance processes.

Based on the University's academic staff's multi-disciplinary expert experience, the quality assurance service actively cooperates with various structural units of the University for the further development of the institution, as well as with external actors at the national and international levels. During the reporting period, active cooperation occurred within the framework of specific projects with the University's quality assurance service and human resources management department, as well as the educational process management department, the external relations department, the finance department, scientific research institutes, faculties, Etc. The cooperation with the quality assurance services at the faculties, part of the University's unified quality assurance system, is particularly noteworthy. However, their activities are based on the specifics of the faculty's branches and fields.

This report presents the current state of development of the quality of teaching and learning, research, and university services for the reporting period from December 2021 to December 2022.

The challenges handled by the University institutionally in the last reporting period have moved into a different phase from the Spring 2022 semester. In particular:

- The educational research process was restored in the university space;

- In some instances, within the framework of academic cooperation, the institution has maintained the format of remote communication (specific components, such as workshops, pieces of training, and communication with the National Center For Educational Quality Enhancement LEPL);

- The institution applied for external institutional evaluation before the Association of European Universities in the reporting year. Accordingly, it was evaluated by the evaluation team of the Institutional Evaluation

Program (EUA IEP), which is the most crucial factor in the international recognition of the University. The evaluation is recognized by the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement LEPL, and for the next five years, the information about the evaluation will be indicated in the annexe of the diploma issued by the University; also, the University can enjoy the status "Evaluated within the framework of the European University Association Institutional Evaluation Program" and use the corresponding logo. Based on external evaluation materials, the strengths of the institution were discussed in detail by the experts, within the framework of which the following are undividedly named:

- ✓ Coping with crisis processes arising from the pandemic;

- ✓ The smoothness of the activities of the quality assurance service and the proper and purposeful focus of the area of operation on institutional development. Gradual increase of quality culture based on open and transparent as well as intensive communication with international partners and agencies. Expanding the area of recognition of the University (based on specific projects and individual scientific research);

- ✓ Methodological approaches to the development of educational programs, which are built on internationally recognized and approved principles;

- ✓ Orientation of the institution to intensive research, which is reflected by the involvement of students in research and grant projects of several bachelor's educational programs (at the Faculty of Exact and Natural Sciences: Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Etc.);

- ✓ Real comprehension of the third mission of the University, as one of the critical strategic tasks of the institution, within the framework of specific tasks and activities, which are carried out in three directions: *continuous education, transfer and integration of knowledge, social involvement;*

Through the evaluation of international experts, detailed new action tasks were presented to the institution, among which are:

- ✓ Promotion and support of innovative practices, examples of which emerged during the pandemic to overcome the crisis managed by the University;

- ✓ Implementation of a new unified information system in all areas of institutional activity (education, research, third mission), which will contribute to the further institutional development of the University and the analysis and measurement of quality systems of all activities of the University;

- ✓ Expanding the activities of the quality assurance service for research, including the monitoring of quality assurance systems of research institutes, which represents an additional responsibility for the service and for the provision of which it would be essential to introduce new information/data management system, to create a special department/division to support the professional development of staff (both academic and administrative);

- ✓ Considering the appropriate balance by the University between teaching at lecture halls and online teaching opportunities, particularly in light of the need for student work. Initiating the results before the National Parliament to amend the Law on Higher Education, which refers to distance learning;

- ✓ Prioritizing a student-centred and inquiry-based learning approach with intensive involvement of the faculties that envisages differences in subject disciplines and the rapid development of technology-based

learning. Intensive work to create a master's/doctoral school with the active participation of faculties and research institutes will contribute to further expanding interdisciplinary studies and forming priorities in this direction.

✓ Creation of independent committees and a university clinic of ethics and integrity research operating by European standards;

✓ The increase and strengthening of the number of students involved in field research for expansion of university research and international sharing, which is also reflected in educational programs, the formation of the third mission strategy to spread the research results more effectively in the wider society and to implement changes in the country's economy.

The academic council of the University, the administration, representatives of quality assurance faculty services, academic and administrative staff, and other interested parties participated in the discussion of expert conclusions. This institutional evaluation was prepared before the University's future authorization, and different activities were planned. The response to individual details of the recommendations and advice was already carried out in 2022 in cooperation with the University's administrative units, academic circles, and external actors of quality assurance. However, the quality assurance service believes that the detailed study of this document is more important and significant to effectively conduct the subsequent authorization processes of the University, in which the entire university community must participate.

From December 2022, 212 educational programs have operated at the Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University LEPL, including 71 bachelor's, 94 master's and 47 doctoral educational programs. 1 Georgian language training, 15 professional educational, 9 professional training, and 1 professional retraining programs, 4 single-level, 2 integrated teacher training, and 1 teacher training programs. As well as, educational program with 24 foreign languages (20 English language: 8 bachelor's, 8 master's, 2 single-level, 2 doctoral programs, Russian-language: 4 programs (2 bachelor's, 2 master's programs) and 7 foreign languages components (Georgian-English - 4, Georgian-French - 2, Georgian-Russian - 1 program) are also important. As a result of the national accreditation process determined by the action plan of 2022 of the service, 71 educational programs have been (re)accredited in the university (including 7 bachelor's, 11 master's, and 7 doctoral; while 23 bachelor's, 26 master's and 2 doctoral educational programs are continuously undergoing different phases of accreditation).

The latest challenges ongoing in the accreditation processes have put new demands before higher education institutions, the case is about the cluster accreditation processes, within the framework of which 3 clusters out of 9 clusters submitted were accredited, 5 cluster groups out of 6 clusters have had an accreditation visit, and 1 cluster has been submitted to the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement. The accreditation of 5 clusters submitted (professional education, philosophy, history-archaeology, philology, and Oriental studies-Caucasiology) was led by an international expert.

10 new educational programs (2 bachelor's, 7 master's, and 1 doctoral program) have been added to the catalog of educational programs of the university. 5 educational programs (2 bachelor's, 1 master's (one-year), and 2 doctoral programs) go through different stages of the accreditation process, the institution is working and preparing for the presentation of 4 educational programs (3 one-year master's programs and 1 doctoral program). Within the framework of cluster accreditation, 3 educational programs at the bachelor's level were prepared, the accreditation of which was carried out based on the change presented in the qualification framework.

In parallel with the reflection of new educational programs included in the catalogue of university programs, based on the current novelties in the Georgian educational space and the challenges presented in various fields, based on optimization and renewal or rebranding of already existing academic programs, starting from 2023, 17 (4 bachelor's, 10 master's and 3 doctoral) educational programs will be subject to cancellation in the catalogue of programs.

Currently, the accreditation process continues for 19 bachelor's, 26 masters, and 4 doctoral educational programs at the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement.

The implementation of the new qualification framework has activated extraordinary monitoring processes for higher education institutions. Under the given conditions, 3 educational programs (1 bachelor's, 1 master's, and 1 doctoral) from the Faculty of Exact and Natural Sciences were prepared in the university space and delivered to the relevant services of the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement. Since most parts of the university curricula were subjected to the accreditation process in the subsequent stage of the qualifications framework, extraordinary monitoring concerning compliance with the framework will be less of a challenge for the institution.

The (re)accreditation process is almost continuous in the university, although the given external evaluation framework has undergone a kind of methodological change manifested in the cluster evaluation of educational programs. Cluster accreditation, in turn, promotes the renewal of the university's academic programs, which is primarily reflected in the conceptual renewal of educational programs by adapting to international standards and best practices and by introducing transformative innovations in the processes of learning and teaching, research, management and service delivery based on the sharing of international experience, to expand internationalization network in both teaching and research direction, to attract researchers, young people interested in the latest topics and new research areas.

The reporting period of 2022 has already established the specific tasks set before the university, which means that the main work aspects and directions have stayed the same. However, the current situation has been periodically filled with separate issues conditioned by legislative innovations in the Georgian educational space. Different activities planned within the institution's framework to expand quality awareness and raise culture required individual consideration of issues by the quality assurance service in many cases. The abovementioned means that the planned measures in terms of quality assurance, which are determined after each analysis, are specified and implemented by the entire university community (departments, institutes, faculties, and central management). Each decision is based on data collection based on cooperation, analysis, and identification of strengths and areas for improvement. To develop and spread the culture of quality institutionally, new directions of activity of the service were determined in the reporting period of 2022, which implies the support of such processes as:

- Integration of teaching-learning and research processes; Applying the principles of interdisciplinarity in teaching and research. Transformation of higher education training programs based on the most significant topics of modern research in the field, accordingly attracting young personnel in teaching and research, as well as management processes;

- Understanding educational programs in a cluster manner and developing a conceptual vision of the cluster, holistically observing and evaluating. Determination of common grounds based on the individual profile of each program included in the group; Preparation of new

educational programs, which is based on unique requirements of the labour and employment market; Professional study of the work and employment market within the framework of specific academic programs, for targeted planning and service of the student contingent;

- Development and establishment of high-quality awareness, as well as well-defined self-responsibility of the university's academic and administrative staff, horizontal cooperation between symmetrical university structures in the direction of learning and teaching, research, management, and services to deeply develop a quality-related culture;

- Transformation of bureaucracy and central control mechanisms, delegating university tasks horizontally and vertically within the scope of increasing self-responsibility.

As mentioned earlier, legislative innovations in the Georgian educational space conditioned the determination of the directions. It was supported by quality service through the active dissemination of information, expansion of communication, participation in university activities and individual responsibility, conducting constructive and critical dialogue, and sharing best practices and experiences in the institutional space. As a result, the university community accepted the given vision of the processes, making communication and cooperation between university institutions more effective.

To further raise the quality culture in the institutional space, the new vision developed by the quality assurance service contributed to the implementation of various processes of institutional development in the institution, with full observance of team principles and detailed discussion and planning of each effective measure within the framework of institutional dialogue.

Several types of research prepared by the quality assurance service on various topics during the reporting period were of particular importance, based on which the new stages of the service's activity and essential tasks were determined. As a result of the studies, the strengths and areas for improvement of several activities and processes within the institution were identified. Academic personnel with relevant expert experience are involved in the university research conducted by the Quality Assurance Service.

In the reporting period of 2022, the involvement of foreign funds and international organizations in implementing different directions and thematic projects of the quality assurance service of the university was high. In addition, the service managed seven institutional development projects.

During the reporting period, the measures promoting the professional development of the staff were thought out and planned differently; in particular, workshops and pieces of training within the framework of cluster accreditation were determined in advance and effectively, primarily with academic staff, and purposefully and gradually with external actors of quality, namely, with the relevant services of the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (with Higher Education Quality Assurance and Qualifications Division), to introduce consulting and new accreditation news, processes and procedures at the request of persons implementing educational programs.

During the preparation period for cluster accreditation at the Faculty of Humanities, the concept of student involvement in quality assurance mechanisms was updated. Instead of term surveys (which envisage sending a questionnaire after the end of the study course/year through the electronic system of educational process management), qualitative research methods were used to measure their satisfaction level - in particular, students' focus-groups, which provided the program implementers with highly reliable data. Other faculties plan the use of the mentioned practice.

In the reporting period, in addition to the planned activities, the focus of the activities of the quality assurance service became: the promotion of the improvement of the quality of learning and teaching and research at the university, the processes of internal and external evaluation, including interim, accreditation self-evaluation, implementation of the recommendations of the accreditation board, special monitoring report, peer evaluation, organization of accreditation processes, promotion of integration and cooperation of the university in international collaboration and international educational space, further development of the quality assurance system in the university. As a result, the institution planned and implemented the processes mentioned above in a new way, as a result of which new beginnings and initiatives were established in the university space to raise the quality awareness and culture in the institution, cooperation with internal and external quality actors to study, discuss and support legislative initiatives, from the point of view of involvement in international projects and programs.

The focus of the quality assurance service's activities became the development of such processes as internationalization at home (German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)); Strengthening the quality and relevance of third mission activities (E+CBHE); Taking care of the needs and welfare of students and academic staff (EUA-TPG). In addition, the processes appeared in the agenda of the service through involvement in international projects. Information about the abovementioned cooperations is indicated in the relevant chapter of the report.

2. FACILITATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

At the end of 2022, 23,941 active status students of TSU are recorded in the education management information system. The largest faculty by the number of students (5908) is the Faculty of Economics and Business, followed by the Faculty of Humanities (4794), Law (3313), and Exact and Natural Sciences (3258) (other faculties: Social and Political Sciences 2711, Medicine 2212 and Psychology and Education of Sciences - 1737). In contrast to the reporting year 2021, the order in the list of numerical ranking of students was changed by the Faculties of Law and Exact and Natural Sciences, as well as the Faculties of Medicine and Psychology and Educational Sciences, which was due to the accreditation of new educational programs at the existing faculties, the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences unprecedented support for teacher education programs, as to the actual decision of state and university policy. During the reporting period, the growing number of students enrolled (at all three levels) was observed at the faculties of Economics and Business (2072), Humanities (1833), and Exact and Natural Sciences (1056), as well as Psychology and Education Science (583). The number of enrolled students at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences was relatively low, which was to some extent caused by the changed competition conditions in the format of the Unified National Exams. The most significant number of graduates is recorded at the faculties of humanities (911), economics and business (799), and law (706).

Educational programs financed from the state budget (physics, chemistry, biology, mathematics (400)/philology, history, archaeology, philosophy (400)/education science (25)/Economics (400)), operate on four faculties of the University on exact and natural sciences, psychology and education and humanitarian sciences, economics and business, among them, the Faculty of Economics has a high application rate of funded study places, and the most significant number of highly funded students is confirmed at the Faculty of Exact and Natural Sciences. Despite the given number of state-sponsored students in the field of educational sciences, in 2022, financial support for students was provided by the university administration for an additional 25 students in the field of educational

sciences, the institution realizing the importance of the area in today's academic market. Financial support of students was also relevant at the Faculty of Humanities (Philology and History) due to the demand for personnel in the labour market in the fields mentioned above.

During the 2020-2021 four-semester pandemic, distance and hybrid learning process, due to the social situation, the student status of approximately 30% (10,222) of the university students was suspended, the status was terminated for about 2,070 students, and the status was restored for 1,384 students during the reporting period. Compared to the last reporting period, 6% fewer students were suspended.

It is worth mentioning that the international network of the university has expanded; namely, in 2022, the educational programs of the university served 971 foreign students; among them, the highest load was on the foreign language education programs of medicine (787), six foreign students are students of doctoral educational programs from different faculties, except for medicine.

At the end of 2022, there were 212 Georgian-language educational programs at all three higher education levels at seven university faculties, including 181 Georgian-language, 24 foreign-language, and seven educational programs with a foreign-language component. According to the faculties, the complete statistics are presented on the relevant website of the quality assurance service of the university.

Educational programs are supported in the university in two main directions:

- Internal quality assurance;
- External quality assurance.

2.1. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

In the active work process of the quality assurance service of the university, essential importance is assigned to the issues of internal quality assurance, the task of which is to evaluate the institution holistically in several directions, particularly,

- Collegial assessment of educational programs;
- Labour market research - support of educational programs with updated methodology;
- Analysis of academic performance;
- Survey of students, academic and invited staff;
- Changes in the procedure of planning and development, evaluation and development of the educational program;
- Participation of students in quality assurance mechanisms;
- For the study, commenting and discussion of normative documents.

2.1.1. COLLEGIAL REVIEW OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

In 2022, the quality assurance service of the university intensively addressed the processes of internal evaluation and monitoring of educational programs established in the institution in recent years. Internal quality assessment is a continuous process in the institution, in the implementation of which faculty quality assurance services and all university field experts are actively involved. The program support committee is active in the process of studying the evaluation results, which includes all those who are interested in the implementation of the educational program. Changes made for the

development of educational programs are reflected in the educational programs as soon as the decision of the Academic Council enters into force.

Among the recommendations issued by foreign experts within the framework of the external evaluation carried out by the institution in the spring semester of 2022, there was an even wider need for horizontal cooperation between faculties. At this stage, taking into account the abovementioned, horizontal cooperation was strengthened in the following directions:

- Expert assessment of educational programs;
- Cooperation in the direction of process research and management, considering the existing expertise at the faculties.

Updated communication among faculties increases the professional development of work processes. For clarification, it is worth noting that in the processes of research and surveys, working with focus groups, the academic staff of the psychology department and doctoral students were actively involved, by whom both university and individual faculty and program research questionnaires have been prepared and modified in recent years. As for the assessment process, in this case, the research department of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences and doctoral students, whose professionalism has been repeatedly noted in the process of accreditation of educational programs by accreditation experts, are activated after the analytical documents have been studied and adjusted to real facts.

During the reporting period, with the active participation of the faculty quality assurance services, the collegial assessment of educational programs was carried out continuously, which in turn strengthens the quality culture, and raises the quality awareness and the self-responsibility of the university community in academic processes. In the abovementioned processes, the involvement of students-interns of the master's educational program of educational sciences in the assessment process was even more important, which contributes to the realization of theoretical knowledge in practice.

During the reporting period, based on horizontal cooperation between faculties, several collegial assessment documents were prepared for various external evaluation processes (individual and cluster accreditation, submission of accreditation council, and triennial self-evaluation reports). The renewed activities in the internal evaluation system contributed to the following:

- Raising awareness and culture of quality in the university space;
- In-depth understanding of university values;
- Defining the essence and meaning of the third mission;
- Independent development of quality assurance services of faculties;
- Active involvement of students in topical issues of quality assurance;
- Activation of employers and heads of practice facilities in the process of development and evaluation of educational programs;
- Extended communication of university graduates in planned processes for program improvement;
- Functional diversity of activities of the committee supporting the planning, elaboration and development of programs.

Assessment procedures underwent significant changes during the cluster accreditation process due to changes in the accreditation methodology. The updated processes put on the agenda:

- High demand for teamwork;
- The necessity to develop a conceptual vision of cluster educational programs;
- Commitment to joint research and analysis of the labour and employment market;
- Analysis of the results of cluster accreditation, new understanding, and formation of procedures, accordingly filling existing procedures with cluster approaches within the institution.

In the reporting period, in some cases, the service continued to maintain specific activities, which proved to be successful in managing the epidemiological crisis. To some extent, assessments are again planned in both face-to-face and hybrid formats for those educational programs, that

- were in the process of (re)accreditation;
- Prepared reports regarding the recommendations of the Accreditation Council;
- Submitted triennial reports for examination;
- Needed modification in relation to new qualification framework.
- It was being prepared for submission to a foreign agency.

Accordingly, an internal assessment was carried out:

- In the spring semester of 2022: 4 educational programs (including 1 - master's and 3 - doctoral) - within the framework of the triennial report;
- In the spring semester of 2022: 9 educational programs (including 3 - bachelor's, 4 - master's, 2 - doctoral) - within the changes in the qualification framework;
- In the spring and autumn semesters of 2022: 10 educational programs (including 4 - bachelor's, 5 - master's, 1 - doctoral) - within the framework of accreditation;
- In the spring and autumn semesters of 2022: 59 educational programs (including 22 - bachelor's, 31 - master's, and 6 - doctoral) - within the framework of reaccreditation;
- In the fall semester of 2022: 8 educational programs (including 1 - bachelor's, 7 - master's) - within the framework of submitting a report on the implementation of the recommendations issued by the Accreditation Council;
- In the spring and autumn semesters of 2022: 8 clusters of educational programs (including 25 - bachelor's, 32 - master's, 7 - doctoral, a total of 64) - within the framework of cluster reaccreditation.

In 2022, 151 educational programs were subject to internal evaluation. About 1200 people participated in the evaluation process. Discussions were held through the electronic platform Zoom. It was attended by representatives of various sections of the Faculty's administration, program leaders, academic and invited staff, students and graduates, employers, and internship/practice implementers.

For certain educational programs accredited in 2020 are scheduled to submit triennial reports in 2023.

2.1.2. Labor market research- Support of educational programs with renovated methodology

During the reporting period, several planned activities were implemented within the framework of new challenges and interesting projects for the quality assurance service of the university. Furthemore, based on the new conditions of accreditation and normative documents, separate effective activities were planned within the framework of the updated methodology. First of all, the updated labor market

research should be noted, which immediately precedes the preparation and development of educational programs.

Regarding the labor market research, the quality assurance service changed specific approaches to the research processes, which means that each stage was purposefully written during the preparatory period, a group of young researchers was involved in the processes, who prepared the questionnaires (psychology department) and processed (the faculty of social and political sciences) - the analytical phases.

The cluster accreditation process required a changed, new vision of labour market research, which led to a different vision and holistic approaches from the institution. Accordingly, the research process was methodically prepared. In particular, the research methodology was defined in detail, and the research was focused on the following:

- On two main target groups: employers and graduates;
- On agreed tasks for employers within the cluster group;
- Within the framework of the cluster group, on tasks agreed upon for graduates;
- On the specific research method (quantitative): a 28-item questionnaire was processed using the SPSS program according to the aim and objectives of the research;
- On selecting design, on the one hand, for employers, and on the other hand, for graduates;
- On the goals and results of educational programs.

Another important decision of the research group was that, despite the 8 clusters presented, their attention was focused on the principle of thematic unification and expansion of educational programs. The abovementioned was based on the idea that, when researching a larger group of languages, it would be possible to more clearly see the need for graduates of a language-labelled educational program in the market on a comparative basis. Accordingly, under the conditions of cluster accreditation, five fundamental documents of market research were prepared, including philosophy, history-archaeology, philology, and Western and Eastern languages. Furthermore, according to the methodology of the preparation of the labour market survey and from the given selection principle, it is clear that the extended survey of the labour market of the cluster was carried out following the changes in the new qualification framework. Therefore, the market research document for the programs of the Faculty of Humanities was prepared according to the following principle: 2 clusters - humanities without language specialization requirements (philosophy and history - archaeology), 1 cluster - language and literature (Kartvelological researches), 2 clusters, both of which featured as communication skills, as well as ancient languages (on the one hand, a cluster of Western languages and translations, and on the other hand, a cluster of Eastern languages).

During the accreditation visits, all groups of experts highlighted in the best practices, the in-depth, qualified, and clustered research format of cooperation of university faculties and the labour market, both in the familiarization session of the findings and in the written conclusions.
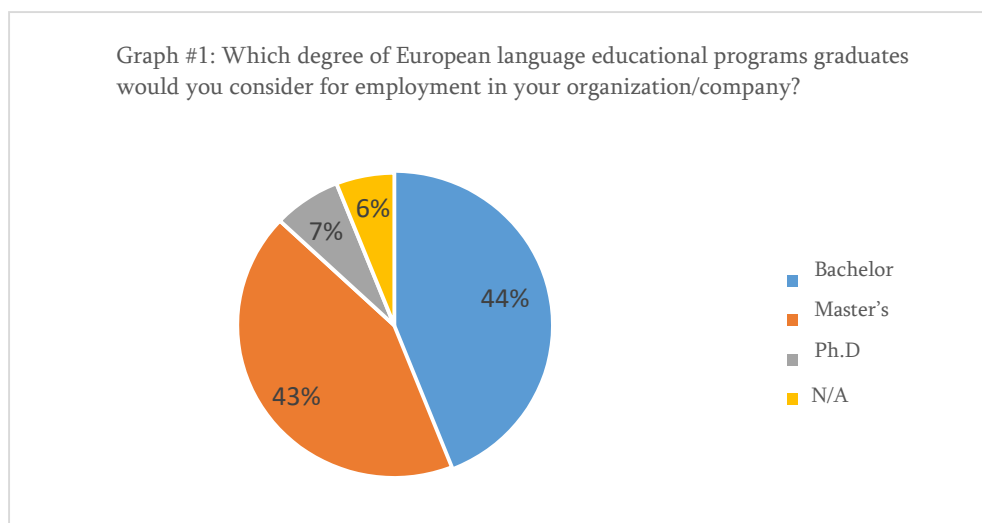
Faculty of Humanities cluster market research revealed the following essential themes:

Philosophy Cluster: Research has shown that the employment rate of graduates is not high according to the profile. However, based on the graduates' high penetrating and analytical competencies, their employment rate from all three educational programs is quite high, not only in the private sector but also in the public sector, where analytical work is significant.

History-archaeology cluster: 121 institutions, both state and non-governmental and private organizations, participated in the research of this cluster; their range was wide (schools - general education and higher education institutions, as well as: archives, research institutes, manuscript centre, museums, and research centres, the Ministry of Culture, museum funds, foreign employers and others). Among them 21% were public services, 48.2% were private companies, 25.8% were non-governmental organizations, and 5% were foreign employers. As for history and archaeology bachelor's degree graduates, 34.8% of the organizations considered their employment, and 41.6% would employ a master's degree holder. More than 40% of employers assessed the field knowledge and skills of TSU history and archaeology program graduates well, and almost 30% confirmed their very high competence in the field with competencies corresponding to market requirements.

The cluster of European languages and translation: within the framework of the cluster, European communication and old languages, as well as master's programs of translation, was discussed, which was based on the principle of the kinship of languages and the main programmatic concept of the educational programs of these languages (philology with languages, country studies, and translation, the essential development axis of which goes through mastering languages with relevant historical and cultural characteristics). The present cluster group was one of the large program groups, where the data of 183 organizations included in the survey were analyzed, based on which it was revealed that the majority of employed graduates of the present programs are masters:

Graph 1: Employment of graduates of European language educational programs according to educational programs.

Graph #1: Which degree of European language educational programs graduates would you consider for employment in your organization/company?

- Bachelor 44%
- Master's 43%
- Ph.D 7%
- N/A 6%

The research team also presented a graph for individual programs detailing quantitative data for all seven educational programs:
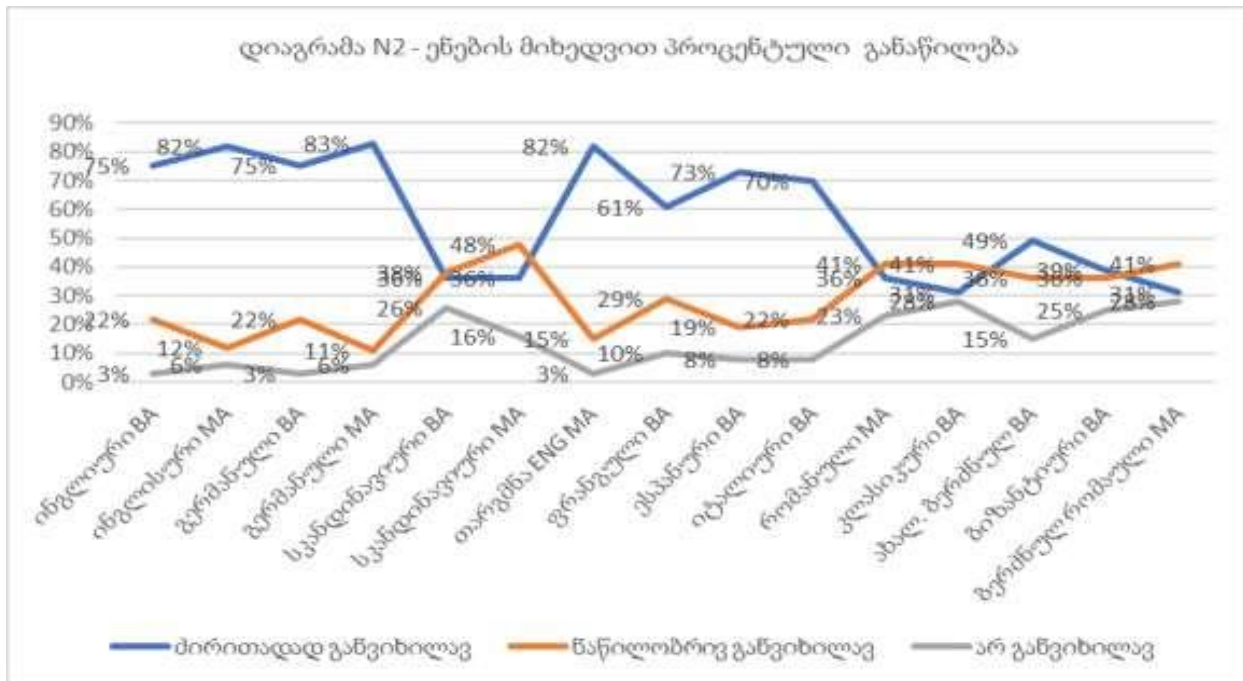
Graph 2: Employment of graduates of European language education programs according to all seven education programs

The following data were important, in particular, 64% of the surveyed organisations reported that their employees were mainly masters from the present educational programs. The service sector is mainly interested in bachelor's, while analytical institutions in the public and private sectors emphasise masters with higher language competencies and research skills.

Oriental studies: Only philological and country studies educational programs of Eastern languages appeared in this cluster. In this case, too, the number of interviewed organisations was vast. Specifically, it was equal to 132. Moreover, 62.1% of the employees of the institutions mentioned above are university graduates. Because Tbilisi State University is the most important centre of oriental studies in the Georgian educational space, 35% of interviewed employers gave a very high, and 38% of them high evaluation of the qualifications of the graduates (Arabic Studies, Iranian Studies, Turcology).

The cluster of Oriental Studies and Caucasology: the importance of this cluster group and the interest in given educational programs is essential not only on a regional but also on an international scale, which is conditioned by the importance of the educational programs included in the cluster from a socio-political and cultural point of view. The questionnaire was completed by 158 organisations, i.e. the response rate was approximately 8%, which gives a margin of error of 6% for a 90% confidence

level. 46% of employers considered the importance of employing bachelors within their institution. Every third organisation agrees to hire a graduate of Caucasology and Oriental Studies. The demand for graduates with this qualification is exceptionally high in translation, tourism, and commercial organisations. A Caucasology and Oriental studies specialist with a master's degree would be more likely to be employed by research and educational organisations, which was expected. The research showed that most employers, i.e. the category of employers who actively cooperate with the relevant educational programs, 59% are fully involved in the creation and development process of the educational programs of TSU.

A large number of employers noted that the graduate should have a high level of theoretical knowledge of Caucasian (Ibero-Caucasian, non-Ibero-Caucasian Azerbaijani, Ossetian languages and languages of ancient civilisations) and Eastern (modern Hebrew, Akkadian, Sumerian or Hittite, modern and ancient Armenian) languages, as well as Caucasian and Eastern cultures, history, socio-political dimensions, religions and literature, and analytical skills, although 66% of employers also appeal to the practical skills of graduates, which primarily means that the ability to apply knowledge in practice is essential for employment in their organisation. *After the cluster accreditation process is completed, all cluster-evaluated market research documents will be analysed, on the basis of which the strengths and areas for improvement of the cluster researches will be determined.*

2.1.3. Analysis of academic performance

The quality assurance service of Tbilisi State University continues the research and data analysis based on surveys and analysis, for which it uses various survey tools, through which it is possible to regularly evaluate the essential aspects of learning and teaching, determine the threshold marks of learning results, correct individual details and select new banchmarks.

One of the essential and decisive activities of university research is the analysis of students' academic performance, based on which the educational program and specific components of the educational processes in the institution change.

According to the updated accreditation standards, educational programs are accompanied by assessment maps of learning outcomes, where activities and time periods should be defined and relevant analyzes should be prepared for the purpose of measuring the results, based on which the program development support committee will discuss and make an essential decision to reach the actual achievement of the learning outcomes.

The educational program support committee regularly prepares and develops each semester's analysis, as the examination centre processes general university statistics. However, during the pandemic, the evaluation of the results of the academic processes remained only within the framework of the surveys, which showed us that the evaluation results were inflated in several educational courses. These

processes were not only typical for the Georgian educational space; Similar results were more or less observed in the world's leading higher education institutions.

At Tbilisi State University, the primary data analysis is provided by the learning process management system (lms.tsu.ge), which enables the analysis of students' academic performance according to individual study courses, i.e. by observing the Gaussian distribution. However, it should also be noted that these data can be obtained while analyzing a large number of study courses.

In 2022, the broadest range of students' academic performance analysis was prepared according to individual educational programs of humanities and socio-political sciences, economics and business faculties.

Faculties use different methodologies and mechanisms in the analysis process, including Gaussian distribution integrated into the LMS portal, observation of introductory faculty courses, or data from individual training courses. In the report on the quality assurance service, we present concrete samples of the faculty analysis on a comparison basis. Analyzes were selected purposely. The report will contain both the results of the unified faculty analysis and the researches prepared on the basis of the program, which are as important as they are used to monitor the learning results of the program, determine areas for improvement, and plan effective measures based on specific recommendations.

The report presents as an example the assessment of academic performance prepared by the Faculty of Economics and Business, where the research team included as many as possible all the tools to present the observations close to accuracy. A similar voluminous study was prepared at the Faculty of Humanities, where students' performance was assessed in clusters, which is a qualitatively new direction within the scope of similar analyses. However, at this stage, within the framework of cluster data processing, the quality assurance service of the faculty will generalize the degree of error, and data processing will be carried out programmatically. The study is planned to be completed in the reporting period of 2023.

The Quality Assurance Service of the Faculty of Economics and Business periodically monitored students' academic performance according to study courses so that, if necessary, appropriate changes were made in the assessment forms and methods, the content of the study course, and the teaching-learning processes. The analysis of the results in the autumn and spring semesters of the academic year 2021-2022 showed that the distribution of marks deviated from the normal (Gaussian) distribution in a significant part of the study courses, in particular, in the spring semester of the reporting period, unlike the autumn semester, the final exams were held in the lecture-halls and not remotely (online), therefore the average rate of failure in the exams increased at all three levels. In the final exams, the average rate of grade Excellent (A) received by students in bachelor's subjects decreased by five percentage points compared to the autumn semester (was 27% became 22%), the rate of grade B is increased by four percentage points (8%-12%), grade C is decreased by 1 percentage point (11%-10%), grade D - by five percentage points (17%-12%), grade F - by six percentage points (was 19% became

13%), and the average rate of failure in the exams FX for the same period is increased by 13% (was 18% and became 31%) (see graph 3).
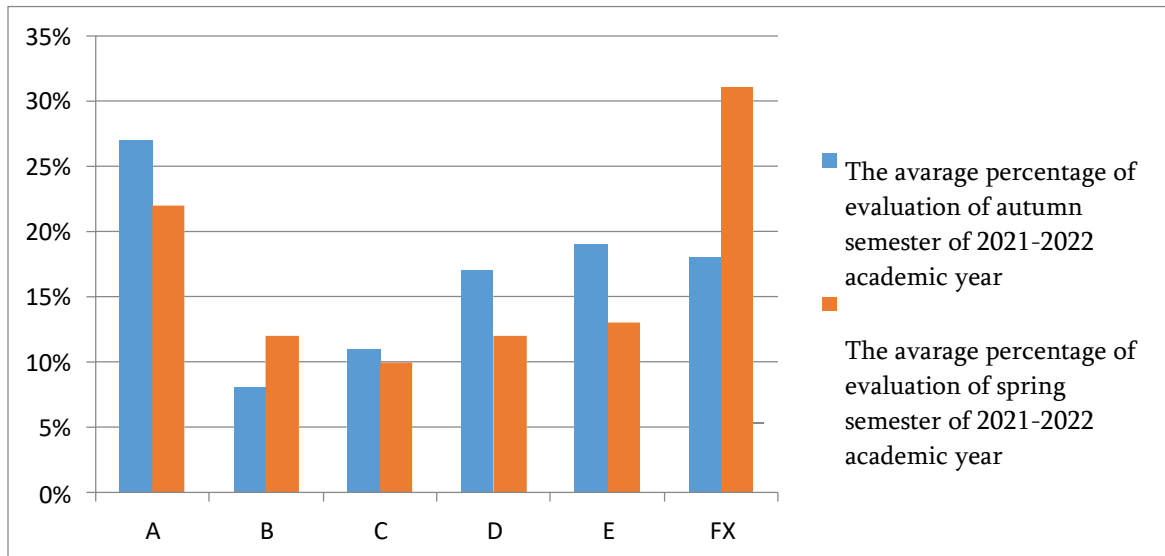
Graph 3: Grades (A, B, C, D, E, FX) received by students in the study courses of bachelor's educational programs in the autumn and spring semesters of the 2021-2022 academic year

The average rate of grade Excellent (A) has increased by 3 percentage points (from 41% to 44%), grade B decreased by 1 percentage point (15%-14%), grade C decreased by 1 percentage point (11%-10%), grade D - by 5 percentage points (14%-9%), grade F - by 1 percentage point (was 9% became 8%) are subjects of **Master's level**, and the average rate of failure in the exams has increased by 5 percentage points (from 10% to 15%). (see graph 2).
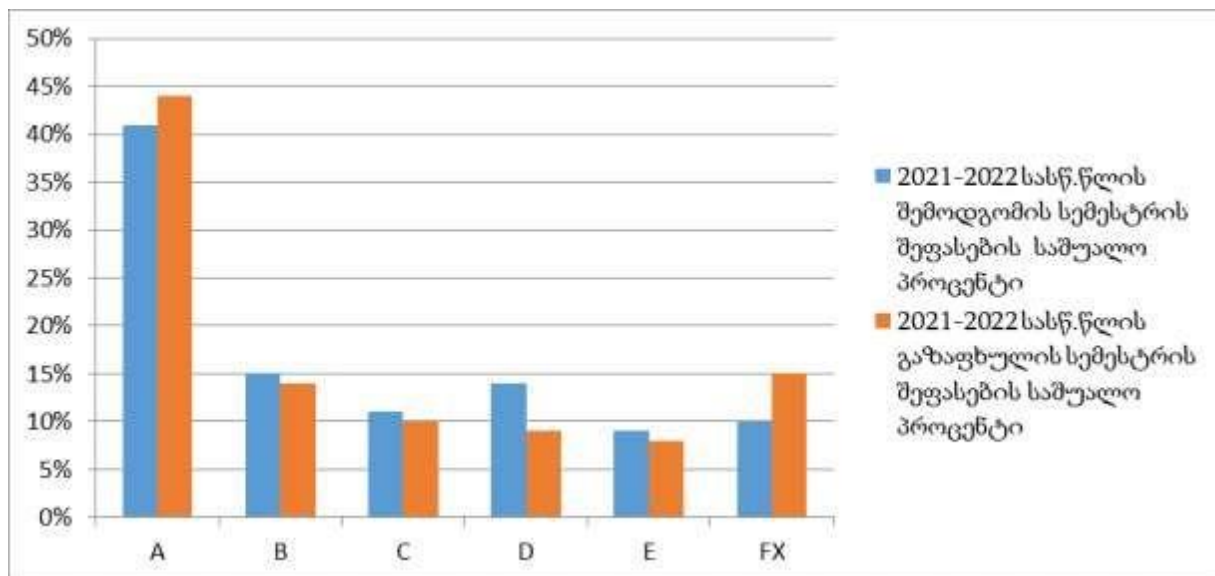
Graph 4: Grades (A, B, C, D, E, FX) received by students in the study courses of master's educational programs in the autumn and spring semesters of the 2021-2022 academic year.

Among doctoral student grades, the average rate of grade Excellent (A) decreased by 7 percentage points (from 41% to 34%), grade B increased by 2 percentage points (7%-9%), grade C decreased by 4 percentage points (5%-3%), grade D- by 1 percentage point (5%-4%), grade F - by 1 percentage point (was 2% became 1%), and the average rate of failure in the exams increased by 9 percentage points (from 40% to 49%). (See graph 5).
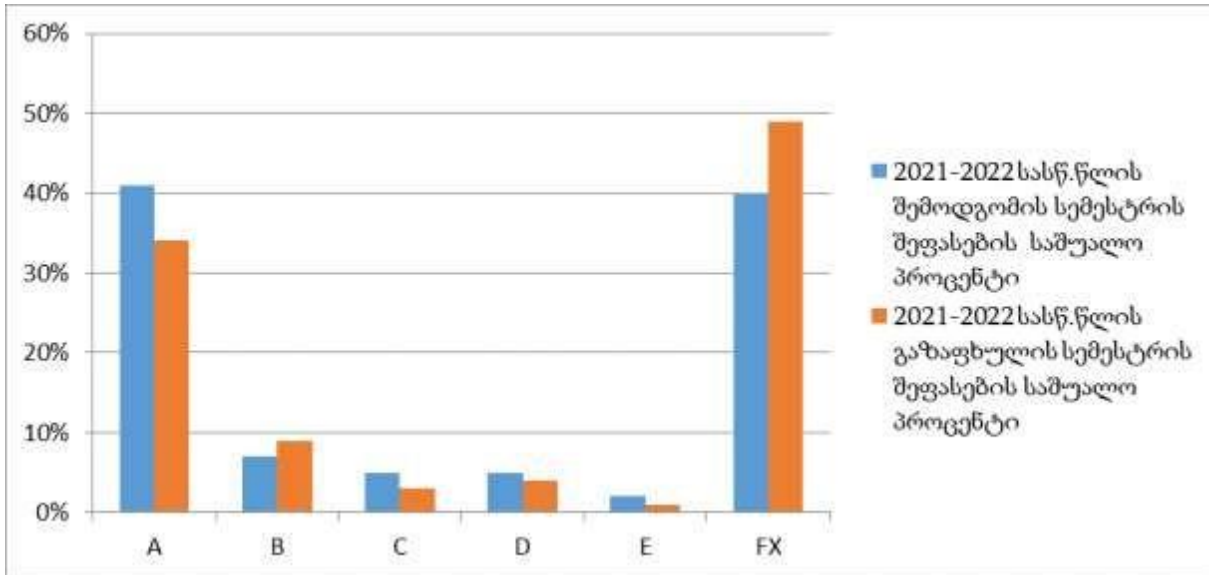

Graph 5: Grades (A, B, C, D, E, FX) received by students in the study courses of the Master's educational programs in the autumn and spring semesters of the 2021-2022 academic year.

The transfer of the learning process to the lecture-halls created a different picture of the assessment results; in particular, the academic data fell to a low level, the monitoring of which will be conituned, to improve the learning process results and adjust the target marks of the study courses. However, a similar picture was shown by the academic performance of students of all three levels of educational programs of all six faculties with more or less progress. A complete picture will be available after the end of the autumn examination session.

There is a different picture in the data of the study results analyzed by the relevant services of the Faculty of Medicine, namely:

✓ One-stage: the analysis of the indicators of the autumn semester of the 2021-2022 academic year revealed: The average rate of grade Excellent (A) in the final exams is 44%, while the avarege of failure in the exams (FX) – 7 %.

✓ One-stage: the analysis of the indicators of the spring semester of the 2021-2022 academic year revealed: The average rate of grade Excellent (A) in the final exams is 37%, while the avarege of failure in the exams (FX) – 6 %.

✓ Master's degree: the analysis of the indicators of the autumn semester of the 2021-2022 academic year revealed: The average rate of grade Excellent (A) in the final exams is 62%, while the avarege of failure in the exams (FX) – 22 %.

✓ The analysis of the indicators of the spring semester of the 2021-2022 academic year revealed: The average rate of grade Excellent (A) in the final exams is 79%, while the avarege of failure in the exams

(FX) – 14 %.
- ✓ The analysis of the indicators of the autumn semester of the 2021-2022 academic year revealed: The average rate of grade Excellent (A) in the final exams is 39%, while the avarege of failure in the exams (FX) – 40 %.
- ✓ The analysis of the indicators of the spring semester of the 2021-2022 academic year revealed: The average rate of grade Excellent (A) in the final exams is 48%, while the avarege of failure in the exams (FX) – 28 %.

Based on the analyzes conducted at the Faculty of Medicine, radically different results are presented, according to which the average rate of failure in the exams is reduced at all three levels.

According to the assessment of the student's academic performance prepared by the **Faculty of Social and Political Sciences**, the data of the Gaussian curve integrated with the electronic system of learning process management was processed; therefore, in more than 100 courses, more than 40% of students have only "A" (excellent) grade, which is actually 4 -times higher than the Gaussian normal distribution.

In most of the analyzed study courses, the student's failure rate (Failed) is either very low or equal to zero. As for elective courses, in this case, a significant imbalance was observed in the case of individual bachelor's educational programs. To demonstrate the general assessment, the research team also presented specific cases, which were presented to the groups of educational program supporting committees for further response.

Analytical data were summarized for all three levels of educational programs, according to which:
- ✓ The average rate of grade "Excellent" (A) in the final exams for the bachelor's degree is 69%, and the average rate of failure in the exams (FX) is 3%;
- ✓ The average rate of grade Excellent (A) in the final exams of master's and doctoral degrees is 67 %, and the avarage rate of failure (FX) in the exams is 1%.

According to the given situation, the upper and lower indicators of learning outcomes are significantly different, which probably gives a difference in relation to the minimum limits of learning outcomes, which review and study will be mandatory for all educational programs accredited in the last period.

It was important to study the target marks of the study courses of the educational programs of the Faculty of Exact and Natural Sciences, within which: Bachelor's educational programs: geography, geology, chemistry, physics, Master's educational programs: physical geography and sustainable development of the environment, geomorphology, cartography and landscape planning, geology, chemistry, and chemical expertise were analyzed. In addition, all accredited educational programs are under development. According to the already processed data, the highest rate was observed in the Bachelor's educational program- physics - 97%, and the lowest for the Bachelor's educational program geography - 62.3%. For those educational programs where the achievement of the target marks is low, program changes are prepared by the committees supporting the educational programs. As for graduate education programs, the targets were achievable according to the analyses.
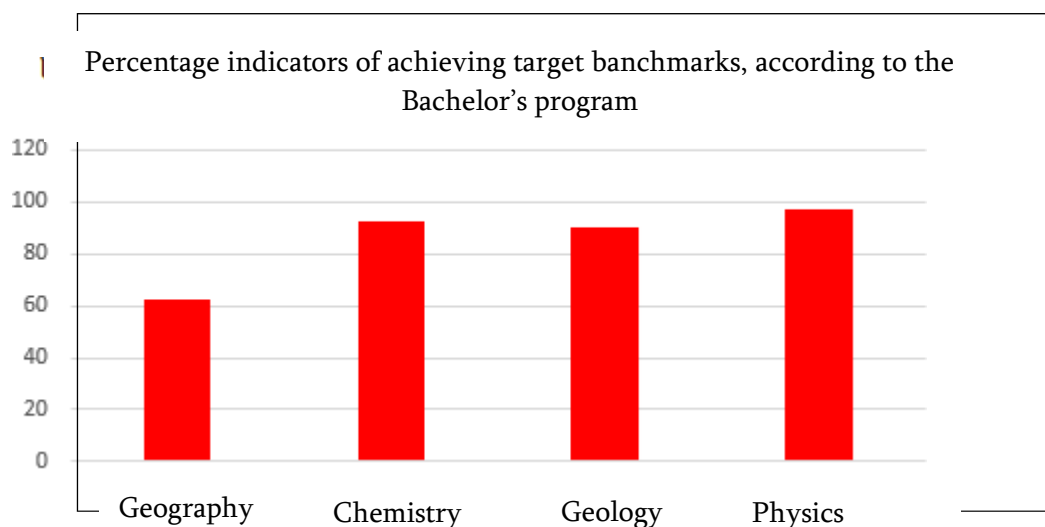
Graph 6: Analysis of Learning Outcome Targets for Undergraduate Education Programs

One of the important challenges of the reporting period can be considered to be the setting of an effective measure for improving the results of the educational process, which, as mentioned above, as a result of the verification and comparison of different data, shows non-homogenous results based on the analysis of both faculty and program results. For example, Suppose there is a deterioration of the learning outcomes in individual educational programs after continuing to study in the lecture-hall, on the other hand, in such educational programs, where in the practical and clinical study courses, the academic performance in the training process was purposefully planned, which is relevant and confirms the alignment with the target marks written for the study courses.

The present report does not present the analysis of the learning results of the Faculty of Humanities because the faculty plans to prepare common comparative studies after the differentiated analysis of cluster data, based on which it will be possible to identify the areas that promote the development of the academic processes of the fields, as well as the areas for improvement.

In the reporting period of 2023, the trienniel self-assessment report of all programs accredited in 2020 will be prepared first. During the submission process, special importance will be given to the analysis of the minimum limits of individual study courses and the corresponding adjustment, which is assigned an essential role in the development of the educational program. Already accredited educational programs within a specific methodology's framework will also be evaluated.

2.1.4. Survey of students, academic and invited staff

Surveys of students, academic and invited staff, employers, and graduates play an important role in a higher educational institution, which is an important mechanism for monitoring and planning further activities in the educational system. The quality assurance service of the university, in cooperation with the relevant services of the faculty, annually updates research tools, including different types of

thematic questionnaires. For surveys, the service actively uses the electronic portal of university educational processes, as well as corporate e-mail, telephone surveys, social networks and other media. Specific targeted research and relevant analyzes that are purposefully conducted are published on the service's website and are also shared with target groups.

Special importance is given to the evaluation of the study courses by the students, which allows continuous monitoring of the learning and research process. In this process, we are dealing with feedback tools, which have at least two essential tasks: on the one hand, the results are reported to the authors of the study courses themselves, and on the other hand, based on the aggregated data, it is possible to determine the quality of learning and teaching according to the study courses, as a result of which the target learning marks will also be controled, which allows for the determination and planning of specific measures to improve the teaching and research processes.

During the reporting period, within the framework of cluster accreditation, reseraches were renewed, the data of which were processed in a cluster manner by the research group, and the results of which, at a later stage, will be subject to detailed analysis and discussion in order to further develop the given processes.

Issues of internal and external quality evaluation of educational programs are prepared directly by the program committee and faculty quality assurance services, which means reseraches based on the specificity of the faculty, field or direction in the research process. Cooperation between faculties and departments deepens the culture and awareness of quality, as well as the self-responsibility of the university community.

During the reporting period, research was actively carried out within the framework of external evaluation of educational programs. Cooperation with the quality assurance services of the faculties has shown that a realistic picture of the surveys is created when the committees supporting educational programs themselves carry out research in relation to the educational program, and their analysis is carried out by a research group that has developed a specific methodology for research, uses the most comprehensive research tools, which, on the one hand, implies not only the sectoral specificity of the educational program but, on the other hand, the innovations of the educational space and the latest challenges in the field.

In the reporting period, taking into account a number of important innovations, researches were more or less successfully conducted within the framework of educational programs. The most numerous surveys were carried out at the faculties of humanities and psychology and educational sciences, as well as economics and business. The following was prepared and analyzed within the service:

- ✓ Research by academic, scientific and invited staff;
- ✓ Student Satisfaction Survey.

A detailed analysis of the results of such surveys gives the institution the opportunity to verify and improve its already developed control mechanisms, on the basis of which new approaches and strategies are also developed to strengthen the best aspects of the educational and research processes.

The results of the student satisfaction survey prepared during the reporting period were processed with a specific methodology; in particular, a population-based/Census-based approach was used within the

scope of the survey; the Learning Process Management System (LMS) of TSU was involved in the research; Participation in the survey was voluntary. The purpose of the survey was to determine the satisfaction of students regarding the quality of education received at the university and to evaluate various university services. The research instrument was a quantitative research questionnaire. 885 students participated in the survey. The response rate is 3.5% (out of a total of 25,252 active students), which is a 0.3% increase compared to last year. The survey was conducted for 20 days (17.08.2022-05.09.2022), and the procedure of conducting the survey and data processing was centralized and implemented by the Quality Assurance Service of TSU (full research document, see the website1 of the service).

The main findings of the research results were:

- Students' satisfaction with the level of education received at the university is higher than average;
- The level of student's satisfaction in relation to the organization of the educational process, the quality of teaching, the relevance of the content of the educational programs to the labour market, the qualifications of the staff, the objectivity-transparency of the assessment and the support services for students is higher than avarage;
- The results of the education received at the university are more or less in line with the expectations of half of the students (49.8%) and completely in line with the expectations of 31.1%;
- 44.7% of the respondents still plan to continue their studies at TSU, and approximately 52.2% - would advise other applicants to enrol at TSU;
- Students receive information about university services (educational, research, cultural, sports and other events at the university) mainly through the website, e-mail, LMS account of TSU and peers;
- The level of student satisfaction with the resources and services offered by the university library is high.

Accordingly, areas to be improved were identified, namely,

- the need to increase hours of practical training and practice (internship);
- Active use of modern technologies in the teaching process, maintenance of technical equipment (infrastructure) of lecture-halls, insufficient number of research laboratories and their quality, increasing the efficiency of career planning services, issues of LMS, Internet and lecture schedule (table) organization, etc.

These issues are also active in the process of (re)accreditation of individual educational programs, not only on the session of students and graduates but also for academic and invited staff, about which informed university administration carries out individual effective activities.

Along with student satisfaction surveys, academic, scientific and invited staff surveys were also conducted, according to the methodology of which the survey was also prepared with Population-based/Census-based approaches. Online questionairre (google form) was provided by the email of TSU.

---

[1] About the university research: https://tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/%E1%83%90%E1%83%9C%E1%83%90%E1%83%9A%E1%83%98%E1%83%96%E1%83%98

Participation in the survey was also voluntary in this case.

The purpose of the survey was to determine the satisfaction, needs and problems of academic, invited and scientific staff of TSU. The research instrument was a research questionnaire. 410 (total 3055 personnel) respondents took part in the survey, which is 13.4% of the response rate. The survey was conducted for 21 days (20.07.2022-09.08.2022). Research and data processing was done centrally by the Quality Assurance Service of TSU.

According to the main results of the research:

–   The vast majority of academic staff, in addition to scientific-research activities, additionally performs works (expert/consulting services, etc.);

–   Factors focused on personal/professional realization or development and interesting work were named among the important factors stimulating work at the university;

–   The factors causing dissatisfaction of the academic community of the university are mainly the bad maintenance of the teaching and research material-technical base of the university, the relatively low quality of involvement of the academic staff in the management process of the university, and the financing of internal projects and researches;

–   Issues for improvement were defined: teaching/assessment methods and approaches, uniform syllabus format, etc., as well as salary policy;

–   Additionally, the list of activities supported by the university included: qualification-raising events, such as trainings, scientific conferences, seminars and workshops conducted by foreign experts and colleagues, in which academic, scientific and visiting personnel were actively involved.

It is important that in both researches, the issue of improving the infrastructure and material-technical base of the university and the actual connection with the teaching and research processes was highlighted. The present issue is so relevant and noteworthy that its review is an urgent and necessary issue for the university management since the institution should actively engage in the new phase of authorization in the new reporting period.

2.1.5. Changes in the procedure of planning and development, evaluation and development of educational programs

In the reporting period, the institution faced a number of innovations and challenges, which were first of all related to the topic of active cluster accreditations within the framework of international standards. In the Georgian educational space, it was planned step gradually and with the active involvement of higher educational institutions, the discussion of cluster accreditation procedures and methodology and mandatory normative documents was underway. The qualification framework and adjusted accreditation processes already established in the educational space, or methodically changed procedures put the issue of revision of the university regulation and its compatibility with the new situation on the agenda. However, this in turn did not mean replacing existing documents with updated and edited versions. The quality service of the university considered it most important to introduce changes in the procedure of planning and development, evaluation and development of educational

programs, within which the description of the procedure for supporting educational programs within the framework of cluster accreditation was named as a necessary condition to be discussed. Due to the fact that the educational program is in constant development due to the modern instant development process of the fields, which is also conditioned by the active ongoing changes in the education system. The educational program and its development should not only be accessible, but also understandable to all interested persons who participate in the implementation of the educational program. In fact, the tasks and functions of the committee supporting educational programs in the university are expanding even more, in particular, the specific conditions changed under the conditions of cluster accreditation introduced certain topics that should be reflected in the activities of the abovementioend committees. Due to the new challenges, the issues of separate topical data collection and primary processing methodology shall be added to the activities of the education program committees, such as:

- Obtaining and classifying data prior to labour and employment market research;
- Targeted study and analysis of educational program changes;
- Processing of learning results and cluster analysis;
- Preparation of the program portfolio within the cluster;
- Committee work protocol;
- The procedure for canceling the educational program.

Five main topics are related to the cluster accreditation process, after the completion of which the results according to the presented clusters will be studied, and generalized university procedures and recommendations will be prepared based on the comparative analysis. As for the fourth topic, which was prepared for existing processes, it will be revised and filled after all the procedures related to the cluster accreditation process are developed. Within the framework of cluster accreditation, the cooperation of the supporting committees of the educational programs within the cluster group has become mandatory based on a specific concept, which will further strengthen the internal faculty horizontal and vertical cooperation. The updated procedure for compiling the program portfolio will also be based on cluster accreditation requirements. In 2022, 26 program committees were involved in the process of internal evaluation of educational programs (including: Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences - 2, Faculty of Economics and Business - 3, Faculty of Law - 1, Faculty of Exact and Natural Sciences - 2 committees, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences - 2, humanitarian sciences - 16). The supporting committees of the program had to work in an updated format, they collected and classified basic statistical documents, prepared and/or updated portfolios of educational programs (151), developed analytical methodology and procedure recommendations.

2.1.6. Student participation in quality assurance mechanisms

The quality assurance service has close cooperation with the students of the educational programs of the Department of Educational Sciences, who have the opportunity to transfer theoretical knowledge to practical processes to strengthen the acquired knowledge. In 2022, 4 masters participated in the internship process, whose involvement coincided with the cluster accreditation process. The accreditation, research and evaluation division of the quality assurance service planned the participation of interns-students, and the main topic of their activity was defined. The explanation of the work topics of the division, distribution and deadlines for submitting assignments preceded the

students' involvement. The following issues were prepared by the students and submitted to the department for consideration:

- Production of study and work schedule;
- Philosophy of Bachelor's, Master's and doctoral educational programs, claster analysis and commenting of portfolio;
- General and applied linguistics of master's educational program, cluster analysis and commenting of the accreditation portfolio;
- Medieval Christian Eastern of Master's educational program cluster analysis and commenting of the accreditation portfolio;
- 1-10.10 2022 Active involvement in the work of the organizing committee of the international seminar "Quality Assurance: Challenges and Prospects";
- Updating and editing the database for internal use of educational programs;
- Internal consumption base analysis - 2018-2022 classification of (re)accredited educational programs;
- Finding and processing statistical data for the self-assessment report for the preparation of the contingent of TSU students; finding and classifying mandatory annexes for argumentation;
- Revision and preparation of the accreditation portfolio of Psychology and cultural personality, psychological anthropology and migration studies of doctoral educational program;
- Philology of bachelor's educational program, cluster analysis and commenting of the accreditation portfolio;
- Kartvelian Lingusitics of master' s educational program, cluster analysis and commenting of the accreditation portfolio;
- EUA IEP - editing the English version of the external evaluation report;
- Evaluation and formation of learning outcomes of the educational program of the university regulation, preparation of English translation;
- Systematization of the decisions of the Accreditation Council of Higher Educational Programs for accredited educational programs in 2020-21 and analysis of the recommendations reflected in them;

Quality assurance issues involve not only students participating in educational program practice but also students who are members of educational program support committees, whose periodic rotation allows more and more students to be involved in educational program development and multilateral functioning.

There is another group of students in the university who are involved in evaluating educational programs. In particular, they participate in self-assessment of programs and meet with accreditation experts involved in the external evaluation of programs. Their selection is made blindly by the relevant services of the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement. Based on the combination of all the activities mentioned above, it is planned to expand the participation of students' participation in quality assurance mechanisms.

2.1.7. For the study, commenting and discussion of normative documents

The quality assurance service of the university, by consolidating its own experience and expert

resources in the university space, plays an important role in introducing and supporting innovations and changes implemented in the education system. Innovations are supported by industry experts from within the university and beyond and shared with the wider community at seminars and workshops. Furthermore, the active cooperation of quality assurance service with the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement helps to transfer and spread the innovations introduced in the educational space to the university space. During the reporting period, the quality assurance service of the university actively cooperated with the university's sectoral, education and authorization experts in various formats. In addition, it continuously worked on quality assurance documents developed by internal and external actors and presented by international institutions.

The quality assurance service of the university studied and shared the new regulatory documents at the workshops in the university space:

- ✓ Cluster accreditation standards of higher education programs;
- ✓ Cluster accreditation procedures;
- ✓ Cluster accreditation self-assessment document and attached annexes;
- ✓ Additional regulations developed for cluster accreditation.

With the high activity, involvement and leadership of the academic staff of the university, the sectoral characteristics of higher education are prepared for the following areas:

- Art
- Conflictology
- Stomatology

Recommendations and advice developed by the university's field experts and quality assurance service were shared with internal and external actors for further action. In addition, the institution was actively involved in the public review of updated and recommended documents.

2.2. External quality assurance

External quality assurance is considered important by the quality assurance service of the university, which contributes to raising the quality culture in the institution: Teaching, research, services and management, developing the third mission of the university and improving their quality. Periodic evaluation of the institution's effectiveness and, thus, the effective management of the institution is largely determined by the development of a complete and tested internal quality assurance mechanism adapted to the institution. Proper and targeted internal quality assurance processes largely determine the perfect management of the external quality assurance process and accurate results. Therefore, external quality assurance at Tbilisi State University develops in two directions:

- Cycle of external formative assessments in the university;
- Preparation for the process of (re)accreditation of educational programs.

2.2.1. The cycle of external formative assessments in the university

In the reporting period, the institution planned an external formative assessment for the educational programs included in the cluster accreditation format. However, the educational programs were also submitted to the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement in an individual manner. Institutional expert resources were mobilized to fully realize the new format of accreditation, which resulted in the change of several documents, procedures and specific processes initiated in the assessment processes.

In the reporting period, the quality assurance service of the university planned a targeted reprocessing of programs for accreditation, including:
- In the format of individual accreditation (new or purposely prepared educational programs);
- In the format of cluster accreditation (educational programs of all three levels, or at least two levels, which were planned to be considered within the same code of the qualification framework);

Based on the actual situation, the institution did not initiate the external evaluation in 2022, primarily due to new and busy procedures, completely updated, modified documents and edited regulations of accreditation processes based on the essence of cluster accreditation.

2.2.2. The process of (re)accreditation of educational programs in the university

The (re)accreditation process was prepared in two important directions in 2022; on the one hand, evaluation processes of new educational and educational programs with special needs were planned, and on the other hand, cluster groups were classified, and faculties prepared action plans for the preparation of cluster accreditation. In addition, the program's supporting committees were actively involved in the evaluation process and have accumulated significant experience since 2018.

The present process in the university is not a one-time process; It is offered in different forms in the university space. Moreover, the present processes are of a wide profile, in which the accreditation, evaluation and analysis department of the university's quality assurance service, faculty quality assurance services, program accreditation experts employed in various structural units of the university, persons implementing educational programs, students and other interested parties participate.

The procedures developed for the cluster reaccreditation process, the replacement of legislative and regulatory documents, the expiring mode of accreditation terms of educational programs, as well as the requirements of academic initiative groups became the basis for the preparation of both individual and cluster accreditation portfolios of 71 educational programs of the university (see Annex 1):
- For accreditation - 13 new educational programs (including - 2 bachelor's degrees: computer science (Georgian-French), European studies (within the framework of the Jean-Monnett project); 7 master's degrees: Eurasia and Caucasus studies, digital media and innovations, conflictology (on the basis of changes in the qualification framework), Policy Analysis and Public Policy, Finance (ISET), National Security Policy in Public Administration (EMBA), Vocational Education and Human Resource Development; 4 PhD.: Social Work, Psychological Anthropology, Cultural Personality and Migration Studies, Vocational Education (in the Education Cluster), psychology);

- For reaccreditation - 8 educational programs (including - 3 bachelor's programs: philosophy, social work, sociology; 3 master's programs: philosophy, social work, sociology; 2 doctoral programs: philosophy, social work). A foreign expert evaluated three educational programs from the present educational programs within the framework of cluster (philosophy) accreditation;
- Prepared within the cluster accreditation and is undergoing different phases of the accreditation process: 7 out of 9 sectoral clusters at the Faculty of Humanities (History-Archaeology: 2 Bachelor's, 5 Master's and 1 PhD; Philology: 1 Bachelor's, 5 Master's and 1 PhD; European Languages and Translation: 3 BA, 4 MA; Oriental Languages: 5 BA, 3 MA; Classical and Romance Languages: 6 BA, 2 MA; Slavic Languages and Translation: 2 BA, 3 MA; Oriental Studies and Caucasology: 4 BA, 4 MA;). In total, 23 bachelor's degrees, 26 master's degrees, and two doctoral degrees were prepared. Five new bachelor's educational programs were also presented in the cluster: Hebrew Studies, Spanish Studies, Italian Studies, Far East: Sinology, and Far East: Japanese Studies.
- For submission of a triennial report - 5 educational programs (including one master's degree (migration studies), 1 Georgian language training and 3 doctoral programs (business administration, European studies, archaeology);
- For submission of a report on the recommendations of the Accreditation Council - 8 educational programs (1 bachelor's degree: political science, seven master's degrees: gender research, diplomacy and international politics, psychology, educational psychology, work and organizational psychology, applied social psychology, psychological assessment and counselling of children and adolescents, psychology of influence and communication);

In the reporting period of 2022, 4 new foreign language programs (European studies, finance, professional education and human resources development (master's) and doctoral educational program professional education) and one educational program with foreign language components (computer science - Georgian-French) were planned and prepared. In addition, in 2023, the doctoral education program in Dentistry will be submitted for accreditation. The work performed by the quality assurance service is presented in the form of an independent matrix.

2.2.3. Base of educational programs

The university's quality assurance service has prepared a database of educational programs for internal use, which is periodically updated following individual changes. This database is updated periodically after completing a separate phase of external evaluation. Apart from that, the database is edited four times a year concerning the relevant database of the National Education Management Information System and the National Center For Educational Quality Enhancement 2 times a year. In 2022, another requisite was added to the present database, which records the dates of the term of cluster accreditation of educational programs. In 2023, the database of educational programs will be edited with relevant new fields, such as:
- Deadlines for submission of triennial interim reports;
- Deadlines for submitting the report following the resolution of the Council of Accreditation of Educational Programs.Based on this database, the catalogue of educational programs is

constantly updated on the website of the service[2].

3. About institutional development

Higher educational institutions have an integral role and mission in the country's development in generating and sharing the latest knowledge within the framework of teaching and research. The university community, with its achievements, experience and best practices, creates a national and international profile of the country, which is part of the mission and value of the university and is reflected in the strategic development plan. The current innovations in the global world and, accordingly, in the modern educational system unconditionally require a review and gradual change of the starting provisions, tasks and goals of institutional development so that the university, with its concept and philosophy, with a high-quality culture of teaching and learning, research, services and management, approaches the high-tech academic established in the modern world. Processes to participate in international academic processes as the first among equals (primus inter pares) to receive and share experience.

Based on the existing Western experience and best practices, within its competence, the quality assurance service coordinates individual processes in the university, studies, collects and analyzes various types of information, compares the processes in the institution with international analogues and, within the framework of regular institutional evaluation, determines specific topical issues and problems, develops and plans relevant activities.

During the reporting period, the work carried out by the service in the direction of institutional development includes the following issues:
- Evaluation of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University by the evaluation team of European University Association Institutional Evaluation Program (EUA IEP);
- About the evaluation of the strategic development plan of the university;
- Involvement of the quality assurance service in international projects related to the development/strengthening of such areas as: the development of institutional capacities; Strengthening the quality and relevance of third mission activities; the development of the directions provided by the strategic plan; strengthening of staff capacity;
- Staff development;
- News in the Professional Education Center;
- Cooperation with quality assurance services of the faculty;
- Website of the University Quality Assurance Service.

3.1. Evaluation of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University by the evaluation team of the European University Association Institutional Evaluation Program (EUA IEP)

---

[2] https://tsu.ge/assets/media/files/65/Quality_Assurance/TSU_programebis_catalogi_2019-2020.pdf last updated:.2022

In 2022, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University was evaluated by the evaluation team off Europea University Association Institutional Evaluation Program (EUA IEP). Obtaining the abovementioned evaluation is determined by the 7-year strategic development plan of TSU.

The European University Association Institutional Evaluation Program (EUA IEP) is an external quality assurance agency that evaluates higher education institutions (HEIs). It has been in existence for 27 years and has evaluated 430 universities in 50 countries of the world. The mentioned institutional evaluation includes the evaluation of the full scope of activities of higher education institutions, namely management, teaching and learning, research, quality culture, the third mission (contributing to the development of society) and internationalization. The evaluation is voluntary, which means it is carried out at the request of higher education institutions. Evaluation is focused on development and improvement, and the process's main goal is to develop the management of SDS and introduce the necessary changes.

The Institutional Assessment Program is registered in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) and is a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

The self-assessment process was carried out by a ten-member group of TSU representing faculties and research institutes. The evaluation process began in October 2021 and involved creating several working groups. Emphasis was placed on the key areas defined in the self-assessment manual of the institutional assessment program: institutional governance and decision-making, quality culture, learning and teaching, etc. During the self-assessment period, the Quality Assurance Service of TSU acted as the coordinator of the process and performed important support work.

The group of experts studied the university's transparency, participation, openness, governance, finances, internationalization, decision-making processes, etc. It also assessed the third mission component, how the university helps society develop. During the visit, the expert evaluators of the Association of European Universities met with all the participants involved in university life: students, professors, administration, researchers or employers, and representatives of the educational policy-determining institutions in the country.

According to the group of experts, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, is the main reference point of the university sector of Georgia. It has an important role to continue to perform the leadership function in developing this sector. The group of experts presented recommendations and advice in the form of 29 points, which affected almost all directions of the university's activities3.

The Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University (TSU) evaluation by the institutional evaluation program will help the university identify its strengths and developing areas and define and implement a development plan. In addition, it is important that the university's achievements and high quality of education were recognized by an independent international agency created under the auspices of the European University Association.

For the next five years, the university can use the symbol "Evaluated by IEP" on its website and other information products, as well as in the graduate diploma supplement, which is another important way to attract international students and academic staff, to raise the awareness of the university and to increase the level of internationalization.

---

3 https://tsu.ge/assets/media/files/65/Quality_Assurance/Avtorizacia/IEP_report_Georgia_final_GEO_.pdf

Information about the institutional assessment of TSU is posted on the EQAR website, as well as on the website of the agency EUA IEP.

3.2. ABOUT THE EVALUATION OF THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN OF THE UNIVERSITY

The Quality Assurance Service has been submitting to the monitoring group (Rector's order No. 131/0101 of June 4, 2018, amendment of February 15, 2019, Order No. 46/01-01 of) created for the purpose of implementing the strategic development and action plan of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University the analysis of the implementation of the strategic plan for the fourth year now. The group aims to change and improve the strategic development plan of 2018-2024 of the university, monitor the implementation of the action plan and present relevant recommendations to the academic and representative councils. In the spring of 2022, the quality assurance service prepared a monitoring analysis of the work of the university's administrative units based on the annual reports submitted by them:

- ✓ Annual reports of administrative structures were submitted to the head of administration. A total of 21 structural units submitted a report;
- ✓ A strategic task coverage table was prepared based on the presented reports. In 2021, 70 out of 71 strategic tasks were covered (for comparison, 57 were covered in the previous year, i.e. 80%) (see Annex 2. Table of coverage of strategic plan items in reports). However, only the Faculty of Economics and Business presented the report from the main educational units. The reports of the faculties would make the picture of the coverage of the strategic tasks of the university more complete.
- ✓ Some of the reports were presented in the form determined by the monitoring methodology approved by the Academic Council on July 22, 2019; most of the reports listed the activities of the structural unit, did not indicate compliance with the goals of the strategic plan, which made it difficult to fully assess the work performed.

Based on the trends identified in the assessment, the quality assurance service developed recommendations:

1. Taking into account the global events taking place in the world in 2020 and the processes initiated under their influence, as well as the internal factors that appeared during the pandemic, it is recommended to re-analyze and modify the strategic plan of the university with the broad involvement of the university community;
2. It is recommended to include in the strategic plan those activities that reflect the development trends of the university and its structures in the coming years;
3. Using quantifiable, clear and measurable performance indicators for action plan activities is recommended.
4. For a full assessment of the implementation of the strategic development plan, it is recommended that the university faculties also present a report;
5. It is desirable to introduce software in the university, using which it will be possible to fully process and analyze the collected quantitative data. In this case, multifaceted quantitative information will be available to all internal stakeholders.

3.3. About the increase in the maximum number of students

Reportedly, with the start of the fall semester of 2022, the University's Quality Assurance Service began investigating the planning of the student intake quota. Based on data comparison, the total number of students was brought closer to the threshold in planning the new admission quota.

The quality service to the central and faculty administrations of the university provided analytical information. Based on the discussion, it was decided to start work to increase the maximum number of students, which was confirmed by the university's academic council. The work in this direction started at the end of September 2022; the information and quantitative data requested from various structural units of the university were collected and analyzed. Work on the self-assessment document was started in the quality assurance service to increase the maximum number of students, and a working version of the document was prepared. The main recommendation of the quality assurance service is to complete the mentioned process so that the university can receive the desired quota without limitation at the bachelor's, master's and doctoral levels.

3.4. Involvement of quality assurance service in international projects: development of institutional capacities; Strengthening the quality and relevance of third mission activities; development of directions provided by the strategic plan; building the capacity of staff

The quality assurance service of the university participates in various events and manages several projects in the direction of institutional development. Among them can be named:
- ✓ SQUARE: Strengthening the quality and relevance of third mission activities in Georgian universities (coordinator - TSU);
- ✓ LOTUS: EUA-funded project Leadership and Organization for Teaching and Learning at European Universities;
- ✓ TSU in the ranking systems of world universities;
- ✓ PROFFORMANCE: Assessment Tool and Incentive Systems for Developing Higher Education Teachers' Performance;
- ✓ Participation in the EUA thematic group "Student and staff needs and well-being";
- ✓ ARCC: British Council-funded project Assuming Responsibility for Climate Change;
- ✓ Assessment of institutional efficiency;
- ✓ INTEGRITY: Academic integrity for quality teaching and learning in higher educational institutions of Georgia - activities to ensure the sustainability of project results;
- ✓ Support the university's participation in international grant competitions;
- ✓ Participation in the "Bologna Hub Peer Support" project funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and Erasmus +.

3.4.1 SQUARE: Strengthening the quality and relevance of third mission activities in Georgian universities

The project "Strengthening the quality and compliance of the third mission in Georgian universities", prepared under the coordination of the Quality Assurance Service of Tbilisi State University, won

within the framework of the 2020 Erasmus+ Institutional Development Grant Projects (CBHE) competition. The fundamental function of the university is to contribute to the development of society along with teaching and research. This can be expressed in many ways: knowledge transfer, expertise, environmental protection measures, etc. The close connection and cooperation between the academy and society ultimately lead to society's development. The project aims to improve the importance and quality of the third mission in Georgian higher education institutions with the involvement of top management and structural units. Provide higher education institutions with methodology and guidelines for planning, implementing and evaluating their third mission. The project's final goal is to draw up a regulatory document based on which the role of the third mission at the national level is determined as a mandatory component of accreditation authorization.

8 Georgian and 3 European universities, the international accreditation agency EFMD, the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and the National Center for Education Quality Development are involved in the implementation of the project. The project is implemented under the coordination of Tbilisi State University.

It is worth noting that TSU is the first university in the country that actively started talking about the third mission and encouraged other universities to develop this component more. The project contributed to focusing attention on the third mission component during the inspection of institutions or programs by accreditation or authorization experts and thus gave a positive impetus to the activation of the main actors of higher education in the country in this direction. The achievement of the mentioned project is that the issue of the third mission has become part of the agenda of the Ministry of Education and Science and universities. Among them, it is worth noting the City Hall and the City Council of the Tbilisi Municipality, with whose representatives, within the framework of the project, active cooperation began to deepen the relations between the university and the city and to work together for common goals. The European members of the project consortium, together with the representatives of TSU, met with the heads of various structural units and commissions of Tbilisi City Council and City Hall and shared their European experience with them; In addition, the representatives of the Tbilisi Municipality paid a working visit to the Nantes Municipality within the framework of the project, where they got acquainted with the examples of cooperation with the university and once again expressed their readiness to create an ecosystem where the municipality will support the universities in the direction of the activities of the third mission.

It should be emphasized that external experts have evaluated the project at different times. Among them, in 2021, after the monitoring conducted by the regional office of Erasmus +1, it was noted that the project is of special importance for the country, and the coordinating institution perfectly manages its progress. Furthermore, a similar assessment was made during the external inspection of the quality of the project in 2022. As a result, once again, it was noted that the project fully meets the established requirements, follows the activities defined by the action plan and is necessary and relevant for the Georgian educational space. Information about the events carried out within the framework of the project is fully presented on the website of the project SQAURE4, as well as on the website of the quality assurance service of the university5. In addition, the activities carried out within the framework

---

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

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

of the project and the achieved progress is given in the annexe (Annex 2).

3.4.2. LOTUS: Leadership and Organization for Teaching and Learning at European Universities[6] – Project funded by EUA

Tbilisi State University implements a diverse spectrum of processes. Sharing of international experience is an important support for the effective execution of these processes. In this direction, the quality assurance service of TSU works especially actively, which prepares various project applications and participating in international competitions every year with additional efforts. Part of the competition provides funding for the university within the framework of a specific grant. Part of it involves providing TSU with additional opportunities to raise its awareness and bring recognition in various international arenas, development of institutional capabilities, etc. Sh. It should be noted that the service devotes appropriate time and human resources to the preparation of each project application, which in the end, mostly ends with a victory at the selection stage of international competitions and noting that the documentation submitted by TSU is always prepared with a special quality, highlighting the correct accents.

Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University participates in the European University Association (EUA) sponsored project - LOTUS (Leadership and Organization for Teaching and Learning at European Universities). European universities participating in the project were selected through an open competition based on their applications. The project's goal was to strengthen the capabilities of universities and develop and implement structured and systematic approaches to developing the quality of teaching and learning. Within the framework of the project, the universities worked on various priority issues related to the development of teaching and learning, such as the integration of teaching and research, professional development of professors and teachers, the introduction of student-oriented teaching and learning, and others. The project's goal was to help universities manage changes in the direction of the development of teaching and learning in the implementation of strategic priorities.

On November 28, 2022, a webinar was organised by the Association of European Universities, where the summary report of the grant project "Leadership and Organisation for Teaching and Learning at European Universities" (LOTUS) was presented. A recording of the webinar can be viewed on EUA's YouTube channel.

A summary report was also published. The report details the challenges facing higher education institutions in learning and teaching, emphasising student-centred learning, academic staff development, inter-institutional collaboration and digitalisation. The document also describes examples of practice and leadership in various HEIs, along with appropriate recommendations to address challenges. The report is available at the given link. The report's appendix describes the project's participating institutions, including **Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University**. The activities carried out within the framework of the project and the achieved progress is given in the Annex (Annex 3).

3.4.3. TSU in the ranking systems of world universities

---

[6] https://tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/LOTUS---Leadership-and-Organisation-for-Teaching-and-Learning-at-European-Universities

Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University participates in the following ranking systems: Times World Universities Ranking; U-multi rank - institutional and sectoral rankings; QS World University Rankings; QS Regional Rankings; Clarivate Analytics (which partners with the RUR Rankings and the U.S. News and World Report Global University Rankings). It should be noted that the data about scientific publications are obtained by the ranking systems from various scientific databases.

A high position in the ranking is a visiting card for the university in terms of cooperation with other universities in the international arena. The reputation gained through ranking also strengthens the university's position in the employment market. As a result of the long-term communication of the quality assurance service with the representatives of the ranking of Times World Universities (Times Higher Education) and the active support of the university administration, Tbilisi State University, starting from 2020, benefits from certain services of the Times. In particular, Tbilisi State University has access to the Times database, allowing it to monitor its progress in various directions and plan relevant events. In addition, the Times World University Rankings' representatives help the university take a better position in the international education market to increase its reputation and awareness.

In THE Ranking magazine (December 23, 2021 - January 5, 2022, p. 18), an article was published about the latest discovery of TSU archaeologists on Grakliani Hill. The article describes how the archaeological discovery of professors and students of Tbilisi State University changed the history of the past decades[7].

3.4.4. Project PROFFORMANCE: ASSESSMENT TOOL AND INCENTIVE SYSTEMS FOR DEVELOPING HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHERS' PERFORMANCE

Since 2019, the project PROFFORMANCE Assessment Tool and Incentive Systems for Developing Higher Education Teachers' Performance have been implemented with the co-financing of the European Commission and the partnership of the National Center for the Development of Education Quality. The project envisaged the development of a self-assessment tool and incentive system for staff involved in teaching at the higher education level. The project was implemented in 6 European countries: Hungary, the Czech Republic, Austria, Croatia, Serbia and Georgia.

The PROFFORMANCE project team has developed an initial version of a self-assessment tool for staff involved in teaching at the higher education level, which can be used in higher education institutions. During the reporting period, the piloting of this tool was in progress. As a potential user of this tool, Tbilisi State University participated in the pilot study. The pilot study was coordinated by the Quality Assurance Service of TSU. Feedback from universities will play an essential role in refining the self-assessment tool.

- 16 academic staff of different faculties and students of at least one of their study courses (42 students in total) participated in the piloting. The survey was anonymous. Piloting continued until the end of January 2022;
- There were 3 types of English-language anonymous questionnaires to fill in during piloting: Self-review for academic staff, Peer-review and Student-review for students. In addition, the necessary information for piloting was given in the instructions prepared by the project

---

[7] https://flipbooks.timeshighereducation.com/19712/66727/index.html?84317

coordinators;
- The perfect implementation of the piloting process was monitored by the faculties' heads of quality assurance services.

Quality Assurance staff attended Project PROFFORMANCE's informational meeting on piloting the teaching staff evaluation system and the final conference held in February and June 2022, respectively.

3.4.5. Participation in the EUA topic group "Student and staff needs and well-being"

Based on its application, Tbilisi State University Quality Assurance Service once again became a member of the thematic group of the European Universities Association (EUA). TSU is the only university from Georgia that, together with 31 European universities, participates in the work of the 2022 EUA thematic groups (TPG). The target audience for TPGs is university staff in leadership and management positions with institutional responsibility for learning and teaching[8].

The 2022 round (March 2022 - February 2023) is organized within the framework of the DIGI-HE project (A Strategic Reflection Tool on Digitalisation at European Higher Education Institutions) and focuses on the following three themes:
- The role of teachers equipped with digital skills in the formation of a quality learning environment;
- Cooperative learning experience;
- The needs and welfare of students and staff.

The thematic group "Need and Wellbeing of students and staff", with representatives of the leading universities of Great Britain, Austria, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Switzerland and Finland, worked for a year in the direction of sharing experience and developing recommendations.

The first coordination meeting of the thematic groups was held on March 15, 2022, in a remote format. The group members presented their institutions and set cooperation plans regarding the meetings' frequency, format and duration. As agreed by the group members, they met twice a month and discussed innovative practices and digitally enhanced approaches, using examples from their institutions. It should be noted that the examples presented by TSU were recognized as best practices by the group. A working report was prepared by the thematic group, the main findings of which were presented at the European Quality Assurance Forum.

3.4.6. ARCC: A project funded by the British Council „Assuming Responsibility for Climate Change"

In 2021-2022, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University participated in the British Council-funded project - arCc (Assuming Responsibility for Climate Change), in which 14 partner universities from 13 countries of the world were involved.

---

[8] https://tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/EUA-თემატური-ჯგუფი--სტუდენტებისა-და-პერსონალის-საჭიროებები-და-კეთილდღეობა-

The project aimed to bring together representatives from different countries and disciplines around joint initiatives focusing on the environment, taking responsibility for climate change and reducing it. Universities participating in the project exchanged their experience and resources by preparing webinars and micro-courses and involving students in the project.

As part of the project, a poster competition was held in 2022, where students had to present reflections on personal accountability and responsibility concerning climate change.

The commission summarized the results of the competition and announced the winner. Each participant was awarded a certificate, and the winner was given a cash prize.

3.4.7. ASSESSMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS (RESEARCH ON WAGE SYSTEMS)

The quality assurance service of Tbilisi State University, in cooperation with relevant structural units, periodically carries out targeted studies in the direction of institutional development, which creates the basis for evidence-based decision-making. An example is the project initiated by the Quality Assurance Service and the Department of Personnel Management in the direction of payroll systems research, which combined several stages. Within the framework of the research, at the first stage, an analysis of the scientific-research literature on the compensation systems of higher educational institutions was performed, taking into account the international best practices, to identify the characteristics and structure of the effective compensation system of the academic staff. The second stage of the project involved the analysis of the salary system of TSU and the assessment of the attitude and mood of the academic staff towards it. At this stage, objective data about the salary system of the academic staff at the university were analyzed, based on which it was possible to identify the differences between the faculties and observe various trends. The report consists of two parts:

- Research on higher education academic staff salary systems;
- A study of attitudes of university academic staff, as well as objective data.

With the support and involvement of the Quality Assurance Service and the Department of Personnel Management, Professor Ia Kutaladze of the Institute of Labor and Organizational Psychology of the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences and Assistant Professor of the same institute Nino Tsulaia worked on this research. As a result, this study was handed over to the TSU administration for further response.

3.4.8. Measure for project sustainability: INTEGRITY - academic integrity for quality teaching and learning in Georgian higher education institutions - activities to ensure sustainability of project results.

The institutional development project INTEGRITY funded by Erasmus+, was completed in 2020. Therefore, the ongoing activities during the reporting year mainly served to maintain the project results, which means the regular holding of pieces of training, various work or informational meetings, awareness raising, and, at the same time, financial support from the university for the purchase/renewal of Turnitin licenses.

On February 19, 2022, International Anti-Plagiarism Day was celebrated at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University[9]. In connection with Plagiarism Prevention Day, an online meeting was held with

---

[9] https://www.tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/ტრენინგები-და-შეხვედრები--Integrity-

TSU PhD students and young scientists within the framework of the Erasmus Institutional Development Program project "Academic Integrity for Quality Teaching and Learning in Georgian Higher Educational Institutions" (INTEGRITY) at the initiative of TSU Quality Assurance Service.

Within the scope of the event:
- Doctoral students were provided with information about the university's academic integrity policy and available resources;
- Georgian graduates of European higher education institutions shared their experience in the direction of plagiarism prevention;
- The chairperson of TSU Dissertation Council, Ketevan Khutsishvili, spoke on the topic of how a doctoral candidate goes from passing to defending the dissertation topic;
- Head of National Scientific Library of TSU, Nino Pavliashvili spoke about library resources and services supporting academic integrity.

At the end of the meeting, a discussion was held on the topic of protecting academic integrity and preventing plagiarism, during which the individual needs and questions of doctoral students were discussed. More than 120 PhD students registered for the event.

The 2022-2023 INTEGRITY sustainability sction plan was developed10.

The Turnitin program was first embedded into the Moodle system on July 6, 2018. On the initiative of the TSU quality assurance service, from July 2020, the university purchased 9,000 Turnitin licenses for a period of 3 years, with the right to 100,000 uploads annually; Licenses are used on the electronic portal e-learning.tsu.ge to check the similarity of assignments/examination papers of different courses, as well as bachelor's, master's and doctoral theses.

During the reporting period, about 7,000 training courses have been uploaded to the Moodle electronic learning platform and are currently active. Turnitin is activated in 6028 courses on the Moodle platform. All assignments uploaded to these courses are checked for plagiarism.

3.4.9. Support of the university's participation in international grant competitions

On the initiative of the quality assurance service, in cooperation with the relevant administrative structures of the university, the procedure 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 the mentioned rule was to ensure the high quality, reliability, and effectiveness of the projects implemented on behalf of the university and with its involvement, compliance with the priorities and needs of the university; Assistance in the systematization of grant applications for the university, control and prevention of non-productive expenses. According to the rule, the requirements that the international grant application must meet to be submitted on behalf of the university or for the university to be involved in the project as one of the participants were defined. Later, the functions of the commission were added to the holding of periodic meetings with the coordinators of ongoing projects with the involvement of the university, the purpose of which was to support the participants

---

[10] tsu.ge/assets/media/files/65/Quality_Assurance/Shida_Usrunvelyofa/Projects/Integrity_Docs/Action_Plan_2022-2023_GEO.pdf

of the international grant project, to ensure the implementation of the activities defined by the Tbilisi State University project and the achievement of the project goals.

In 2022, at the initiative of the Quality Assurance Service of TSU, it was included in the said order changes (Order 1/04, 12/01/2022). In particular, the list of Erasmus+ programs was filled, and the direction of professional education was added. Furthermore, the composition of the commission composed of the heads of various administrative structural units was re-approved (order 4/01-01, 14/01/2022), which evaluates the project within the scope of its competence, including the quality assurance service, the finance department, the department of external relations, the department of scientific research and development, Personnel Management Department, Legal Department. In 2022, at the initiative of the Quality Assurance Service of TSU, it was included in the said order. The commission will consider the projects submitted by the person/group of persons submitting the grant application in the form approved by the order. The mentioned procedure contributes to the high quality of the projects implemented on behalf of the university/with the involvement of the university and their compliance with the priorities and needs of the university. It also prevents the university from making the kind of commitments that might prove problematic while supporting applicants through advice and recommendations.

In the reporting year, 14 applications were considered for submission to the current competition, of which 2 were Jean Monnet project applications and 12 were Erasmus + (KA2 – Capacity Building in Higher Education). The commission held meetings in January-February 2022. In parallel, personal consultations and additional support mechanisms were offered to applicants.

It is worth noting that among the projects presented in 2022, the project "Responsible Conduct of Research, Integrity, and Ethics in Georgian Universities (ETHICS)" with the participation of the Quality Assurance Service won funding. The project is a conceptual continuation of INTEGRITY, and its goal is to strengthen the research component of doctoral programs in Georgian higher educational institutions. In particular, to promote improving the quality of research products offered and implemented in higher education institutions to avoid cases of academic misconduct and the implementation of such literary work or research that lacks originality.

To ensure high-quality research, the main goals of the project are:
1. To introduce research ethics mechanisms;
2. To strengthen the issues of academic integrity for representatives/researchers of the academic field in doctoral programs;
3. Clarify and clearly explain the regulation of plagiarism in doctoral program accreditation standards to ensure the implementation of innovative research and the protection of research ethics issues based on research integrity and supported by appropriate policies, structures, mechanisms, tools and processes.

3.4.10. Participation in the "Bologna Hub Peer Support" project funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and Erasmus+

The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) is implementing the "Bologna Hub Peer Support" project with Erasmus+ funding. The project aims to promote the implementation of the primary

obligations of the Bologna Process in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Within the framework of the project, Bologna experts will provide consultations to higher education institutions taking into account their specific needs, thus implementing the mission of Bologna experts' collegial support.

According to the application, 30 universities from the following countries were selected to participate in the project: Spain, France, Germany, Sweden, Poland, Austria, Albania, Ukraine, Estonia, Kazakhstan, and Georgia. In addition, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University (TSU) is among the selected universities.

Based on the application form of the TSU quality assurance service and subsequent consultations, the main work directions were identified, namely student-oriented teaching and TSU internationalization strategy. An expert from Bologna, professor emeritus of Salzburg University G. Aberman, an expert of the European space of higher education from Austria[11].

The project included two consulting visits. The first visit was held on June 23 and 25, 2021, through the Zoom platform. Professor Aberman conducted two workshops - on student-centred learning and internationalization for TSU academic and administrative staff. The second consultation visit was held face-to-face on June 27, 2022. During the visit, Professor Aberman held two meetings on the same topics. During the meeting, work was carried out on what exactly student-oriented teaching means for TSU, how this principle is implemented, what directions of internationalization are relevant for TSU, and how to write an internationalization strategy and action plan.

3.5. Personnel development (seminars, trainings)

Supporting the professional development of academic staff is one of the priorities of the quality assurance service. In 2022, within the framework of the quality assurance service, consultations were continued with the interested groups of various faculties of the university, namely:

- Development of educational program (May);
- Evaluation of educational program results (May).

3.5.1. International seminar "Internal quality assurance: perspectives and challenges"

"Internal Quality Assurance: Perspectives and Challenges" - a seminar on this topic was held at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. The representatives of the universities of Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine and Ireland, and the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement of Georgia participated in the event. The seminar was of great importance for developing the education system in the direction of quality assurance. Specialists from different countries participate in the workshop.[12]

Irish internal quality assurance model, doctoral education quality assurance and online teaching quality assurance issues were discussed at the seminar. The director of the quality assurance service, of Limerick (Irland) univesity, Sh. O'Saliavan noted that the workshop is essential in terms of sharing experiences. According to him, the Irish specialists and their Georgian and Ukrainian colleagues will

---

[11] https://eu.daad.de/medien/eu.daad.de.2016/dokumente/programme-und-hochschulpolitik/bologna-prozess/abermann_cv_eng_2020.pdf

[12] https://tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/საერთაშორისო-სემინარი--ხარისხის-შიდა-უზრუნველყოფა--პერსპექტივები-და-გამოწვევები-

discuss the issues in this regard in a working format.

At the seminar, representatives of different universities shared their experiences, especially after the pandemic, what challenges the universities faced, and the future prospects for this cooperation. In addition, European colleagues shared with us their experience of internal quality assurance procedures and challenges and perspectives on establishing a quality culture with the support of external actors (we mean quality development agencies) and within the institution itself. It is significant and crucial that the seminar was attended by the Secretary General of the European University Association, as well as the head of the Doctoral Education Council of the European University Association, who spoke about the experience, challenges and perspectives of European universities, as well as the affairs of the doctoral school.

The quality assurance service of the university pays a lot of attention to the role of TSU in the development of society and the contribution made by the university in the relevant directions within the framework of the third mission. Within the framework of the third mission, the service realized the consequences of the ongoing Russian hostilities in Ukraine and the need for support for Ukrainian colleagues, applied to the *European Academy* and obtained funding, based on which 5 Ukrainian colleagues were allowed to attend the seminar. Taras Shevchenko University Quality Center representatives and the Ivan Franko University of Lviv were among them.

Reports in the working format of the seminar were read by: representatives of four Irish universities (University of Limerick, Dublin City University, Mary Immaculate College, South East Technological University), representatives of the European University Association and Council for Doctoral Education (EUA-CDE), quality assurance services of Ukrainian universities, as well as, representatives of Georgian universities. The seminar lasted three days at the university. The workshop agenda with links to relevant presentations can be found here.

3.5.2. EFMD QAA training

Employees of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University - TSU Quality Assurance Department Head, Tinatin Davitashvili and Economics and Business Faculty Assistant Professor, Lia Dzebauri successfully passed EFMD Global Quality Assurance Academy training conducted online from September 12 to December 15, 2022 and awarded with relevant certificates[13].

The Quality Assurance Academy (QAA) online training is a 14-week comprehensive training course offered by EFMD Global to higher education quality assurance professionals. The QAA program develops participants' skills in leadership, quality management systems operation, communication, data management and project management.

Participants attended six interactive sessions divided into three blocks. Each block was preceded by preparatory materials and tasks completed by evaluating the corresponding activity. Then, individual work was carried out with the mentor on the mentioned activities. Finally, the knowledge and experience gained from the training was reflected in the final project, which was evaluated and defended twice (both in written form and in the form of an oral presentation) before the facilitators, mentors and other training participants.

Founded in 1972, EFMD Global is a global, not-for-profit, membership-driven organization with an

---

[13] https://tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/ღონისძიებები

extensive membership network dedicated to management development. It is recognized as an accrediting body for business schools, business school programs, and corporate universities.

3.6. NEWS IN THE CENTER OF PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

Since 2019, the Professional Education Center (hereinafter referred to as the Center) has been operating in Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, in two locations (Tbilisi and Kutaisi). The above-mentioned center administers professional programs within its competence in coordination with the Quality Assurance Service of TSU and other departments of TSU.

At this stage, the center administers 15 professional educational programs at two locations in Tbilisi and Kutaisi. Also, the center successfully implements 9 professional training programs and one professional retraining program:

- **Tbilisi location** - professional **retraining** program "Laboratory health and safety."
- **Kutasi location** - professional **training** programs: "warehouse logistics operator", "holiday event planning", "implementation of cash register operations in trade facilities", "preparation of information and management documents", "Working with financial documents and managing office and household supplies", "Accounting according to international standards", "Production of primary accounting documents and tax declaration", and "Customs declaration".

On the basis of Order No. 42/N of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia (02/06/2021, "Regulations and Conditions of Enrollment in a Professional Educational Program"), the centre has been selecting applicants for 2 years in a new manner. Under the administration of the centre, commissions for selecting applicants registered for professional programs of TSU have been created according to the programs in Tbilisi and Kutaisi. The centre permanently ensures the introduction of changes in the documents regulating the training process of the current professional education program for the full-fledged management of the training process.

In 2022, at two locations (Tbilisi and Kutaisi), 1,869 applicants were registered as a result of interviews, and 370 professional students were enrolled in professional educational programs in 2022.

In 2022, 246 graduates of the professional educational program (Tbilisi - 113, Kutaisi - 133) were awarded a qualification, 31 studentss completed the short-term training program ("Implementation of cashier operations in shopping facilities" (Kutaisi), "Warehouse logistics operator" (Kutaisi) "Planning of festive events" " (Kutaisi), and 100 students completed the professional training program "Laboratory health and safety".

According to today's data: 428 professional students are studying at professional educational programs: 190 - at the Tbilisi location and 238 - at the Kutaisi location.

➢ **The course of the educational process at professional educational programs.**

In 2022, the educational process at professional educational programs returned to the classroom format. For professional students and teachers, the centre provides effective organization and coordination of teaching. During the reporting period:

- Verification of the evaluation system of seven professional educational programs at the Tbilisi location was carried out. Based on the processing of verification results, recommendations were developed, which were shared with interested parties;

- For the effective implementation of the process of verification of the professional educational program evaluation system, consultation meetings were held for teachers of professional programs and program leaders;
- The procedure for conducting the evaluation process of professional students of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, drawing up documents confirming the achievement of study results, and storing and disposing of completed evaluation evidence was approved.
- The rules for financing the student projects of professional students/trainees at the Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University were approved;
- The head of the professional educational program "Preschool Education" was changed;
- The professional program of "customs case" was modified. Based on the changes, the program became fully compliant with the framework document;
- Barcodes were added to the training materials of the professional programs "Customs Affairs" and "Financial Services", and work on other professional programs continues;
- A survey of professional students using electronic questionnaires was carried out to analyze the learning process of the current modules in 2022; based on the analysis of the results of the survey, a report was developed, which was presented to the head of the centre and the heads of professional programs;
- The monitoring of the drawing up of individual study plans of professional students enrolled with the status of a disabled person was carried out; based on the results of the monitoring, the form of the individual study plan and the drawing up procedure were improved;
- Electronic questionnaires of professional students, trainees, employers, teachers and graduates were updated and developed anew;
- Appendices of the professional training program certificate were developed in Georgian and English languages;
- Consultation meetings and informational pieces of training were held for teachers and supervisors of professional programs (Tbilisi, Kutaisi) in the direction of teaching and learning;
- The catalogue of professional programs was updated;
- The activities of the head of the professional educational program and an electronic survey were monitored. Based on the analysis of the implemented works, recommendations were developed, which were shared with the interested parties;
- Together with the Professional Skills Agency, the 2019-2020 graduate survey was planned and implemented, which will continue in 2023.
- The centre's website and the social network's official page are constantly being updated in Georgian and English.

> **Electronic provision of services to professional students/trainees**

In 2022, the TSU centre effectively uses modern technological means to communicate with professional students/trainees and provide them with various services: professional students/trainees can contact the centre both by hotline and special contact information (phone, email) and through the official page of the social network. Vocational students/trainees are provided on-site and online integration consultations, while references and similar documents are provided via email.

Special emails with the domain @vet.edu.tsu.ge are created individually for professional students, through which they can receive all the necessary electronic information. Also, professional students receive the literature and other materials used in the educational process in the indicated emails. In addition, groups are created for vocational students according to vocational education programs in the social network, where they can interact with other vocational students, as well as with teachers and administration.

➢ **Internationalization of the educational process - sharing the experience of international colleagues.**

One of the main priorities of the activity of the TSU centre is to familiarize me with international experience and share best practices for quality assurance of the teaching-learning process. The centre actively worked in this direction: during 2022, at the initiative of the TSU quality assurance service and the TSU centre, together with the Ida-Virumaakutsehariduskeskus professional education centre (Estonia), several meetings were held to deepen mutual cooperation issues, and in September 2022, the Ida-Virumaakutsehariduskeskus professional education centre was held The director of the education centre, representatives visited TSU, and a memorandum of cooperation was signed between the parties.

➢ **Development of professional educational programs.**

The centre is actively working in Tbilisi and Kutaisi locations to add new professional programs and short-term professional training and retraining programs. To build additional space at the Tbilisi location, the centre is involved in design work with the relevant department of TSU and the architect. Funding sources for rehabilitating the third floor in the educational building at the Kutaisi location are also being sought. Among them, the centre is working on labour market research to select professional programs in both locations that will be competitive in the field of professional education and will be in demand by employers.

3.7. COOPERATION WITH QUALITY ASSURANCE SERVICES OF THE FACULTY

Every activity of the quality assurance service of the university is closely related to the faculty quality assurance services, with whose direct participation the service makes strategic decisions, reviews changes in legislative documents, plans and conducts internal and external quality assessment processes, and discusses innovations in Georgian and international educational spaces. Faculties themselves manage poly systemically, taking into account the specifics of individual directions. In the reporting period, the cooperation of 7 pluricentric faculties operating in the university was further expanded in cluster accreditation and institutional assessment format.

The multiplicity of tasks faced by the quality assurance service in recent times is caused by the new requirements and challenges that are due to the close communication of the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement with the relevant Western external actors and the important measures planned to bring the Georgian educational space in line with the western one. The discussion and study of individual new topics and issues are carried out with the direct involvement of the quality assurance service, although it is important to delegate several issues to the faculty services, which is, in a way, another distinct form of academic freedom. The latter are given the opportunity, based on and

based on the faculty's specifics, to further highlight the faculty's specifics to diversify the university's academic image, emphasising the university's academic diversity and versatile capabilities.

The efficiency of the service vertical was once again confirmed in the process of cluster accreditation, which was repeatedly evaluated by both Georgian and foreign education and field experts. Namely, the cooperation of university and faculty services was evaluated positively in the process of cluster accreditation and was named by experts as one of the best practices.

It was also important to share the academic staff's expert experience in the external evaluation process and their active involvement in developing, evaluating, editing, developing and internationalising educational programs. Committees supporting educational programs, whose composition was replaced by persons interested in educational programs on a rotating basis, played an essential role during the reporting period because any changes were made based on the essential recommendations developed by the committee.

Based on covid-regulations established at the university, the mode of inspection of the infrastructure in the (re)accreditation process was somewhat changed, in which the following topics were actively discussed within the mandate of the service in 2022:

- University evaluation by the European University Association Institutional Evaluation Program (EUA IEP) team;
- The issue of modification of educational programs within the framework of cluster accreditation;
- Changes in the framework of qualifications and initiation of new fields of study;
- Revision of the database, catalogue of internal use of educational programs in communication with external actors in the phase of establishing cluster deadlines;
- Modification of survey questionnaires and updating of surveys, preparation of updated market research methodology;
- Within the framework of cluster accreditation, planning and phased implementation of cluster accreditation of the Faculty of Humanities;
- Determination of the actual situation of the limited number of students and determination of further activities;
- Determination of the topics and tasks of the new authorization phase and establishing the target topic of the preparatory period;
- Increasing student involvement in the process of supporting quality assurance issues.

The University's Quality Assurance Service worked as a team, which involved active communication with Faculty Quality Assurance Services, academic and invited staff, alumni and students, administration, and various types of external actors.

3.8 Website of the Quality Assurance Service of the University

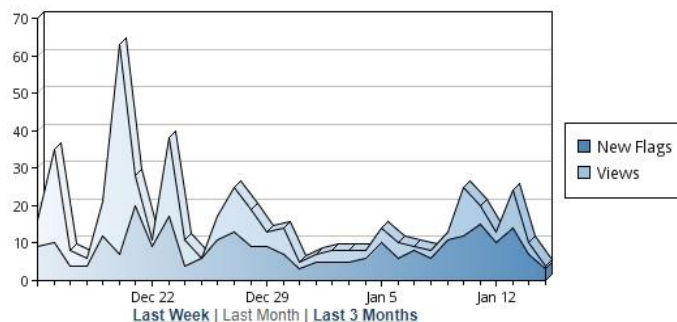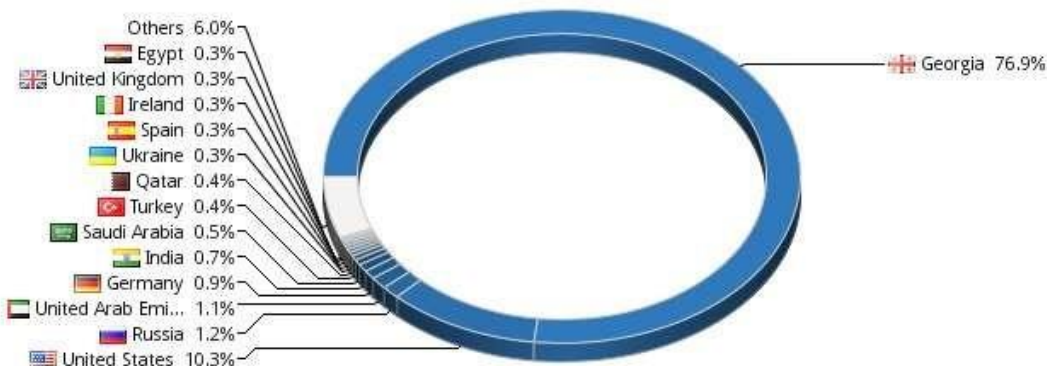All the activities of the quality assurance service are fully described on the website of Tbilisi State University, in the relevant sections of the service[14]. Through them, not only communication with the university community is carried out, but also information about the current news in the modern

---

[14] The university's quality assurance web address is available at: https://tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance;

educational space, implementation of university research, study of research results, analysis, sharing with target groups, professional support of academic staff. Delivery of manuals and documents developed within the service to the general public both locally and internationally.

Websites of the Quality Assurance Service are presented in both Georgian and English languages. The interest in the work of the service is constantly growing on the part of international actors. Statistical data also prove this. In particular, visitors to the website of the service are from 83 countries of the world.

83 different countries have visited this site. 112 flags collected. View all details »

Others	6.0%	
Egypt	0.3%	
United Kingdom	0.3%	
Ireland	0.3%	
Spain	0.3%	
Ukraine	0.3%	
Qatar	0.4%	
Turkey	0.4%	
Saudi Arabia	0.5%	
India	0.7%	
Germany	0.9%	
United Arab Emi...	1.1%	
Russia	1.2%	
United States	10.3%	
Georgia	76.9%	

This counter has been viewed 11,659 times by 6,041 visitors!

Visitors

GE	4,644		IN	44
US	620		SA	31
RU	75		TR	27
AE	69		QA	22
DE	52		UA	21

Pageviews: 11,660

FLAG counter

47

The information on the activities of the university's quality assurance service is divided into 11 main parts and is placed on the website in the corresponding sections of the menu15:

- ✓ About us[16]:
  - ▪ [About us](#)
  - ▪ [Regulation of quality assurance service](#)
  - ▪ [Structure and personnel](#)
  - ▪ [Service action plan and reports](#)
  - ▪ [Internship, employment, vacancies](#)
  - ▪ [Archive](#)
- ✓ Internal quality assurance[17]:
  - ▪ [Elaboration and development of educational programs](#)
  - ▪ [Collegial evaluations of educational programs](#)
  - ▪ [Rankings and ratings](#)
  - ▪ [Methodology of ranking systems](#)
  - ▪ [Annual ranking reports](#)
  - ▪ [Studies and surveys](#)
  - ▪ [Questionnaires](#)
  - ▪ [Analysis](#)
  - ▪ [E-learning](#)
  - ▪ [Materials and guides](#)
- ✓ External quality assurance[18]:
  - ▪ [Authorization](#)
  - ▪ [Accreditation](#)
- ✓ Professional development[19]:
  - ▪ [Guides and manuals](#)
  - ▪ [Calendar of trainings](#)
- ✓ International projects and events[20]:
- ▪ [Current projects](#)
  - ▪ [Assessment of institutional effectiveness](#)
  - ▪ [Collaboration with Times Higher Education (THE).](#)
  - ▪ [Support of 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: Student partnerships in quality Scotland](#)
  - ▪ [Strengthening the culture of quality at Tbilisi State University (funded by AUF)](#)
- ▪ [Completed Projects](#)
  - ▪ [Academic integrity for quality teaching and learning in higher](#)

---

[15] Sitemap·Available:https://www.tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/საიტის-რუკა;
[16] About Us·Available:https://tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/ჩვენს-შესახებ-ხარისხი;
[17] Internal quality assurance is available:https://tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/ხარისხის-შიდა-უზრუნველყოფა;
[18] External quality assurance is available:https://tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/ხარისხის-გარე-უზრუნველყოფა
[19] Professional development available: https://tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/პროფესიული-განვითარება
[20] International projects and events are available:https://www.tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/საერთაშორისო-პროექტები-და-ღონისძიებები

educational institutions of Georgia (INTEGRITY)
- Trainings and meetings
- Raising awareness
- Resources
- Regulatory documents
- Calendar of trainings for students
- European University Association (EUA) thematic group "Meeting the Skills and Employability Demands"
  - Events
  - Sectoral projects
- ✓ Strengthening the quality and relevance of the third mission in Georgian universities (SQUARE)[21]:
  - Project meetings
  - SQUARE trainings
  - Resources
- ✓ Quality Assurance Thematic Group[22]:
  - Structure of the thematic group
  - Thematic group meetings
  - Thematic group materials
- ✓ International cooperation[23]:
  - Current events
  - Finished events
- ✓ Quantitative indicators[24]:
  - Catalog of educational programs
  - Statistical data
- ✓ **Vocational Education Center**[25]

In addition, there is a news section on the home page[26].

The website of the Quality Assurance Service is constantly updated, edited and managed by the Service's Institutional Development and Authorization Division in cooperation with the Accreditation, Research and Evaluation Division and Faculty Quality Assurance Services.

By constantly updating the information section of the website, the quality assurance service contributes to the transparency of the university's processes. The information posted on it is available to all interested persons.

---

[21] Information about the project is available at:https://tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/მესამე-მისიის-ხარისხის-და-შესაბამისობის-გაძლიერება-საქართველოს-უნივერსიტეტებში--SQUARE-

[22] Quality Assurance Thematic Group·Available on the website:https://tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/ხარისხის-უზრუნველყოფის-თემატური-ჯგუფი

[23] International Cooperation·Available on the website:https://tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/საერთაშორისო-თანამშრომლობა

[24] Quantitative indicators·available on the website: https://tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/რაოდენობრივი-მაჩვენებლები

[25] Vocational Education Center·available on the website:https://tsu.ge/ka/quality-assurance/page/პროფესიული-განათლების-ცენტრი

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

4. Communication with external actors and institutions of quality assurance

The quality assurance service of the university carries out institutional management not only within the framework of Georgian legislation based on interdepartmental Communication but also within the framework of intensive Communication with international actors. In addition, constant Communication with internal quality actors, such as university and faculty administrations and quality assurance services, is particularly important.

The successful management of quality assurance in the university is directly related to the faculty quality assurance services, whose participation in solving key issues is important. However, the faculty's position preserves the institution's individuality and diversity. As for the external actors of quality assurance, this includes both external evaluators, the National Center for Education Quality Development and international institutions. During the reporting period, the quality assurance service communicated with external actors:

- ✓ Communication with the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia;
- ✓ National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement;
- ✓ Communication with the European University Association (EUA).

4.1. Communication with the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, Education Management Information System (EMIS) LEPL and National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE) LEPL

The present agencies, in constant communication with the university administration, with specific recommendations, advices and legislative injunctions, in particular, offer the institution wide involvement:

- In important studies for higher education institutions (in the project of the Educational Policy and Research Association (EPRA) and the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia: on determining the difficulties and barriers that arise in front of young people with educational needs and disabilities on the way to higher education);
- In the trainings planned in the field of higher education (trainer Prof. T. Makharadze, topic: working with students with hearing disorders & deaf and learning disabilities);
- In the process of obtaining approval for changes in the educational program on the basis of a specific legislative decision (issuance of permission for the implementation of the educational program in a foreign language and the change of the tuition fee);
- In the process of reflecting bachelor's and master's educational programs in the system;
- In determining and adjusting the requisites of the educational program;
- In expert processes;
- In the public discussion of educational program reports and experts' conclusions;
- In reviewing and evaluating normative documents;
- In the development and review of the industry standard;
- In the review of separate procedures in the process of accreditation and authorization;
- In the process of sharing expert experience.

In 2022, the institution applied with a petition to the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia several times for the re-accreditation of the educational program in a foreign language (*master's and doctoral educational programs: professional education, European studies and finance of the master's academic program of the International Economic School*) for the approval of the teaching process and tuition fees (*International Economic School Master's Education Program in Finance*) to establish different one from the established.

In the reporting period, there was intensive cooperation with the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement, with the involvement of both the university's sectoral and education experts, whose participation in the processes was meaningful in the preparation of several sectoral standards, namely, history, archaeology, philosophy, language acquisition, linguistics and literary studies, conflictology, which It prepared the basis for transparent and effective implementation of cluster accreditation processes.

The centre provided significant support to the institution within the framework of consultations and meetings on individual topics before cluster accreditation; individual thematic meetings were held, such as:

- 25.02.2022 - discussion of individual issues of the cluster accreditation process;
- 27.02.2022 - about the form of cluster accreditation self-assessment report;
- 22.03.2022 - about the implementation of the cluster;
- 04.04.2022 - about the initiation of adding the field of conflictology to the qualification framework;
- 19.04.2022 -   about the sectoral characteristics approved within the cluster accreditation of humanitarian sciences;
- 28.07.2022 -   About the creation of the legal base of the cluster accreditation system;
- 15.11.2022 -   About submitting the 2021-2025 strategy and the 2023 action plan to the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement.

The following were sent to National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement for Expertise:

- Memorandum of cooperation within the joint educational programs of TSU and BSU;
- Base of educational programs.

In 2022, within the mandate of the service, several analytical service correspondences were developed concerning the center, an analysis of various types of documentation was carried out, and several activities were carried out in communication with the relevant services of the centre in various modes of up to 71 educational programs:

- Preparation for the process of (re)accreditation of educational programs;
- Preparation and submission of extraordinary monitoring documentation to determine compliance with the reports and qualification framework in connection with the decision of the Accreditation Council;
- Triennial report of the educational program;

- Visit of authorization and accreditation experts;
- About the evaluation of the accreditation process and the quality of the involvement of the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement in these processes;
- Preparation of a reasoned response to the conclusion of accreditation experts;
- Involvement in the discussion of new legislative initiatives and projects;
- Organization of workshops, seminars and pieces of training and discussion of current issues (workshops regarding the debate on individual details of the qualification framework);
- Correction of accreditation deadlines (for educational programs operating at humanities faculties);
- Regarding the presentation of university academic staff as part of the sectoral characteristics development board (art, dentistry, conflictology - 17 experts);
- Recommending and submitting candidates to the Higher Education Programs Accreditation Council group;
- Analysis of documents developed in cluster accreditation preparations, recommendations, and opinions exchange.

The processes mentioned above and activities between the actors take place in many cases according to the plan, consistently, result-oriented and smoothly, based on the high responsibility and professionalism of the actors. However, there are cases when activation of specific communication is based on often unplanned, urgent and mandatory issues with the institution and external actors.

5. Other service activities

The activities planned and prepared by the university's quality assurance service more or less cover specific institutional areas, and consider the competence and scope of various university administrative links, based on strictly written internal university procedures. Therefore, internal actors of the University Quality Assurance Service are considered to be any university administrative unit with which work was carried out in the following direction in the reporting period of 2022 in close cooperation:
- Study and preparation of external and internal correspondence circulation;
- Archiving of documentary materials of the service;
- Initiate and prepare resolutions for academic and representative councils.

5.1. Study and preparation of circulation of external and internal correspondence

During the reporting period, about 1000 correspondences were officialy in circulation in the quality assurance service of the university the topics of which covered the following issues:
- Recognition of ECTS of study courses completed within the framework of mobility abroad (124 units);
- Recognition of ECTS of the educational courses completed at the higher education institutions of Georgia (12 units);
- Recognition of the ECTS of the training courses completed during the period of study at TSU (22 units);

- Preparation for the apostille of syllabi, annotations and references of study courses (17 units);
- Exemption from the mandatory foreign language module based on the attached certificate (44 units);
- Examination of the agreement to be signed between TSU and foreign higher educational institution/organization (30 units);
- Examination of documentation submitted by the Center for Continuing Education (10 units);
- Preparation of the notice on the authorization of TSU based on the procedures defined by *the Law of Georgia on Higher Education* (6 units);
- Preparation of notice on the right of TSU graduates to work in various positions (5 units);
- Preparation of notice for apostille based on the procedures defined by the *law of Georgia on higher education* on the right to enroll in the master's program (4 units).

During the reporting period, a large share of incoming and outgoing correspondence (both internal and external circulation) was related to the accreditation processes of educational programs - about 2000 units, the questionnaire for the evaluation of accreditation processes - 17 units. Quantitatively, the highest rate is represented by the correspondence of recognition of study courses completed within the framework of mobility abroad (124), as well as the rate of recognition of the study course in case of confirmation of foreign language competence (44) and the number of examination of agreements of foreign higher education institutions - 30 units, which is a high rate of internationalization and also a high institution It is a confirmation of recognition in the international educational space.

Annex

| Stages of external evaluation | quantitative indicator | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Educational level | | | | | faculty | | | | | | |
	Bachelor's degree	master's degree	one-step	Ph.D	Sum	exact and natural sciences	Humanities	social and political	of psychology and education	Economy and business	Medicine	Law
Accreditation	2	7	-	4	13	1	-	5	4	2	-	1
Including foreign language	2	2	-	1	5	1	-	-	2	1	-	1
Reacreditation	3	3	-	2	8	-	3	5	-	-	-	-
Including foreign language	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Clustered (9 clusters)	23	27	-	3	53	-	23	-	2	-	-	-
Clustered (9 clusters)	-	1	-	1	2	-	-	-	2	-	-	-
In total, 74 educational programs were prepared												
Accredited	2	7	-	4	13	1	-	5	4	2	-	1
Including foreign language	2	2	-	1	5	1	-	-	2	1	-	1
(re)accredited	6	7	-	2	15	-	10	5	-	-	-	-
Awaiting the visit of accreditation experts	4	4	-	-	8	-	8	-	-	-	-	-
Submitting a triennial report	1	1	-	3	5	-	2	-	-	1	-	2
With the decision of the Accreditation Council Report submitted in connection with	1	7	-	-	8	-	-	3	5	-	-	-
Result: 36 educational programs												

Information about events held within the framework of the SQUARE project:

> ➢ **SQUARE presentation at the National Center for Quality Development in Education Conference, January 27, 2022[27]**

At the annual international conference of the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement, which was held online for three days through the ZOOM platform, the Head of the Quality Assurance Service of Tbilisi State University, Irma Grdzelidze presented a report on the development of the quality and compliance of the third mission of the Erasmus+ institutional development project in Georgian universities (SQUARE - About Strengthening the Quality and Relevance of the 3rd mission in Georgian Universities). In addition, representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, the Committee of Education and Science of the Parliament of Georgia, higher, professional and general educational institutions, as well as other partners, local and international organizations, members and experts of authorization, accreditation, appeal councils, representatives of international partner organizations, as well as students, participated in the conference. Employers and other stakeholders.

> ➢ **SQUARE workshop, March 2-3, 2022[28]**

On March 2-3, 2022, SQUARE consortium members were hosted by Ilia State University within the framework of the workshop "Current Status of Third Mission Activities in Georgian Universities". The representatives of 8 Georgian universities presented the attendees with information about the activities of the third mission in their institutions according to such directions as: continuous education, knowledge transfer and social involvement. In addition, the consortium's European partners shared with the workshop participants their experience of the prospects and challenges in consulting and mentoring of Georgian universities.

One of the important parts of the meeting was the presentation of the research report conducted by the National Center for Education Quality Development on the importance of the third mission in European standards. The Georgian and European partners of the consortium discussed the research and its results with great interest. During the 2-day event, the participants had the opportunity to discuss each other's experiences and agree on the project's future development.

---

[27] https://square.tsu.ge/en/text/67/80
[28] https://square.tsu.ge/en/text/68/90

➢ **SQUARE consortium meeting, March 10, 2022[29]**

On March 10, 2022, SQUARE's management team members met online for the third coordination meeting. During the meeting, the participants summarized the project's first year and discussed in detail each activity included in the work plan. As a result, Georgian and European institutional coordinators agreed to update the project's work plan in accordance with the changes caused by the Covid pandemic. In addition, the participants will also talk about the financial issues of the project and the feedback they received from checking the already presented materials.

The project coordinator shared with colleagues the report provided by the Erasmus+ national office regarding the project, on which the project management team made a concrete plan to implement the recommendations. The meeting participants were also briefed on current progress and challenges related to project quality assurance, dissemination, and operational issues.

➢ **Dissemination of SQUARE at Masaryk University, April 4-7, 2022[30]**

On April 4-7, 2022, representatives of Tbilisi State University were on a working visit to the city of Brno, Czech Republic, to participate in the workshops of the project (Sharing competence and experience of V4 for knowledge and technology transfer) funded by the VISEGRAD+ grant fund, which was aimed at sharing knowledge and technology transfer experience sharing, including to employees of research institutes. Within the framework of the visit, the participants visited the Technology Transfer Center of Masaryk University and the South Moravian Innovation Center and had meetings with the representatives of the Quality Assurance Service.

Irma Grdzelidze, the coordinator of the SQUARE project, shared information about the project results with the participants of the visit.

➢ **SQUARE T2.1 Training: Strategic Assessment, April 11 and 15, 2022[31]**

On April 11 and 15, 2022, the members of the SQUARE consortium were hosted by the Caucasus University as part of the Erasmus+ funded institutional capacity development project training "Strategic Assessment". The training was conducted by experts from the French National Conservatory of Arts and Crafts.

During the meetings, the representatives of the management link of the Georgian partners got acquainted with the methodologies and tools used to evaluate how the activities of the third mission contribute to the implementation of the unified strategy of the institution. The participants also got acquainted with the basic definitions of the assets (both physical and virtual) of the university, which are related to strategic planning. Representatives of the French National Conservatory of Arts and Crafts presented the participants with theoretical and practical examples and best practices from their university, as well as examples from European higher education institutions.

---

[29] https://square.tsu.ge/en/text/68/91

[30] https://square.tsu.ge/en/text/67/114

[31] https://square.tsu.ge/en/text/68/95

Representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and the National Center for Education Quality Development were actively involved in national legislative framework and regulations discussions.

> ➤ Study Tour: 3M in European Universities - CNAM, April 20-22, 2022[32]

On April 20-22, 2022, Georgian partners visited the National Conservatory of Arts and Crafts in Paris, France. During the study visit, the participants met with representatives of the conservatory and visited various objects, including the museum belonging to the conservatory itself, where the participants learned about the history of industrial development in France; Also, they visited the Carnavalet Museum; met the founder and implementer of the "27th Region" project; get acquainted with the principles and specifics of the work of the scientific and industrial centre; Information was gained on how universities can offer innovation, cultural activities and social services to the wider community, not just to their students or academic staff.

> ➤ Training: strategic planning, May 16-18,2022[33]

On May 16-18, 2022, Shota Rustaveli State University of Batumi hosted the members of the SQUARE project consortium within the framework of the "Strategic Planning" training, which was conducted by experts from the Nova University of Lisbon and the University of Turku.

During the meetings, the Georgian partners got acquainted with the strategic planning methodology, tools and specific instructions for the activities of the third mission, which will be used later in developing internal institutional strategies.

Representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement were actively involved in the working meeting.

> ➤ Study tour: 3M in European higher education institutions – UTU, June 6-8, 2022[34]

On June 6-8, 2022, Georgian partners visited Turku University in Finland. During the study visit, the participants met with the Center for Continuing Education of the University of Turku representatives, who spoke about the centre's activities. Also, the participants met with the representatives of the Department of Partnerships and Strategic Engagement of the University, who shared their practices on measuring the activities of the Third Mission and organizing the related financial issues; The representatives of the university also presented their objectives regarding the third mission, accreditation and audit procedures of the third mission activities in the university; Also, they presented the innovation centre of the university and talked about the importance of cooperation with industry as one of the main supporting mechanisms of research commercialization; The representatives of the university also spoke about the main structural units implementing the activities of the third mission.

---

[32] https://square.tsu.ge/en/text/68/118
[33] https://square.tsu.ge/en/text/68/120
[34] https://square.tsu.ge/en/text/68/122

➢ **Joint event of two projects in Zugdidi: SQUARE & RURD, June 16, 2022**[35]

On June 16, 2022, Shota Meskhia State University of Zugdidi hosted the joint event of two EU-co-financed institutional capacity development projects. The projects "Strengthening the Quality and Relevance of the third mission in Georgian Universities" and "The Role of Universities in regional development" aim at the development of the Georgian higher education system and society, partially sharing common goals in terms of strengthening the social impact of Georgian higher education institutions.

➢ **Coordination meeting in Zugdidi, June 17, 2022**[36]

On June 17, 2022, members of the SQUARE management team of the institutional capacity development project funded by Erasmus+ met at the third coordination meeting in a hybrid format in Zugdidi.

During the meeting, the participants summarized the already completed activities of the project: training on strategic assessment (T2.1) and strategic planning (T2.2). They also discussed future activities and planned the process of developing internal institutional strategic plans for the third mission and assigning mentors in the mentoring phase.

The participants also talked about the financial issues of the project and the feedback they received from checking the already presented materials.

The meeting participants were also briefed on current progress and challenges related to project quality assurance, dissemination, and operational issues. In addition, participants were provided with an interim quality assurance report.

➢ **Training: 3M Activity Management and Impact Assessment, Gori, September 12-14, 2022**[37]

On September 12-14, 2022, members of the SQUARE Consortium were hosted by Gori State University within the framework of the training "Administration and Evaluation of the Third Mission Activities", conducted by experts from the Nova University of Lisbon and the University of Turku. Within the framework of the meeting, the participants got acquainted with the mechanisms and principles of determining the relevant goals, beneficiaries, direct and indirect stakeholders, intermediate and final results, and necessary resources when planning the activities of the third mission. Also, the University of Turku representatives shared with them examples of planning and implementation of activities of the third mission according to the relevant principle.

➢ **Meeting with SQUARE partners at Tbilisi City Hall, September 14, 2022**[38]

On September 14, 2022, the members of the Third Mission of Universities project consortium, which includes 8 Georgian universities, the Education Quality Center, the Ministry of Education and 4 European partners, met with the leadership of the Tbilisi City Council. Representatives of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, EFMD (Brussels, Belgium), and University of Turku (Turku,

---

[35] https://square.tsu.ge/en/text/67/115

[36] https://square.tsu.ge/en/text/68/124

[37] https://square.tsu.ge/en/text/68/126

[38] https://square.tsu.ge/en/text/67/128

Finland) met with Deputy Mayor of Tbilisi Andria Basilaya, Chairman of Education and Culture Commission of Tbilisi Municipality Kakha Labuchidze, Member of Sakrebulo Nino Rukhadze, Tbilisi Members of the City Hall and self-government.

The purpose of the meeting was to search for ways of cooperation between the local municipality and universities for the development of civil society, in which European partners with their many years of experience will be involved.

> ➤ **Representatives of Tbilisi Municipality at TSU, October 3, 2022[39]**

On September 3, 2022, a meeting was held at Tbilisi State University within the framework of the project - "Development of the quality and relevance of the third mission in Georgian universities" (SQUARE), which was attended by the heads of Tbilisi City Hall services and city assembly, representatives of the National Conservatory of Arts and Crafts in Paris and Nova University of Lisbon. At the same time, they are members of the third mission project consortium. At the meeting, they talked about the activities, achievements and current progress of the third mission implemented by Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. The European partners shared with the representatives of the Tbilisi Municipality their experience of cooperation with local governments in French and Portuguese universities and how they are involved in university activities for the purpose of community development.

The coordinator of the third mission project, the head of the quality assurance service of TSU, Irma Grdzelidze, spoke about the already existing examples of cooperation between the university and the city and expressed her willingness to actively participate in the development of the corresponding strategy. According to him, Tbilisi State University is the coordinator of the institutional development project financed by ERASMUS+, which is related to the third mission of the university, quality enhancement and institutional development of universities in this direction.

> ➤ **"Internal Quality Assurance: Prospects and Challenges", October 10-12, 2022[40]**

On October 10-12, 2022, an international seminar on "Internal Quality Assurance: Perspectives and Challenges" was held at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. The representatives of the universities of Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine and Ireland, as well as the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement of Georgia, participated in the event.

Reports in the working format of the seminar were read by: representatives of four Irish universities (University of Limerick, Dublin City University, Mary Immaculate College, South East Technological University), representatives of the European University Association and Council for Doctoral Education (EUA-CDE), quality assurance services of Ukrainian universities, as well as, representatives of Georgian universities.

The coordination group of the "SQUARE" project provided information about the achieved results and planned activities to the participants of the seminar.

---

[39] https://square.tsu.ge/en/text/67/130
[40] https://square.tsu.ge/en/text/67/132

> ➤ **T3.2_T3.5 Training and observation of the work process "Management of activities of the third mission in the direction of culture", November 7-12, 2022[41]**

On November 7-12, 2022, the Georgian members of the SQUARE project consortium visited the National Conservatory of Arts and Crafts in the city of Nantes, France, within the framework of the training and work process observation workshops "Managing the activities of the third mission in the direction of culture".

During the visit, the participants learned how the National Conservatory of Arts and Crafts of Paris leads the activities of the third mission and how the local government is involved in this process. Nantes Municipality's City Hall and City Council representatives participated in the visit. Together with representatives of the Tbilisi City Council and the National Union of Museums, they presented successful examples and strategies of cooperation with the university to the project participants.

Georgian participants paid a working visit to the Nanti Environmental History Museum, during which the museum was presented from the third mission's perspective. Also, a workshop was held on the system approach of the third mission, which implies university, culture and scientific culture together. In the framework of the mentioned workshop, the case of the "permanent university" concept was discussed.

> ➤ **T3.4_T3.5 Training and observation of the work process "Managing the activities of the third mission in the social direction", November 14-19, 2022[42]**

On November 14-19, 2022, the Georgian members of the SQUARE project consortium visited the Nova University of Lisbon in Lisbon, Portugal, within the framework of training and work process observation workshops "Management of Third Mission Activities in Social Direction".

The representatives of the Georgian delegation were welcomed at the opening meeting by the Rector of Nova University of Lisbon, who expressed his willingness to be a participant in a similar project and help Georgian partners in developing in this direction, since Nova University is one of the first both in Europe and internationally, with the strength of the third mission component. Likewise, the Georgian partners were welcomed by the vice and pro rectors of Nova University according to the respective directions.

During the visit, Georgian partners had meetings with representatives of various structural units of the university. Among them, they visited the campus of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University, where they met the representatives of the Vice Rector's Strategic Office for Innovative Research and Impact. They discussed the process that a researcher goes through, from an idea to obtaining funding for it to the implementation stage; How does the structural unit supporting this process work?; It was noted that there are many similar units throughout the university.

At the end of the visit, the participants unanimously noted that they were ready to join Nova University in the presented projects and start new projects with a similar idea.

---

[41] https://square.tsu.ge/en/text/68/134
[42] https://square.tsu.ge/en/text/68/136

> ➢ **T3.3_T3.5 Training and observation of the work process "Management of activities of the third mission in the direction of economy", November 21-26,2022**[43]

On November 21-26, 2022, the Georgian members of the SQUARE project consortium visited the University of Turku in the city of Turku, Finland, within the framework of the training and work process observation workshops "Managing the activities of the third mission in the direction of the economy".

The representatives of the University of Turku offered the Georgian partners the agenda of the activities of the third mission in the economic direction, which started with sharing the concept of the university as an entrepreneurial institution. In the perception of the hosts, the university is as important a player in the economic development of the society as any other industrial entity. Therefore, the University of Turku projects are aimed at startups, spinoffs and similar projects that offer a wide variety of services and products to both the external and internal university communities.

During the visit, the Georgian partners, along with other speakers, met with the representatives of the Turku University Research and Development Center, Science Park, and Risk Management Department, who spoke about the principles of managing the activities carried out by the university in the direction of the third mission.

---

[43] https://square.tsu.ge/en/text/68/138

Information about events held within the framework of the LOTUS project:

> ➤ **LOTUS - Working group meeting, January 31, 2022**

On January 31, 2022, another working group meeting was organized within the Lotus Leadership grant project of the European University Association (EUA).

The workshop's main topic was policy and practice of continuous professional development. Participants from different institutions presented their experiences, existing challenges and possible ways to overcome them. Although each institution has its own approach, the responsible unit, the list of programs, and teachers' motivation to participate in continuing professional programs are challenging for all countries. Different mechanisms are in place to regulate this issue in different countries, including the external quality mechanism (accreditation, audit), the mandatory character of participation in UPG programs in some fields (medicine), awards and other incentive methods. Considering the shared experience, the working group members will develop an action plan at the next stage.

The following participated in the working meeting: group facilitator Dr Claire McAvinia is an education expert working since 2013 at the Center for Learning, Teaching and Technology at Dublin University of Technology (Ireland). In addition, the working group includes representatives of various universities, including Head of Quality Assurance Service Irma Grdzelide and Head of Quality Assurance Service of Faculty of Medicine, Nino Chikhladze from TSU, Panayiotis Angelides - Vice Rector for Academic Affairs of University of Nicosia (Cyprus), Sanna Kivimäki - University of Tampere (Finland) Director of the Education and Training Program Development Project, Marta Mendel - Vice Rector of the Warsaw University of Life Sciences (Poland) in the field of International Cooperation and Mariusz Maciejczak - Director of the Institute of Economics and Finance of the same University, Rodrigo Trujillo - Vice Rector of La Laguna University (Spain) Assistant and representative of the same university Guido Santos.

> ➤ **EUA Project LOTUS Final Conference, 28-29 September 2022**

On September 28-29, 2022, the final conference of the grant project LOTUS of the Association of European Universities was held at the Royal Academy of Sciences and Arts of Belgium (Brussels, Belgium). Professor Nino Chikhladze, Head of the Quality Assurance Service of the Faculty of Medicine, participated in the conference from TSU. During the two days, both plenary discussions and parallel sessions were held, on which special emphasis was placed on the role of leadership in the learning/teaching process. Parallel sessions were devoted to the following topics:
- Adaptation of the educational offer;
- The World of Teachers: Staff Development, Academic Careers, Teaching Ecosystem;
- Cooperation between institutions;
- Digitization in learning and teaching.

A particularly interesting key messages from the conference were about learning/teaching from an

institutional and sector perspective. It was noted at the confrence that institutional autonomy is crucial for improving learning/teaching. Inadequate recognition of teaching in academic activities and lack of cooperation directly at the sector level were identified as structural barriers. The need to strengthen knowledge about effective teaching methods and reassess pedagogical approaches in the post-pandemic period was noted.

In addition to participating in the plenary and parallel sessions, Nino Chikhladze also met with members of the Lotus working group (Claire McCavinia, Dublin University of Technology/Ireland, Marta Mendel, Warsaw University of Life Sciences/Poland) and Guido Santos, La Laguna University/Spain), together with which further stages of work on a joint scientific article were planned.