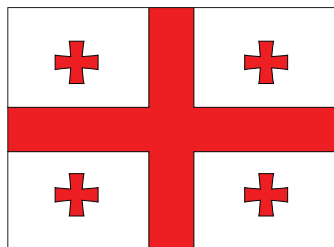




Overview of the Higher Education System

Georgia



February 2017

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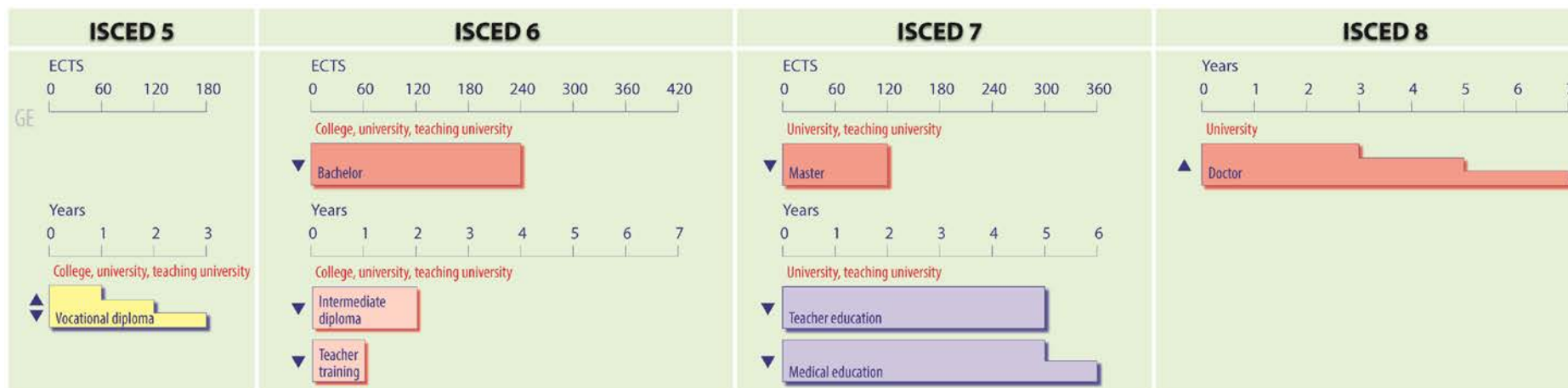
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The higher education system in Georgia



Most common length of a Bologna cycle

Other length of a Bologna cycle

Professional programme

Programme outside the typical Bologna model

Professional programme non Bologna

ECTS:
Credits according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

| | | regulated at national level | decided at institutional level |
|------|--|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| All | programmes have admission requirements | ▼ | ▲ |
| SOME | | ▽ | △ |

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1 Overview¹

The republic of Georgia is a country in the Caucasus region. Located at the crossroads of Western Asia and Eastern Europe, it is bounded to the west by the Black Sea, to the north by Russia, to the south by Turkey and Armenia and to the southeast by Azerbaijan. Georgia covers a territory of 69,700 square kilometres (26,911 sqmi), and its population amounted to 3,729,500 in 2015. The capital and largest city is Tbilisi with 1.118.300 inhabitants. The majority of the people (83.3%) are Georgians. The ethnic minorities include Azerbaijani, Armenian, Russian, Greeks, Kurds. A large majority of the Georgia's population (83.9%) practices Orthodox Christianity. The religious minorities of Georgia include also Armenian Christians, Muslims (both Shia and Sunni), Roman Catholics and Jews.

Georgia is a unitary, semi-presidential republic, with the government elected through a representative democracy. The official language is Georgian.

Georgia's GDP per capita is \$4,010 and GDP real growth rate was 3% in 2016. According to 2015 data, 2.9% of GDP is spent on education, the largest share being invested in general education (69.4%), followed by higher education (12.6%), professional education (2.1%), educational support services (3.1%) and other non-classified activities (12.9%).

1.1 Fundamental Principles and National Policies

In accordance with the Article 35 of the Constitution of the Republic of Georgia, everyone has the right to education as the education is a fundamental human right and essential for the exercise of all other human rights. Education promotes individual freedom and empowerment and yields important development benefits.

The Law of Georgia on Higher Education, adopted in December 2004, created a legal basis for reforms, defining the roles and responsibilities of all players involved in higher education, the levels of higher education, rules for admission, licensing/authorisation and accreditation procedures, types of educational institutions, introduction of credits, etc. Several changes and amendments to the law enacted in the last years reflect the dynamic process of reforms in the field of higher education. All the main principles set out in the legislation have been implemented so far.

The Georgian higher education area is regulated by the following main legal acts:

- Georgian Law "On Higher Education"(December 2004)
<http://eqe.ge/res/docs/2014120816000571585.pdf>
- Georgian Law "On Education Quality Enhancement" (July 2010)
<http://eqe.ge/res/docs/201412081600419310.pdf>

In 2014, the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, in collaboration with other governmental and non-governmental organisations, developed a document entitled "Strategic directions of development of education and science in Georgia"² which is still under discussion and has not been approved officially yet.

1.2 Lifelong Learning Strategy

The development of lifelong learning (LLL) is one of the priorities of the "Strategic directions of development of education and science in Georgia". The idea of LLL is integrated into the "Government Programme of Georgia, Basic Data and Directions" of the government of Georgia and is strengthened by the framework legislation regulating the educational system of Georgia. In these documents, the importance of social inclusion and civil integration is emphasized but, at this stage, no separate LLL concept on national level has been designed, although different LLL aspects are reflected in the Law of

¹ Statistical data on demographics and GDP: National Statistics Office of Georgia (<http://geostat.ge>)

² http://www.mes.gov.ge/uploads/strategia_.pdf (available only in Georgian language).

Georgia on Higher Education and are being developed accordingly (National Qualifications Framework, learning outcomes as a basis for curriculum development, etc.). At the same time, several Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have elaborated their own LLL strategy policy and regulations. It is worth noting that a number of Tempus projects significantly contributed to the development of LLL in Georgia.

1.3 Organisation of Private Education

Currently there are 75 state recognized (authorised) HEIs in Georgia, 55 out of them being private.

The establishment and operation of higher education institutions, both state and private, are monitored by the National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement (NSEQE) of Georgia. HEIs can be publicly or privately founded, but the quality criteria are the same for all institutions regardless their legal status.

1.4 National Qualifications Framework

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) was approved by a decree#120/N of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia in December2010. The draft of the NQF was elaborated by the National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE) on the basis of a series of consultations and discussions with all parties interested. The document includes all the qualifications and levels of general, vocational and higher education competences that exist in Georgia. The NQF defines what type of knowledge, skills and values an individual should have in order to receive a certifying document of completion at a corresponding level – School Certificate, Vocational Diploma, Diploma.

The NQF supports:

- The establishment of a learner, vocational student, and student-oriented educational system;
- The promotion of education received in Georgia and its alignment with international standards;
- The mobility process of students and learners.

The NQF is based on the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (LLL) and consists in five documents:

- **General Education Qualification Framework** – a document which systematizes the qualifications of the basic general and complete general education
- **Vocational Qualification Framework**- a document which systematizes the qualifications existing in vocational education in Georgia
- **Higher Education Qualification Framework** - a document which systematizes the qualifications existing in higher (academic) education in Georgia
- **The fourth Annex** of the NQF, which provides a list of directions, field/specialties, subfield/specialties and vocational specialisations
- **The fifth Annex** - Rule on Qualification Formation – a document which defines how to add new qualifications to the existing list of qualifications

The NCEQE is the main body responsible for ensuring the quality of education in the country as well as monitoring the effectiveness of the NQF. The Quality Assurance (QA) mechanisms used for the monitoring of the effectiveness of the NQF is the accreditation of educational programmes and the authorization of educational institutions. The main problem for the development and the implementation of the NQF is the barrier for the free access to higher education from the vocational education sector. This causes a problem of proper implementation of the LLL approach. In order to eliminate the existing problems, the National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement has launched in 2014 a new project, namely the revision of existing NQF with a special focus on vocational education and NQF's alignment with the European qualification framework for LLL. The project was mainly inspired by the Association Agreement between Georgia and the European Union and some strategic changes in the vocational education system.

1.5 Statistics on Organisation and Governance³

The different categories of higher education institutions (HEIs) in Georgia have been defined by the Law on Higher Education, but the number of state recognized HEIs is not stable and those fluctuations reflect the dynamic process of authorisation and accreditation.

There are three types of higher education institutions (HEIs) in Georgia:

- The research universities are authorised to award all three academic degrees (Bachelor, Master and PhD)
- The teaching universities, without a notable research function, are implementing first and second cycles higher education programmes;
- The colleges are implementing higher professional and Bachelor programmes.

Table 1. Number and types of HEIs in Georgia

| HEIs | Public | Private | Total |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| University | 12 | 20 | 32 |
| Teaching University | 7 | 21 | 28 |
| College | 1 | 14 | 15 |
| Total | 20 | 55 | 75 |

It is important to note that 68% of the HEIs are located in the capital city, Tbilisi.

The total number of students in all HEIs amounted to 190,057 in October 2016. The breakdown of students in the different higher education cycles is given below:

Table 2. Number of students enrolled in Georgian HEIs

| | Bachelor | Medical education | Master | PhD | Total |
|----------------|----------|-------------------|--------|-------|----------------|
| Nr of students | 146,662 | 12,454 | 24,144 | 6,797 | 190,057 |
| % of total | 77.16% | 6.54% | 12.70% | 3.60% | 100% |

1.6 Distribution of responsibilities

The principle of autonomy of the higher educational institutions is stipulated in the Law of Georgia on Higher Education as one of the leading principles of the national HE system. Amendments to the Law on Higher Education (2011) provide for different legal status of HEIs and the responsibilities of the state authorities differ accordingly.

There are three legal forms of HEIs, namely the legal entity of public law, the legal entity of private law and the non-commercial non-profit legal entity (NNLE) (the last can be also established by the state). The

³ Statistical data provided by the NCEQE (www.eqe.ge)

law defines the functions and responsibilities of the state authorities. The state authorities have certain powers in the field of higher education:

- **The Parliament of Georgia** defines the key guidelines of the policy and management in HE, and passes appropriate legislative acts.
- **The Government of Georgia** defines the amount of the state education grant and draws up social programmes and state programmes in the field of higher education. The Government can also establish HEIs as a legal entity of public law. The Prime Minister appoints the directors of the National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement⁴ and National Examination Centre⁵.
- The **Ministry of Education and Science (MoES)** implements a unified policy in HE, develops basic documents reflecting the indicators used in the HE system and proposes the amount of the state education grants.
- The **Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection and the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs** decide the normative acts in the sphere of higher education, fine arts and sport and finance higher education in those sectors.
- The **National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE)** ensures external quality assurance.

The HEIs having the status of legal entities of public law are subject to a greater control by the Ministry of Education and Science: the MoES approves the charter of the public HEIs upon the proposal of the Council of Representatives (HEI elective body, developing statute and internal regulations of the institute, as well as approving budget, academic staff recruitment procedures, code of ethics, etc.); the MoES exerts state control over them and is responsible for enforcing the normative acts enacted in the field of higher education. In case of a non-commercial non-profit legal entity, founded by the state, the governmental control is significantly reduced.

At the same time, the HEIs, independently of their legal form, are free to develop and approve the study, research and creative work policies, develop and approve the rules for the recruitment of staff, their internal regulations, elect their management bodies and officials and manage their finances and property.

The formal autonomy of the HEIs granted by law is evolving into an effective autonomy. The establishment of a Council of Rectors of the Public Higher Education Institutions and a Council of Rectors of the Private Higher Education Institutions in 2009 is a clear sign of the growing self-confidence of HEIs.

2 Higher Education Funding

2.1 Public Education

The funding model of HEIs has changed substantially in the last years. The input-based lump sum financing model of education has been transformed into per capita financing, although part of public HEIs budget is still formed by direct governmental subsidies. Consequently, vouchers and grants have been introduced. This shift is primarily aimed at increasing the efficiency and transparency of financing. The maximum annual amount of state grant is GEL 2,250 equal to 859 €⁶, which is linked to student and follows the student during horizontal mobility from one HEI to another. The state grants are given on the basis of the results at the Unified National Examinations at bachelor's level and for the master's level, according to the results of the centralized Master's Exams. The grants can be 100%, 70% and 50%. The voucher scheme takes the form of a government grant to students. Different grants are given to the students according to their performance in a national admission exam at the end of secondary education

⁴ The National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement is a governmental agency among others in charge of institutional authorization and programme accreditation of Higher Education Institutions (www.eqe.ge)

⁵ The National Examination Centre is a governmental agency creating and conducting large-scale qualifying and certifying exams (www.naec.ge)

⁶ Exchange rate 1Euro=2.62GEL (http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuro/index_en.cfm)

and depending on the field of study. The State covers tuition fee of all students enrolled at bachelor's level to the priority 21 specialities (Agronomy, Veterinary, Forestry, Food Technology, Animal Husbandry, Education Science, Teacher Education, Engineering Physics, Energy and Electrical Engineering, Agricultural Engineering, Construction, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology/Life Sciences/Applied Biosciences, Economics, History, Philology, Philosophy, Architecture, Archaeology).

Apart from the state student grants, the HEIs are entitled to receive funding from the following sources:

- funds received through private grants, contributions or a will,
- research grants awarded by the state on the basis of competitions,
- special state-budgetary programmes designed to encourage the enrolment of students in HEI specialties which represent priorities for the state,
- programme support allocated by the ministries of a relevant field,
- any other sources of income allowed by the Georgian legislation, including revenues from economic activities.

In the absence of any objective allocation system (such as a funding formula), the remaining lump sum payments received by the HEIs are negotiated on an annual basis. The negotiating power of the individual universities largely determines how much they receive. Thus the system works very much to the advantage of the larger universities in Tbilisi (accounting for some 10-12% of the total income). The lump sum payments (which in many university systems provide the bulk of government funding to universities) is clearly unsatisfactory. The amounts, when received, are limited to a small proportion of the overall funding and the process of allocation is rather arbitrary. Clearly, the present lump sum system needs to be reformed. Discussions are currently under way to decrease the lump sum funding mechanism from the state and to replace it by increasing the HEI voucher subsidy scheme. Ultimately, the lump sum funding system may be phased out.

2.1.1 Financial Autonomy and Control

For public HEIs, tuition fees account for 90% of the total income, while the rest comes from state subsidies, paid indirectly through state-funded grants to students and directly as a lump sum payment (block grant) to the HEI. The grants from the government targeted at the infrastructure are provided to the public HEIs for infrastructure projects where necessary and from time to time.

2.1.2 Public Higher Education Fees

The majority of HEIs in Georgia are funded through tuition fees.

The tuition fee for the public higher education institutions at Bachelor's and Master's levels and at most programmes is equal to the maximum amount of the state grants (GEL 2,250=879 €) per year.

There are no part-time studies envisaged by the Georgian legislation.

Third cycle students may get funding from a particular HEI, or from the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation; however, the number and amount of scholarships are limited. As an incentive, some HEIs offer reduced fees for the third cycle students or free doctoral programmes.

Table 3. Tuition fees at public Georgian HEIs in 2015

| | Minimum amount | Maximum amount |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| First cycle | | |
| All Students in public HEIs | GEL 1,500 = 572.5 € | GEL 2,250 = 859 € |
| Second cycle | | |
| All Students in public HEIs | GEL 2,250 = 859 € | GEL 16,800 = 6,412 € |
| Third cycle | | |
| All Students in public HEIs | Free of charge or GEL 250 = 95.4 € | GEL 2,250 = 859 € |

The difference in the fee policy between programmes taught in Georgian and in a foreign language (mostly English) is quite obvious. The tuition fees for programmes in foreign languages are significantly higher (for example at one private HEI, a Business Administration programme at Bachelor's level costs 859 € whereas the same programme in English costs 2,734 €, a Joint Programme in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) at Bachelor's level, involving three Georgian public HEIs and San Diego University (USA) costs 5,859 €).

There are also differences in tuition fees depending on the field of study. Law, Business Administration and Medical education can be considered as the most expensive fields in higher education.

The tuition fees as well as the state grants are paid directly to the higher education institutions.

2.2 Private Education

In 2015 there were 55 Private HEIs in Georgia fully self-funded and functioning without governmental subsidies; among them universities, teaching universities and colleges. Their funds are generated by the student tuition fees, individual or group grants, the participation in international projects or private donations.

2.2.1 Financial Autonomy and Control

Private universities do not receive any direct funding from the government, but receive indirect subsidies through state-funded grants to qualified students who enrol in these institutions. Private institutions have higher level of autonomy in financial management than public ones; their financial management depends to a great extent on their organisational and legal status. Private universities are not accountable to the state bodies concerning the financial issues, whereas the quality assurance criteria are the same for all HEIs (private or public).

2.2.2 Private Higher Education Fees

Table 4. Tuition fees at private Georgian HEIs in 2015

| | Minimum amount | Maximum amount |
|------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| First cycle | | |
| All Students in private HEIs | GEL 2,250 = 859 € | GEL 7,850 = 2,996€ |
| Second cycle | | |
| All Students in private HEIs | GEL 2,250 = 859 € | GEL 16,896 = 6,448 € |
| Third cycle | | |
| All Students in private HEIs | GEL 2,250 = 859 € | GEL 18,000 = 6,870 € |

2.3 Financial Support for Learners' Families

No structural measures are targeting learners' families. The governmental financial support applies to students directly.

2.4 Financial Support for Learners

State grants are used to finance the tuition fees, at both public and private HEIs. Approximately one fourth of the students receive grants (at varying percentage levels: 100%, 70% and 50%) and therefore most students (or their families) have to finance the tuition fees, as well as the living expenses, from their own resources. Many students take loans to top-up private funding and/or government grants for tuition. Students are eligible for short-term consumer-type loans issued to their families (no grace period, immediate repayment and high interest) used to cover only the needs for short-term cash flow.

For the students' social assistance programmes please see section 7.1.1.

3 The structure of the Higher Education system

The main features of organisation of higher education in Georgia reflect the Bologna principles and the legal requirements stipulated in two main laws, regulating the sector:

- The Georgian Law "On Higher Education" (December 2004)
- The Georgian Law "On Education Quality Enhancement" (July 2010)

The three-cycle higher education (HE) system has been implemented in Georgia. Bachelor, master and doctoral programmes have already been introduced in all state recognised higher education institutions. All students below doctoral level are enrolled in the two-cycle degree system (except for certain specific specialisations such as medicine).

The Bachelor programmes (*bakalavriati*) cannot comprise less than 240 ECTS credits whereas Master programmes (*magistratura*) comprise 120 ECTS and the doctoral programmes (*doktorantura*) 180 ECTS.

The HEIs are free to decide about the beginning and the end of the academic year. Typically, the academic year starts in autumn (September/October) and ends in late spring/early summer (May/June). It is generally split into two semesters, although trimesters are used by a few HEIs. The time framework of the academic year is determined by the Decree No 3 (5 January 2007) of the Ministry of Education and Science (minimum length – 38 weeks, maximum length – 45 weeks). The examination periods at the end of the semester/trimester last typically up to four weeks. The length of the academic breaks is set by the HEIs themselves.

3.1 Types of Higher Education Institutions

There are three types of higher education institutions in Georgia:

- The research universities are authorised to award all three academic degrees (Bachelor, Master and PhD – *bakalavriati, magistratura, doktorantura*);
- The teaching universities, without a notable research function, are implementing first and second cycles higher education programmes;
- The colleges are implementing higher professional (*umaglesi profesiuli ganatleba*) and Bachelor programmes (*bakalavriati*)

Currently there are 75 state recognized (authorised) HEIs in Georgia (20 public and 55 private). 68% of them are located in the capital city, Tbilisi.

3.2 First Cycle Programmes

The first cycle study programmes are offered at all types of higher education institutions in Georgia. A precondition for entering a first-cycle study programme is the completion of secondary school and success at the Unified National Examinations, the establishment of which was one of the main achievements of the reform of higher education in Georgia of the past years.

3.2.1 Branches of Study

Generally, Bachelor level studies in Georgia last for four years (240 ECTS). Only the Medical and Teacher Education programmes have a different approach concerning the length of the first cycle: the first level of education lasts for five-six years (for details see section 3.5). In general, upon completion of the first level of higher education, the student receives a Bachelor degree.

The main branches of higher education studies in Georgia can be grouped as:

- Social Sciences, Business and Law
- Arts and Humanities

- Technical and Technology Sciences
- Natural Sciences and Mathematics
- Health
- Interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and trans-disciplinary sciences
- Agriculture and Veterinary

3.2.2 Admission Requirements

The system of Unified National Examinations was established in 2005, giving the right to study to those enrollees, who successfully pass these centrally organized examinations.

A special unit, the National Examination Centre (NCE)⁷ a legal entity of public law, has been established to implement the Unified National Examinations. The Examination Centre provides the education system with reliable and objective tools for assessing knowledge and abilities of students. Students compete for places at state or private HEIs. Only students who have completed secondary education and passed the unified examinations may enrol at state recognized HEIs. State grants are awarded to the highest achievers.

3.2.3 Curriculum

Curriculum development is fully under the responsibility of the HEIs according to the principle of academic freedom. New study programmes must be approved according to the internal procedures of the HEI. The structure of curricula and proportion of compulsory and elective subjects are defined by programme leaders at the HEI.

Most programmes have a modular and major/minor structure, except those for the regulatory professions (medicine, law and education). Currently, more than 90% of HEIs have optional subjects in their curricula and approximately 60% have optional modules.

Students can also take part in the development of individual study programmes (Law of Georgia on Higher Education, Article 43).

The recently introduced National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the subject benchmarks⁸ influenced the curriculum content. Programmes were updated in order to correspond to the learning outcomes defined by the NQF and the minimum academic standards.

3.2.4 Teaching Methods

The teaching methods are not prescribed by the government and every higher education institution is free to choose the specific methodology depending on the field of studies and the faculty profile. Moreover, academic staff is also free to determine teaching methods of their courses/modules. In general, the teaching methods include lectures, discussions, presentations, research/field activities etc. Teaching and assessment methods shall be described in the curriculum and syllabi of the specific subjects.

3.2.5 Progression of Students

Universities have their own regulations and approaches to define the maximum number of times students can attempt to pass examinations in a given subject. At the same time each university defines its own rules to be fulfilled for students to progress to the next the year of the course. It may be indicated as a minimum numbers of ECTS per year.

In some cases Georgian universities have defined a limited period in which students are obliged to complete their studies, though no country wide regulations are provided from the government and all the

⁷ www.naec.ge

⁸ <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements>

universities are free in their decisions.

3.2.6 Employability

Data on alumni and student employment and income are not collected on a systematic basis by higher education institutions. Despite the programme accreditation standards oblige higher education institutions to adjust their programmes to the labour market demand, the indicators of performance and the sources of verification are vague. They are not sufficiently described in details in the self-evaluation and external evaluation instruments, and therefore, do not provide for a complete and objective evaluation of an entire higher education institution and individual programme. Though HEIs do try to develop individual partnerships with various enterprises for student internships, cooperation and further employability guarantees, the results are not homogeneous. For some disciplines/programmes it's easier to find partners from the labour market, whereas in other fields of study this process is limited to a rather formal dialogue including participation of employers in final exams.

As to the development of student career guidance, the first career centres at Georgian HEIs have been established as a result of a Tempus project and became very popular among students.

3.2.7 Student Assessment

Each HEI is required to ensure a fair assessment of the student's knowledge, for which it must develop appropriate procedures. The introduction of ECTS helps measure the student's achievements on the basis of clearly defined learning outcomes. Assessment criteria must be indicated in the syllabus.

The student's workload and the general assessment procedures are defined by Law and Decree No 3 (5 January 2007) of the Minister of Education and Science on the "Rules for Calculating Higher Educational Programmes by Credits". A mid-term assessment is obligatory since the student's achievements cannot be evaluated only on the basis of final exams. Both, written and oral exams are used for the student's assessment, depending on the learning outcomes.

The National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement acts as an official institution at national level, responsible for assessing prior learning (PL) for access to HE programmes. HEIs are also free to assess themselves prior learning. They have their own procedures for defining the compatibility of competences of specific educational programmes and thus recognising credits accumulated. This procedure also ensures the student's mobility. General provisions of credit recognition are defined by the Decree No 120 (16 December 2007, some further amendments in 2010) of the Minister of Education and Science.

Recognition of prior non-formal learning at higher education level is not defined by legislation and, as a result, is not applied in practice.

Conditions for the student's progress from one year of studies to the next are determined by the HEIs according to the programme requirements.

Requirements for final qualification are defined by the HEIs and vary according to the programme. For regulated professions (medicine, including veterinary, medicine, law and education) students must pass a State Certification Test for practicing in addition to obtaining a relevant academic degree. There are no legal restrictions for accessibility to further levels of higher education: all Bachelor (or equivalent) can access Master programmes and all Master (or equivalent) can access doctoral programmes.

3.2.8 Certification

The authority responsible for certification is the higher education institution. Upon completion of the first level of higher education, the student receives a diploma with his/her relevant professional title, average degree and the number of ECTS earned. The student also receives a diploma supplement, which contains information regarding the level, type and content of the studies successfully finished.

The National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement implements a validation procedure of Georgian Educational Documents provided to students in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, the educational resource centres, the education institutions eligible to conduct educational activities on the Georgian territory and other entities.

Upon validation of the educational documents issued in Georgia, National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement shall establish, whether the person concerned has passed an educational programme either partially or fully, also the fact of issuance of a relevant document on awarding qualification thereto and their compatibility with the Georgian legislation.

Any educational document, issued in Georgia and intended for the use abroad is subject to legalisation under the responsibility of the National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement. Legalising a document means certifying the authenticity of a signature, powers of a signatory, seal or stamp of the document.

3.3 Short-Cycle Higher Education

The Georgian higher education system considers the establishment of Short-Cycle education (120 ECTS), though at this stage such programmes are not yet established.

3.4 Second Cycle Programmes

3.4.1 Branches of Study

Study programmes of second cycle (Master) consist of no less than 120 credits. There is an increased trend to develop interdisciplinary master programmes. The list of branches remains the same described in section 3.2.1.

3.4.2 Admission Requirements

Formal prerequisite for the admission to a Master's degree programme is a Bachelor's or equivalent academic degree. The admission procedures on Master's level are managed by the National Assessment and Examinations Centre.

3.4.3 Curriculum

Curriculum development is solely under the responsibility of the HEI. Usually Master programmes include a 30 ECTS thesis or creative project, but different variations are possible.

3.4.4 Teaching Methods

Please see section 3.2.4.

3.4.5 Progression of Students

Please see section 3.2.5.

3.4.6 Employability

Obtaining a Master's degree does not guarantee a significant increase in income, but increases the chance of getting a job by at least 70% when compared to an individual with only a bachelor's degree. Therefore, graduate studies are a means of increasing employment chances in Georgia.

3.4.7 Student Assessment

Please see section 3.2.7.

3.4.8 Certification

Please see section 3.2.8.

3.5 Programmes outside the Bachelor and Master Structure

Exception to the traditional two-cycle degree programmes are programmes in the fields of medicine and teacher education. Programmes in Medicine (360 ECTS, ca. six years), Dental Medicine (300 ECTS, ca. five years) and Teacher Education (300 ECTS, ca. five years) are defined as long term/integrated programmes equivalent to the Master's level.

3.6 Third Cycle (PhD) Programmes

3.6.1 Organisation of Doctoral Studies

The third cycle (doctorate programme) consists of no less than 180 credits. Only masters or persons with equivalent academic degrees have the right to study in doctoral programmes. Doctoral programmes consist of taught courses/modules (usually no more than 60 ECTS) and research components. Different approaches are possible.

3.6.2 Admission Requirements

After the successful completion of the Master's level (second cycle) students are allowed to proceed to the Doctoral Level.

The admission procedures at Doctoral level are managed by the HEIs themselves. The procedures and the requirements differ from one HEI to the other and depend on the internal regulations and rules established by each institution.

3.6.3 Status of Doctoral Students/Candidates

The doctoral students are legally considered as students. With this status, in some HEIs, doctoral students are allowed to assist academic staff and are involved in the teaching process.

3.6.4 Supervision Arrangements

Responsibilities between doctoral students, supervisors and universities are regulated by the HEIs statutes and other internal documents. There is no unified approach to the supervision arrangements at national level.

3.6.5 Employability

Statistical data on employment of doctoral degree holders is not available, neither information on any special measures to facilitate their access to the labour market.

3.6.6 Assessment

Assessment criteria and process of doctoral students is defined by the university, namely by the Dissertation Council, the body awarding the academic degree of doctor. There is no general regulation at national level.

3.6.7 Certification

Please see section 3.2.7.

4 Teachers and Education Staff

4.1 Initial Education for Academic Staff in Higher Education

There is no special organisation responsible for training of academic staff and no usual programmes for academic staff training.

4.2 Conditions of Service for Academic Staff Working in Higher Education

There is no special decision-making body responsible for the different phases of academic careers – from entry to the profession until retirement covering thus issues such as recruitment, professional status of academic staff, salaries and promotion, working time and duties, mobility, retirement etc. The categories of academic staff and qualifications needed to access these categories, as well as the requirements for selection are stipulated in the Law on Higher Education.

According to the law, the academic staff of a higher education institution shall consist of professors, associate professors and assistant professors. Professors shall be involved and/or lead the study process and research. The threshold workload of a professor shall be defined by the higher education institution”.

The number of professors⁹ (all categories) in state-recognised Georgian HEIs in 2016 amounted to 6.991, of which 1,986 were professors, 3,745 associate professors and 1,260 assistant professors. Women represent 52.5% of the academic staff. HEIs can invite lecturers from other universities or scientific institutions to teach and/or supervise students. In some HEIs invited professors exceed the core staff.

4.2.1 Planning Policy

There is no planning policy for academic staff supply and demand at national level.

4.2.2 Entry to the Profession

An HEI has academic, administrative and support staff. The academic staff consists of professors, associate professors and assistant professors. The post of professor may be acquired only by a person holding a doctoral degree and having at least six years of experience in teaching and research (in terms of Art's disciplines at least eight years of experience in teaching, research and/or creative professions). A professor leads the study process and supervises the research work of associate professors, assistant professors and students. The post of associate professor may be acquired only by a person holding a doctoral degree and having at least three years of experience in teaching and research. An associate professor takes part in the main study process and supervises the research of assistant professors and students. The post of assistant professor may be acquired by a person holding a doctoral degree.

The teaching load of professors is defined and approved by the HEI.

The rules for filling academic posts are the same for public and private HEIs. An academic post may be filled only on the basis of an open competition based on the principles of transparent, equal and fair competition. The date and conditions of the competition are made public in accordance with the procedures prescribed by the Georgian legislation and the HEI's respective charter, not later than one month prior to the registration and two months prior to the competition.

Besides the rules set by the law, the HEI may define additional conditions for the selection of academic staff. Employment contracts for academic staff are concluded for the terms as defined by the labour legislation. At public higher education institution this procedure shall be defined by the Academic Council and approved by the Council of Representatives of the university. According to the Law on Higher Education, the professors (and experts in the Art's field) are appointed for a non-limited period of time.

4.2.3 Professional Status

Academic staff is appointed in accordance with the general employment legislation.

4.2.4 Salaries

Both public and private higher education institutions are autonomous in establishing their own norms and scales of academic staff salaries. There is no general rule determining salary rates at national level.

⁹Statistical data provided by NCEQE (www.eqe.ge)

4.2.5 Working Time and Holidays

Employment contracts for academic staff are concluded in line with the terms defined by the labour legislation.

4.2.6 Promotion, Advancement

Promotion and advancement conditions are defined by the HEI itself. It may even differ within one institution according to the profile of the department.

4.2.7 Retirement and Pensions

A labour contract with the academic personnel shall be made commensurate with the law of Georgia. Tenure track can be introduced and retirement age can be set in the statute of the higher education institution.

4.3 Continuing Professional Development for Academic Staff Working in Higher Education

4.3.1 Organisational Aspects

There are no requirements established by the Law in terms of professional development. Generally the professional development of academic staff is linked to their scientific and research activities. Some special conditions and requirements may be set by the particular HEI.

4.3.2 Incentives for Participation in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Activities

There are no regulations or determined benefits or incentives for academic staff to undertake CPD activities. It is up to HEI policy to elaborate some rules and incentives in this regard. However, scientific and research activities, such as publications or obtaining research grants are considered important for professional development and career promotion. The qualification of academic staff is considered as one of the main tools of quality assurance. One of the requirements of the educational programme accreditation states that *"The infrastructure and technical appliances of the institution ensure the attainment of learning outcomes, envisaged by the educational programme, what shall be evidenced by: in the case of personnel – scientific works, accomplished for the past 10 years (in the field of fine arts – a creative project), which certifies his/her competencies in the respective field; and in the case of an invited personnel and teachers – can be evidenced by practical experience"*.

5 Management and Other Education Staff for Higher Education

5.1 Requirements for Appointment

The Law on Higher Education defines responsibilities and roles of administration for public HEIs whereas the private HEIs are free to choose any management system.

The managerial bodies (managerial entities) of a higher education institution established under public law shall be the Academic Council, the Senate, the Rector and the Chancellor.

The Academic Council is the highest representative body of a public HEI. The Academic Council members shall be elected by all the members of the academic staff of the basic educational units of the higher education institution and by the representatives of the students' self-governance (members of the basic educational units) through direct, free and equal elections and using secret ballot. The Academic Council drafts and approves the strategic development plan of the HEI, approves the study and research programmes and is in general responsible for the academic processes at the HEI.

The representative body of a higher education institution established under public law shall be the Council of Representative (Senate), which shall be elected from amongst the representatives of the basic structural units of the higher education institution, separately by the students and the academic staff, pro

rata to their number in the basic educational units. The minimum number of members of the Council of Representatives should not be less than the double of the number of the members of the Academic Council members and shall be defined in the statutes of the institution. The students shall represent one-third of the entire Council of Representatives.

In public HEIs, the Rector is the head of the higher education institution and is therefore the highest academic official. He/she represents the HEI in the academic and research fields both within the country and abroad. He/she is therefore entitled to enter into agreements and transactions on behalf of the HEI. The rector of a higher education institution established by the state cannot be elected for more than two consecutive terms of office (four years each). This period cannot exceed the duration of two periods of the basic educational cycle. The statutes of a higher education institution may provide for the minimal qualification required from the candidates.

Public higher education institutions shall be represented in financial and economic relationships by the Head of Administration (Chancellor). The same person can be appointed as Chancellor only for two consecutive terms (four years). This period should not exceed the duration of two terms of the basic educational cycle.

5.2 Conditions of Service

The specific rules for the recruitment and professional status of the administrative staff are defined by the law on Higher Education for the public HEIs. Each HEI can also determine additional requirements.

6 Quality Assurance in Higher Education

6.1 Responsible Bodies

The Georgia's system of external quality assurance comprises the authorization and accreditation procedures. A special state authority, the National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement¹⁰ (NCEQE), has been established in 2005 to processes. It operates in compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area and the Laws of Georgia on "Higher Education" (December 2004) and "Education Quality Enhancement" (July 2010).

The mission of the NCEQE is *"in line with the country's overall strategy and collective goals of integration into the international community, the continuous work on the development of the education quality concept and aims to create and maintain up-to-date standards and ensure related mechanisms for compliance and continuous improvement. Hence the National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement supports the establishment of the necessary teaching and academic conditions within higher, vocational and general education institutions"*.

The NCEQE is independent in its activities. The Director of the Centre is appointed by the Minister of Education and Science (MoES) whose candidacy is agreed with the Prime Minister. At the same time, the members of the Authorisation and Accreditation Boards are nominated by the MoES and appointed by the Prime Minister. Each Board consists of 9 members whose term of office lasts one year. The members of the Authorization and Accreditation Boards cannot be public officials. The responsibilities of the boards are defined by their respective charters, which guarantee the independent functioning of the boards with regards to the education and state institutions.

Since November 2013, the NCEQE is an affiliate member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

Public Higher Education Institutions are obliged by Law (Law on Higher Education, Article 25) to establish and operate internal Quality Assurance units. Private HEIs are also developing such internal QA

¹⁰ www.eqe.ge

structures. There is no central regulation for carrying out internal quality assurance since it is left to the autonomy of the HEIs.

6.2 Approaches and Methods for Quality Assurance

The mechanisms of quality assurance are defined by the law on "Education Quality Enhancement" (July 2010). The Quality Assurance System in Georgia consists of internal and external QA mechanisms.

The internal self-evaluation is carried out by the education institutions in line with their own procedures of evaluation and the results should be summarised in an annual self-evaluation report. The self-evaluation report is the basis of the external quality assurance. External QA is implemented through the authorization and accreditation procedures.

The "authorisation" is the instrument for the external evaluation of the compatibility of an institution with the national standards and certifies the internal (self) evaluation. The authorisation is obligatory for all types of education institutions in order to carry out educational activities and to issue an educational document approved by the state.

The "Programme Accreditation" is a type of external evaluation mechanism, which determines the compatibility of an educational programme with the national standards. State funding goes only to accredited programmes. Accreditation is mandatory for doctoral programmes and regulated professions as well as for the Georgian language and Liberal Arts.

The procedures for authorization and accreditation are similar. A special expert commission is set up by the NCEQE upon request of the HEI. The commission performs an authorization/accreditation visit followed by a report. The authorization/accreditation board makes a decision after an oral hearing. The positive or negative decision shall be made within a period of 90 days following the recognition of the HEI as an applicant for the external QA procedure.

The authorization of the higher educational institutions is carried out in accordance with three main standards about:

- (1) The academic programmes of the higher education institutions
- (2) The material resources
- (3) The human resources

Additionally, each authorization standard consists of six sub-standards concerning: the material resources necessary for academic-research activities (space, inventory, library, etc.), the human resource management, the academic-research processes, the regulations regarding quality assurance and security, the formal and content-related issues of the academic programmes, the qualifications of the academic staff, etc.

The accreditation of the programmes shall aim at the establishment of a regular self-evaluation by the education institutions in view of the improvement of the educational quality and the promotion of quality assurance mechanisms. The accreditation is based on the evaluation of the compatibility of the educational programme with the following accreditation standards:

- The goals of the educational programme, the learning outcomes and the compatibility between both of them
- The methodology and organisation of teaching
- The student performance and individual work with students
- The provision of teaching resources
- The potential for future enhancement of the educational quality

According to these standards, the following issues are typically included in the programme accreditation process: teaching, research, student support services, admission processes, employability, internal QA, human resources.

Students are not included in the evaluation (expert/peer review) teams, but students' involvement in the self-evaluation is one of the assessment criteria and students are members of the Authorization Board.

The authorization and accreditation standards, the detailed description of the procedures, as well as the board meeting protocols are published on the NCEQE website¹¹. The evaluation reports shall be prepared after the visit of the expert commission and shall be presented to the NCEQE within timelines as specified by the order of the Director of the NCEQE. The NCEQE shall ensure the presentation of the report of the evaluation commission to the applicant. The evaluation reports are made public unless, the applicant considers this documentation a commercial secret.

The authorization and accreditation standards are the same for public and private HEI and are granted for five years.

The NCEQE covers all public and private higher education institutions for external QA issues.

7 Educational Support and Guidance

7.1 Support Measures for Learners in Higher Education

7.1.1 Definition of the Target Group(s)

The Georgian Law on Higher Education (article 89¹, 89², 89⁷) defines the target groups for the students' social assistance programme. This programme targets the bachelor and master levels. Each year a special decree of the Georgian Government defines the amount and conditions of the programme. The disadvantaged learners include the following categories: learners from mountain and eco migration regions; learners from occupied territories; orphans; learners with personal disabilities; learners from families deported during the soviet period; learners from villages on the border-lines of the occupied territories; affected as a result of natural disasters; learners from families with dependent children; learners from families with low income; learners who graduated from Azeri and Armenian secondary schools in the last three years.

7.1.2 Specific Support Measures

The specific support measures are limited to language and financial support.

There is a centralized approach and special programmes offering Georgian language preparation programmes to non-Georgian language speakers at the initial stage of the Bachelor level education. The Georgian language preparation programme is offered to Georgian citizens who have passed the Unified National Examinations in other language than Georgian (Abkhaz, Azeri, Ossetian and Armenian) to allow them to continue their studies in the Bachelor's programmes and programmes of Doctor of Medicine/Doctor of Dental Medicine. The programme is worth 60 ECTS and may only be taken during the first year of studies and, eventually, the higher education institution issues a certificate of completion of the programme. After completing the Georgian Language Preparation Programme, students, according to their choices, continue their studies in the Bachelor's programme, programme of Doctor of Medicine/Doctor of Dental Medicine at the same higher education institution.

Between 6 and 10% of all scholarships provided according to the law on Higher Education are allocated to students with social needs (see section 7.1.1). In the academic year 2015-2016, a total of 868 students have been funded completely or partially and the budget of "social grants" amounted to 2,520,000 GEL¹².

¹¹ Authorization <http://ege.ge/eng/static/9/authorisation> Accreditation http://ege.ge/eng/static/11/eng_khariskhis-uzrunvelkofa/accreditation

¹² Statistical data on social grants: Ministry of Education and Science <http://www.mes.gov.ge/content.php?id=4231&lang=geo>

7.2 Guidance and Counselling in Higher Education

7.2.1 Career Guidance

Student career services, as special structural units, function only in some Georgian HEIs. The majority of these service providers have been established and started working in the framework of a Tempus project. Those career guidance centres are offering different types of services for students including special courses on academic writing (CV, motivation letters), as well as counselling on choosing academic courses, providing information on career paths and employability.

8 Mobility and internationalisation in Higher Education

8.1 Student Mobility

One of the goals of higher education in Georgia, as defined by the Law on Higher Education (Article 3) is "... to encourage the mobility of students and academic staff of higher education institutions". The same article later specifies the role of the HEIs: "*To achieve the goals set forth in Paragraph 1 of this article the higher education institution shall ... foster international cooperation and student/professor exchange with the relevant foreign educational institutions*". At the same time, article 359 of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement (signed in June 2014) stipulates that "...cooperation in the field of education and training shall focus on ... reinforcing international academic cooperation, participation in EU cooperation programmes, increasing student and teacher mobility". Thus, the importance of mobility programmes is stipulated both in the local legislation and in international treaties of Georgia and the motivation of HEIs and students/staff to participate is very high.

The most popular student/staff mobility programme in Georgia is the Erasmus+ Credit Mobility action preceded by the Erasmus Mundus Action 2. EM A2 started in 2007 and since then 17 Georgian HEIs participated in 23 consortia and the number of mobilities amounted to 847 (747 students and 100 academic/administrative staff). The new Erasmus+ Credit Mobility action involves so far 32 Georgian HEIs and for the period 2015-2017 concerns 888 scholarships (697 outgoing and 191 incoming individuals) and for the period 2016-2018 1,472 scholarships (942 outgoing and 530 incoming individuals)¹³. The Erasmus+ student mobility projects are organized and coordinated by partner HEIs.

The universities are also in charge of establishing and implementing other short-term student mobility programmes on the basis of bilateral agreements with different partner HEIs.

The scholarships for student mobility, offered by different donor organisations, are managed by these organisations according to their rules and selection criteria – German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), Mevlana (Turkey), CIMO (Finland), etc. Those international donors offer both short-term and degree mobility programmes.

There are two national programmes providing scholarships for student mobility:

- The International Education Centre¹⁴, established in 2014 by the aegis of Prime Minister of Georgia, is aimed at encouraging young people in Georgia to get involved in students' academic mobility and obtain internationally recognized master and doctoral degree(s) at world leading universities. Once the scholarship recipients complete their state-funded course(s), the master and doctoral programme graduates must return to Georgia and continue working in the relevant sector for at least three years. The most successful graduates will be offered profiled state employment.
- The Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation¹⁵ offers scholarships for doctoral students to conduct research at scientific institutions abroad.

¹³ Statistical data on mobility numbers: National Erasmus+ Office Georgia www.erasmusplus.org.ge

¹⁴ <http://iec.gov.ge>

¹⁵ www.rustaveli.org.ge

The recognition of periods of study abroad and degrees obtained outside Georgia is regulated by the Georgian Law on Higher Education (Article 50). "A qualification acquired at a foreign higher education institution or the education acquired during the period of study at a foreign higher education institution shall be recognized only in the case of establishing their compatibility with the respective qualification, awarded by Georgian higher education institutions. The compatibility can be established on the basis of learning outcomes and awarded qualification irrespective of the difference in programme duration. A qualification acquired at a foreign higher education institution or the education acquired during the period of study at a foreign higher education institution shall be recognised by the National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement according to the procedures defined in the international agreements of Georgia by the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia".

8.2 Academic Staff Mobility

The only national programme for academic staff mobility is offered by the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation and consists of several sub-programmes:

- Short-term Individual Travel Grants – to support participation of Georgian scientists in international scientific events
- Presidential Grants for Young Scientists - to provide funding for one-year duration individual research projects of young scientists and engineers, irrespective of the fields of science, in order to attract young people to and retain them in science and assist in strengthening their capabilities. The grant is to cover travel expenses, purchase of equipment, charges for publication, salaries, etc.
- Competitive Grants for Internships Abroad - The competition is designed to provide young scientists with opportunities to visit Leading Universities and Research Centres abroad and facilitate early career development of talented young Georgian scholars.

Popular international staff mobility programmes are also offered by DAAD (Germany), Humboldt Foundation (Germany), Fulbright (USA), etc.

The Erasmus+ Credit Mobility action is one of the most well-known and demanded programme, currently involving 24 Georgian HEIs and fostering mobility of academic and administrative staff of HEIs.

8.3 Other Dimensions of Internationalisation in Higher Education

8.3.1 European, Global and Intercultural Dimension in Curriculum Development

The EU-Georgia Association Agreement is supporting approximation to relevant EU policies and practices, meaning also promoting the modernisation of the education and training systems and the quality in higher education in a manner which is consistent with the EU Modernisation Agenda for Higher Education and the Bologna process (Article 359).

The most efficient activities to support the modernisation of the higher education system have been implemented in the framework of Tempus and now Erasmus+ Capacity Building projects and concerned mainly curricular and governance reforms. The Erasmus+ transnational cooperation projects, based on multilateral partnerships, contribute significantly to the introduction of a European dimension in curriculum development. Since 1995, up to 80% of all projects funded by the EU programmes have been implemented in the field of curricular reform, covering different subject areas and different levels of higher education. The implementation of ECTS, modern teaching, learning and assessment methods have led to the development of curricula compatible with European standards. The implementation of newly developed programmes increased the numbers of students enrolling, as reported by the universities.

8.3.2 Partnerships and Networks

Establishing partnerships and networks with HEIs from abroad is one of the most popular internationalisation initiatives of the Georgian universities, although the level of success differs from one institution to the other, depending on the resources available.

The Tempus and Erasmus Mundus programmes, followed by Erasmus+, have significantly contributed to the development of relationships between Georgian and European universities, opening possibilities for cooperation not only in the framework of these programmes. Many Tempus projects resulted in establishing new consortia for research and policy development initiatives, as well as programmes in the field of youth.

8.4 Bilateral Agreements and Worldwide Cooperation

8.4.1 Bilateral Agreements

The majority of Georgian HEIs have established bilateral cooperation with universities in the EU countries, the USA, Turkey, post-soviet countries and other regions. This cooperation is aimed at student and staff exchanges, collaboration in research and curriculum development, focusing on the elaboration and implementation of joint or double degree study programmes.

The most important bilateral agreement at national level has been signed with the EU in July 2014 (EU-Georgia Association Agreement) determining among others cooperation in the field of higher education.

8.4.2 Cooperation and Participation in Worldwide Programmes and Organisations

Several Georgian HEIs are involved in worldwide programmes, networks and organisations, such as the:

- European University Association
- EUA Council for Doctoral Education (EUA-CDE)
- Black Sea Universities Network
- Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie
- International Association of Universities
- Magna Charta Observatory
- Orpheus, etc.

The Georgian national quality assurance agency (National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement) is an affiliate member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education and seeks full membership.

9 On-going reforms and Policy developments

9.1 Overall national education strategy and key objectives

A long-term strategic vision about the development of the education system in Georgia has not been adopted yet.

In 2013 a group of non-governmental and international organisations gathered together. Its goal was to support the state structures and it mobilized the general public and the stakeholders concerned to participate in the process of identifying the country's strategic priorities for higher education and science¹⁶. The goal also entailed developing a strategic plan for the transformation of the sector on the one hand, and evaluating and analysing the strengths and weaknesses of the current higher education system, on the other. In the following year, the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia prepared a

¹⁶<http://erasmusplus.org.ge/files/publications/Strategic%20Development%20of%20HE%20and%20Science%20in%20Georgia%20-%20en.pdf>

document on the “Strategic directions for the development of education and science in Georgia”¹⁷ which is still under discussion and waiting for official approval.

9.2 Overview of the education reform process and drivers

Different aspects of higher education reforms can be initiated directly by the HEIs, the non-governmental organisations or in most cases by the government itself. However, the main drivers of the process are definitely the Ministry of Education and Science and the Parliament of Georgia, namely its Education, Science and Culture Committee.

The Parliament of Georgia is defining the key priorities of the higher education policy and management and adopts the respective legislative acts, whereas the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia is in charge of monitoring the education system and preparing the legal acts, changes and amendments in the law and proposes them to the parliamentary committee. The National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement has the same function, but limited to the quality assurance standards and procedures.

9.3 National reforms in Higher Education

9.3.1 2015

Amendments to the Law on Higher Education were adopted in order to:

- Support and enhance the development of joint/multiple degree programmes
- Introduce new 300 ECTS teacher education programmes
- Enhance research capacities of universities through the integration of scientists into the teaching process

Cooperation agreements with CERN (The European Organisation for Nuclear Research), DUBNA (The Joint Institute for Nuclear Research, Russia) JÜLICH RESEARCH CENTRE (The Interdisciplinary Research Centre, Germany), CNR (The National Research Council, Italy), CNRS (The National Centre for Scientific Research, France), STCU (Science and Technology Centre in Ukraine), ISTC (The International Science and Technology Centre), CRDF-Global (The Organization for International Scientific and Technical Collaboration, USA), and ELSEVIER BV (The Netherlands) have been signed/renewed. The Negotiations with the EU Horizon 2020 programme about the associate status of Georgia were completed.

9.3.2 2014

Amendments to the Law on Higher Education were adopted in order to support the international mobility of students thanks to the clarification of the status of mobile student and the recognition procedures of the periods of studies abroad

The document “Strategic directions for the development of education and science in Georgia” was elaborated by the Ministry of Education and Science and public discussions started.

9.3.3 2013

State funding was increased in order to enhance access to higher education:

- The government was fully funding 21 prioritized bachelor programmes
- The scholarship programme for students from vulnerable groups was increased by 2.6 times.

10 Legislation

1. Law of Georgia on Higher Education (December 2004) (sakartvelos kanoni umaglesi ganatlebis shesaxeb)

¹⁷ <http://www.mes.gov.ge/uploads/strategia..pdf> (available only in Georgian language)

- <http://eqe.ge/res/docs/2014120816022280962.pdf>
2. Law of Georgia on Education Quality Enhancement (July 2010) (sakartvelos kanoni ganatlebis xarixis ganvitarebis shesaxeb)
<http://eqe.ge/res/docs/2014120816015474706.pdf>
 3. The Regulation for the Accreditation of Educational Programmes of the Educational Institutions and Accreditation Fee (May 2010) (saganmanatleblo dazesebulebebis saganmanatleblo programebis akreditaciis debulebisa da safasuris damtkicebis shesaxeb)
<http://eqe.ge/res/docs/2014120816044720740.pdf>
 4. The Educational Institutions Authorisation Charter and Authorisation Fees (October 2010) (saganmanatleblo dazesebulebebis avtorizaciis debulebisa da safasuris damtkizebis shesaxeb)
<http://eqe.ge/res/docs/2014120816050796823.pdf>
 5. The procedure of movement between Higher Education Institutions (February 2010) (umaglesi saganmanatleblo dazesebulebidan sxva umagles saganmanatleblo dazesebulebashi gadasvlis zesis damtkizebis shesaxeb)
<http://eqe.ge/res/docs/2014120816071260056.pdf>
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