



**Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani**  
UNIVERSITY

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## **Quality Assurance Mechanisms, Assessment Results and their Application Procedure**

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## 1. General Provisions

### 1. Quality Assurance

- 1.1. Quality assurance aims to ensure high-quality teaching by implementing modern methods of learning, teaching, research and assessment. The Quality Management Service ensures the quality of a) educational programmes, b) the learning process, c) academic staff members, and d) learning outcomes.
- 1.2. The application of quality assessment results aims at improving educational products, perfecting them constantly and tailoring them to users' needs for the purposes of adjusting them to the European Quality Assurance System and the requirements of the higher education standards of Georgia.
- 1.3. Quality assessment results constitute the crucial document for ensuring quality, which must provide answers for the following questions at least: what was planned (targets), what is the existing situation like, and how big is the margin of error. Based on this, problems must be identified, analyzed, assessed, the corresponding conclusions made and methods of improvement formulated, which will be included in quality assessment reviews.
- 1.4. The Quality Assurance Service operates using the common university PDCA principle: P (plan), D (do), C (check), and A (act), according to which the Quality Assurance Service plans its activities, determines aspects of university activities to be checked and assessed, their order, formulates the criteria for checking these aspects, in consideration of the inspection specifications, determines an inspector's or inspectors' competencies, ensures that inspection is carried out in accordance with the formulated plan and criteria, checks itself and/or creates the group of inspectors with the corresponding competencies for the purposes of conducting inspections, analyses of the achieved results, determines the reasons of faults and draws up the corresponding recommendations to eradicate them, identifies the mechanisms to improve faults detected, maintain achieved results, and controls implementation of measures planned. From this it follows that:
  - 1.5. 1.5. Planning: In accordance with the strategic university development plan and this Document, the Quality Assurance Service specifies activities to be carried out each academic year, which is included in the annual action plan.
  - 1.6. Doing: The preparatory stages for doing/implementation are as follows: Determination of inspection order, the facilities to be inspected and assessed, determination and formulation of adequate assessment criteria for facilities to be checked and assessed, formulation of assessment procedures and assessment and result analysis forms, as well as determination of the assessor's or assessors' competencies in accordance with the facility to be assessed. For the purposes of ensuring objectivity of checking/assessment and/or in view of inspection specifications, the Quality Assurance Service may create the monitoring group which will be composed of university staff members with the corresponding competencies or invited specialists with the corresponding qualifications.

Monitoring group members cannot be employees of an institution whose operation is to be evaluated, the head of an educational programme to be assessed or the author of a course syllabus. Before an assessment stage, the Quality Assurance Service informs monitoring group members about specifications of the facility whose operation is to be evaluated and the assessment to be carried out, familiarizes them to the objectives set and trains them, if required.

- 1.7. *Check*: The checking/assessment process covers the checking/assessment process, the acquisition of required information from the structural units of the corresponding university to ensure proper functioning of the monitoring group and control of the operation of the monitoring group. To determine whether or not they meet the standards, the Quality Assurance Service will check: educational programs, courses/programme components envisaged in educational programmes, the learning/teaching process and quality, academic/invited specialists, and others.
- 1.8. *Act*: This stage involves subjecting inspection to analysis and assessing results, making the corresponding conclusions, formulating recommendations, determining measures to be taken, drawing up written opinions and recommendations by the Quality Assurance Service, and oral presentation. Considering that internal assessment is aimed to maintain the achieved results, eradicate the existing faults and issues and is conducted to ensure, improve and develop learning/teaching quality and adjust it to the standards specified, in the event of discovering deviations from the standards, the corresponding response, planning and implementation of necessary measures are required.

## 2. Quality Assurance Mechanisms

- 2.1. Internal and external quality assurance mechanisms are in place at Sulkhani-Saba Orbeliani University.
- 2.2. The internal quality assurance mechanisms are mechanisms which:
  - a) develop and assess educational programmes;
  - b) assess the achievement of the outcomes of teaching educational programmes;
  - c) evaluate the learning process of educational programmes;
  - d) assess academic/invited personnel in charge of educational programmes;
- 2.3. External quality assurance mechanisms are as follows:
  - a) authorisation and accreditation carried out by the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement.
  - b) authorisation and accreditation standards of the corresponding country, internationally recognized English-language accreditation institutions and/or joint educational programmes, and/or separate components of educational programmes, except for those of the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement.

c) use of collegial evaluation made by Georgian and/or foreign colleagues from other higher educational institutions, if required, for the purposes of improving the programme.

### **3. Data and Methods of Analysis**

3.1. Surveys involving academic and invited specialists, employers, students and graduates are held at the university to develop educational programmes. Surveys aim to determine the existing situation based on which the core requirements to be envisaged in the educational programme will be specified.

3.2. A four-stage questionnaire analysis cycle is in place at the university. Initially, data are collected according to individual questionnaires. The second stage involves the comparison of data with the corresponding components of a benchmark year and the previous reporting year according to the questionnaires. Mid-term assessment results are received (mid-term results 1.1.-1.16) at the third stage through grouping the components of individual questionnaires and compared to the corresponding mid-term results of the benchmark year and the previous reporting period. At the final stage, the final results of the quality assessment (quality assessment 2.1-2.4) are produced and compared with those of the benchmark year and the reporting period.

### **4. Educational Programme Assessment Mechanisms**

4.1. Two types of assessment are carried out at the university:

- a) an assessment of educational programs which are being formulated and
- b) an assessment of current educational programmes for the purposes of their further development.

4.2. Assessment objectives and tools for each educational programme are different.

### **5. Assessment of educational programmes in their formulation phase**

5.1. The assessment of an educational program aims to determine if:

- a) the educational program fully meets the requirements of a potential employer and envisages opinions of academic or invited personnel;
- b) the educational program is in line with the university's internationalization strategy;
- c) an educational program fully complies with authorisation and accreditation standards and
- d) the learning process and academic personnel ensure the quality of education necessary to achieve objectives a and b. Consequently, The Quality Assessment Service applies different assessment mechanisms.

5.2. Academic and invited personnel as well as potential employer professional associations are involved in the formulation of educational programmes. For this purposes, they have drawn up:

- a) a labour market survey questionnaire (Annex 3/8 1.1);

- b) an educational programme assessment questionnaire by the academic/invited personnel (Annex 3/0 1.2);
- 5.3. 5.1-5 Components are assessed through determining if learning outcomes meet employers' requirements. A supervisor of the corresponding programme ensures that Annex 3/0 1.1 and Annex 3/0 1.2 are sent to the academic and invited personnel and potential employers. On the bases of produced data, the program supervisor must draw up a working version of the educational programme.
  - 5.4. 5.1-6 Components are assessed through comparing the educational programmes carried out by an educational programme supervisor with similar programmes of partner higher-educational institutions.
  - 5.5. 5.1-8 Components are assessed through adjusting educational programmes and their individual components (programme objectives, teaching and learning methods, the field of employment, study methods, assessment methods, the assessment system, learning outcomes, used literature, the course structure, distribution of hours, the number of credits, syllabi, and others) to authorisation and accreditation standards that is ensured by the quality management system.
  - 5.6. 5.1-9 Components are assessed through analyzing the factual data and qualification requirements of the academic or invited personnel in charge of the programme, which is performed by the Quality Management Service together with the faculty dean.
  - 5.7. The methodology for initiating, planning, formulating and developing an educational programme and its approval procedure that verifies correspondence in accordance with this procedure and its annexes is in place to assess educational programmes and their structural elements \_ modules and individual course programmes (syllabi).
  - 5.8. The Quality Assurance Service determines whether the given educational programme has been developed in accordance with predetermined forms provided by the Order on Methodology for Planning, Formulating, Developing the Educational Programme and its Approval Procedure, as well as its annex forms. Educational programmes only may be approved at academic board meetings if the opinion of the Quality Assurance Service is positive in this regard.
  - 5.9. The Quality Assurance Service determines the correspondence of field and general competence to the national qualification framework in accordance with the educational programme. Educational programmes only may be approved at academic board meetings if the opinion of the Quality Assurance Service is positive in this regard.
  - 5.10. The Quality Assurance Service determines the correspondence of educational programmes and their individual components (programme objectives, teaching and learning methods, the field of employment, study methods, assessment methods, assessment system, learning outcomes, used literature, the course structure, distribution of hours, the number of credits, syllabi, and others) with authorisation and accreditation standard requirements. Educational programmes

only may be approved at academic board meetings if the opinion of the Quality Assurance Service is positive in this regard.

## 6. Assessment Mechanism of Ongoing Educational Programmes

- 6.1. The objective of the assessment of the existing educational programme is to determine whether
  - a) the educational programme produces highly qualified personnel who is competitive on the labour market
  - b) educational programme components are carried out smoothly and
  - c) study outcomes are achieved by carrying out the components.
- 6.2. Academic and invited personnel, the employer, students, and graduates are involved in the assessment process. For this purpose, it has been developed:
  - a) a satisfaction survey of graduates of bachelor's or master's degree programmes (*Annex P/M 1.1*) and a satisfaction survey of graduates of a doctoral degree programme (*Annex P/M 1.1.1*)
  - b) "self-evaluation of the academic and invited personnel and educational programme monitoring." (*Annex T/sh 1.1 and P/M 1.2*)
  - c) „assessment of the educational programme and a lecturer by a student (*Annex T/sh 1.2 and P/M 1.3*) “; in the event of the master's degree programme, in addition to the mentioned above, the master's thesis supervisor's assessment questionnaire(*Annex K/SH 1.1*), while in relation to doctoral degree program components, “the assessment questionnaire of the supervisor of a research seminar” (*Annex D/SH 1.1*), the professor's assistance questionnaire (*Annex D/SH 1.2*) and the doctoral thesis assessment questionnaire.” (*Annex D/SH 1.3*); Questionnaire of the practice component (*Appendix P/K 1.1.*)
  - d) Bachelor's; Master's; One Cycl's educational programme assessment questionnaire by an employer (*Appendix P/M 1.4.*), while in the event of a doctoral programme, “the assessment questionnaire of a doctoral educational programme by an employer” (*Appendix P/M 1.4.1*).
  - e) "Questionnaire of students transferred by mobility" (*Annex M/G 1.1*), "Questionnaire of students transferred by mobility" (*Annex M/G 1.1*)
- 6.3. The Student Affairs Department fills in paragraph 6.2 and a and d questionnaires and generates data in a predetermined form (*Annex SH/SH 1.4, SH/SH 1.4.1, SH/SH 1.5 and SH/SH 1.5.1*). The Quality Management Service ensures filling in questionnaires envisaged in subparagraphs b, c and e of paragraph 6.2 and summarizing data in the predetermined format (*Annex KH/SH 2.1*).
- 6.4. The Quality Assurance Service gets familiarized with the assessment results of educational programmes (*Annex KH/SH 2.1*), the learning outcomes indicator (*Annex KH/SH 2.2*), the assessment result of the learning process (*Annex KH/SH 2.3*) and the assessment result of the academic and invited personnel based on which it studies the causes of changes; for this purpose, it introduces itself to opinions, complaints and recommendations by respondents in questionnaires and draws up the corresponding report if required.

6.5. The educational programme assessment report includes the following:

After analysing educational programme assessment results, if the necessity to respond to changes emerges, the Quality Management Service with the involvement of Programm leader and other structural unit draws up an “Educational Program Annual Evaluation Report” (*Annex A/N 1.1*) that is based on the data as follows:

- a) the assessment results of the educational programme of the previous year (*Annex KH/SH 2.1*) in relation to the quality assessment results of the reporting period.
- b) the study of a trend in accordance with its individual components and the analysis of the said trend.
- c) the identification of both strong and weak points on the basis of which new challenges are determined.
- d) the formulation of a recommendation package the fulfilment of which ensures the improvement of the quality of results. (This refers to the next reporting year’s);

6.6. The assessment of each educational program (*Annex KH/SH 2.1*) is carried out once a year; however, based on the specifications of the educational programme, the frequency may be modified.

## **7. Assessment Mechanism of Attainment of Educational Programme Learning Outcomes**

7.1. The assessment of attainment of learning outcomes aims to determine how effectively program learning outcomes are achieved following the corresponding activities.

7.2. Academic, invited personnel, employers, students and graduates are involved in the assessment process, with the following assessment indicators used:

- a) the educational programme assessment outcome (*Annex KH/SH 2.1*).
- b) the learning outcome attainment indicator. (*Annex KH/SH 2.2*.)

7.3. The faculty dean gets familiarized with the quality assessment outcomes *Annex KH/SH 2.1* and *Annex KH/SH 2.2*, which are extracted from the database according to an educational programme and following this, the learning outcome report is drawn up (*Annex A/N. 1.2*), while in the event of a doctoral programme, the doctoral school supervisor does so.

7.4. The learning outcome report comprises:

- a) the operational plan of the previous reporting period and its accomplishment indicators;
- b) the opinion (*Annex KH/SH 2.1* and *Annex KH/SH 2.2*.) on the quality assessment results during the current reporting period;
- c) the study of reasons of margin of error from a target benchmark through additional activities if required (e.g., in-depth interviews);
- d) the identification of both strong and weak points based on which new challenges are determined.

- e) the formulation of a recommendation package the fulfilment of which ensures the improvement of the quality of outcomes in the next reporting year.
- 7.5. The assessment of attainment of learning outcomes is positive if the assessment indicator meets the condition as follows: “in line with the standard requirements.”
- 7.6. The assessment of attainment of learning outcomes is carried out once a year in the event of bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degree programmes, and based on programme specifications, each term in the event of mandatory courses.

## **8. Learning Process Assessment Mechanism**

- 8.1. On the basis of analysis of learning process outcomes, the adequacy of teaching process shall be determined, basic issues identified, if any, and the methods to eradicate them must be formulated.
- 8.2. Academic, invited and administrative personnel, as well as students are involved in the evaluation process. For this purpose, the following has been formulated:
- a) students’ academic performance indicators (*Annex SH/SH 1.6*).
  - b) the assessment questionnaire of the environment in which academic and invited personnel, as well as students are (*Annex S/P 1.2*).
  - c) lecturer assessment questionnaire (*Annex T/SH 1.2 and P/M 1.3*); in addition to this, master’s degree thesis supervisor’s assessment questionnaire (*Annex K/SH 1.1*) in the event of a master’s programme, while in relation to doctoral degree program components, “the assessment questionnaire of the supervisor of a research seminar (*Annex D/SH 1.1*), the professor’s assistance questionnaire (*Annex D/SH 1.2*) and “a doctoral thesis assessment questionnaire” (*Annex D/SH 1.3*).
- 8.3. On the basis of the analysis of the learning process, the following information may be obtained:
- a) issues in the course of educational programme and the course;
  - b) how adequate study methods are in relation to assessment methods and criteria;
  - c) pedagogical qualities of the personnel in charge of the programme;
  - d) students’ academic performance indicators.
- 8.4. Within the framework of the learning process monitoring, by regular opinion surveys and the analysis of statistical information, the university gets information on the learning process, its individual elements and the characteristics of factors affecting students’ academic performance.
- 8.5. Students’ academic performance indicators envisage collecting of statistical information and analyzing them, which is ensured by the study process management module at the university. The basis of the statistical analysis of students’ academic performance is an electronic assessment database, which makes students’ attendance and assessment transparent enabling students to:
- a) control real-time assessments in all activities envisaged in a course syllabus;
  - b) ensure a consistent and timely completion of all activities;
- 8.5.1. Positive outcomes of “students’ academic performance monitoring” are as follows:



- a) students are assessed regularly, which increases their motivation;
  - b) each student's assessment is transparent, which increases the objectivity of assessment.
  - c) complete university-wide synchronisation of the learning process is ensured.
- 8.6. Students' academic performance monitoring system ensures ranking of students according to their scores. Target benchmarks of students' academic performance is deemed to be ECTS grading scale. ECTS ranking is based on students' position within the framework of the given evaluation. According to ECTS, students are grouped, which simplifies the interpretation of ranking. ECTS divides students into two categories: "pass" and "fail";
- 8.7. ECTS ranking scale constitutes a target benchmark of academic performance results effectiveness in accordance with which target benchmarks of those with passing grades are as follows: the best 10% are awarded an A-grade, the next 25% a B-grade, the following 30% a C-grade, the following 25% a D-grade and the final 10% an E-grade. The number of students in groups is essential for ECTS ranking. If a large number of students is assessed for the same course or module simultaneously, the situation is simplified as assessment results may be directly used for the ECTS ranking. The group of students in which at least 60% is awarded pass, is considered a minimum number required for a proper assessment.
- 8.8. The e-system for learning process management ensures that the process of filling in questionnaires and collecting data go smoothly. The Quality Management Service summarizes data in a pre-determined format (*Annex KH/SH 2.3* and *Annex SH/I 1.2*) and sends produced results to the faculty dean, while in the event of a doctoral programme, to a doctoral school supervisor.
- 8.9. The faculty dean and the Quality Management Service get familiarized with quality assessment results and study the causes of changes; for this purpose, they introduce themselves to opinions, complaints and recommendations by respondents in questionnaires.
- 8.10. The Quality Management Service draws up an opinion on learning process assessment (*Annex D2*, which comprises information according to each educational programme).
- 8.11. The opinion on the learning process assessment includes:
- a) last year's operational plan and its accomplishment indicators;
  - b) an opinion on quality assessment results during the current reporting period (*Annex KH/SH 2.3*);
  - c) the study of a trend according to individual components and the analysis of causes of the said trend;
  - d) the identification of both strong and weak points based on which new challenges are determined.
  - e) the formulation of a recommendation package the fulfilment of which ensures the improvement of the quality of outcomes within a reasonable term.

8.12. The assessment of the learning process is positive if the assessment indicator meets the condition as follows: “in line with the standard requirements.”

8.13. The assessment of the learning process is carried out once a year.

## 9. Academic Assessment Mechanism of Academic and Invited Personnel

9.1. The quality of academic personnel is determined by their teaching qualifications and general competence. The primary function of academic personnel is sharing knowledge with students. To determine the quality of teaching, use of the following criteria is recommended:

a) effective programme planning and formulating skills: drawing up syllabi, use of adequate teaching and assessment methods, involvement in the formulation of curricula, and others.

b) The skill to teach, share knowledge with students, interest them, effectively communicate with them and objectively assess them.

c) competence in the corresponding field \_ knowledge of the corresponding subject, and the ability to keep up with changes and innovations;

d) the skill to manage a course \_ fulfilling different course-related duties, such as providing consultations.

9.2. To assess teaching competence, they use the methods as follows:

a) self-assessment by the academic and invited personnel and educational programme monitoring.

b) educational programme assessment by students and assessment of those in charge of the programme; in addition to this, master’s degree thesis supervisor’s assessment questionnaire in the event of a master’s programme, while in relation to doctoral degree program components, “the assessment questionnaire of the supervisor of a research seminar, “a professor’s assistance questionnaire”, and a doctoral thesis assessment questionnaire”.

9.3. Following the analysis of opinion survey results, mid-term assessment data are generated in the pre-determined format (*Annex SH/SH 1.1 SH/SH 1.2; Annex SH/SH 1.7 SH/SH 1/9; Annex SH/SH 1.10; Annex SH/SH 1.11; Annex SH/SH 1.12; Annex SH/SH 1.13; Annex SH/SH 1.14; Annex SH/SH 1.15; Annex SH/SH 1.16*). The Quality Management Service summarizes data in a pre-determined format (*Annex KH/SH 2.4 and Annex SH/I 1.1*) and sends produced results to the corresponding faculty dean, while in the event of a doctoral programme, to a doctoral school supervisor.

9.4. The Quality Management Service draws up an opinion on the assessment of the academic and invited personnel (Opinion 01 comprising information according to all educational programmes).

9.5. Academic and invited personnel are assessed once a semester.

9.6. The assessment of academic and invited personnel is deemed to be positive if it meets the requirement: “in line with the standard requirements.”

## **10. Effectiveness Benchmarks of Quality Assurance Assessment Mechanisms**

10.1. The comparison method is employed to determine the effectiveness of each assessment mechanism.

10.2. Annual results are compared. Based on the produced data, the improvement or deterioration dynamics is determined.

10.3. Three levels are determined in total:

a) in line with standards \_ a percentage rate has improved in accordance with each component.

b) partly in line with standards unless a percentage rate changes in an assessment component or subcomponent.

c) not in line with standards \_ a percentage rate has worsened in an assessment component or subcomponent.

## **11. Use of Quality Assessment Outcomes**

11.1. The quality assessment results are presented in a quality assessment report and quality assessment opinions. The Quality Management Service produces quality assessment results.

11.2. After the end of each term and before the beginning of a new term, academic and invited personnel receive their assessment results submitted by students. Assessment results belong to academic and invited personnel, and the university is not allowed to disclose them. The university ensures protection of personal data. Academic and invited personnel use assessment results, ensures human resource development and includes professional development results in self-assessment questionnaires (*Annex T/SH 1.1 and P/M 1.2*). Questionnaire generalisation results are also essential components for assessing the learning process and personnel, which will be included in the corresponding quality assessment opinions.

11.3. Accordingly, Quality assessment results are as follows:

a) educational programme assessment results (*Annex KH/SH 2.1*).

b) learning result indicators (*Annex KH/SH 2.2*).

c) learning process assessment results (*Annex KH/SH 2.3*).

d) academic and invited personnel assessment results (*Annex KH/SH 2.4*).

11.4. The quality assessment reports are as follows:

a) Educational Program Annual Evaluation Report (*Annex A/N 1.1*)

b) learning outcome reports (*Annex A/N 1.2*).

11.5. Quality assessment opinions are as follows:

a) an opinion on the assessment of the academic and invited personnel (*Annex D1*).

b) a learning process assessment opinion (*Annex D2*).

- 11.6. The Quality Management Service sends the results to various faculties or in the event of a doctoral programme, to a doctoral school supervisor. Faculties discuss and formulate the corresponding recommendations on the faculty boards, while the doctoral school does so at the dissertation board; based on their recommendations and results, the Quality Management Service draws up final opinions and a report.
- 11.7. The report and opinions by the Quality Management Service are submitted to the academic board for approval.
- 11.8. On the basis of the submitted report and opinions, the academic board formulates an action plan, which will be included in the annex to the corresponding protocol.
- 11.9. The action plan is a response form, which includes the details as follows: The description of a problem; consistent actions; the corresponding deadlines for carrying out activities; responsible person/s, and resources necessary to carry out the activities.
- 11.10. The head of university's quality management service performs monitoring of the operation plan approved by the academic board.
- 11.11. Information on fulfilment of the action plan is included in the corresponding reports of next reporting period.