



Telavi State University (TeSaU) Institutional Plan for Quality Assurance 2010-2015



Developed in the framework of the Tempus project
"Developing an Internal Quality Assurance System
at Telavi State University
(UM_JEP_27232_2006(GE))

1. Institutional objectives

After the introduction of the Bologna-scheme and Institutional and Program Accreditation in Georgian Higher Education in 2005, it was decided to establish the internal Quality Assurance (QA) system in such a way that the requirements of accreditation will be met for all Higher Professional, Lifelong, Bachelor, Master and Doctorate degree programs that TeSaU has on offer and is planning to start. In the assessment framework for accreditation the internal Quality Assurance system of the institution is one of the main subjects to be assessed. TeSaU has implemented a support structure to provide standard procedures, systematic information and adequate decision-making in the different stages of internal and external Program Evaluation.

The University has committed itself to continuous improvement and quality management as indicated in its strategic objectives as follows:

- **Ensuring Relevance** – start to interact proactively with the world of work and the community to cater for emergent needs and requirements.
- **Ensuring Quality of Teaching and Learning** - enhance existing provisions for continuous improvement in the quality of teaching and learning, and work progressively towards the implementation of the best practice.
- **Strengthen Research** – further develop the University's research capacity and research management plan.
- **(Inter) nationalize the University** - Improve the (Inter) national standing of the University and expand its role and program of activities.

These strategic objectives are reflected to a large extent in the following specific approaches to quality management that are currently being adopted:

- The gradual integration of quality improvement processes throughout the University;
- The enhancement of the University quality system;
- Specific approaches to quality assurance of core activities, with initial focus on Teaching and Learning.

The University is committed to continuous improvement of the quality of its activities and achievements in order to fully realize its Mission, effectively achieve its purposes, be productively responsive to the wider community, and transparently meet its obligations. To achieve this, TeSaU's QA system has developed and is implementing a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality

1.1. Concepts of Quality

The concepts of Quality that circulate in nowadays Higher Education may be grouped in three categories: Effectiveness, Efficiency and Excellence.

The Effectiveness category includes quality concepts like

- Fitness for purpose
- Compliance (zero errors)
- Output control (you get what you want)
- Transformation (changing the customer in the desired direction)
- Guarantee (providing the graduates a good position at the job market)

The Efficiency category includes quality concepts like

- Customer satisfaction (you get what you want)
- Enhancement (improving the institutional processes and procedures)

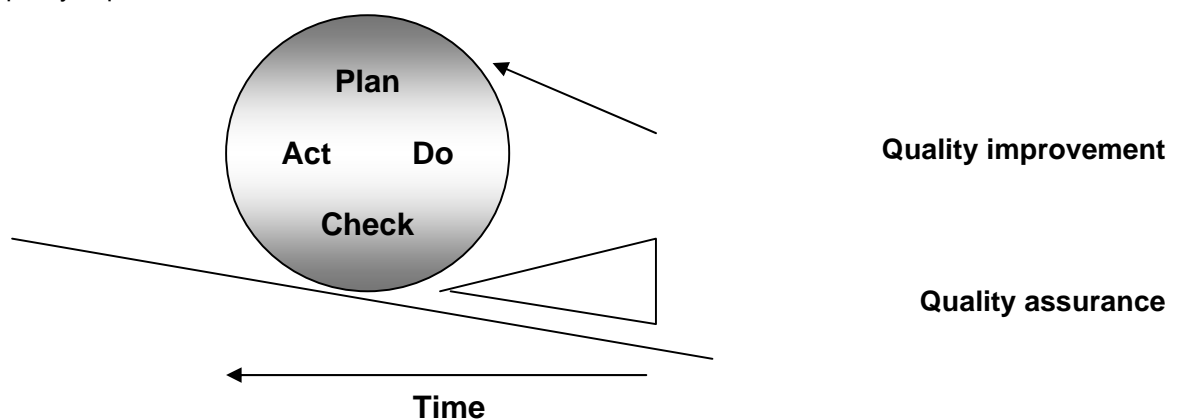
The Excellence category includes quality concepts like

- Transformation (improving the institutional outcomes)
- Enhancement (improving the institutional position in the Higher Education area, as well as the graduate's position at the job market)

When it comes to Program Evaluation in Higher Education, these three categories of Quality concepts often seem to elicit a battle within most of the institutions. The teaching staffs usually want to go for effective excellence (even sometimes disregarding efficiency), while the management usually prefers efficient excellence. At Telavi State University this is not different.

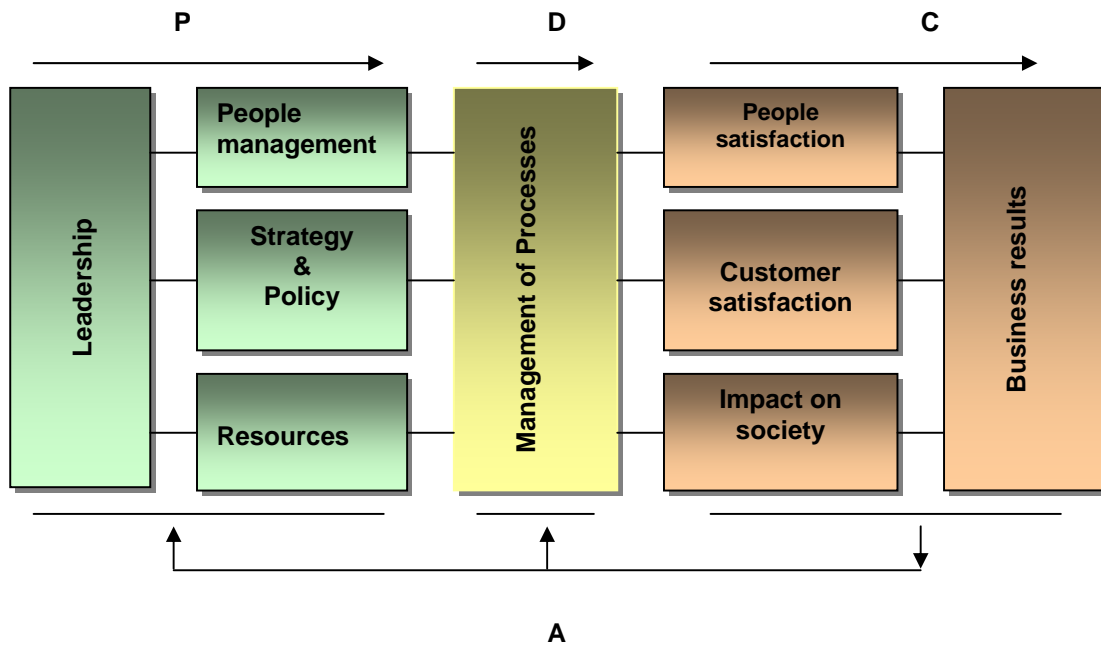
In the project, therefore, deliberately no attempt has been done to reach agreement on a joint definition of Quality. The project has based itself on the following institution wide accepted starting points for Quality Assurance:

- Quality Assurance is seen as a continuous process of learning and improving (learning organization), aimed at improvement activities in well defined areas with explicitly defined items;
- Quality Assurance is an issue for all levels of the organization: students, professors and teaching teams, services and all management levels;
- Every manager at university-, faculty-, department-, service-unit etc. is responsible for Quality Assurance with regard to the processes and products within his or her authority;
- Every employee should be committed to evaluate his or her functioning in order to improve;
- The continuous process of improvements may best be described as a continuous cycle of Plan – Do – Check – Act. A systematic PDCA-approach guarantees quality control, quality assurance and quality improvement.



1.2. Program Evaluation at TeSaU

TeSaU has chosen the EFQM-model¹ as a guide for further development of its Quality Assurance system.



Program Evaluation at TeSaU is aimed at giving evidence to internal and external panels that the construction, delivery and the results of a degree program are systematically evaluated and improved.

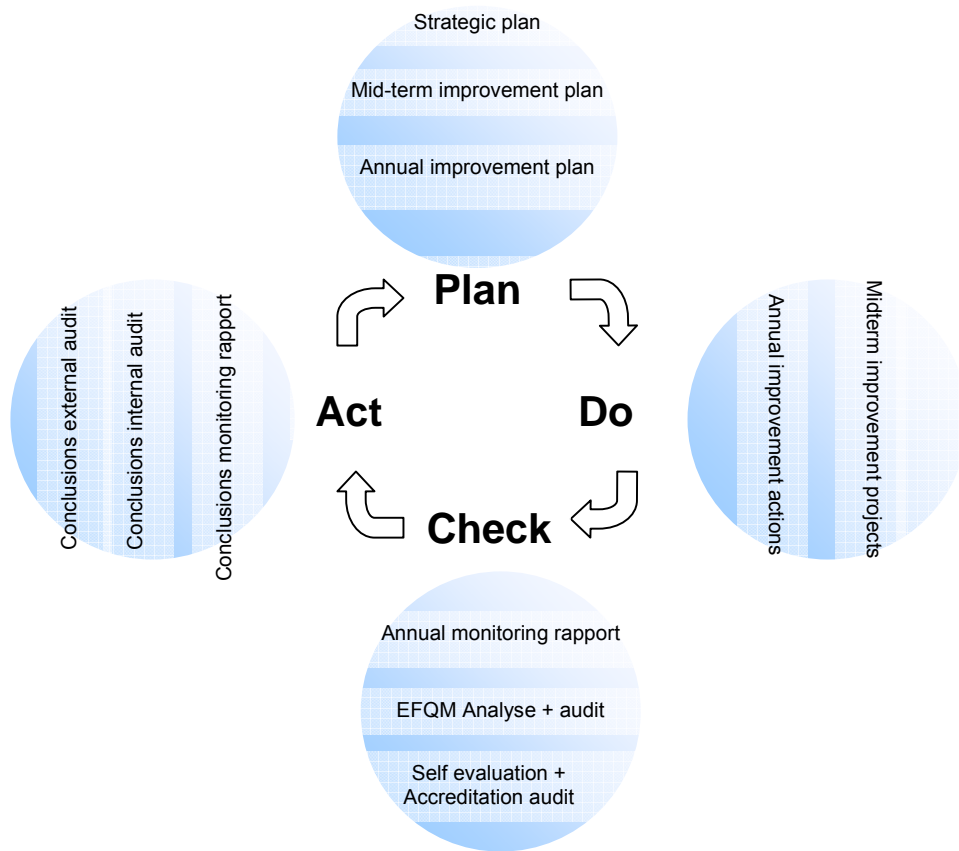
Program Evaluation can:

- Understand, verify or increase the impact of products or services on customers;
- Improve delivery mechanisms to be more efficient and less costly;
- Identify program strengths and weaknesses to improve the program;
- Verify that we're doing the right things right;
- Verify if the program is really running as originally planned.

1.3. Program Evaluation and Planning & Control at TeSaU

In the Program Evaluation Scheme of TeSaU the internal and external evaluation of degree programs are linked to each other in terms of content and procedure and in related cycles. These cycles have a lifetime of 6 years (accreditation), 3 years (internal audit) and 1 year (evaluations and screening). Frames of reference are TeSaU quality standards and the EFQM-model.

¹ European Foundation for Quality Management



The management of TeSaU at university, faculty and department levels is in terms of content and procedure linked through related P&C-cycles. These cycles have lifetimes of 5 years (university strategic plan, faculty strategic plans, service units and department levels). Frames of reference are managerial wisdom and vision, government policies and directives. The existing P&C cycles and the Program Evaluation Scheme will be simply linked by explicit attention for the PDCA cycles of quality assurance.

2. The national and institutional context

Program Evaluation at TeSaU is strongly influenced by Georgian governance structure in Higher Education, namely by Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia. Georgian Higher Education Institutions have a relatively large autonomy, but they are at the same time hold accountable for their performance through a national system of legal regulations and quality assurance, in order to maintain a guaranteed standard of Higher Education. This may be seen as a striving for effectiveness. Degree programs should deliver and guarantee what they pretend.

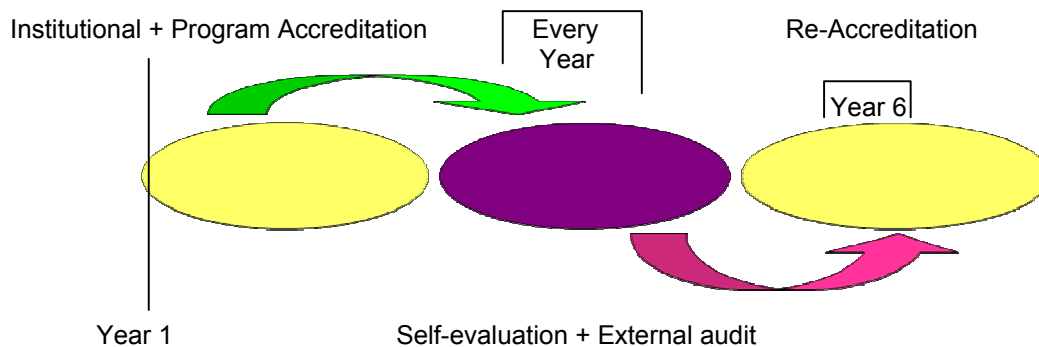
2.1. Accreditation

The Legal Entity of Public Law – National Education Accreditation Centre (NEAC) was founded on 27 March 2006 under Order №222 of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia. The NEAC is empowered to administer the institutional and program accreditation in higher, professional and general

education institutions. The NEAC is independent in its activities and is guided by: the Constitution of Georgia, international treaties and agreements of Georgia, the Laws of Georgia on Higher Education, on General Education, On Legal Entities of Public Law, other relevant normative acts and the Regulation of the Center.

All degree programs offered by universities are evaluated according to established criteria, and programs that meet those criteria will be accredited; i.e. recognized for a period of six years. Only accredited programs will be eligible for government funding, and students will receive financial aid and graduates will receive a recognized degree only when enrolled in an accredited degree program. If a university wants to start a new program approval from National Education Accreditation Centre is required. The institution is required to fulfil annual self-evaluation procedures and go through external audit by the NEAC.

The introduction of accreditation has increased the awareness of the institutional management for ongoing program evaluation. The fact that the internal quality assurance system of the institution will be externally assessed in each program accreditation process, gives an impetus to the development of an institution wide system. More than in the former visitation scheme, the institution has to show evidence to an external panel that the construction, delivery and the results of a degree program are systematically evaluated.



2.2. Bologna

The Bologna Process aims to create a European Higher Education Area, in which students can choose from a wide and transparent range of high quality courses and benefit from smooth recognition procedures. The Bologna Declaration of June 1999 has put in motion a series of reforms needed to make European Higher Education more compatible and comparable, more competitive and more attractive for Europeans and for students and scholars from other continents. Reform was needed then and reform is still needed today.

The introduction of Accreditation in Georgian Higher Education is not only the result of expanding knowledge and understanding of quality assurance in higher education, but is also closely related to the Bologna declaration and the introduction of the Bachelor-Master-Doctorate structure in the European Higher Education area. With a view on this, TeSaU started in 2005 an institution-wide project of educational reform in order to deal adequately with these developments and with the growing need for flexibility in the way higher education should be organized and delivered.

2.3. Telavi State University

Telavi State University is the only one accredited higher educational institution in Kakheti region. TeSaU has about 2.000 students, about 164 staff of whom about 104 teaching and 60 supporting staff and management. Nowadays, TeSaU has 77 accredited programs, of which 25 Bachelor, 24 Masters, 17 Doctoral, 7 Higher Professional and 4 Medical programs. Since September 2009, 23 full professors, 52 associate professors, 25 assistant professors and 4 teachers have been appointed at TeSaU to engage in teaching process and develop also a research climate and environment.

2.4. Planning and Control within TeSaU

Quality and performance improvement are advanced through the University's formal planning framework and through planning for a range of activities that are supplementary to these formal plans.

At the top is the University's Strategic Plan, developed by CUD in consultation with the University Academic Board. This sets broad directions, priorities and planned developments for the University over a five-year period. Each faculty has its own Strategic Plan developed within the faculty in accordance with TeSaU Strategic Plan and the Laws of Georgia on Higher Education.

Plans at each level are expected to include specific goals, strategies and actions for achieving each goal, and performance indicators for identifying or measuring achievement. Plans for developing new programs and courses and making changes to current offerings are progressed through the University's program accreditation and course approval processes.

Within the quality system, evaluative reviews and evidence-based formal reviews of the quality, standards and effectiveness of University performance in a specified area or range of areas are systematized. Usually, these reviews are initiated within the University on a regular basis. Reviews are a major means by which the University assesses and reflects on its own performance, policy, plans and processes (based on evidence), demonstrates accountability, and identifies its strengths and any needed or desirable improvements. The implementation of planned improvements is monitored and reported in order to check whether those improvements are having their intended effect.

Planning and Control include the following criteria:

- ⇒ Students/market
 - Enrolment per degree program and market share in Georgia
 - Total number of students in the program allowed by NEAC and admitted by NEC²
 - Success rate of students in the program

- ⇒ Finances
 - Turnover
 - Absolute result

- ⇒ Personnel
 - Number of fulltime equivalents
 - Satisfaction of employees, as measured in annual TeSaU-wide surveys

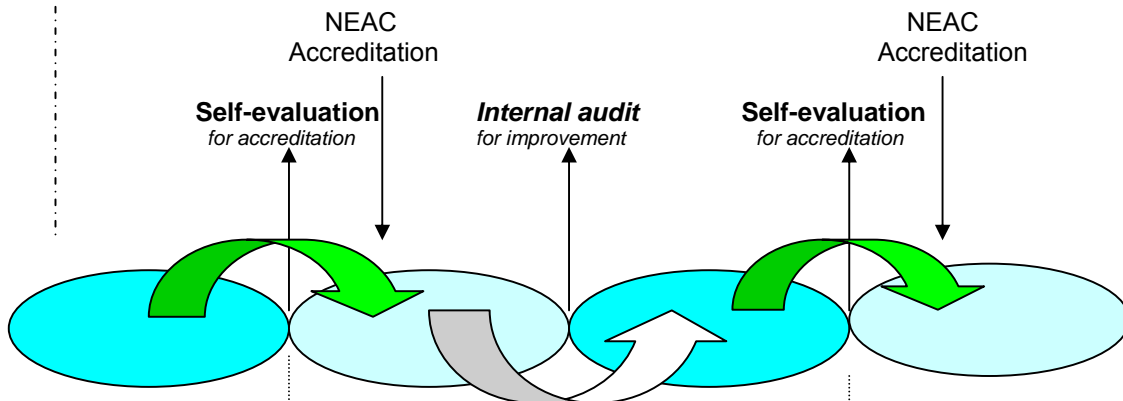
- ⇒ Quality of education

² National Examination Center

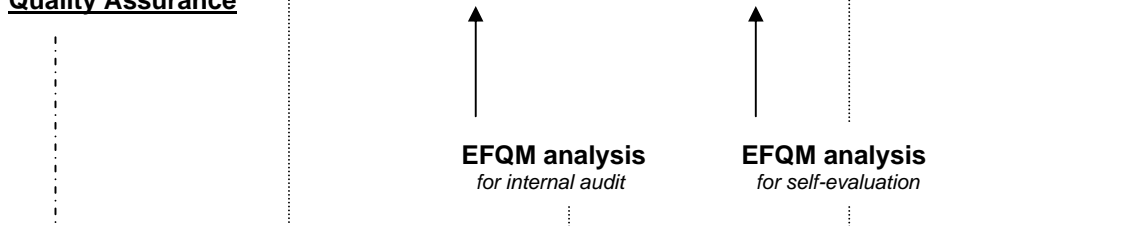
- Quality assessments (per degree program), based on an annual monitoring in relation to the external accreditation criteria
- Student satisfaction (per degree program), as measured by an annual TeSaU-wide survey

2.5. Program evaluation scheme at Telavi State University

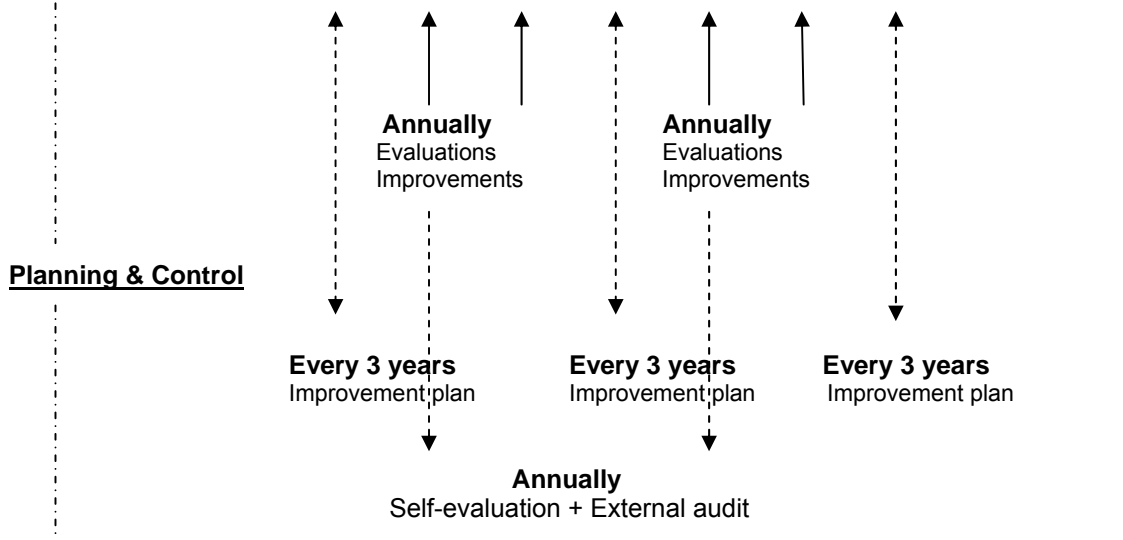
Accreditation



Quality Assurance



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		Accreditation for a 6 year period							
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	



2.6. The NEAC-TeSaU Accreditation framework for degree programs

For the purpose of accreditation, nine subjects or aspects of quality of a degree program need to be assessed. The subjects have been subdivided in facets with corresponding criteria.

Subjects	Facets
1. Aims and objectives of the degree program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Domain-specific requirements / final qualifications ◦ Level: Bachelor, Master, Doctoral, Higher Professional, Lifelong, One-level Medical ◦ Orientation: research-oriented or student-oriented
2. Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Requirements of Higher professional education, Academic or Research program ◦ Relationship between aims and objectives and content of the program ◦ Coherence of the program ◦ Study load ◦ Intake ◦ Duration ◦ Coordination of structure and contents of the degree ◦ Assessments and examinations
3. Learning outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Knowledge and understanding ◦ Ability to apply knowledge in practical situations ◦ Ability to make sound judgments ◦ Communication skills ◦ Learning skills
4. Field-specific Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Knowledge and understanding of the Field ◦ Practical Utilization of Field-specific Knowledge / Field-Specific Skills
5. General Competences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Ability to analyze and synthesize ◦ Problem solution ability ◦ Ability to plan and organize ◦ Communication skills ◦ Ability to utilize information technologies ◦ Team-working ability ◦ Ability to learn ◦ Ability to research ◦ Ability to work independently ◦ Ability to develop and manage projects
6. Deployment of staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Requirements for University ◦ Quantity of staff ◦ Quality of staff
7. Facilities and provisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Material facilities ◦ Student support and guidance
8. Internal quality assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Evaluation of results ◦ Measures to effect improvement ◦ Involvement of staff and students

Subjects	Facets
9. Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Level that has been achieved ◦ Results of teaching

3. The Quality Assurance Centre at TeSaU

TeSaU is committed to institutionalize its Internal Quality Assurance in order to provide excellent quality academic programs that are relevant, accessible and market-oriented, and that will also promote creativity, self-reliance and intellectual activities of students.

Institutionalization of the Internal Quality Assurance is an on-going process in which a set of activities, strategies, values and policies that ensure high standards of education are implemented as an integral and sustainable part of the University. The Quality Assurance Centre of TeSaU was established in 2006. Its position and functioning within the University have been reinforced during the course of the Tempus 2008-2010 project on Quality Assurance. At this moment each of the faculties has a Quality Assurance Head who is supported from the Centre at University level.

3.1. Fundamental Statements

- **Vision Statement**
The vision of the TeSaU Quality Assurance Centre is to become a fully established University Advisory and Evaluation Centre on all matters that affect the academic standards of the University and beyond.
- **Mission Statement**
The mission statement is to promote and enhance the quality of the University programs to the highest standards, through strategic planning, assessing, monitoring and improving practice.

3.2. Goals and Objectives

Goal

The main goal of the Centre is to ensure a high quality of teaching and learning processes and scientific work at TeSaU.

Objectives

- To develop a system of monitoring and evaluating.
- To create awareness and transparency within the University community on Quality Assurance.
- To integrate the University into the (inter)national Higher Educational Area.
- To successfully accomplish **ongoing institutional and program accreditation**.

The main obligations of the Centre are:

- To accomplish successfully ongoing program accreditation and institutional re-accreditation.
- To provide the university community with systematically updated information about QA center activities and new regulations and changes in the Laws of Georgia on Higher Education.
- To support the continuous process of improvement in learning, teaching and research.
- To coordinate the planned monitoring of teaching and learning processes and outcomes.
- To update the internal and external (NEAC) databases of students and academic staff.
- To evaluate systematically curricula and course syllabi at all levels.
- To participate in the development of regulatory documents and policy plans at university and national levels.
- To conduct the procedures of internal and outward changes in students' study program.

3.3. Situational and SWOT Analysis

A review of the external and internal situation of the Quality Assurance Centre has identified the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) facing the Centre, upon which key priority areas and strategies are based.

Strengths:

- An active and complete support from university management to fully realize QA system's goals and objectives.
- Strong links with Faculties and Departments for strategic implementation of evaluation exercises and academic reviews.
- Strong links and an active cooperation with Georgian Ministry of Education and Science, National Education Accreditation Center, National Examination Center.
- Cooperation with other Georgian universities' QA Centers.

Weaknesses:

- As QA is still rather new, the staff of the Centre needs to develop experience through practice and training.
- The funds for monitoring and evaluation are limited.
- More equipment is needed for adequate data processing.
- More funds would be needed for conducting surveys among a larger range of stakeholders
- The information on the QA website needs to be updated and extended.

Opportunities:

- Increased demand for accountability and transparency through Quality Assurance.
- Existing synergy with relevant departments and (inter)national networking.

Threats:

- Competition from other universities.
- Maintaining confidentiality on individual lecturers and students performance.

3.4. Priority areas in the planning period (2010-2015):

- Updating the QA Regulation document and QA website.
- Ensuring the quality of academic programs and teaching and learning processes through systematic evaluation of curricula and course syllabi, monitoring and periodic evaluation of teaching staff.
- Initiating market surveys to determine market needs and relevance of our academic programs.
- Conducting surveys of inside stakeholders, namely students and professors, and outside stakeholders, namely parents and world of work.
- Creating awareness and transparency on Quality Assurance within the University community.
- Involving of students into the QA System at university and faculty levels.
- Increasing the cooperation with (inter)national universities, leading to more academic activities (conferences, research, joint programs, etc.).

Annex 1 Frequency of subject/facet evaluation at TeSaU

Subjects	Facets	Validity / Update
1. Aims and objectives of the degree program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Domain-specific requirements / final qualifications ◦ Level: Bachelor, Master, Doctoral, Higher Professional, Lifelong, One-level Medical ◦ Orientation: research-oriented or student-oriented 	3 years
2. Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Requirements of Higher professional education, Academic or Research program ◦ Relationship between aims and objectives and content of the program ◦ Coherence of the program 	2 years
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Study load ◦ Intake ◦ Duration 	1 year
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Coordination of structure and contents of the degree ◦ Assessments and examinations 	2 years
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Knowledge and understanding ◦ Ability to apply knowledge in practical situations ◦ Ability to make sound judgments ◦ Communication skills ◦ Learning skills 	3 years
3. Learning outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Knowledge and understanding of the Field ◦ Practical Utilization of Field-specific Knowledge / Field-Specific Skills 	3 years
4. Field-specific Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Ability to analyze and synthesize ◦ Problem solution ability ◦ Ability to plan and organize ◦ Communication skills ◦ Ability to utilize information technologies ◦ Team-working ability ◦ Ability to learn ◦ Ability to research ◦ Ability to work independently ◦ Ability to develop and manage projects 	3 years
5. General Competences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Requirements for University ◦ Quantity of staff ◦ Quality of staff 	1 year
6. Deployment of staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Material facilities ◦ Student support and guidance 	1 year
7. Facilities and provisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Evaluation of results ◦ Measures to effect improvement ◦ Involvement of staff and students 	QA-system
8. Internal quality assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Level that has been achieved ◦ Results of teaching 	1 year
9. Results		