

Quality Assurance Service Tbilisi State Medical University Goals and Statement of Guiding Principles

on Quality Assurance Policy

By

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Main Postulates

Higher Education Quality Assurance, an integral part of overall educational process within the Higher Institution, serves as common attribute and is determined by teacher's qualifications and Curriculum quality.

Quality Assurance Conducting Internal and External evaluation procedures will help to improve teaching and learning processes at the University.

Lifelong learning involves obtaining qualifications, extending knowledge and understanding, gaining new skills and competences or enriching personal growth. The implementation of lifelong learning policies requires strong partnerships between public authorities, higher education institutions, students, employers and employees.

Main documents of the Bologna Process (Bergen 2005)

Tbilisi State Medical University is Autonomous Higher Education Institution. The University's primary responsibility is taking into account the economic, social, geographical and cultural context and the historic heritage in existing economical and geographical environment, to preserve existing knowledge and deliver knowledge and culture via teaching and research.

Tbilisi State Medical University (TSMU) shares common views of academic mission and is dedicated to improving people's lives through excellence in teaching, research, health care, cultural enrichment, and economic development. It means that teaching in TSMU welds research and practice into an indivisible unity. Teaching and research in universities must be inseparable if their tuition is not to lag behind changing needs, the demands of society, and advances in scientific knowledge. Clearly, if we don't set our sights high, in a rapidly changing economic environment, we could fall significantly short of our goals. The virtues of academic freedom, freedom in research and training is the fundamental principles of university life.

To facilitate the transition to a knowledge-based society, the European Commission is promoting the establishment of strategies and specific activities for lifelong learning, with a view to achieving a European area of lifelong learning. This objective is at the heart of the Lisbon

Strategy, in particular the "Education and Training 2010" program. Key competences for lifelong learning are a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context. They are particularly necessary for personal fulfillment and development, social inclusion, active citizenship and employment.

The University's long term strategic objective to make lifelong learning a reality, by improving the quality of teaching and learning is high on the agenda in the University-,

TSMU is the member of European Higher Education Area (EHEA), Therefore it shares EHEA's guiding principle- quality is the basic underlying condition for trust, relevance, mobility, coherence and compatibility in the European Higher Education Area.

Although, in Europe, quality assurance should not be based on a single agency enforcing a common set of standards. National Quality Assurance Systems play in ensuring high quality standards and in facilitating the comparability of qualifications throughout Europe. They also encouraged closer cooperation between recognition and quality assurance networks. They emphasized the necessity of close European cooperation and mutual trust in and acceptance of national quality assurance systems. Further they encouraged universities and other higher education institutions to disseminate examples of best practice and to design scenarios for mutual acceptance of evaluation and accreditation/certification mechanisms. We should always remember that quality improvement of education is quality improvement of health care.

For the higher education institutions -autonomous bodies involved in Bologna process- Quality assurance (QA) is arguable the key issue for Bologna and progress in this area will largely determine the success or otherwise of the Bologna Process. The coherence and quality assurance of higher educational institutions in Europe is based on transparency and trust. Moreover, the accent is put more and more on quality assurance. The ingredients of European quality assurance system are recognition, openness, and trust" (Barblan, 2001) It means for our reality, the following:

- Greater autonomy for TSMU, as higher education institution, means greater responsibility.
- We are responsible for the development and implementation of Internal Quality Assurance culture strategies to ensure constant development of Teaching-Learning process.
- Use of internal quality assurance procedures should ensure further intellectual and academic achievements.
- To ensure intellectual and academic achievements effective leadership and right management .
- Shared values and commitments of all communities involved (academics, administrative and support staff and students). Internal evaluation is the corner stone of quality assurance in higher education. The Bologna Process assumes that students are full members of the higher education community. They should participate in the organization and content of education. Student participation in institutional governance should be prescribed by law.

(Communique of the meeting of European Ministers in charge of Higher Education in Prague on May 19th 2001). The students involvement in self-evaluation and reflection is also important. Because self-evaluation processes contribute to improving academic results and developing students' autonomy, teachers and tutors must develop them,

- External evaluation of Quality assurance is a condition of credibility of results of internal evaluation. Autonomy of TSMU must be balanced by accountability. Greater autonomy for higher education institutions therefore also means greater responsibility for the quality of teaching and learning. It means real accountability of the academic system within the National Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency. Accountability must go hand in hand with autonomy.

Due to all above mentioned, the strategic goals and procedures of quality assurance at TSMU can be defined:

- Teaching and research quality improvement.
- Improvement of quality assurance organizational structure.
- Respect to institutional autonomy.
- Developing an internal quality culture.
- Cost-effectiveness of Instructional Support.
- React to National Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency recommendations and evaluations.
- Avoiding of bureaucracy, wasting costs and unnecessary regulation.

Quality Assurance Department is structural group in TSSU Administration Organizational Hierarchy that manages above mentioned quality assurance policy. The faculty at TSMU is internal “academic segment” of the University. Exactly quality assurance service at the Faculty is authorized to evaluate and determine the policy of quality assurance, to create the database and primary processing of data. QA Department, understands the implications of external regulation and laws, as well as internal policies and procedures; provides a balance between literal adherence to policy and the use of policy as a guide. sets Evaluation Criteria and Quality Indicators for evaluation of quality of teaching and research at the University.

In this paper, we present the organizational characteristics and the main aspects of the development of Quality assurance at TSMU. Quality Assurance Personnel are responsible for assessment, verification and suggesting enhancements to the various parts of the institution. In development of Quality assurance system take part “quality evaluators” (evaluators) and “Objects for quality assurance” (objects).

. Evaluators are named from academic and administrative personnel, The economic, legal and organizational aspects of evaluation process are directed by administrative group.

The object for evaluation is a program of study, defined by the curriculum. This includes the courses, modules, syllabus and other educational experiences, the methods of delivery, and the structure of requirements and electives into which these are arranged to give coherence to the program.

In the evaluation of the effectiveness of an undergraduate academic program, it is essential to consider the students it serves and those it might serve in the future. Student needs influence the design of the curriculum, the faculty to implement it, and the services to support it. The quality and success of the program depends upon the extent to which it meets the needs of its students.

The above mentioned is based on student-oriented versus teacher-oriented programmes of studies. The teacher-oriented approach to learning is generally time independent, based on the

assumption that the proper object of study is what the individual professor thinks the student should learn in his or her course. The student-oriented approach gives greater weight to the design of the overall curriculum and focuses especially on the usefulness of study programmes for a future position of the graduate in society.

One of the major criteria for evaluating undergraduate educational programs are: student competencies/learning outcomes. Learning outcomes should: reflect broad conceptual knowledge and adaptive vocational and generic skills,. Subject specific competences (theoretical, practical and/or experimental knowledge and subject related skills) are connected to a particular subject discipline and labor market oriented

The purpose of quality assurance is to ensure both the effectiveness and the efficiency of delivery of learning within the service. Quality assurance Service ensures systematic evaluation both of Curriculum and research activities of TSMU, although with different level of activity.

Academic process is dynamic: with a beginning but no end. It is essential that “subjects” involved in academic process teachers and students need to be developed permanently, their performance to be upgraded. Similarly, curricular materials need to be upgraded to reflect higher expectations that will be guarantee of making progress in medical education. Success in medical education depends on balance and parallel development of three components teaching, learning, research and service functions- excellence in teaching, research/scholarly activity support and consideration of professional service experience.

The main role and function of quality assurance service is the creation of performance evaluation indicators that may be called indicators of «triple spiral model". The spiral symbolizes the unity of medical education and research -research-teaching-medical-care programs on different levels (under and postgraduate). The spiral model for the development of coordination means a learning model with horizontal and vertical integration of medical education elements.

We give special attention to factors like- trust, transparency, self regulation: a key to life long learning in medical education and self-evaluation of professional skills, that is recognized to be an essential requirement in undergraduate medical education. QA service has capacity and competence to keep a balance between innovation and tradition, socioeconomic advantage, achievement motivation, and academic performance , mandatory vs. free choice of courses.

Quality assurance system itself as a useful instrument for the work on improving education offered at TSMU, has a large scope and embraces all processes that affect the quality of education. To receive trust we have to be worthy of trust It is our responsibility to care about our students. Our achievements will able us to become trustworthy and respectful in Georgia and all over world.