QUALITY ASSURANCE IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN GEORGIA

ETF Forum Member Institution: National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement

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Quality Assurance Forum

THE ETF FORUM FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE
IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1   National context

Georgia has a population of almost 3.73 million people, a figure that has decreased by more than a million over the past decade. The relative size of the youth population (aged 15–24) declined from 20.8% in 2013 to 17.7% in 2019. Two primary factors explain the decrease: low natural growth rates and emigration.

Emigration is an important phenomenon in Georgia: the stock of 746 000 emigrants abroad represents 16% of the country's population (2013 data). According to the same source, 32% of emigrants have a tertiary education. The most striking point about emigration from Georgia is that it is mainly young people who leave the country. Emigration is highest in the 25–29 age group, followed by those aged 30–34 and then those in the younger group (aged 20–24).

Georgia is a lower middle-income country with a growing gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, which increased from USD 8 000 in 2012 to USD 11 400 in 2018. Over the past five years Georgia's GDP growth has fluctuated considerably, falling from 7.2% in 2011 to only 2.7% in 2016. However, after catching up in 2017, the Georgian economy continued to perform well in 2019, with GDP growth standing at 5.1%. The main contributors to GDP in 2019 were services (60.4%), followed by industry (20.0%) and agriculture (6.2%). Services are also the fastest growing sector, with hospitality and financial services leading the way.

The EU bloc is currently Georgia's main trading partner, accounting for 28% of Georgian imports and 22% of Georgian exports in 2018[1].

1.2   Statistics

TABLE 1. POPULATION

	Size of population	Relative size of youth population (15-24; %)
2010	3 799 832	22.6
2015	3 716 911	20.2
2019	3 729 633	17.8

Source: GEOSTAT

TABLE 2. EMPLOYMENT

	Employment rate (15+; %)	Employment rate of youth (15-24; %)
2010	52.3	23.1
2015	55.9	25.6
2019	55.8	28.3

Source: GEOSTAT

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[1] Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies (2019)

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TABLE 3. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF ACTIVE POPULATION (15+; %)

	Low	Medium	High
2015	10.7	58.2	31.1
2017	11.8	57.6	30.5
2019	11.9	57.8	30.2

Source: GEOSTAT
LOW: ISCED 0-2; MEDIUM: ISCED 3-4; HIGH: ISCED 5-8

TABLE 4. PARTICIPATION IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (STUDENTS IN VOCATIONAL PROGRAMMES AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL UPPER SECONDARY STUDENTS (ISCED LEVEL 3)

	Upper-secondary (ISCED 3) VET
2013	14.6
2015	9
2019	8

Source: Unesco
Note: m.d. - missing data

TABLE 5. SPENDING ON GENERAL EDUCATION AND ON VET

Table 5	Spend on ISCED 3-4 all education (including VET) as % of GDP	Spend on ISCED 3-4 VET only as % of GDP
2010	2.9	N/A
2015	3.2	N/A
2018	3.8	N/A

Geostat, calculations based on Ministry of Finance of Georgia data

1.3 The Vocational education and training (VET) system

Governance and management

The Ministry of Education and Science, (MoES) is the main policymaking body for education. The government develops national development policies and strategies, and holds complete responsibility for setting objectives for VET, following consultation with the its agencies, social partners, the government of the two autonomous republics (Ajaria and Abkhazia) and international partners. Several institutions and bodies are involved in the management of the VET system. They are the National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE), responsible for quality assurance at all levels of education; the National Centre for Teachers' Professional Development, which provides in-service training for secondary general and VET teachers and trainers; and the National Assessment and Examination Centre (NAEC).

Social partners take part in sectoral committees/skills councils, thus participating in the articulation of skills needs and the design of occupational standards. They are also sit on school boards of public VET providers.

At school level, social partners are part of supervisory boards.

Regulatory frameworks (examples: legislation, rules, strategy plans)

The key legislation relevant for this sector is the VET law adopted by the Georgian parliament in September 2018. The law aims to improve the quality and flexibility of the vocational education system, to develop a link between general, VET and higher education, to introduce a general education component in VET and to enhance and develop the adult education system. It sets up the legal basis for the validation of non-formal and informal learning and opens an opportunity for integrating VET into the secondary stage of general education.

Secondary legislation is under preparation.

Two other legal acts shape the regulatory framework of the VET system and are related to the national qualifications framework (NQF). The first is the Law on Developing the Quality of Education, amended in September 2020 with a new section dedicated to the NQF. The second is the Order of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Georgia, of April 2019, on the Approval of the National Qualifications Framework and the Classifier of Fields of Study.

The Unified Strategy for Education and Science for 2017-2021 sets out the strategic objectives for all levels of education. The strategic objectives for VET include: (1) compliance of vocational education with the requirements of the labour market and internationalisation of the system; (2) ensuring access to vocational education based on the principle of lifelong learning; (3) popularisation of professional education and increased attractiveness.

Main provider institution types[2]

In 2020, VET programmes were implemented by 92 authorised providers (EMIS, July 2020 data), of which 67 were private or public colleges, 18 were higher educational institutions and 7 were general

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[2] Examples: Public or private educational institution (e.g. school) or company (e.g. car manufacturer)

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secondary schools. 9 399 students were enrolled in these programmes, compared to more than 23 000 in 2013.

There were 29 educational programmes in 13 educational institutions with a dual approach. 51 private companies were engaged in dual programmes.

Main provision/programme types[3]

Training provision in mainly based in schools.

A dual approach to TVET implementation was introduced by the German-Georgian programme 'Private Sector Development and Technical Vocational Education and Training Caucasus' (PSD TVET). The programme focuses on the reform of the current TVET system by introducing elements of dual education and training or apprenticeship programmes in labour-market-relevant sectors such as construction, tourism, viniculture, information and communication technologies (ICT), transport and logistics.

Currently, more than 50 companies are involved in work-based learning and almost all public VET colleges implement specific programmes based on a dual approach.

Main qualifications according to ISCED levels

The VET system in Georgia delivers the following qualifications:

1. Basic vocational education programme that leads to a qualification corresponding to level 3 in the NQF (ISCED level 3)
2. Secondary vocational education programme that leads to a qualification corresponding to level 4 in the NQF (ISCED level 4)
3. Higher vocational education programme that leads to a qualification corresponding to level 5 in the NQF (ISCED level 5)
4. Short-cycle education programme that leads to a qualification corresponding to level 5 in the NQF (ISCED 5)

2. QUALITY ASSURANCE IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

2.1 Overview

The quality assurance framework includes mechanisms for the development and approval of qualifications – occupational and educational standards and procedures – and measures to ensure quality of provision – authorisation of providers.

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[3] Examples: School-based with workshops for skills training, 80% company-based apprenticeships with 20% school-based learning, 80% school-based apprenticeships with 20% company-based learning

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2.2　General information on quality assurance at VET system level

The NCEQE is responsible for quality assurance at all levels of education. It authorises educational institutions by issuing them with a licence. Eleven sector committees have been created to validate occupational and educational standards under the NCEQE.

The legal basis for the quality assurance system is the Law on Educational Quality Enhancement. Under this law, the NCEQE is recognised as the sole national body authorised to act as an external mechanism, assuring and enhancing educational quality.

The main aims of the NCEQE are to promote the enhancement of educational quality and the development of a quality culture at educational institutions by developing and implementing external QA mechanisms and supporting the development of internal QA mechanisms at the educational institutions.

2.3　Quality assurance in key VET areas

Evidence – Statistics and research and development

Many bodies are involved in data collection and analysis. The Education Management Information System, a legal entity under the MoES, is responsible for collecting data and evidence on the entire education system. The National Assessment and Examination Centre (NAEC), operating under the Ministry of Education and Science (MESCS), carries out assessments and research on the education system and conducts the PISA survey in Georgia.

In addition, data on the insertion of VET graduates in the labour market are collected through two administrative data sets, the Georgian Statistics Office (GEOSTAT) Labour Force Survey and the Tracer Study conducted by the Ministry of Education and Science. They both provide valuable data on indicators such as the employment rate of VET graduates, enrolment and completion rates, VET attainment, the unemployment rate of VET graduates compared to higher education graduates and other areas.

Quality assurance and the qualifications cycle

General education qualifications are based on the national curriculum developed by the MESCS. It is obligatory for general education institutions and VET institutions that implement the integrated VET and general secondary programme to follow the national curriculum.

VET qualifications and programmes are developed using vocational education standards. The VET standards themselves are formulated based on occupational standards following NCEQE rules, procedures and methodologies[4]. VET educational standards may be used to define one or more qualifications and must be developed with the involvement of representatives of employers and educational institutions, validated by the relevant Sector Council and approved by the NCEQE.

Georgia has gradually replaced vocational subject-based courses with modular, competency-based vocational programmes, so that, since 2019, any new student entering vocational education follows a modular programme. Modular programmes focus not only on the development of

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[4] Rules for developing, amending and revoking occupational standards, framework documents for educational programmes and modules (NCEQE Order No 652ო of 26 July 2019) https://eqe.ge/res/docs/652%E1%83%98.pdf

vocational/professional skills, but also on basic skills such as literacy, mathematical skills, etc. and key skills such as entrepreneurship, communication in foreign languages, digital competencies, etc. The VET programmes integrated into general secondary education reflect the requirements of the national curriculum in the integrated general modules.

In the new modular VET programmes, competence-based assessments are used. Each module is based on learning outcomes and includes performance/assessment criteria and evidence requirements[5]. Assessment should meet the requirements of the assessment standard, based on the respective occupational standard.

In 2017-2018, national authorities conducted a major revision of the NQF to achieve better linkages among the sub-systems of general education, VET and higher education, and greater comparability of the framework internationally. As a result, in 2018, NQF-related amendments to the Georgian Law on Developing the Quality of Education were adopted, setting the main objectives and principles of the new NQF. In 2019, the new revised lifelong learning NQF was adopted.

The new framework comprises a unified eight-level structure in which the level descriptor categories are 'Knowledge and Understanding', 'Skills', 'Responsibility and autonomy', compatible with those in the European Qualifications Framework.

Quality assurance and VET provision/provider institutions

Quality assurance in VET Institutions is carried out using internal and external quality assurance mechanisms. Internal quality assurance mechanisms are set up and performed by the VET Institutions, while external quality assurance mechanisms are the responsibility of the NCEQE.

To ensure the implementation of quality assurance mechanisms, NCEQE has created bodies of experts expert corps. The VET quality assurance department carries out intensive training sessions for these corps, monitors their performance, evaluates their activities and carries out periodic updates of their composition.

The authorisation council for VET institutions discusses the experts' evaluation reports and makes appropriate decisions on whether the programmes, infrastructure and resources of the institutions comply with authorisation standards.

The VET quality assurance department provides VET institutions with advice, training, manuals and guides. The department also gives advice to organisations intending to obtain VET institution status.

Quality assurance and VET teacher/trainer qualification standards and continuing professional development (CPD)

Considering that VET curricula and teaching need to be continuously aligned with the changing skill demands of the private sector, the ministry has developed and delivered numerous in-service training programmes for VET teachers, for example on modular VET curricula and pedagogical skills. The training model for VET teachers and their professional development is being modified to include professional standards and an ethics code (MoESCS, 2019).

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[5] https://eqe.ge/geo/static/669/vocational-education/

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3. STRENGTHS, DEVELOPMENTS, NEEDS

3.1 New developments – in progress/in the pipeline

In accordance with the Order of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Georgia of 11 February 2020, new standards for the authorisation of vocational education institutions were approved. The new standards assess all components of the educational process in terms of a unified, orderly mechanism and pay special attention to ensuring the full involvement of stakeholders in the educational process. Various types of technical assistance initiatives were available to the VET schools, including the following interventions under the National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement: creating authorisation expert profiles; developing selection methodology and tools; developing expert evaluation schemes and methodologies; expert certification concepts; and selecting new expert corps. The VET quality assurance department prepared a guide on the quality assurance of the implementation of the programmes, providing direct support during the process. Training sessions on verification of the evaluation system and implementation of the development evaluations were conducted for the representatives of the institutions. According to the current regulations, 85 institutions submitted self-assessment reports to the NCEQE. In order to increase the capacity of providers to ensure the quality of vocational training and retraining courses, the National Centre for Quality Development in Education (LEPL) conducted training seminars that were attended by more than 100 people from 50 providers. The Centre also conducted monitoring visits to organisations.

3.2 Needs and challenges

- Improving internal quality assurance mechanisms and existing practices;
- Strengthening the capacity of institutions' quality assurance structures.

4. GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

- New standards of authorisation for vocational education institutions can be considered as the best experience in the field of quality assurance. Each standard (five standards) is based on a quality assurance cycle (Deming cycle) and includes all stages of the cycle (planning-implementation-evaluation-review). These standards ensure the quality of external evaluation, as well as the internal quality of educational institutions.
- To ensure both external and internal quality processes, the LEPL NCEQE has developed a detailed guide to authorisation standards and some related posters, which are published on the Centre's website and shared with stakeholders.
- A significant achievement in terms of quality assurance is the certification of experts for vocational education institutions. A competition was announced, candidates were selected and trained and the system acquired 40 certified experts based on the final simulation interview, enabling a better implementation of external evaluation mechanisms.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CPD	Continuing professional development
CVET	Continuing vocational education and training
EQAVET	European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training
ESA	Employment Service Agency
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEOSTAT	Georgian Statistics office
ICT	Information and communication technologies
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
IVET	Initial vocational education and training
MESCS	Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports
NAEC	National Assessment and Examination Centre
NCEQE	National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement
NQF	National qualifications framework
PSD	Private Sector Development
TVET	Technical Vocational education and training
VET	Vocational education and training