

Inspectorate Profile

LEPL - National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE),
Georgia

September, 2024

1. Overview of the Inspectorate

Age of inspectorate

The [National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement \(NCEQE\)](#) is Georgia's sole authorized agency responsible for ensuring the educational quality. Established in 2010 as a successor to the National Center for Educational Accreditation (NCEA), the NCEQE has been at the forefront of quality assurance in Georgian higher education since 2006. In 2010, with the explicit purpose of ensuring the educational quality assurance, the NCEQE was established by the Law of Georgia on Educational Quality Enhancement, as an independent legal entity of public law (LEPL) under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth (MoESY) of Georgia, guaranteeing the independence in its activities.

The NCEQE's primary responsibilities encompass:

- Development of Standards and Procedures of Authorization and Accreditation and their continuous improvement;
- External Quality Assurance of Early and Preschool, General education, Vocational Education, Higher Education – the NCEQE evaluates the compliance of early and preschool, general, vocational and higher educational institutions against the standards;
- Management and Development of National Qualifications Framework and a Classifier of the Fields of Study – the NCEQE manages and develops the National Qualifications Framework (NQF);
- Elaborates the sectoral benchmarks with the full-fledged involvement of the stakeholders and creates the related sector councils/working groups;
- Supports the Development of Quality Culture – for that purpose, the NCEQE elaborates the recommendations, carries out the pilot/development-oriented reviews, organizes training, holds seminars and conferences. Also, the Agency provides the supportive mechanisms for General Educational Institutions (GEIs) and other interested parties, and plans the activities supporting internal QA mechanisms of GEIs;
- Recognition of Education – the NCEQE recognizes the foreign education and confirms authenticity of educational documents issued in Georgia.

Structure of inspectorate

The NCEQE maintains a unified framework of standards and regulations applicable to all educational institutions across Georgia. This ensures consistency and sustainability in quality assurance practices in the country.

A detailed organizational chart outlining the NCEQE's structure and management is accessible at the following link: <https://eqe.ge/en/structure>

The NCEQE has two governance bodies: Director and Coordination Council.

The Charter of the NCEQE explicitly defines the responsibilities and areas of their supervision. The Director of the NCEQE has an authority to manage the Center, coordinate the structural units, appoint, and dismiss the staff, define the functions and obligations of the structural units/subdivisions, distribute duties and responsibilities, use incentives and disciplinary measures against the staff of the NCEQE, issue administrative legal acts, represent the organization, delegate the authority, announce the competitions, and create the respective commissions.

The Coordinating Council operates as a managerial body to ensure stakeholder involvement in the management and development of the NCEQE.

In agreement with the Coordination Council, the Director approves strategic and action plans of the NCEQE. Also, the Director agrees with the Coordination Council any developments, amendments or/and changes to the Statute of the NCEQE and authorization/accreditation standards and procedures.

The NCEQE also has:

Authorization Council of General Educational Institutions, Authorization Council of Vocational Educational Institutions, Accreditation Council of higher Educational Programs, Authorization Council of Higher Educational Institutions, Appeal Council (for all levels). They are independent bodies during the implement their functions.

The separate departments of the NCEQE are dealing with educational quality assurance: Early and Preschool Education Quality Assurance Department; General Education Quality Assurance Department; Vocational Education Quality Assurance Department; Higher Education Quality Assurance Department.

Size

The NCEQE employs a staff of over 200 professionals distributed across various structural units, each with defined roles and responsibilities. Staff recruitment is conducted through open competition based on specific qualification requirements.

The General Educational Quality Assurance Department is staffed with 17 permanent employees and supported by a pool of 258 general education quality assurance experts and 450 subject experts. The main functions of the expert pools are the external evaluation (Authorization, monitoring process, Increasing the number of students, Change of school location and area) of the General Educational Institutions.

Overseeing the authorization process, the Authorization Council in General Education is an independent body appointed by the Prime Minister of Georgia. Composed of 10 members, the Authorization Council's primary responsibilities include deliberating and making decisions on various administrative procedures, such as authorization, monitoring, increasing the number of students, change of school location and area.

Remits

The NCEQE conducts comprehensive external quality evaluations across all educational levels, encompassing early childhood and preschool, general, vocational, and higher education.

Unit of inspection

The NCEQE's Department of General Educational Quality Assurance, in collaboration with expert pools, conducts individual external evaluations of both public and private general educational institutions.

Purpose of inspectorate

The NCEQE conducts external quality evaluations of General Educational Institutions to enhance their overall development and functionality. This assessment process is designed to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement within these institutions. Thus, this assessment process is designed to drive the enhancement of educational quality within the General Educational institutions.

What is your strapline/motto?

Vision of the NCEQE: The NCEQE represents a regional hub with high credibility and recognition on local and international level, which offers a wide range of services related to education quality enhancement to the public.

Mission of the NCEQE: The mission of the NCEQE is to support education quality enhancement by providing services that are user-oriented and based on internationally recognized standards and best local practices, as well as by supporting enhancement of quality-oriented governance.

Relationship with government

The NCEQE is a Legal Entity under Public Law (LEPL), which operates as an independent and autonomous institution according to the Law of Georgia "on Educational Quality Enhancement", and the Statute of the NCEQE protects the principles of transparency and publicity, the Constitution of Georgia, international agreements and other relevant legislative acts.

The NCEQE has institutional independence, which is ensured by the tangible results of operational, financial and organizational independence.

In terms of organizational independence, the NCEQE is the Agency separated from the legislative and state administration bodies, and it carries out its activities independently. In the managerial body, the NCEQE has the Coordination Council and the Director.

The Director selection process is regulated by the Law of Georgia "On Legal Entities under Public Law ". It should be noted that all procedures and regulations in the Agency are approved by the Director. The members of the Authorization/Accreditation/Appeal Councils are selected by a special Committee and are appointed by the Prime Minister of Georgia, and the candidate is proposed by the Minister of Education, Science and Youth of Georgia. It should be noted that the Coordination Council participates in the selection of the members for the Authorization, Accreditation and Appeal Councils, as well as the Director of the Agency.

To ensure financial independence, the NCEQE performs its own activities independently, with its own income. Operationally, self-sufficient services provide the Agency with its own financial resources. It should be noted that the Agency's financial independence from the state budget has been increasing over the years, and it decides to dispose of these funds independently.

Furthermore, the NCEQE has full operational independence in all areas of external quality assurance activities, both on processes and results/outcomes. The NCEQE independently plans and implements of institutional evaluation (authorization) in all educational levels and program accreditation (only in higher education). Accordingly, the Agency is autonomous in organizing external evaluation procedures. However, any kind of decision on authorization and accreditation is made independently by the respective Councils, voting in a closed voting format and there is no possibility of any external interference.

Accountability

NCEQE has open and extensive cooperation with various stakeholders, transparency, continuity, accountability of the NCEQE's activities, which increase trust towards the organization.

The NCEQE involves its stakeholders in its decision-making processes and incorporates their feedback to ensure a comprehensive and inclusive quality assurance system. Moreover, the NCEQE is committed to transparency and accountability. The NCEQE communicates about its processes, evaluation outcomes, and recommendations to the public and has mechanisms of complaints and appeals in place to ensure fair and transparent procedures.

The Agency regularly collects and analyzes the feedback from the stakeholders and uses it for the further improvement of its internal processes. The feedback is collected through the working groups, conferences, site visits or other events where the stakeholders mainly participate.

To enhance transparency and accountability, the NCEQE publishes an annual report on its [website](#), detailing key activities and accomplishments throughout the year.

Impact of inspections

The external evaluation process yields several key impacts. First, the Authorization Council's decisions regarding external evaluations are publicly accessible on the NCEQE website, fostering transparency and stakeholder engagement. Second, the NCEQE regularly analyses

expert pool reports to identify systemic challenges requiring targeted support and improvement initiatives.

Quality assurance of inspections

The following standards govern the external evaluation and quality assurance of general education institutions in Georgia:

[Standards of Authorization and Evaluation scheme \(PDF\).pdf](#)

Following the external quality evaluation, General Educational Institutions are required to develop an action plan which outlines the key improvement strategy for the next one or two years depending on the volume of the implementing activities.

2. Evaluation process

Self-evaluation

In accordance with Order No. 99/n issued by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Youth of Georgia, General Educational Institutions are required to complete and submit an electronic self-evaluation form to the NCEQE annually. General Educational Institutions utilize self-evaluation to enhance their internal quality assurance processes. The NCEQE analyses the submitted self-evaluation data and results are considered for improving quality assurance system.

Focus of inspection

External Quality Evaluation Mechanism are based on the Authorization Standards. Please, see the Authorization Standards in detail:

[Standards of Authorization and evaluation scheme \(PDF\).pdf](#)

Inspection framework

External Evaluation framework is based on the Order N99/N of Minister (see below the link):

https://eqe.ge/res/NewFolder/NewFolder/NewFolder/NewFolder/NewFolder/NewFolder/NewFolder/NewFolder/NewFolder/NewFolder/99_On%20Approval%20of%20the%20Charter%20and%20Fees%20for%20the%20Authorization%20of%20Educational%20Institutions.pdf

Inspection time and resources

The authorization process takes 180 days to complete following the authorization fee payment. Expert site visits typically last two days. Two quality assurance experts participate

in the visit process, and the number of subject experts depends on how many levels of general education the school provides (primary, basic or secondary level).

General education quality assurance experts must hold an academic degree, preferably a Bachelor's or Master's degree in Education Administration, Business Administration, Public Management, or Social Sciences.

Frequency of inspections

Authorization is granted to the institution for a period of nine years. Every year it carries out a self-assessment, which is reflected on the NCEQE's electronic platform. According to the decision of the Authorization Council, the school may be assigned a monitoring period, during which it is checked to what extent the school has fulfilled the shortcomings and inconsistencies.

Please, see the description of the authorization process below:

[Authorization Guide \(En\).docx](#)

Non-inspection activities

As for non-inspection activities, the General Education Quality Assurance Department implements various developmental measures for schools, expert corps and members of authorization council.

The Department periodically conducts various trainings, meetings and workshops.

With the involvement of various stakeholders are created recommendation guidelines and methodical documents to support the internal quality enhancement of schools.

A general education institution may appeal a decision to deny or revoke its authorization by submitting a request to the Appeals Council within one month of receiving the notification. The Appeals Council is required to review the appeal and issue a decision within 60 calendar days. A detailed outline of the appeal process can be found in the authorization decree, Order No. 99/n, issued by the Ministry.

https://eqe.ge/res/NewFolder/NewFolder/NewFolder/NewFolder/NewFolder/NewFolder/NewFolder/NewFolder/NewFolder/NewFolder/99_On%20Approval%20of%20the%20Charter%20and%20Fees%20for%20the%20Authorization%20of%20Educational%20Institutions.pdf

3. Consequences of inspection

Reporting

Following the Authorization Council's deliberation and final decision, a report is published on the NCEQE website. This report is publicly accessible, allowing parents and the general public to review the findings and make informed decisions about General Educational Institutions selection.

Grading

The NCEQE does not assign grades to general education institutions.

Sharing inspection findings

In 2020, the NCEQE established a dedicated Planning, Research, and International Relations Department to coordinate thematic analysis. This department collaborates with other units to conduct ongoing thematic analyses aimed at improving quality assurance policies and processes at institutional, national, and international levels. It should be noted that, [The Rule of Implementation of the Thematic Analysis](#) was adopted in 2024 by the NCEQE. Completed thematic analyses are publicly available on the [NCEQE website](#).

What happens following an inspection?

Authorization mechanisms are designed to foster development and collaboration among General Educational Institutions. Non-compliance with national authorization standards may result in the temporary closure or shut down of the general education institution. General Education Institutions that address identified deficiencies properly can reapply for authorization. This approach positions external evaluation as a developmental tool for the overall general education system.