

# National Education Accreditation Centre

## 2008 Annual Report

Tbilisi

### **National Education Accreditation Centre Legal Entity of Public Law (LEPL)**

Director – Nino Chubinidze; ninochubinidze@nea.ge

#### **Administration**

Nodar Kharazishvili – Head of Administration, Financial Manager; nodar\_ter@yahoo.com

Revaz Khoperia – Lawyer; revaz\_khoperia@daad-alumni.ge

Nodar Megrelishvili – Lawyer; nodarmegrelishvili@nea.ge

George Tskhvediani – Lawyer; GiorgiTskvediani@gmail.com

Dimitry Karetin – IT and Website Manager; sisadmin@nea.ge

Nino Khachiuri – Accountant; nino-9@posta.ge

Mzia Makhviladze – Clerk; mziamakvildze@yahoo.com

Maia Nikuradze – Deputy Director; info@nea.ge

#### **Higher Education Accreditation Department**

Khatuna Mkheidze – Head of Department; khatuna\_mkheidze@nea.ge

Ekaterine Chinchaladze – Institutional Accreditation Manager; ekaterine\_chinchaladze@nea.ge

Natia Vacharadze – Program Accreditation Manager; natia\_vacharadze@nea.ge

Veronika Lanchava – Institutional Accreditation Coordinator; veriko\_lanchava@nea.ge

Marika Dolidze – Program Accreditation Coordinator; dolidzemarika@yahoo.com

#### **Secondary Education Accreditation Department**

Maka Kordzadze – Head of Department; maka\_kordzadze@nea.ge

Nino Bokeria – School Coordinator for Eastern Georgia; n.bokeria@yahoo.com

George Gakheladze – School Coordinator for Western Georgia; ggakheladze@yahoo.com

Nino Inauri – Coordinator of Private and Special Schools and Schools for Refugees/IDPs;

nini.i@mail.ru

#### **European Integration and Mobility Department**

Maia Advadze – Head of Department; maka-a@nea.ge

Guram Ugrekheldze – Register Manager; g\_ugrekheldze@yahoo.com

George Maisuradze – Mobility Manager; giorgimaisuradze@nea.ge

Irakli Pantsulaia – Voucher Manager; irakli\_pantsulaia@nea.ge

Natia Amiridze – Foreign Relations Coordinator; contactnea@gmail.com

Tatia Giorgobiani – Register Coordinator; tatia.giorgobiani@posta.ge

Ana Yakobashvili – Mobility Coordinator; anajakobashvili@yahoo.com

Veriko Rapava – Voucher Coordinator; verikorapava@yahoo.com

## **Higher Education Accreditation Board**

Nino Khurtsidze – Board Chairperson; Senior Legal Adviser, the Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative, the American Bar Association; [nkhurtsidze@hotmail.com](mailto:nkhurtsidze@hotmail.com)

Nodar Surguladze – Deputy Board Chairman, Deputy Minister for Education and Science; [surguladze@mes.gov.ge](mailto:surguladze@mes.gov.ge)

Boris Gitolendia – Board Secretary; Head of the Students and Graduates Relations and Career Service, the Georgian Technical University; [boris.gitolendia@yahoo.com](mailto:boris.gitolendia@yahoo.com)

### **Members:**

Nino Okribelashvili – Associate Professor, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University; [okribeli@hotmail.com](mailto:okribeli@hotmail.com)

Lia Buadze – Head of the Educational Programs Department, Ministry of Culture, Monuments Protection, and Sport; [liabuadze@yahoo.com](mailto:liabuadze@yahoo.com)

Ramaz Kvatadze – Executive Director, Association of the Georgian Research and Educational Computer Networks “GRENA”; Ph.D. in Physics and Mathematics; [ramaz@grena.ge](mailto:ramaz@grena.ge)

George Todua – Head of the State Property Management Policy Department, Ministry of Economic Development

Irine Darchia – Head of the Quality Assurance Service, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University; [irinedarchia@tsu.ge](mailto:irinedarchia@tsu.ge)

Irakli Gharibashvili – President, Georgian Library Association; [igar@hotmail.com](mailto:igar@hotmail.com)

## **Contents**

### **Chapter 1. Higher Education Accreditation**

- a) Facilitation of accreditation of the regulated programs– development of standards for medical and veterinary academic programs
- b) Accreditation of Higher vocational program
- d) Analysis of the improvement of accreditation conditions by the accredited higher educational institutions and their annual reports
- e) Administrative legal cases and lawsuits related to the institutional accreditation

### **Chapter 2. The student register and mobility**

- a) The student mobility in Georgia in 2008 and its major trends
- b) Management of the students' register and new responsibilities of universities and NEAC

### **Chapter 3. Secondary education accreditation**

- a) Preliminary procedures for accreditation of the secondary education and involvement of the public in the process
- b) The legal basis of accreditation of the secondary education

### **Chapter 4. Accreditation of teacher professional development programs**

- a) Implementation of teacher professional development programs and preconditions for the process
- b) Selection/training of the evaluators of teacher professional development programs
- c) The accreditation procedure and indicators of program assessment

### **Chapter 5. Recognition/verification of academic qualifications**

- a) ENIC-NARIC representation office
- b) National and international regulations of the recognition/verification of academic qualifications

### **Chapter 6. Institutional development and external evaluation of the National Education Accreditation Centre**

### **Chapter 7. Public relations**

### **Chapter 8. Financial Report 2008**

## **Preface**

Georgia's economic competitiveness at the global labour market largely depends on the efficiency of the national education system. The Georgian government's strategy for the development of education in 2007-2011 is based on the following principles: active public involvement in the management; decentralisation of the educational system and enhancing autonomy and independence of educational institutions; development of a management system aiming at internal quality control and efficient distribution of resources; increased funding for all sectors of education and improvement of technical resources; integration of training and research centres in order to improve the scientific and technological potential. New models accreditation of higher and general education, standards and relevant indicators for the assessment of educational institutions reflect priorities set by the government.

In 2008 NEAC actively participated, with representatives of the higher and general educational institutions, in preparation of conceptual and legal issues of the new systems. Starting from 2009, accreditation of schools and teacher professional development programs will be carried out through an active interaction with the public and mutual understanding and agreement of opinions. NEAC has successfully cooperated with professional associations and state medical and agrarian universities in preparation for program accreditation in regulated professions such as medical and veterinary academic programs. Duly implementation of new accreditation models will enable to set up transparent institutions with greater accountability at all levels of education, facilitating the country's political, social and cultural integration into Europe.

The given annual report includes the assessment of the NEAC's external audit carried out by the independent European experts and analysis of the annual reports submitted by the accredited higher educational institutions. There is also a brief review of a new accreditation model of higher vocational programs, student mobility and recognition/verification of academic qualifications.

We greatly appreciate effective cooperation of independent experts Mr. Andy Reid (OFSTED, UK), Mr. Klaus Vittkuhn, Mrs. Monique Mueller (Performance Design International, Germany), Dr. Theodore D. Mauro (Clemson University, USA), Mr. David Losaberidze (Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development, Georgia) and all participants of workshops and seminars organised by NEAC in 2008 in drafting concepts and charters of general education accreditation and accreditation of teacher professional development programs.

We are also deeply grateful to all representatives of international organisations, European and American universities who supported Georgia during the Russian aggression in August and afterwards. Many thanks to all those who said "I'm Georgian" to save Georgia.

Nino Chubinidze  
Director, National Education Accreditation Centre

## **Chapter 1. Higher Education Accreditation**

The accreditation and European integration programs 2008 of the National Education Accreditation Centre (NEAC) set out three main directions of NEAC activities:

- 1) Preparation for the new systems of higher institutional and program education accreditation, accreditation of higher vocational programs, and inspection of the compliance of accredited higher educational institutions with accreditation terms.
- 2) Accreditation of teacher professional development programs and preparation for the accreditation of general education.
- 3) Measures to facilitate European integration such as verification of educational materials, verification/recognition of academic qualifications and support for the ongoing activities of Georgia's ENIC-NARIC representation, mobility of students and teachers/professors, maintenance of the integrated student database, and external audit of NEAC aiming at membership of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

The NEAC program for 2008 was revised due to internal political tensions and the Russian intervention. The revisions affected mainly the pilot project of accreditation of the general education and the training program for quality management services of the accredited higher educational institutions designed to ensure accreditation of academic programs for regulated professions.

Apart from the planned projects, NEAC had to implement several additional activities in 2008: preparation of basis for and the commencement of accreditation of teacher professional education programs; control over the students' vouchers on the basis of the student register; prevention of the illegal issue of diplomas to the students that enrolled in 2004-05, according to the reports of accredited higher educational institutions, with the help of forged documents – inspection of the personal files of the graduates. For two months following the August events NEAC voluntarily and willingly took an active part in the registration of IDPs, post-war relief programs, and protest actions.

### ***a) Facilitation of accreditation of the regulated programs– development of standards for medical and veterinary academic programs***

The program accreditation process cannot begin unless relevant standards and indicators are in place. In January-April 2008 the NEAC Higher Education Accreditation Department coordinated experts' working meetings in order to develop accreditation standards and indicators for regulated medical and veterinary programs. Prof. George Menabde, the rector of State Medical University, and Prof. Gela Javakhishvili, the rector of State Agrarian University, were actively involved in planning the meetings.

On the basis of the Article 77 of the Law of Georgia on Higher Education the NEAC commenced developing accreditation standards and indicators for regulated medical and veterinary programs in 2008 in cooperation with professional associations and other stakeholders.

### ***Medical programs***

On 17 January, 2008 an experts' group was set up at the initiative of the NEAC in order to work out accreditation standards for medical education programs. The group was made up of the representatives of higher educational institutions and professional associations. Namely, it included Gaiane Simonia, vice president of the Georgian Cardiology Association, Irakli Pavlenishvili, vice president of the Georgian Paediatric Association, Ghia Lobzhanidze, president of the Georgian Doctors Association and a board member of the Georgian Surgeons Association, Dimitry Kordzaia, a member of the Georgian Paediatric Association, Roman Shakarashvili, president of the Georgian Neurologists and Neurosurgeons Association and a board member of the American Stroke Association, Alexander Tsiskaridze, a member of the Georgian Neurologists and Neurosurgeons Association, Tamara Rukhadze, president of Palliative Care Association and a member of the Georgian Oncology Association, and Maia Okujava, a member of the Internist Association.

The group of medical experts held 12 working meetings in January-April 2008, during which the experts drafted the program accreditation standards for public health, dentistry, and pharmacy.

Modern medical program standards are to ensure qualification and competence of graduates in medicine. The standards must comply with the following national and European regulations: The Trilogy – Global Standards of World Federation of Medical Education (WFME), the directive 2005/36 (7 September 2005) of the Council of Europe and European Parliament on the recognition of professional qualifications, Bologna Declaration, TUNING/MEDINE “Harmonisation of Learning Outcomes for Higher Education” (2006-07), European Core Curriculum – the Students' Perspective (Bristol, 2006), Law of Georgia on Higher Education (2004), and Law of Georgia on Medical Practice (2001).

On the basis of the above-mentioned European directive, representatives of medical associations and different branches of medicine drafted accreditation standards for educational programs in the fields of public health, dentistry and pharmacy. These standards serve as a basis for the accreditation process of medical programs in Georgia.

### ***Veterinary programs***

On 31 January 2008 an experts' group was set up at the initiative of the NEAC in order to work out accreditation standards for veterinary education programs. The group was made up of the representatives of the following bodies:

- **NEAC**
  - Nino Chubinidze – Director;
  - Khatuna Mkheidze – Head of the Department of Higher Education Accreditation;
  - Natia Vacharadze and Ekaterine Chinchaladze – Coordinators of the Department of Higher Education Accreditation;
- **State Agrarian University**
  - Prof. David Gubeladze – Head of the Quality Assurance Services;
  - Prof. Levan Makaridze – Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine;
  - Associate Professor Maia Kereselidze – Head of the Quality Assurance Services;
- **National Bureau of Food Safety, Veterinary and Plant Protection of the Ministry of Agriculture**
  - Prof. Demna Khelaia – Head of the Veterinary-Sanitary Control Service;
- **State Chancellery of Georgia**

- Prof. Shadiman Potskhveria – Senior Expert of the Protocol Division of the Organisation Department;
- **Union of the Georgian Veterinary and Livestock Workers**
- David Shalamberidze – Head of the Veterinary Sector.

The group of veterinary experts held 12 working meetings in January-April 2008, during which the experts drafted accreditation standards for educational programs in the field of veterinary medicine. They also identified the need to create professional associations in the field to facilitate the veterinary program accreditation. Together with other members of the group NEAC representatives drafted the charter of such a professional association and outlined its future development strategies, including prospects of cooperation with Georgian research foundations and international organisations. As a result, International Veterinary Education Association of South Caucasus (IVEASC) was founded on 24 September, 2008. Prof. Levan Makaridze was elected IVEASC chairman.

A meeting with Prof. Betty Walters of Regional College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Maryland, was held in NEAC at the end of the year, on December 3, within the framework of the Georgian State Agrarian University's project "Curriculum Development in the Georgian State Agrarian University". The meeting was attended by representatives of NEAC and the Georgian State Agrarian University and focused on American standards of veterinary medicine and Betty Walters's expert experience in the field of program accreditation. The participants also agreed to carry out preparatory work for the veterinary program accreditation process in the State Agrarian University in 2009, in cooperation with the American Veterinary Association and University of Maryland.

#### ***b) Higher vocational program accreditation***

NEAC carried out the accreditation of higher vocational programs twice in 2008. The deadline for submitting applications for accreditation of vocational programs by accredited higher educational institutions was set by Order 215 (dated 12 March 2008) and Order 688 (5 August 2008) of the Minister of Education and Science. In all, the following seven accredited and newly licensed higher educational institutions applied to NEAC for accreditation of higher vocational programs: Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Tbilisi State Medical University, State Subtropical Farming University of Georgia, Shota Rustaveli State University, Sh. Meskhia Zugdidi State Institute, Zugdidi Independent University Ltd, and Gori Multi-Discipline University "Small Academy" Ltd (renamed Sukhishvili University). These institutions submitted a total of 31 higher vocational education programs 22 of which were granted program accreditation on the basis of the accreditation experts' conclusions and analysis by the NEAC Higher Education Accreditation Board (see the appendix).

In the autumn NEAC received accreditation applications from four accredited higher educational institutions: Shota Rustaveli Theatre and Film University, Vano Sarajishvili Tbilisi State Conservatoire, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University and Jacob Gogebashvili Telavi State University. All higher vocational education programs out of the 12 submitted programs were granted accreditation.

Admission of students to 106 higher vocational education programs offered by 17 higher educational institutions was announced in 2008.

In 2007 and 2008 the NEAC Higher Education Accreditation Board awarded accreditation to 159 higher vocational education programs submitted by 24 accredited and newly founded/licensed (which have the same status as accredited institutions) higher educational

institutions. The quota of enrolling students in higher vocational education programs of accredited higher educational institutions numbered 7909 students in 2007-2008. According to the integrated student database, 5892 students were enrolled in higher vocational education programs.

***d) Analysis of the improvement of accreditation conditions by the accredited higher educational institutions and their annual reports***

According to the Order 223 signed by the Minister of Education and Science on March 27, 2006, on the charter of the higher education accreditation and the instruction for calculating institutional accreditation fees, accredited higher educational institutions must submit annual self-assessment reports to NEAC to confirm their compliance with the criteria for institutional accreditation. NEAC must elaborate the self-assessment report form and provide the higher educational institutions with advice and consultation. In 2008 NEAC developed and authorised the self-assessment report form. During the submission of self-assessment reports NEAC director and the Department of Higher Education Accreditation regularly arranged “open days” and held consultation meetings to assist the educational institutions prepare their self-assessment reports. In total, 40 higher educational institutions submitted annual self-assessment reports from October 28 to November 17.

The annual self-assessment report form of higher educational institutions for 2008 comprised of six chapters and five sub-chapters as follows: general information, material resources, educational programs, human resources, web-site and administration. Apart from the quantitative parameters defined in the charter, the self-assessment reports also included information on a progress made by a higher educational institution in teaching, science and research, as well as about social conditions of students and professors/teachers.

Analysis of the self-assessment reports revealed that 14 higher educational institutions had improved their compliance with the accreditation criteria stipulated by the charter since they were granted accreditation. At the same time, NEAC and Higher Education Accreditation Board found out that 24 higher educational institutions failed to meet certain criteria. With recommendation of the Board, NEAC set a deadline for these educational institutions to address their problems and meet all accreditation criteria. Results and analysis of the self-assessment reports will be presented in NEAC 2009 annual report.

***e) Administrative legal cases and lawsuits related to the institutional accreditation***

In 2008 NEAC was involved in 15 administrative legal cases and 20 lawsuits related to institutional accreditation and recognition of academic qualifications. These cases and lawsuits revealed that:

1) Higher educational institutions only formally agree to the principle of self-assessment and do not fully understand that accreditation is a voluntary process. They apply for accreditation without taking into account the results of internal audit of the quality management system. Their applications and other submitted documents are superficial and too formal. Besides, some educational institutions appeared unwilling to follow the approved accreditation norms and procedures, and provisions of the law on higher education. Despite this, they were still anxious to pursue their activity in the field of higher education.

2) During court hearings the purpose and the importance of accreditation is underestimated and reduced to mere procedural irregularities in an administrative case.

3) The current accreditation system is rather inflexible and does not fully reflect the quality of the education process.

4) It is necessary to revise the time frame for accreditation applications as soon as possible. At present higher educational institutions can apply for accreditation only once a year. As a result, they are unable to choose the time for applying at their own convenience. If their application is rejected, they cannot re-apply and are forced to bring a lawsuit.

In 2008 NEAC won 10 lawsuits – 6 in the first instance courts, 4 in the courts of appeal – and lost 8 lawsuits – 4 in the first instance courts, 4 in the courts of appeal. Two lawsuits are still under way in the court of appeal and the ruling is pending.

#### *Administrative legal cases*

<b>№</b>	<b>Plaintiff</b>	<b>Ruling</b>
1	Quality Management University, Ltd	Claim rejected
2	Caucasus Academic Centre, Ltd (CAC)	Claim rejected
3	European University, Ltd	Claim rejected
4	Ilia Chavchavadze Tbilisi University, Ltd	Claim rejected
5	Automobile-Road Institute, Ltd	Claim rejected
6	T. Mamistvalov-Kezerashvili Georgia-Israel Interbusiness Dental Institute, Ltd	Claim rejected
7	Tbilisi Banking-Financial Institute, Ltd	Claim rejected
8	Akaki Chkhartishvili Sukhumi Economic-Humanitarian University, Ltd	Claim rejected
9	Tbilisi Academy of Economy and Law, Ltd	Claim rejected
10	Rustavi Independent Institute, Ltd	Claim rejected
11	“Sakartvelo” University, Ltd	Claim rejected
12	Sulkhan Saba Orbeliani Institute of Theology, Philosophy, Culture and History, Ltd	Claim rejected
13	Institute of Critical Medicine, Ltd	Claim rejected
14	Citizen Tamta Ghughunishvili	Claim rejected
15	Founding Association of Non-state Educational Institutions	Claim rejected

#### *Lawsuits*

<b>№</b>	<b>Plaintiff</b>	<b>Court ruling</b>	<b>Appeal</b>	<b>Results of appeal</b>	<b>The ruling enforcement</b>
1	National Social-Technological University of Georgia, Ltd	Claim rejected	+ (plaintiff)	Appeal rejected	
2	Quality Management University, Ltd	Claim satisfied	+ (NEAC)	Appeal rejected	+
3	Tbilisi Humanitarian University, Ltd	Claim satisfied	+ (NEAC)	Appeal rejected	+
4	Euro-Caucasus University, Ltd	Claim satisfied	+ (NEAC)	Appeal rejected	+
5	Tbilisi Banking-Financial Institute, Ltd	Claim rejected	+ (plaintiff)	The ruling is pending	

6	Ilia Chavchavadze Tbilisi University, Ltd	Considered ineligible	-		
7	Khashuri Independent University, Ltd	Claim rejected	+ (plaintiff)	Appeal rejected	
8	Rustavi Independent Institute, Ltd	Claim rejected	+ (plaintiff)	Appeal satisfied	-
9	Kutaisi National Institute "Gelati" Ltd	Claim rejected	+ (plaintiff)	Appeal rejected	
10	Tbilisi Academy of Economy and Law, Ltd	Claim rejected	+ (plaintiff)	The ruling is pending	
11	Multi-Discipline Institute of Batumi Professional Scientific Centre Ltd	Claim rejected	+ (plaintiff)	Appeal rejected	
12	Akaki Chkhartishvili Sukhumi Economic-Humanitarian University, Ltd	Claim satisfied	-		+
13	Citizen Lamara Tabutsadze	Claim withdrawn	-	-	-

The city court and courts of appeal of Tbilisi have adopted the following practice for dealing with institutional accreditation cases:

1. The courts agreed with arguments of the NEAC and Higher Education Accreditation Board that any document created after an accreditation visit must have no mandatory bearing on an accreditation decision. The overwhelming majority of such claims filed by plaintiffs were rejected by courts.

2. In all disputable cases the courts first of all looked at whether an administrative body strictly implemented the procedural regulations of the accreditation process and whether accreditation experts could provide relevant documentary evidence to back up their reports.

These aspects will be reflected in the NEAC development program in order to streamline the accreditation-related processes.

## **Chapter 2. The student register and mobility**

### ***a) The student mobility in Georgia in 2008 and major tendencies***

Student mobility means free transfer of students from one educational institution to another in search of a better education process and higher quality education. This initiative is designed to promote global mobility of students and their involvement and active participation in the international education system. This process helps students to accumulate part of their credits within the framework of international student exchange programs or complete their educational program. They also can pursue their study at the next level of the education system in other educational institutions both at home and abroad.

There are two types of mobility – horizontal and vertical. Vertical mobility means that students study in a foreign university one or several semesters within the framework of one specific educational program. In case of vertical mobility students complete an educational program in one country and can move to another country to enrol in a next-level educational program. Mobility contributes to cooperation among educational institutions, namely to:

- development and implementation of joint educational programs
- student mobility between educational institutions
- mutual recognition of academic qualifications
- transfer and recognition of credits
- personal development of students
- studies of foreign languages and cultures
- inter-cultural dialogue

According to available statistical data, USA hosts the highest number of foreign students in the world. It is followed by UK, Australia, Germany, France, Japan, Canada and New Zealand. Malaysia, Singapore and China are at the bottom of the list.

In addition to the above-mentioned purposes, student mobility in Georgia has some other goals. First of all, mobility offers Georgian students, provided they got admission on the basis of respective Georgian legislation that was in effect at the time, an opportunity to move from unaccredited higher educational institutions to accredited ones. Mobility is also helpful for students when their educational institution loses accreditation – in such cases students can transfer to an accredited educational institution and get an officially recognized certificate/diploma.

NEAC has monitored the student mobility since the second semester of academic year 2006-07. In Georgia mobility helped students move from the educational institutions that failed to get or lost their accreditation to the accredited ones. More than 3,500 students changed their educational institutions within the framework of student mobility programs from the second semester of academic year 2007-08 till the first semester of 2008-09: about 900 of them moved from unaccredited educational institutions to accredited ones, while some 2,600 students transferred between accredited educational institutions.

Special posters and flyers with thorough information on the mobility procedure were printed, within the framework of a 2008 program to facilitate European integration and mobility, and distributed among higher educational institutions to promote transparent and fair student mobility in the winter and the spring. Useful information on the student mobility, including the available mobility vacancies for respective semesters, was also posted on the websites of all accredited higher educational institutions and NEAC ([www.nea.ge](http://www.nea.ge)). A special TV commercial about the mobility procedure was shown on TV by the Georgian Public Broadcaster in January 2008 and July-August 2008. A respective radio commercial came on the air at the same time. NEAC regularly provided consultation and advice to individuals and educational institutions.

To guarantee fair and transparent student mobility in the second semester of academic year 2007-08 in Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, 12 NEAC experts were assigned to the university to check students' personal files and monitor transfer exams. Since the first semester of 2008-09 the student mobility documents and transfer exams have been monitored by the department's staff.

Documents of the students –those who applied for mobility – of all higher educational institutions that registered at the NEAC website were cross checked in 2008. In January and June-August 2008 students moved from unaccredited higher educational institutions to accredited ones or transferred from one educational program to another within the same educational institution. In January 38 higher educational institutions offered student mobility vacancies. In the summer their number reached 42. In total, 5,830 student mobility vacancies were registered in 2008. Due to transparency of the mobility process and the abundance of

vacancies, students of unaccredited higher educational institutions had no difficulty moving to accredited institutions and choosing respective educational programs at will.

Analysis of the student mobility in Georgia revealed that the number of students that moved from accredited to accredited higher educational institutions was six times higher than that of the students who transferred from non-accredited to accredited institutions. Most of the students changed courses and their speciality.

### ***b) Regulations of the student register management and new responsibilities of universities and NEAC***

Order 860 of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia, dated 15 October 2008, brought into force new management regulations for the registers of students, professors/teachers, and accredited higher educational institutions. The regulations are designed to regulate the registers of students, professors/teachers and accredited higher educational institutions and newly founded licensed educational institutions created under Article 66<sup>1</sup> of the Law of Georgia on Higher Education. In particular, the new regulations deal with the procedure to add new entries and revise/update the existing information in the registers.

The registers have the following objectives: a) to create, systematise and statistically analyse an integrated database of the students, professors/teachers and higher educational institutions; b) to promote mobility of professors/teachers; c) to monitor accreditation conditions; d) to oversee admission of students to higher educational institutions; and e) to control student grants.

Under the register regulations, NEAC has assumed a new function beginning from the autumn 2008 – control over students' grants. The new function required to add new, grant-related fields to the registers: training, social conditions, foreign citizenship, etc. The registers allow to cross-check the amount of grant(s) allocated by a higher educational institution to each student on the basis of the minister's order and prevent misappropriation of funds. It will be impossible to cross check the students' grants effectively, unless higher educational institutions have fully functional student registers. There were some problems in this respect in 2008. Namely, higher educational institutions failed to update their student registers. As a result, NEAC was unable to check and verify grants of the students who were absent in the register, while the education ministry could not allocate grants for such students.

Examination of the grant-related information in the first semester of 2008-09 revealed some errors in the data provided by higher educational institutions. For instance, names of some 350 students were duplicated in the registers of respective educational institutions. As a result, the Ministry of Education and Science withheld grants of these students, promising to transfer the money only after the errors are corrected.

NEAC has to maintain the following registers:

- a) the register of higher educational institutions
- b) the register of students
- c) the register of professors/teachers

a) The register of higher educational institutions includes the following data:

1. The title, legal-administrative status, valid address and contact information of an institution; the name and contact information of the contact person/representative;
2. The date and registration number of the accreditation order

3. The type of accreditation
4. The term of accreditation
5. Implemented higher academic and vocational education programs and their respective accreditation status
6. The number of students at each level
7. The number of the academic personnel

b) The student register contains information on accredited students. It can help detect illegally enrolled students and monitor student mobility within an educational program or from one educational program to another. The student register consists of the following fields:

1. First name, second name, gender, personal identification number, birth date, citizenship, place of registration
2. The title, legal-administrative status, and valid address of the institution that issued a secondary education certificate; the date and registration number of the certificate
3. The registration number of a certificate verifying that national matriculation exams were passed successfully
4. The number and date of the rector's order to admit a student to the higher educational institution; the number of the admission contract between a student and the higher educational institution
5. Faculty, speciality, course, specialisation, sub-specialisation
6. One of the educational programs (higher vocational education program, higher academic education program and its level, higher medical education program and its level)
7. The language of instruction of the educational program
8. The number and date of the rector's order to expel/transfer a student or the order to suspend/restore a student's status; the number and date of the rector's order to admit a transferred student
9. The amount of a state education grant received by a student; the date the grant was allocated and/or augmented and the basis for study in a higher educational institution

c) The register of professors/teachers includes the following data fields:

1. First name, second name, gender, personal identification number, birth date, citizenship, address (place of registration)
2. Academic degree; the registration number and date of issue of a diploma (the most recent one); the registration number of the university rector's individual legal act to issue the diploma; academic position in the educational institution; the form of employment; educational program; publications, training workshops, professional development courses and conferences in the last five years
3. A legally chosen higher educational institution and the term of contract between the institution and a professor/lecturer

The student register should be updated twice a year – the update process must end on October 1 and April 1 of each year. The register of professors/teachers must be updated systematically. Errors in the database can be corrected at any time upon written request of a higher educational institution or if mistakes are revealed by NEAC itself. Responsibility for the accuracy or correctness of the data submitted by a higher educational institution and added to the register is a responsibility of that institution.

With the help of the student register NEAC was able to expose the students that were enrolled illegally in 2004 and 2005. NEAC also cross-checked personal files of all students that graduated from higher educational institutions of Georgia in 2008. The registers allowed identifying those

students (on the basis of birth date and the date of issue of secondary education certificates) who were awarded their secondary education certificates under the age of 17. NEAC experts – six 3-member groups – visited higher educational institutions to address the problem. They examined education certificates and personal files of all such students – the entire process took 4 months. The expert groups were financed by NEAC. The experts have revealed more than 400 forged education certificates and illegal admission cases.

Analysis of the documents showed that the main reasons for fabricating education certificates were to avoid national matriculation exams or to get admission despite the failure in the exams. For instance, the students who left secondary school in 2005 and failed to get sufficient marks in the national matriculation exams provided forged secondary education certificates dated 2004. As a result, they were enrolled directly to the second year of study as sophomores. It was revealed that these students were listed in NEAC database in the failed-the-exams category.

### **Chapter 3. General education accreditation**

General education accreditation is one of the most important functions of NEAC. Its main objective is to give every child access to high quality education that complies with European standards, is based on the principle of respect for a child's national and universal human values, and aims to foster civil consciousness in youngsters.

According to the Law of Georgia on Secondary Education, accreditation is mandatory for all secondary educational institutions of the country. Under the law accreditation status of public secondary schools expires at the beginning of academic year 2011-12. Accreditation of licensed private schools is valid till the beginning of academic year 2010-11 or till the end of the current educational program.

NEAC's responsibility is to develop the general education accreditation system according to pre-planned schedule, provide training for schools, and commence the process on time.

In 2008, proceeding from the above-described aspects, NEAC put a lot of effort into the development of the legal basis of the general education system and PR campaigns to shape/prepare public opinion on the issue. The department of accreditation of general education institutions was set up in NEAC on 1 February, 2008. The department began its activity by elaborating legal documents for the process of general education accreditation. Meetings were held in Tbilisi and different regions of the country with interested stakeholders and activists of the civil sector to popularise the idea of accreditation of schools, boost public confidence in the general education accreditation and increase public awareness of the importance of the issue prior to the commencement of the process.

#### **a) Preliminary procedures for the general education accreditation and involvement of the public in the process**

##### *Draft accreditation charter*

In February the Department of Accreditation of General Education Institutions prepared the first draft of the general education accreditation charter and translated it into Russian, Armenian and Azeri. The following amendments and revisions of the document were also translated into the three languages. In order to ensure transparency and public involvement in the process, the Department of Accreditation of General Education Institutions held seminars in the resource centres of all Georgian municipalities to present and discuss the draft accreditation charter and

following revisions of the document. The draft charter was then revised and modified on the basis of feedback from the seminars.

It is noteworthy that special measures were taken to popularise the accreditation process in regions with non-Georgian ethnic population in the country. With assistance of the Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development (CIPDD), NEAC provided public schools of Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti with thorough information on the accreditation process. Seminars and workshops were held on March 17 and 18 in Marneuli and Gardabani, and on April 10-11 in Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki, within the framework of the CIPDD project "Supporting ethnic minorities for democratic political participation". With the help of the project the above mentioned charter was translated into three languages, printed and distributed. Besides, respective articles were published in regional newspapers, while NEAC director and experts were invited to take part in radio and TV programmes on the accreditation process of the regional radio and TV companies.

In April-May NEAC organised public discussions on the draft accreditation charter in three major cities – Tbilisi, Kutaisi, and Batumi. Stakeholders (representatives of resource-centres, public schools, NGOs and journalists) from the following regions participated in the discussions:

- Kutaisi (April 16-19) – from Imereti, Samegrelo and Zemo Svaneti
- Tbilisi (April 22) – from Kakheti, Shida Kartli, and Kvemo Kartli
- Batumi (May 1-2) – from Ajara and Guria.

The participants were provided explanation on the principal idea and implementation mechanisms/procedures of the general education accreditation. They also received relevant materials and were asked to provide feedback.

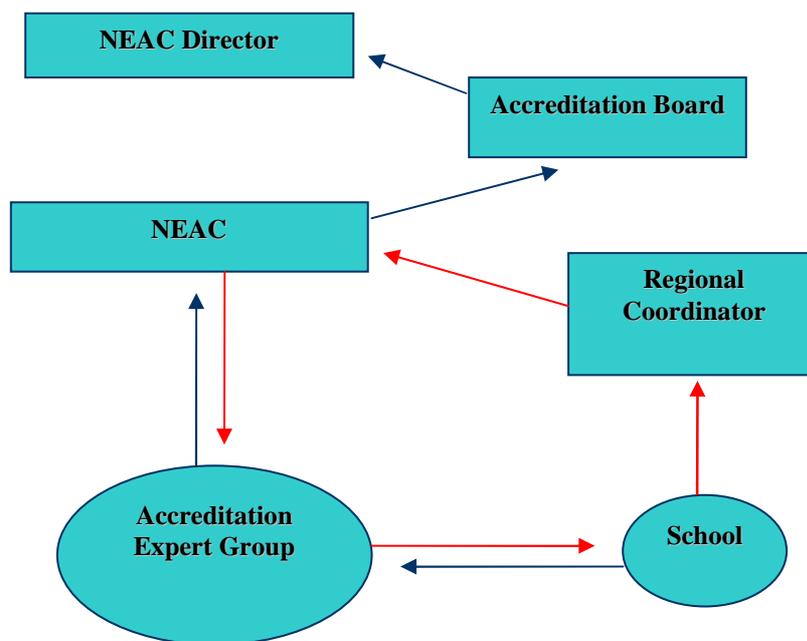
During the public discussions NEAC experts elaborated other accreditation-related issues as well. For instance, the participants asked what the difference between accreditation and licensing was and why both were necessary. They were also interested in understanding the differences between the processes of higher education accreditation and general education accreditation.

At every seminar/workshop the participants were told that the general education accreditation process was completely different from the current model of higher education accreditation. The central elements of the draft accreditation charter of secondary education were the promotion of self-assessment culture in schools and active participation of school communities in the educational process and quality assurance measures. The mission-based accreditation process can help schools re-evaluate their mission and prepare strategic development plans and quality assurance schemes. The period from now till 2011 is in fact a preliminary stage of the accreditation process. All decisions made during this time are nothing more than mere recommendations.

Another important part of NEAC activities was preparation of accreditation standards for boarding schools and schools for children with disabilities. Workshops were held in NEAC on June 24, 2008 and in the Disabled Children Care Department of the Ministry of Education and Science in early July 2008 for representatives of the department and boarding schools. The participants examined and discussed the specificities and education problems of such schools. They also outlined steps to search for and attract foreign partners to take part in the development of accreditation indicators and criteria. The participants were also asked to provide feedback to help revise and amend the accreditation charter.

Feedback from all 73 education resource centres, Disabled Children Care Department of the Ministry of Education and Science, public secondary schools, and boarding schools/schools for children with disabilities played a crucial role in the development of the charter of general education accreditation. In addition to feedback from workshops and seminars, NEAC received lots of letters with recommendations and proposals regarding the standards and procedure for accreditation of general education. Public discussions also took place in the Ministry of Education and Science with participation of the minister, deputy ministers and responsible officials of the ministry's structural departments. At present, the draft charter of the general education accreditation has been submitted to the Ministry of Education and Science for consideration and approval. The draft is designed first of all to ensure efficient structure and regulations of the accreditation process. An improved accreditation model, incorporating web-portals in the process, was adopted. In our opinion, it will streamline the accreditation process and reduce accreditation costs.

#### Organization of the accreditation process



A pilot project of general education accreditation was scheduled for the period of August-December, 2008. However, the Russian military intervention in Kvemo Kartli made its implementation impossible.

#### The development of accreditation standards and the concept of guidelines

During preparation of the draft accreditation charter a large part of the debate and deliberation focused on accreditation standards, their check sources and methods. NEAC carried out six special meetings with independent general education experts. Directors of public and private secondary schools and boarding schools, schoolteachers of various disciplines, representatives of the child care department of the Ministry of Education and Science and National Curriculum and Assessment Centre attended the meetings. The participants of the meetings came up with

interesting and useful ideas and proposals, which were taken into account during the development of accreditation standards, criteria and check sources.

Preparation of a self-assessment and expert assessment guides for the general educational institutions began with the development of a guide concept. That is why, with assistance of the Georgian office of the British Council, Mr. Andy Reid, an advisor of OFSTED (UK office for standards of education), paid a two-day visit to Georgia. The visit was enriching and led to the creation of the concept of the guide.

The first edition of the self-assessment and expert assessment guide for general educational institutions was produced in 2008.

### Self-assessment guide

- Chapter 1. The secondary education accreditation process in Georgia
- Chapter 2. Standards and indicators
- Chapter 3. Preliminary steps of self-assessment
- Chapter 4. Self-assessment report
- Chapter 5. Organisation of the accreditation process
- Appendix: Samples of self-assessment reports

### Assessment guide

- Chapter 1. The role and importance of accreditation
- Chapter 2. The accreditation process in Georgia
- Chapter 3. The secondary education accreditation
- Chapter 4. Before expert accreditation visits
- Chapter 5. The planning of expert accreditation visits
- Chapter 6. The end of an expert accreditation visit
- Chapter 7. Assessment by standards and indicators
- Appendix: a) samples of assessment reports; b) questions for interviews

## **The pilot project of the general education accreditation**

The pilot project of the general education accreditation was prepared by NEAC in 2008. NEAC also held meetings with donor organisations accredited in Georgia in order to ask for co-financing. In 2008 the project was partly funded by UNDP. Particularly, 50-60 experts had to be selected and trained in school accreditation at the first stage of the project. NEAC started selecting the experts in July. The selection process included evaluation of the applicants' CV and interviews with them. During interviews special attention was given to an applicant's motivation, communication skills and other characteristics of a successful expert. In all, 59 experts were selected – 27 of whom were chosen to attend the training workshops given by the education expert Dr. Theodore D. Mauro, Professor of Clemson University (USA) . The training workshops took place, with UNDP financial assistance, in the library of the public school No. 23 of Tbilisi on 16-22 December, 2008. The rest of the experts will be trained by NEAC in 2009 on the basis of existing training modules. To make the training efficient and successful, the self-assessment guide and the final version of the charter of general education accreditation was translated into English and handed to the foreign trainer. The school self-assessment guide will be improved in 2009, within the framework of the same project and about 1,000 copies will be printed.

Another stage of the preparation for piloting the general education accreditation is the development of a relevant web-portal and training of the participants of the pilot accreditation process (accreditation board, regional coordinators, experts, pilot schools) in using the web-portal.

In order to carry out the general education accreditation process successfully, NEAC produced a detailed road-map of 2009 activities. The major component of the road-map is the nationwide training of Georgian school personnel to help them prepare for the accreditation process. NEAC is also planning to expand its cooperation with the leading Georgian NGOs in order to ensure better preparation of schools for the accreditation process. Some 250-300 schools will get training and relevant materials at the first stage. Non-Georgian schools and schools for children with disabilities will be also involved in the training project. Besides, NEAC worked out questionnaires to interview pupils, teachers and parents during external expert assessment of schools.

We think that implementation of the pilot project ahead of the full-scale accreditation of schools will create favourable conditions for the accreditation process and help testing the accreditation structure and regulations. It will also provide every Georgian secondary school with an opportunity to better prepare for the accreditation. In addition, the pilot project will allow NEAC to assess efficiency of the general education accreditation and identify potential risk factors for the process.

### **General education accreditation standards**

#### **I. Mission**

1. The school's mission must correspond to the national general education strategy and reflect the school's principles of education and its purpose. The schoolteachers, pupils, parents, and administration staff must recognise and implement the school's mission.
2. The school's mission must reflect the school's priorities – educational goals the school plans to achieve and public expectations it pledges to meet.
3. The school must regularly evaluate efficiency of its teaching-learning process in accordance with its mission. The school must design its activities to fulfil its mission successfully.
4. The school must be assessed on the basis of its mission. The school must review its mission as often as it deems appropriate and revise it when necessary.

#### **II. Culture**

1. The school must foster the sense of safety, kindness, community, cooperation and support to help its pupils and personnel realise their potential, and share responsibility.
2. The school must have mechanisms to encourage teacher training and professional development.
3. The school must regularly provide every pupil's legal representative with information on the pupil's achievements, behaviour, and school activities and give them an opportunity to participate in the school's life.

### **III. The school curriculum**

1. The school's curriculum is in fact a thorough interpretation of the national general education curriculum, localised for a specific school within the mandatory limits which also describes additional educational services stipulated in the national curriculum, unforeseen educational services, and all other educational activities of the school.
2. The school's curriculum is based on the school's mission. Teachers should have a voice in the curriculum development.
3. The school's curriculum must meet pupils' needs and transfer knowledge to them while acquiring skills stipulated in the national general education curriculum and the school's mission. The school's curriculum must be regularly reviewed and evaluated.

### **IV. Resource management**

1. The school's human and material resources must be relevant to its mission and curriculum.
2. The school must select and employ its teachers on the basis of the Law of Georgia on Secondary Education and requirements of the national general education curriculum. The school must use its human and material resources purposefully to maintain and improve the quality of education and fulfil its mission successfully.
3. The school must always try to enhance its resources and use them efficiently.

## **Chapter 4. Accreditation of teacher professional development programs**

### **a) Implementation of teacher professional development programs and preconditions for the process**

Under the Law of Georgia on General Education (Article 21<sup>8</sup>), NEAC is responsible for the accreditation of teacher professional development programs. The main objective of the accreditation of teacher professional development programs is to ensure quality of these programs in order to give teachers a chance to improve their professional qualification, meet national teacher standards, and prepare for qualification exams.

In close cooperation with Teacher Professional Development Centre, NEAC drafted the charter of the accreditation of teacher professional development programs.

**Teacher Professional Development Centre** (directed by Sophio Gorgodze), <http://tpdc.ge/>, is a self-regulated body founded in January 2007 with support of the Ministry of Education and Science. TPDC's main functions are to regulate and increase the status of teaching; to maintain high standards of teacher professional skills, knowledge, and work; to substantially improve the quality of teaching-learning for the benefit of teachers, pupils and the broad public. In close cooperation with pedagogic and scientific communities, TPDC prepares in-depth policy recommendations for the government on issues related to the teacher professional development. TPDC priorities are as follows: development of professional standards; creation of registration, certification and accreditation systems; promotion of continuous teacher professional development and improvement of teacher motivation; development of efficient communication and research mechanisms; evolution of TPDC into a flexible, effective and efficient organisation.

A number of joint workshops were held in 2008. The list of participants included:

- **NEAC:** Nino Chubinidze – Director  
Khatuna Mkheidze – Head of Higher Education Accreditation Department  
Ekaterine Chinchaladze – Coordinator  
Natia Vacharadze – Coordinator
- **TPDC:** Sophio Gorgodze – Director  
Ketevan Mekhuzla – Lawyer  
Lela Samniashvili – Coordinator
- **Ministry of Culture, Protection of Monuments, and Sports:**  
Lia Buadze - Head of the Educational Programs Department  
Ramaz Shavlaqadze – Expert  
Nino Bestavashvili – Expert

The participants examined and discussed professional development programs for out-of-school teachers of arts and sport, and agreed that these programs be included in the draft charter. Relevant amendments were made to the charter.

The participants drafted the charter of the accreditation of teacher professional development programs, the guide to the assessment of teacher professional development programs, and forms of a program annotation and accreditation expert's report.

Presentation of the draft guide to the assessment of teacher professional development programs and draft charter of the accreditation of teacher professional development programs, jointly produced by NEAC and TPDC, took place in Vere Palace Hotel.

On September 19, 2008, the Minister of Education and Science issued Order 800 to approve and enact the charter of the accreditation of teacher professional development programs. To popularise the new charter and the accreditation process, NEAC organised Open Door Days in Tbilisi and different regions of the country for representatives of higher educational institutions, secondary schools, education resource centres and NGOs.

The attendance at the Open Door Days:

- Akhaltsikhe, 23 September 2008:
  - Public and private secondary schools – 13 representatives
  - Akhaltsikhe Institute, LEPL – 5
  - NGOs – 4
  - Vocational education centre – 1
  - Education resource centre – 1
  - Total: 24 representatives
- Akhalkalaki, 24 September 2008:
  - Public secondary schools – 31
  - Higher educational institutions – 8
  - Total: 39 representatives
- Batumi, 27-28 September 2008:
  - Public and private secondary schools of Ajara and Guria – 18
  - Education resource centres of Ajara and Guria – 10
  - Shota Rustaveli Batumi State University, LEPL and Batumi State Naval Academy, LEPL – 4

- Kutaisi, 29 September 2008:
  - Public and private secondary schools of Imereti and Samegrelo – 41
  - Education resource centres of Imereti and Samegrelo – 12
  - Regional institutes and universities – 11
  - NGOs – 4
  - Total: 68
  
- Tbilisi, 2 and 8 October 2008:
  - Educational institutions and NGOs – 62 representatives in total
  
- Gardabani, 9 October 2008:
  - Public secondary schools of Kvemo Kartli – 12
  - Education resource centres – 2
  - Institutes – 4
  - Gardabani Sakrebulo – 1
  - NGOs – 1
  - Total: 20
  
- Tbilisi, 10 October 2008:
  - Education resource centres and educational institutions of Tbilisi, Gori, Telavi, Sukhumi, Signaghi, Sages and Mukhrani – 18 representatives in total

In total, the seminars on the accreditation of teacher professional development programs and Open Door Days were attended by 286 participants.

#### **b) Selection/training of the evaluators of teacher professional development programs**

Consultation meetings were held in NEAC on 8 and 31 October, 2008 to discuss training modules for the training/retraining of experts in the accreditation of teacher professional development programs, competencies of the experts and conflicts of interest. The meetings were attended by representatives of the following organisations:

- George Nozadze – Independent Trade Union of the Georgian Teachers and Scientists
- Tamara Meipariani – Institute of Advanced Teacher Training
- Manana Nikolaishvili – Georgian Education League
- Zurab Vakhania – “Korbuda” Union
- Lasha Mkurnalidze, Paata Papava, Irina Kikvadze and some others – “School-Family-Society” Association

The regulations and timetable of the selection of experts for the accreditation of teacher professional development programs were approved and enacted by the NEAC director’s Order 30, dated 7 October, 2008. According to the Order, the selection process was scheduled for the period of October 7 - October 31, 2008. The NEAC director’s Order 33 extended the process till November 14, 2008.

Georgian and foreign citizens and residents without citizenship can apply for the position of accreditation expert and take part in the selection contest. Candidates can be nominated by educational and scientific-research institutions, public organisations, professional associations, foreign and international organisations. The selection of experts is based on the following criteria:

- Higher education in disciplines stipulated by the national education curriculum;
- Master, Ph.D. or other equal academic degree in psychology, pedagogy, or methodology;

- Relevant work experience in educational or research institutions, or at least three-year experience of work as a trainer in NGO sector dealing with problems of education;
- Candidates must demonstrate essential skills and qualification enabling them to establish compliance of a training program with accreditation criteria stipulated by the charter of the accreditation of teacher professional development programs, which were enacted by Order 800, signed on 19 September, 2008, of the Minister of Education and Science;
- The knowledge of the national education curriculum;
- The general knowledge and awareness of the ongoing education reform;
- Candidates must not be public servants;
- Strong sense of responsibility;
- Analytical skills;
- Team working and communication skills;
- The ability to perceive, evaluate and judge a situation/environment objectively;
- Excellent writing skills in Georgian;
- The knowledge of the MS Office software.

A selection contest commission was set up on the basis of NEAC director's Order 42 signed on November 17, 2008. For the purpose of selection of accreditation experts, the commission reviewed candidates' CV and carried out special training workshops to test and evaluate the candidates' skills and qualification. In total, 191 candidates applied for the position of accreditation expert. The review of their applications and CV revealed that 36 candidates did not meet the selection criteria and/or failed to submit all required documents. These candidates were considered ineligible for the second stage of the selection process – training workshops. The rest, 155 candidates were enrolled in the training – 120 of whom signed written statements that they were not in a conflict of interest. The training took place in the Ministry of Education and Science and lasted from November 25 to December 4, 2008. Assessment exams were held in the public school No. 23 of Tbilisi on December 6, 2008. In total, 72 candidates passed the exams, while 48 candidates decided to drop out. The exam results showed that 58 candidates satisfied – while 14 candidates did not – the candidate assessment regulations of the selection of accreditation experts for teacher professional development programs that were approved by NEAC director's Order 49, dated December 5, 2008.

On December 10, 2008 NEAC director signed Order 52 to certify 58 successful candidates as accreditation experts for teacher professional development programs.

### **c) The accreditation procedure and program assessment indicators**

According to NEAC director's Order 50, dated December 8, 2008, institutions and organisations legally registered in Georgia could submit applications for accreditation of teacher professional development programs and relevant documents from 8 to 22 December, 2008. By the end of the deadline 18 institutions/organisations applied for the accreditation of 147 programs in total. After processing their applications and documents the institutions/organisations were given five days to submit additional documents. The accreditation of the presented teacher professional development programs will be carried out in January 2009. The accreditation procedure and criteria are stipulated in the charter of the accreditation of teacher professional development programs enacted by Order 800, September 19, 2008, of the Minister of Education and Science.

Accreditation of the programs of the applicant institutions/organisations must be based on the principle of mutual agreement. It means that the program accreditation is a voluntary rather than a mandatory process and applicant institutions/organisations have the right to demand a replacement of some or all accreditation experts.

After the documents submitted by an applicant institution/organisation (application, a program annotation, a sample certificate to be awarded, etc.) are reviewed and the institution/organisation is given the formal status of a candidate, a group of accreditation experts (the head and at least two members) set up on the basis of NEAC director's respective individual legal act implements a scheduled accreditation visit with the candidate institution/organisation's consent. During an accreditation visit the experts look into actual terms of a program and try to establish compliance of the terms and contents of the program with the program annotation and accreditation criteria. The program annotation form was approved by NEAC director's legal act. It should comprise of general information on a program and specific data about the contents of a program, quality assurance mechanisms, and resources (objectives and goals of a program, the structure and contents of a program, curriculum, the rationale of a program, the system of assessment of participants of a program, human and material-technical resources essential for implementation a program, etc.).

At the end an accreditation visit the leader of the expert group prepares a summary report, based of the experts' conclusions, with description and analysis of the actual terms of a program. After examining the experts' conclusions NEAC Higher Education Accreditation Board is to make one of the following decisions:

- to grant accreditation
- to deny accreditation
- to cancel accreditation

A program is awarded accreditation only on the basis of expert conclusion regarding its compliance with all accreditation criteria. If at least one of the criteria is not met, the program is denied accreditation. The program accreditation is valid for two years.

The “**Contents of a program**” criterion is considered met if a program meets the following parameters:

1. The program complies with one of the directions stipulated by the charter of the accreditation of teacher professional development programs
2. The program complies with teacher professional standards
3. The program has a strictly defined target group(s)
4. The program outlines requirements for participation
5. The program has clear-cut goals and objectives
6. The program details specific and distinct learning results, i.e. skills and knowledge, it aims to achieve
7. The program has a full list of themes to be addressed
8. Themes of the program are consistent with its goals and objectives
9. Themes of the program correspond to expected learning results
10. The contents of the program are relevant to expected learning results
11. A teaching methodology to achieve the program goals is available
12. The program curriculum reflects all the themes and shows in what order they should be addressed.
13. The program credits are relevant to its contents and comply with the European Credit Transfer System.

The “**Quality assurance**” criterion is considered met if a program meets the following parameters:

1. The program has a strategy for self-assessment and improvement of quality

2. The program specifies qualification requirements for the personnel involved in its implementation
3. All program participants are provided with conditions and learning materials needed to achieve the learning results.
4. The program is justifiably urgent
5. The program has a multi-component system to assess skills and knowledge
6. The program strictly defines the regulations and conditions to award the certificate of attainment.
7. The program has a reliable mechanism to register the issued certificates.

The “**Resources**” criterion is considered met if a program meets the following parameters:

1. The program is implemented by a fixed number of personnel
2. Each of the program personnel has to implement a clearly specified amount of tasks.
3. The program personnel have to meet clear qualification requirements
4. The program personnel are required to sign employment contracts
5. The material-technical base needed for successful implementation of the program is available
6. The program has a strategy to retain and enhance its resources.
7. The literature relevant to the contents of the program is available.

## **Chapter 5. Recognition/verification of academic qualifications**

### **a) ENIC-NARIC representation office**

ENIC – European Network of Information Centres – was established by the Council of Europe and UNESCO to implement the Lisbon Recognition Convention and, in general, to develop policy and practice for the recognition of qualifications. Its main function is to provide information on:

- the recognition of foreign diplomas, degrees and other qualifications;
- education systems in both foreign countries and the ENIC’s own country;
- opportunities for studying abroad, including information on loans and scholarships, as well as consultation on practical questions related to mobility and equivalence.

The NARIC network (National Academic Recognition Information Centres) is an initiative of the European Commission and was created in 1984. The network aims at improving academic recognition of diplomas and periods of study in the Member States of the EU, the EEA countries and the associated countries in Central and Eastern Europe and Cyprus. The network is part of the Community's Programme SOCRATES/ERASMUS, which stimulates the mobility of students and staff between higher education institutions in these countries.

All EU and EEA States and all the associated countries in Central and Eastern Europe and Cyprus have designated national centres, the purpose of which is to assist in promoting the mobility of students, teachers and researchers by providing authoritative consultation and information concerning the academic recognition of diplomas and periods of study undertaken in other States. The main users of this service are higher education institutions, students and their advisers, parents, teachers and prospective employers.

More thorough information on these networks is available at [www.enic-naric.net](http://www.enic-naric.net)

On June 19, 1999 education ministers of 29 European countries signed the Bologna Declaration, thereby pledging to reform the structures of their higher education systems in a convergent way and create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The Bologna Declaration was preceded by other key documents: Magna Charta Universitatum (1988), Lisbon Recognition Convention (1997), Sorbonne Declaration (1998), communiqués signed in Prague and Berlin, and documents of Graz and Salamanca conferences. Student Göteborg Declaration was created later in the process. The Bologna Declaration and EHEA have the following objectives:

- Creation of easily readable and comparable academic degrees organised in a three-cycle structure (e.g. bachelor-master-doctorate), and introduction of Diploma Supplements to improve employment opportunities for European citizens and increase international competitiveness of the European system of higher education
- Introduction of a two-stage education system: pre-diploma and post-diploma. Successful completion of at least three years of pre-diploma study is the sine qua non for admission to the second stage of the system. The academic degree awarded upon completion of the first stage of the higher education system, which verifies the respective qualification level, must be recognised by all European labour markets. The completion of the second stage leads to a Master or Ph.D. degree, a practice accepted in many European countries.
- Introduction of a credit system (European Credit Transfer System – ECTS) as a tool to promote student mobility. Credits must be available outside the higher education system too, for instance within the framework of lifelong learning, provided they are recognised by respective universities.
- Encouragement of student mobility by removing obstacles to free movement of students. It means, for instance, that students must have unrestricted access to learning and training means and related services, while the time spend by teachers, scholars and administrative staff on research, education and training in the European education area must be recognised and their rights must be protected.
- Promotion of the European cooperation in quality assurance in higher education in relation to criteria and methodologies.
- Adoption of European dimension in higher education, especially the development of curricula (educational programs), inter-university cooperation, and creation of integrated programs and schemes of student mobility, education, training and research.

Signatories to the declaration include Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and UK.

**Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon, 1997)**

Article VIII.2 of the Conventions states that:

“Each Party shall make relevant provisions for the development, maintenance and provision of:

1. an overview of the different types of higher education institutions belonging to its higher education system, with the typical characteristics of each type of institution;
2. a list of recognised institutions (public and private) belonging to its higher education system, indicating their powers to award different types of qualifications and the requirements for gaining access to each type of institution and programme;
3. a description of higher education programmes;
4. a list of educational institutions located outside its territory, which the Party considers as belonging to its education system.

Signature and ratification of the Lisbon Convention by Member States of the Council of Europe

Country	Signature	Ratification	Entry into force
Austria	7/7/1997	3/2/1999	1/4/1999
Azerbaijan	11/4/1997	10/3/1998	1/2/1999
Albania	4/11/1999	6/3/2002	1/5/2002
Andorra		22/4/2008 a	1/6/2008
Belgium	7/3/2005		
Bosnia-Herzegovina	17/7/2003	9/1/2004	1/3/2004
Bulgaria	11/4/1997	19/5/2000	1/7/2000
Germany	11/4/1997	23/8/2007	1/10/2007
Denmark	11/4/1997	20/3/2003	1/5/2003
UK	7/11/1997	23/5/2003	1/7/2003
Spain			
Estonia	11/4/1997	1/4/1998	1/2/1999
Turkey	1/12/2004	8/1/2007	1/3/2007
Ireland	8/3/2004 s	8/3/2004 s	1/5/2004
Iceland	11/4/1997	21/3/2001	1/5/2001
Italy	24/7/1997		
Cyprus	25/3/1998	21/11/2001	1/1/2002
Latvia	11/4/1997	20/7/1999	1/9/1999

Lithuania	11/4/1997	17/12/1998	1/2/1999
Liechtenstein		1/2/2000 a	1/4/2000
Luxembourg	11/4/1997	4/10/2000	1/12/2000
Macedonia	11/4/1997	29/11/2002	1/1/2003
Malta	11/4/1997	16/11/2005	1/1/2006
Moldova	6/5/1997	23/9/1999	1/11/1999
Monaco			
Montenegro	3/3/2004	3/3/2004	6/6/2006
Netherlands	14/5/2002	19/3/2008	1/5/2008
Norway	11/4/1997	29/4/1999	1/6/1999
Poland	11/4/1997	17/3/2004	1/5/2004
Portugal	11/4/1997	15/10/2001	1/12/2001
Romania	11/4/1997	12/1/1999	1/3/1999
Russia	7/5/1999	25/5/2000	1/7/2000
Greece			
San-Marino			
France	11/4/1997	4/10/1999	1/12/1999
Georgia	11/4/1997	13/10/1999	1/12/1999
Serbia	3/3/2004	3/3/2004	1/5/2004
Slovakia	11/4/1997	13/7/1999	1/9/1999
Slovenia	11/4/1997	21/7/1999	1/9/1999
Armenia	26/5/2000	7/1/2005	1/3/2005
Ukraine	11/4/1997	14/4/2000	1/6/2000
Hungary	11/4/1997	4/2/2000	1/4/2000
Finland	22/1/1998	21/1/2004	1/3/2004

Sweden	11/4/1997	28/9/2001	1/11/2001
Switzerland	24/3/1998 s	24/3/1998 s	1/2/1999
Czech republic	11/4/1997	15/12/1999	1/2/2000
Croatia	11/4/1997	17/10/2002	1/12/2002

Signature and ratification of the Lisbon Convention by non member states of the Council of Europe

Australia	19/9/2000	22/11/2002	1/1/2003
USA	11/4/1997		
New Zealand		4/12/2007 a	1/2/2008
Belarus		19/2/2002 a	1/4/2002
Israel	24/11/1997	12/7/2007	1/9/2007
Canada	4/11/1997		
Tajikistan			
Kazakhstan	11/4/1997	7/10/1998	1/2/1999
Kirgyzstan		9/3/2004 a	1/5/2004
Holy See	11/4/1997	28/2/2001	1/4/2001

#### **b) National and international regulations of the recognition/verification of academic qualifications**

European Integration and Mobility Department is authorised to formally recognise (verify) foreign academic qualifications and establish equivalence and authenticity of national education documents. NEAC assumed the new function – to establish authenticity of education documents and award certificates of authenticity – in May 2007 on the basis of Article 7 (Paragraph 1) of the Law of Georgia on Higher Education, Article 26 (Paragraph 1) of the Law of Georgia on General Education, and Article 3 (Paragraph 2) of the regulations of the Ministry of Education and Science, which were approved and enacted by the Georgian government's Decree 37 issued on May 21, 2004.

To formally recognise (verify) foreign academic qualifications or establish equivalence and authenticity of national education documents, an applicant must submit to NEAC: the

application, a copy of the relevant education document and a copy of the applicant's ID card or passport. The copy of the education document must be verified by an authorised public notary.

If the application or the relevant education document is not in the official language (Georgian), the applicant must submit to NEAC a notary-verified translation of the document within the deadline set by NEAC. The deadline must not be less than three days since the application date. If the deadline is missed, the application can be turned down.

To award the certificate of authenticity, NEAC should establish whether the submitted education document was really issued by the educational institution specified in the document and whether it was issued for a person named in it. It means that NEAC should reach national information centres or educational institutions of respective countries by telegram, mail, e-mail, fax or other means of communication. In case of national education documents, NEAC must send an inquiry to a respective educational institution or resource centre, while the latter must respond in writing not later than 10 days after receiving the inquiry.

After establishing authenticity of the document, NEAC must define the status of the educational institution, i.e. whether it belongs to the respective country's national education system and whether it is accredited or not. If this country does not have an accreditation system, NEAC must request a respective body of that country to verify, in writing, that the educational institution and/or educational program complies with the country's national education standards.

Foreign national information centres and educational institutions and Georgian educational institutions and resource centres can send information to NEAC on issues stipulated in paragraphs 1 and 2 of the given article by telegram, mail, e-mail, fax or other means of communication.

NEAC makes a decision to recognise (verify) an education document or not depending on whether the status of a foreign educational institution or educational program is consistent with standards of the Georgian education system. NEAC has to recognise qualifications of refugees even if their documents are impossible to verify. More exactly, NEAC must set up separate boards for each academic degree and make a decision to recognise or not on the basis of the boards' assessment of competencies and qualifications. NEAC Higher Education Accreditation Board is planning to create 17 sectoral expert groups (commissions).

Recognition of academic qualifications in Georgia is regulated by Article 50 of the Law on Higher Education:

“Academic qualifications awarded by a foreign educational institution and passed foreign educational programs shall be recognised only if it is established beyond doubt that they comply with educational programs of Georgian higher educational institutions”.

Recognition of academic qualifications is based on the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region signed in Lisbon in 1997. The Convention aims at adopting easily readable and comparable academic degrees. Article V.1 of the Convention states:

“Each Party shall recognise periods of study completed within the framework of a higher education programme in another Party. This recognition shall comprise such periods of study towards the completion of a higher education programme in the Party in which recognition is sought, unless substantial differences can be shown between the periods of study completed in

another Party and the part of the higher education programme which they would replace in the Party in which recognition is sought”.

According to Article VI.1 of the Convention, “...each Party shall recognise the higher education qualifications conferred in another Party, unless a substantial difference can be shown between the qualification for which recognition is sought and the corresponding qualification in the Party in which recognition is sought”.

Article VI.3 of the Convention stipulates that:

“Recognition in a Party of a higher education qualification issued in another Party shall have one or both of the following consequences:

(a) Access to further higher education studies, including relevant examinations, and/or to preparations for the doctorate, on the same conditions as those applicable to holders of qualifications of the Party in which recognition is sought;

(b) The use of an academic title, subject to the laws and regulations of the Party or a jurisdiction thereof, in which recognition is sought.

In addition, recognition may facilitate access to the labour market subject to laws and regulations of the Party, or a jurisdiction thereof, in which recognition is sought”.

The Georgian parliament ratified the Convention on June 23, 1999 (Resolution 2142-II of the Parliament of Georgia).

All countries that have ratified the Convention must follow its provisions. The Convention was jointly drafted by the Council of Europe and UNESCO. It is designed to streamline the legal framework at European level and to replace in the long run six conventions adopted in this matter by the Council of Europe or UNESCO. The Convention aims at facilitating the recognition of qualifications granted in one Party in another Party.

In 2008 NEAC recognised academic qualifications of some 100 foreign citizens who were enrolled in Georgian higher educational institutions. In total, about 260 students were enrolled in Georgian higher educational institutions on the basis of the commissions’ decisions.

## **Chapter 6. Institutional development and external evaluation of the National Education Accreditation Centre**

NEAC plans to achieve several important objectives in the next three years: higher educational program accreditation, a new model of institutional accreditation, accreditation of some 2,500 public and private schools, and membership of international quality assurance organisations. Taking into account the new requirements, NEAC needs to improve professional qualifications of its personnel constantly in order to ensure correspondence of their knowledge and skills to structural and substantial education reforms, which are under way in Georgia and abroad, and internal and external assessment of NEAC.

### **Improvement of professional qualifications of NEAC personnel**

With financial assistance of the NGO “Consultation and Training Centre” (CTC), 20 employees of NEAC underwent the training “Systemic Internal Audit of Quality Assurance”, ISO 9001-

2000, in July 2008, while on December 15-17 the same year 11 NEAC personnel attended a Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop.

Employees of the General Education Accreditation Department took part in the first international conference in Gori “Knowledge Management Challenges – Knowledge for Life”, which was held in the Gori University on October 3-4. They presented the report “Development and Implementation Recommendations for the First Standard (Mission) of the Accreditation of Schools for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children”. Natia Amiridze, a coordinator of the department, delivered a speech at the conference.

In accordance with the NEAC program and strategic plan 2008, which aimed, among other things, at the organisational development of NEAC, plans were made for the participation of NEAC personnel in a Business Correspondence training course. The training was supposed to be helpful for their daily routine and international contacts. The need for such training was prompted by the increasing volume of inward and outward correspondence in NEAC (according to NEAC’s statistics, the volume of inward and outward correspondence increased nine times in 2008 in comparison with the previous year).

All NEAC’s employees underwent the Business Correspondence training on June 27-29, which took place in the Bazaleti Conference Palace. The training program was developed on the basis of NEAC needs assessment analysis and supervised by Lela Abdushelishvili, an associate professor of the Caucasus University.

### **The business visit to Sweden**

Personnel of the General Education Accreditation Department participated in international seminars, workshops and conferences too. Maka Kordzadze, the head of the department, Natia Amiridze and Nino Inauri, coordinators of the department, paid a business visit to Sweden. In the framework of the visit, a workshop was held in the Section for Swedish as a Second Language for the Deaf, Department of Linguistics, Stockholm University on November 24-26. Mrs. Kristina Svartholm of Stockholm University was in charge of the workshop. In the framework of the workshop Professor of Stockholm University Mrs. Johanna Mesh and her colleagues organised a seminar for NEAC personnel on the results of the special education studies, namely Deaf studies, in Stockholm University and other foreign universities. Mrs. Kristina Svartholm also arranged visits to Manila School for the Deaf in Stockholm. During these visits, which lasted two days, NEAC representatives held talks with teachers and administration of the school and attended several lessons. These seminars and visits gave NEAC useful information to analyse problems of the Georgian schools for children with disabilities and outline future cooperation plans with these educational institutions. With assistance of the foreign partners NEAC also prepared plans for the development of general education accreditation standards and new models of teaching for the Georgian schools for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children.

During the visit to Sweden NEAC employees took part in a seminar at the Faculty of Health and Society, Malmö University, on November 27. The seminar was focused on the problems of special education for children with disabilities, including problems of special education in post-Soviet countries. Maka Kordzadze, the head of the General Education Accreditation Department, made a presentation at the seminar about Georgian schools for children with disabilities. Participants of the seminar showed increased interest in the problems of special education in Georgia. Plans were made for future cooperation between Malmö University and NEAC. In 2009 NEAC plans to participate in international projects on special education.

A conference organised by Department of International Migration and Ethnic Relations, Malmö University, and the Centre of Caucasus Studies, Øresund University, on November 28-30 looked into the problems of migration, society and language in the Caucasus region. Participants of the conference examined the current situation in the region from the political, anthropological, historical, linguistic and cultural perspectives, and discussed the dynamic of the regional development. Natia Amiridze, a coordinator of the department, presented a report at the conference on the socio-cultural problems of the Deaf in Georgia.

All children, including those with disabilities, must have access to high quality education – it is one of their fundamental rights. Accreditation is an essential tool for improving the quality of education and control in schools. We regard the business visit to Sweden as very useful and successful for the NEAC personnel. Sweden has accumulated extensive experience in the field of special education for children and adolescents with disabilities. NEAC will greatly benefit from learning this experience, as well as from cooperation with Sweden's educational institutions, as it can help plan and implement the accreditation process in special schools properly and efficiently.

### **The educational visit to the USA**

NEAC personnel and representatives of higher educational institutions – Khatuna Mkheidze, the head of the Higher Education Accreditation Department, Ekaterine Chinchaladze, institutional accreditation manager of the Higher Education Accreditation Department, Anzor Beridze, the Dean of the Faculty of Mathematics and IT Technologies of Shota Rustaveli State University (LEPL), Mogeli Shengelia, the head of the Quality Assurance Services of Grigol Robakidze University (Ltd), and Berdia Natsvlishvili, the facilitator of the group – visited USA (Washington and Atlanta) on December 4-16, 2008 within the framework of the Open World Program. The visit was hosted by Friendship Force of Greater Atlanta, a representation office of Friendship Force International, a leading non-profit international cultural exchange organisation founded in 1977 with a single mission: to create an environment in which personal friendships are established beyond barriers that separate people. A 1992 nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize, it is active in 125 American communities and more than 60 countries, promoting friendship and goodwill through an extensive program of homestay exchanges and an expanding range of related programs.

A meeting was held in the Embassy Suites Hotel, Washington D.C., on 4 December 2008 with representatives of American Councils for International Education. The meeting was focused on problems related to local programs.

On December 5, in the Library of Congress, the NEAC delegation held talks with John O'Keefe, Executive Director of the Open World Leadership Centre, and program managers Lewis Madanick and Vera De Buchananne.

US-Georgian relations were discussed at a meeting with William H. Korten, director of CSC's North American Public Sector (NPS). CSC NPS is a diversified professional service organisation that provides IT, business operations and specialised engineering services for government clients throughout North America. CSC NPS supports clients' needs for operational effectiveness and operational efficiencies so that they may achieve excellence in their core missions.

US-Georgian business and economic relationships were discussed at meetings with Mamuka Tsereteli, the president of the Georgian Association in the United States and with John Sherry in the office of Allyson Schwartz.

Within the framework of the visit several workshops were held in the Library of Congress, South Association of Colleges and Schools, Latria Corporation of the State of Georgia, Emory University, Georgia State University, Technical College of Georgia State University, Agnes Scott College, Oglitrophic College, Atlanta Technical College. Besides, NEAC delegation met some journalists in a publishing house.

During the meetings the host organisations described their activities in detail, and the hosts and the guests shared their experience in accreditation, assessment of educational programs, student services and financial regulations. Prospects of cooperation between educational institutions of Georgia and USA were also discussed.

### **External assessment of NEAC**

Experts Klaus Vittkuhn and Monique Mueller of World Learning visited NEAC in July-August 2008 within the framework of a USAID program to conduct external assessment of NEAC activities. Other organisations that are in contact with NEAC – namely Ministry of Education and Science, and other legal entities of public law were also evaluated by the experts. The experts submitted their NEAC assessment report and development recommendations to the Ministry of Education and Science in October 2008.

The experts examined one of the functions – recognition/verification of academic qualifications – of the European Integration and Mobility Department. They outlined measures to streamline the recognition/verification procedure in order to save time and money. They also looked into the pilot accreditation project prepared by the General Education Accreditation Department and made recommendations to improve its implementation mechanisms.

The experts positively assessed NEAC activities. In their opinion, the strength of NEAC was its ability to mobilise resources quickly to implement orders and instructions of the Ministry of Education and Science. Besides, NEAC director proved to be competent in identifying priority problems properly and direct the NEAC employees to resolve them timely and efficiently. NEAC director takes care of the organisation's development and the qualifications of the personnel, maintains close relations with educational institutions and is well aware of their needs. NEAC has outlined its short-term and long-term goals and regularly reviews them. It is flexible and easy to reform. NEAC personnel are bound by a strong esprit de corps, have high sense of responsibility and teamwork skills.

At the same time, the experts recommended that NEAC should improve the design of its procedures, define its functions more precisely and standardise them, and upgrade its software. NEAC was also advised to create a centralised electronic management system. Training workshops and seminars for professional development of the personnel must be pre-planned rather than spontaneous. Information on NEAC activities must be understandable for international partners. It means that NEAC website and its documents must be translated into foreign languages. To implement its functions efficiently, NEAC should also enhance its human, material, and financial resources.

## Chapter 7. Public Relations

### Paperwork and records management

<b>Paperwork and records management 2008</b>		
	Amount	Correspondence handled by each structural unit
Inward correspondence from legal entities	4648	
Inward correspondence from individuals	1885	
<b>Inward correspondence total</b>	<b>6533</b>	
<b>Outward correspondence total</b>	<b>5785</b>	
Higher Education Accreditation Department		301
European Integration and Mobility Department		4971
Secondary Education Accreditation Department		27
Administration		486
Orders drafted by the Law Department	289	
Internal correspondence	300	
<b>Agreements total</b>	<b>90</b>	
Employment contracts	34	
Contracts with accreditation experts	56	

Personal files of 408 students of Technical University with NEAC resolutions were handed to the Incomes Division of the Ministry of Finance of Georgia in order to examine and establish validity of their enrolment. As a result, 30 forged documents were revealed.

NEAC provided Georgian and foreign citizens with consultation and advice, by phone or through personal visits, within the limits of its competence. NEAC has set a schedule for visits and consultations.

NEAC was actively involved in the August events. During the war it worked round the clock to help IDPs from Shida Kartli and took part in the anti-war campaign. NEAC registered all IDPs accommodated in educational institutions and worked hard to solve organisational problems, together with Gori State University and Sukhishvili University Ltd.

## Chapter 8. Financial Report 2008

On October 28, 2004 the Ministry of Education and Science announced the commencement of the first institutional accreditation process. After a transitional period, under the Law of Georgia on Higher Education, an independent body should have assumed charge of the accreditation process. For this reason, National Education Accreditation Service (currently National Education Accreditation Centre) was established – as a legal entity of public law – by the Order 222 of March 27, 2006, signed by the Minister of Education and Science. The order authorised NEAC to carry out higher, vocational, and general education accreditation.

NEAC is a fully independent body. Its activities are regulated by the Constitution of Georgia, international agreements and conventions Georgia is a signatory to, and the relevant national legislation: Law on Higher Education, Law on General Education, Law on Legal Entities of Public Law, other relevant legal acts, and institutional regulations. It has the right to sign contracts, to acquire/purchase the titles and undertake liabilities, and be a plaintiff and respondent in lawsuits concerning third parties. It has its own independent balance sheet, a bank account, a coat of arms, the seal with small inscription of the national coat of arms, and other attributes of a legal entity.

According to Order 222 of March 27, 2006, on the establishment of the National Education Accreditation Centre – as a legal entity of public law – and its charter, NEAC can have the following financial sources:

1. Targeted subsidies from the state budget
2. Revenues generated from education accreditation fees
3. Incomes from private contract-based services
4. Targeted grants
5. All other legal sources stipulated in the Georgian legislation

**Appropriation of budgetary funds.** Under the Law on the State Budget of Georgia 2008, approved by the parliament on December 28, 2007, a total of GEL 435,000 was allocated to NEAC (organisational code 32-03) in 2008, including:

<i>Code</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>I Quarter</i>	<i>II Quarter</i>	<i>III Quarter</i>	<i>IV Quarter</i>
32 03	<i>National Education Accreditation Centre, LEPL</i>	<i>435,000.0</i>	<i>85,620.0</i>	<i>105,700.0</i>	<i>108,880.0</i>	<i>134,800.0</i>
	<i>Expenses</i>	<i>415,000.0</i>	<i>82,500.0</i>	<i>102,500.0</i>	<i>102,500.0</i>	<i>127,500.0</i>
	<i>Subsidies</i>	<i>415,000.0</i>	<i>82,500.0</i>	<i>102,500.0</i>	<i>102,500.0</i>	<i>127,500.0</i>
	<i>Non-financial assets</i>	<i>20,000.0</i>	<i>3,120.0</i>	<i>3,200.0</i>	<i>6,380.0</i>	<i>7,300.0</i>

NEAC organisational structure and payroll (27 employees) were agreed with the Ministry of Education and Science in 2008.

In total, NEAC spent GEL 432,689 of the allocated budgetary funds in 2008.

### Non-budgetary incomes of NEAC

NEAC's raises non-budgetary incomes from accreditation and application fees paid by applicant higher educational institutions.

Accreditation and application fees paid by applicant higher educational institutions in 2008 in accordance with Order 223 of March 27, 2006 by the Minister of Education and Science, on the charter of the higher education accreditation and the instruction on calculation of institutional accreditation fees, totalled GEL 48,725.

The closing balance at the beginning of the year was GEL 100,903. In total, NEAC spent GEL 102,066 of non-budgetary funds in 2008.