



Higher educational programme planning, designing and development regulations, Annex №03

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Basic approaches to e-Learning

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Article 1. About basic approaches to e-Learning

This basic approaches (concept) to the electronic teaching and learning of Batumi Navigation Teaching University (hereinafter referred to as - BNTU) correspond to the BNTU Development Strategy (2019-2025), including its component – “Common Information Area Development Concept”. e-Learning ensures the participation of students and lecturers in the educational process through modern electronic educational technologies, even if they are not in the same physical space due to various circumstances.

Article 2. e-Learning forms

1. e-Learning envisages conducting the learning process using a learning management system. The education process management system is an Internet-based software, which is necessary for the organization and management of the learning process based on information and communication technologies, in particular, for the delivery of learning materials, for communication of the student (except for the student placed in a penitentiary institution), with the student and/or staff, for testing, counseling, and monitoring the progress of students, and for other purposes;
2. e-Learning can be implemented in the following forms:
 - Asynchronous (implies interaction when the sender and receiver of information do not communicate at the same time);
 - Synchronous (when the communication between the sender and receiver of information is carried out at the same time);
 - Combined (includes the use of synchronous and asynchronous forms).

Article 3. e-Learning realization

1. Realization of e-Learning requires the provision of appropriate resources (including human, financial, material and technical: information and communication technologies, computer equipment and programs, etc.), as well as the organization and administration of the educational process, taking into account the peculiarities of the learning form, and the use of educational technologies (including, teaching-learning and assessment methods, learning resources, information availability, communication, feedback, etc.). Also, this form of learning requires efficient management, effectiveness of educational and other processes, active quality control, promotion of technical skill development of BNTU students, programme implementers (hereinafter referred to as - lecturers) and staff, complete use of the capabilities of the intra-university automated management system and systematic improvement, providing access to public information and information security;
2. Before starting e-Learning, it is necessary to implement the following mechanisms:
 - Multifaceted assessment and mobilization of human, material-technical, technological and financial resources;
 - Development of appropriate approaches to the organization and administration of the education process and determining the possibility of their use (for example, optimizing the organization of the education process, using opportunities of the education process management system to full advantage, fully providing students with lectures, manuals and other materials in e-format, using the online mode for communication with staff and students and for consulting purposes, etc.);
 - Identification of the key aspects that will affect the introduction and implementation of e-Learning and determine the responsibilities and obligations of BNTU;
 - Ensuring the use of BNTU computer equipment and other resources for those students and lecturers who do not have the opportunity to use the personal technical equipment necessary for e-learning/etc.;
 - Informing students in advance about the transition to e-Learning, ensuring the possibility of receiving all services remotely;
 - Informing programme implementer(s) in advance about the transition to e-Learning, and obtaining their written consent;
 - Creation of technological and administrative support and control groups for the education process and/or delegation of these functions to specific persons;
 - Developing instructions for identification and prevention of possible problems;
 - Conducting trainings for students, lecturers and staff, as well as conducting online lectures in test mode.;
 - Determining the activities to be implemented during the e-Learning period, including continuous control of the education process, study and analysis of the attitudes of interested parties, identification and assessment of problems/possible risks, determination of mechanisms to overcome them, operational response, etc.);
3. When making decision on electronic (Synchronous and/or Asynchronous) learning, BNTU follows the following principles:
 - The decision shall not contradict the legislation of Georgia, as well as the decree/resolution adopted by the authorized body regarding this matter;
 - The decision shall be justified - based on a comprehensive and unbiased assessment of BNTU resources and capabilities (including financial resources/reserves);
 - The introduction of e-Learning should not create a threat to the sustainability of BNTU, the fulfillment of the commitments and/or the implementation of the programmes and the quality of education, as well as it should not lead to the deterioration of the current situation and/or the non-fulfillment of the development strategy.

Article 4. Main advantages and possible problems of e-Learning

1. Main advantages of e-Learning:
 - Free access (the student has the opportunity to engage in the education process from virtually any (and not only BNTU's physical) space where there is Internet access);
 - Flexibility of learning (the student himself/herself adjusts the learning process to his/her abilities and needs, he/she can return several times to the already passed lecture material; lecture and study materials are available at any time without restrictions);
 - Personalization of learning (e-Learning provides the opportunity for equal participation in the education process and learning with an individualized schedule, which is especially important for students with special educational needs and other students who temporarily have such a need (for example, students who cannot participate in the education process in any other way);
 - Versatility (learning is carried out using modern software and techniques, which increases the availability and effectiveness of the educational process carried out in electronic form: the dynamism of information visualization increases, the student's relationship with the electronic system and resources is active during the learning process, which in turn improves their technological skills).
2. Possible problems of e-Learning:
 - Difficulty in assessing the quality of contact classes conducted in electronic form (lectures/group work/etc.);
 - Reduction of interpersonal contacts;
 - Legal problems of intellectual property protection;

- The threat of various forms of unethical behavior (for example, violation of academic integrity standards, attempts to disrupt online lectures/etc., etc.);
- The possibility of access to and use of appropriate technical and technological resources by both lecturers and students - for example, the ability of lecturers to fully develop materials necessary for e-Learning and to fully implement the teaching process in this form (for example, lecture materials, assignments, selection of teaching methods, lecture structuring and managing time, feedback to students, etc.);
- Peculiarities of e-Learning organization (for example, technically faulty and incorrectly planned teaching process reduces the effectiveness of teaching);
- Risks and financial costs related to the provision and renewal of technological and technical resources.

Article 5. Peculiarities of teaching and learning and main conditions

1. The following is necessary for e-Learning:

- Systematic assessment and development of BNTU capabilities and resources (human, financial and material-technical resources, equipment, technical and software, library electronic fund, etc.);
- Maximum usage of Education process management system capabilities;
- Full provision of lecture, guidance and other materials in electronic format and control of the current education process, carried out in electronic form;
- Communication with programme staff and students, their consultation;
- Identification of problems/risks, study and operative response;
- Preliminary study and determination of relevance of planned teaching and learning methods and assessment components (including content and requirements), as well as systematic control of students' academic performance;
- Studying and responding to the attitudes and needs of stakeholders (students, lecturers), evaluating the effectiveness of communication and learning;
- Study of best practices and their implementation.

2. e-Learning does not apply to learning activities that require special equipment/software and can only be carried out directly at BNTU and only using BNTU infrastructure, equipment and resources);

3. Various quality assurance mechanisms, including: monitoring of the education process (observation, information analysis and response) are used systematically during the semester, survey of the attitudes of students and programme implementers and feedback to them, survey of the sufficiency and effectiveness of the support mechanisms of students and programme implementers, and implementation of new mechanisms if necessary;

4. It is necessary to provide access to BNTU technical/software/etc. resources for students and lecturers who do not have required personal resources /who need to use BNTU resources;

5. In e-Learning conditions, it is necessary to support students and lecturers, including: promoting the development of technological and digital skills as needed, consulting and helping in the assimilation of e-Learning and teaching and evaluation methods, etc.;

6. Learning shall be carried out in accordance with syllabuses: The general rules of assessment and credit assignment applicable in BNTU are applied, which means that the grades and credits received are automatically and fully counted. Also, the relevant methods/forms of students' educational activities, teaching-learning and evaluation are selected, which correspond to the specifics of the programme component and the implementation of this component in electronic form. Also:

- There should be ensured the consistency between the objectives, outcomes and teaching and evaluation methods of the study courses: the evaluation methods should be appropriate to the specifics of the study course, and it should be possible to confirm the achievement of the planned goals and outcomes by using them;
- Assessment must be: a) valid (assessment objects must correspond to the objectives of the study course/programme components); b) reliable (uniform standards and criteria must be used); c) fair (all students must have the opportunity to achieve the learning outcome); d) developmental (it should fix what students have achieved and how they can improve their outcomes); e) well-timed (it should provide the possibility of constructive feedback); e) effective (should not take up an irrelevant amount of students' time);
- The "open book" method can be used in the assessment (students have the opportunity to use a book, a synopsis, a reader or presentation slides prepared by the lecturer, etc. when answering the questions). It is recommended to give assignments that require not only knowledge, but also critical thinking (for example, an essay/theoretical assignment that focuses on reasoning, making arguments, forming conclusions; open-end questions that require reasoning about the issue; critical analysis of the situation, modeling of the situation; critical assessment of studied literature and/or comments; preparation of a review focused on the problem, its analysis and solution methods; preparation of a project related to the actual problem and its solution ways and/or other, by which the student can demonstrate/confirm the achievement of the planned outcome);
- Assessment should take place both during the semester (intermediate assessments) and as a final assessment (form of final assessment). An exception is the research component (master's thesis), which is assessed in the form of a one-time final assessment.

7. e-Learning for people with special educational needs is voluntary. e-Learning can involve a person for whom it is permissible to work with a computer for a long time, taking into account his/her health conditions. The main principles of e-Learning for people with special educational needs: provision of opportunities for quality education, which can be realized through the integration of study process organized in traditional (contact) form and distance (electronic) educational technologies, which implies consideration of the peculiarities of educational needs, including adaptation of e-Learning model. Students with special educational needs can enjoy all support mechanisms effective in BNTU, which are provided for by the rule of designing and implementation of the individual curriculum and are aimed at consideration of special educational needs and the support of students with disabilities;

8. In case of electronic learning and teaching it is necessary to consider the aspects, such as:

- Standards of academic integrity - students must be made aware of the inadmissibility of violating these standards and the sanctions established for misconduct. The implementer of the study course/programme component is obliged to immediately respond to violations of these standards;
- Network etiquette- students and lecturers should be informed about the rules of the network etiquette (online behavior) (e.g. it is prohibited to make unethical comments/behavior/posting pictures, disrupting the study/evaluation process or limiting student involvement, using the work done by others, receiving/providing help etc.) All participants of the educational process must follow the ethical standards and all the rules (dressing, behavior, etc.) that would be followed in case of conducting the classes in a traditional way;
- Autonomy and academic freedom - Authors of syllabi for study courses/other programme components are free to determine programme

component content, teaching resources, teaching-learning and assessment approaches. At the same time, they are obliged to comply with the rules effective in BNTU, take into account the peculiarities of e-Learning, ensure the smooth running of the educational process (within the scope of competence), equal involvement of all students in the educational and evaluation process, the quality of education, timely and complete access to public information, and confidentiality of non-public information;

- Public information - it is necessary to provide public information to the educational process participants in a timely manner (e.g., placement of public information on the website, sending information to a person from BNTU official e-mail (personal informing), entering information in the educational process management system etc.);
- Non-public information - protection of personal and other non-public information is carried out in accordance with the procedure for ensuring information security. It is not allowed for the student/lecturer/other person to transfer the personal password to other person(s) and thereby involve/attempt to involve other persons in the learning/evaluation process. This is the fact of disclosure of non-public information and violation of the rules of conduct, which leads to the initiation of disciplinary proceedings and the imposition of appropriate sanctions;
- An action that in BNTU is considered a violation of the rules of conduct, academic integrity and ethical standards, leads to the initiation of disciplinary proceedings and the imposition of an appropriate sanction.

Article 6. Termination of e-Learning

1. BNTU terminates online learning if:

- according to the legislation of Georgia, this form of learning is prohibited/restricted;
- the real/objectively identified danger of reducing the quality of education or not achieving the outcomes planned by the corresponding component of the programme is revealed (e.g., frequently interrupted lectures/seminars, severely deteriorated academic performance, etc.);
- BNTU cannot provide e-Learning with appropriate resources or the amount of material and technical resources used for e-Learning, infrastructure, software, etc., as well as the amount of funding for their storage and development threatens/may threaten the financial security of the programme(s), BNTU activities, fulfillment of obligations and/or its financial sustainability.

2. The student is entitled to refuse the electronic form of learning (except for the cases defined by the decree/resolution of the Government of Georgia/official body) and/or to make a decision on the suspension/termination of the student status (in these cases, the student should apply to BNTU rector with a corresponding application).

Article 7. Resources for realization of e-Learning approaches. Liabilities. Performance monitoring and adjustment mechanism

1. This e-Learning approach will be implemented by BNTU internal resources. All structural units and staff of BNTU, program directors and implementers participate in this process within the scope of their competences;

2. Provision and control of the resources necessary for e-Learning is carried out by BNTU Head of administration-Chancellor;

3. Responsibility for the implementation of e-Learning approaches and e-Learning quality control is laid on the Head of BNTU Quality Assurance Service;

4. Based on the observations on the e-Learning proves and its results, the Head of administration-Chancellor, the Head of BNTU Quality Assurance Service (learning quality aspects), BNTU lawyer (legal aspects) can initiate cancellation/modification of this Rule;

5. Specific provisions of this Rule can be modified:

- if the necessity of changes is caused by the requirements of the Georgian legislation and/or the decree/resolution adopted by the official body;
- if the necessity of changes is caused by objective circumstances, provided that appropriate justification and description of changes is made.

Article 8. Annexes

1. Annexes to this Document, as well as documents/forms, which were elaborated on the basis of this Document, shall be the integral part of this Document. Annex to this Document:

Annex №01 – Quality Assurance in e-Learning conditions (according to ESG-2015 standards).

Article 9. Final provisions

1. This Document and changes thereto shall be approved by BNTU Rector;

2. Immediately after this Document became effective, the regulations/rules effective before and governing issues provided for by this Document shall be null and void;

3. Titles of articles in this Document are provided only for the convenience, and they shall not be regarded as for the determination, alteration or definition of any article;

4. Invalidation of any article/provision of this Document shall not invalidate remaining articles/provisions;

5. All the issues not covered by this Document shall be governed in accordance with the effective Law of Georgia;

6. This Document shall be null and void after approval of new Document.

Annex №01

Quality Assurance in e-Learning conditions (according to ESG-2015 standards)

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| Standard №1 - e-Learning strategy. Quality Assurance Policy | |
| <u>Compliance indicators</u> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> e-Learning is the part of HEI Development Strategy and Quality Assurance Policy; HEI has the specified e-Learning strategy, decision-making policy regarding e-Learning introduction that consider the possibility and quality of achieving the planned result with e-Learning; Institutional policy, structure, processes and resources ensure smooth, high-quality implementation of teaching and learning process, as well as equal opportunity for all students to receive sound education; There are policies and norms of academic integrity, academic freedom and ethics in the HEI; Electronic security measures are covered by HEI policy/regulations; There are written agreements/contracts that define the powers of the parties; Stakeholders (especially students) participate in internal quality assurance assessments. | |
| Standard №2 – Programme designing and approval | |
| <u>Compliance indicators</u> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The HEI has a clear digital innovation strategy, of which e-Learning is a part. This strategy is shared by the HEI community, including staff involved in program designing; e-Learning programs are consistent with HEI's mission and e-Learning strategy; Program designing includes pedagogical practices and innovations (if possible); The strengths (advantages) and weaknesses (disadvantages) of e-Learning are known to the personnel involved in the designing/implementation/evaluation of the programme; Students' needs are taken into account when designing the program and teaching-learning model | |
| Standard №3 – Student-oriented teaching and learning and evaluation | |
| <u>Compliance indicators</u> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching methodology, students' learning activities are selected in order to achieve the planned learning outcomes; The learning materials correspond to the content of the programme component, the teaching model and promote teaching and learning; The authors of the learning materials are relevant in the corresponding field, the learning materials are reviewed and updated regularly; The technical infrastructure corresponds to the teaching methodology, the student's educational activities, electronic evaluation methods and simplifies the teaching and learning process; Electronic assessment methods are suitable for their purpose, through them students can demonstrate the achieved results; Students have clear and comprehensive information about the electronic assessment system Students are aware of the inadmissibility of violating the standard of academic integrity; HEI informs about network etiquette rules (online behavior). | |
| Standard №4 - Admission of students to the programme, academic performance, recognition, awarding of qualification | |
| <u>Compliance indicators</u> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students/prospective students should be informed about the requirements related to necessary equipment, e-learning, digital skills, conditions for admission to the programme, programme structure, components and organization of learning; Students have full information about the academic load, learning activities and programme methodology within e-Learning; The HEI has rules and procedures for the recognition of educational outcomes (including previous level) and the awarding of qualifications. | |
| Standard №5 | Programme implementers |
| <u>Compliance indicators</u> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HEI has defined structure, profile (qualification) and role of programme implementers, which correspond to the programme implementation model; The HEI uses appropriate tools to ensure that the qualifications of the program implementers comply with the duties they perform; Program implementers are properly trained and able to use e-Learning technology and e-assessment methods. There are mechanisms for training and skilling new personnel; There are support procedures for programme implementers in HEI; Technical and methodological support mechanisms for programme implementers are adequate, available and well-timed; Procedures for finding and hiring programme implementers is implemented in HEI; The composition of programme implementers is effectively coordinated | |
| Standard №6 - Academic resources and student support system | |
| <u>Compliance indicators</u> | |
| <p>1. Academic resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education process management system includes all required methods and tools; The technical infrastructure ensures the availability of the e-Learning program for all, including students with special educational needs; HEI defines electronic security measures that ensure compliance with quality standards, information security and reliability; The control and updating of the Education process management system is in progress, which ensures that technological changes are taken into account; HEI provides students with relevant e-library and virtual labs (as required) <p>2. Student support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HEI has developed mechanisms that include student support, including counseling (tutorial), academic, administrative and technological support; Student support corresponds to his/her specific needs; Student support takes into account the features of e-Learning; The student has educational, personal and digital skills development support; | |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are provided with instructions/ trainings that promote the use of e-resources (virtual educational space, e-Library, etc.); • The work schedule of student support services in the education process is flexible and focused on students' needs; • HEI provides the students with the possibility of virtual mobility. |
| <p>Standard №7 – Information management</p> <p><u>Compliance indicators</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The obtained data are used for evaluation of e-Learning programs (for example, results obtained through traditional and e-Learning forms); • There is a strategy for using the results of the analysis, the purpose of which is to improve the promotion/support of students; • The information management system includes current, updated, reliable information about the HEI and its programmes; • HEI takes into account ethical norms and state policy regarding data protection and privacy. |
| <p>Standard №8 – Public awareness</p> <p><u>Compliance indicators</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HEI publishes reliable, complete, up-to-date information about educational programmes (qualifications, learning objectives, credits, prerequisites, requirements, evaluation system, duration of studies); • Technical requirements are clearly defined and public; • Information about the completion of the programme, academic performance, exclusion from the programme is studied. |
| <p>Standard №9 - Continuous monitoring and periodic evaluation of programs</p> <p><u>Compliance indicators</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • e-Learning programs are subject to review, updating and improvement; • Programme implementation methodologies are consistent with the HEI's strategy; • Introduced educational and informational technologies are subject to review and, if necessary, updating; • Internal quality assurance system includes feedback to stakeholders (especially students). |



Document Revision Sheet

| Revision № | Revision date | Content of revision |
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