



# IBSU

**INTERNATIONAL BLACK SEA UNIVERSITY LLC**  
**QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM DOCUMENTS**

## **REGULATION for MASTER'S EDUCATION**

*Approved on 23/08/2016 by Academic Board - Decision №7 (Appendix №6)*

### **Approvals**

The signatures below certify that this quality manual has been reviewed and accepted, and demonstrates that the signatories are aware of all the requirements contained herein and are committed to ensure their provision.

Prepared by: Graduate-School \_\_\_\_\_

Controlled by: Quality Management Commission \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by: Academic Board \_\_\_\_\_

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**Amendments**

#	Decision taken by	Decision №	Date
1	Academic Board	02	25.01.2017
2	Academic Board	09	22.08.2017
3	Academic Board	16	18.01.2018
4	Academic Board	02	23.01.2019
5	Academic Board	06	07.05.2019
6	Academic Board	07	15.05.2019
7	Academic Board	12	20.08.2019
8	Academic Board	4	24.02.2020
9	Academic Board	14	26.08.2020
10	Governing Board <sup>1</sup>	3	15.11.2021
11	Governing Board	9	07.02.2022
12	Governing Board	23	13.06.2022
13	Governing Board	30	19.09.2022

**Primary version:** 23.08.2016

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<sup>1</sup> By Rectors' order, from 01.11.2021 Governing Board was given the authority to amend the present document.

## Revision List

#	Date	Article	Remarks
1	25.01.2017	9	Students' right to register on an on elective study component, while register on MA thesis.
2	25.01.2017	18	The restriction of defending MA thesis, without passing the elective study component.
3	22.08.2017	12.3	Design of MA thesis
4	18.01.2018	16	Commission Membership
5	23.01.2019	13	Assessment of Master's Thesis
6	07.05.2019	2	Creation and Development of Academic Programs
7	07.05.2019	5	Duration of Study Process
8	07.05.2019	10	Defining the Topic of a Thesis and the Supervisor
9	07.05.2019	11	Features of the Master's Thesis
10	07.05.2019	14	Submitting the Thesis
11	07.05.2019	15	Supervisor
12	07.05.2019	15 <sup>1</sup>	Co- Supervisor
13	07.05.2019	16	Commission
14	07.05.2019	17	Functions of the Head and the Secretary of the Defense Commission
15	15.05.2019	2	Design and Development of Academic Programs
16	15.05.2019	19	Awarding Master's Degree
17	20.08.2019	2	Planning, Designing and Developing of Master's Programs
18	20.08.2019	3	Admission to Program
19	20.08.2019	6	Registration
20	20.08.2019	9	Admission to Master's Thesis
21	20.08.2019	10	Defining the Topic of a Thesis and the Supervisor

22	20.08.2019	12	Technical Requirements of the Thesis
23	20.08.2019	13	Assessment of Master's Thesis
24	20.08.2019	14	Submitting the Thesis
25	20.08.2019	16	Commission
26	20.08.2019	18	Defense Procedure
27	20.08.2019	19	Awarding Master's Degree
28	20.08.2019	22	Implementation
29	24.02.2020	3	Admission to Program
30	26.08.2020	15	Reviewer
31	15.11.2021	2	Planning, Designing and Developing of Master's Programs
32	15.11.2021	3	Admission to Program
33	15.11.2021	20	Other Terms
34	07.02.2022	3	Admission to Program
35	13.06.2022	10	Defining the Topic of a Thesis and the Supervisor
36	19.09.2022	2	Planning, Designing and Developing of Master's Programs
37	19.09.2022	4	Language of Instruction
38	19.09.2022	5	Duration of Study Process
39	19.09.2022	10	Defining the Topic of a Thesis and the Supervisor
40	19.09.2022	12	Writing Master's Thesis
41	19.09.2022	13	Assessment of Master's Thesis
42	19.09.2022	14	Submitting the Thesis
43	19.09.2022	15	Supervisor
44	19.09.2022	15 <sup>1</sup>	Co-Supervisor
45	19.09.2022	15 <sup>2</sup>	Reviewer

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46	19.09.2022	16	Commission
47	19.09.2022	18	Defense Procedure

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**Article 1. Aim and Scope**

- 1.1. This regulation aims at defining the rules for enrolling students in Master's programs of the International Black Sea University (hereinafter, "university"), as well as rules regarding the study process, assessment of students' learning outcomes and awarding Master's academic degree.
- 1.2. Master's program is an educational program of the second cycle of academic higher education, which covers the elements of scientific research and aims at training the post-bachelor level specialist or researcher; also prepares the persons to pursue professional activities according to acquired qualification.
- 1.3. Master's educational program covers no less than 120 ECTS credits.

**Article 2. Planning, Designing and Developing of Master's Programs**

- 2.1. An Associate Professor or a Professor (initiator) of the University creates a Master's program and becomes the program coordinator if the program is approved.
- 2.2. The minimum number of students required to open a Master's program is 5 (five). Exceptions shall be decided by the Graduate-School Board. Upon approval of the Master's program by the Governing Board, addition of the program by IBSU is carried out through an authorization, or by submitting authorization annual self-assessment report or accreditation in accordance with the rules established by law.
- 2.3. All other issues related to the planning, designing and developing of master's programs are regulated by the "Instruction for Planning, Designing and Developing of Educational Programs" (R36.I02).

**Article 3. Admission to Program**

- 3.1. Applicants (R03F35) can be enrolled in University Master's Programs according to the Georgian legislation – on the grounds of the Unified Master's Examinations results / without passing the Unified Master's Examinations (according to the legislation) and the results of the University's internal exams (foreign language& specialty). An agreement (R01F30) is concluded between University and the applicant. The Act of the Rector is issued regarding students' enrolment.
  - 3.1.1. Rules for enrolment via Unified Master's Examinations (of Georgia):
    - 3.1.1.1 A Georgian citizen who possesses a Georgian Bachelor's diploma or equivalent, and has successfully passed the Unified Master's Examinations as well as

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- the University exam(s) (defined by the Master's program as foreign language exam & specialty exam) is entitled to enroll in the Master's program.
- 3.1.1.2 For the candidates, who have obtained Bachelor degree during the last 3 years at IBSU, are entitled to be enrolled on Master program based on interview results if the instruction language and the studying sphere of both cycles coincide.
- 3.1.1.3 If the instruction language of the Bachelor program is not the same as the instruction language of the desired Master program, candidate has to prove his/her competence in relevant language by passing IBSU language exam or meeting the criteria set by 3.1.3.
- 3.1.1.4 Interview criteria are defined by R04F14.
- 3.1.2. Rules for enrolment without Unified Master's Examinations:
- 3.1.2.1 The applicant can be enrolled in University's Master's program upon passing admission exam(s) (specialty & foreign language) and meeting one of the requirements defined by the Order #224/n, of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia dated 29.12.2011.:
- 3.1.3. Both types of applicants:
- a) Those candidates who have an international foreign language proficiency result that is equivalent to B2 level (R03L05) will be exempt from foreign language requirement (if any).
  - b) Those candidates who have graduated from an educational program in which the instruction language is foreign language of the IBSU Master's program within the last three years and their GPA is at least 75 (out of 100) or 3 (out of 4), will be exempt from the foreign language requirement.
  - c) If the candidate is a citizen of a country, where first/second official language is the relevant foreign language, is exempted from passing the foreign language exam.
- 3.2. The admission examination(s) process is organized by the Graduate-School.
- 3.2.1. Admission exam(s) for candidates abroad can be held online.
- 3.3. Exam(s) in the field of specialty are carried out in the instruction language of the program.
- 3.4. The required documents are determined by the Graduate-School and announced by the Graduate-School for Georgian citizens and International Relations Office (IRO) for international candidates.



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- 3.5. The following documents are normally appended to the application:
- 3.5.1. 2 photos (3X4) (in print, and softcopy sent to Graduate-School if not applying online);
  - 3.5.2. CV (preferably in Europass format);
  - 3.5.3. A copy of a Bachelor's or equivalent diploma certified by a notary office (for foreign diplomas – translated into Georgian and notary certified; notary-approval is not required for IBSU diplomas);
  - 3.5.3<sup>1</sup>. If the applicant submits a diploma obtained as a result of the completion of a one-level - at least five-year educational programme within the time period defined by Georgian law “On Higher Education” is obliged to submit recognition document of equivalency with the relevant cycle, issued in compliance with Georgian legislation.
  - 3.5.4. A copy of ID card or passport (notary-approved translation for foreign passports);
  - 3.5.5. An internationally recognized foreign language examination result / a diploma and supplement received via education in the language of instruction of the program being applied;
  - 3.5.6. Military certificate (for Georgian candidates).
  - 3.5.7. The other requirements specified by R03F60 for foreign applicants.
- 3.6. If the enrollment period of an international student falls after the end of the fourth week of the semester, he/she will be enrolled from the next semester.

#### **Article 4. Language of Instruction**

- 4.1. Instruction languages in the Master's programs can be Georgian, English.

#### **Article 5. Duration of Study Process**

- 5.1. The duration of a Master's program is 4 semesters.
- 5.2. Those students who cannot complete the program in 4 semesters can continue their educational process on self-financing basis in compliance with the requirements defined by the “Rules and Regulations on Educational Process” - R3 and “Regulation for Educational Service Fees” – R9.
- 5.3. The student shall submit the Master's thesis in 15 calendar weeks. This period is calculated from the date of first approval of the thesis title and supervisor (R03F88), regardless of any subsequent changes made in the title and / or the supervisor/co supervisor in due course.

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**Article 6. Registration**

- 6.1. The registration process on Master's level will be held in accordance with the procedure defined the Rules and Regulations for Educational Process – R3.
- 6.2. For the purposes of this regulation (unlike the relevant paragraph of Rules and Regulations for Educational Process (R3), the minimum number of students for opening a course is 5. Exception can be made by the decision of the Graduate-School.

**Article 7. Assessment of Courses**

- 7.1. All issues related to assessment (except for the assessment of Master's thesis) are defined by "Rules and Regulations on Educational Process" - R3.

**Article 8. Disciplinary Rules**

- 8.1. Disciplinary rules for Master's students are defined by the "Disciplinary Regulation for Students" - R07.

**Article 9. Admission to Master's Thesis**

- 9.1. Students who have passed all obligatory courses will be admitted to register for the master's thesis.
- 9.2. While registering on Master's thesis, student is entitled to register on 1 (one) elective study component, not essentially connected to his/her Master's thesis.
- 9.3. The fact of non-existence of the essential connection between the elective study component and the thesis is proved by the Graduate-School Board decision, upon the proposal of the program coordinator.

**Article 10. Defining the Topic of a Thesis and the Supervisor**

- 10.1. The topic of the thesis and the Supervisor are approved by the Graduate-School Board at the beginning of the semester. The topic of the thesis could be changed until one month before submitting the thesis to the Graduate-School. The changed topic shall be reapproved the same way it was approved for the first time.
- 10.2. In case of necessity, upon the students' or Graduate-School board initiative, co-supervisor is appointed together with supervisor or no later than one month before submitting the thesis to the Graduate-School.
- 10.3. The thesis title and the supervisor are approved through the following procedure:

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- 10.3.1. The head of the program, in agreement with the Board of the Graduate and Doctoral School, prepares a list of majors/departments/general titles and corresponding possible supervisors;
  - 10.3.2. The Graduate-School delivers this list to the Master's students;
  - 10.3.3. The student decides together with the supervisor/co-supervisor and writes an application to the Graduate-School. The application shall be signed by the student and the supervisor/ co supervisor (if co-supervisor is appointed from the beginning);
  - 10.3.4. Graduate-School prepares the draft list of titles and supervisors as selected by the students and submits it to the program coordinator;
  - 10.3.5. Program coordinator evaluates this list;
  - 10.3.6. Thesis title and the supervisor/co-supervisor (if the co-supervisor is appointed from the beginning) are approved at the Graduate-School Board.

#### **Article 11. Features of the Master's Thesis**

- 11.1. Master's thesis is a piece of academic research conducted under the supervision of a supervisor/co-supervisor.
- 11.2. Master's thesis should meet the requirements listed below:
  - 11.2.1. Should be directed to solving an issue regarding the field;
  - 11.2.2. Practical and/or theoretical results obtained by the student must be revealed.

#### **Article 12. Writing Master's Thesis**

- 12.1. The thesis for the programs offered in Georgian Language shall be written in Georgian (with max. 1 page of abstract in English). The thesis for the programs offered in English Language shall be written in English (with a max. 1 page of abstract in Georgian and English).
- 12.2. The basic format requirements are as follows: volume: 60-70 pages; font: Sylfaen for Georgian, Times New Roman for English, font size – 12, Line Spacing – 1.5 lines, Left Margin – 3 cm., Right Margin – 1.5 cm., Top and Bottom Margins – 2.5 cm.
- 12.3. R04F08 provides a template for writing the thesis, and the detailed design and format of the Master's thesis is shown in R03I11 - "Guidelines for Thesis and Dissertation Writing for Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral Level Papers".

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**Article 13. Assessment of Master's Thesis**

- 13.1. The Master's thesis is evaluated as a whole, at the end of the semester - with a final evaluation, which includes the evaluations of the thesis supervisor, reviewer and a public defense commission.
- 13.2. The supervisor evaluates the thesis with 30 points, the reviewer with 33 points, the commission with 37 points. For the final evaluation, the mentioned evaluations are summed up.
- 13.3. The maximum point of assessment is 100 points.
- 13.4. Evaluation criteria for a thesis supervisor are defined by the forms: R4F5a, R4F5b. Reviewer's evaluation criteria are defined by the forms: R4F4a, R4F4b. The Commission's assessment criteria are set out in the form R4F1.
- 13.5. The evaluation of the master's thesis is carried out according to the system established by clause 13.6.
- 13.6. The evaluation systems allows:
  - a) Five types of positive assessment:
    - a.a) (A) Excellent - 91-100 points;
    - a.b) (B) Very good - 81-90 points;
    - a.c) (C) Good - 71-80 points;
    - a.d) (D) Satisfactory - 61-70 points;
    - a.e) (E) Sufficient - 51-60 points.
  - b) two types of negative assessment:
    - b.a) (FX) failed - 41-50 points, which means that the student needs more work to pass and is allowed to take one additional exam with independent work;
    - b.b) (F) Failed - 40 points or less, which means that the work done by the student is not enough and s/he has to retake the required course/subject.
- 13.7. If a student receives a point between 41-50 (FX), he/she is entitled to improve and re-defend the same thesis during the following semester.
- 13.8. If a student receives less than 40 points (F), he/she has no right to re-defend the same thesis.
- 13.9. The decision to award Master's academic degree has the power on condition that the average grade is at least 51 (Rite). If commission evaluates the student with 41- 50 (insuffiecienter) the student will need to improve the thesis and will be able to resubmit it the following semester. If commission evaluates the student with below 41, the student loses right to submit the same thesis.

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- 13.10. If the master's student did not appear for the public defense due to a honorable reason (the fact of the existence of an honorable reason is confirmed by the Board of the Graduate School), he/she is assigned a public defense in the same semester.
  - 13.11. Master's thesis may be defended within the same semester or in the following semester when the student finishes working on it.

#### **Article 14. Submitting the Thesis**

- 14.1. The student shall submit the Master's thesis in 15 calendar weeks. This period is calculated from the date of first approval of the thesis title and supervisor (R03F88), regardless of any subsequent changes made in the title and / or the supervisor in due course.
- 14.2. The student writes an application about the completion of the thesis to the Graduate-School and asks for its admission for the defense. The supervisor/co-supervisor (if the co-supervisor is appointed at the beginning) also signs the application. The student sends the electronic version of the thesis to the official email of Graduate-School.
- 14.3. The Graduate-School checks the thesis with the special software that identifies text similarity. If the similarity percentage exceeds 10% of the thesis (excluding appendix); the student, in this case, will be required to reduce the percentage of similarity within three days.
- 14.4. After checking similarity percentage by Graduate-School, two hard copies of the thesis (signed by the student) and one CD disk is submitted to Graduate-School and the thesis is sent to the supervisor/co-supervisor for evaluation, together with the software report (regarding similarity percentage).

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**Article 15. Supervisor**

- 15.1. Master's thesis supervisor can be a person who has a doctoral degree, who has at least 3 publications related to the field in last 5 years.
- 15.2. A student has the right to apply to change his/her supervisor during the one-month period from the approval of the thesis.
- 15.3. Supervisor is given 10 (ten) calendar days to write a review.
- 15.4. The supervisor's report (R4F5a) is sent to the student for feedback purposes.
- 15.5. A student will be admitted to the defense if he/she has obtained at least the minimum number of points specified in the form (R4F5b) from each component of the supervisor's assessment.
- 15.6. If the review is negative, the student is not admitted to the defense.

**Article 15<sup>1</sup>. Co-Supervisor**

- 15<sup>1</sup>.1. Master's thesis co-supervisor can be a person is field specialist.
- 15<sup>1</sup>.2. A student has the right to apply to change his/her co-supervisor during the one-month period from the approval of the thesis, if the co-supervisor was appointed at the beginning of the semester.
- 15<sup>1</sup>.3. Co-supervisor is given 10 calendar days to write a review.
- 15<sup>1</sup>.4. While writing the review, co-supervisor has to pay a special attention to the Master's thesis format and style, their correspondence to this regulation and "Guidelines for Thesis Writing for Bachelor, Master and PhD Level Papers" R3. I11.
- 15<sup>1</sup>.5. The review has to involve recommendations on admission or non-admission to defense.
- 15<sup>1</sup>.6. If the review is negative, the student is not admitted to the defense.

**Article 15<sup>2</sup>. Reviewer**

- 15<sup>2</sup>.1 (Deleted).
- 15<sup>2</sup>.2 Reviewer might be internal - academic/invited staff of IBSU or external (national or international). While assigning a reviewer, priority is made on assigning international reviewer.
- 15<sup>2</sup>.3 Reviewer has to have a PhD degree. In case of internal reviewer, PhD degree should be in the field or along with the PhD degree in the unrelated field s/he has to hold an academic position (associate professor/professor) in the field of thesis, while external reviewer has to work either as lecturer at a university, in a company or in the state agencies in the related field.
- 15<sup>2</sup>.4 Reviewer is assigned by the Graduate Board based on the proposal of Program Team (hereinafter "PT").

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- 15<sup>2</sup>.5 PT is composed by an affiliated academic staff of IBSU of the relevant Master program. PT elects the chair from its members who calls and presides the meeting during one academic year. PT is authorized if at least half of the members attend. The decision is made by a majority of the attendees. All Team members have equal voting rights.
- 15<sup>2</sup>.6 Reviewer appointing process is conducted in the following way:
- 15<sup>2</sup>.6.1 Supervisor submits the CV(s) of potential reviewers (at least one internal and one – external) to the program coordinator.
- 15<sup>2</sup>.6.2 Program coordinator evaluates the candidates' field competencies. In case of program coordinator's augmented dissatisfaction with the qualification of the offered candidates' competency in the field, he/she is entitled to offer different candidature(s) to PT for approval.
- 15<sup>2</sup>.6.3 If the coordinator is the supervisor of the thesis, s/he offers the candidate(s) for review to the PT approval.
- 15<sup>2</sup>.6.4 Within 5 work days, PT makes assigns a reviewer according to list offered by the program coordinator. Graduate Board approves the candidate selected by PT on its earlier meeting.
- 15<sup>2</sup>.7 After the appointment of a reviewer, the process of his/her thesis evaluation is coordinated by the Graduate School.
- 15<sup>2</sup>.8 The reviewer is given two weeks to evaluate the thesis. In case of the thesis is sent to an international reviewer, time can be expanded up to 4 weeks based on Graduate School Board decision.
- 15<sup>2</sup>.9 The reviewer assesses the paper (R4F4b) and writes recommendations and/or comments (R4F4a).
- 15<sup>2</sup>.10 The reviewer's report (R4F4a) is sent to the student for feedback purposes.
- 15<sup>2</sup>.11. The reviewer evaluates the student on public defense according to the criteria defined in the form R4F4b.

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## **Article 16. Commission**

- 16.1. The defense of the master's thesis is carried out before the commission created by the Council of the Master's and Doctoral School. Members of the commission are appointed based on the submission of the supervisor of the master's thesis (all members of the commission must have a doctor's academic degree). One member of the commission may not be an academic staff member of IBSU.
- 16.2. The commission includes at least 2 (two) representatives of the relevant field and reviewer. A representative of the Graduate School is entitled to attend the defense with deliberative voting rights. The master's thesis supervisor/co-supervisor is entitled to attend the defense, but cannot be a member of the commission.
- 16.3. The chair of the commission is elected with simple majority. The secretary shall be the representative of Graduate-School without the right to vote.
- 16.4. Defense report is signed by the Head, Secretary and all attending members.
- 16.5. The signed report is submitted to the Graduate-School for archiving.

## **Article 17. Functions of the Head and the Secretary of the Defense Commission**

- 17.1. Functions of the Head of the defense commission are:
  - 17.1.1. Leading the defense procedure;
  - 17.1.2. Summing up the results of the commission members and calculating the average point.
- 17.2. Functions of the Secretary of a Defense Commission are:
  - 17.2.1. Conducting all the necessary procedures and the paperwork regarding the Master's thesis defense (including the preparation of the list of those students who successfully defended their Master's thesis (indicating the name and surname of the student, thesis title, program and supervisor/co-supervisor, his/her report, date of the defense, etc.) and providing information about the students who did not defend their Master's thesis: the reason of not defending the thesis, decision of a defense commission regarding the student who did not defend his/her Master's thesis).
  - 17.2.2. Preparing the public defense minutes (R04F02) in one copy and submitting them to the Faculty Board.

## **Article 18. Defense Procedure**

- 18.1. The defense is organized by the Graduate-School (including the announcement of the date and time of the defense).



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- 18.2. The members of the commission (at least 2 field specialists) and the reviewer must be present at the defense. Otherwise, the defense will be postponed for a period of no more than 1 (one) week.
  - 18.3. The defense of the thesis is carried out orally and publicly in the corresponding program language.
  - 18.4. The presentation of one thesis should not exceed 15 minutes. After the student's presentation the members of the commission can express their criticisms and ask the Master's student questions.
  - 18.5. Subject to paragraph 9.2 of this regulation, student is entitled to defend the thesis if he/she has passed the elective study component.
  - 18.6. The supervisor's and reviewer's conclusions are made public before the student's presentation on the defense of the master's thesis. The student is entitled to express his own argumentative position on the issues indicated in the conclusion of the supervisor and/or reviewer.

#### **Article 19. Awarding Master's Degree**

- 19.1. Students, who have defended the Master's thesis and have obtained 120 credits, are awarded with Master's academic degree.
- 19.2. The diploma certifying Master's academic degree may be cancelled, if Plagiarism is detected at any stage.
- 19.3. The decision about the cancellation of the academic degree is made by the Faculty Board upon the proposal of Graduate-School Board.

#### **Article 20. Other Terms**

- 20.1. Those issues which are not defined within this present document will be regulated according to the Georgian Law "On Higher Education" and other regulations of International Black Sea University.
- 20.2. The case of any changes, amendments and/or additions to the "Master's Education Regulation" – R4 is adopted by the University Governing Board.

#### **Article 21. Date of Effect**

- 21.1. This regulation is valid from 1 September, 2016.

#### **Article 22. Implementation**

- 22.1. The rules in this regulation are carried out by the Graduate-School.

*Ignorance of rules of the university shall not be a defence to anyone.  
All are therefore required to familiarize themselves with the rules and regulations as outlined in the  
related IBSU documentation.*

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*IBSU is an equal opportunity institution. It does not discriminate any member of its community on  
the basis of gender, race, nationality, ancestry, creed, marital or parental status, or physical,  
mental, emotional, or learning disabilities in its educational programmes and activities.*

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2, David Agmashenebeli Alley, 13<sup>th</sup> km.,

Tbilisi, 0131, Georgia

[www.ibsu.edu.ge](http://www.ibsu.edu.ge)

[contact@ibsu.edu.ge](mailto:contact@ibsu.edu.ge)

