

LEPL David Aghmashenebeli National Defence Academy of Georgia



The vision of the Academy Commander, Brigadier General Mamia Balakhadze

2026



Brigadier General Mamia Balakhadze

The vision of the Academy Commander

1. Institutional Development and Sustainability

As the highest military educational institution of the Defence Forces, the Academy is continuously development-oriented. Its objective is to establish an even more transparent, efficient, and results-oriented management system; to ensure the balanced coexistence of academic freedom and military discipline; and to foster human capital development through the continuous professional growth of faculty, instructors, and administrative personnel.

Within the framework of the Ministry of Defence of Georgia system requirements and the ongoing national educational system reform, the Academy plans to fully adapt its educational programs to the standards established under the reform.

In 2026, the Academy plans to develop and accredit a Bachelor's program in Cybersecurity and Defence Management, alongside a Master's program in International Relations and Military Diplomacy.

Within the framework of the ongoing national educational system reform, all Master's programs at the Academy will be implemented under the "1+1" system, allowing future graduate students to enroll in both one-year and two-year Master's curricula.

Notably, in 2025, in accordance with the system requirements of the Ministry of Defence of Georgia, student admission was successfully launched for the new Master's program in International Relations and Diplomacy.

In 2025, the 'Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency' training course, developed by the Academy in cooperation with NATO's Allied Command Transformation, was officially granted 'NATO SELECTED' status, establishing a solid foundation for obtaining NATO institutional accreditation.

Notably, the National Defence Academy operates a highly successful Distance Learning Center, which trains both military and civilian personnel in alignment with the requirements and priorities of the Defence Forces and the Ministry of Defence. In the near future, the Center plans to expand its offering by providing various professional development courses to representatives of state agencies across the security sector.

Organized by the Distance Learning Center, the inaugural pilot course on 'Counter-Terrorism and Counter-Insurgency' was successfully conducted in 2025 for representatives of the Ministry of Defence and various state security sector agencies.

2. Military Training and Development of Junkers/Students

Training honorable future military leaders is of paramount importance to the Academy. Every graduate must possess essential leadership skills and a level of military readiness that ensures their competitiveness within the nation's defence and security sector.

We implement all necessary measures to ensure that every graduate of the Academy ranks among the very best.

The Academy shall ensure that Junkers/students are forward-thinking, equipped with essential leadership qualities and the necessary knowledge. They must be prepared to command units of appropriate size during both peacetime and crises.

The relevant structural units of the Academy shall ensure that Junkers/students possess the theoretical and practical knowledge that meets the military training qualification requirements established for the personnel of the Georgian Defence Forces.

To enhance the standard of military training in 2026, we will continue to elevate the quality of instruction across the Academy's military disciplines (including tactics, military topography, and marksmanship—as well as military support courses), ensuring they remain closely aligned with the requirements of the Defence Forces.

Throughout this process, our core priorities will include adopting international best practices and updating the Academy's educational programs to reflect the current needs and challenges of the Defence Forces. Furthermore, we will prioritize the professional development of our instructors, providing targeted training in advanced teaching, learning, and assessment methodologies.

Furthermore, alongside theoretical instruction, we will place greater emphasis on developing the practical military skills of our Junkers/students. The Academy will integrate modern technologies into practical exercises and field training. We also plan to conduct joint field exercises for Junkers/students alongside active-duty military personnel who possess experience in NATO-led military exercises. Various commands within the Defence Forces will be actively engaged in executing these field exercises and courses, directly sharing their expertise and insights with the Academy's Junkers and students.

Cooperation with foreign partner military educational institutions will actively continue in 2026. Based on insights gained from managing pandemic-related circumstances, this collaboration will also extend to remote formats. The Academy guarantees equitable access for all Junkers/students to participate in these scheduled programs.

Additionally, high-level command visits to the Academy under the Guest Speaker Program, along with visits to various state agencies, will continue throughout the year.

Junkers and students will continue to undergo the 'Lone Fighter,' water-based, airmobile, and mountain training courses, alongside tactical winter training under severe meteorological conditions, unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) operations, culminating long-distance exercises (covering 100 km, 120 km, and 150 km), and internships within the Defence Forces.

These practical military exercises will elevate the current standard of military training at the Academy to a new level.

2.1 Fostering and Development of Junkers'/Students' Leadership Skills

The Academy serves as an intellectual cornerstone for strategic thinking, military education, and national security, shaping future leaders prepared not only for warfare but also for peacebuilding, crisis management, and the sustainable development of the state. Consequently, the Academy remains continuously dedicated to cultivating and developing essential leadership qualities within its Junkers and students.

During training and skill development, emphasis must be placed on assigning and rotating Junkers/students across various levels of command positions, gaining practical experience within units, and fostering a fair and competitive environment. Notably, the Academy will prioritize the comprehension and practical application of the 'Mission Command' philosophy. By instilling a culture of Mission Command, Academy graduates will be prepared to demonstrate initiative, take calculated risks, and make independent decisions as junior commanders when required.

2.2 Developing Critical Thinking Skills

We view the development of critical thinking skills as an integral component in forging a military service member into a leader. Consequently, it is essential to integrate critical thinking, tactical military scenarios, and After-Action Reviews (AARs) into the Academy's curricula. During their tenure at the Academy, Junkers must cultivate operational, strategic, analytical, critical, and creative thinking, while fully embracing discipline and the rule of law. Furthermore, Junkers must develop a deep civic consciousness, fully realizing their duty to the homeland as both citizens and military professionals.

2.3 Enhancing Military Physical Readiness

High physical readiness is essential for Junkers, students, and Academy military personnel to possess the endurance, strength, and resilience required for demanding military exercises. To elevate overall fitness levels, physical training must prioritize military endurance and strength conditioning, alongside the development and implementation of tailored, individual physical training programs.

Ultimately, the Academy's physical training frameworks and schedules must ensure all personnel meet established fitness standards while continuously raising both individual and collective performance levels.

3. Development and Enhancement of Educational Programs

As the sole higher military educational institution in Georgia, the Academy fully recognizes the critical importance of its educational programs to the nation and the Defence Forces of Georgia.

In advancing its curricula, the Academy aims to develop modern, evidence-based, and doctrine-driven educational programs. Furthermore, it seeks to achieve deeper integration of military education with the fields of security, defence management, international relations, and technological innovation.

It is important to note that in 2023, the Academy developed a voluntary military training program for reserve junior officers. In 2024, the Academy admitted its first cohort of trainees to the program, and the training process has been successfully ongoing ever since.

Notably, in 2025, the Academy launched, for the first time, a Junior Officer Military Training Program for individuals conscripted under the 11-month National Military Service. This unprecedented initiative serves as a vital pathway for producing highly capable, professionally trained junior officers.

To enhance foreign language proficiency across the Defence Forces, the Academy's primary educational units offer instruction in English, German, French, and Turkish up to the B2 (B2+) level. Alongside their mandatory primary language, students are offered electives chosen from these same four languages (English, German, French and Turkish).

In 2025, the Academy successfully secured reaccreditation for its Master's in State Resources Management, as well as its Bachelor's programs in Management and Informatics, while achieving initial accreditation for the Master's in International Relations and Diplomacy.

Looking ahead to 2026, the Academy plans to pursue reaccreditation for its Bachelor's programs in Mechanical Engineering and Aviation Engineering. Furthermore, it intends to develop and secure accreditation for a new Bachelor's program in Cybersecurity and Defence Management, alongside a Master's program in International Relations and Military Diplomacy.

4. Strengthening Research and Analytical Capabilities

In 2026, the Academy will further expand its scholarly and research activities. In executing its research agenda, the Academy will focus on meeting the requirements of the Ministry of Defence, conducting targeted research in the domains of national defence and security, and

investigating critical, contemporary issues within strategic analysis, hybrid threats, cybersecurity, operational planning, and military leadership. Furthermore, it will dedicate efforts to providing actionable analytical support and policy recommendations to state institutions and the Defence Forces, as well as executing the specialized research necessary to secure and implement grant-funded projects that support the Academy's Bachelor's and Master's programs.

Additionally, the Research Center will actively pursue its agenda by conducting research in priority areas aligned with the requirements of the Ministry of Defence system, organizing and hosting international and domestic academic conferences and symposia, and securing international grants. Furthermore, the Center will focus on identifying new networking opportunities, establishing institutional communication with foreign research organizations, and editing and publishing scholarly journals and conference proceedings.

The Academy will encourage its personnel to participate in international academic conferences and engage in scholarly research activities. Additionally, it will support the involvement of both military and civilian personnel from across the Ministry of Defence framework in hosting these conferences. Notably, to stimulate research initiatives, a permanent "Think Tank" working group was established in 2024; it operated successfully throughout 2025 and will continue its operations during the current year.

Furthermore, the Academy library's catalog was updated and replenished with the latest educational and informative literature in 2025, a process that remains ongoing throughout 2026.

In 2026, the Academy will further enhance its electronic library system, including expanding access to international scientific databases and securing the inclusion of the Academy's international scientific journal in these databases. These efforts will enable personnel employed within the Georgian defence system, as well as individuals interested in research activities, to gain access to a substantial portion of the world's electronic scholarly and book collections.

5. Development of the Distance Learning Center

In response to the latest challenges in the educational environment, the Academy's Distance Learning Center shall expand the scope of its activities in 2026. This structural unit will play a significant role in ensuring the uninterrupted continuation of the educational process at the Academy. In 2026, the professional development of the Center's personnel and the sharing of experience with foreign partners will continue. The Center will provide training courses for the Defence Forces, develop new fee-based professional development courses for target audiences, continue the delivery of existing courses, organize an international conference on

distance learning, create and implement English language maintenance courses, and develop other necessary training courses in accordance with the requirements of the Ministry of Defence system.

Through the activities implemented by the Center, access to education will increase for Academy Junkers and students, as well as for military and civilian personnel within the Ministry of Defence system. Furthermore, the operation of the Center will contribute to bringing the Georgian Defence Forces closer to the standards of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

6. Strengthening International Integration and Cooperation

Within the framework of bilateral cooperation and memoranda of understanding, the Academy will continue its close cooperation with educational institutions in the United States, Europe, and the region, as well as with international organizations and NATO. In line with the Academy's priorities, new partnerships will be established, and joint exchange programs, training activities, and research projects will be initiated. Additional opportunities will be sought for Junkers, students, and personnel to actively participate in short-term and long-term exchange programs and various international events, deepen their theoretical knowledge, gain practical experience, and collaborate with representatives of leading military educational institutions worldwide.

In 2026, participation will continue in activities organized under five NATO programs and within the Erasmus+ framework. The number of military, educational, scientific, and sporting events planned with partner countries, as well as the number of participating Junkers, students, academic, invited and administrative staff, and instructors, will increase.

Particular attention will be devoted throughout 2026 to strengthening international cooperation, especially the internationalization of master's degree programs, in order to facilitate the preparation of highly qualified professionals and enhance the Academy's international recognition through targeted cooperation and the sharing of best practices.

7. Personnel Care and Professional Development

To overcome any challenge facing the Academy, not only strong leadership but also personnel possessing appropriate qualifications, knowledge, and skills are required. We firmly believe that competent personnel are the foundation of accomplishing any mission successfully.

Given the importance of this issue, special emphasis will be placed on personnel development in 2026. Personnel development initiatives will be implemented in accordance with the

Academy's Human Resource Management and Professional Development Concept. Furthermore, efforts will be made to attract highly qualified academic and invited personnel.

To support personnel development, the Academy plans to implement a Professional Development Program through which Academy personnel will have the opportunity to participate in various events organized both in Georgia and by partner countries.

It should be noted that incentive measures for high-performing Junkers and students are continuously implemented and will continue throughout 2026. In particular, Junkers and students demonstrating the best academic performance, together with their parents, will receive Certificates of Appreciation from the Commander, while letters of appreciation will be sent to the families of other high-achieving Junkers and students.

In addition, military and civilian personnel of the Academy are continuously recognized and rewarded for the integrity and high-quality performance of their duties.

8. Social Support for Students/Junkers and Academy Employees

In 2026, students/Junkers of the National Defence Academy, Academy personnel/employees, and their family members will continue to benefit from free or discounted services at various institutions (educational, sports, medical-rehabilitation, cultural-educational, and children's entertainment facilities) within the framework of cooperation agreements and memoranda of understanding.

Particular emphasis should be placed on the fact that the Academy will continue to provide medical insurance coverage for students/Junkers, personnel/employees, and their family members throughout 2026. In addition, financial assistance will be provided when necessary to address health-related challenges.

A significant innovation beginning in 2026 concerns medical services for Academy personnel/employees and students/Junkers. A Family Physician's Office will become operational within the Academy's Medical Center, further increasing the efficiency of medical services, accelerating access to healthcare, and supporting the systematic monitoring of employees' health conditions.

The Academy will also continue to implement numerous social and charitable initiatives throughout the country and the region in 2026, including assistance to socially vulnerable families and other charitable activities.

9. Services for Students/Junkers and Academy Employees

In 2026, the Academy will continue to place special emphasis on providing its students and Junkers with unique services, such as guaranteed 100% employment within the Defence Forces; provision of accommodation, free meals, equipment, and all materials and resources necessary for the educational process; full funding of tuition fees; Academy scholarships (a base stipend of GEL 500, with additional academic performance-based supplements of GEL 100, GEL 200, and GEL 300 for first-, second-, and third-year students respectively, and a fixed stipend of GEL 1,452 for fourth-year students), Donald Rumsfeld Scholarships, and various scholarships funded by municipalities and mayoral offices; provision of personal laptops and corporate mobile numbers; and access to educational and information platforms, international scientific databases, as well as electronic and printed resources available through national and international libraries.

The Academy not only offers unique services to its students and Junkers but also places significant emphasis on the welfare and professional development of its personnel. Accordingly, in 2026, the Academy will continue to provide services such as an annual salary increase of 10%; free participation in various online courses developed by the Academy's Distance Learning Center; and opportunities to attend qualification-enhancement and professional development courses and programs at higher military educational institutions abroad.

10. Implementation and Development of Organizational Management and Control Systems at the Academy

Within the framework of developing the Academy's organizational management and control system, the gradual development of a risk management system will be implemented. As part of this process, awareness among employees regarding the importance and practical application of risk management will be enhanced. Appropriate methodologies for risk identification, assessment, and management will be developed, together with procedures for risk monitoring and reporting.

The risk management system will be integrated into the activities of all structural units of the Academy, taking into account their respective functions and responsibilities. Special attention will also be devoted to strengthening the culture of personal data protection and occupational safety.

Throughout 2026, the Academy will implement these practices comprehensively and in full compliance with the requirements of Georgian legislation, thereby contributing to the establishment of a secure and legally compliant working environment.

11. Infrastructure Development

In 2025, the development of a unique landscape and recreational zone on the Academy's territory was successfully completed.

In 2026, the process of upgrading infrastructure and material resources will continue. The Academy will further develop recreational and sports facilities. The basketball court will be renovated, while the obstacle courses and the grandstand at the drill square will be reconstructed. In addition, the construction of a modern shooting range that meets contemporary standards, as well as a Georgian ethnographic house, is planned.

To enhance the general knowledge and motivation of Junkers and students, thematic classrooms and specialized educational spaces will continue to be established. To improve the quality of military training, existing training facilities will be upgraded, and the development of new educational spaces will continue.

12. Increasing Awareness and Promoting the Academy

In order to attract Junkers, students, and highly qualified personnel, the Academy will continue to increase its visibility and public awareness. To achieve this objective, the Academy plans to identify and inform target groups through a variety of initiatives, including: conducting practical informational meetings with graduating secondary school students (prospective university applicants) throughout the country; distributing printed promotional materials in public service centers and other public venues; publishing promotional video materials on social media platforms and in the broader media space.

The Academy will disseminate information about its activities and achievements in accordance with the developed communication strategy, raise awareness, promote educational programs by showcasing successful Junkers/students and professors, and provide comprehensive information about these programs to the public.