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Kosovo Accreditation Agency

“HAXI ZEKA” UNIVERSITY IN PEJA
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT, MSc

RE-ACCREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

April, Kosovo



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: March 19, 2024

Expert Team (ET) members:

- Doc. dr. sc. Marina Gregoric, University North, Croatia
- Ms. Marija Vasilevska, Student Expert

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- Arianit Krasniqi, KAA Officer
- Ilirjana Ademaj Ahmeti, KAA Officer

Sources of information for the Report:

- *Self-evaluation report, Accreditation, Peje 2024.*
- *Syllabuses*
- *Staff CV (full time and part time)*
- *Accreditation manual*
- *KAA Accreditation Manual 2022*
- *KAA Manual Annex 4.3.*
- *Compliance calculation*
- *Practical information of the general context of Kosovo*
- *Law on higher education*
- *Statute of the University*
- *Strategic plan UHZ 2023-2026*
- *Strategic plan 2020-2024*
- *Strategic Plan 2017-2022*
- *Administrative instructions UA 17-2024*
- *Administrative instructions UA 09-2021*



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- *Law No 4 L-054*
- *Law No 4 L-261*
- *Manual for practical work of Students*
- *Regulation on monitoring*
- *National qualification framework*
- *Ethic code*
- *Regulation on quality*
- *Quality assurance strategy*
- *Quality assurance guide*
- *Evaluation results*
- *Statistical report from the evaluations*
- *Regulation for academic staff*
- *Regulation of evaluation procedures for engaging external collaborators*
- *UA Accreditation*
- *Law on labour*
- *Regulation on MSc studies*
- *Regulations on personal incomes*
- *Performance indicators for the study program*
- *The Guidebook for young students*
- *Research Strategy*
- *Proof of ownership*
- *Statistical report from evaluation results*
- *Etc.*

Additionally, Received documents:

- *Manual on the Determination of Measuring Indicators*
- *Questionnaire - Dean the Teacher*
- *Questionnaire - Academic Staff Self-Assessment*
- *Questionnaire - Student Teacher*
- *Questionnaire - Student Administration*
- *Questionnaire - Employer*
- *Evaluation results for all questionnaires above*



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- *Proposed recommendation for all questionnaires above*
- *Financial plan regarding new Master program.*

Criteria used for program evaluation:

The experts team followed the program re-accreditation assessment areas and respective performance indicators, developed by Kosovo Accreditation Agency that are presented in Accreditation Manual – 2021.

1.2. Site visit schedule

Date: 19th of March 2024

Expert Team

- Prof. Dr. Sanja Kalambura, University of Applied Science Velika Gorica
- Domagoj Švigir, Student Expert
- Doc. dr. sc. Marina Gregoric, University North, Croatia
- Marija Vasilevska, Student Expert

Coordinators of KAA

- Arianit Krasniqi, KAA Officer
- Ilirjane Ademaj, KAA Officer

Site Visit Program

Time	Meeting	Participants
09:00 – 09:50	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated	
09.50 – 10.35	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff	



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10:40 – 11:40	Meeting with the heads of the study programme Human Resource Management MSc, 120 ECTS (room 1) Dr. Marina Gregoric Marija Vasilevska, Student Expert	Theranda Beqiri Mersiha Kacamakovic
	Meeting with the heads of the study programme Insurance and Risk Management MSc, 120 ECTS (room 2) Dr. Sanja Kalambura Domagoj Svigir, Student Expert	Halit Shabani Ibish Mazreku Afrim Selimaj
11:40 – 12:40	Meeting with the heads of the study programme Environmental Management MSc, 120 ECTS (room 1) Dr. Marina Gregoric Marija Vasilevska, Student Expert	Mimoza Hyseni Spahiu Albona Shala Abazi
	Meeting with the heads of the study programme Management and Sustainable Tourism MSc, 120 ECTS (room 2) Dr. Sanja Kalambura Domagoj Svigir, Student Expert	Alberta Tahiri Shyhrete Muriqi
12:40 – 13:40	Lunch break	
13:40 – 14:20	Visiting Facilities	
14:20 – 15:05	Meeting with teaching staff	
15:05 – 15:50	Meeting with students	
15:55 – 16:45	Meeting with graduates	
16:45 – 17:35	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders	
17:35 – 17:45	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts	
17:45 – 17:55	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program	

1.3. A brief overview of the institution and program under evaluation

University "Haxhi Zeka" (UHZ), or University of Peja was established in 2011, as a public institution in Kosovo currently onboarding 2857 students on all 5 faculties and 16 study programmes. The University` mission, as specified in the SER and in the UHZ`s Statute, is to continue with the positive academic and artistic tradition, creating an environment and transformative academic experiences to fulfil the full potential of students. It applies advanced scientific standards and contributes to the economic development of the Peja region and Kosovo. There are five Faculties within the UHZ`s structure: Business faculty, Faculty of

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Management in Tourism, Hospitality and Environment, Law faculty, Faculty of Agribusiness and Faculty of Arts. The majority of students at UHZ hail from the Dukagjin Region or from various municipalities including Peja, Decan, Kline, Istog, Gjakova, Junik, Rahovec, Malisheva, and Prizren, with occasional instances of students originating from Albania and Montenegro.

The program – Environmental Management at the Master`s level, a subject of reaccreditation, is organized under the Faculty of Agribusiness (FAB). The faculty is functioning as a separate unit of the UHZ from 2012 with three departments offering programs at the bachelor and master level. It is High Education – Bologna Second Cycle (Master) MSc., Level - 7, According to National Qualifications Framework (NQF), of total duration 2 years, 4 semesters, with a total 120 ECTS. The academic degree and title of diploma will be Master of Science on Environmental Management (MSc.)

The main mission/objective of the study program are:

- To prepare cadres capable of managing various environmental problems caused by the anthropogenic factor and other factors;
- Identification, research and assessment of environmental problems;
- Development and implementation of national and international environmental policies and legislation;
- Providing focused development of research skills in one or more physical, chemical and biological aspects in the environment; comparing, implementing and managing short-term and long-term solutions to environmental problems.
- To develop an advanced multidisciplinary education in the natural, social and human sciences, which will contribute to understanding and solving environmental problems.
- To develop analytical, functional criticism and the ability to find solutions for areas related to environmental problems.

From the Self-evaluation report (SER), the strives for achieving these objectives are defined by some of the measures and facts:

- Advancement of teaching at all levels
- Uniqueness of the study programme
- Further development of curricula, teaching methodology, modern literature, etc.
- High staff and management motivation
- Intensive engagement in research



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- Continuous training of academic staff
- Improvement of infrastructure, new campus under construction
- Good local and employee collaboration
- Equal opportunities for all students
- Quality culture
- Good procedures for monitoring, controlling and modernizing study programs.

BRIEF ANALYSIS OF ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

ADVANTAGES OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION:

1. Very Good connection with the local community and business community
2. Good opportunity for quality practices implementation
3. Organizational structure open for improvements
4. The unique programmes.
5. Big motivation of professors and management for study programme
6. Keen interest from both alumni and recent graduates to contribute their support and expertise to the programme.

DISADVANTAGES OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION:

1. Internationalization aspects are not yet sufficiently developed
2. The transfer of knowledge and technology needs to be improved
3. Lack of funding for academic staff education and research
4. English skills need to be improved
5. Digitalization of the study programmes including usage of more digitalized tools and methods for teaching and learning.

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE:

Performing an independent program evaluation specifically tailored to the particular program.

1. Collection and analysis of quality data at all levels at UHZ
2. Great integration into the local community
3. The proposed study program is created for the needs of society
4. University is focused to the creation of first program in this field in Kosovo
5. Good atmosphere and motivated staff ready to learn and teach



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The main recommendations of the previous assessment:

1. The study program has great potential for students, professors and Kosovo, so it should be modern and based on good practices. You should strive for a thorough review of the SWOT analysis as strengths and weaknesses are not in balance and also threats are sometimes actually weaknesses. From that point we can clearly see what we can change in the future. The mission of the program needs better definition of the target learning outcomes at the descriptive levels of the European Qualifications Framework.
2. Focus on the opportunity to become a leader in the region with an attractive and better concept of implementing a coherent concept of teaching and learning engaged by students.
3. Integration of modern teaching and research practices at the program level, especially the integration of e-learning and online teaching and learning at all levels of the teaching concept and the entire curriculum in a differentiated manner.
3. Write a Quality Policy and make it public and also the Development Strategy for the Faculty.
4. Set up an open live discussion of course evaluation results with students and Professors.
5. The faculty should make an effort to develop and implement a quality management system that ensures the proactive involvement of all stakeholders following a PDCA cycle approach.
6. Review and standardize all learning outcomes, provide constructive extension, and include general skill acquisition in outcomes.
7. Rename some of the subjects in line with the study program name.
8. To better support international exchange, it is necessary to introduce lectures and courses in English in all studies. These lectures and courses should be defined as mandatory for all students, including homework.
9. Enabling a smoother procedure for transfer between universities and recognition of ECTS.
10. Provide mechanisms to ensure that work submitted by students is original.
11. Continue the further development of the ALUMNI organization.
12. Use plagiarism tools to prevent plagiarism for both academic staff and students.
13. Ensure that students with special needs will have adequate infrastructure at the new campus.



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2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

2.1. Mission, objectives, and administration

The direction of Faculty of Agribusiness is guided by the surrounding circumstances and the significance of the subject it addresses within the program's scope. According to the Self Evaluation Report (SER), the programme Environmental Management endeavors to equip ambitious students for the job market, grooming them as future leaders in scientific inquiry and environmental stewardship, with a view to advancing societal and regional progress. Furthermore, the programme's mission/objectives are: 1) to prepare cadres capable of managing various environmental problems caused by the anthropogenic factor and other factors; 2) identification, research and assessment of environmental problems; 3) development and implementation of national and international environmental policies and legislation; 4) providing focused development of research skills in one or more physical, chemical and biological aspects in the environment; comparing, implementing and managing short-term and long-term solutions to environmental problems; 5) to develop an advanced multidisciplinary education in the natural, social and human sciences, which will contribute to understanding and solving environmental problems and 6) to develop analytical, functional criticism and the ability to find solutions for areas related to environmental problems.

Efforts for taking into consideration of the previous accreditation process' recommendations are evident. This overarching goal and emphasis align with the recent Strategy outlined by the University Haxhi Zeka which specifically emphasizes research, economic growth, fostering dynamic skills for the workforce, and fostering international connections. During the site visit, the management also affirmed their efforts to synchronize the program's mission with that of the University, by making recent changes in the mission statement. Hence, it can be inferred that the program's objectives are consistent with those of the University.

The programme is level 7 of the National Qualifications Framework and the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area. From the meeting with management, students, graduates and employers of graduates it can be concluded that the curriculum of Environmental management study program is designed to meet the needs of both the public and private sectors, taking into consideration the specific challenges and opportunities present in Kosovo's labor market. Students are encouraged to think critically, analyze real-world issues,

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and propose innovative solutions. From the SER and the meetings with different beneficiaries during the site visit the Expert Team (ET) learned that in the drafting of the programme different actors in the field were consulted, such as: Advisory Bodies, officials of the Environmental Protection Agency of Kosovo, the Hydrometeorological Institute, the Department of the Environment within the framework of MESP, the Municipality of Peja, the Municipality of Istog, NGO ERA, university professors with experience in the environmental field from other universities, etc. However, there is a clear need of involvement of more international practices in the programme including mobilization of international staff that can support this programme making it even more unique and attractive.

There are formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural and academic issues. They are publicly available to students and staff via different e-platforms or directly through the website and students and staff have confirmed that they know how to refer to them to relevantly address matters arising. The guidelines and regulations have been provided as Annex to the SER in Albanian language. However, from the meetings with different stakeholders it can be concluded that those regulations are embedded in their regular way of working and they are site familiar with them. In addition, all academic staff are obliged to hold additional consultations based on the students' needs where any issue can be addressed.

The University enjoys the autonomy and freedom of academic teaching, scientific research, and artistic creativity within its activities. On University level there are Code of Ethics for the Administrative and Code of Ethics for the Academic Staff. As specified in the SER, the academic and administrative activities must be based on the University's Code of Ethics. All staff members are familiar with the Code of Ethics which is also available online on the University's website. Moreover, on a university level there is an Ethics Council responsible for monitoring and implementation of this code. The Council addresses instances where academic staff breaches the Code of Ethics. When students violate the Code of Ethics, these matters are addressed by the Disciplinary Commission within the academic unit. In addition, there is a Regulation on Anti-Plagiarism and an Anti-Plagiarism System (SAP) which is in English language which limits its usage since most of the students' work is in Albanian language.

Policies, regulations, terms of reference and statements of responsibility relating to the management and delivery of the program are reviewed at least once every two years and



amended as required in the light of changing circumstances. For this purpose, the Faculty of Agribusiness has established an advisory body, which consists of labor market representatives, who are decision makers in private and public companies. Where the department has regular meeting and also have insights on the changes needed by the program. According to SER and meeting with stakeholders, Council meetings are held regularly, at least once before the semester starts, and once towards the end; to discuss, review and make recommendations for the upcoming semester. At the beginning of each academic year the quality office evaluates and re-evaluates the curricula for each subject which helps to continuously improve study program. The Heads of the Programme shared that last year on their initiative a separate evaluation of the programme was performed. The ET would like to commend to them for this initiative and propose having regular evaluations like this.

Major challenges are detected in decrease of the number of students, the lack of English language knowledge and raising the research capacities of young staff in age and experience. The management of the University should prioritize taking significant steps and implementing effective approaches to address the notable weaknesses identified in the SER, particularly concerning research work and professional practice.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 1.1. The study program mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution.	X	
Standard 1.2. Relevant academic and professional advice is considered when defining the intended learning outcomes which are consistent with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.	X	
Standard 1.3. The study program has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept.	X	
Standard 1.4. There are formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues. These are made publicly available to all staff and students.	X	



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Standard 1.5. All staff and students comply with the internal regulations relating to ethical conduct in research, teaching, assessment in all academic and administrative activities.	X	
Standard 1.6. All policies, regulations, terms of reference and statements of responsibility relating to the management and delivery of the program are reviewed at least once every two years and amended as required in the light of changing circumstances.	X	

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations: /

2.2. Quality management

The university has established its own quality assurance system to uphold standards and fulfill its objectives. This system encompasses the University Statute, Regulation on the Quality Assurance and Assessment, Quality Assurance Guide, University Strategic Plan, and other internal regulations pertaining to the organization of the teaching process. The Statute defines the quality assurance as an evaluation process that analyzes the efficiency and effectiveness of the functioning of the university in all areas of action, providing assessed units and responsible government bodies indicative of security measures and quality improvement. The system is led by different bodies including Quality Management and Evaluation Council, the Office for Quality Assurance and Assessment and the Quality and Evaluation Coordinators in each University's academic units. University management puts the quality assurance as one of their top priorities. Furthermore, during the meeting with the Heads of the particular programme the ET learned that last year they performed a separate evaluation only for this program. Having this in mind the ET would like to acknowledge this practice.

From the SER, the Quality Assurance Guide and the Regulations on the Quality Assurance System the ET team can conclude that all staff participate in the self-evaluations. The University mostly uses questionnaires as the main method for evaluation distributed both in hard-copy and electronically. As specified in the Quality Assurance Guide questionnaires are used for evaluation of the academic staff, evaluation of the administrative staff by the students,



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for assessment from the graduates and the business sector. In total there are eight questionnaires:

1. Questionnaire: Dean on Teachers;
2. Questionnaire: Self – assessment of Academic Staff;
3. Questionnaire: Student on Teachers;
4. Questionnaire: Student on Administration;
5. Questionnaire: Employer;
6. Questionnaire: Graduates (Alumni)
7. Questionnaire: Peer on Peer;
8. Administration Questionnaire

Once the evaluation process concludes, the quality coordinator within the academic unit gathers data from the evaluations. Additionally, within the academic unit, the Commission for Quality Assurance and Evaluation, led by the quality coordinator, operates. This commission processes the collected data, compiling a report containing summarized results and recommendations based on the evaluation. Upon completion, the report is forwarded to the Council for Quality Management and Evaluation for approval. The report from the evaluation summary is published on the University's website and academic staff is aware of the changes and implications, improvements done by management. All quality assurance and evaluation processes of study programs are fully integrated into normal planning and development processes to improve overall performance within the academic unit and within the institution as a whole. As presented in Annex 12 (Regulation on the quality assurance and assessment), there are 8 areas of quality assessment covering study program, teaching process, research, administration, staff, mobility, international cooperation, internationalization, external quality assurance and other fields according to the need or different requirements from Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MEST), Kosovo Agency for Accreditation (KAA), etc. To comply with need to provide an overview of quality issues for the overall program and different components within it, information collected by quality assessment further serve to increase the effectiveness of the teaching process and to identify shortcomings and opportunities for improvement in the future.

During the site visit and meeting with management and quality assurance representatives ET could relate relevant information about the considerations and implementation of internal quality evaluation results. It is evident that the data collected are widely considered for further development of the study program Environmental Management. Review of study programs,



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procedures and mechanisms used for review of programs are regulated by Regulation for study programs (Annex 5). The evaluation of the study program is carried out after every two years and is done by the Ad-hoc committee that performs the evaluation according to the procedures provided in the Regulation for quality assurance and evaluation. Different stakeholders are providing different types of inputs. The instruments used to evaluate a study program besides the questionnaires are analysis of statistics for the relevant areas of the program and other evaluations, such as: evidence of participation in lectures, pass ability of students, evaluation of syllabuses, registration of new students, used literature, etc. Such dedicated approach and implementation, together with commitment of management and faculty shows the link between mission, objectives of the Study program, the Statute of the University and Strategic Plan.

The only weaknesses identified within the SER and through the conversations during the site visit are the need of full digitalization of the evaluation system and potential lack of objectivity by the business sector in the evaluation process. The management should find a way to address this and take further steps.

However, management is highly motivated and continuously improves the quality assurance process which results in quality improvement of the study program Environmental Management and quality of high education. According to previous reaccreditation recommendations and quality assessment, UHZ applied majority of the recommendations by that ET and result is seen in improvement of the Quality management standard and policies from the overall perspective and performance. During the meeting with heads of the study program under evaluation, ET members noticed and observed strong commitment to improvement of the program, professionalism and hard work of heads of the study program directed to quality improvement, further development of the study program, showing good leadership skills and at the same time understanding and acceptance (with implementation) of previous reaccreditation. In this manner, they do deserve appreciation. The commitment and enthusiasm are highly observed, and the study program heads create motivating and positive learning and teaching environment for students, academic staff and administration.



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Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 2.1. All staff participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity.	X	
Standard 2.2. Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes.	X	
Standard 2.3. Quality assurance processes deal with all aspects of program planning and delivery, including services and resources provided by other parts of the institution.	X	
Standard 2.4. Quality evaluations provide an overview of quality issues for the overall program as well as of different components within it; the evaluations consider inputs, processes and outputs, with particular attention given to learning outcomes for students.	X	
Standard 2.5. Quality assurance processes ensure both that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance.	X	
Standard 2.6. Survey data is being collected from students, graduates and employers; the results of these evaluations are made publicly available.	X	
Standard 2.7. Results of the internal quality assurance system are taken into account for further development of the study program. This includes evaluation results, investigation of the student workload, academic success and employment of graduates.	X	



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Standard 2.8. The institution ensures that reports on the overall quality of the program are prepared periodically (eg. every three years) for consideration within the institution indicating its strengths and weaknesses.	X	
Standard 2.9. The quality assurance arrangements for the program are themselves regularly evaluated and improved.	X	

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Continue to evaluate, monitor, improve and implement self-evaluations.*
2. *Continue to integrate quality assessment results in the regular planning processes.*
3. *Continue to improve and review questionnaires results by involving all stakeholders.*
4. *Start using different methods for evaluation such as peer reviews, focus groups, or open live discussion of course evaluation results with students and professors as recommended in the previous evaluation and others, especially for the representatives from the business sector.*
5. *Perform trainings for quality and IT officials.*
6. *Improve and increase level of digitalization in the system of internal assessment.*
7. *Increase cooperation with international and local universities, public and business sector, EU projects and form partnerships in order to gain more experience in quality assurance management and receive funding for improvement of infrastructure.*

2.3. Academic staff

Candidates for employment at UHZ as well as to the Environmental Management study program are provided with the full position descriptions and conditions of employment. There is a table presented in the SER including the following: name and surname, program affiliation, qualification level, academic title, contract duration, workload divided by teaching, counselling etc, consultation, administrative work and research as well as the employment status is presented allocating skills and time resources to different tasks.

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All contracts of the academic staff of the Faculty of Agribusiness as well as those who teach in Environmental management program, follow the legal requirements regarding the position in which they are placed (assistant or professor, lecturer). The above is regulated in the policies and regulations that determine the employment of academic staff with regular work contracts according to academic ranks (prof. dr., prof. ass. prof., prof. ass. dr., assistant). They are defined in Regulation on Selection Procedures regarding the election, re-election and advancement of full academic personnel UHZ. 025/23, dt. 06.01.2023 (Annex 15), while for external collaborators for lectures and exercises are defined in Regulation of Evaluation Procedures for the Engagement of External Collaborators UHZ, ref. no. 1165/22, dt. 23.05.2022 (Annex 16). All documents are published on the UHZ website and approved by the UHZ Senate. According to SER, it is evident that documents originate from Law on Higher Education in the Republic of Kosovo, The Law of Labor in the Republic of Kosovo, University Statute (Annex 1). There is a specific procedure for onboarding on the new staff team members including separate meetings with the management of the faculty, with the secretary of the academic unit, with the information technology office as well as with the office for academic affairs and the Academic Staff Handbook.

As perceived by SER, over 82% of the academic staff teaching within the study program under evaluation are full time employees, while only three of them are part time. Two of the permanent staff have specialization in the narrow field, in environmental sciences. Academic staff participating in this program are restricted to a maximum of two teaching positions within a single academic year: one full-time and one part-time. Holding more than two positions concurrently is prohibited at UHZ. Majority of the staff has a relevant PhD degree, and the program fulfills the requirement of having for every 60 ECTS credits of the program to have employed at least one full time staff with PhD title. It is also evident from the Panel discussion as well as formal staff profiles submitted prior to the review, that academic staff can deliver high level learning process.

Staff members have opportunities for ongoing development and are actively encouraged to engage in research projects both locally and internationally. The Faculty of Agribusiness, as explained in the SER, is committed to motivating and supporting staff to participate in a diverse range of programs. The Statute of UHZ supports these initiatives where according to article 161 and 164 of University Statute (Annex) universities are obliged to offer suitable conditions

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for scientific research and artistic creativity and to enable the academic staff to achieve competitive results at the international level. In 2022, UHZ has established the Center of Excellence aiming to offer training to regular academic staff for the advancement of academic capacities and the development of teaching systems that promote more effective and more effective teaching. During the site visit the academic staff confirmed the effectiveness of this center, and the opportunities its offer. As part of the Center of Excellence a Trainers' Council has been tasked with formulating the training plan tailored to the specific requirements of each faculty, as outlined in the Regulation for the Center of Excellence (Annex 51).

While the academic staff of the University is obliged to do scientific research and creative work in accordance with their professional skills and the obligations arising from the strategic instructions of the Senate as well as the advice of the relevant academic units. Professors have the right to request from the senate to be allowed of a free year and be focused on research at a foreign University and during this year the employee will receive the full salary. The academic staff have also some financial supports from the faculty for capacity building and publishing.

In terms of evaluation of the ET members, all above is very important for the study program and its continuous development, especially in terms of creating attractive environment and academic quality for attracting new students and increasing the number of students. Professor and other academic staff are key players in competitive analysis of study programs. The program under evaluation is still unique and only one of a kind in Kosovo and Peja region, but there is a threat of new entrants to the market, and consequently increase in competition.

As per the article 182 of University Statute, academic staff working hours is 40, performing teaching, research, committee, and other duties and responsibilities together with 2 hours of consultancy hours for students. The detailed obligations of full academic staff and external collaborators, related to their engagement during working hours at UHZ, are defined in Regulation on Workload for Teachers, Associates and Assistants in Academic Units and ISHA in UHZ ref. no. 299/23, dated 06.02.2023 (Annex). As explained in the chapter Quality management standards, the Internal evaluation processes are carried out regularly and as such are foreseen in the quality assurance documents and calendar of activities.



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As explained by management, academic staff and quality assurance representatives, the ET has identified that the results of teaching staff and academic evaluation processes are processed at by the Commission for Quality Assurance and Evaluation and forwarded to the Central Office of Quality at the level of the institution. The results of this assessment are published on the University website (Self-assessment results, 2021/2022). The results from this assessment are published at the institution level. During the site visit and provided by the SER the ET members are informed about the process of academic staff assessment. They are evaluated by the students through the "Student to Teacher" questionnaire at the end of each semester by students completing the questionnaire 'Student to Teacher' to evaluate the course and the professor of the specific course.

Concerning the strategy to enhance the quality of teaching materials, the program holder will collaborate with the subject professors to ensure that the materials assigned for student reading are of superior quality, current, and accessible in a timely manner. It is expected that each professor and associate will ensure that the teaching materials incorporate works from renowned authors in the respective field, with a focus on recent publications not exceeding ten (10) years, or five (5) years, depending on the field's requirements. As highlighted in the previous SER, this might be too long period especially having in mind the uniqueness of the programme. Having this in mind the literature should be regularly updated and contain the last trends with a special focus on international trends.

A new model has been tasted by the Heads of Programme such as journal club. Furthermore, from the meeting with the Heads of the programme the ET learned that from the last time changes in the curriculums were made such as the assessment now include tests and case studies and there is an internship which is obligatory for everyone.

The retirement age for academic staff is set at 65 years old, but due to a shortage of professionals in specific fields within the Kosovo market, higher education institutions may find themselves compelled to retain professors beyond this age limit. This situation occurs even at the Faculty of Agribusiness, as stipulated in Article 177 of the UHZ statute. According to this provision, academic staff members retire upon reaching the age limit but may still engage in part-time teaching activities after retirement until they reach the age of 70 years. However, there is an urgent need for young staff to be recruited that will ensure the sustainability of the programme. This was shared also during the meetings as part of the site visit.

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<i>Standard</i>	<i>Compliance</i>	
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Standard 3.1. Candidates for employment are provided with full position descriptions and conditions of employment. To be presented in tabular form data about full time (FT) and part time (PT) academic/ artistic staff, such as: name, qualification, academic title, duration of official (valid) contract, workload for teaching, exams, consulting, administrative activities, research, etc. for the study program under evaluation.	X	
Standard 3.2. The teaching staff must comply with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative instruction on Accreditation.	X	
Standard 3.3. Academic staff do not cover, within an academic year, more than two teaching positions (one full-time, one part-time), regardless of the educational institution where they carry out their activity	X	
Standard 3.4. At least 50% of the academic staff in the study program are full time employees, and account for at least 50% of the classes of the study program.	X	
Standard 3.5. For each student group (defined by the statute of the institution) and for every 60 ECTS credits in the study program, the institution has employed at least one full time staff with PhD title or equivalent title in the case of artistic/applied science institutions.	X	



Standard 3.6. Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties.	X	
Standard 3.7. The responsibilities of all teaching staff, especially full-time, include the engagement in the academic community, availability for consultations with students and community service.	X	
Standard 3.8. Academic staff evaluation is conducted regularly at least through self-evaluation, students, peer and superiors' evaluations, and occur on a formal basis at least once each year. The results of the evaluation are made publicly available.	X	
Standard 3.9. Strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials.	X	
Standard 3.10. Teachers retired at the age limit or for other reasons lose the status of full-time teachers and are considered part-time teachers.	X	

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Continue with good practices and regularly update self-evaluation of teachers following trends and changes in the teaching methods and field of the study.*
2. *Improve English language and foreign language skills of academic staff to contribute more efficiently to internationalization of the study program.*
3. *Develop a plan for recruiting young researchers and academic staff.*
4. *Increase budget for the mobility, training and research of academic staff by dedicating internal sources, applying for government funds and EU funds.*



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5. *Increase international cooperation of academic staff with international academic staff in order to publish research papers together in journals with high impact factor (to facilitate the lack of budget and local shortage of journals with high impact factors).*

2.4. Educational process content

According to SER and discussion with heads of the study program under evaluation, members of ET determine that the study program is a 2-year study programme with 120 ECTS credits. The program is organised in four semesters, where the last semester is dedicated to Master Thesis, or in the individual research work within the preparation of the master's topic. During the initial three semesters, students gain comprehensive interdisciplinary expertise in addressing environmental challenges encompassing air, water, and soil quality, energy management, sustainable resource utilization, waste management, and hands-on experience through internships. In the first semester the students have the following obligatory courses: Integrated Water Resources Management II, Waste Management, Biodiversity Conservation, Sustainable development, and the elective ones: Management of protected areas, forest ecology, environmental economics and cost-benefit analysis in environmental evaluation. The second semester is focused on Land Use Management, Advanced environmental legislation, Air quality management, Green Entrepreneurship, Energy and Climate Change, Spatial planning and Environmental and Natural Resources Economics. In the third semester the following subjects are covered: Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment, GIS, Methodology of scientific research, Analysis of environmental data, journal club, internship, environmental audit and microeconomic foundations for environmental managers. There are a total of 13 compulsory and 10 elective subjects each of them with 7, 6, 5 and the ECTS Credits. The allocation of ECTS for Master Thesis is 30 ECTS meaning that students spend 750 hours for research and thesis submission. During the meeting with heads of the study program, academic staff, students and graduates, it is identified that students benefit from thesis writing, research process and it is always related to industry sector or real business problem. This approach is very important and shows that the program as such complies with societal needs, business needs and methodologically develops generic skills and competences. The structure of courses is well design and covers core of the Environmental Management.



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As specified in the SER (page 23) the following expected learning outcomes are planned:

- Demonstrate advanced knowledge in the field of natural, social and human sciences in the analysis of environmental issues and management strategies;
- Identify and critically analyze the impact of anthropogenic sources and other sources of air, water and land pollution;
- Use theoretical and applied knowledge to evaluate and recommend management strategies and solutions to environmental problems;
- Demonstrate ability to develop and implement national and international policies and legislation in the field of environment;
- Identification and application of adequate tools, techniques and technologies to analyze environmental issues;
- To evaluate (evaluate) biodiversity and implement measures for its protection and conservation;
- Demonstrate knowledge of research principles and methods to complete a research project
- Communicate environmental management in written, oral and visual form.

The programme is compatible with the study programs and curricula delivered in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) as specified in the SER (page 23). In specific the experience from the following European Institutions were taken into account: Brandenburgische Technische Universität Cottbus–Senftenberg (BTU), University of Sterling, University of Maryland and Yale school of Forestry & Environmental studies. The study programme also complies with the requirements and standards for training managerial staff and young professionals in Kosovo and is in line with the requirements of national qualification's framework and the framework for qualifications of the EHEA. The ET members assess that the individual components of the program are combined in a way to best achieve the specified qualification objectives and provide for adequate forms of teaching and learning.

The student-teacher relationship is a partnership in which each assumes the responsibility of reaching the learning outcomes. Both students and teachers met during the site visit confirmed the partnership approach practiced in different ways such as the tutorial and peer support system, students' involvement in different projects and others. However, there is no clear definition in relation to specific assessment of each learning outcome, which leads to a

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conclusion that this is partially achieved. This is not fully communicated because it does not exist in the assessment criteria in syllabuses. The same applies to teaching strategies which are fit for the different types of learning outcomes programs are intended to develop. On the other hand, assessment set out in the program and course specifications do not fully comply with clear assessment of learning outcomes. Consequently, it is not possible to meet the needs of different group of students.

Academic staff is flexible, especially having in mind there are students who are working, but relations to learning outcomes in assessment are not clearly defined. Based on the lack of learning outcome assessment criteria, the student assessment mechanisms cannot be conducted fairly and objectively to the fullest. Students do not get feedback on assessment of each learning outcome. This is an area where revision should be made.

ET members conclude that the master's program in Environmental Management implements a structured and defined approach to student engagement through a calculated ECTS credit system during an academic year. As explained in SER, this method and approach ensures a fair and suitable alignment for student development, calculating the hours of engagement in all aspects of learning and research. To ensure a fair distribution of student time and improve the quality of the learning experience, calculation of the value of one ECTS credit in student engagement hours.

During the meetings with management, heads of the study programs, students and graduates it is confirmed that the internship is organized as explained in the SER. Internships are conducted in line with the study program. The acceptance of students for internship period was confirmed also by the business sector met during the site visit. In the course "Internship and Career Development," students can apply their knowledge in practice. This course is mandatory and includes practical work in public or private institutions, establishing a close connection between theory and professional reality.

Some of the previous accreditation process' recommendations related to this criteria have been addressed by the Heads of the programme. In specific, they renamed three courses to be in line with the study program name. To better support international exchange, they added two elective courses who are taught in English.



It's crucial to emphasize the immediate requirement for consistently integrating the latest international trends in Environmental Management into the curriculum. The program's distinction shouldn't solely rest on the subjects it covers, but also on its incorporation of cutting-edge trends in the field and the innovative teaching and learning methodologies and tools employed.

Finally, the Faculty of Agribusiness has signed many partnership agreements with private and public institutions. Agreements with them were attached as annexes to the SER.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 4.1. The study program is modelled on qualification objectives. These include subject-related and interdisciplinary aspects as well as the acquisition of disciplinary, methodological and generic skills and competencies. The aspects refer especially to academic or artistic competencies, to the capability of taking up adequate employment, contributing to the civil society and of developing the students' personality.	X	
Standard 4.2. The study program complies with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. The individual components of the program are combined in a way to best achieve the specified qualification objectives and provide for adequate forms of teaching and learning.	X	
Standard 4.3. The disciplines within the curriculum are provided in a logical flow and meet the definition and precise determination of the general and specific competencies, as well as the compatibility with the study programs and curricula delivered in the EHEA. To be listed at least 7 learning outcomes for the study program under evaluation.	X	



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Standard 4.4. The disciplines within the curriculum have analytical syllabuses which comprise at least the following: the discipline's objectives, the basic thematic content, learning outcomes, the distribution of classes, seminars and applicative activities, students' assessment system, the minimal bibliography, etc. The full course description/ syllabuses of each subject/ module should be attached only in electronic form to the self-assessment report for the study program under evaluation.		X
Standard 4.5. If the language of instruction is other than Albanian, actions are taken to ensure that language skills of both students and academic staff are adequate for instruction in that language when students begin their studies. This may be done through language training prior to the commencement of the program.	N/A	
Standard 4.6. The student-teacher relationship is a partnership in which each assumes the responsibility of reaching the learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are explained and discussed with students from the perspective of their relevance to the students' development.	X	
Standard 4.7. Teaching strategies are fit for the different types of learning outcomes programs are intended to develop. Strategies of teaching and assessment set out in program and course specifications are followed with flexibility to meet the needs of different groups of students.	X	
Standard 4.8. Student assessment mechanisms are conducted fairly and objectively, are appropriate for the different forms of learning sought and are clearly communicated to students at the beginning of courses.		X
Standard 4.9. Appropriate, valid and reliable mechanisms are used for verifying standards of student achievement. The standard of work required for different grades is consistent over time, comparable in courses offered within a program, and in comparison with other study programs at highly regarded institutions.	X	



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Standard 4.10. Policies and procedures include actions to be taken in dealing with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or inconsistently assessed.	X	
Standard 4.11. If the study program includes practice stages, the intended student learning outcomes are clearly specified and effective processes are followed to ensure that those learning outcomes and the strategies to develop that learning are understood by students. The practice stages are allocated ECTS credits and the work of the students at the practical training organisations is monitored through activity reports; students during practice stages have assigned tutors among the academic staff in the study program.	X	
Standard 4.12. In order to facilitate the practice stages, the higher education institution signs cooperation agreements, contracts or other documents with institutions/organisations/practical training units.	X	

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Review and improve syllabuses in terms of assessment criteria for each learning outcome.*
- 2. Implement constructive alignment in a way to design assessment tasks aligned with learning outcomes in all courses and all syllabuses.*
- 3. After implantation of recommendation 1 and 2, the communication and introduction of assessment criteria could be communicated fully to students.*
- 4. As a result of constructive alignment in assessment, students will pass learning outcomes.*
- 5. It will enable students to know exactly how many ECTS was assign to which learning outcome and in case student fail certain learning outcome, they will repeat only that specific learning outcome, not the whole exam.*
- 6. Distinguish difference between assessment methods and assessment of learning outcomes.*

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7. *Engage consultants or advisors to assist academic staff to improve syllabuses in the constructive alignment.*
8. *Continue updating syllabuses with recent literature, international trends and digitalized tools for teaching and learning.*
9. *Continue updating syllabuses with improved creation of learning outcomes by using verbs recommended on the level 7 of high education.*
10. *Apply for Erasmus projects and academic exchange in order to advance, exchange and learn EU practices in course development, description and assessment.*
11. *Offer more courses in English language to attract international students, including elective and obligatory one.*
12. *Improve facilities for online learning and teaching in order to retain more students even if there is a high emigration level.*

2.5. Students

The master 's level program in Environmental Management is highly appealing to students because of its engaging topic, unique nature, and the opportunities it presents. During site visits, a majority of the students expressed that they selected the program because of its attractiveness and the convenient geographical location of UHZ`s campus, which is close to their homes.

According to legal procedures, SER and meeting with management, administration staff and quality assurance, ET members identified that the formal process of admission of students is done according to officially accepted procedures at the institutional level and in accordance with the dispositions of the Statute (Article 83 - Students and organization of studies) and the Regulation for master studies (Annex 23). Additionally, the admission requirements are set and applied consistently and fairly to all students by Article 16.4 of the Law on Higher Education. Students can enrol in the study program under evaluation, on the MSc level if they have completed fundamental studies (BSc) which should contain at least 180 ECTS credits. For admission to master studies, candidates must succeed in the entrance exam, too.



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Maximum number of students for the Environmental Management is 20 so it cannot be expected that there are groups with more than 20 students. The ET members agree that the teaching methods comply with the standard requirements. There are different teaching methods applied, such as lectures, seminars, theoretical exercises, fieldwork, discussions, professional consultations, and independent student projects. During the meeting with students and academic staff, many reported on case study analysis, discussions, project-based learning and problem solving. In many subjects, students must work on term papers, too. This approach enables students to gain practical and theoretical skills, knowledge, and competencies as well as communication skills.

Student assessment notifications is done through the mechanism of "Electronic Data Management System" (SMU), in the prompt way in the proper timeframe. After undergoing the relevant written or verbal exam, students have the right to complain as prescribed in the UHZ's Statute. The SER (page 29) shared the results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record. Minimum passing grade is 6 (six), while the maximum grade is 10 (ten).

Some of the students that the ET met during the site visit declared to choose this programme due to the opportunity to work and study at the same time. From this it can be concluded that the academic staff are supportive and flexible in cases needed. During the exam period, all students in particular situations are provided with flexible treatment based on the provisions of the Statute (Article 109. Item 4).

According to SER, it is evident that there is a system dedicated to control of originality of the students' research and work which is based on the Regulation on Anti-Plagiarism System (Annex 37) and the detection program <http://sap.unhz.eu/>. During the site visit, library visit and discussion with management and academic staff, ET members are not fully convinced that the plagiarism detection is fully applied. This system is oriented to English language and thesis, seminars while the students' work is conducted in Albanian language. The problem is seen in the adaptation of originality and plagiarism detection in Albanian language.

UHZ makes sure that the students' rights and obligations are made publicly available through its promotion on its website. In addition to this, the rights and obligations are promoted through the Welcome Week and Quality Assurance Week plus the Guidebook for Young Students (Annex 40).



The transfer of students between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs is clearly regulated in formal internal documents. The transfer and recognition of studies from other Higher Education institutions is regulated according to the provisions of the Statute (Article 132). The SER explains the procedure and management, assurance representatives and administrative staff also explained the procedure during the site visit. All transfers from other universities, both inside and outside the country, in addition to being based on the Statute and regulations, are also based on the administrative instruction of MEST. The Dean of the Faculty decides with the proposal of the College of postgraduate studies and the approval of the Council of the relevant departments according to the provisions provided by the Statute. The SER (page 32) specifically mentioned the procedures for the recognition and transfer of ECTS credits from other universities that takes too long as one of the weaknesses. This was also one of the weaknesses in the previous accreditation process and the previous ET team recommended actions in this regard.

Four hours per week is planned for consultations for each academic staff. The good relations between students and academic staff was confirmed also by the academic staff and students during the site visit. UHZ has settled a Tutorial and Peer Support System through which students are advised by the academic staff. In addition to this is the Career Development Center that serves for career counselling.

The graduates and Alumni should be more involved in the teaching and learning processes and can also act as ambassadors for UHZ and the programme. They requested more activities and the Alumni Office to be more active during the ET meeting with them.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 5.1. There is a clear and formally adopted admission procedure at institutional level that the study program respects when utilizing students' recruitment. Admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied for all students.	X	



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Standard 5.2. All students enrolled in the study program possess a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent document of study, according to MEST requirements.	X	
Standard 5.3. The study groups are dimensioned so as to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process.	X	
Standard 5.4. Feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments is given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed.	X	
Standard 5.5. The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record.	X	
Standard 5.6. Flexible treatment of students in special situations is ensured with respect to deadlines and formal requirements in the program and to all examinations.	X	
Standard 5.7. Records of student completion rates are kept for all courses and for the program as a whole and included among quality indicators.	X	
Standard 5.8. Effective procedures are being used to ensure that work submitted by students is original.		X
Standard 5.9. Students' rights and obligations are made publicly available, promoted to all those concerned and enforced equitably; these will include the right to academic appeals.	X	



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Standard 5.10. The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs is clearly regulated in formal internal documents.	X	
Standard 5.11. Academic staff is available at sufficient scheduled times for consultation and advice to students. Adequate tutorial assistance is provided to ensure understanding and ability to apply learning.	X	

Compliance level: *Substantially compliant*

ET recommendations:

1. *Improve tools and software for plagiarism detection to ensure the originality of students work especially for Albanian language.*
2. *Continue maintaining communication with students about their rights and obligations.*
3. *Continue good collaboration with Alumni (graduates) through the Alumni office which is expected to be more active.*
4. *Create environment for international students by offering course in English language.*
5. *Reconsider including the English language knowledge as a prerequisite for admission in the Master Programme.*
6. *Promote the Environmental Management study program in neighboring countries to attract regional students.*
7. *Improve communication platform continuously and invest in digitalization for better learning results.*
8. *Make sure that the procedures for the recognition and transfer of ECTS credits from other universities do not take too long.*



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2.6. Research

UHZ implement Scientific Research and Artistic Strategy 2023 – 2026 (Annex 26) with the one of the goals related to opening and development of new research programs. UHZ has undertaken many additional measures for promotion of the research on institutional level. Among them are the opening of the Office for Scientific Research that aims to identify requirements and encourage academic staff for scientific research. In addition, financial support for publication of journals and participation in international conferences are offered followed by rewarding mechanism for researchers for their work and international projects. Furthermore, according to SER each member of the academic staff at the beginning of the new academic year submits the individual development plan to the Deans. In this plan, each professor and assistant plan the research and scientific activity that he will carry out within an academic year, determining the number of scientific papers that he will publish in international scientific journals with an impact factor, the number of international scientific conferences that he will receive part, the number of research projects and other scientific and research activities until 2024.

The academic staff of the Faculty of Agribusiness consistently publish their research and academic work in international scientific journals. These journals are indexed in prestigious databases, ensuring the widespread dissemination and recognition of their scholarly contributions. The SER provides a list of the published articles from the academic staff and from the table it can be witnessed that there are new and many relevant research work papers published. The publication of the articles is also taken into consideration in the recruitment, appointment, reappointment and advancement of regular academic staff. The SER shares that there is a slight increasing of the number of publications at Faculty of Agribusiness in the last three years.

There are certain challenges regarding the research identified by the ET. From the SER data analysis and Panel discussion this ET concludes that the research dedicated funds are not enough, there are a small number of organized scientific conferences and low participation of academic staff involved. ET members also note a limited access of both students and academic staff to international databases of scientific journals. The support for projects were 2000 Euro



for research project but the plan is to increase this budget to 10.000 Euro per research and the application process seem to be difficult and bureaucratic. However, there is a good strategic plan to reach Faculty research objectives. More support from the government and the University is needed to fully implement research objectives. There is a need for improvement of the Research Facilities as well.

The academic staff is expected to participate in research activities and their performance is monitored and evaluated. These criteria are found in the University Statute and Regulation and promotion of Academic staff. There is a Code of Ethics in Scientific Research which serves as a policy for ownership of intellectual property. However, despite of the UHZ's Code of Ethics, ET did not find a clear implementation of policy defining what is recognized as research according to international standards and norms nor a clear effective mechanism that ensure originality of both academic staff and student research.

Academic staff are encouraged to include in their teaching information about their research and scholarly activities that are relevant to courses they teach, together with other significant research developments in the field. They also include their research in the teaching process, syllabuses and they create case studies for students to learn more specific and relevant topics from recent research.

The Environmental Management department together with heads of department have organized and offered extra opportunities for their students so just in 2022, 2023 there were some the extra activities that are offered for the students where they participated in trainings workshops, and conferences together with Faculty members, as well as had opportunity to participate in summer school and winter school. This information is derived from the SER but also discussed with academic staff and students during the site visit which assured ET members in the continuing commitment of academic staff to encourage and motivate students to participate in the research process and all other related activities.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No



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<i>Standard 6.1.</i> The study program has defined scientific/applied research objectives (on its own or as part of a research centre or interdisciplinary program), which are also reflected in the research development plan of the institution; sufficient financial, logistic and human resources are allocated for achieving the proposed research objectives.	X	
<i>Standard 6.2.</i> Expectations for teaching staff involvement in research and scholarly activities are clearly specified, and performance in relation to these expectations is considered in staff evaluation and promotion criteria.	X	
<i>Standard 6.3.</i> Clear policies are established for defining what is recognized as research, consistent with international standards and established norms in the field of study of the program.	X	
<i>Standard 6.4.</i> The academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity.	X	
<i>Standard 6.5.</i> The academic and research staff publish their work in specialty magazines or publishing houses, scientific/applied/artistic products are presented at conferences, sessions, symposiums, seminars etc. and contracts, expertise, consultancy, conventions, etc. are provided to partners inside the country and/or abroad.	X	
<i>Standard 6.6.</i> Research is validated through: scientific and applied research publications, artistic products, technological transfer through consultancy centres, scientific parks and other structures for validation.	X	
<i>Standard 6.7.</i> Each academic staff member and researcher has produced at least an average of one scientific/applied research publication or artistic outcome/product per year for the past three years.	X	



Standard 6.8. Academic and research staff publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full-time staff.	X	
Standard 6.9. Academic staff are encouraged to include in their teaching information about their research and scholarly activities that are relevant to courses they teach, together with other significant research developments in the field.	X	
Standard 6.10. Policies are established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.	X	
Standard 6.11. Students are engaged in research projects and other activities	X	

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

1. Continue increasing the quantity and quality of research in the domain of Environmental Management topics relevant to the field.
2. Improve the availability of international resources by broadening the international cooperation with universities, libraries and online database access to recent publications for academic staff and students.
3. Explore the use of research funding from international organizations and increase Erasmus mobility of academic and administrative staff.
4. Foster international collaboration in scientific research
5. Invite more international guest professors.
6. Organize summer and winter schools with international universities as a way of exchanging knowledge and experience but also to improve research budgets.
7. Use plagiarism tools to prevent plagiarism for both academic staff and students.
8. Continuously improve and implement the Strategic Research Plan.



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9. *Strengthen networking with international universities in the organization of conferences, especially in Balkan region (create partnerships).*
10. *Invest in international data bases and utilize digital tools to reach more recent sources for research.*
11. *Organize long life learning courses and gain extra income for research (local and international cooperation).*

2.7. Infrastructure and resources

UHZ possess their own premises, which are allocated within the main campus for the specific program. Their facilities include an amphitheater, two classrooms, five laboratories, as well as offices for both management and academic/administrative staff. According to the SER, there are a total of 16 classrooms (halls) with a collective seating capacity of 1049, one library accommodating 84 seats, two computer labs with 60 seats each, and 10 faculty offices with room for 30 seats. These classrooms are equipped with Smart TV projectors, blackboards, internet access, and heating systems. Additionally, each hall is furnished with devices for online lecture hour registration conducted by professors. The laboratories and classrooms are adequately furnished with equipment necessary for most study programs, which has been procured through various EU-funded projects. As outlined in the SER, the infrastructure meets the minimum standards required for this particular program.

The library is equipped with a reading room with a capacity of up to 84 seats, and the book fund has 1513 titles according to the disciplines included in the curriculum but mostly in Albanian language (Annex 28). As reported in the SER and confirmed during the site visit, the students and academic staff have access to the electronic library that can be used within the institution's network, where adequate literature for research and research can be requested and used.

The University has its own Electronic System for Student Management (UMS) that provides access to the use of various materials such as: lectures, syllabuses, timetables and various announcements related to students and staff.



The University is constructing two new building funded by the government and the new facilities will be available for the programme which is under accreditation. This was presented to ET members during the site visit.

Three major problems have been identified regarding the infrastructure. The first problem is the lack of offices for academic staff. The second is the limited opportunities for the students with special needs in term of physical access to the building. Although there is an entrance for students with disabilities and special needs, this is the area where more attention and improvement should be introduced. The different actions undertaken by the University's management to ensure equal access for all students listed in the SER, such as ekiosk on the ground floor, positioning the student services offices are located on the ground floor for easy access and others are taken into consideration by the ET when assessing this criteria. However, enhancing the physical accessibility of facilities for differently-abled students warrants prioritization, aligning with principles of inclusivity and diversity. The last problem is the limited computers and IT equipment. During the site visit, students expressed their desire for increased ICT equipment, particularly more computers within the classrooms. Additionally, they emphasized the importance of digitalizing more courses and tools to enhance their learning experience. The ET members find this aspect very important and should include soft and hard facilities in the classrooms and entire University premises. This will benefit the entire Faculty and should be implemented in the program under evaluation. It will also help to improve promotion of the program and attract more students (especially bearing in mind that the number of students is decreasing).

<i>Standard</i>	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 7.1. The adequate long-term implementation of the study program is ensured in quantitative terms as regards premises, human resources and equipment. At the same time, it is guaranteed that qualitative aspects are also taken into account.	X	



Standard 7.2. There is a financial plan at the level of the study program that would demonstrate the sustainability of the study program for the next minimum three years.	X	
Standard 7.3. The higher education institution must demonstrate with adequate documents (property deeds, lease contracts, inventories, invoices etc.) that, for the study program submitted for evaluation it possesses the following, for the next at least three years: a) owned or rented spaces adequate for the educational process; b) owned or rented laboratories, with the adequate equipment for all the compulsory disciplines within the curriculum, wherever the analytical syllabus includes such activities; c) adequate software for the disciplines of study included in the curriculum, with 40tilization licence; d) library equipped with reading rooms, group work rooms and its own book stock according to the disciplines included in the curricula.	X	
Standard 7.4. The number of seats in the lecture rooms, seminar rooms and laboratories must be related to the study groups' size (series, groups, subgroups); the applicative activities for the speciality disciplines included in the curricula are carried out in laboratories equipped with IT equipment.	X	



Standard 7.5. The education institution's libraries must ensure, for each of the study programs: a) a number of seats in the reading rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program; b) a number of seats in the group work rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program; c) their own book stock from Albanian and foreign speciality literature, enough to cover the disciplines within the curricula, out of which at least 50% should represent book titles or specialty courses of recognized publishers, from the last 10 years; d) a book stock within its own library with a sufficient number of books so as to cover the needs of all students in the cycle and year of study the respective discipline is provided for; e) a sufficient number of subscriptions to Albanian and foreign publications and periodicals, according to the stated mission.		X
Standard 7.6. The infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the program is adapted to students with special needs		X

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Complete the construction of the infrastructure for the Faculty of Agribusiness and ensure its accessibility for students with physical disabilities.*
2. *Continue improving digitalisation and distance learning facilities, which is especially important to enhance the position and uniqueness of the programme.*
3. *Develop the Student centre for social and psychological help or Student Welfare Support Unit which should be established to support students with learning difficulties such as dyslexia.*
4. *Intensify the cooperation with international institutions of higher education to secure more funds for laboratories, equipment, digital tools, software etc, through Erasmus projects and other partnerships.*
5. *Secure funds for infrastructure development through donations by networking with major companies in Kosovo and using the Alumni members as ambassadors for the study programme.*



6. *Enhance the use of electronic resources in all key areas of the curriculum, including the access to on-line journal databases.*

3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

The Expert team would like to commend the programme development team for their proactive engagement with the Panel during the validation event. There was a very strong sense of teamwork and ownership exhibited by the programme development team. Having considered the documentation provided and discussed it with the programme development team, the Accreditation Panel recommends the following:

Standard	Compliance Level
Mission, objectives, and administration	Fully compliant
Quality management	Fully compliant
Academic Staff	Fully compliant
Educational Process Content	Substantially compliant
Students	Substantially compliant
Research	Fully compliant
Infrastructure and resources	Substantially compliant
Overall Compliance	Fully compliant

The overall compliance is assessed by the experts at the level of **Fully Compliant**.

However, the following recommendations need to be considered in relation to programmes re-accreditation in future period:



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1. Continue good cooperation with external stakeholders, business sector and employers of graduates.
2. Utilize alumni network to assist in promotion of studies and offer internship to students to overcome threats listed in SWOT analysis.
3. Continue to monitor and evaluate review of policies and regulations by introducing formal procedures and surveys every year.
4. Continue to evaluate, monitor, improve and implement self-evaluations.
5. Continue to integrate quality assessment results in the regular planning processes.
6. Continue to improve and review questionnaires results by involving all stakeholders.
7. Start using different methods for evaluation such as peer reviews, focus groups, or open live discussion of course evaluation results with students and professors as recommended in the previous evaluation and others, especially for the representatives from the business sector.
8. Perform trainings for quality and IT officials.
9. Improve and increase level of digitalization in the system of internal assessment.
10. Increase cooperation with international and local universities, public and business sector, EU projects and form partnerships in order to gain more experience in quality assurance management and receive funding for improvement of infrastructure.
11. Continue with good practices and regularly update self-evaluation of teachers following trends and changes in the teaching methods and field of the study.
12. Improve English language and foreign language skills of academic staff to contribute more efficiently to internationalization of the study program.
13. Develop a plan for recruiting young researchers and academic staff.
14. Increase budget for the mobility, training and research of academic staff by dedicating internal sources, applying for government funds and EU funds.
15. Increase international cooperation of academic staff with international academic staff in order to publish research papers together in journals with high impact factor (to facilitate the lack of budget and local shortage of journals with high impact factors).
16. Review and improve syllabuses in terms of assessment criteria for each learning outcome.
17. Implement constructive alignment in a way to design assessment tasks aligned with learning outcomes in all courses and all syllabuses.
18. After implantation of recommendation 1 and 2, the communication and introduction of assessment criteria could be communicated fully to students.



19. As a result of constructive alignment in assessment, students will pass learning outcomes.
20. It will enable students to know exactly how many ECTS was assign to which learning outcome and in case student fail certain learning outcome, they will repeat only that specific learning outcome, not the whole exam.
21. Distinguish difference between assessment methods and assessment of learning outcomes.
22. Engage consultants or advisors to assist academic staff to improve syllabuses in the constructive alignment.
23. Continue updating syllabuses with recent literature, international trends and digitalized tools for teaching and learning.
24. Continue updating syllabuses with improved creation of learning outcomes by using verbs recommended on the level 7 of high education.
25. Apply for Erasmus projects and academic exchange in order to advance, exchange and learn EU practices in course development, description and assessment.
26. Offer more courses in English language to attract international students, including elective and obligatory one.
27. Improve facilities for online learning and teaching in order to retain more students even if there is a high emigration level.
28. Improve tools and software for plagiarism detection to ensure the originality of students work especially for Albanian language.
29. Continue maintaining communication with students about their rights and obligations.
30. Continue good collaboration with Alumni (graduates) through the Alumni office which is expected to be more active.
31. Create environment for international students by offering course in English language.
32. Reconsider including the English language knowledge as a prerequisite for admission in the Master Programme.
33. Promote the Environmental Management study program in neighboring countries to attract regional students.
34. Improve communication platform continuously and invest in digitalization for better learning results.
35. Make sure that the procedures for the recognition and transfer of ECTS credits from other universities do not take too long.



36. Continue increasing the quantity and quality of research in the domain of Environmental Management topics relevant to the field.
37. Improve the availability of international resources by broadening the international cooperation with universities, libraries and online database access to recent publications for academic staff and students.
38. Explore the use of research funding from international organizations and increase Erasmus mobility of academic and administrative staff.
39. Foster international collaboration in scientific research
40. Invite more international guest professors.
41. Organize summer and winter schools with international universities as a way of exchanging knowledge and experience but also to improve research budgets.
42. Use plagiarism tools to prevent plagiarism for both academic staff and students.
43. Continuously improve and implement the Strategic Research Plan.
44. Strengthen networking with international universities in the organization of conferences, especially in Balkan region (create partnerships).
45. Invest in international data bases and utilize digital tools to reach more recent sources for research.
46. Organize long life learning courses and gain extra income for research (local and international cooperation).
47. Complete the construction of the infrastructure for the Faculty of Agribusiness and ensure its accessibility for students with physical disabilities
48. Continue improving digitalisation and distance learning facilities, which is especially important to enhance the position and uniqueness of the programme.
49. Develop the Student centre for social and psychological help or Student Welfare Support Unit which should be established to support students with learning difficulties such as dyslexia.
50. Intensify the cooperation with international institutions of higher education to secure more funds for laboratories, equipment, digital tools, software etc, through Erasmus projects and other partnerships.
51. Secure funds for infrastructure development through donations by networking with major companies in Kosovo and using the Alumni members as ambassadors for the study programme.
52. Enhance the use of electronic resources in all key areas of the curriculum, including the access to on-line journal databases.



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On the end Quality should be developed at the Faculties -components of the University. This ET strongly supports the development of a quality culture, and therefore it is necessary to monitor the parameters and analyses at each Faculty and not to use the analyses of other faculties as their own to show only the element of the existence of a formal procedure.

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program *Environmental Management, MSc* offered by *University "Haxhi Zeka"* is *Fully compliant* with the standards included in the *KAA Accreditation manual* and, therefore, recommends *accrediting* the study program for a duration of **5 years** with a number of **20 students** to be enrolled in the program.

4. APPENDICES (if available)

None

Expert Team

Chair

Signature (Prof. Asis.. Marina Gregoric, PhD) (03.04.2024.)

Member – Student expert

(Signature). (Marija Vasilevska, student expert) (03.04.2024.)



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Member – expert

(Signature)

(Prof. Dr. Sanja Kalambura)

(03.04.2024.)

Member – Student expert

(Signature).

(Domagoj Švigir, student expert)

(03.04.2024.)