Republika e Kosovës

Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo

Agjencia e Kosovës për Akreditim

Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju

Kosovo Accreditation Agency

UNIVERSITY "UKSHIN HOTI" PRIZREN, FACULTY OF LIFE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES, FORESTRY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES, BSc.

(RE-ACCREDITATION)

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

27 May 2021, Abrantes

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: 7th of May 2021, online meetings per video-conference due to the pandemic situation.

Expert Team (ET) members:

- Prof. Dr. Sofia Knapic – SERQ (Innovation and Competence Forest Centre, Association), PT
- Ms. Jadranka Pelikan, M.Sc.Bioproc.Eng. – University of Zagreb, Faculty of Science, HR

Coordinators of KAA:

- Naim Gashi, Executive Director of KAA
- Shkelzen Gerxhaliu, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring
- Arianit Krasniqi, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Accreditation
- Leona Kovaci, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring
- Ilirjane Ademaj, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring

Sources of information for the Report:

- Accreditation Manual from KAA
- Self-Evaluation Report
- Curriculum vitae from all the teachers enrolled in this evaluation
- Several Annexes (partly in Albanian language)

Criteria used for establishing the compliance level:

CL - COMPLIANCE LEVEL		%
A	Fully compliant	>90

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B	Substantially compliant	70-90
C	Partially compliant	30-70 [1]
D	Non-compliant	<30
N.A.	Not applicable	

[1] 30-60% according KAA Accreditation Manual, corrected to close the gap

1.2. Site visit schedule

09:00 – 09:40	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated
09:45 – 10:30	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff
10:35 – 11:35	Meeting with the heads of the study programme
11.35 – 12:15	Lunch break
12:15 – 12:55	Meeting with teaching staff
13:00 – 13:40	Meeting with students

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13:45 – 14:25	Meeting with graduates
14:30 – 15:10	Meeting with employers of graduates
15:15 – 15:25	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts
15:25 – 15:35	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program

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

University of "Ukshin Hoti" in Prizren (refered as University in the future) was founded in 2010 by the decision of the Government of Kosovo to establish this University and is the second public University in the Republic of Kosovo. The Faculty of Life and Environmental Sciences (FLES), established in 2016, provides bachelor study programs in Albanian language.

Currently 74 students are enrolled in the program of Forest and Environmental Sciences. In the FES study program, the lectures are covered by the regular academic staff consisting of a total of 6 professors, of which 1 with an Associate Professor academic call and 5 with an Assistant Professor academic call and 2 full time Assistants.

The fundamental mission of FLES is to provide excellent education and scientific research in the field of Agribusiness and Forestry and Environmental Sciences, and the contribution of FLES not just within local community but also nationwide.

This report focuses on the re-accreditation of the Bachelor of Forest and Environmental Sciences (Bsc. Forest. and Environ.), a 3-year BSc study program with a total of 180 ECTS.

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2.PROGRAM EVALUATION

2.1. Mission objectives and administration

Mission objectives and administration	CL
Standard 1.1. The study program mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution. The ET considers that this study program mission follows the overall mission statement of the institution. There seems to be a clear and assertive approach towards the education needs regarding this sector in Kosovo. Forest in Kosovo is an important natural resource and therefore education on this subject is of utmost importance. Significant and fruitful efforts have been made by the administration in order to reach both the community and the stakeholders and make them an active part of the study program. Moreover, there is already quite an extensive network among the academic staff reaching other universities and allowing for a continuous increase on the joint projects and research initiatives.	A
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. From what the ET could read in the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and discuss during the Online evaluation meeting, the study program is aligned with the goals of the National Qualifications Framework and the European Qualifications Framework of Higher Education, hence corresponding to international standards. Moreover, it is stated that the study program is on the same lines with 3 European Universities such as: 1. Università Politecnica delle Marche (Ancona, Italy), Forest and Environmental Science with an 80% fit. 2. Università degli Studi di Palermo (Palermo, Italy), Scienze Agrarie e	A

Forestali Biotechnical Faculty, with an adjustment of 80%. 3. University of Ljubljana (Slovenia), Forestry and Reneneable Forest Resources with 20% of adjustment.	
Standard 1.3. The study program has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept. Despite of the qualification of BSc., there is already a clear strategy that encourages the students to take part in the research activity which is a good sign and can contribute in a positive way to a future cycle of studies (MSc) on this subject. Moreover, there is an adequate balance between theoretical knowledge and practical work. The teaching method encompasses the attendance of lectures, laboratory exercises (theoretical and practical), outdoor expeditions, and seminars. Concerns were expressed in the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and on the Online evaluation meetings regarding the lack of transport for the students, crucial to attend the practical work. An individual transport solution seems to be what is in place to overcome this weakness. Regarding the pandemic impact on the study program, all the academic staff report that the period of adjustment was rather small (two weeks), and that the online engagement did not compromise the fulfilment of the study program.	A
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. According to the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) all the formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues are established, complied, and properly made available to the staff and students.	A
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.	A

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The Self-Evaluation Report (SER) describes the Code of Ethics established for university members, including academic staff, scientific school assistant, administrative staff, and students. Since the evaluation meetings were done online it was not possible to verify this locally, but it is the ET impression that all the staff and students comply with this code. The Code of Ethics is published on the University Web site and is revised once a year.	
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. According to the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) this procedure is done on a regular basis (annually).	A
Overall	A

Compliance level: Fully compliant.

ET recommendations:

1. *The acquisition of a permanent mean of transportation is strongly recommended to expedite and even increase the field work.*
2. *The documents attached to the SER should all be in English so that the international experts can understand. Despite the clarification made to this fact, this must be corrected in the future.*

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2.2. Quality Management

Quality Management	CL
Standard 2.1. All staff participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity. SER provides information that acknowledges the participation of all staff in self-evaluations. Regarding the Evaluation of academic staff performance, SER provides an evaluation criterion that was questioned by the ET. The ET considered that the fact that all the criteria had the same weight (%) in the evaluation process could put an excessive stress on the teaching staff. The evaluation criterion are: Evaluation from students; Evaluation among colleagues; Evaluation from the Dean; Scientific publishing and conference participations; Contribute toward University and toward society. The ET considered that a lower % should be given to the *Evaluation from students*, because sometimes this evaluations are more based on personal empathy from the student which can be misleading; and to the *Scientific publishing and conference participations*, due to the fact that there is no researcher career and the main focus should be placed on teaching, and also because it is not always easy to maintain the same track record of publications each year specially in this field of expertise. The ET was explained that if it were necessary authorizations could be asked to change this.	B
Standard 2.2. Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes. SER states that the self-evaluation of the study program is subject to regular periodic process (annually) led by the study program holders / administrators in order to identify eventual weaknesses and to continually improve it.	A

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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. SER states that the quality assurance system is comprehensive and includes academic, administrative and support staff through the self-assessment process in their areas of activity. The quality assurance committee at the faculty level is tasked with evaluating a wide range of quality assurance activities that include: monitoring the progress of the learning process, organizing the assessment process through questionnaires, developing an action plan for the implementation of KAA quality standards and recommendations, analysing curricula and study program courses / subjects, analysing assessment procedures for students, analysis of student passing rate in courses / courses of study programs, collecting and analysing data on student dropout rates and proposing measures to reduce dropout rates, monitors student satisfaction with study programs, teaching resources and support for students, career development programs for graduates. During the Online evaluation meetings it was clear to the ET that all the faculty members were engaged with this processes. Moreover, the quality assurance assessment and planning processes are integrated into the University strategic documents (priority 1 of the Strategic Plan 2020-2024) and FLES (priority 1 of the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan).	A
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. SER states that FLES pays particular attention to converting assessment results into inputs that serve to improve and enhance study programs, with particular emphasis on student learning outcomes. The ultimate target is to make sure that study program performance, curriculum, student workload, course/subject content, teaching and	A

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support services are in full accordance with national (KAA accreditation manual standards) and international quality standards (ESLG standards).	
Standard 2.5. Quality assurance processes ensure both that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance The ET feels confident that the standards for the Quality assurance processes are met. This indication is present in the SER and seems to be well understood by all the academic staff from the Online evalutaion meetings.	A
Standard 2.6. Survey data is being collected from students, graduates and employers; the results of these evaluations are made publicly available. SER states that for the purpose of collecting employer data, FLES in cooperation with the Faculty Industrial Advisory Board (IAB) organizes a survey of employer satisfaction with faculty graduates. At the same time, through the Career and Alumni Center (CAC), the faculty provides data on the employment rate of graduates. Moreover, The evaluation process through questionnaires produces quantitative data which is processed, tabulated and presented in the form of semester and annual reports. The results of the assessments through the questionnaires are made public and are sent to the surveyed teachers, faculty management, university management bodies and other stakeholders. There is an indication of Relatively low student interest in engaging in the evaluation process in the SWOT quality management analysis.	A
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. SER states that all results from the internal quality assurance system will serve to improve and enhance the study program, with particular emphasis on the study	A

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program performance, curriculum, student workload, course/subject content, teaching and support services.	
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. According to SER, all quality assurance activities are summarized in a report that is submitted to the Faculty Council and the Central Quality Assurance Commission. The report of the Quality Assurance Committee at the faculty level is compiled twice a year, respectively on January 30 and June 30 of each calendar year. There is a clear concern on throughout the SER poin out a detailed SWOT analysis, identiyng all the strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats. Although not always was clear, from the Online evaluation meetings what was the strategy aligned to overcome the identified weaknesses.	B
Standard 2.9. The quality assurance arrangements for the program are themselves regularly evaluated and improved. According to SER, the continuous monitoring and implementation of the vital processes of the qualitative functioning of the study programs and faculty is implemented through surveys / questionnaires designed for this purpose (Quality Assurance Regulation).	A
Overall	A

Compliance level: Fully compliant.

ET recommendations:

1. *To change the % (to a lower value) on the evaluation criterion regarding "Evaluation from students" and "Scientific publishing and conference participations" should be considered, but*

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not mandatory. This is particular important hence the SER identifies as a weakness "Relatively low student interest in engaging in the evaluation process".

2.3. Academic Staff

Academic Staff	CL
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. SER provides a List of full-time academic staff and Part time professors and assistants (including detailed CV), with mention to academic call, grade, study program and contract duration. Information on workload is also provided. Unfortunately the annex "Call for job vacancy for employment of academic staff" is not in english, so it is impossible to verify if the candidates are aware of all the information by the time they apply. However during the Online evaluation meetings, the academic staff seemed well aware of what was expected from them and quite engaged in the dynamics of lecturing and research activities. The ET does not have any data if they were informed previsouly regarding their involvement on the administrative activities or consulting (although it was mentioned in the Online evaluation meetings that they were envolved in this activities).	A
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.	A

The SER states that the teaching staff complies with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions. The ET has no other evidence that would contradict these statements.	
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. From the information provided the ET infers that Academic staff do not cover, within an academic year, more than two teaching positions (one full-time, one part-time).	A
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. 42.10% of the academic staff in the study program are full time employees and are responsible for 67.64% of the classes of the study program.	A
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. The SER states that "Regarding full-time professors, it is also considered the criteria that for every 60 ECTS credits in the Forest and Environmental Sciences program a full-time Professor with a doctoral degree are employed."	A
Standard 3.6. Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties. SER states as strength in the SWOT analysis of the academic staff that they are enrolled in the participation in projects, scientific conferences, and trainings with international	C

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universities. However, it is stated that the institution does not offer training programs for new or even existing staff on teaching skills, and, also, the fact that there is no engagement of the temporary academic staff for an entire academic year but only for one semester.	
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. The program comprises a List of agreements with business community partners and SER states that the FLES offers consultancy services for the community (businesses, NGO, public institutions). Although it was not clear on what conditions (established protocols? direct business contracts? does it involve payment or not? And if it involves payments, how much does it represent on the FLES total annual income? Nonetheless, during the online evaluation meeting it was possible to gather information about the cooperation with the municipality for environmental plan development and clean-up actions.	B
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. This evaluation is conducted once a year under the supervision and guidance of Office of Quality and the quality committee. The results of the evaluation are made publicly available.	A
Standard 3.9. Strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials. SER states that "In recent years the supply of laboratory equipment, chemical reagents, or even materials for the realization of the practical part for students has increased." Both in SER and in the Online evaluation meetings it is mentioned that there is a	C

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continuous effort on improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials, but no exact strategy is identified. It is identified a *Lack of sufficient funds for the good quality assurance*.	
Standard 3.10. Teachers retired at age limit or for other reasons lose the status of full-time teachers and are considered part-time teachers. There is no statement in the SER regarding this.The retirement age of academic staff is 65 years. There is no one on the full-time teachers that are near the retirement age.	A
Overall	B

Compliance level: Substantially compliant.

ET recommendations:

1. *It is necessary to meet the 50% ration for academic staff fully-time employed.*
2. *It is necessary to improve the offering of training programs for new or even existing staff on teaching skills. Also, it could be quite beneficial to provide the academic staff with specialized training on communication strategies in the digital world, hence strengthening the skills for online classes.*
3. *It would be advisable to elaborate a technical sheet with all the services that the FLES can provide to the community and have it properly disseminated. This kind of services can be a great way to be able to get extra funding to support the faculty needs in terms of materials and so on.*

2.4. Educational process content

Educational process content	**CL**

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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. The ET finds that overall, the study program is modelled on qualification objectives. There is, however, a large unemployment rate in Kosovo. A good thing is that students know from the beginning of their studies what are the employment rate for this course. Also, from the Online evaluation meetings the ET came to realize that there seems to be from the stakeholder's perspective an interest in employing some students.	B
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. SER states that this study program complies with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. From the Online evaluation meetings the ET also took that conclusion. The study curriculum of the Forest and Environmental Sciences study program is in accordance with the rules and criteria of studyies according to the Bologna system.	A
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.	C

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The SER states 9 learning outcomes for the study program under evaluation. Regarding the disciplines within the curriculum the ET expressed a major concern on the lack of the wood industry subjects that are crucial to be though at a bachelor level. From SER and from the Online evaluation meetings the ET could grasp the need of improvement of the students regarding their English language skills.	
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. The SER presents for each course: title of the course; lecturer; course status; course description; course objective; learning outcomes; methodology of teaching; assessment methods; concretization tools/IT; the ratio between the theoretical and practical study; main literature. Regarding the student workload it is divided in a well-balanced way between: lectures; exercise theoretical/laboratory; practice work; contact with lecturer/consultations; field exercises; mid-terms; seminars; homework; individual time spent studying (at the library or home); final preparation for the exam; time spent in evaluation (tests, quiz, final exam); projects, presentations; etc.	A
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. SER states that the study program is conducted only in the Albanian language and students perform lectures and exercises in the same language.	A

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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. SER states that the students have a relationship with the teachers on the basis of a mutual partnership, with the aim of fulfilling the teaching and learning outcomes. The ET does not have any reason to think differently. During the Online evaluation meetings this type of relationship was clear.	A
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. The teaching strategies and methods are well explained in the SER, with adequate measures regarding the control over the teaching process and through the final exam. The modes of knowledge control (exam/colloquium) are specified in the module curriculum and in the educational studies plan.	A
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. SER states that "Exams may be held in written form as a test, or might be held in oral form- which is a conversation with the teacher. The condition for passing the exam is that the student must have successfully completed the laboratory exercises during the academic year and must have a satisfactory attendance at the lectures. Another form that influences the final assessment of the student is the seminar work that is applied in some subjects. The student's final assessment is also influenced by student activity in lectures and exercises over the time the course takes place". Students seem to be aware of the assessment mechanisms.	A

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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. SER has information regarding the volume and quantity of work required to the student. The standard of work required seems appropriate for this level of studies. But there are no information on how it is then controlled.	B
Standard 4.10. Policies and procedures include actions to be taken in to dealing with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or inconsistently assessed. Both in the SER and during the Online evaluation meetings, there is a policie of repeating the failed exams. During the Online evaluation meeting it was explained that students can participate 3 times on the exams, if failed then, they must repeat the semestar, repetition enrolment.	A
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 ETCS 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. SER states for every course the amount of practical stages, specifying the learning outcomes and quantifying it with ECTS. Also each student has a designated tutor.	A

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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. SER states a list of partner universities (University of Ljubljana, Polytechnic University of Ancona and the Agricultural University of Tirana) and other institutions (like Ministry of Agriculture, Kosovo Forestry Agency, National Parks Directorates, Municipalities, NGO "FINCH",etc.), where students have students will have opportunities for professional practice, employment, joint projects, training consulting services etc.	A
Overall	A

Compliance level: Fully compliant.

ET recommendations:

1. *It is crucial that the study program provides an obligatory subject on timber forest products (with a balanced workload divided between the more theoretical classes and field visits to the wood-based industries). At a bachelor level it is imperative that the students have knowledge on the entire forest chain, and the timber forest products together with the industry play a major role in the economy. Stakeholders should be involved in this process.*
2. *It is necessary to provide the students with the opportunity to increase their English level skills, as it is an imperative need in today's competitive labour world. To do this there should be English Language I, II and III.*
3. *It could be considered to have some courses (or part of courses) given in English, not only this improves the day-to-day communication but also could be interesting to capture some international students and enrol in Erasmus programs.*

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2.5. Students

Students	CL
Standard 5.1. There is a clear and formally adopted admission procedure at institutional level that the study program respects when organising students' recruitment. Admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied for all students. According to the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) pg. 42: "Student recruitment in the "Forest and Environmental Sciences" Program is carried out on the basis of the criteria set according to the Law on Higher Education in Kosovo, according to the status of "Ukshin Hoti" University in Prizren and are placed in the public competition for student admission". The Admission process has its foundation in the National Law on Higher Education (Article 13 and Article 29). The Law defines the access to high education (Art.5) with no discrimination acceptable and the Code of Ethics of the University of Prizren (Art.6).	A
Standard 5.2. All students enrolled in the study program posses a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent document of study, according to MEST requirements. According to the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) pg. 42: "All candidates who have successfully completed high school in the Republic of Kosovo and other countries are eligible to apply. The program "Forest and Environmental Sciences" is dedicated to all candidates who have completed the secondary grade education testified with a diploma (while foreigners need to have a diploma verification that is done in the relevant institutions)".	A
Standard 5.3. The study groups are dimensioned so as to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process. "After the enrolment of the students, they are divided into groups as defined in the regulation no.prot.01-11/A, dated: 18.1.2019. Division of the groups into lectures and exercises is done in order to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning	A

process". The ET believes that the size of the teaching groups of students are designed in order to ensure the best ratio of quality and size.	
Standard 5.4. Feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments is given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed. The SAR (pg.45) presents the consultation hours of 4 teaching staff twice per week. Thy Syllabi of the courses contain consultation as one of the teaching methods available to the students. The Evaluation meeting with the teaching staff and with the students confirmed that the consultations are available to the students of the study programme. Regarding the performance and the assessment results, the SAR (pg. 45) presents the table with the exams and the students' passing rate.	A
Standard 5.5. The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record. The ET confirms this standard compliance.	A
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. The SAR does not mentioned support available to students in distress, except in the SWOT analysis on the Weakness side as lacking. In cases of special situations students could apply to the Study programme Council for the exam extension. Each case is considered individually. The Student's Handbook supports the standard as well.	A
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. The SAR (pg. 44) states that "Students are provided with a diploma at the end of their studies and with a diploma supplement designed based on the model of the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO / CEPES. The purpose of the annex is to provide independent and sufficient data to improve international transparency as	B

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well as academic and professional recognition of qualifications". Yet, the students' performance has not been included in the list of quality indicators.

According to the information provided, there are processes in place to collect and analyse data referring to the student progression and drop-out rates. The Study programme management provided the requested information about the number of student enrolment since 2017. According to it, the drop-out rate is significant between 1st and 2nd year, while the graduation ratio improved in 2021. For some reason, the Study programme management did not conduct the enrolment to the 1st year in the academic year 2019/2020.

The ET believes that it will not have an adverse effect on the quality of the study programme. | |
| *Standard 5.8. Effective procedures are being used to ensure that work submitted by students is original.*

The Study programme management prepared and delivered the supporting documents including the Code of Ethic which address plagiarism and measures to supress it (Articles 23-25).
The teaching staff explained that the University has deployed the anti-plagiarism system and that the thesis are available on its web page. During the desk-review process of the Study programme evaluation the University web site was checked and it was not in a function, therefore, there is a serious concern that the anti-plagiarism system is not always/properly functioning. Regardless the fact that the system in under responsibility of the University, it is not accessible all the time. The SAR does not mention it. | B |
| *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.*
The ET had been provided by the supporting documents including the Student's Handbook addressing the student rights in details. | A |

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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. This standard is under the University regulation.	A
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. This is confirmed in the SAR and the Evaluation meetings as well.	A
Overall	A

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *The drop-out and graduation rates should be included into the quality indicators at the study level programme until the next reaccreditation.*
2. *Anti-plagiarism system improvement especially in cases when the University's one is not in a function.*
3. *Design an action plan for the graduation rate improvement, monitor its implementation, and report, annually. Adjustment necessary upon the reporting.*

2.6. Research

Research	**CL**
Standard 6.1. 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.	A

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The SAR (pg.48) quotes: "The FLES is devoted into the implementing of the strategic research priorities and objectives incorporated in the FLES Strategic Plan 2020-2024 (strategic priority 2)". It is compliant with the University strategic document and the Regulation for scientific research.	
Standard 6.2. 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. The supporting document provides evidence for this standard.	A
Standard 6.3. 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. Several supporting documents confirm this standard.	A
Standard 6.4. The academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity. The academic staff presented proof in their resumes the topics and themes of their teaching that can be linked to the Syllabus.	A
Standard 6.5. The academic and research staff publish their work in speciality 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. The academic staff publish their research results in co-authorship with researchers from the Republic of Kosovo and abroad. Apart from teaching, the academics are usually involved in are: publishing papers and books, participation at conferences and	A

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similar event with oral or poster presentations, mobility of academic staff to international institutions and projects' implementation. Verified in the list of the publications and the SCOPUS. The University provides a modest fund to every researcher for publishing fee and journal's subscription.	
Standard 6.6. Research is validated through: scientific and applied research publications, artistic products, technological transfer through consultancy centres, scientific parks and other structures for validation. Compliant to the standard (validated by SCOPUS).	A
Standard 6.7. 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. This requirement is not fulfilled by the members of the full time teaching staff, only. They published 8 publications (verified in SCOPUS) in total since 2017 which means 0.33 annualy per person. Regarding the academic staff CVs there is a different figure, the number of publications in total is 14, which is stil underacheivement. According to SCOPUS, the temporary academic staff published 22 papers in international peer-reviewed journals, while their CVs contain 33 papers more. When combined, the full-time academic staff and the part time one, they produced and published 69 papers since 2017. The average is 1,21 per year and per person. On the other hand, by participation in other scientific activities such as conference presentations the threshold has been achieved. To the opinion of the ET, one publication per year in an international peer reviewed journal should be required.	B

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Regarding the 'h – index', it varies between 0 and 6 (according to SCOPUS). The highest number of published papers is 4 within 3 years per the academic staff member. The average individual number varies between 0 – 8.	
Standard 6.8. Academic and research staff publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full time staff. Full time academic staff met this standard.	A
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. There is no evidence supporting this standard.	B
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. In Kosovo, the intellectual property aspect is protected by the Law on Copyright and Related Rights adopted by the Assembly of Kosovo. The aspects of this law include the intellectual property of UP staff and students of all study groups.	A
Standard 6.11. Students are engaged in research projects and other activities. There is no evidence supporting this standard. Yet, the students are encouraged to conduct the thesis research thus they might introduce their teachers' work. During the Evaluation meetings, stakeholders mentioned that the students have an opportunity to participate in project' implementation.	B
Overall	B

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Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *The study programme management should find the way of meeting the standard.*
2. *Young researchers should be more supported and involved in the research activities by the senior staff. They should meet the standard, at least the KAA's one of a paper published per year in average in the past three years.*
3. *There should be a substantial increase on the number of publications (which will have a direct impact on the h-index).*

2.7. Infrastructure and resources

Infrastructure and resources	CL
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. SER states that there are adequate infrastructure that refers to the facilities for the realization of the study process, sufficient human resources, as well as technological and laboratory equipment. Nonetheless there is a reference to lack of technical staff for maintenance of existing equipment. The list of equipments seems to be adequate for the courses taught. Although the evaluation process was conducted online, the ET was supplied with an institutional video that showed all the premises that showed adequate conditions.	B

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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. The ET was not provided with any financial plan for this study program. Nonetheless this is a kind of detail that normally is on the University side. However there seems to be a lack of funds for the purchase of textbooks for the courses being taught, and a lack of adequate software for the study disciplines included in the curriculum with a license.	B
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 utilisation licence;* *d) library equipped with reading rooms, group work rooms and its own book stock according to the disciplines included in the curricula.* The conditions regarding spaces, laboratories, software, and library, that are included in the SER and were acknowledged by the ET during the Online evaluation meetings are adequate for this study program for the next at least three years. However there needs to be a clear investment regarding the technical equipment and software in order to make sure that this study program can remain competitive and up to the international standards on research and teaching methodologies.	B
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	A

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activities for the speciality disciplines included in the curricula are carried out in laboratories equipped with IT equipment. The SER states an adequate number of seats in the teaching hall, laboratories, and amphitheatres. From the institutional video the ET has no reason to think otherwise. There seems also to be enough laboratories equipped with IT equipment.	
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 speciality courses of recognised 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.* The library seems to have good conditions judging from the institutional video, and the students can also have access to the university library. From the video there seems to be enough seating places but in the faculty library it appears to have only reading rooms and group work. There seems to be an adequate list of access in electronic library resources, but the ET does not have any data regarding the content of the book stock.	B
Standard 7.6. The infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the program is adapted to students with special needs.	B

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In the institutional video it is possible to see an access from the outside suited for special needs. Also, there is a bathroom equipped for that purpose. There is no data regarding the learning resources for special needs (as blindness, deafness etc.). During the Online evaluation meetings, it was referred that currently there are no students with any time of disabilities. Nevertheless, there should be policies prepared in case there is someone disabled enrolled to the study programme.	
Overall	B

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Information on the resources available for the disabled students must be provided (as blindness, deafness etc.), as well as a policy on to provide disabled students with all the tools to have a successful learning experience.*
2. *It is necessary to have a continuous update on IT resources and software licences.*
3. *An effort should be made to improve the technical staff for maintenance of existing equipment.*
4. *A detailed financial plan for this study program must be presented.*
5. *An effort should be made to provide the necessary funds for the purchase of textbooks for the courses being taught.*

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4. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program, *FORESTRY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES,* **B.Sc.** offered by the University of Prizren is **fully compliant** with the standards included in the KAA Accreditation manual and, therefore, recommends **to accredit** the study program for a duration of **3 years** with a number of **50** students to be enrolled in the program.

4. APPENDICES (*if available*)

Expert Team

Member

Prof. Dr. Sofia Knapic

27th may 2021

| (Signature) | (Print Name) | (Date) |

Member

Ms. Jadranka Pelikan, M.Sc.Bioproc.Eng.

27th may 2021

| (Signature) | (Print Name) | (Date) |

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