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*University of Applied Sciences Ferizaj*

## **INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION**

## **REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM**

*Brno, May 31, 2020*



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Context

**Date of site visit:** *May 15, 2020*

**Expert Team (ET) members:**

- *Prof. Milan Pol, Masaryk University, Czech Republic (chair)*
- *Prof. Janez Vogrinc, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia*
- *Ms. Keti Tsotniashvili, PhD student*

**Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):**

- *Naim Gashi, Executive Director of KAA*
- *Shkelzen Gerxhaliu, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring*
- *Arianit Krasniqi, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Accreditation*

**Sources of information for the Report:**

- *Documents provided by University of Applied Sciences Ferizaj before the site visit*
- *Additional documents provided by University of Applied Sciences Ferizaj after the site visit*
- *Documentation of KAA related to the process of HEI's evaluation*

**Criteria used for institutional and program evaluations**

- *KAA Accreditation Standards for Institutional Evaluation*



## 1.2. Site visit schedule

### 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020

<b>09.00 – 10.30</b>	Meeting with the management of the institution ( <i>no slide presentation is allowed, the meeting is intended as a free discussion</i> )
<b>10.30 – 11.20</b>	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative services
<b>11.20 – 12.00</b>	Lunch break ( <i>to be provided at the site visit place</i> )
<b>12.00 – 12.50</b>	Meeting with the heads of study programs
<b>12.50 – 13.40</b>	Meeting with teaching staff
<b>13.40 – 14.30</b>	Meeting with students
<b>14.30 – 15.10</b>	Meeting with graduates
<b>15.10 – 15.50</b>	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders
<b>15.50 – 16.00</b>	Internal meeting – Expert Team and KAA
<b>16.00 – 16.10</b>	Closing meeting with the management of the institution

## 1.3. A brief overview of the institution under evaluation

University of Applied Sciences Ferizaj (University) was established in 2015, but it was built on a previously existing higher education institution. It consists of five faculties, each of them



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realising from one to three programs, some of them of bachelor, some on master level. According to the Self-evaluation report (SER), there are currently 412 students and 59 full-time staff, out of them “45 are teachers” (SER, p. 1). “As needed, it hires up to a similar number of staff engaged for one semester respectively for one academic year” (SER, p.1). The University seems to be playing an important role in the region.

## 2. INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION

### 2.1. Public mission and institutional objectives

The University of Applied Sciences Ferizaj (University) has revised its mission as well as strategic plan in December 2019. As a result, its current mission statement covers all three main directions of university operation, teaching, research and so-called third role (public reach/community service). Concretely, the mission statement of the University is formulated as follows: “We are committed to providing quality education, to train qualified professionals, dedicated researchers, educated and responsible citizens to develop a professional career and lead a productive life“ (SER, p. 7). Values such as learning, ethics, collaboration, excellence and diversity are declared as University values.

It appears that the mission has been developed on the basis of consultation process that included main actors within the university and beyond. This seems to be a qualitative shift in comparison to the previous process of mission development.

During the interviews it was confirmed that the mission is recognized by those who participated in the interviews and in some extent also by those who represented different groups across the University and beyond.

One can see as logical connection of the mission with University vision (“National model of a modern, innovative university and integrative education, where practice complements theory and develops professional and research skills for the benefit of society”) (Strategic Plan, p. 2), although in the vision the research as well as third role could perhaps be more explicit.



This can be said that the mission, since it is developed towards all three main directions (areas) of University operation, has a potential to serve as a guide for strategic planning, decision making and operation of the University.

And, the plans, as developed by the University, seem to be consistent with the mission and they support its realisation.

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. Consider a possibility to formulate more explicitly focus of the vision to the research area and to the third role of the University.

**2.2. Strategic planning, governance and administration**

The University has a Strategic Plan for the period 2018-2020, and this plan was revised in 2019.

The whole process of developing the Strategic Plan can be seen as the one in which consultations were held with relevant actors (representatives) of the University groups across the University and also beyond, including staff, students, alumni and employers. This way all main relevant actors were involved.

There is a link between the Strategic Plan and the budget of the University. The budget is elaborated for three years and it is itemized and here is a generally expressed connection with individual strategic goals and thematic strategies. More concrete elaboration for instance for the current year between individual objectives of the Strategic plan and the financial allocations is not developed.

The Strategic Plan is very ambitious and explicitly stresses three strategic goals (Excellence in education, Excellence in practice and research, Excellence in innovation), each of them being elaborated in thematic strategies and linked to resources. This way, each strategic goal is broken down into aims, objectives, strategies, indicators, and targets. Some concrete targets are very ambitious and it is not always clear from the Plan how the University is going to



reach these plans – for instance, increase the proportion of female academics (lecturers, senior lecturers, professors) by 30 %.

Also, system of monitoring of how the Strategic Plan is implemented in short- and medium terms and how outcomes are going to be evaluated is not clearly stated.

The University is having a decision-making system well elaborated, the same can be said about internal operating regulations which seem to be in line with current legislation. The organisational structures of the managerial as well as academic decision-making processes are logically and clearly built. The election criteria are clear, transparent and stated in University documents. Also, this can be said that the responsibilities of decision-making bodies are defined adequately, in a differentiated way. They seem to be followed in reality, too. Students are involved in Student Parliament at the University level (9 members), each member is nominated by student organisation in a clear way. Student elections take place every 2 years and their organisation is ruled by Regulation on Student Elections. Students also have their representative in Programme Committee Teaching/Scientific Council as well as in Senate. This way, it can be said students are involved in all main bodies of the University, elections are a democratic procedure and the University does not seem to interfere into this process (except of the rule that only students with study record 8 and more are eligible for possible elections, which apparently also hinders access to main bodies of the University to some students).

It appeared from the SER as well as from interviews, the administration staff seems to be incomplete, due to various reasons (incl. finances). Their responsibilities as well as positions are defined and they seem to match the qualification of the individuals.

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. Consider possibilities to develop and implement effective system of monitoring focused on how the Strategic Plan is implemented in short- and medium terms and how outcomes are going to be evaluated
2. Consider opening up the elections for all students, not only for those with study record 8 and better.
3. Consider possibilities to complete a number of administrative staff.



### **2.3. Financial planning and management**

It appears from the University documentation as well as from interviews that the University has sufficient financial resources for next three successive years to realise its mission and aims/objectives as formulated in Strategic Plan. The budgets seem to be in principle realistic and financial policies seem to address University financial sustainability.

Financial issues are a responsibility of Vice-rector for Budget, Finance and Infrastructure, and General Secretary of the University, as well as finance office. This way, oversight and management of the University budgeting and accounting seem to be conducted sufficiently. The University is relatively a small organisation, and this can therefore be understandable that the budget is centralised. At the same time, a limited or no access to financial incentives for middle managers (deans, for instance) raises a series of questions.

Accurate monitoring of expenditure and commitments against the budget is going on, at the end of each fiscal year the University prepares Financial Report. Also, annually the external audit is going on. Accounting system complies with accepted standards.

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant

#### **ET recommendations:**

1. Consider a possibility to implement a certain degree of budget decentralisation.

### **2.4. Academic integrity, responsibility and public accountability**

Some aspects of dealing with academic integrity issues seem to be only at their very beginning or sometimes they are not developed yet at the University.

The University has its own Code of Ethics which was only approved in 2019, though. This is supposed to serve to staff as well as students as a guide in case of need to resolve ethical





behaviour issues related to work and studies. During the interviews, we did not hear about any case to be dealt with, the very Code´ novelty was apparent during the interviews, too.

The Code of Ethic also requires – among other things – avoidance of plagiarism. But the University had no antiplagiarism software at the moment of submitting its documents for evaluation. Also, the university staff (incl. the senior one) does not seem to be well informed about critical ethical issues related to research/publication activities, such as predator journals. This clearly has a very negative impact on University performance and outcomes – at least in the research and publication area, but also – potentially – in student research (very many publications of the staff are placed in predator´s journal, for instance). The discrepancy between existing document advocating for ethical behaviour and the practice is apparent here.

The University has established Ethics Council (also only from 2019) and Disciplinary Committee. During the interviews no information about their activity was collected which also raises questions. Internal regulations related to the issue are published on the website, but this cannot be said about self-evaluation report, for instance.

But this needs to be stated that English version of the University webpage contains information about many aspects of University operation, incl. the study programs, teaching/learning procedures, staff, and more.

**Compliance level:** Partially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. Introduce antiplagiarisms software and use it in a daily work with students.
2. Raise awareness of ethics in research and publication across the University.
3. Make sure newly established structures and newly introduced documents are well integrated into the University life.

## 2.5. Quality management

The University has formally adopted a quality assurance policy “Regulation for Quality Assurance”, which describes quality assurance system, evaluation procedures, instruments, subjects of quality assurances. According to the SER (p.24), the university applies the following evaluation mechanisms:

- Student evaluation of the institution,



- Student evaluation of the program,
- Student evaluation of academic staff,
- Evaluation of academic staff by colleague,
- Evaluation of the institution by the staff,
- Evaluation by management,
- Self-evaluation of academic staff,
- Evaluation of the Programme
- Business Evaluation for the program.

However, the Regulation for Quality Assurance does not include the “evaluation of the institution by the staff” in the list of the types of evaluations that it conducts (article 12), while it is included in the following article which concern the frequencies of conducting the evaluations . The QA reports requested from the university do not include the survey results of evaluation of the university (management, resources and facilities) by academic or administrative staff survey results on. However, the QA calendar indicates these areas in the plan for this and the next two academic years.

The institution carries out the student, staff, employer and alumni surveys using the hard copies of the questionnaires. The representatives of the university argue that in this way they ensure the higher retention rate of completing the surveys. As the ET learned during the site-visit, the university has used the alumni meeting to conduct a paper-based survey with them.

Although the surveys are anonymous as respondents do not have to indicate their names on it, completing the surveys on papers in the same space includes the risks of anonymity and confidentiality, thus this might resist the respondents to completely express their opinions.

Paper-based surveys are also associated with the difficulties and additional workload to enter and analyze the data thus it is highly recommended that the institution develops online surveys that guarantee the anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents. This will also support more efficient feedback from alumni and employers on the university’s activities. In order to motivate the student, staff and other stakeholders to participate in the surveys, it is essential that the university takes into account the survey results, addresses the concerns expressed in the surveys and reports back to the academic community about the steps that the institution takes to improve its performance and resources.

According to the SER, the data collection and data processing is carried out by the QA office that reports the results to the deans and university management on respective areas of the



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surveys. However, the Regulation for Quality Assurance skips the functions, existence and relationship of QA office with other units. According to the organizational chart of the university (SER, p. 13) the Quality Assurance Office is established under the division of academic affairs, which to its end is established under the Department of Academic Issues and Student Services that is accountable to the Secretary General of the university. Thus, in terms of the organizational hierarchy the QA office is at the lowest level of organizational structure and it is hard to say that the QA office is established as a central unit of the university administration. Moreover, establishing the QA office under the academic affairs unit limits its coverage of quality assessment with the academic program related issues, while the QA office should be responsible to evaluate all activities of the HEI.

The institution has a vice-rector for international cooperation and quality assurance. However, according to the organization structure of the university there is not a formal subordination of the QA office to the Vice-Rector, as the QA office reports to the academic affairs officer, who reports to the secretary general. Also, the vice-rector has a coordinator that is also responsible for QA related functions. The confusion on the distribution of functions and reporting schemes was also evident during the interviews. Distribution of the central QA functions between two unrelated units with different supervisory bodies is prone to complicating the coordination of the QA processes and inefficient segregation of resources and staff, especially when the university considers a low number of staff in QA office as one of its weaknesses (SER, p. 25). ET has learned that the QA officer and the vice rector for international affairs and quality assurance attended the training conducted by the KAA on external quality evaluation process and share the knowledge at the university afterward.

The Quality Assurance Commission is established by the Senate of the university that is composed from all types of members of academic community, including the student that is nominated by the Student Parliament. The chair of the QA commission is the vice rector for international cooperation and quality assurance. The Commission is responsible for determining the content of the surveys and adopting the QA related policies and procedures and approves the reports.

During the interviews the ET has learned that the A commission has recently revised QA system and the questionnaires. The survey results are not publicly available, but the reports are accessible for the university staff on the internal U-SHARE platform.



According to the university leadership, there was not sufficient data and the quality evaluation result available during the strategic planning process. However, the ET notes that the institution is making important steps to improve the quality assurance system and develop the quality culture at the institution.

**Compliance level:** Partially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. Revise the Regulation for Quality Assurance to ensure consistency of different articles with one another; include all the mechanisms that it uses for QA assurance; define the responsibilities and relationships between all units responsible for QA function.
2. Review the organizational structure to ensure that the QA office is established as part of the institution's central administration; functions and reporting channels are clear, logical, efficient. Although, addressing this recommendation is partially constrained by the governmental legal acts, initiating the relevant legislative changes is essential for independent, transparent and efficient operation of the internal QA system.
3. Enhance the capacity of QA management in terms of: developing electronic system for data collection and analysis that ensures anonymity and confidentiality of respondents; provision of training of staff on specific issues related to the development and implementation of internal QA system (e.g. survey design, data collection, analysis and benchmarking)
4. Ensure that QA results are used in the improvement of all range of institutional activities and development and monitoring of strategic plan.

## 2.6. Learning and teaching

The university has developed regulations and procedures for Bachelor and Master studies. The regulations include requirements for admission on the program, the procedure for recognition of prior studies, rules related to students' status, rights and responsibilities including the norms related to academic integrity and disciplinary responsibilities; requirements for academic succession and completion of the program. The statute of the institution defines the policy for development and approval of the educational programs, organization and structure of the study programs, which should include: title and type of the study program, conditions for registration, goals and learning outcomes, content of the curriculum, competence, ECTS values (subjects, theses) and conditions for individual studies.



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The university conducts regular students, alumni, employer surveys to monitor implementation of educational programmes. At the same time the university is tracking the graduation and employment rates. According to the SER, based on the analysis of student succession rate in the exams, in case of the low passing rate additional teaching of the subject is organized, however, this has not been confirmed during the interviews. In this regard, ET has learned that the university is planning to establish a “personal tutor” practice to assist students with difficulties in their studies. During the interviews the ET has learned about couple of examples that the institution has improved based on the surveys, but the responses were not directly linked to the improvement of the curriculum.

The expected learning outcomes of educational programs are in line with the National Qualifications Framework and the European Qualifications Framework for Higher Education.

Teaching staff is appropriately qualified and experienced for their particular teaching responsibilities and try to actively engage students during the classes. However, it should be noted that the institution should carefully monitor the student/staff ratio when planning and increasing the student intake, especially on the programs that require more individual work with students (e.g. Interior Architecture and Future Design where the student staff ratio is 57/1).

It should be noted that due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the institution has effectively moved to the online teaching, however, it is essential to regularly monitor the process and assist the staff and students in case of technical difficulties or limited access to internet or hardware devices.

The institution has established cooperation with industries and provides internship opportunities for students. Regulations related to the internship are defined in the Internship Manual, which includes the responsibilities of students, university and employer in the provision of the internship process and internship report form. During the interviews the representatives of the institution emphasized the cooperation with businesses as one of the institution’s strongest advantages, however, students and alumni, still underlined more practical component and experience as the area the institution should improve in future. Moreover, graduates and employers suggested that focusing on the development of transversal skills with special emphasis on English language competences (especially that some of the



course literature is provided only in English language), would help students to be better prepared and more competitive on a labour market.

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. Take a closer look at the students, alumni and employer surveys and results of monitoring the student progression and consider them for improvement of educational programmes, teaching practice and student succession. ET considers that establishing the “personal tutor” practice will assist students to achieve their academic goals and for its effective implementation recommends providing special training for the staff in tutoring.
2. Take full advantage of university’s cooperation with industry and intensify practical component in educational programmes and provide students with better practical skills and experience.
3. Improve the teaching practice by incorporating and strengthening the provision of transversal skills for students and increase hours for teaching the English language.

## 2.7. Research

A research development plan is not developed as an individual document, however research is one of the main pillars of the 2018-2020 Strategic Plan. This plan encompasses a spectrum and quality of research and laboratory work at the University involving both staff and students and in particular postgraduate students. The Plan has identified its objectives and development Strategies along with performance indicators. The University has drafted the Regulation of Scientific Research. This regulation defines the rules, procedures and other supporting documents for the organization of research and scientific activities of academic staff, researchers and students. With the purpose to manage and supporting research activities, the University has established the Commission for Research and science. The Research Committee has, amongst other things, the following tasks: propose to the Senate individual journals and databases for academic staff publications; approve or reject requests to support academic staff scientific activities, cover the costs of publishing of academic staff scientific papers in international scientific journals, and approve or reject academic staff requirements to cover participation in international conferences, symposiums, workshops or scientific forums. From 2020, the University has planned to promote the award of Researcher of the Year.





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However, on the basis of the analysis of the scientific papers of the academic staff, it is obvious that some teachers have published their papers in international journals that are not indexed in any important basis and that are on the list of predator journals (e.g. European Academic Research – 22 papers are published in this journal). The university has to define strict rules for journals that are suitable for publication by academic staff, are of sufficient quality and should not be on the list of predatory journals. ET suggest the University to raise the awareness of the importance of research culture.

The University has formally adopted a research budget to enable the achievement of its research plan. Until 2019, the university lacked a budget to support research and scientific activities of its academic staff. In 2019, the University Steering Council has decided to support the academic activities of the academic staff up to a sum of 1,000 euros per year for each staff which includes research, conference participation and compensation for the publication of their work in international journals.

Academic staff publish under the name of the University in Ferizaj. In the last three years, the number of publications by the University's academic staff has reached 113 publications, which corresponds to an average of 0.9 papers per year and staff member. However, if one disregards the papers published in predator journals, the average number of papers per year and per employee is much lower.

During the interview, teachers stated that they are encouraged to include in their teaching information about their research that is relevant to the courses they teach, and that they practice this. Both teachers and students stated that students are also involved in the research work of academic staff and that they have co-authored some references.

Research is validated through scientific and applied research publications, artistic and other products. The University is under development of the Institute of Applied Sciences. Policies are established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.

The university has been a partner in three ERASMUS + capacity building projects (Entrepreneurial Universities for Industry Alliances – EUFORIA; Creating Theory to Practice



Centres for Innovation and Employment – CTPCIE and Enhancing Research Culture in Higher Education in Kosovo – ResearchCult).

**Compliance level:** Partially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. Define strict rules for journals that are suitable for publication by academic staff, are of sufficient quality and not published in predator journals.
2. Work on the research culture at the university level.
3. Encourage the integration of research results in study programmes, as well as increasing students' participation in research activities.
4. Consider and allocate relevant financial and human resources for research activities.

## **2.8. Staff, employment processes and professional development**

In this school year the university has 59 full-time staff, of whom 45 are teachers. As needed, it hires up to a similar number of staff engaged for one semester respectively for one academic year.

The needs for new staff derive from the deans of the respective faculties, the request for staff is approved by the management and the Senate of the University where the decision to open a public competition is made. The recruitment processes ensure equitable treatment of all applicants. The recruitment processes ensure that staff have the specific areas of expertise, qualification and experience for the positions they occupy.

Candidates for employment are provided with full position descriptions and conditions of employment. There is an induction process for academic and administrative staff to ensure their integration and orientation within the University. University has now established a tradition for induction of new staff and preparation for the academic year. In the first week of October, the University organizes induction week for all new academic staff. Also, at the beginning of each academic year, the Rector of the University organizes a meeting with all the academic staff, where the new staff are introduced to the other members of staff of the University.





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The University has developed an employment handbook. It includes rights and responsibilities, recruitment processes, performance evaluations, promotion and professional development. This manual is posted on the U-SHARE platform to which all academic and administrative staff of the University have access.

The ratio between full-time academic staff and university students is 1 to 31. Teaching loads are equitable across the university.

All staff employed in the institution (academic and administrative) hold the relevant qualifications so that they are able to effectively manage educational, scientific, research activities and administrative processes.

Criteria and processes for performance evaluation are clearly specified and made known in advance to all staff. Each academic staff at the University is subject to its own evaluation process. Staff evaluation is done in different periods as follows: assessment of students (is conducted each semester), peer assessment (is conducted once within the academic year), evaluation by the manager and self-assessment (also done once in an academic year). From the evaluation process of the academic staff, the dean of the respective faculty prepares the report on the staff performance and development report for each member of the academic staff. The evaluation of the academic staff performance is based on: student evaluation of the teacher, peer evaluation, regular teaching activity, scientific activity, community activity, etc.

After submitting the self-evaluation report, the individual development plan of each staff for a period of 6 months, one year and two years is agreed upon by the manager and the academic staff. In addition to the individual staff development plan, the University also develops an institutional development plan. Administrative staff are also subject to annual performance evaluation by the secretary general of the University. This evaluation is done according to the evaluation procedures of the civil staff at the level of the Government of Kosovo.

The University has clear plan for all staff professional development. All staff are given appropriate and fair opportunities for personal and career development.

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

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1. Increase the number of full-time academic and administrative staff.
2. Make knowledge of the English language one of the most important criteria in recruitment procedures.
3. Develop a training program on academic writing and academic integrity for the professional development of academic staff.

## **2.9. Student administration and support services**

The university has clearly defined admission requirements by the Provisional Statute, and regulation for Master's and Bachelor's studies that are publicly available. Information about the programs and available services is published on the university website. The institution additionally publishes information about student admission in the daily newspapers in Kosovo. The institution does not provide an orientation program related to the university services, policies and procedures, however, according to the SER students receive this information about their rights and responsibilities during the registration. The student handbook that is publicly available at the university website includes brief information about the study process, student's status, rights and responsibilities, availability of scholarships, tuition fee, student organizations and available student services. However, as the institution does not provide a comprehensive orientation and the student handbook is the major source of information, it is quite brief to guide new students to take advantage of the opportunities that are available at the university. For example, the handbook how to use the library resources, what are the specific criteria for receiving the scholarship, how a student can become a member of the student parliament. The handbook misses some of the important information, such as the possibility for students to participate in the governing committees, availability of career development center, etc.

According to the SER and the interview results QA office is responsible for collecting and analyzing the data on student profile, student progression, students' satisfaction and their employment. Appeal procedure and regulations related to the students' disciplinary responsibilities are described in regulations on Bachelor and Master studies, student handbook and the statute of the university.

The university has recently established the career development center (it should be noted that the university statute does not include information about the functions of the career development center, thus the statute also needs revision). The center has conducted career fairs



and workshops to assist students in drafting the CVs. During the career fair students had the opportunity to exhibit and show their work to potential employers.

At this point the university does not provide academic or psychological counseling services. As the ET learned during the interviews the institution is planning to establish the “personal tutoring” practice, which will assist students in academic issues. The strategic development plan does not include the development of student services as one of its strategic goals or tasks. The student parliament organizes various activities and socialization events for students

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. Provide better guidance for students on the educational processes, policies and university services through the comprehensive orientation program and detailed revised student handbook.
2. Develop student support services, such as academic counselling and psychological counselling.
3. Regularly monitor and improve the provision of student services. In this regard, incorporate the development of student services in the strategic development plan and allocate relevant financial and human resources.

**2.10. Learning resources and facilities**

The University is housed in a relatively new building (campus), operational since 2014, and has a very convenient environment for students and staff both in terms of learning and in social spaces. The building has a space of over 7000 m<sup>2</sup> including workshops and laboratories. The University offers around 5m<sup>2</sup> per student.

The University has 1 conference room, 2 amphitheatres, 15 classrooms, 53 professors’ cabinets, 4 labs, 2 working classes for heavy machinery, library, reading room, 2 information technology classes, 6 administrative offices, office for the student parliament, financial office, archive, physical security office of the facility, office of cleanliness and hygiene workers and office material warehouse. The University provides an adequate, clean and well maintained physical environment of both buildings and grounds.



The University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj is funded by the government of Kosovo based on real university requirements and state budgetary opportunities. The planning of the University budget for the next three years includes 4.500 EUR per year for information technology maintenance, 25.000 EUR per year for publications, 7.500 EUR per year for IT equipment and 350.000 – 500.000 EUR per year for laboratory equipment. Also based on the interview with the University management we can conclude that adequate financial resources are provided for equipment and for services.

Adequate computer equipment is available and accessible for teaching, staff and students and also technical support is available when they are using information and communication technology.

The University Library has about 760 different publications, some with more than one copy, and it has 10 student reading seats. The university has also allocated a separate reading area with 20 seats where students can read as well as work in groups and individually. Required additional space is also reserved for national and international visiting professors. The University employs an IT Officer who is available to students and academic staff. ET proposes to increase a number of different publications in the University library, and to ensure that students (also at Bachelor level) are more involved in the individual study of literature (not only in Albanian but also in English). Students and staff have access to online databases. The University has provided access to Cambridge University Press electronic resources (<https://www.cambridge.org/core/>) and MSP – Mathematical Sciences Publishers (<https://www.msp.org>). The University has also entered into agreements with the National Library of Kosovo on the use of electronic titles and resources.

Appropriate provision is made for both facilities and learning resources for students and staff with physical disabilities.

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. Strengthen institutional efforts to provide sports and recreational facilities for students and staff on campus.



2. Increase the number of different publications in the university library and ensure that students (including at Bachelor level) are more involved in the individual study of literature (not only in Albanian but also in English).

### **2.11. Institutional cooperation**

The University has adopted an institutional cooperation and internationalization strategy that guides the institutional decisions in this area. In the Strategic Plan 2018-2020, institutional cooperation is the specific priority area which requires special commitment. The objectives of this plan are as follows: expanding internationalization of the university; capacity building of the University to keep up with international educational and scientific developments; enhancing the international experience of students and staff and promoting global citizenship. The University has established the international relations office.

The institution has different agreements and memorandums of understanding with relevant international partners and organizations. The university has cooperative agreements with the University of Applied Sciences in Salzburg, University of Gazi in Turkey, with two Lithuania Universities: with Alexandra Stulginskis University and with the public Institution Atlanta School of Technology and Business”, Kastamonu University, Turkish University Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Marche Polytechnic University, Warsaw University of Ecology and Management, Mendel University of Brno, Czech University of Life Sciences, Prague, Agricultural University of Tirana, etc. The inter-institutional agreements signed between the University and the other party clearly define the specifics of the cooperation and the responsibilities of each party.

In addition, the University has signed student and staff exchange agreements under the ERASMUS + KA1 Programme with three institutions, the Warsaw University of Ecology and Management in Poland, Riga Technical University in Latvia, and Polytechnic University of Porto, Portugal.

The University is a partner institution in 3 ERASMUS + projects. In cooperation with the University of Applied Sciences in Salzburg and in support of the HERAS project University organized the International Conference "University Cooperation - Industry in Innovation", which was held on 12 November 2019 in Ferizaj.



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The University is supporting staff and students participation in study mobility – they have 9 outgoing student mobility, 1 incoming mobility (a student who speaks Albanian language) and 9 mobility of staff (academic and administrative). However, the University does not offer any courses in English language for students from abroad and many academy staff members are not capable to have a course in English because they are not fluent in English language. Engagement in international cooperation is included in promotion criteria.

University is also cooperating with international higher education institutions, networks and organizations. As of September 2018, the University has been accepted as a new affiliate member of the European Association of Higher Education (EURASHE).

Relationships are established with local industries and employers to assist program delivery. Since its establishment, the University has concluded over 70 agreements with businesses. At the end of the academic year the University opens the exhibition called “Future Professionals” where students present their developed products to businesses, staff, colleagues and the general public.

During 2019, the University established the Alumni Network

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. Offer the provision of English language courses and study programs in English language.
2. Develop a strategy to encourage more students and staff to participate in various mobility activities.
3. Better support and encourage staff to develop cooperation agreements with the international community and ensure that more people benefit from the international cooperation agreements signed.



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## Conclusion

**With regard to the above stated evaluation, the expert panel recommends to accredit The University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj for three years.**

### Expert Team

#### Chair

**Milan Pol**

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(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print Name)

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#### Member

**Janez Vogrinc**

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