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Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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Kosovo Accreditation Agency

***University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina”
Programs under evaluation:***

1. Mathematics – Accreditation of BSc

ACCREDITATION Evaluation

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM



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8th May, Prishtina

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: 8th May 2019

Expert Team (ET) members:

- *Prof. Dr. Vassilis Tsiantos - Eastern Macedonia and Thrace Institute of Technology*
- *Prof. Dr. Mladen Krajacic – University of Zagreb*
- *Ms. Delia Gologan – Student Expert*

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- *Avni Gashi, Acting 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:

- *First page of the application form;*
- *Self-Evaluation report of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences*

Criteria used for program evaluation:

- *National standards for quality assurance as presented in the Accreditation manual transmitted by the KAA;*
- *European Standards and Guidelines, 2015;*
- *Decisions or regulations of the MEST - as understood by the ET;*



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1.2. Site visit schedule

(7th May)

- 19.45** *Meeting at the Reception of the Hotel*
- 20.00** *Working dinner*

(8th May)

- 08.45** *Meeting at the reception of the hotel*
- 09.00 – 09.30** *Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated (no slide presentation is allowed, the meeting is intended as a free discussion)*
- 09.35 – 10.35** *Meeting with the head of the study programme*
- 10.40 – 11.20** *Meeting with quality assurance representatives*
- 11.25 – 12.10** *Meeting with teaching staff*
- 12.10 – 13.15** *Lunch break*
- 13.20 – 13.50** *Visiting tour of the facilities and infrastructure (used for the implementation of the programme)*
- 14.00 – 14.50** *Meeting with students*
- 14.55 – 15.40** *Meeting with graduates and employers of graduates*
- 15.45 – 16.00** *Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program*



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

Insert general information about the institution and the program under evaluation, its legal status, its mission, and others.

- The faculty (FMNS) has a long history in providing studies in the field of mathematics and natural sciences that began in 1960 and took the current form in 1971 when the FMNS was established, thus separating from the Faculty of Philosophy;
- The faculty members and its management were preoccupied by constantly improving the quality of the offered study programmes, thus they opted for the three-cycled structure specific to the EHEA and followed the Bologna Process engagements.
- Teaching in FMNS is organized in a regular (full-time) form and involves a variety of activities planned to achieve the objectives of the courses and the program as a whole. These activities include lectures, laboratory work, theoretical and practical exercises, seminars, scientific research, mentoring of students, etc.

2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

The ET decided to present its conclusions and recommendations within the template of the report (as received from the KAA) by discussing each standard under each of the General Area of the Accreditation Manual. This section is dedicated therefore to presenting the results of the analysis of the collected information and recommendations for improvement. The data was collected from the SER and the interviews conducted during the site visit.

2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

(Insert all comments or observations, commendations and suggestions relating to this general area and its allocated standards, as specified in the KAA Accreditation manual. Consideration should be given to the adequacy of processes and results achieved in each of the standards.)

Standard 1.1. The study program mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution.

The study program mission is in compliance with the UP mission as resulted from [SER, p. 129] that states that: *‘One of the objectives of the study program for bachelor of mathematics corresponds to the FMNS mission, in the preparation of personnel for teaching in the lower*



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and higher secondary schools. The second goal of this program is the preparation of new highly qualified staff who will be willing to deal with further mathematics and other science studies that require deep mathematical knowledge.'

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**.

The SER did not include relevant data to analysis the compliance with this standard, but during the site-visit, the conducted interviews proved that the learning outcomes were designed by the professors in charge of the disciplines without any external help. Some of them declared they compared their syllabus proposal with the syllabus of similar international programs. However, there is much space for improvement and we believe that there is need for a coherent policy within the university to encourage teachers to improve their competencies in terms of course design and exam design.

Recommendation: the university can consider the opportunity of using the established Center for Excellence for providing training opportunities for their teachers. These trainings could on the one hand provide training in new teaching methods and international trends relevant for the teaching activity, and on the other hand could provide training in areas indicated by the evaluations of teachers as areas that need improvement.

Moreover, the centre could try to support teachers in using new technologies in their teaching and research activities. For e.g. the Centre could offer training in using Moodle/e-learning platforms that teachers could use in order to communicate with their students and sharing materials with them. Using such a tool could help their teaching activity and save them precious time that could be invested into further explanations or examples related to the most difficult elements of the course – those that usually cause problems to the students (who find it difficult to meet the required standards), thus benefiting the program in several ways (making courses more attractive to students, helping them with learning and passing the exams, promotion rates, general satisfaction with the program etc.).

Standard 1.3. The study program has a **well-defined overarching didactic and research concept**.

As resulted from the SER [p.12] and the annexed syllabuses, the study program has been built with a first and foremost educational (didactic) purpose: to offer a qualitative alternative to the Math BSc and MSc offered by the University of Pristina to all potential candidates to a



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teaching career in the field of Mathematics in primary and secondary schools. Moreover, the program intends to contribute also to the development of research skills of the students and facilitate the creation of an offering environment for its academic staff to engage in research activities and reach good results.

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.

As resulted both from the SER and the interviews from the site visit, there are policies and regulations for recurring procedural and academic issues such as: student's admission, hiring new academic staff, organizations of the studies, etc. According to the [SER, p.14]: *'All relevant documents that regulate academic processes such as the UP Statute and Faculty Regulations, are published on the website of the University of Prishtina and are easily accessible to all interested.'* The availability to all members of the academic community - both staff and students - could be easily verified upon entering the website of the university (they are available here <https://www.uni-pr.edu/page.aspx?id=1,27>; last accessed by the ET on 09.05.2019).

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.

All staff and students met during the interviews knew about the existence of the internal regulations and were able to explain them to the ET, thus proving that they were aware of them. However, the QA responsible persons were not able to prove that they check if all these regulations are followed by everyone, nor what happens if someone breaks the rules. Moreover, the ET could observe there are some internal tensions between the Rectorate and the management of the Faculty who contests some of the decisions taken by the Rectorate and the Board of the University, accusing them they don't take feedback from faculties. *Recommendation: the structures involved in QA processes should work together to develop procedures for constantly verifying if the internal regulations of the university and the program are followed. It is important to consult all stakeholders in the development and constant reviewing of these regulations in order to have them on board regarding their implementation.*



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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.

Policies and regulations are usually revised before an accreditation process, thus every two or three years.

Recommendations: The purpose of quality assurance processes is to ensure a constant preoccupation and a commitment towards permanent improvement of all aspects of the academic life, by the members of the academic committee. Reviewing policies and regulations in order to improve them, based on the feedback from those responsible for following or implementing them, is part of this endeavour towards a culture of quality. Therefore, we recommend the university and the faculty to consider taking up the responsibility for periodically reviewing the policies and regulations - for e.g. every four years.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. The faculty should develop their own policies and regulations based on the Statute of the University and the policies and regulations of the university (by including details specific to the Mathematics BSc program for e.g.);*
- 2. the faculty should use the opportunity of having a new Committee of Ethics, whose head is from the FMNS, in order to develop a code of ethics and the necessary procedures for putting it into practice;*
- 3. FMNS should create the structure (commission/committee) for quality assurance at the level of unit as mentioned by the regulations within the university: Committee for quality assurance and evaluation at the level of academic unit (faculty) as this has not been established. This structure should use the procedures and guidelines for QA from the level of university and adapt them for the level of the faculty. And thus, along with the Dean, should try to insufflate all members the responsibility of quality assurance of their day-to-day activity as every-each one of them is responsible.*
- 4. FMNS should take the decision of revising all its policies and regulations every three or four years. These reviews should take into consideration feedback gathered from those following these rules in the period between revisions.*



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2.2. Quality management

(Insert all comments or observations, commendations and suggestions relating to this general area and its allocated standards, as specified in the KAA Accreditation manual. Consideration should be given to the adequacy of processes and results achieved in each of the standards.)

Standard 2.1. **All staff participates in self-evaluations** and cooperates with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity.

According to the SER, the Senate, Rector, the Central Committee for Quality Assurance and evaluation at the level of the University, the Office for Academic Development at the level of University, the Dean and the Committee of the Quality Assurance and evaluation at the level of the academic unit (faculty) are involved in the internal quality assurance processes. These structures include both teachers and students. However, they don't include at least one representative of the administrative body, nor representatives of the alumni (graduates) or the employers.

Recommendation: *The ET strongly recommends that the university eliminates the criteria for students' involvement in the quality assurance processes. As this is the process through which the students participate in decision making it should not restrict this right for them, in favour of encourage them to vote and choose for representatives that are willing to get involved in QA processes and have the time and resources for this, rather than force them to choose students with academic performances that don't meet the first criteria.*

Standard 2.2. **Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes.**

The evaluation forms are integrated and managed via the Students Electronic Management System (SEMS) which proves that it is part of the normal planning processes [SER, p.20].

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.

The questionnaires used as part of the internal quality assurance processes refer to all aspects of the program planning and delivery, from quality of teaching, the course curricula and implementation, up to the quality and adequacy of the infrastructure and services [SER, p. 20].



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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.**

According to the SER [p. 20-21] the internal quality evaluation overview all different components of the program and the overall program (including the research activity of the academics in the specific field). However, SER does not mention the way these evaluation analyse whether the pre-set learning outcomes are met or not.

Standard 2.5. Quality assurance processes ensure both that **required standards are met** and that there is **continuing improvement in performance.**

According to the SER [p. 21] internal QA processes are meant to contribute to the improvement of the study programmes, thus if any problem is identified it is addressed by the respective management authority. However, the site visit discussion did not provide any relevant information that such problems were identified and transferred for solution to respective management authority.

Standard 2.6. **Survey data is being collected from students, graduates and employers;** the results of these evaluations are **made publicly available.**

Survey data is being collected from students, but its results are not publicly available. Since the surveys refer mainly to the teaching activities, the results are provided only to the teachers (each one receives an individual report on their performance), their direct managers and the rector. No information regarding the collection of survey data from graduates or employers.

Standard 2.7. **Results of the internal quality assurance system are taken into account for further development of the study program.**

But there were insufficient information provided in order to assess whether the internal QA system includes besides the evaluation results (regarding the teaching performances), investigations of the student workload and/or academic success and employment of graduates.

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.**



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According to the SER, p. 19: *‘Collects and reports data on each activity as required by the Vice Rector for Academic Development to demonstrate rate of progress from current state to desired one.’* Similar reports are elaborated each time the university or the program undergoes an external evaluation which means that strengths and weaknesses are identified every two or three years.

Standard 2.9. The quality assurance arrangements for the program are themselves regularly evaluated and improved.

According to the SER [p. 17] regularly evaluate and improve the quality assurance arrangements are not part of the responsibilities of the Central Committee.

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. The faculty (the academic unit responsible for the reviewed program) should consider naming a Quality Assurance commission/committee that should be responsible for the internal QA procedures for the study program. This unit could instruct the members of the community about QA procedures, could offer them opportunities to help about instruments of ensuring quality of their activities and inform them about national and international trends in the QA field. With the help of such a unit, the dean could motivate the teachers to reflect upon the potential of improvement for their academic and research activity.*
- 2. Surveys should be directed to graduates and potential employers in order to collect feedback on the relevance of the program and the degree in which the learning outcomes are met. This could be a solid start for any endeavour aiming at improving the program.*
- 3. Feedback forms addressed to students should include questions scrutinizing their perception over the quality of the infrastructure, administrative services and learning materials.*
- 4. The QA unit should summarize all the collected information in reports that are presented to the academic community and published on the website of the program. Such reports could be accompanied by plans to remedy any shortcoming pointed out by the report.*
- 5. Self evaluations should be mandatory for teachers annually and for the entire program every three years.*



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2.3. Academic staff

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, p. 9]: All academic staff in FMNS has adequate academic and scientific qualifications regarding to respective courses.

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.**

The SER included a table with the academic staff employed full-time and part-time. There are at least three PhD staff occupying full-time positions, thus complying with the regulation. KAA assured the ET that this aspect is also verified by their experts. Moreover, during the site-visit, the ET found out that the program initiators intended to open up competitions for further people to join the program as academic staff.

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.

KAA verifies that academic staff does not cover more than two teaching positions within the program.

However, discussions during the site visit pointed out that there is a trend among the teachers to not spend the time required by their contract within the university. We recommend that the university and the academic unit develop the instruments necessary for monitoring the time spent by the academic staff within the university, in order to check whether they fulfil their contractual responsibilities and put into place punishments if they don't meet the requirements of their position. Complementary, the university needs to find solutions for the lack of space within the faculty for the academic staff as having an office will encourage



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them to spend more time in the university and thus identify new opportunities for the university and the program.

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.

According to SER: *'All academic staff in FMNS has adequate academic and scientific qualifications regarding to respective courses'*. There are 20 full-time (regular) staff and 12 part-time (non-regular) staff within the FMNS [SER, page 142] therefore the standards is met.

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.

FMNS proposes this program for 120 students and it has allocated it 180 ECTS. For each 60 ECTS the program fulfils the requirement of having employed at least one full time staff with PhD title, as the program has more than three staff members holding a PhD. However, the program seems understaffed in report with the needs of 120 students, therefore the ET recommends the enrolment of only 60 students^[1] until the resources of the university multiply.

Standard 3.6. Opportunities are provided **for additional professional development of teaching staff**, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties.

[SER, p. 9]: The Center for Excellence in Teaching is operating in the UP, which offers regular training and other resources aiming to increase the teaching quality. However, discussions during the site visit evidenced that the offer of the center is not known by the members of the academic community and there is a trend that only young academics are encouraged to attend the trainings offered by the Center.

The ET feels that the entire program would benefit from a more active Center offering to the academic staff the opportunity to personally and professionally develop and improve their teaching methods. All academic staff members should be encouraged to attend the training opportunities offered by the Center. A theme that could be addressed by the center can be Student - Centered Learning and the difficulties associated to the teaching process that takes into account different needs of students in the same time.



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Standard 3.7.

Both the SER and the site visit confirmed that the responsibilities of all teaching staff, especially full-time, include the **engagement in the academic community, availability for consultations with students and community service.**

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.**

Academic staff evaluation is conducted annually, but the results are not made publicly available. They are communicated directly to the evaluated teacher, its direct superior (e.g. the dean) and the rector. No information about the results or follow-up of the evaluations is communicated to students.

Standard 3.9. Strategies for quality enhancement include **improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials.**

Strategies for internal quality assurance include improving the teaching strategies (as previously shown), but not of learning materials. The ET recommends the university and the academic units to develop the mechanisms to constantly improve these also, along with the administrative services and the other resources needed for the educational and research activities.

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.**

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Efforts could be made by the university and the academic unit responsible of this program to motivate teachers to spend more time in the university while working on common projects for the university and identifying development opportunities for themselves and the study program under review.*

In order to reach this desiderate, the university has to develop a mechanism of verifying that the academic teachers don't take up more than two positions (one full-



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*time and one part-time position) within the university and abroad as this **can negatively impact the quality of the study program.***

2. *The ET feels that the entire program would benefit from a more active Center offering to the academic staff the opportunity to personally and professionally develop and improve their teaching methods. All academic staff members should be encouraged to attend the training opportunities offered by the Center. A theme that could be addressed by the center can be Student - Centered Learning and the difficulties associated to the teaching process that takes into account different needs of students in the same time.*
3. *We strongly recommend the publication of an annual report of the periodic evaluations of the academic staff. Seeing that the university is preoccupied about the improvement of the teaching methods and teaching materials will motivate students to continue filling in the feedback forms.*
4. *We recommend that FMNS develops a quality assurance unit that develops the internal procedures for monitoring the quality of all the activities linked to the educational, research and administrative processes. This unit could motivate all members of the community to participate in self-evaluations and annual evaluations, etc.*



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2.4. Educational process content

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 study program is modelled on **qualification objectives** as it is designed to prepare future teachers for the primary and secondary schools.

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.

The study program complies with the National Qualifications Framework and therefore with the EQF. However, it is not very clear that the individual components of the program are combined in a way that best serves the purpose of reaching the specified qualifications objectives. For example: many of the students fail the course and drop out of the program, which might indicate that they find it difficult to follow the logic of the components and progress step-by-step.

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.**

The learning outcomes of the study program are detailed in the SER at page 210: *'By the end of the study program, students will be able to:*

- *Solve more complex problems from the algebra, analysis, geometry and topology;*
- *Use logical arguments to prove mathematical statements;*
- *Explain, interpret mathematical ideas with clarity and coherence, both written and verbally;*
- *Analyze strategies (techniques, methods) to solve a problem from everyday life;*
- *Use the knowledge gained from this program to model and solve problems from various fields;*



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- *Apply the general principles of scientific research methodology;*
- *Perform research in conjunction with others as well as individually.*

Standard 4.4. **The disciplines** within the curriculum **have analytical syllabuses** which comprise at least the following:

1. **the discipline's objectives,**
2. **the basic thematic content, learning outcomes,**
3. **the distribution of classes, seminars and applicative activities,**
4. **students' assessment system,**
5. **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 provided the ET with the syllabuses of the program and they all fulfil the minimal requirements.

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.

Not the case: as the language of instruction is Albanian.

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, p.10]: At the beginning of each course, professors are obliged to present their syllabus, which includes all the activities planned for the respective course. **However, nor the SER, neither the site visit offered sufficient information for determining if learning outcomes are also explained with this occasion.**

The ET recommends the academic staff to share the learning outcomes with the students and follow together with them the students' progress towards meeting these expected outcomes.



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Academic staff could inform students about their progress towards meeting the learning outcomes as part of the on-the-go feedback they provide to the students. Moreover, together with the student, the academic staff can identify the best strategies for them to cover the eventual gaps and reach the learning outcomes successfully. All these might improve the success rates of the program.

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.

Student assessment takes place through intermediate and final evaluations and are defined by the UP Statute. The academic unit does not have specific mechanisms to verify whether the student assessment is conducted fairly and objectively, though the academic staff is pretty convinced this is the case - due to the specifics of the evaluations in the field of Math.

The ET recommends the academic unit to take into consideration the added value that the student centered learning principles can bring to the program. As part of the endeavour to implement them, efforts should also be directed towards adapting the assessment methods to the learning outcomes and the different learning strategies of the students. Among the benefits of doing so, successful rates might also improve.

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**.

The academic staff declared during the site visit that they are in touch with different similar programs from other institutions (in other countries) and that this helps them checking whether their standards are internationally agreed upon.

However, the ET feels that the QA unit could do more to support the academic staff in developing student assessments that can verify the achievement of students and their progress in report to the pre-set learning outcomes. Moreover, the center for teaching could help the academic staff to correlate and verify that the standards they use are comparable between the courses of the program and with similar programs from other institutions.



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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.**

Neither the SER, nor the site visit did offer sufficient information in order to verify if such policies or procedures exist.

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.

Practical stages are not mandatory but as SER mentions [SER, p. 130] “the Bachelor of Mathematics Study Program is mainly oriented to the education of future teachers at the professional aspect. For math majors, internships and other forms of practical experience are available in other areas, such as: industry, economy, banks, insurance companies, etc.

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.**

The Center for Career Development of the University helps students with relevant advice in finding opportunities for undergoing such stages. [SER, p.14]

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *The ET recommends the dean to work with the QA structures in order to conduct evaluations of the content of the program and all the other components of the program besides the teaching methods. This could be part of the periodical review of the program and could hint to potential illogical sequences of the disciplines or lessons, that make it difficult for the students to progress.*

These evaluations should also look into the teaching methods, assessment methods, learning materials, infrastructure, administrative services, practical work, etc. Collecting data from multiple sources about these components of the program can



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offer a complete 360 degrees perspective over its quality and should be the starting point of any improvement initiative. For these surveys should be distributed both to students and academic staff, and the QA unit can develop complementary instruments of verifying the quality of these components - for e.g. in order to ensure that student assessment is objective, the QA unit can require academic staff to develop and use grading sheets for each exam and periodically ask them to present them.

2. *The ET recommends the academic staff to develop the learning outcomes of their courses with the consultation of other academics involved in teaching the same subjects in other (e.g. foreign) institutions. It is also recommended that the teachers discuss the learning outcomes with the students and follow their progress towards reaching them as part of the on-the-go feedback they offer. The university, through the center for teaching can support teachers in doing this as part of the university efforts to develop a student centered learning.*
3. *The academic unit should put to value both the QA structures and the center for learning to support the academic staff in developing high-quality courses and program. This includes supporting them in designing objective student assessments that are adequate for observing the students' progress towards meeting the pre-set learning outcomes. **The university should develop procedures and policies on how to deal with situations in which standards in students achievements are not consistently assessed or are inadequate.***
4. *The ET recommends the academic unit to define the learning outcomes for the practical stages included in the program as a first step of ensuring their quality. Complementary, both the HEI and the institution hosting the student in practice should name responsible person for monitoring the quality of the practical stages and the students' progress in terms of meeting the learning outcomes of this component of their training.*

Moreover, the ET stands by the recommendations received by the program during the previous evaluations, considering that it is important for the program to implement them (and observing that they were not all put into practice):

- *organize meetings between the academic staff members to discuss teaching strategies, exchange good-practice examples in terms of teaching methods, and correlate the requires of all the courses so that they help the students reach the intended learning outcomes.*
- *A rough estimate of the expenditure per student per year should be available for planning purposes.*



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- *offer teachers training opportunities linked to the importance of learning outcomes and course design considering them;*
- *The department, with the support of the university and MEST, must prepare a feasible staff development plan related to the admission quota for students.*
- *The department should develop a long-term strategic plan to focus research areas, funded projects acquisition, and international cooperation.*

2.5. Students

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.

The admission procedure includes examination in relevant subjects and the eligibility criteria for students' enrolment are set out in the UP statute and are respected by the faculty for all its programs.

Standard 5.2. **All students** enrolled in the study program possess a **high school graduation diploma or other equivalent document** of study, according to MEST requirements.

According to the SER, all enrolled students have completed high school and passed the Matura exam.

Standard 5.3. The **study groups are dimensioned** so as to ensure **an effective and interactive teaching and learning process**.

The study program proposed to enrol 120 students per year, however both the human resources and the infrastructure seem more adequate for a smaller group of students. Given the limited opportunity of improving the infrastructure available to the program on the short and medium term, the ET recommends the program responsible to limit the admissions to a maximum of 60 students. This will give them the possibility to hold lectures with 60 students and practical seminars with two groups of 30 students, thus ensuring the quality of the teaching - learning process.

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 site visit highlighted the efforts of teachers to offer feedback to students on their performance periodically as intermediate evaluations are organized at mid-term. However,



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the ET recommends the academic staff to accompany this feedback with a discussion with each student on mechanisms for overcoming the gaps.

The academic unit should also consider developing a mentoring program that would either connect students in difficulty with older students or with academic staff in order to work together to improve their progress towards meeting the learning outcomes.

Standard 5.5. **The results** obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are **certified by the academic record.**

AND

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.

Academic records are kept both on paper and online by the teaching assistants.

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.

Students coming from difficult socio-economic backgrounds or from remote places benefit from rooms in the university dormitory and students' canteen. [SER, p. 9] However no other flexible treatment for students in special situations was mentioned in the SER or during the site-visit discussions.

Standard 5.8. Effective procedures are being used to **ensure that work submitted by students is original.**

Each academic staff is responsible for verifying that the work submitted by the students is original, but there are no specific procedures referring to this.

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.**

No relevant information regarding the rights of students were collected from the SER or the site visit, with the exception of the right to academic appeals which several members of the community mentioned as being a right of the students which is often used.

Standard 5.10. The **students' transfer** between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs is **regulated in formal internal documents.**



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Not applicable.

The SER and the discussions during the site visit did not provide with sufficient information regarding the possibility of transfer. From the understanding of the ET this might be explained by the very small number of potential transfers given that this is the only Mathematical program in the country.

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.

Academic staff is required through their work contract to provide consultations for students and they publicly announce their consultations schedules. However, only a small share of the students use the opportunity of consultations to address their difficulties in studying.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations - given the aspects presented above, the ET recommends:

1. *To enrol only 60 students in the first year;*
2. *to acquire a special software to verify the originality of students work and develop policies to prevent and reduce the plagiarism phenomenon that could include: periodical discussions on this topic, constantly discouraging students to plagiarise, courses/workshops to help them develop the skills of academic writing and proper citation of a scientific /academic paper.*
3. *QA policies and procedures to address also the quality of the consultations and the possibility of offering complementary support for students to cover their learning / educational gaps. It seems there is dire need for such support systems to be put in place in order to improve the success rates of the program.*
4. *to ask the students why they don't go to consultations and what would make them more attractive and to act towards creating the conditions for more students to use this service, e.g. to prepare a space for consultations, separate from the offices of the academic staff;*
5. *to create a mentoring system and any other instruments to help students progress towards meeting the learning outcomes and thus improve the successful rates of the program;*



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2.6. Research

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.

AND

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**

Neither the SER, nor the site visit evidenced any research development plan of the institution, though all academic staff are also involved in research activities as part of their contractual responsibilities. The study program has as an objective to prepare and encourage students to continue their studies towards a PhD program and the initiators of the program intend to develop such a program in the future. Part of this endeavour is the efforts mentioned in SER, at page 142: *‘Cooperation with external partners in the establishment of new cadres in the field of scientific research is an objective which we believe that we will find the necessary support from UP and MEST.’*

Research is part of the promotion criteria, but the ET feels that the associated standards are rather lower than the international standards and the university could aim to slowly, gradually raise them. This is in line with the recommendations previously received by the program from the external evaluators: *‘The qualification standards for assistant, associate, and full professors should be gradually adjusted to international standards’*.

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.

The SER mentions, in page 199, as a strength of the program: *‘Number of scientific papers in credible journals in relation to the staff of other faculties within the UP’*, thus highlighting that the academic unit check the credibility and quality of the journals in which the academic staff publish. However, there is no clear policy mentioned in this regard and it might be useful.

Standards 6.4, 6.5 AND Standard 6.6

The academic staff has a proven **track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity, as shown by the list of published articles in specialty magazines**



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(journals) included in the SER (pages 192 - 199). This stands as a validation of the quality of their research.

Standard 6.7 and 6.8: **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**, as proved by the list of research outcomes included in the SER (pages 192 - 199). **And they have published under the name of the University of Pristina.**

Standard 6.8. 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.

Discussions during the site visit included mentions of the fact that academic staff is referencing the latest research results during their teaching, when it is relevant for the lesson, but there is no specific encouragement from the university to do so.

Standard 6.9. **Policies are established for ownership of intellectual property** and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.

No such policy was mentioned during the site visit discussions or the SER.

Standard 6.10. Very few **students are engaged in research projects** and this is more an individual decision, rather than a policy of the university to encourage students to be part of research activities. There were no specific references in SER or during the site visit discussion regarding the engagement of students in other activities.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

The ET recommends to the program initiators/responsible persons to:

- 1. set some research objectives for the program and plan resources (human, material and financial) to meet these objectives. This could support the mid-term objective of creating a PhD program.*
- 2. raise the standards regarding the research activity of the academic staff and include them in the promotion criteria.*



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3. *encourage the academic staff to reference the latest research results in their teaching (during classes), thus inspiring students to consider getting involved in research projects and to involve their students in research activities;*
4. *consider involving students in other activities of the university as this might motivate them to get more involved in their own learning process which might, indirectly, contribute to the improvement of successful rates;*
5. *encourage students to use the online platforms that give them access to recent scientific articles when preparing their paper works for different disciplines.*

2.7. Infrastructure and resources

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.

Both the SER and the site visit indicated a general overall scarcity of resources within the university, in general, and this program, in particular. Some of them seemed to be linked to a not so good relationship between different decisions levels within the university as some tensions could be perceived between the rectorate and the deans' office. Others were linked to the fact that academic staff tend to take up more jobs and thus spend insufficient time in the university. Last but not least, the insufficient offices for academics might offer the latter the excuse for requesting to work from outside of the institutions. As neither of these aspects can be solved overnight, the ET recommends the program initiators and the university management to cooperate in order to identify the best solutions for ensuring the quality of the program. They should be gathered in a short, medium and long term plan.

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**.

No relevant data was offered regarding the financial sustainability of the program during the site visit discussions or the SER. However, there is great request from potential students for this program and it has an undiscussable advantage given by the fact that it is the only one in the country.



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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.

[SER, p.15]: ‘*FMNS currently has no its own building, ‘ however, the university allocated some spaces for the program which include large course rooms, rooms for seminars and IT labs, none of which is rented. The computers available to students (in the IT room or within the library) have a special software installed used during some the practical seminars.*

[SER, p.10]: ‘*FMNS, possesses a very modest library in which students can read during the day, but within the UP there is a university library equipped with modern literature and access to digital platforms’.* However, discussions during the site visit highlighted the fact that students are not using these platforms regularly.

Standard 7.4. **The number of seats** in the lecture rooms, seminar rooms and laboratories must be **related to the study groups’ size** (series, groups, subgroups); the applicative activities for the speciality disciplines included in the curricula are carried out in laboratories equipped with IT equipment.

The number of seats in the lecture and seminar rooms is adequate for a student population of 60 students/year and working groups of 30 students for seminars, which the ET considers the ideal group size given the available resources of the program.

Standard 7.5. The education institution’s libraries must ensure, for each of the study programs:



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- 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 program does not have its own library, but shares one with other programs in the same academic unit. Even so, this library is small and doesn't cover 10% of the total number of students of all the study programs that should use it, and not by far manages to ensure from the book stock learning materials for at least 50% of all these programs.

However, the library has several subscriptions to online platforms granting both students and academic staff access to Albanian and foreign journals with the most up-to-date research outcomes.

Standard 7.6. **The infrastructure and facilities** dedicated to the implementation of the program is **adapted to students with special needs**.

The same applies as with the Dept. of Biology, because both Departments are hosted in the same building, so according to those stated in [SER, p.15]: *'The building facility in which the Department of Biology operates does not meet the criteria for people with disabilities.'*

Compliance level: Partially compliant



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ET recommendations:

ET recommends the program initiators and the university management to:

1. cooperate in order to identify the best solutions for ensuring the quality of the program. They should be gathered in a short, medium and long term plans.
2. encourage students to frequently use the online platforms that grant them access to international journals and recent scientific papers, which can help everyone overcome the shortage of books and learning materials from the stock of the library. For example, students could be granted remote access to these platforms so that they can use them from home, from their own computers.
3. create and use online platforms like Moodle for sharing learning materials with students.
4. consider, in the long term plans, to invest in accessibilizing the spaces for students with different disabilities.

3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program **MATHEMATICS – BACHELOR (Bsc)** offered by **University of Pristina** is **Substantially 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 *60* students to be enrolled in the program.

The ET made several recommendations throughout this report and takes this final opportunity to emphasize the importance of different units of the university working together towards the goal of improving this program. In order to reach this desired outcome, the program initiators and responsible persons could start from the list of recommendations received from external evaluators in time - including those from previous evaluations that were not yet fully implemented. We reassure the educational services provider and the QA agency (KAA) that the current recommendations made by the ET are in line with and complement the previous recommendations.



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4. APPENDICES (if available): -.

Expert Team

Chair

	Vassilios Tsiantos	27.5.2019
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)

Member

	Delia Collogan	27.5.2019
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)
