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Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju
Kosovo Accreditation Agency

University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina”
Programs under evaluation:
Mathematics – Accreditation of MSc

ACCREDITATION Evaluation

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

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.
- The department of Mathematics offers a program in Mathematics at Bachelor level and the program under review, at Master level - both in full-time form;
- Most of its students come from Pristina or immediate surrounding areas, therefore only some of them - those coming from the most remote places from Pristina can stay in dormitory;
- According to the national provisions the students coming from vulnerable social categories can benefit from an assistance program, while those who perform better receive scholarships from the UP budget;

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

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

` required.



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The study program mission is in compliance with the UP mission as resulted from [SER, p. 211] that states that: *‘The main objective of the **Master of Mathematics Study Program** corresponds to the mission of the FMNS in the preparation of new staff with high qualifications that will be willing to deal with further math and other science studies in which advanced mathematical knowledge is required.’*

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 analyse 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**.



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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 teaching career in the field of Mathematics in primary and secondary schools. Moreover, the program intends also to contribute 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. This desiderate is shown also through the title chosen for the program which includes the `MSc` symbol standing for Master of Science.

The ET recommends the program imitators to develop supplementary the research component of the program in order to support the development of research-specific competencies and abilities during the program, involve students in research projects and motivate them to undergo research on their own or continue their studies with a PhD program in the field.

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.



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Moreover, the ET could observe there are some internal tensions in 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.

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 in 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 and MSc programs, for example);*
- 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*



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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.*
- 5. the program responsible persons should use the Center for Excellence to provide training opportunities for their teachers regarding new teaching methods or international trends in the teaching-learning process;*
- 6. the program responsables should use the center for excellence to provide support for teachers in using new technologies or software to improve the quality of the teaching and learning process – for e.g. to use Moodle-like platforms in order to share learning materials to the students;*
- 7. the program responsible persons should develop the research component of the program in order to help students develop research-specific skills and motivate them to undergo research and/or continue their studies with a PhD program.*
- 8. the structures from different levels of decision within the university should work together in order to develop procedures for periodically verifying if the internal regulations of the university and the program are followed.*

2.2. Quality management

Standard 2.1. **All staff participate in self-evaluations** and cooperate 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.



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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. 218].

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. 218].

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. 218-219] 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. The mentioned evaluation doesn't include questions regarding the quality of the outputs of the program - for e.g. it could evaluate the quality of the final thesis;

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. 218-219] 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.



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However, during the site visit the members of the QA units avoided to say whether the issues pointed out by students in the feedback forms were solved, so they only referred to the requests of students for more spaces or renovations - which they requested repeatedly to the university management, but without success (no funds were yet allocated from the university budget for them).

Thus, it is difficult to assess whether the QA processes are meant to continually bring improvements to the performance of the program.

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 collected from students, but not from graduates and employers. The collected data is not made public.

Standard 2.7. Results of the internal quality assurance system are taken into account for further development of the study program. This includes evaluation results, investigation of the student workload, academic success and employment of graduates.

Neither the SER, nor the site visit provided relevant information to assess this issue. There is some will among the academic staff to further develop the program and the commitment of the university management for QA was constantly reaffirmed, but there were no quality assurance procedures addressing the constant development of the program presented and known to everybody.

Standard 2.8. The institution ensures that reports on the overall quality of the program are prepared periodically (eg. every three years) for consideration within the institution indicating its **strengths and weaknesses**.

According to 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.'* It is not clear whether these reports indicate the strengths and weaknesses of the programme, nor their frequency.

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. However, the site



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visit indicated that these revisions more frequently happen before an external evaluation from the KAA.

Compliance level:/Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

The ET recommends:

- 1. To eliminate the criteria for students' involvement in decision-making processes;*
- 2. To introduce representatives of the administrative body, graduates and employers in the QA structures as well as in consultative bodies;*
- 3. The university management to discuss with all deans an investment plan that will solve the current infrastructure shortage and difficulties (e.g. some spaces are not safe or improper for long-term activities, putting the health of those participating in the educational process at risk). Priorities should be allocated to those programs with the worst spaces.*
- 4. To make the decision - making process regarding on how the budget is spent within the university more transparent so that all faculties know what they can do to receive more funding;*
- 5. To make the reports regarding the data collected from the students public, along with a plan including measures to overcome the problems of the program;*
- 6. To collect data about the program from graduates and employers as they manifested their interest to contribute to the improvement of the program and they can bring a new perspective to the decision makers regarding the quality and the relevance of different program components;*
- 7. To publish annual reports on the collected data/the program;*
- 8. To review the QA procedures and policies in order to make sure that they address all aspects of the program and that they are designed in such a way that they verify if the required standards are met and that there is a constant preoccupation of the academic staff for the development of the study program. They should contribute to the consolidation of a quality culture within the department and the university within which every member of the community is constantly trying to improve the quality of their work.*



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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 comply with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative instruction on Accreditation.

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 as **KAA verifies this and ensured the ET about this**. However, the ET feels that verifying this aspect would be in the very interest of the university as it is a factor that can impact significantly the quality of the study program, therefore the ET recommends that the university verifies this in the future. Moreover, the university and the academic unit should put into place instruments to verify the number of hours spent within the university by the academic staff in order to check if they respect their contractual requirements. Those not fulfilling the standard of minimum 40 hours within the university should be penalised.

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.

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.

<p>The program has a number of 120 ECTS allocated and is proposed for a group of 30 students. The program has more than one full time staff with a PhD title thus meeting this standard.</p>
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Standard 3.6. Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties.



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[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, the site visit pin-pointed that many of the academic staff members did not hear in due time about the training offer of the center and thus did not attend these trainings. We recommend to the Center to improve their ways of communicating their offer to the potential beneficiaries and to multiply the developing opportunities they create. These later ones could refer to new teaching methods, new trends in teaching and learning, student centered learning processes, etc.

Standard 3.7. The responsibilities of all teaching staff, especially full-time, include the engagement in the academic community, availability for consultations with students and community service. However, the site visit highlighted the difficulties of the teaching staff to meet these requirements due to the lack of proper spaces. For example: very few students attend the consultation hours and one potential explanation for this can be linked with the fact that consultations have to take place in academic offices that are shared by two or three teaching staff members which makes it more uncomfortable for the students to address questions and receive explanations for the parts they didn't understand during classes.

Standard 3.8. Academic staff evaluation is conducted regularly at least through self evaluation and evaluations from students. Neither the SER, nor the site visit offered sufficient information about the peer-to-peer evaluation or the superiors' evaluations of academic staff. The conducted evaluations occur on a formal basis at least once each year. But the results of the evaluation are not made publicly available. They are only communicated to the individual academic staff and to its direct superior and the rector.

The ET reaffirms its recommendation mentioned during the site-visit that the university should publish annually reports on the quality of each program that should refer to the collected data from students, teachers, graduates, employers, etc., on all components of the program - e.g., teaching methods, learning materials, infrastructure, administrative services etc. Along with this report, the decision making bodies should publish a plan of measures they intend to implement in order to improve the eventual identified problems or shortcomings of the program.

Standard 3.9. As data collected from the students refer mostly to the teaching - learning process, one can affirm that the university strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies, but less the quality of learning materials.



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Standard 3.10. Teachers retired lose the status of full-time teachers and are considered part-time teachers, according to the institutions internal regulations.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

The ET recommends:

- 1. The faculty to put into place a mechanism to check the number of hours spent by the academic staff within the university and penalize those who don't respect their contractual responsibilities;*
- 2. the Center to improve their ways of communicating their offer to the potential beneficiaries and to multiply the developing opportunities they create;*
- 3. the dean to find a space within the faculty and (re)design it as a consultation space that could be used by turn by the academic staff members so that they avoid offering consultations in their shared offices;*
- 4. the academic unit to implement a mentoring program to help students progress towards meeting their learning outcomes;*

2.4. Educational process content

Standard 4.1. The study program is modelled on qualification objectives as it is designed to serve those who intend to teach in primary and secondary schools. However, the ET is concerned that in the year in which the program had a gap (was not provided) the changes in the national legislation put to question the way it is modelled. This is because, as the ET understands it: one can teach in primary and secondary education only after finishing both a bachelor and a master degree, but one of them has to be in the field of education. This raised the issue of who is this program, as it is now proposed, addressed to. This issue was not clarified during the site visit and was not addressed in the SER. In this regard, the ET recommends to the program initiators to implement processes meant to constantly improve the program so that it can stay one-step-ahead of these potential issues with candidates.

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 contribute to the achievement of the specified qualification objectives. However, the ET has doubts regarding the link between the way the program is designed and its capacity to provide for adequate forms of teaching and

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learning. These doubts are generated by the low rates of successful graduation of the program in two years - the normal duration of the program.

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 pages 13-14: *‘Upon completion of this program, the student will:*

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

The ET express their concerns about the logic flow of the disciplines in the curricula, especially as seeing how few students manage to finish successfully all their exam pin-points towards a potential difficulty they meet in registering positive progress.

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.



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The SER presented in the annexes the syllabuses of the disciplines within the curriculum and they all met - at least formally - the standards.

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 applicable since all disciplines are offered in 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, it is not clear if learning outcomes are also explained with this occasion.

Standard 4.7. The site visit indicated that there are no instruments put in place to verify if the teaching strategies used by the academic staff are fit for the different types of learning outcomes that the program intends to develop. They don't even verify whether the strategies of teaching and assessment set out in the program and course specifications are followed with flexibility by the academic staff in order to meet the needs of different groups of students. These are essential components of the students-centered learning processes that are trending world-wide, therefore the ET recommends the university to provide training opportunities for the academic staff to learn about the SCL concepts and principles and develop specific skills to help them implement these in day-to-day teaching activity. The training opportunities offered by the center of Excellence could include opportunities to develop the teaching skills needed for personalising the teaching strategies for the different learning methods of different students - that obviously have personal specific needs.

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. However, the university does not have specific mechanisms to verify if the student assessment is fair and objective, nor if it is adequate to the learning objectives.



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Standard 4.9. Appropriate, valid and reliable mechanisms are used for verifying standards of student achievement. The standard of work required for different grades is consistent over time, comparable in courses offered within a program, and in comparison with other study programs at highly regarded institutions.

The site visit indicated that academic staff is confident that this standard is met, the internal QA policies and procedures do not verify these aspect, thus making it impossible to evaluate at this point. The ET recommends the QA units and structures within the university and faculty to develop instruments in order to check if the academic staff use any mechanisms for verifying the standards for student achievement.

Standard 4.10. Policies and procedures do not include, at this point, actions to be taken in to dealing with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or inconsistently assessed.

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. SER in p. 211-212 mentions “The Master of Mathematics Study Program is mainly oriented to the academic education of future teachers and scientific researches. For math majors, internships and other forms of practical experience are available in universities (as assistants for mathematical courses), research institutes, industry, economy, banks, insurance companies”. However, learning outcomes are not defined for these stages.

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



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The ET recommends:

- 1. The faculty to put into place a mechanism to check the number of hours spent by the academic staff within the university and penalize those who don't respect their contractual responsibilities;*
- 2. the Center to improve their ways of communicating their offer to the potential beneficiaries and to multiply the developing opportunities they create;*
- 3. the dean to find a space within the faculty and (re)design it as a consultation space that could be used by turn by the academic staff members so that they avoid offering consultations in their shared offices;*
- 4. the academic unit to implement a mentoring program to help students progress towards meeting their learning outcomes;*
- 5. the program initiators to implement processes meant to constantly improve the program so that it can stay one-step-ahead of these potential issues with candidates;*
- 6. a better self-analysis of the way the program is designed and whether it provides adequate forms of teaching and learning, especially considering the small rates of successful graduation in normal time.*
- 7. The logical flow of the disciplines within the curricula should be periodically evaluated based on the feedback of both students and graduates and maybe by comparing it with similar programs offered abroad, as to ensure its success.*
- 8. The development of a functional highly-operative partnership between the academic staff and the students who should be involved in all decision-making processes and empowered to participate in the improvement of the quality of the program, including the syllabus of the courses and defining of the learning outcomes.*
- 9. the QA units and structures within the university and faculty to develop instruments in order to check if the academic staff use any mechanisms for verifying the standards for student achievement. Student achievement have to be consistent over time, comparable between courses etc.*

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.*



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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 (30 students/year) so as to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process.

Standard 5.4. Feedback to students is offered during the semester due to the intermediate exams organised. However, the ET feels this is not enough to offer students feedback on their performance in a way that can help them progress towards meeting the learning outcomes. The ET recommends that the results of assessments are given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed.

Standard 5.5. The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record which is filled in 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] No other flexible treatment is mentioned in SER.

Standard 5.7. Records of student completion rates are kept for all courses and for the program as a whole, but they are not included among quality indicators. The ET feels that the decision-makers could definitely benefit from these statistics in the endeavour to improve the quality of the program.

Standard 5.8. Teachers are responsible for ensuring that work submitted by students is original, but no procedures for this were identified. The ET recommends that the university



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and the faculty develop such procedures while also acquiring a specialised software to help in this endeavour.

Standard 5.9. Students' rights and obligations are made publicly available, promoted to all those concerned and enforced equitably; these include the right to academic appeals about which all the students present at the site visit meetings were able to refer to. Many of them declared they use this right frequently.

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

No relevant information about this was found in the SER, since probably there are few or no such transfers given the fact that this is the only Mathematics program in the country.

Standard 5.11. Academic staff is available for consultation and advice to students. However, the ET feels that the consultation hours are not sufficient to understanding and ability to apply learning since students successful completion rates are so low and suggest the development of supplementary support mechanisms.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *That students in special situations should be granted a flexible treatment in terms to deadlines and formal requirements of the program and this right should be among those regulated in the internal provisions;*
2. *That records of student completion rates should be kept also for the whole program and they should be included among the quality indicators of the university and the program;*
3. *That the faculty develops the procedure for verifying whether the students' papers are original. For example: special classes could be designed for teaching students about plagiarism and how to avoid it by citing correctly the sources used;*
4. *The university buys the software for verifying the originality of the students work papers;*
5. *The faculty should ensure that the daily schedule of a student or teaching staff doesn't include more than 8 hours of contact-hours in order to ensure the quality of the educational process;*



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2.6. Research

Standard 6.1. The study program has defined scientific research objectives since it is designed like a ‘Master of science’, but no information about any research development plan of the institution were found. The ET recommends the alignment of the programs objectives with the development plan of the institution and that sufficient financial, logistic and human resources are allocated for achieving the proposed research objectives in the future.

Standard 6.2. Expectations for teaching staff involvement in research and scholarly activities are clearly specified and known by everyone. However, it is not clear if performance in relation to these expectations is considered in staff evaluation and promotion criteria.

Standard 6.3. Nor the SER, neither the site visit indicated that the program or the institution had any policies are established for defining what is recognized as research. The ET recommends the faculty to develop such regulations defining what is recognised as research. These regulations should be consistent with international standards and established norms in the field of study of the program.

Standard 6.4 + 6.5 + 6.6+ 6.7. The lists of research outcomes annexed to the SER (list of academic/research works published in specialty magazines/journals) prove that the academic staff has a proven **track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity**. Their research is validated through: scientific and applied research publications. Each academic staff member and researcher has produced at least an average of one scientific/applied research publication, under the name of the University of Pristina, per year for the past three years.

Standard 6.8. Academic staff are not encouraged to include in their teaching information about their research and scholarly activities that are relevant to courses they teach, but they sometimes do it (on an individual basis). The ET recommends them to include in their teaching references to significant research developments in the field.

Standard 6.9. No policies are established for ownership of intellectual property. The ET recommends that such policies should be established in the near future, along with clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students, if there is the case.



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Standard 6.10. Students are rarely engaged in research projects though this could definitely improve their research skills - which is supposed to be one of the programs' objective.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. the alignment of the program objectives with the development plan of the institution and that sufficient financial, logistic and human resources are allocated for achieving the proposed research objectives in the future.*
- 2. That the performance in research is taken into consideration for staff evaluation and promotion as one of the criteria used in these processes.*
- 3. the faculty to develop such regulations defining what is recognised as research. These regulations should be consistent with international standards and established norms in the field of study of the program.*
- 4. to include in their teaching references to significant research developments in the field.*
- 5. that such policies for determining the ownership of intellectual property should be established in the near future, along with clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students, if there is the case.*

2.7. Infrastructure and resources

Standard 7.1 - 7.5. The adequate long-term implementation of the study program is ensured by the human resources available. However, both the infrastructure and the financial resources allocated to the program seem to be scarce or improper even though the program uses the buildings of the University of Pristina (not some rented spaces) both for classes and laboratories (seminars). However, the ET feels they are enough for the short term to ensure the educational process for the 30 students proposed by the program initiators.

There is no financial plan demonstrating the sustainability of the program for the short and medium term, thus the ET recommends the faculty to work together with the university leadership to develop one.

Some academics mentioned using some specialised software for certain disciplines. It is available on the computers from the IT labs, but the ET recommends the faculty to try to allow students access to this software outside of classes too, for them to continue practicing on them.



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The library that the program shares with other programs is equipped with a reading room, but space is insufficient to cover the needs of all the programs using it. The university management should consider alternative solutions for covering for this insufficiency. For e.g.:

- students could be granted remote access to the digital platforms of the library so that they can read recent research articles/publications in the field and use them for preparing their school work;
- student could be granted access to the rooms of the faculty even outside the contact-hours in order to use them as reading or learning rooms or to work on their school work;
- the university could rent other spaces or facilitate students' access to the spaces of other institutions in town etc.

[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.*

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

According to those stated in [SER, p. 15]: *'The building facility in which the Department of Biology (ET comment: it is the same building with the Mathematics Department) operates does not meet the criteria for people with disabilities.'*

Compliance level: Partially compliant

3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program Mathematics MSc offered by the 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 30 students to be enrolled in the program.



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4. APPENDICES (if available): -

Expert Team

Chair

	Vasilis Tsiantos	28.05.2019
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)

Member

	Delia Gologan	28.05.2019
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)