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***University Haxhi Zeka (UHZ), Peja***  
***Agro-Environment and Agroecology/BSc***

***Reaccreditation***

## **REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM**

*24.04.2019, Peja*



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Context

**Date of site visit: 24.04.2019**

**Expert Team (ET) members:**

- *Prof. Dr. Reiner Doluschitz*
- *Prof. Dr. Joachim Müller*

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

- *Arianit Krasniqi*
- *Shkelzen Gerxhaliu*

**Sources of information for the Report:**

- *Self Evaluation Report of the University Haxhi Zeka*
- *Site visit in Peja on 24.04.2019*

**Criteria used for program evaluation:**

- *KAA Accreditation Manual – July 2018*
- *Standards and performance indicators for reaccreditation of bachelor study programs*

Compliance level CL	Grade
Fully compliant	3
Substantially compliant	2
Partially compliant	1
Non-compliant	0
Not applicable	n.a.

### Abbreviations

EHEA      European Higher Education Area



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ET	Expert team
FA	Faculty of Agribusiness
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
KAA	Kosovo Accreditation Agency
KAA18	KAA Accreditation Manual – July 2018
SER	Self-evaluation report
SWOT	Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
UHZ	University Haxhi Zeka

## 1.2. Site visit schedule

09.00 – 09.30	Meeting with the management of the faculty of UHZ in Peja
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
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



### 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 University Haxhi Zeka is embedded in an agricultural dominated landscape, surrounded by a couple of agribusiness companies like a brewery, dairy and juice and vegetable processing factories. Therefore, by providing knowledge and skills in various aspects of plant production, agro-environment and food processing technology the bachelor study programmes “Technology of Plant Production”, “Agro-Environment and Agroecology“ and “Food Technology” are well corresponding with the mission of UHZ, which is “to prepare leaders for making Kosovo a more competitive country”.

Most Standards focus on institutional issues, and hence apply equally to all three degree programmes to be evaluated. The SER texts for the three study programs are widely the same. Therefore, the reports of the ET differ only in some Standards of Chapter 2.3, 2.4 and 2.6, where specific comments are provided for the three programs individually.

## 2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

### 2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

*Standard 1.1. (CL 3) The study program mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution.*

It is indicated in the SER of UHZ that the Vision and Mission of the University and its study programs is defined within the cohesion envisaged in the Strategic Plan 2017-2022:

Vision: “To be a significant regional factor, which guarantees sustainable development, advanced teaching, innovation, research and practical knowledge”.

Mission: “UHZ is the center of scientific, artistic and professional education that prepares competitive students for the labor market, leaders in the relevant fields that will contribute to the overall development of Society.”

Referring to the statements in the site-visit it can be confirmed and agreed by the ET that UHZ is an important regional factor, particularly since the region provides fertile soils and a high



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density of Agribusiness Companies as well as a significant share of organic agriculture. Numerous co-operations between UHZ and the private sector are established and a quite active stakeholder board is established and contributes to a sustainable development. This holds also true for the co-operation with other Kosovar HEI in the field.

***Standard 1.2. (CL 3) 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.***

Particularly from the discussions with the academic staff and with the graduates and employers of graduates it could be learned during the on-site visit that there is academic and professional advice included in the definition of learning outcomes. Particularly Chapter 3 in the UHZ's Strategic Plan 2017-2022 indicates that development of the University and its study programs are consistent with the National Qualifications Network and the Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA.

***Standard 1.3. (CL 1) The study program has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept.***

The question cannot sufficiently be answered since such a concept is not particularly and detailed mentioned in the SER and also did not become clear in the discussions with the management of the institution, the academic staff and the students. However, elements of such an overarching concept are visible and include the University Center of Quality assurance in teaching and general regulations for the development and establishment of study programs. In addition, it had been mentioned by students and by academic staff that there is a University-wide Learning Platform (SMU) available, also including some e-learning approaches. However, it seems that this concept is still in the process of establishing. The ET has the impression that the potential provided by such a platform is far not used yet. Even a demonstration by staff and/or students has not been possible due to the fact that the respective screen terminal in the Universities entrance hall has been out of order. As mentioned during the site visit discussions, the platform is designed for University-wide utilization. In addition, it had been mentioned that joint conferences and participation in Erasmus-projects provide over-arching elements.

***Standard 1.4. (CL n.a.) There are formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues. These are made publicly available to all staff and students. KAA Accreditation Manual – July 2018***



The ET trusts that such regulations are laid down in the statutes of UHZ (<http://unhz.eu/lajmet-dhe-ngjarjet/rregullore/>). However, the regulations are not provided in English language. Neither the documents provided to the ET nor the discussions with different status groups of the University provide indications for sufficiently answering this question.

*Standard 1.5. (CL n.a.) All staff and students comply with the internal regulations relating to ethical conduct in research, teaching, assessment in all academic and administrative activities.*

Ethical conducts are referred to at several passages in the SER. The ET does not see itself in a position to assess the ethical conduct of all staff and students. However, the ET trusts that staff and students comply with the regulations.

*Standard 1.6. (CL 2) 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.*

Review processes concerning the delivery of the program are described in several parts of the SER (e.g. p. 68 ff). The ET trusts that these reviews are performed as described, but cannot evaluate the extent to which these processes are being carried out. Furthermore, there are compulsory accreditation and re-accreditation procedures initiated and established and frequently conducted by KAA on a regular basis. International experts from the respective fields of the study programs are an essential backbone-component of such procedures.

**Compliance level: Substantially compliant (2.3)**

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. The available learning-platform should be used to a larger extent and more frequently to implement an overarching didactic concept.*

**2.2. Quality management**

*Standard 2.1. (CL 3) All staff participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity.*

ET has met only limited part of the staff in the interviews and cannot comment on “all” staff. Interviewed staff members showed ability for self-reflection and self-evaluation. ET trusts that the staff is following the reporting and improvement processes of the UHZ.



**Standard 2.2. (CL 2)** *Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes.*

Evaluation and improvement processes are integral part of the quality management of the University. Students are evaluating courses by standardized questionnaires with optional free text comment. Results are collected at the dean's office. Professors with low results get a feedback meeting with the dean. Temporary teaching staff might be not prolonged in such cases. Best professors are honored in annual public meetings.

**Standard 2.3. (CL 3)** *Quality assurance processes deal with all aspects of program planning and delivery, including services and resources provided by other parts of the institution.*

Faculty management is involved in design of study programs. Delivery of courses and eventual shortcomings are reported to the management. External services such as internships in companies and institutes are discussed with supervisors of the hosting institutions.

**Standard 2.4. (CL 1)** *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. KAA Accreditation Manual – July 2018*

Learning outcomes are evaluated on course level by assessment, which includes attendance, homework, interactive exercises, seminar work, tests and final exam, written and oral.

Further quality parameters of the study program such as enrolment number, completion rate, and grade overview are recorded as stated in the SER. However, those quantitative performance parameters are only partly included in the SER (p. 105 ff). Following figures have been found for the three programs under evaluation:

Number of students (enrolments?)	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Plant Production Technology		235	163	280
Agro-Environment and Agroecology		225	151	245
Food Technology		255	310	294

  

Graduate students (graduations?)	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Plant Production Technology	16	8	20	
Agro-Environment and Agroecology	15	11	10	





The number of graduate students (presumably: actual graduation) is considerably contrasting the number of students (presumably: actual enrolments). As number of students before 2016/17 is not provided in the SER, completion rate cannot be calculated.

The ET has explicitly asked for such figures during the meeting with the management of the faculty. Unfortunately, data has not been provided.

**Standard 2.5. (CL 2)** *Quality assurance processes ensure both that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance.*

According to SER a quality assurance system is established at UHZ. ET trusts that the assurance system is adequate to ensure that standards are met and an improvement in performance is stimulated. However, “continuing improvement in performance” cannot be judged by the ET team, because time series of quantitative quality parameters are not provided.

**Standard 2.6. (CL 2)** *Survey data is being collected from students, graduates and employers; the results of these evaluations are made publicly available.*

Standardized surveys of students, graduates and employers are not mentioned in SER and interviews. According to the opinion of the ET, such survey data of students, graduates and employers, if being collected, should be treated confidential and not being made “publicly available” rather than individual participants would explicitly agree.

As an alternative to surveys, UHZ has established an advisory board with members from employers and alumni. The board is meeting quarterly and advice is resulting in improvement of the program, e.g. a new course on “Counseling” was proposed, which is now implemented by the faculty.

**Standard 2.7. (CL 2)** *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.*

The ET trusts that results of the internal quality assurance system are used by the management to further develop the study program. Work load is documented in the SER and appears to be



adequate. Results of course evaluation, academic success and employment of graduates have not been provided.

**Standard 2.8. (CL 3)** *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.*

The system of reaccreditation is asking for such a report, which was delivered by the UHZ in form of the SER. SWOT analyses were provided in the SER.

**Standard 2.9. (CL 3)** *The quality assurance arrangements for the program are themselves regularly evaluated and improved.*

The ET trusts that the UHZ management is supervising, evaluating and improving the internal quality assurance system.

### **Compliance level: Substantially compliant (2.3)**

#### **ET recommendations:**

- 1. All professors should get a feedback of the students' evaluation in a compiled anonymous form independent of the result*
- 2. Professors should discuss the evaluation result and ways of improvement with the students*
- 3. Quantitative performance parameters such as number of applicants, number of enrolment, completion rate, grade overview should be provided to the ET team*

#### **2.3. Academic staff**

**Standard 3.1. (CL 2)** *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. KAA Accreditation Manual – July 2018*

A table presenting above mentioned data on teaching staff is provided in the SER (p. 1010 f same as p. 847!). The table contains 12 regular (FT?) staff members, whereof 8 with PhD-



degree (1 Prof. 2 Assoc. Prof.) and 4 with MSc-degree. Furthermore 8 engaged (PT?) staff members (5 Assoc. Prof., 2 with PhD-degree, 1 with M.Sc. degree. This data is in conflict with the numbers mentioned during the site visit: 3 FT positions, 2.5 PT positions and 6 teaching assistants.

**Standard 3.2. (CL 3)** *The teaching staff must comply with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative instruction on Accreditation.*

The ET trusts that academic staff does comply with legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative Instruction on Accreditation.

**Standard 3.3. (CL 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.*

The academic staff having been present during the site visit fulfills this request. However, it is difficult for the ET to prove this for the complete number of academic staff within the study program under evaluation. An estimate of 20% teaching import and export vice versa has been reported during the site visit discussions. Major partners are University of Pristina and University of Mitrovica.

**Standard 3.4. (CL 3)** *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.*

The following estimated numbers for the study programs under evaluation have been reported to the ET during the site visit: About 60 % of the academic staff is regularly full time, about 40% on different kind of part time contracts.

**Standard 3.5. (CL 3)** *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.*

According to the SER and the information provided during the site visit this requirement is well fulfilled, see Standard 3.1.



**Standard 3.6. (CL 1)** *Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties.*

There was no formal procedure reported during the discussions in the site visit. The academic staff taking part in the discussion reported about respective courses, mostly done during visits abroad and in many cases quite some time ago. It has to be positively remarked that quite a few professors have visited HEI abroad and had the opportunity to participate in activities for additional professional development. In contrast to professors, teaching assistants are missing opportunities for professional development.

**Standard 3.7. (CL 3)** *The responsibilities of all teaching staff, especially full-time, include the engagement in the academic community, availability for consultations with students and community service.*

According to the information provided during the on-site-visit this request is well fulfilled. The academic staff taking part in the on-site visit discussions reported that they offer such kind of consultancy for students on a regular basis.

**Standard 3.8. (CL 2)** *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.*

There is a formal procedure established for academic staff evaluation done by students. This is based on a standardized questionnaire which is filled in anonymously. However, as it has been reported during the on-site visit the University office of QA reports the results only to the dean and the dean forwards these results to teaching staff only in cases of insufficient performance of respective staff, see Standard 2.2.

It is highly recommended by the ET that this process in future becomes more transparent. The entire results should be reported to each teacher. Staff should reflect to the results of the questionnaire and even more importantly to the comments in the free comment section of the questionnaire. Finally, the actions taken and expected impacts should be reported back to the students in a feedback-loop.

**Standard 3.9. (CL 1)** *Strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials.*



Improving teaching strategies and quality of learning material is part of annual review cycles as described in the SER. Examples of learning material have not been presented during the site visit. The electronic learning-platform could not be demonstrated due to technical problems of a kiosk-monitor. A view on other monitors has not been offered, although the ET has asked for.

**Standard 3.10. (CL 1)** *Teachers retired at age limit or for other reasons lose the status of full-time teachers and are considered part-time teachers.*

According to SER (p. 1015) retired professors may be assigned the title "Professor Emeritus" for at least two years. They can gain the right to teach up to age (70). Other rights and obligations are determined by an individual contract related to the rectorate. It is doubtful whether the retired professors are losing the status of full-time teacher.

**Compliance level: Substantially compliant (2.2)**

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. Teaching assistants should get regular access to didactic training and further scientific education*

## **2.4. Educational process content**

**Standard 4.1. (CL 3)** *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 to KAA Accreditation Manual – July 2018 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 "Agro-Environment and Agroecology" has clearly employment oriented qualification objectives (SER p. 997). Internships are complementing the academic education in developing student's personality. FA established an Advisory Body with members and guests from companies and institutes in agribusiness to steadily adjust the study program to societal needs. The Advisory Board aims to also provide opportunities for internships and organizes joint projects between the FA and industry.

During the site visit graduates and employers recommended that students from the program would have more practical experience, language proficiency and soft skills, research experiences and extension service competencies.



**Standard 4.2. (CL 3)** *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 syllabus of the study program Agro-Environment and Agroecology is arranged according to the Bologna system and provides adequate forms of teaching. The program is oriented towards similar study programs of European universities (Giessen, Hohenheim, Milan, Zagreb) and complies with the framework of the EHEA. The ET trust that this will also cover the National Qualifications Framework.

**Standard 4.3. (CL 2)** *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.*

Skills (4) and learning outcomes (7) of the study program “Agro-Environment and Agroecology” are listed in the SER (p. 1019 f). The courses are arranged within the syllabus in a logical and useful order. A B.Sc.-Thesis with 6 ECTS is placed in the 6<sup>th</sup> semester as an obligatory course. Examples of B.Sc. theses have been presented to the ET on request. The ET recommends that the B.Sc.-Thesis is extended to at least 10 ECTS.

**Standard 4.4. (CL 2)** *The disciplines within the curriculum have analytical syllabuses which comprise at least the following: the discipline’s objectives, the basic thematic content, learning outcomes, the distribution of classes, seminars and applicative activities, students’ assessment system, the minimal bibliography, etc. The full course description/ syllabuses of each subject/ module should be attached only in electronic form to the self-assessment report for the study program under evaluation.*

The full course descriptions are not attached as required in KAA18, but integrated in the SER (p. 1028 ff), which makes it hard to read.

The individual course descriptions comprise: course objectives, learning outcomes, thematic content, teaching methods, students’ assessment system and bibliography. The quality of course descriptions differs among the various courses. The presentation is partly sloppy, but the content becomes clear. Course contents are reasonable and contribute to the qualification objectives of the study program.





**Standard 4.5. (CL n.a.)** *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.*

The language of instruction is Albanian. Language training will not be required.

**Standard 4.6. (CI 2)** *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.*

Envisaged learning outcomes are described for each course in the syllabus. The ET trusts that the degree of achievement of the learning outcomes will be verified in students' assessments and discussed in individual consultations, when necessary.

**Standard 4.7. (CL n.a)** *Teaching strategies are fit for the different types of learning outcomes programs are intended to develop. Strategies of teaching and assessment set out in program and course specifications are followed with flexibility to meet the needs of different groups of students.*

“Different groups of students” are neither defined in the KAA18 nor in the SER. The ET team trusts that students under special circumstances (illnesses, disabilities, family situation) are treated with appropriate flexibility, see also Standard 5.6.

**Standard 4.8. (CL 3)** *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.*

The ET trusts that the assessments are communicated at the beginning of the course and are conducted fairly and objectively during and at the end of the course.



**Standard 4.9. (CL n.a.)** *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.*

Learning outcomes are evaluated on course level by assessment, which includes attendance, homework, interactive exercises, seminar work, tests and final exam, written and oral. Form of assessment is described for each course and appears appropriate, valid and reliable. The ET cannot evaluate, whether the standard of work required is consistent over time and similar between courses of the same study program and courses in EHEA. This would require to participate in oral exams (which is not possible) or to evaluate written exams, which not have been provided by FA.

**Standard 4.10. (CL n.a.)** *Policies and procedures include actions to be taken in to dealing with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or KAA Accreditation Manual – July 2018 inconsistently assessed.*

The ET trusts that such regulations are laid down in the statutes of UHZ (<http://unhz.eu/lajmet-dhe-ngjarjet/rregullore/>). However, the regulations are not provided in English language and cannot be evaluated by the ET.

**Standard 4.11. (CL 2)** *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.*

The FA is maintaining very good contacts to companies and institutes of the labor market in the vicinity of Peja, where the students are performing practical internships. The internships are accompanied by a tutor of the study program and by a mentor at the hosting institution. The students are keeping activity records. However, the internships are not integrated into the syllabus and ECTS credits are not allocated to the practical stages.

**Standard 4.12. (CL 3)** *In order to facilitate the practice stages, the higher education institution signs cooperation agreements, contracts or other documents with institutions/organisations/practical training units.*





UHZ has signed more than 30 cooperation agreements with companies and institutes in the vicinity of Peja.

**Compliance level: Fully compliant (2.5)**

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. B.Sc.-Thesis should comprise a minimum of 10 ECTS credits*
- 2. Internships should be integrated into the syllabus and ECTS credits should be awarded*
- 3. Examples of written exams should be presented by next accreditation site visit*

**2.5. Students**

*Standard 5.1. (CL 3) 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 is described in SER (p. 104 f). Procedure and criteria are clearly stated. The ET trusts that the admission criteria are fairly applied to all candidates.

*Standard 5.2. (CL 3) 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 SER, admission requires at least a high school diploma. Matura exam can be replaced by 70 points in entrance exam.

*Standard 5.3. (CL 1) The study groups are dimensioned so as to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process.*

This standard cannot be evaluated by the ET, because detailed information about student numbers was not provided. When student numbers of the SER are taken in consideration (see Standard 2.4), groups would be too large for interactive teaching.

*Standard 5.4. (CL 3) Feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments is given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed.*



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At UHZ the quality office is monitoring the annual progress rates to identify and provide assistance to any category of students who may have difficulties (SER, p. 353)

**Standard 5.5. (CL 1)** *The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record. KAA Accreditation Manual – July 2018*

This standard does not seem to be clearly formulated. The ET trusts that a central academic documentation of all results of the students takes place. After each term, the quality office makes statistics on the student's passing rate (SER, p. 353). However, a grade overview neither was included in the SER nor presented to the ET on request (see comments in Standard 2.4).

**Standard 5.6. (CL 3)** *Flexible treatment of students in special situations is ensured with respect to deadlines and formal requirements in the program and to all examinations.*

According the SER (p. 353), a tutorial system is implemented to help students who encounter problems in a subject by organizing additional classes and by orienting them to relevant material that enables students to overcome shortcomings.

**Standard 5.7. (n.a.)** *Records of student completion rates are kept for all courses and for the program as a whole and included among quality indicators.*

See Standard 5.5.

**Standard 5.8. (CL 2)** *Effective procedures are being used to ensure that work submitted by students is original.*

UHZ is sanctioning plagiarism by the students and in cases when the seminar paper of the student is not original then that work is cancelled. Plagiarism check is performed by professors based on their experience. Lack of software for professional detection of plagiarism is mentioned in several SWOT analyses in the SER.

**Standard 5.9. (CL 3)** *Students' rights and obligations are made publicly available, promoted to all those concerned and enforced equitably; these will include the right to academic appeals.*

Students' rights and obligations are published on the UHZ official web site <http://unhz.eu/lajmet-dhe-ngjarjet/rregullore/>. To promote these rights, the UHZ administration has distributed brochures summarizing the students' rights to academic appeals (SER p. 664).



*Standard 5.10. (CL 3) The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs is clearly regulated in formal internal documents.*

UHZ Statutes contains: "Regulation on Academic Mobility of students at "Haxhi Zeka" University in Peja" <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rBrUKps0IsyQzUIwMth-pjK8p7liV0Ack/view>.

*Standard 5.11. (CL 3) 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.*

The members of the teaching staff and the students confirmed in the interviews that time is available for individual counselling.

**Compliance level: Fully compliant (2.5)**

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. Software for professional detection of plagiarism should be made available*
- 2. Student statistics have to be provided per cohort for the last 5 years, comprising: applications, enrolments, cohort size at year (n), graduations*

## **2.6. Research**

*Standard 6.1. (CL 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.*

According to the SER, 30% of the work load of professors is allocated to research. Students are expected to acquire practical skills through research work at faculty laboratories as well as laboratories at the Kosovo Agricultural Institute and companies operating in Kosovo and especially in the Dukagjini Region, and there are a number of agreements signed with various national and international universities for collaboration in research. The research plan is implemented within the overall research program of the University (SER, p. 1093). However, neither the research plan of the FA nor the research program of UHZ are presented in the SER.

Generally, it has to be stated that research does not have very high priority and is not of such importance for both, the study program and the institution. One of the reasons is that there is very limited financial budget available for research, neither from the institution nor from third

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party research funds and donors. On the other hand, representatives from Agribusiness industry indicate to have significant research needs in numerous fields and subjects. The majority of the interviewed academic staff members expressed interest in research and they are aware of the linkage between research and the highly requested higher level scientific publications. Currently there are not sufficient financial, logistic and human resources allocated for achieving the proposed research objectives.

Against this background the ET highly recommends to put research more in the center of all kind of strategic considerations and to establish incentives and procedures to allow and foster high-level research activities.

**Standard 6.2. (CL 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.*

According to the SER (p. 62) research activities and scientific publications are criteria for staff evaluation. Expected quantity and quality might be defined in the regulations of UHZ, but information is not to be found in the SER.

**Standard 6.3. (CL 1)** *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 is lacking clear policies for defining what is recognized as research, consistent with international standards and established norms in the field of study of the program. However, in the discussion with graduates and employers quite detailed ideas for applied research have been expressed, including environmental aspects of fruit production, impacts of chemical application on product quality, legal aspects (part. in the field of veterinary inspection), competitiveness of organic production, compilation of sound and successful business plans.

**Standard 6.4. (CL 0)** *The academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity.*

The track record of the academic staff is not included in the SER.

**Standard 6.5. (CL 2)** *The academic and research staff publish their work in speciality magazines or publishing houses, scientific/applied/artistic products are presented at conferences,*



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*sessions, symposiums, seminars etc. and contracts, expertise, consultancy, conventions, etc. are provided to partners inside the country and/or abroad.*

There is a limited number of publications and other scientific contributions so far. Academic and research staff are mainly performing research on locally relevant topics and are publishing as conference proceedings and in regional journals. Only few articles are to be found in international data bases like SCOPUS. However, there is quite a large potential for increase of quantity and improvement of quality.

**Standard 6.6. (CL n.a.)** *Research is validated through: scientific and applied research publications, artistic products, technological transfer through consultancy centres, scientific parks and other structures for validation.*

Infrastructure such as scientific parks or consultancy centers are neither described in detail in the SER nor have been visible during the site visit. To the opinion of the ET, this standard does apply to the institution but not to the study program. It is recommended by the ET that such procedures should become developed by the institution and established by following a consistent research strategy which has to be set up and agreed on prior to this.

**Standard 6.7. (CL 0)** *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.*

A list of publications of the teaching staff of the study program Agro-Environment and Agroecology is missing in the SER. The ET recommends that separate tables are prepared for refereed journal articles, other journal articles and conference proceedings. Also number of publications and h-index of a scientific database like SCOPUS have to be presented for each member of the teaching staff, divided into groups of full time, part time, and teaching assistants.

**Standard 6.8. (CL 3)** *Academic and research staff publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full time staff.*

The ET trusts that academic and research staff is publishing under the name of UHZ. Random checks have been positive.



**Standard 6.9. (CL 2)** *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.*

The ET trusts that the teaching staff is integrating own research outcomes into teaching as this is regular way of teaching at an University. However, as mentioned in Standard 6.5, there is substantial potential for increasing quantity and improving quality in this respect of performing research.

**Standard 6.10. (CL n.a.)** *Policies are established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.*

The ET trusts that ownership and intellectual property is protected by regulations of UHZ and published on the website, however, in Albanian language, which cannot be evaluated by the ET.

**Standard 6.11. (CL 1)** *Students are engaged in research projects and other activities. KAA Accreditation Manual – July 2018*

Students of the study program “Agro-Environment and Agroecology” do some practical laboratory courses. However, the laboratories of the FA are not very well equipped. The conditions at the Agricultural Institute of Peja and at some agribusiness companies are better. Those facilities could be use by performing joint B.Sc., theses. Unfortunately, the B.Sc.-Thesis is only scheduled as an elective course. Until now, it seems that graduating students did not chose this option, see Standard 4.3. The ET again recommends that the B.Sc.-Thesis is turned into an obligatory course with at least 10 ECTS.

**Compliance level: Partially compliant (1.3)**

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. The ET highly recommends to put research more in the center of all kind of strategic considerations and to establish incentives and procedures to allow and foster high-level research activities.*
- 2. The ET recommends that validation procedures for scientific outputs should be developed and established by following a consistent research strategy, which has to be set up and agreed on prior to this.*





## 2.7. Infrastructure and resources

**Standard 7.1. (CL 2)** *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.*

Land and buildings are available from former military installations. Buildings are in a good condition and extensions are under construction. Lab space is available but instrumentation is poor and investments are required. Shortcomings are partly compensated by performing internships and thesis work in cooperation with surrounding agribusiness companies and the Agricultural Institute of Peja. Erasmus projects allow extensions such as a new greenhouse for research purposes. Permanent staff is accomplished by temporary staff. Academic level of teaching staff still has to be improved by promoting/hiring more staff on Ph.D. level.

**Standard 7.2. (CL 1)** *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.*

Financial plans at the level of the study program were not provided in the SER. An overall UHZ budget of 4,028,197 EUR is planned for 2019 (SER p.43 ff), whereof 2,095,782 EUR are for salaries and 2,093,986 EUR for “Errors & Omissions” (!). A total of 107,395 EUR are explicitly allocated to the FA, where the three programs under evaluation are hosted. The way the financial plan is presented, does not allow a proper evaluation of this standard.

**Standard 7.3. (CL 1)** *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;*

Lecture halls, seminar rooms and laboratories are available. The ET does not see it as its task to verify the relevant documents.

*b) owned or rented laboratories, with the adequate equipment for all the compulsory disciplines within the curriculum, wherever the analytical syllabus includes such activities;*

*KAA Accreditation Manual – July 2018*



Equipment in the laboratories of the FA is basic and not yet sufficient for experimental work for B.Sc.- Theses. However, laboratory facilities of cooperation companies and the Agricultural Institute of Peja are used for this purpose.

*c) adequate software for the disciplines of study included in the curriculum, with utilisation licence;*

Software was not demonstrated during the site visit although the ET has asked for.

*d) library equipped with reading rooms, group work rooms and its own book stock according to the disciplines included in the curricula.*

Library is available, see also Standard 7.5.

**Standard 7.4. (CL 3)** *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.*

In-depth statistics on actual student numbers in the different cohorts were not provided. However, the ET trusts that The number of seats in the lecture rooms, seminar rooms and laboratories are sufficient.

**Standard 7.5. (n.a.)** *The education institution's libraries must ensure, for each of the study programs:*

*a) a number of seats in the reading rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program;*

*b) a number of seats in the group work rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program;*

*c) their own book stock from Albanian and foreign speciality literature, enough to cover the disciplines within the curricula, out of which at least 50% should represent book titles or speciality courses of recognised publishers, from the last 10 years;*

*d) a book stock within its own library with a sufficient number of books so as to cover the needs of all students in the cycle and year of study the respective discipline is provided for;*

*e) a sufficient number of subscriptions to Albanian and foreign publications and periodicals, according to the stated mission.*





The time scheduled for the site visit did not allow to verify the specific requirements of this standard. Furthermore, the ET does not see it as its task to verify the quality of the library according the listed in-depth criteria. This would be a task for librarians,

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

“Special needs” are not defined in the standard. Concerning disabled students, it can be stated that the building can be entered barrier-free.

**Compliance level: Substantially compliant (1.8)**

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. A detailed budget has to be presented for the study program*
- 2. English language proficiency of teaching staff has to be improved*
- 3. Number of teaching staff on Ph.D.-level has to be increased*
- 4. Laboratory equipment has to be improved*
- 5. Electronic access to scientific literature has to be provided (databases like SCOPUS)*

### **3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET**

*(Insert overall observations referring to the evaluation process, the quality at study program level, approach to the site visit, etc.)*

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program “Agro-Environment and Agroecology (B.Sc.)” offered by the Faculty of Agribusiness of the University Haxhi Zeka, Peja is *Substantially compliant (CL 2.1)* 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 100 students to be enrolled in the program.

### **4. APPENDICES (if available)**



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## Expert Team

### Member

<hr/>	Prof. Dr. Reiner Doluschitz	13.05.2019
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