



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



Agjencia e Kosovës për Akreditim
Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju
Kosovo Accreditation Agency

*University of Applied Sciences Ferizaj
MSc in Engineering and Informatics*

ACCREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

May 2019, Prishtina



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: 16.05.2019

Expert Team (ET) members:

- Prof. Dr. Peeter Normak
- Mihai Adrian Vilcea

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:

- Self Assessment Report (SAR)
- Strategic Plan of the University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj 2018-2020
- Syllabi of the courses
- CVs of the academic staff
- Other documents of the University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj (UASF) submitted upon request
- KAA Accreditation Manual
- Administrative Instruction for Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Kosova
- Official website of UASF

Criteria used for program evaluation:

- Standards and performance indicators for external quality assurance (Re/accreditation of bachelor and masters study programs) set in the Accreditation Manual



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1.2. Site visit schedule

15th May

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

16th May

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 08.15 | Meeting at the reception of the hotel |
| 09.00 – 09.30 | Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated |
| 09.35 – 10.35 | Meeting with the head of the study programme |
| 10.40 – 11.40 | Meeting with quality assurance representatives |
| 11.40 – 12.45 | Lunch break |
| 13.00 – 13.45 | Meeting with involved teaching and administrative staff |
| 13.50 – 14.30 | Meeting with external stakeholders |
| 14.30 – 14.50 | Visiting tour of the facilities and infrastructure (<i>used for the implementation of the programme</i>) |
| 14.50 – 15.00 | Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program |



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

The University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj (UASF) was established in 2015 as a public university through reorganization of the Faculty of Applied Technical Sciences (FATS) of the University of Prishtina. UASF is currently the only university of applied sciences in Kosovo. The MSc program in Engineering and Informatics is offered at the Faculty of Engineering and Informatics, in which is offered the already accredited bachelor program in Industrial Engineering with Informatics. 198 students are actively studying at this faculty.

The Vision: “National model of a modern, innovative and integrative education where the practice meets the theory and where professional skills are developed for the good of society.”

The Mission Statement: “We are committed to providing quality education to prepare qualified professionals and educated and responsible citizens to develop a professional career and lead a productive life.”

Although UASF has four faculties each lead by a dean, they share a common administrative staff. Therefore, the faculties do not form independent structural units. UASF has institutional accreditation from year 2016.

2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

What follows are the comments on each standard, numbered according to the numbering of the standards in the *KAA Accreditation Manual*.

2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

- 1.1. The mission statement does not specify any focus area of the university, stating only that the university is committed to provide quality education. The administration of the university named industrial engineering (especially wood, polymers and metal industries, focused on business), architecture and tourism as the focus areas of academic activities. Therefore, although not explicitly stated, the study program would be in compliance with the mission statement of the university.
- 1.2. The University has an Industrial Board where 20 companies are represented. Members of the Industrial Board were involved in defining the intended learning outcomes. The experience of the University of Applied Sciences in Salzburg as well as the partners in Erasmus+ project EUFORIA were used. The study program was also discussed in Industrial Board meetings. The Knowledge and Skills Gap Analysis in Kosovo, a study coordinated by Riinvest Institute was also considered (UASF was also among the partners in this study). On the other hand, during the meeting with representatives from



the private sector (where also some members of Industrial Board attended) some significant recommendations concerning the content of the study program were made. This means that consultation with industry in the preparatory phase of the study program could have been more comprehensive.

- 1.3. The overall didactic concept was not explained in the SAR. The staff explained during the meetings that the theory is illustrated with a big number of case-studies of international and local character. The staff has direct link to local companies that allows them to be informed about the problems and activities of the companies.
- 1.4. The main document stating the structure and administration is a thorough (61 pages) Statute of the University. Only Albanian version is available in the Web. Specifics of Master studies is stated in the Master Study Regulations, another quite thorough (20 pages, 75 articles) document.
- 1.5. Ethics is accepted as one (out of five) of values of UASF: “The University addresses the dignity of each of its members with respect, honesty, equality and integrity.” For ethical issues, the university has a separate regulation (*The Code of Ethics*). Aspects of ethics are also covered in the Learning Outcomes of the study program, and are included in the description of some courses (*Research Methods, Management and Leadership*).
- 1.6. The Faculty management compiles semi-annual reports where the progress of the teaching process is analyzed, the main difficulties are identified and recommendations for improvement proposed. There are set six strategic objectives for each intervention field of the college, and measures for each strategic objective determined.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. Update the official webpage of the university, especially the websites in English language.
2. Involve more local/regional companies in further improvement of the objectives and the content of the study program.

2.2. Quality management

- 2.1. The development of the study program took about two years, and concluded with a two-day workshop (21.-22. May 2018). On this all major aspects were discussed, including the dissemination of the information about the study program. Teachers from



other faculties were also involved in the development of the study program. However, involvement of so many people had also a drawback – the titles of the courses varied in the SAR (for example, “Engineering Materials” in the study program, and “Modern Engineering Materials” as the title of a syllabus).

- 2.2. Main evaluation processes take place semi-annually. For students, paper-based questionnaires are used. Staff’s peer-evaluation is not yet systematic, consisting mainly on observations – and subsequent discussion – of each other lectures. For staff’s self-evaluation, an electronic system is under development.
- 2.3. The quality issues belong to the scope of the Vice-Rector for International Relations and Quality Assurance. Practical activities in quality assurance are coordinated by the Quality Coordinator of UASF. The processes are unified in the university as the Quality Coordinator acts as the quality coordinator for the Faculties as well.
- 2.4. Although the university has adopted the *Regulation for Quality Assurance and Evaluation Procedures* and established the *Quality Assurance Committee*, the implementation of the quality assurance processes is still ongoing. However, the procedures required by KAA for conducting accreditation/reaccreditation are implemented.
- 2.5. For quality assurance, students’ feedback at the end of each semester is currently the only implemented instrument. The questionnaire covers all basic aspects of the university life. Students’ assessment for the teaching staff is internal and shared only with the teacher, with the Program Director and the Dean of the respective faculty as well as with the university's senior management.
- 2.6. The data collection from the graduates and employers is not implemented yet, the drafting of the questionnaires for graduates and employers is planned to be completed in the coming academic year (2019/2020).
- 2.7. The procedures of the internal quality assurance for further development of study programs are foreseen in the *Regulation for Quality Assurance and Evaluation Procedures*.
- 2.8. The University plans to develop a re-evaluation of the study program once in three years even if the program will get accreditation for a longer period of time.
- 2.9. According to the *Regulation for Quality Assurance and Evaluation Procedures*, “Approval of the strategy for quality assurance of teaching, as part of the overall strategy of the institution, by the Senate, which is public and subject to periodic research”.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant



ET recommendations:

1. Develop and implement a system for collecting systematic feedback from the graduates and alumni.
2. Elaborate a methodology for systematic involvement of students in the process of ensuring and progressing the quality of work.

2.3. Academic staff

- 3.1. UASF as a public university follows strictly all regulations concerning employment.
- 3.2. Legal requirements set for teaching staff are met: all ten teachers have a PhD degree and are elected by open competition.
- 3.3. According to the CV-s submitted, the formal requirements concerning employment of academic staff by other institutions are met.
- 3.4. Nine out of ten teachers (90%) have full-time employment, and they cover 90% of the courses.
- 3.5. As the majority of teachers teach also on other study programs, the calculations are made over the whole university. There are currently four Bachelor programs (180 ECTS each). Therefore, 12 full-time teachers with a PhD is needed. The new Master program (120 ECTS) assumes existence of additional two full-time teachers with a PhD. In fact the university has employed 20 full-time teachers with a PhD. The University has employed also 15 full-time teachers without a PhD and 50 part-time teachers. Therefore, the student-teacher ratio is $1500/60 = 25$ which is acceptable (50 part-time teachers are considered equivalent with 25 full-time teachers).
- 3.6. The university spends 20-25 000€ a year for supporting staff's mobility (participation on international conferences, internship etc.). For a broader staff, yearly 3-5 workshops were organized at the university.
- 3.7. Community services are offered both in the premises of the university and outside, mainly to the neighboring schools (for example, lectures to the schoolchildren) and by the request of the Department of Education of the local Government (for example, organizing a competition of English language for secondary schools).
- 3.8. As mentioned above, the evaluation of academic staff has not been fully implemented yet.
- 3.9. Although the university has some activities in supporting teachers in improving their teaching skills and quality of learning materials (for example, a workshop about using



e-learning was conducted in September 2018), the experts were not provided convincing explanation that these activities are systematic.

3.10. The average age of teachers is about 40 years.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. Develop and implement a system of yearly development discussions for the staff with their superiors.

2.4. Educational process content

4.1. The study program is unique in Kosovo and the graduates are widely needed. The fact that it focuses on the development of practical skills of the students is also commendable. However, there is a number of aspects that were either inadequate or not explicitly discussed in SAR:

4.1.1. The general conception of the study program remains unclear and the whole study program is not focused enough. Deciding on the skill-set the graduates should be equipped (Pages 18 and 19 of SAR), *Production Engineering* would be much more adequate title for the study program. The main arguments are the following: 1) The share of Informatics is marginal in the study program. Moreover, every study program in engineering should provide necessary IT competences. 2) Engineering is a general term; every engineering profession has a complementary word that specifies the scope of professional activities - production engineering, industrial engineering, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, chemical engineering, civil engineering, software engineering, biomedical engineering etc. Taking into account the content of the submitted study program and the needs of local industry, *Production Engineering* or *Industrial Engineering* seem to be the most adequate titles. 3) As the big majority of enterprises are SME-s in Kosovo, *Production Engineering* is preferable.

4.1.2. The study program has strong focus on management (the word “management” or “managing” is in the title of five compulsory and three elective courses). The aspects of the development of production processes has correspondingly less attention. For example, the role of robots or modeling (as well as the concept “digital twin” of a product life cycle) and optimization of production processes are not mentioned in the course descriptions. Such a strong focus on

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management seems to be not quite justified as the University proposes also an *Industrial Management* study program. Note that “Automation and Computer Integrated Manufacturing” is only an elective course. The Master Study Regulation specifies that there are three profiles of master curricula: 1) Industrial Management, 2) Wood Design, 3) Plastic Design. It is not explicitly stated to what profile the study program is supposed to belong.

- 4.2. Local enterprises belong mainly to wood, metal or polymers’ industry. The learning outcomes do not specify any specific competences needed for working in these industries. As the course “Polymers, their production and processing” is elective, it is probably not assumed that all graduates get competences necessary for working in polymer’s industry. Ability to work in wood and metal industry was also not explicitly stated in the study program.
- 4.3. There are listed 12 learning outcomes, 5 of general and 7 of specific character. These present in totality a coherent and compact set. However, the learning outcomes and the courses are not always in harmony. For example, it is not clear what learning outcome the course “Marketing and sales” is supposed to serve. On the other hand, as “Quality Management” is an elective course, it is not clear how the achievement of the learning outcome “apply modern methods of quality management in order to increase efficiency” will be guaranteed for all graduates.
- 4.4. The syllabi contain all the necessary components and were submitted in electronic form. They could have more details. For example, “Assignment 50%” does not say much about the actual assessment methods used. Moreover, although the SAR claims that assessment methods include composing of essays (page 19 of SAR), composing of essays is not mentioned in any syllabus. There was a big confusion with the titles of the courses: about half of the syllabi had different names in the study program and in the course descriptions. For example, “CAD and reverse engineering” in the study program (page 20 of SAR) and “Reverse engineering and rapid prototyping” (page 30 in the SAR).
- 4.5. The language in which the study program will be offered is Albanian.
- 4.6. The student-teacher relationship seems to be a partnership. An example was presented where an exam was postponed because a 3 months internship has not been ended by the regular examination session. Learning outcomes and other aspects will also be discussed already on the first class.
- 4.7. The teaching methodology and assessment methods are described in very general terms in the syllabi. As the study program has not been launched yet, it is not possible to estimate to what extent the strategies of teaching and assessment set out in the program



and course specifications are followed with flexibility to meet the needs of different groups of students.

- 4.8. As the study program has not been launched yet, it is not possible to estimate to what extent the 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.
- 4.9. The grading system that is used in all Balkan countries is used. The grades are 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 where 5 marks failing and 6-10 are positive. The passing level is 50% as widely used in Europe.
- 4.10. Students who are not satisfied with the evaluation of their work have the right to request evaluation by commission, as foreseen in the *Master Study Regulations*. The *Code of Ethics* defines the steps the university should undertake in such cases to teachers.
- 4.11. There is no industrial practice course in the study program. Instead, the students will conduct several case studies.
- 4.12. The SAR states that “The University has signed more than 50 agreements of cooperation with various enterprises of different fields of industry. One of the objectives of this agreement is to create the opportunity for businesses to offer students access to conduct research or any practical work that will go towards their master theses” (page 20 of SAR).

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. Use “Production Engineering” as the name of the study program.
2. Be more explicit in the general conception of the study program: whether a student can focus on only one area of industry (wood, metal, plastic) or not, what will be the role of elective courses, the level of freedom in composing personal curriculum (for example, should the study program offer to the students also a free elective) etc.
3. Strengthen the focus on the analysis, modeling, and optimization of production processes in the study program (the employers also stressed the need for getting more product designers).
4. Harmonize the learning outcomes and the list and content of syllabi.



2.5. Students

Remark. As there are no students on the study program, the statements below base on the regulating documents of the University (including SAR) and on the practices used on the *Industrial Engineering with Informatics* bachelor program.

- 5.1. The criteria for admission of new students are conducted according to the clauses set in *Provisional Statute of the University* and in accordance to the legal regulations established by MEST and KAA.
- 5.2. To enroll in this program, students must have completed bachelor studies in the fields of industrial, mechanical or electrical engineering and have accumulated at least 180 ECTS.
- 5.3. One group of students consists of maximum 100 students for theoretical and 70 for practical courses.
- 5.4. The communication of the student evaluation results is made not later than 7 days from the date of the exam, according to the official schedule. If a student is not satisfied with their grade then they have the right to make a written complaint to the Dean within 24 hours of their publication and request an evaluation through a commission.
- 5.5. The electronic University Management System (SMU) retains all records for each student, including assessments, colloquium scores, final exam scores etc.
- 5.6. The exam from the same subject can be repeated up to 4 times (the 4th to a commission). As mentioned above, an agreement with a company was concluded offering to the students a 3 months internship in hotels (and consequently the exam has been postponed).
- 5.7. At the end of each semester, the Faculty prepares a semester report in which, among others, the percentage of student success rate is reported.
- 5.8. Procedures related to academic misconduct, including plagiarism and other forms of copying are defined by the *Code of Ethics*.
- 5.9. All rights and obligations of students in terms of teaching, attendance of lectures, evaluation, etc. are determined in the *Provisional Statute of the University* and in the *Master Study Regulations*. However, the Experts were not able to find the Statute in the web page of the University.
- 5.10. Students' transfer is regulated by the *Provisional Statute of the University* as well as with the regulations of the studies. The transfer can be initiated only after the completion of the first year of the study.



5.11. Academic staff are required to be available to students on a regular basis for a few hours a week, for both academic and advisory purposes. Additional hours of consultations with academic staff may be organized. Consultations can be organized in individual or group form.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations: no recommendations (as there are currently no students)

5.12. Research

- 6.1. *The Strategic Plan of the University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj 2018-2020* includes a thematic strategy “Student and Students Experience”. This thematic strategy contains eight activities. The activities will be coordinated by the Institute of Applied Sciences. The Innovation Centre of the Institute having 3D printers, 3D scanners and CNC machines will also support academic activities on the study program.
- 6.2. Expectations for teaching staff involvement in research and scholarly activities are specified in the work contract and in the *Provisional Statute of the University*. The performance in relation to these expectations is considered in the self-assessment report that the university is going to implement this year.
- 6.3. Research is considered as a strategic goal of the University. The objectives, strategies, key performance indicators and targets in research are stated in the *Strategic Plan of the University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj 2018-2020*. Internationalization, cooperation with the industry and development laboratories will certainly support the studies on the study program.
- 6.4. The research of the academic staff is in general conducted on the topics of the study program – wood industry, economics and analytics (including mathematics) prevail.
- 6.5. The research of academic staff is internationally visible (for example, in *Google Scholar*). The staff is relatively active in presenting on international conferences, having altogether (of ten teachers) in average about ten presentations a year.
- 6.6. Research is basically validated by scientific publications.
- 6.7. The CV-s submitted did not always provide the full list of publications. According to the additional list requested by the experts the majority of academic staff have produced one publication per year. The share of joint publications prepared in cooperation with



the colleagues from UASF is relatively small. This indicates that no research groups have been formed yet.

- 6.8. The regular academic staff within the Faculty publishes papers on behalf of the University. However, *Google Scholar* indicates for some members of academic staff some other institution of employment.
- 6.9. The experts were explained that as the teachers will offer the courses in their areas of competence, the specific questions that belong to the scope of the teachers' research issues will also be discussed.
- 6.10. The University has not yet established intellectual property policies. During 2019, when the *Institute of Applied Sciences* is expected to be functional, policies will also be created.
- 6.11. It is planned that students will be involved in cooperation projects with the local industry.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. Decide on the research priorities of the Faculty and form the research groups accordingly.

6.12. Infrastructure and resources

- 7.1. The university has modern buildings and has assigned considerable resources for buildings and equipment.
- 7.2. Although the study program is already covered by teaching staff, the university has resources for employing additional staff. The university has recently obtained up-to-date production lines and supporting infrastructure (the experts were explained that only the wood processing lab did cost about 2 M€).
- 7.3. As a public institution of higher education, University's financial sustainability is guaranteed by the Mid-Term Expenditure Framework for the next three years. The University is the owner of the space it uses. According to the SAR, "The University has two amphitheatres (lecture halls) with 150 and 350 seats, 15 classrooms for groups of up to 75 students, two IT cabinets, two industrial spaces for workshops, four labyrinth spaces and many additional spaces". The lecturers prepare thorough course materials for the courses where the suitable textbooks are not available; these course materials are



free for students. There were no smaller rooms (for 20-30 students) for group work presented.

- 7.4. Considering the number of students (about 1500 active students in the whole university), the number and size of the lecture halls, classrooms and laboratories is adequate. The only question was whether 5 workplaces in the VR and 3D lab is sufficient. The experts were explained that the practical work is conducted in small groups.
- 7.5. The big majority of books is published within last 10 years.
- 7.6. The facility possesses electrical stairs, elevators, emergency exits as well as the entire infrastructure which is needed for students with special needs.

ET recommendations:

1. In upgrading the facilities foresee more smaller rooms for group work as well as more space for students' learning and socializing outside the classrooms.

8. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program *Engineering and Informatics* offered by *University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj* 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 *50* students to be enrolled in the program.

Expert Team

Chair

	Peeter Normak	21.05.2019
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)

Member

	Mihai Adrian Vilcea	
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)