



Republika e Kosovës  
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

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***UBT COLLEGE***  
**Branches in Prizren and Ferizaj**

**INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION**

**REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM**

*June 7, 2020*



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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Context**

Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA)

Site Visit Program (on-line)

Institutional Reaccreditation Procedure at UBT College

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> of May 2020

#### Expert Team

- Prof. Dr. Melita Kovacevic, University of Zagreb
- Prof. Dr. Magdalena Platis, University of Bucharest
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#### Coordinators of KAA

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

### **Sources of information for the Report**

- SER
- On-line interviews

### **Criteria used for insitutional evaluation**

- Standards and guidelines of KAA

### **Sources of information**

- Information obtained during the on-line visit;



- Meetings conducted with the management of the institution, teaching and administrative staff, students, graduates, external stakeholders and employers of graduates;  
Additional documents requested by the ET

## 1.2. Site-visit schedule (on-line)

15<sup>th</sup> May 2020

09.00 – 10.20	Meeting with the management of the institution ( <i>no slide presentation is allowed, the meeting is intended as a free discussion</i> )
10.30 – 11.10	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative services
11.10 – 12.00	Lunch break ( <i>to be provided at the site visit place</i> )
12.10 – 13.00	Meeting with the heads of study programs
13.00 – 14.00	Meeting with teaching staff
14.00 – 14.40	Meeting with students
14.40 – 14.55	Short break
14.55 – 15.40	Meeting with graduates
15.40 – 16.20	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders
16.20 – 16.30	Internal meeting – Expert Team and KAA
16.30 – 16.40	Closing meeting with the management of the institution

## 1.3. A brief overview of the institution

UBT College is a private higher education institution in Kosovo established in 2004 by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, no.808/02-1. It provides education on bachelor and master. It has 19 academic units, and it is spread at different locations across Kosovo. It has offices and contact points outside Kosovo as well. Branches in Prizren and



Ferizaj are two branches, but there are also three other colleges situated in three different locations in Kosovo, plus one in Prishtina, as a central part. The Ferizaj branch was established in 2015 with the decision on licensing 6/935. It offers programmes in architecture, management, business and economy, integrated design, and nursing. The Prizren branch was established in 2016 based on the decision on licensing 648/16. It offers programmes in architecture, management, business and economy, integrated design, computer science, food science and technology and law.

## **2. INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION**

*The institutional evaluation consists of 11 sub headings through which the administration, organisation and management of the institution, as well as teaching and research are assessed.*

### **2.1. Policy mission and institutional objectives**

Institutional policy mission is a part of a new institutional Strategy 2025. UBT College defined the mission and vision of the institution, embracing three main pillars, teaching, research and society, i.e. community service. It is a bit unusual to have Strategy stating the last year of its implementation, not the starting point, knowing that the strategy actually requires clear framework in order to set up its objectives and/or to develop accordingly an action plan with a proper indicators. Objectives are not presented as a medium and long term objectives, but as an overall objective of the institution, divided in five areas.

The Strategy 2015 took into account external environment and provided industry analysis, and according to the SER and information collected during the on-line visit both external and internal stakeholders took part in the process of consultation. Also, according to the two SER reports (branches in Prizren and Ferizaj) as well as through the interviews, members are aware of the mission. However, the real issue in evaluation of two branches is to disentangle branches from the main institution. Interestingly, almost none of the documents does not treat branches in any way as a separate institutions, and accordingly they do not have any structural own documents or policy papers.

Mission is presented in a descriptive way, but it provides a guide for strategic planning and overall institutional functioning. It does leave a space for further development of the institutional (and branches) planning. Again, it is not clear from the documents, how strategic planning as well as different aspects of institutional functioning differs between the main



institution and the branches. By doing evaluation of the two branches, actually the same documents are provided as for the evaluation of the central institution, UBT College. This imposes certain constraints on the evaluation process.

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. In order to achieve more transparent and more efficient way of institutional functioning it would be relevant to have separate policy documents for branches*
- 2. Further develop objectives considering long term and medium term objectives, in particular due to opting for a Strategy with a 5 years period*

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

UBT College developed the Strategy for the period of five years, which is actually much better option than opting for a shorter periods. Such a strategy would enable the institution to have better planning, and to apply adequate adjustments if revealed during the monitoring process. However, all the structural and policy level shows a high level of centralization, where it is extremely hard to distinguish between the central institution functioning and functioning of its branches.

According to the SERs, academic community participated in shaping the strategic plan. But again, the Strategy is an umbrella strategy for the central institution as well as for all the branches, including those outside Kosovo. As the institution developed separate strategies for research and internationalisation, one would expect to have separate strategies, and in particular activity plans for each branch. This is not the case. It is not transparent which segments, plans, actions refer exactly to which part of the system, and how the implementation is monitored.

Financial planning and budget management is taking as the starting point 2017, however they do not go beyond 2021. This facts made us conclude that some figures are taken from the old Strategy and the budget did not take long enough perspective, which means that it will not be possible to apply well guided monitoring. In addition, the financial planning does not correspond to the overall Strategy.



At the same time indicators, that supposable are enabling adequate monitoring, are stated as indicators 2018 to 2025, however in the table they are given from 2014 (2019, 2025). This reflects certain level of low attentiveness and it is hard not to conclude that the new strategy has been developed bit in a hurry.

Rector is a central figure in governing process and management. This is reflected in documents, but it was also observable during the on-line visit. It appeared that the management of the units (branches) are the weak links in the system management, and much slower in providing the answers than the Rector. A question is what kind of level of autonomy branches have and/or could have, and if the actual situation actually protects them or slow them down. In big (or bigger) higher education systems it is known that distributed leadership is much more effective.

According to the SERs and information collected during the interviews, students do participate in decisional, executive and consultative bodies (but not of the Board).

Branches and their role and position is not clearly stated in none of the documents. The term that it has been used is 'academic units', but the same term covers the whole range of organizational units, such as faculties, departments, institutes, centers, branches, units etc.

This kind of division certainly does not contribute to transparency, and it is hard to understand how the branch (which is presently the objective of the evaluation, reaccreditation process) could be equally treated as, for example, department, or even to have a statutory option 'etc.', which actually leaves space for unlimited interpretations and options. Further, while the faculty, its role and responsibilities are defined, there is no word on a branch. The Statute dates from 2018, when the branches had been already established.

For such a relatively big system, it is also unusual to have Deputy Rector, not to have any Vice Rectors (the role of deputy vs vice is quite distinctive). Similar observations could be done for the role of deans, although vice deans (together with co-head and coordinator) is mentioned under the section of the faculties in the Statute. Apparently, it is used different terminology, but it is not clear are there any difference among those titles and their roles and responsibilities. Similarly, it is confusing definition of the manager, who represents the academic unit (which can be many different organizational units within the College, as stated above).

Administrative staff is well fitted for the institutional purpose and it has adequate qualifications, according to the documents and information obtained during the interviews. However, in both SERs, when explaining responsibilities of administrative staff it is stated.. *The criteria for the selection are the candidate's level of education, scientific work and*

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*teaching abilities as well as practical knowledge of the field. The most important criterion is the productivity of the candidate's scientific work (in Prizren SER, pg 56) evidently mixing academic and administrative staff and not providing sufficient and appropriate information.*

### **Compliance level: Partially compliant**

#### **ET recommendations:**

- 1. It is necessary to revisit budgetary planning and to align it with the Strategy cycle*
- 2. Implementation of the Strategy needs to be monitored and regularly reported, following the short term and medium term targets*
- 3. Indicators need to be revisited and to enable more efficient monitoring*
- 4. Action plan needs to be operationalised with clear timeline, activities, responsible person/body, indicators*
- 5. The Statute requires revision in order to define better different organisational units*
- 6. Branches need to be transparently defined and transparently treated in all the relevant institutional documents*

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

UBT College is a higher education institution established in 2004 that allocates resources for the development of engineering, economy, public policy and medicine areas. (<https://www.ubt-uni.net/en/ubt-en/for-ubt/history/>). It operates in main campus in Prishtina and in branches defined by the management of the institutions (during the online site visit) as campuses which are not located in the main one, but in different other cities/regions. Therefore, ET evaluates the institutional budget, as all other institutional resources as being available, managed and controlled institutionally, branches being part of the institution. According to SER:

- *“The source of funding and financial position has been strengthened due to a constant and predictable pace of growth in student number, in research projects, industry services and donations” (SER, Ferizaj, page 52);*
- *“In terms of financial planning, the budget is planned annually based on the cycle applied to all areas of the organization's business. A five-year budget proposal is prepared on the basis of the business plan and the UBT strategy”. (SER, Prizren, page 59);*
- *“Investments in labs and other fixed assets participate around 10% on average throughout the years of planning”. (SER, Ferizaj, page 52);*





- *“While capital investments from the central institution were essential in infrastructure development, the operation of programmers, research and staff development rely significantly on student tuition fees”. (SER, Prizren, page 59);*
- *“The institution has already established a good network of cooperation with industry and public sector in getting small research grants from both local and international donors. On the other hand, the College also operates several fee-based professional certifications with international vocational training bodies like and which have proven to be a small but steady stream of incomes”. (SER, Prizren, page 60).*

The institution can demonstrate that it has sufficient financial resources in the short (one year) and medium term to address to its mission and objectives set out in the strategic plan, as it has a diversity of sources of income: tuition fee from students, cooperation with industry, professional certifications, research projects and donations. Comparing the two branches that provided SERs, it is clear that the institution has a prospective vision on income and expenditures for 5 academic years and this is differentiated between branches. ET appreciates that there is difference between branches not in total amount of income and expenditures, but in what they decide to do with the difference as profit: while in Ferizaj, they reinvested in staff development, research, and capacity development (SER Ferizaj, page 53), in Prizren, they reinvest in the following year for staff development and research projects. (SER Prizren, page 60). Nevertheless, despite the fact that the institution has a clear annual budget and a five-year estimated budget, ET is reserved in considering that the institution has clear well established financial policies which address its financial sustainability.

At an institutional level, the college has a Finance Division with responsibilities in the area of budget revenues, financial accounting and payments (SER, Ferizaj, page 48 and SER, Prizren, page 55). Therefore, management of the institutions budgeting and accounting functions are carried out by a specialised office responsible to a senior administrator. In fact, the “the Finance Office operates as a service to Finance Coordinator in the implementation of procurement requests. Approval of the agreed procurements is given by designated officials from the Branch Director at the branch level, Secretary or by the Rector himself in the end at the central institution level” (SER, Ferizaj, page 53).

The college uses a software in the process of monitoring financial indicators. “Budget reports are based on a number of indicators showing the performance of payment planning and the use of the allocated budget to date. The Financial software has been updated with features to allow Business Area Leader to enter their planned payments. An increasing level of performance in budget consumption has been achieved”. (SER, Prizren, page 61). The main financial indicators that UBT College monitors are: related to cash flow efficiency: overhead, funding incomes and funding expenditure (<https://www.ubt-uni.net/en/ubt-en/mission-and-vision/performance-indicators/>).



ET considers that the accounting system comply with accepted professional accounting standards at least some particular allocations are made on branch level, but not yet on detailed academic units or particular activities. It is very good that the branches are subject to internal and external auditing. In addition, “financial results – the scorecard measures and tracks the level of income and overheads for every financial year since 2008. The overview of financial income progression reveals a steady increase in organisational incomes over the past cycle of the UBT strategy. The funding of strategy has been centered on the financial model that is based on student fees, research funding and commercial projects” (<https://www.ubt-uni.net/en/ubt-en/mission-and-vision/performance-indicators/>).

### **Compliance level: Substantially compliant**

#### **ET recommendations:**

1. *Create a clear financial policy considering the financial risk assessment;*
2. *Elaborate the budget more detailed (or create an annex to the budget) correlating the budget allocation to concrete measurable strategic objectives;*
3. *Divide the institutional budget into cost centres (programs);*
4. *Make a simple financial report public and share it to annually academic community.*

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

The institution has a code of ethics and academic integrity through which it defends the values of academic freedom, institutional autonomy and ethical integrity. The Code of Ethics of the UBT College (provided to ET as annex to SER) is aimed at guiding the conduct of the academic community of the College; it applies to entire academic community.

According to SER:

- *“Members of academic community include staff and students and the Code of Ethics applies to their interpersonal relations and their relations with the institution. The Code is a moral contract made between the members of academic community and UBT College Branch Ferizaj to strengthen their connection and cooperation to enhance the reputation of the organisation”. (SER, Ferizaj, page 53);*
- *“Violations of the Code of Ethics come before Faculty Sub-Committee for Ethics as the first instance. The Institutional Ethics Committee serves as the second and final instance dealing with ethical violations. The institutional Ethics Committee is*



*comprised of three staff representatives, two members from administration (HR/Research) and a Student Union representative”. (SER, Prizren, page 64);*

- *“Ethics Committee - The body is responsible for the implementation and promotion of responsible ethical code of conduct and diversity policy among staff and students on teaching, research, learning and management. The body will be responsible to implement and promote ethics and handle instances of code breaches among academic staff, administrative staff and students”. (SER, Prizren, page 64).*

The code of ethics requires that all internal stakeholders act consistently with high standards of ethical conduct and avoidance of plagiarism in research, teaching, performance evaluation, and in the conduct of administrative duties, and avoid conflicts of interest. According to the Code, integrity is crucial for teaching and learning, as well as for research and cooperation relationships. It deals with issues describing responsibility of staff, academic freedom, a task of Academic Community Members being the creation of a constructive atmosphere for promoting the knowledge of all members.

The code is enforced through clear processes and mechanisms, and it applies to all staff and structural units in the institution. It is important to mention that the Ethics Committee is not entirely similar at the branch level, and this provides a better insight of the fact at local activity in different places. Ethics Committee is responsible for the analysis and resolution of any potential breaches in the code of ethics. *“The violations handling procedure is described in the Ethics (Sub) Committee Standard Operating Procedure. After receiving a report, the Ethics Committees shall invite for a meeting the persons implicated or representatives of the bodies submitting the report. The Ethics Commission may invite for a meeting any person who, in its opinion, may possess information relevant to the case. The persons may remain anonymous upon their request.” (SER, Ferizaj, page 58).* The discussion with the college’s representatives during the online visit revealed that branches have a clear autonomy and that the Committee of ethics may act on its own initiative; at Prizren branch the head declared that they had no case of violation of the Code of Ethics.

The institution representatives declare that it applies the code of ethics and its associated processes and mechanisms but there is no clear evidence on this matter, as results, even anonymous are not on the website. In fact, at the link with all procedures listed, none of the 62 policies and regulations are uploaded. They have only the name of the documents, but no content: <https://www.ubt-uni.net/en/ubt-en/mission-and-vision/regulations-and-policies/>. At



this stage, ET remarks that in the list there is a Code of Conduct but in the report and annex, the discussion is around the Code of Ethics. In the case, that the 2 documents are different, the Code of Ethics is not at least listed in the set of documents, and in the case, that these are the same one document, the content is anyway, unavailable to the community in this manner. Therefore, ET does not consider that all internal regulations, procedures, self-evaluation reports and decisions of governing bodies are made publicly available. Here, the college has a lot to improve to generate a high level of transparency.

The institution is publishing some relevant, but not really detailed information regarding its academic staff, its research and academic activities, the programmes it offers, the number of students enrolled, the intended learning outcomes of its programmes, the qualifications they award, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, the pass rates and the learning opportunities available to its students, graduate employment information, scholarship opportunities, as well as tuition and administrative fees. It is a huge effort to search on the website information as some issues are differently placed in English than in Albanian. Many documents, as already mentioned have only their names. Other issues, are only declared and not updated. Here are some examples:

- UBT publication and impact is not updated since 2016: <https://www.ubt-uni.net/en/services/publications-and-impacts/>;
- Staff category has nothing uploaded: no picture, no e-mail, no CV, no list of publication: <https://www.ubt-uni.net/en/ubt-en/governance/staff/>;
- UBT conferences item has nothing for the 2019: <https://www.ubt-uni.net/en/services/conferences-and-round-tables/>;
- Examples can continue.

Although, the institution considers that “Transparency is one of the main goals of UBT and this is achieved mostly through publishing its main, relevant, accurate, detailed information in its website” (SER, Prizren, page 66), and “Internal regulations, procedures, and decisions of governing bodies are made publicly available via internet page of UBT” (SER, Ferizaj, page 59), Et considers that they still have a lot of work in this area.

### **Compliance level: Partially compliant**

### **ET recommendations:**



1. *Make public (available online) Code of ethics and its application, self-evaluation reports and decisions of governing bodies – Senate, Rector, Quality Council and Ethics Council;*
2. *Develop the site of the institution with relevant information for all stakeholders – internal and external;*
3. *Create individual pages for academic staff and update the information, annually.*

## 2.5. Quality management

According to the SER, the quality assurance system at UBT College, including Branches in Ferizaj and Prizren, is regulated by the UBT Quality Assurance Manual in line with the legal framework in Kosovo, such as the Law on Higher Education, the Administrative Instruction on the Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions in Kosovo and the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). The UBT Quality Assurance Manual describes processes, mechanisms, instruments, reporting, data collection, timeframes, responsibilities and units involved in the processes:

- *Procedures for design and approval of new programmes, subjects and modules*
- *Procedures for student assessment*
- *Procedures for ongoing monitoring of programmes*
- *Procedures for programme evaluation*
- *Procedures for selection, appointment, appraisal and development of staff*
- *Procedures for evaluating premises, equipment and facilities*
- *Procedures for evaluating student services*
- *Procedures for evaluation the governance and quality assurance policy*
- *Procedure for the evaluation of public information*

The UBT Quality Assurance Manual with its policies, processes and procedures is not a public document.

Internal Quality Assurance System for the branches is coordinated by the central management. The structure responsible for the development and implementation of quality assurance processes throughout the UBT College is Quality Assurance Committee **which has nine members** according to the QA Regulation: 1 representative of the UBT management; 3 representatives of the academic staff; 2 representatives of the administrative staff; 1 student; 1 alumni; 1 international expert and **seven members** according to the *SER Branch Prizren page 75*. The Quality Manager is the administrative officer responsible for coordinating and



implementing the policies adopted by the Quality Assurance Committee. The institutional Quality Assurance Office is fully staffed and has a separate budget line to implement all quality assurance processes. Every Faculty has its respective Quality Assurance Sub-Committee and Quality Assurance Officer. Programs delivered at the branch level are part of Faculties at the central institution level, hence the quality assurance processes at each study program are overseen by the respective Quality Assurance Sub-Committee of the Faculty. While the Quality Assurance Committee is responsible for the review the policy and should ensure that the policies, processes and procedures are implemented, the Quality Assurance Office is direct responsible with the implementation.

*Branch governance structures assume leadership in the implementation of quality assurance standards at the branch level.* (SER Ferizaj page 61) and it is not clear for the ET if the directors of the branches have only attributions in the implementation of the decisions taken by the central management or they are playing an active role in the process.

According to the SER, both branches use regular survey with students, staff and stakeholders. Except of students, who confirmed that they complete semester questionnaires, no other stakeholder has confirmed the existence of data collection instruments – survey (alumni, employers). Moreover, the graduates of both branches have never heard of Alumni, some not even knowing the meaning of the term.

While teachers are aware of the processes governing the institution and, in particular, those regarding quality assurance, students from both branches do not seem to be aware and involved at all. During the discussions, ET identified that students have no idea about organisational structures and student's involvement or about processes in place regarding quality assurance. Students and graduates confirmed that they have periodically completed questionnaires on teaching and learning resources, but do not know what happens next with the questionnaires. The example of semester Report presented by institution as additional document, is very general, having any evidence from data obtained using the surveys. In the same time, the self-evaluation reports of the branches are so similar, that it is difficult to be confident into a real analysis at branch level, and an honest reflection on the present situation (*there are also mistakes coming from copy-paste*).

The QA assurance system and processes are regularly evaluated by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency and updated according with KAA requirements





**Compliance level: Partially compliant**

***ET recommendations:***

1. *Ensure that QA commitment at branches' level follows their specificity and the involvement of the whole community;*
2. *Increase the role of QA system in the processes at all levels of the branches' activities;*
3. *Ensure that branches' students are equally involved in QA assurance activities, as the students from Prishtina are;*
4. *Ensure that Alumni Association has also representatives from branches and their contribution is taken into account in decision making processes;*
5. *Ensure that the QA system and the data collection instruments cover the whole range of institutional activities (graduates and employers).*

**2.6. Learning and teaching**

According to SER:

- *"The bases of the administration of studies are the following documents: Law of Higher Education, the Statute of UBT, UBT College legislative documents of the school and the Regulations for Organisation of Studies. The curriculum is implemented by academic terms and years. The beginning and the end of studies and dates for examination sessions are fixed in the academic calendar." (SER, Prizren, page 81);*
- *"The bases of the administration of studies are the following documents: Law of Higher Education, the Statute of UBT, UBT College legislative documents of the school and the Regulations for Organisation of Studies. The curriculum is implemented by academic terms and years. The beginning and the end of studies and dates for examination sessions are fixed in the academic calendar." (SER, Ferizaj, page 74);*
- *"The general structure of curricula is uniform and has been worked out by the Study Commission of the Academic Council and approved by the Board. The respective departments, including branches draw up the objectives of the curricula and education programmes within the certain confirmed rules. After a discussion in the department and branches, the curriculum is presented to the Study Commission for amendments and additions. The final version of the curriculum is presented to the Academic Council for approval. The quality assurance system is developed and the processes are underway". (SER, Ferizaj, page 76).*



UBT has drafted and adopted policies and procedures applicable to all academic programs; the institution monitors the extent to which those policies and procedures are effectively implemented. In terms of teaching and learning, the performance indicators include 2 areas of indicators: regarding the customer results, including: student and stakeholder satisfaction, number of students and graduate employment and in the area of learning and growth, paying attention to staff development (<https://www.ubt-uni.net/en/ubt-en/mission-and-vision/performance-indicators/>). The college also monitors some quality indicators, and pays attention to differentiate programs. According to 5.3. article in the Quality assurance regulation (provided as annex to SER): *“Procedures for ongoing monitoring of programmes – the purpose of these procedures is to ensure that systematic processes exist and are managed in order to collect and analyse information supportive of the continuous improvement of the programmes, monitor student achievement in relation to stated learning outcomes of programmes and gauge the effectiveness of programme assessment mechanisms, create a quality culture within the College at both staff and student level such that stakeholders are aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to programme quality, support overarching periodic reviews of the institution and Faculties”*.

UBT is taking measures to ensure that all programs meet high standards of learning and teaching through initial approvals, regular changes and monitoring of performance. Regulation is detailed and clear. Each study program is based on correlations between learning outcomes. “The institution undertakes a regular periodic evaluation of programmes once every three years. This procedure is implemented as part of the accreditation process and is essential to ensure that the offer is catered to student needs and labour market. The evaluation process serves to review the programme learning outcomes, programme teaching and learning methodology, assessment and its courses.” (SER, Prizren, page 86).

A study program is presented in the form of a series of documents including the main relevant information; thematic programs and syllabuses express learning outcomes in the form of different competences achieved by a discipline.. In addition, the assessment methods for each discipline take into consideration the planned learning outcomes and the description professors provided to students at the beginning of the teaching. Student learning outcomes of the programs are consistent with the National Qualifications Framework. Teaching staff confirmed during the online site visit that they use a variety of assessment methods for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.





During the discussion with students, they expressed their appreciation for the quality of teaching. Teaching staff are qualified and experienced for their particular teaching responsibilities, they use teaching strategies suitable for the different kinds of learning. In order to improve their teaching effectiveness, academic staff is frequently taking part at trainings, fact confirmed by the teaching staff during the online site visit. Several examples of teaching training were provided by the UBT College representatives in the set of additional documents after the visit. The learning methods and environments are considered as student-centred and stimulate students' motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process: "The goal to motivate and engage students in the learning process is done through setting expectations for all students, providing them with challenging goals and assessing their work. Learning methods are based on research-led and practice driven. Students are actively engaged in the research process and are driven by practical means" (SER, Ferizaj, page 83). The student-professor relationship is a good and positive one. Several projects in which were students involved in different faculties, were provided in the set of additional documents, after the online site visit. Nevertheless, there is no clear evidence that students learning far away from the main campus, meaning branches are effectively involved in processes of learning, being motivated as a group. They still need basic equipment in those locations, such as more printers, as they confirmed during the online site visit.

Teaching quality and the effectiveness of programs is evaluated through student assessments. In SER, both branches consider the assessment as being done by graduates and stakeholders: "The institution undertakes a regular periodic evaluation of programmes once every three years. This procedure is implemented as part of the accreditation process and is essential to ensure that the offer is catered to student needs and labour market. The evaluation process serves to review the programme learning outcomes, programme teaching and learning methodology, assessment and its courses" (SER, Prizren, page 86). Nevertheless, during meetings, apart from students, the other categories of participants (graduates and stakeholders) did not confirm that they fill in some surveys. Therefore, ET is reserved in considering the SER's statement as evidence-based.

### **Compliance level: Substantially compliant**

#### **ET recommendations:**



- 1. Extend the level of quality survey to more stakeholders, especially graduates and companies;*
- 2. Create and make public a report based on the survey addressed to students, graduates and stakeholders;*
- 3. Create a methodology/procedure to increase the student engagement in learning process.*

## **2.7. Research**

UBT College, as well as their branches do have research development plan that follows the mission of the institution. Even more, with the intention to emphasise their research activities and institutional role in research they also developed Strategy for Research. What is missing, although they provided number of indicators, they are still not sufficient, targeted enough and the way they are given they do not allow to establish benchmarking for further monitoring of performance. Similar comment goes for the budgeting and investments for research. Offered figures are not elaborated and there is no clear picture how the funding will be allocated, and how it will be done throughout the whole lifecycle of the Strategy.

Central institution, as well as branches which are actually obliged to follow central decisions do set up number of indicators and ambitious plans how to monitor research productivity. Actually, plans for a near future in terms of increasing number of publications, in particular in relevant international journals, number of citations etc. is quite ambitious and with no doubts, the governing and management bodies as well as administrative support will need to put a lot of efforts, and invest into research, if those numbers ought to be reached. It has been also reported on further support for innovation and transfer technology activities, including opening of spin offs. Although it has been reported on the existence of TT office, as well as having certain regulations for intellectual rights, there are still no well documented on clear rules of intellectual property, patenting, the role of patenting (and licensing), adequate professional administrative support for this kind of activities, including the participation of students in research that might result in patent and how to protect their rights in relation to senior researchers/teachers. This is a legally and financially very demanding issue, as well as it is important to have extremely skilful professional team to support those kind of activities.

Number of laboratories and research centers that suppose to support further research development is impressive, although when talking to academic staff focus on teaching still



emerges as a first focus. Nevertheless, both documents and collected data pointed clearly to the fact that teaching staff is aware of the relevance of doing research and to include students in research directly or via presenting research results and integrating them into their lecturing.

All the documents as well as staff interviewed show a pride for belonging to the institution, therefore the way of showing institutional loyalty and respect by publishing papers under the institutional affiliation it seems to be regular. However, according to documents it seems that the number of published paper extremely vary among the staff. While some appear to be very productive, some have very small number of papers over period of years, evidently not one annually, at least.

Institution has code of ethics (a central document), but some areas of research integrity are still insufficiently covered (such as for example treatment of research participants, protection of their privacy, rights etc.). It needs to be updated and more comprehensive having in mind the fields of research that are covered. Also, it is a general Code of Ethics, covering a range of the institutional activities, such as employment, teaching, research etc. Institution that has ambitions to emphasise research activity needs to have very elaborated document in order to assure ethical behaviour in research which is today extremely demanding, including the protection of the research participants' rights.

### **Compliance level: Partially compliant**

#### **ET recommendations:**

- 1. In order to enable research plan to be monitored it is important to establish more indicators and to make clear activity plan for research development*
- 2. With the ambitious plan for research development it is important to have ore elaborated investments in research, including allocation of budget, including funding for performing research itself*
- 3. Big number of laboratories and centres for performing research will be justified only if research productivity is increase, and primarily according to international criteria*
- 4. Research on a branch level need to ne managed adequately, not exclusively from the central unit*
- 5. Research integrity and ethical issues in research require further elaboration following international experience and requirements.*



## 2.8. Staff, employment processes and professional development

UBT College has several policies and regulations is included in an employment handbook which includes information on rights and responsibilities, recruitment processes, supervision, performance evaluation, promotion, support processes, and professional development: *“The Staff Employment Handbook is essentially a written copy of the information communicated at induction, and is provided to in hard copy and posted in the Intranet. Staff receive information in employment conditions, teaching and learning methods, quality assurance, ethics, complaints and IT and communication advice”* (SER, Prizren , page 123). Criteria and processes for performance evaluation are clearly specified and made known in advance to all staff. *“Academic staff selection and promotion procedures in College UBT Branch Prizren are set out in the Statute of UBT College. The Regulation on Academic Staff Selection, Performance Assessment and Promotion guides the institutional framework on staff workload, designations, staff appraisal and promotion”* (SER, Prizren, page 120). Other relevant procedures are: Regulation of work relations and of the person responsible for performing the required tasks, Administrative Directive of determining the coefficient in the workplace and administration, Handbook for Teachers (<https://www.ubt-uni.net/en/ubt-en/mission-and-vision/regulations-and-policies/>).

UBT College provided also a Staff development policy as annex to SER. The recruitment processes ensure that staff have the specific areas of expertise, qualification and experience for the positions they occupy. The recruitment processes ensure equitable treatment of all applicants.

According to SER:

- *“The institution has developed strategies and policies for maintaining the current staff, academic and professional development of staff, and policies to attract better qualified staff in the context of permanent staff of the institution. Special importance also, is dedicated to balancing gender, policy selection, promotion, retribution and teaching workload and scientific-research. Also, an emphasis is being put in attracting young and talented staff with qualifications from renowned education centers worldwide”.* (SER, Prizren, page 121);
- *“The criteria for the choice are the candidate’s level of education, scientific work and teaching abilities as well as practical knowledge of the field. The most important criterion is the productivity of the candidate’s scientific work. The candidates’ ability*



*is initially evaluated by a specially constructed assessment commission. The administrative personnel in different” (SER, Ferizaj, page 114);*

- *“The allocation of work must be made in consultation with the staff members and by taking into consideration that staff members skills and experience. The allocation of the work must recognise the position of the employee within a research – teaching nexus. It must take into consideration employees’ administration, research, service to their professional discipline and service to the wider community“ (SER, Ferizaj, page 116).*
- *departments have permanent contracts. Additional schooling and vocational courses for academic and administrative staff are arranged as part of Staff Development Plan.*

Candidates for employment are provided with full position descriptions and conditions of employment. Of course, the academic staff is either full time or part-time hired. The management of the institution (the rector) confirmed that all staff has a contract at an institutional level, and not at a branch level.

New teaching staff is given an effective orientation to ensure familiarity with the institution and its services, programs and student development strategies, and institutional priorities for development. Teaching staff confirmed that they had orientation program at their beginning of their career in UBT. In fact, one of the teaching staff, during the online site visit said that “they do not work for UBT, they work with UBT” revealing therefore, their connection to the institution.

The level of provision of teaching staff (the ratio of students per full time staff member) is adequate for the programs offered. In fact, regarding the UBT performance indicators, they also have some for Learning and growth referring to staff: number of staff, training and staff development, people satisfaction, staff ratio and skill orientation (<https://www.ubt-uni.net/en/ubt-en/mission-and-vision/performance-indicators/>). Teaching loads are equitable across the institution, taking into account the nature of teaching requirements in different fields of study. Anyway, teaching staff confirmed that they have periods and periods of time, when they are more or less busy. In addition, staff employed in the institution hold the relevant qualifications so that they are able to effectively manage educational, scientific, research, being very much preoccupied of getting involved in projects and international cooperation.



Criteria and processes for performance evaluation are clearly specified and made known in advance to all staff. Academic staff evaluation is done through students' evaluations, and occur on a formal basis at least once each year. The results of the evaluation are made publicly available. There is no clear evidence that there is an annual self-evaluation, peer evaluation and superior evaluation of staff and no results are made publicly available on this matter. In addition, students have no idea what is happening after they respond to surveys.

Staff performance is somehow monitored. Main indicators have already been mentioned. Teaching staff was very open to admit that they have improved on digitalization, interdisciplinary work, projects with community etc. Nevertheless, it is not clear how the institution is closely monitoring the improvements in staff activity, apart from their advancement in career. UBT pays a lot of attention to all staff professional development, but not really on the step-by-step process of improvement. In other words, they have training, but after that, they have no clear evidence on how they find out that their staff activity has really and clearly improved.

### **Compliance level: Substantially compliant**

#### **ET recommendations:**

- 1. Monitor the improvements of the staff activity making public the results of improvement;*
- 2. Create a procedure or integrate in an existing one a sharing phase from the staff who was trained to the staff who was not;*
- 3. Create a procedure for academic staff peer and superior evaluation and make public the results;*
- 4. Make public a report on academic staff evaluation (at least statistical report);*

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

In all branches of UBT, the admission to the study is realised on the basis of a public call and the conducted entrance examination. The criteria are consistently defined by Academic Council Regulation on Undergraduate and Graduate Admission and fairly applied. The entrance examination is conducted by the Commission for the Entrance Examination appointed by the Faculty Council for the period of three years. Based on the results of the entrance examination, the Commission creates a ranking list determining which candidates have become entitled to

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be enrolled on the basis of the results achieved in the entrance examination. Student admission requirements are specified in advertisements and published on the website of the university.

New students have all available information about UBT Branches offerings, types and levels of the study program, study fees, offered scholarships, organisation of studies, and any other information needed.

Every year, after new students' enrolment, both branches organizes Induction Days, an orientation program aiming to ensure through understanding of the range of services and facilities available to them. Information about facilities, the assessment regulations, available student supports, code of conduct, student complaint and disciplinary procedures, deferral information, and other such important information is provided by the student handbook through the Student Portal.

According to regulations, students can have between 10 to 50 % discount from tuition fee. Also, discounts are offered to Kosovo civil servants (20 to 30 %). Considering the additional information provided by UBT, the number of students who have benefited from international mobility is insignificant, for both branches.

According to the information provided, there are processes in place to collect and analyse data referring to the student progression and drop-out rates. The institution collects also data on students' satisfaction with their programmes, the learning resources, and administration and support services. The students do not know what happens to the results obtained from the analysis of the questionnaires, they only suppose that they are used to improve the teaching processes and the facilities provided.

UBT College developed a Student Appeals Procedure available for all branches. The regulations make clear the grounds on which academic appeals may be based and the steps to follow. The appeal procedure is intended to protect the students from unfair decisions. During the meeting, students confirmed that the procedure is public available and operational.

There is no anti-plagiarism software and until then, there are no procedures in place to guarantee the originality of the submitted work. The institution is relying that it will be the teachers themselves that can identify plagiarism in students' work, projects and thesis. As confirmed during the meeting with teaching staff, they did not implement a clear plagiarism prevention strategy in their teaching processes.



Considering the counselling provided by the college in both branches, students and graduates identified as functional the career planning and internships and employment advice. They do not know about psychological counselling or any other type of counselling.

Even if, at UBT College level, various extracurricular activities involving students, such as learning and sports competitions, tours, cultural events, movie night, parties etc. are mentioned, students and graduates from branches are not familiar with these activities, which are organized in Prishtina.

**Compliance level: Partially compliant**

***ET recommendations:***

- 1. Ensure that the data provided in internal QA analyses are used to identify the students' need and also, that they are taking into account in branches' development plans;*
- 2. Increase the branches' support for extracurricular students' activities;*
- 3. Ensure that the plagiarism's prevention is one of the key point in teaching, research and administrative activities;*
- 4. Increase the number of international students' mobility in both branches;*
- 5. Provide various counselling for branches' students (career, psychological etc.).*

**2.10. Learning resources and facilities**

First of all, ET should mention the fact that regarding the learning resources and facilities, the evaluation was made on the basis of the information received from the institution and those declared by the participants in the meetings during the online site visit.

Students and graduates from both branches emphasized that the main difference between what happens in branches comparing Prishtina is linked with the facilities and learning resources. They would like to have the same environment, with large spaces for individual work and recreational spaces. The same issue was emphasized by the graduates who would have liked to have during them studies more green spaces and also more places for creational work. Complete inventories are maintained of equipment owned or controlled by the branches.

SERs for both branches mention that *Branches have both been certified as meeting the minimum standards for special needs students*, but during the meetings, ET didn't identify appropriate facilities and learning resources for special needs as blindness, deafness etc.





Both branches have their own library, but students stated that the literature should sometimes be requested from the library in Prishtina and it is provided online. Libraries include also study areas with computers. All UBT's libraries, for all branches, provide access to: EBSCO, SAGE Journals and JSTOR Journals and benefit from agreements on interlibrary loans and sharing of resources and services with: Library of University of Helsinki, in Finland, Library of Charles University, in Prague, Czech Republic, National Library of Kosovo, Pristina; Library of Agricultural University of Tirana, Albania, and Dukagjini-Publishing House in Peja, Kosovo. Computers are not always enough, but personal laptops and mobile devices can also be connected to the library wireless network. The students said they would also like to have opportunities to print and copy in branches' buildings.

Quality assurances processes include feedback about the quality of facilities, but how the ET already mentioned, the quality assurance system is not fully functional and completely integrated in the daily routine among the branches. Both branches have increased their areas (*from 990 m<sup>2</sup> to 8350 m<sup>2</sup> in Prizren and from 900 m<sup>2</sup> to 1500 m<sup>2</sup> in Ferizaj*), but the number of students has also increased (*tenfold increase at Prizren and doubled increase at Ferizaj*). Also, there is not any kind of feedback from administrative staff.

The college organized various training programs to ensure effective use of computing equipment and appropriate software and at those attended also staff representatives and students from the two branches. At branches level, ET didn't identify a structure responsible with technical support.

**Compliance level: Substantially compliant**

***ET recommendations:***

- 1. Increase (in both branches) the number of spaces dedicated to individual work and recreational activities;*
- 2. Ensure (in both branches) suitable arrangements are made for the infrastructure and facilities to accommodate students and staff with special physical and learning difficulties;*
- 3. Ensure in branches' buildings opportunities to print and copy;*
- 4. Provide more computers for the libraries.*



## 2.11. Institutional cooperation

As part of UBT College, the Ferizaj Branch and the Prizren branch operate in accordance with the strategies established by the central management. UBT College developed an Internationalization Strategy and intends to increase the international visibility of the College. The UBT Strategy proposes the following main objectives considering institutional cooperation and internationalization:

***Maintaining and increasing internationalization and regional partnerships*** – *Maintaining and increasing internationalization and regional partnerships Formation of the new local and international higher education alliances and continued excellent performance against international and regional efficiency and effectiveness benchmarks.*

***Partnering with the community*** – *Partnering with the community. The UBT College will continue to forge strong links with industry and wider society, which will be supported through mainstream funding, alternative income streams and volunteering arrangements in order to provide service to industry and the community at institutional, staff and student level.*

The strategy proposes also specific actions to achieve the objectives, but some of them seem to describe sub-objectives and not concrete actions, for instance: *Expand the UBT's role as a leading regional centre with a proactive agenda for educational, social, economic, political, environmental, and cultural advancement; Build more bridges between and among our communities to create a culture of engagement, inclusion, and belonging etc.*

Similar with UBT 2025 Strategy, the Internationalization Strategy refers to all branches equally, without a separate analysis of the potential development of each.

The UBT College's structure responsible for institutional cooperation and internationalisation is UBT International Office which is in charge of putting into practice the actions set to achieve the objectives mentioned before

In terms of international cooperation, it is difficult to separate the activity of the branches from that of the central management, the branches not having the legal authority to sign agreements separately. ET tried more to identify if representatives of the branches are active in the activities proposed by projects or agreements at college's level.

According to the SERs of branches, UBT College has over 250 international partnership agreements for joint-programmes, research, staff development and exchange, student exchange and knowledge transfer; and more than 80 active partnerships across the globe. Some of the



agreements were signed long time ago and ET expressed its doubt that all agreements are really functional.

UBT College organize different events aimed to increase the College's visibility. UBT College organizes *UBT Summer Academy (Summer Academy of Entrepreneurship, Summer Academy of ICT, Summer Academy of Integrated Design, Summer Academy of Energy Efficiency, Summer Academy of Life Sciences, Summer Academy of EU Integration, Summer Academy of Nursing, Summer Academy of Building Engineering, Summer Academy of Architecture)* and *Open International Days (Consume Protection Day, Innovation Day, Entrepreneurship Day, Project Management Day, Quality Day, Tourism and Hospitality Day, Austrian – Kosovo Days, Business Club Forum)* which provide the staff and students the opportunity to share experience, to learn from an international colleagues, and to enrich their cultural experience. Staff from branches (in most cases being also teaching staff in Prishtina) know well these activities, but they are not at all familiar to students and graduates from branches. It is more or less the same situation for international projects and, considering international mobility of students, ET expressed already the opinion that this is insignificant compared to the student population from branches.

UBT College has developed collaborative partnerships with different stakeholders from local branches, the most for internship placements. The employers' involvement in structural units is visible more at central management level, but consultative meetings between local employers and branches' representatives were mentioned for both branches, during the meeting with representative of the local labor market.

How the ET already mentioned, even if SERs of both branches mention Alumni Association as an active structure, the graduates of both branches have never heard of Alumni, some not even knowing the meaning of the term.

**Compliance level: Substantially compliant**

***ET recommendations:***

- 1. Increase institutional efforts and funding in order to increase students and staff international mobility;*
- 2. Increase the branches' students participation in national and international events organized by the College;*



3. *Re-evaluate the agreements and memoranda with international institutions to ensure their function.*
4. *Ensure that Alumni Association has also representatives from branches and their contribution is taken into account in decision making processes.*

### 3. Overall Evaluation and Judgments of the ET

According to the KAA Accreditation manual, in order to be granted a positive decision for program re/accreditation, every education provider has to demonstrate at least a **substantial compliance** level in the overall judgment. Therefore, failure in meeting at least an overall substantial compliance level entails delaying, withdrawing, suspending or denying accreditation.

UBT College Branches in Ferizaj and Prizren have been object of the united evaluation process during one site visit, namely performed on-line, but each of the branches submitted separate SER. However, all the submitted documents are not specific to either of the branches but they are overall institutional documents and policy papers, the same one if the object of the evaluation would have been the central unit, UBT College. As it has been observed throughout of the evaluation report the UBT system has a high level of centralisation and it is not easy to distinctively separate branches and their functioning from the headquarter. ET tried to identify how the activities planned at institutional level are put into practice at each branch and, in the same time, how the institution responds to the specific needs of each branch. On the other side, two branches are treated simultaneously through one process of the evaluation, which resulted also in one common evaluation report. Such an approach, *per se*, might have some advantages as well as disadvantages.

UBT's feed back on the draft report showed that the institution/s are aware that the weak points can be remedied and have already identified some solutions in this regard.

According to the Manual requirements, and based on the evaluation process for both of the branches, the Expert Team recommends **to reaccredit the two UBT College Branches, in Prizren and in Ferizaj** for the period of **3 years**.



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Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju  
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