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UBT COLLEGE
ENERGY ENGINEERING AND MANAGEMENT
BSc

REACCREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

22 Apr 2021, Zagreb, Croatia



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: 19 April 2021

Expert Team (ET) members:

- *Dr. Dražen Vrhovski*

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- *Naim Gashi, KAA Director*
- *Shkelzen Gerxhaliu, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring*
- *Arianit Krasniqi, Senior Officer for Accreditation and Evaluation*
- *Ilijane Ademaj Ahmeti, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring*
- *Leona Kovaci, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring*

Sources of information for the Report:

- [1] *Self-Evaluation Report, UBT College, BSc in Energy Engineering and Management, Prishtina, 2021*
- [2] *Syllabi of the study programme*
- [3] *CVs of the study programme academic staff*
- *Self-Evaluation Report Appendices:*
 - [4] *Regulation for Academic Advancement, Prishtina, 2019*
 - [5] *Document called “UBT – Faculty of Energy Engineering and Management, Code of Ethics, filename “Code of Ethics - EEM”, date/place of publishing unknown*
 - [6] *UBT Code of Ethics, Prishtina 2019*
 - [7] *Regulation for Student Complaints UBT College HEIPP, Prishtina, 2019*

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- [8] *Document entitled “Ethics Subcommittee of the Faculty”, date/place of publishing unknown*
- [9] *Guidelines for Online Exams Organisation, PBHE College UBT, Prishtina, 2020*
- [10] *Handbook of Academic Staff, UBT College, Prishtina, 2020*
- [11] *Handbook of Student, UBT College, Prishtina 2020*
- [12] *Document entitled “Industrial Board of the Faculty”, date/place of publishing unknown*
- [13] *Document entitled “List of National and International Partners”, date/place of publishing unknown*
- [14] *Document entitled “List of Publication”, date/place of publishing unknown*
- [15] *Document entitled “Organogram”, date/place of publishing unknown*
- [16] *Document entitled “Quality Assurance Subcommittee of the Faculty”, date/place of publishing unknown*
- [17] *Regulation for Student Registration, UBT College, Prishtina, 2020*
- [18] *UBT College, Department of Energy Engineering and Management, Research Strategy, date/place of publishing unknown*
- [19] *Document entitled “The List of Academic Staff – BSc in Energy Engineering and Management”, date/place of publishing unknown*
- [20] *UBT – Energy Engineering and Management Faculty, Strategic Development Plan 2020-2021, date/place of publishing unknown*
- [21] *Document entitled “Subcommittee on Appeals of the Faculty”, date/place of publishing unknown*
- [22] *Quality Assurance Regulation, UBT, Prishtina, 2019*
- [23] *Statute of UBT College HEIPP, [online], available at: <https://www.ubt-uni.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Statuti-i-UBT-English.pdf> [Accessed 3 Apr 2021]*
- [24] *Prof.Dr. Edmond Hajrizi, Founder and President of University for Business and Technology, [online], available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5jPaHZRnRE> [Accessed 2 Apr 2021]*
- [25] *UBT Facts and Figures, [online], available at: <https://www.ubt-uni.net/en/ubt-en/about-ubt/facts-and-figures> [Accessed 2 Apr 2021]*
- [26] *UBT Mission and Vision, [online], available at: <https://www.ubt-uni.net/en/ubt-en/about-ubt/> [Accessed 3 Apr 2021]*



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- [27] *UBT Regulation and Policies*, [online], available at: <https://www.ubt-uni.net/en/ubt-en/about-ubt/regulations-and-policies> [Accessed 4 Apr 2021]
- [28] *Anhalt University of Applied Sciences, Study Guide*, [online], available at: <https://www.hs-anhalt.de/nc/en/study/orientation/study-guide.html> [Accessed 4 Apr 2021]
- [29] *UBT Quality Manual*, [online], available at: <https://www.ubt-uni.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/UBT-Quality-Manual.pdf> [Accessed 5 Apr 2021]
- [30] *UBT Strategy 2025*, date/place of publishing unknown
- [31] Document entitled “*Previous re-accreditation report received from the KAA*”, date/place of publishing unknown
- [32] *Staff evaluation report - Student Questionnaire, Faculty of Energy Engineering and Management, Winter semester, Academic Year 2020/2021, UBT, Prishtina, 2021*
- [33] *Staff Development Plan, Academic Year 2020/21, UBT IDEAA*, date/place of publishing unknown
- [34] Document entitled “*Templates of the questionnaires for different stakeholder groups - students, graduates, academic staff, employers*”
- [35] *Regulation and Procedure for Staff Recruitment, UBT, Gjilan, 2018*
- [36] Video entitled “*Sisteme te informacionit.mp4*”, [online], available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uacEXTN_6ErHLObnW2gsrDN-karZ2JRI/view?usp=sharing [Accessed 9 Apr 2021]
- [37] Video entitled “*Energji Eficiente*”, date/place of publishing unknown.

Sources referenced from [1] to [22] were provided by the UBT prior to the online evaluation interviews, whereas the sources from [30] onwards were requested and received upon the interviewing.

Criteria used for program evaluation:

- *Standards and performance indicators outlined in the Kosovo Accreditation Agency’s Accreditation Manual, 2018.*
- *The European Qualifications Framework*
- *The Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*



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- *National Qualifications Framework, Kosovo National Qualification Authority, Prishtina, 2020.*

1.2. Site visit schedule

- 09.00-09.40 Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated*
- 09.45-10.45 Meeting with the heads of the study programme 1: Energy and Management Engineering, Level V*
- 10.50-11.50 Meeting with the heads of the study programme 2: Energy and Management Engineering, BSc*
- 11.50-12.30 Lunch break*
- 12.30-13.10 Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff*
- 13.15-14.05 Meeting with teaching staff*
- 14.10-14.50 Meeting with the students*
- 14.55-15.35 Meeting with graduates*
- 15.40-16.20 Meeting with employers of graduates*
- 16.20-16.30 Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts*
- 16.30-16.40 Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program*

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

The UBT College (hereafter referred to as: the UBT) was established in 2001 in Prishtina first under the name of Institute for Enterprise Management and Engineering (IEME) which was later changed into the University for Business and Technology (UBT). Since 2004 the institution operates under the name of UBT College. At the time of this writing, the UBT operates at six locations in Kosovo, namely Prishtina, Lipjan, Prizren, Ferizaj, Gjilan and Peja,

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and offers 25 study programmes taught at 19 faculties. According to [24] and [25], in total, the UBT has got roughly 17.000 students and ca. 1.000 employees which makes it one of the largest higher education institutions operating in the Western Balkans.

The BSc in Education Energy Engineering and Management program which has been the subject of the undertaken evaluation (hereafter referred to as: Study Programme) is a study programme targeting high school graduates interested in energy engineering. The programme precedes the MSc level programme of the same name taught at the UBT Faculty of Energy Engineering (FEE), hence it also serves as a steppingstone to prospective MSc-level students. The Study Programme is a three-year programme carrying 200 ECTS credits and corresponds with Level 6 of the Kosovo National Qualifications Framework.

Work done in the course of the undertaken evaluation has been based on the self-evaluation report [1] prepared by the UBT in January 2021 (hereafter referred to as: SER), as well as on supplementary information and documentation listed in Section 1.1. All the documentation was provided either by the UBT/KAA or has been publicly available via different channels.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the assessment process did not include site visits to UBT locations. The evaluation has therefore been done entirely via online interviews and by means of document consultation. Although this has not had any influence on the objectiveness of the assessments made, nevertheless the process has still been somewhat hindered by the inability to undertake physical inspection of the UBT facilities and operational procedures.

As given in Section 1.2, online meetings were held with the following stakeholder groups and attendees:

- *UBT Management, attended by Mr Bertan Karahoda and Ms Annea Futko;*
- *Academic staff members acting as the heads of the study programme, attended by Ms Afete Musliu, Mr Sami Gashi, Mr Sami Makolli, Mr Nexhmi Krasniqi and Mr Faton Maloku;*
- *Quality assurance and representatives of the administrative staff, attended by Mr Armend Ymeri, Ms Natyra Kabashi and Mr Visar Hoxha;*
- *Teachers, attended by Mr Kliton Bylykbashi, Ms Ines Bula, Mr Visar Krelani, Mr Vehebi Sofiu, Mr Egzon Bajraktari, Mr Afrim Sylja and Mr Luan Morina;*

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- *Representatives from the industry, attended by Mr Blin Berdoniqi, Mr Xhevat Muqa and Mr Arian Ramaj;*
- *Student representatives, attended by Mr Blend Hashani, Ms Desantila Muriqi, Ms Vlera Kadriu, Ms Blinera Bislimi, Mr Blendi Berisha, Ms Leandra Sadiku and Liron Gjocaj;*
- *Graduates attended by Mr Visar Bejta, Ms Laura Nushi and Ms Rezarta Jetullahu.*



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2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

The UBT mission may be found online at [23] and [26]. Although the two sources provide different formulations, it must be said that both of them are somewhat generic and as such fit for a variety of possible academic and/or business outcomes. In this regard, it may be said that the mission of the Study Programme has been aligned with the overall mission of the institution. Nevertheless, the programme mission does not suggest either UBT/Programme's comparative advantages and unique discriminators on the market, neither it implies UBT/Programme's strategic orientation with respect to the geographic area of interest, research focus or target academic relevance/market share. In this regard, the Study Programme has indeed been aligned with the university mission declaratively, nevertheless, it does not provide a balanced reflection of the current and future specific strategic needs of both the institution and the local community, neither it recognises in a meaningful way any of the critical trends of the 21st century's industry/economy.

The UBT offers energy engineering and management study programmes both as Level 5 and BSc level programmes. Given that any programme focusing on engineering requires deep understanding of STEM-based disciplines and practices, it is not evident what didactic, logical or natural progression the Study Programme follows such that to achieve the required understanding and hence capacitate its graduates for any serious engineering undertaking. Implicitly, this has been acknowledged in the very SER given that the UBT has failed to provide any meaningful formulation of the programme goals and objectives other than rather trivial blanket descriptions such as “energy engineering systems are all around us...” and “...studying energy engineering is very exciting and interesting” identical to what has been said in the self-evaluation report accompanying the Level 5 programme reaccreditation process.

Although it is undisputable that the UBT enjoys a reputation of a business-driven higher education institution, and as such has been partnering a number of institutions and companies from different economy sectors, to prove that relevant academic advice has been sought for,

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the institution has listed only a handful of reference partnering institutions [13]. Moreover, among the partners, the UBT lists the German Anhalt University of Applied Sciences but it remains unclear what sort of advice for the given Study Programme has thus been acquired given that, according to [28], the only energy engineering study programme run by the Anhalt university is an MSc level programme on photovoltaics engineering. Also, it is not clear how come that the Industrial Board of the FEE faculty includes members from government-owned companies and institutions only, neither it is clear what is the purpose of a student-member in the board.

There is a number of formal policies, guidelines and regulations addressing various academic and/or procedural issues, however, a number of these is publicly inaccessible. Thus, for instance, from [27] it can be seen that only a handful of important documentation is downloadable for general public. Even if some of the documents are treated confidential for mere business reasons, it is not clear why the regulations like “Recruitment Procedure” or “Regulation of preserving personal data” would be treated that way, nor it is obvious what is the purpose of regulations such as “Regulation of the Photocopy”, “Regulation of Server Room” or “Handbook”.

Finally, the institution has failed to demonstrate a clear vision on its strategic orientation and goals related to the Study Programme, and both the documentation supplied, and the feedback gained leave room for arbitrary interpretations. Through the undertaken evaluation a number of contradictory information and feedbacks have been received such as, for instance, the forecasted constant marginal income generated by providing consultancy services (see p. 46 of the SER) which directly contradicts the corresponding strategic goals aimed at improving UBT cooperation with the industry listed in [20], as well as the feedback from the UBT management on where to expect new revenue streams.

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Define a strategic development plan with a timespan longer than one year, as has been the case with the [20]. For the next business timeframe, outline clearly key strategic*

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academic, research and business objectives of the given Study Programme with the corresponding action items, risks and performance indicators such as expected revenue, number of protected intellectual property rights and others. Define target deadlines for accomplishing a given strategic objective more precisely instead of a rather vague formulation like “2021 target” used in [20].

- 2. Extend the current partner database of the FEE faculty with industry partners other than public sector companies and institutions, as well as with partners outside the domicile geographic area. Run surveys on industry needs taking into account a much wider set of business profiles. If needed, hire external consultants to undertake such surveys and analyse feedback.*
- 3. Introduce a practice of running intermediate programme and institutional reviews by foreign academic partners.*

2.2. Quality management

Even though the UBT has got introduced a number of formal governing bodies responsible for maintaining an appropriate level of academic and business quality, as can be seen from the UBT Statute [23], the main decision-making power lays in the hands of a single person, the President of the Board. The president thus either appoints or has got a major influence on selection of the Rector, UBT Board, Steering Council, Academic Council and other managing bodies. As this may impede the objectivity of both the selection process and hence lead to biased quality assurance (QA) undertaking, it would somewhat be expected from an institution openly advocating self-governing and academic autonomy to have such impeding factors identified in the relevant QA improvement strategies and action plans. However, from the documentation presented and feedback collected it may be concluded that this has not been the case. Quite opposite, both the interviewed academic staff and UBT management have shown no concerns on the potentially unbalanced distribution of power.

Evaluation actions and improvement planning have been integrated into the regular planning processes, and UBT staff take part in these activities. However, it remains unclear to what extent is the thus collected feedback translated into concrete improvements as there was evidence that either feedbacks collected, or the corresponding improvement plans get eventually neglected. Thus, for instance, the feedback from the interviewed academic staff

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suggested that concerns had been raised on inadequate software support, however, no improvements have been made since.

The quality improvement process is regulated primarily by the QA regulation [22] and the corresponding manual [28]. The documents were adopted in 2019 and 2020 respectively, and in this regard, it may be deemed that formalised QA awareness has been rather recent. As such, any QA-related undertaking has been susceptible to various misalignments and discrepancies such as the discrepancy in the QA mechanisms set in Article 3 of the [22] and those of the QA regulation available at <https://www.ubt-uni.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/UBT-Quality-Assurance-Regulation-Final-06.10.2020.pdf>. Also, it is not clear which of the two regulations has been put in power.

Another example of regulatory misalignment may be seen in the formation of the QA Sub-Committee as the QA governing body at the faculty level. Even though it is not entirely clear how come that nothing on the QA Sub-Committee can be found in both [22] and [28], according to the QA regulation available online, the sub-committee is supposed to be membered by five representatives one of which is a student and with no representatives from outside the institution (Article 12.6). At the same time, from [16] it is clear that the current sub-committee includes six representatives in total, and as many as three student representatives and one alumnus. This indeed raises significant concerns as to both the legality of the committee as well as the capacity to make any meaningful quality change.

Unfortunately, similar discrepancies are also seen elsewhere. Thus, for instance, according to [6] the faculty ethics sub-committee is supposed to be membered by three representatives one of which is a student. Nevertheless, from [8] it is clear that the current sub-committee comprises of five members in total with only one being a student, thus diminishing the overall student representativeness in the matters having to do with ethical misconduct. Moreover, it is not clear what has been the reason behind running separate regulations such as [5] and [6] covering ethical misconduct on the faculty and UBT level respectively as it would be reasonable to expect that same positive standards are required to be applied UBT-wide.



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The UBT QA regulations put a strong emphasis on self-evaluation which is produced, at least, once every three years. The evaluation tools focusing on the overall programme quality issues are student evaluations of academic staff, and student evaluations of the study programmes, administration, and infrastructure. It needs be noted that these tools are more focused on inputs and processes rather than outputs, and no evidence has been collected proving that outputs of the Study Programme currently provided by the UBT, such as the progression rate, graduation rate, achievement of learning outcomes and others, are systematically analysed.

There is a solid evidence that feedbacks from students, graduates and employers are sought for and the corresponding survey data are collected. However, as mentioned earlier, evidence has been acquired suggesting that the results of the corresponding analyses have not been properly addressed, disseminated and made publicly available. It is hence recommended that aggregated data are used for producing semestral and/or annual reports and that these reports are published on the UBT website. It is also recommended that revisions of the survey templates are undertaken regularly. In case of the templates for students, the revision should be done in cooperation with the appointed student representatives. Given that the current version of the survey template [34] is in a paper-based format and is missing important questions related to academic integrity, teaching methods or resources used, it is recommended such important issues are also addressed in the questionnaires.

Finally, as given earlier, being rather recent, QA arrangements and measures are still at developmental stage and it takes time and experience to develop them further. In this regard, all recent QA-related developments that have taken place should be complimented. Nevertheless, to improve the quality further, it is recommended the UBT seeks examples and advice from other comparable higher education institutions outside Kosovo such that to develop a fully functional system able to meet the strategic objectives and minimise the immanent administrative burden.

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Align fully the quality management related documents with the strategic plan and UBT strategic objectives.*



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- 2. Introduce measurable KPIs which would be included in and analysed during the semestral or annual reporting process.*
- 3. Prepare and publish reports on the quality of study programmes more frequently than once every three year.*
- 4. Adjust the quality assessment tools so that they would focus more on the outputs.*

2.3. Academic staff

The UBT has provided a full tabular overview of academic staff to be engaged in the Study Programme. In addition to the corresponding national laws and regulations of the Republic of Kosovo, the hiring and appointment conditions are governed by the UBT statute [23] as well as by the regulation for staff appointment [35].

According to the SER, the majority of academic staff members engaged in the Study Programme are employed by the UBT as full-time employees. Furthermore, the UBT also meets the requirement of having employed at least one full-time staff member holding a PhD degree for every 60 ECTS credits in the Study Programme. Academics expected to be involved in the Study Programme confirm they do not hold more than two concurrent teaching positions by providing a corresponding statement.

Performance assessments are carried out once a year and the results are made available to the corresponding party and the relevant governing bodies. Given the feedback collected from the interviewed students, it may be deemed that effectiveness of the performance assessments taken and their impact on teaching quality is satisfactory, and so is the availability of academic staff for consultations. Nevertheless, for further professional improvement purposes, the institution runs both regular and demand-driven staff development trainings via its Institute for Development Education and Academic Affairs – IDEAA.

In addition to lecturing, responsibilities of teaching staff include other engagements in the academic community and the feedback collected has demonstrated teacher's interest and enthusiasm in undertaking such activities. Examples of the non-teaching activities include joint



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undertakings with the Sapienza University of Rome, Italy, memberships at governmental bodies and institutions and other such activities.

Finally, even though the SER suggests full compliance with the requirement to change the employment status upon retirement automatically, no such evidence has been found in the corresponding regulations consulted. It could however be argued that staff retirement procedures are completely governed by the national Law on Higher Education, nevertheless, Article 28 of the same law clearly states the provisions related to staff retirement are governed by the statute of the institution.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. In case it hasn't been done so already, update the existing regulatory documents such as the Statute and regulations governing the staff appointment policies and procedures such that to address the change in employment status upon retirement.*
- 2. Make the results of the undertaking evaluations publicly available taking into account privacy issues that may hence arise.*

2.4. Educational process content

Even though the Study Programme tends to be seen as an interdisciplinary programme intended to educate energy-engineering professionals, in its essence, the programme is nothing more than a mere collection of subjects aimed to cover nominally as many disciplines, paradigms and business approaches as possible, with no major intention to go into the merit of each of them individually. As such, in explaining the content of the Study Programme, the SER repeatedly points out that the programme is aimed at providing basic understanding of target engineering disciplines such that to allow the graduated students to take up entry level positions in energy engineering businesses. However, this contradicts with both the National Qualification Framework as well as the European Qualification Framework given that a level 6 programme would be expected to provide "...advanced knowledge in and about the field of work or study, including a critical understanding of theories and principles..." such that to

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enable students to “...demonstrate mastery and innovation to solve complex and unforeseen problems in the specialized field of work or study”.

Furthermore, the Study Programme does not follow a logical didactic flow and only a marginal progression in target competences may be seen as many of the programme modules typically describe its content as aimed at providing introductory or basic-level knowledges and skills. Examples of such modules include “Fundamentals of Energy Resources”, “Fundamentals of Electric-Electronics”, “Work Safety”, “Solar Energy Systems”, “Power Electronics and Power Supplies”, “Industrial Ecology” and many others. Moreover, the programme is full of questionable pragmatics and there are more than a few study modules difficult to find a logic behind. Thus, for instance, it is not clear what is the purpose of running as many as three modules having to do with technical drawing (Technical Drawing/CAD, Computer Aided Design I and II), or modules such as the “Information and Communication Technologies I and II” with rather trivial expected learning outcomes like “Communicating on web” or “Applying a job on internet” given that, at the same time, far more complex IT content such as CAD or GIS is taught in other modules. It would be reasonable to expect that a GIS literate would be more than capable to “communicate on the web” let alone apply for a job on the internet. As such, modules such as the aforementioned Information and Communication Technologies are completely redundant and do not contribute in any way to the overall learning outcomes of the Study Programme.

Some of the study courses use rather vague titles and hence may lead to misinterpretations of the content to be taught. Example of such courses include the “Scientific Principles of Technology” or “Measurement Techniques” modules both of which, according to the description provided, provides mere basics of a high school physics. As such, it is recommended that student literacy on engineering fundamentals such as elementary physics and maths is checked on admission as this would better balance both the target student population, as well as the curriculum.

The SER outlines 12 learning outcomes to be, to a certain degree, acquired upon finishing off the study programme. However, many of them are rather generic and hence contradict the general programme idea outlined in Section 2.1 which points out electricity production and distribution engineering as the main programme focus. Thus, for instance, outcomes such as

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“be competitive in the industrial and technological environment”, “respond to the specific needs of the related industries”, or “possess excellence-based education and the highest academic and ethical standards nationally and internationally” can hardly be seen as advanced and/or mastered energy engineering related learning outcomes – as required by the National Qualification Framework – neither they are critical to understand complex energy engineering systems such as the ones operating in Kosovo.

All courses are taught in Albanian and include syllabi clearly describing course objectives, learning outcomes and the teaching methods expected to be used. The feedback collected from the teaching staff suggests the staff is well qualified and capacitated to teach in English, hence it is recommended to introduce options which would allow students to opt for English-taught courses.

The feedback collected from both the interviewed teachers and students/graduates suggests appropriate student-teacher relationship and full student appreciation of the efforts made by the teachers. Nevertheless, almost all the programme modules include valuing teamwork and class activities of a student, both contributing to the overall assessment score with as much as 50%. As such, a great deal of the student success lays in the hands of the teacher having a discretion right to assess these contributions, hence, concerns could be raised on whether the good student-teacher relationship is somewhat influenced by the described uneven distribution of power.

From both the SER and the feedback received from the UBT staff it is not clear how the internship would be organised in practice and what sort of support would be available to students. Even if it is assumed that students would have full-time or part-time employment status, it cannot be a sole responsibility of the student to ensure his/her workplace/position complies with the requirements of a given study module. Furthermore, even though UBT agreements with its industry partners have repeatedly been referred to in the interviews held, it is not clear how they contribute to the Study Programme content.

Finally, if the Study Programme’s curriculum is compared with the corresponding Level 5 curriculum, it may be seen that virtually all of the courses share the same title, ECTS score and they are even taught by the same lecturer. As this suggests that the Study Programme is treated



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rather as an “extended” up-sized version of the Level 5 programme, instead of a complete rounded up study programme with its clear and meaningful teaching and studying objectives, it is highly recommended that such an approach gets thoroughly revised.

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Review the contribution of teamwork and classroom activities as assessment methods and either lower down their importance or introduce ways to unambiguously quantify student activity.*
2. *Ensure that the programme content complies with the level 6 learning outcomes as defined in the National Qualification Framework and is not just an extended version of the Level 5 study programme.*
3. *Thoroughly review the content of the Study Programme and cut out module which do not contribute to the overall study programme learning outcomes such as the “Information and Communication Technologies”, “Technical Drawing” and similar.*

2.5. Students

According to the SER, the admission requirements and procedures are described in the UBT Regulation on Admission approved by the Faculty Council. However, such a regulation could not have been found on the UBT website [25], neither the admission criteria nor the requirements have been outlined in the student handbook [11]. Furthermore, some study programmes taught by the UBT have the admission criteria published on the UBT website, however, information on the given Study Programme is available only in Albanian and does not seem to include any details on the admission criteria or the syllabus.

As a privately owned institution funded mainly from the tuition fees, the UBT pays special attention to balanced group sizing and student satisfaction. As such, and given the feedback collected from the students and graduates interviewed, the group sizes seem appropriate and matching the studying objectives set. Furthermore, students seem to be happy with the way

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their results are communicated to them and consider the availability of the academic staff and flexibility to certain special needs and circumstances to be appropriate.

At the beginning of each study course, students are informed about the expected learning outcomes and the assessment methods. The assessment methods vary depending on the course and/or learning outcome and may include both written and online examining. Regarding the latter, a corresponding guidebook has been provided to the students [9].

The SER states that the UBT collects results of student completion and makes adjustments to the scrutinised study programmes. However, neither the UBT website nor the additionally provided evidence include any proof of such doing. In this regard, as argued earlier in Section 2.2, a particular emphasis on the importance of duly indicators and performance measures to be applied in order to make the programme adjustments adequate should be given.

Student work is still validated for plagiarism manually and hence the most important anti plagiarism (AP) control relies on deterring clauses set forth by the introduced regulation. It needs to be stressed out that both the Code of Ethics regulation of the FEE [5] and the corresponding code at the UBT level [6] do not include a single reference of plagiarism, hence, substantial work needs to be done in order to promote and raise awareness of academic integrity in both academic community as well as general public.

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Update and make publicly available all the documentation and regulations addressing the student admission issues such that to clearly outline requirements and criteria pertaining to the given Study Programme.*
- 2. Introduce awareness on the importance of academic integrity and plagiarism prevention, and include certain AP activities in the study courses taught.*
- 3. Introduce corresponding AP regulation and make it publicly available and discussed.*



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2.6. Research

Even though the UBT has provided [18] and [20] as supplementary documentation underpinning the claims outlined in the SER relevant to research undertaking of the faculty, both of them can hardly be seen as serious strategic development documents. On 40 out of 45 pages in total, the former document entitled as “Research Strategy” provides a mere list of scientific publications done by the FEE academic staff, instead of analysing the operating context, providing risk assessments and/or defining corresponding action plans and performance indicators. The latter document entitled as “Strategic Development Plan” does provide some planning, but it remains unclear what was the reason behind making the plan applicable for relatively short period of time (2020-2021), despite the relatively ambitious vision to become “...the leading research and education centre in the field of Energy Engineering and Management”. Equally so, the plan includes a number of dubious and/or repeating action items (strategic goals), or items not corresponding to the performance indicators set to value the accomplishment of the plan. Thus, for instance, it is not clear what would be the purpose or research-based objective in meeting the strategic goal formulated as “Increasing the environmental sensitivity” neither it is clear what sort of research activities identified as the corresponding performance indicators would thus be undertaken. Furthermore, almost all the listed strategic objectives are either directly or indirectly connected to receiving external funding. As such, even a marginal success in getting such funding would imply the accomplishment of a number of the strategic goals thus leading to bogus and misleading conclusions.

The feedback collected from the interviewed academic staff suggests that no specific stimulation policies other than those relevant to regular academic career advancements have been exercised. Equally so, no regulation covering research activities provides a clear and undisputable definition on what sort of undertaking is considered research. A summary of research focus has been provided in [18] and [20], however both documents do not identify specific niches, technologies or disciplines the institution would like to excel in.

Even though energy efficiency has been identified as one of the strategic research priorities (as given in Section 3.0 of the [18]), only one single course module of the Study Programme, namely the “Fundamental Energy Resources” module, has got understanding of energy

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efficiency set as a learning outcome. It may hence be concluded that despite substantial research contributions manifested through a number of published scientific works, the research priorities and findings do not contribute to the teaching process in a straightforward manner.

Although [14] and [18] give contradictory information as to the FEE research output, it may be deemed that the number and quality of the publications are adequate. However, apart from scientific publications, only marginal evidence on other research activities such as consultancy work or technology transfer may be seen. This has somewhat been acknowledged in [20], as well as in the feedback from the management, given the expectations related to expected new revenue streams.

Academic and research staff publish their works under the name of the institution, but no particular regulation has been introduced to safeguard intellectual property rights.

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Set up clear strategic objectives and the corresponding development policies as to which disciplines, technologies and research areas the university will aim to excel in.*
2. *Set up straightforward and universally accepted research performance indicators tailored also to address research contributions other than paper publishing.*
3. *Include students in research activities other than those related to their final thesis/works.*

2.7. Infrastructure and resources

The UBT is a privately funded institution and as such its financial stability relies exclusively on self-generated income. From both the SER and the feedback collected, it is obvious that the majority of the income comes from the tuition fees and much of the attention in securing long-term stability of the given Study Programme will gradually be shifted to finding and stimulating alternative revenue sources. The feedback collected also suggests that, for the given Study



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Programme, there is no phase-out plan and, if needed, financial stability will be secured from revenues generated by other more lucrative study programmes.

Although the UBT locations and premises could not be evaluated physically, there are no reasons to believe the UBT is undercapacitated with respect to available infrastructural resources needed to underpin both general academic as well as technology-driven processes and courses. However, from the video material made available [36] and [37], UBT web site and the SER, it is not entirely evident the UBT has secured quality physical infrastructure and equipment dedicated to students and staff with special needs such as text-to-speech aids, floor guidance for visually impaired people, access ramps, dedicated lavatories and others.

According to the SER, the UBT runs a library which feels adequate both space-wise and with regards to the number of seats available.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Further to the recommendations given in Sections 2.1 and 2.6, it is suggested the UBT tries to streamline its focus on its comparative advantages such that to position itself as a leader in the chosen discipline, technology and/or research area. This is hence expected to attract more interest from students and academics outside the current gravitational area thus securing long-term financial stability.*
2. *In case it has not already been done, pay special attention to providing various possible aid to students and staff with disabilities.*



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3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE EXPERT TEAM

The UBT College is a relatively new higher education institution but even so has managed to achieve considerable success in different educational fields and disciplines. The evaluated study programme is a programme targeting primarily high school graduates interested to start their professional careers in energy engineering sector, but also prospective students of the follow-up MSc level study.

Due to the Covid-19 crisis, the assessment process did not include any site visits to any of the UBT locations, nor it included physical face-to-face interaction with the interviewed stakeholders. Although it may be argued that such circumstances may have influenced the objectivity of the conclusions made, every effort has been made to make the conclusions sound, substantiated by concrete evidence and not a result of speculation or misjudgement.

In this regard, in every section a set of recommendations has been given to address the issues raised through the evaluation process. It needs to be emphasised that all the recommendations made should be seen only as guidelines aimed at improving the overall quality of both the study programme evaluated as well as the institution as a whole. In this regard, it remains to the UBT management and staff whether these recommendations would be found affirmative and hence put into practice or disregarded. Nevertheless, in addition to the recommendations made, few general comments on matters to be complimented for, as well on those which leave room for improvements seem appropriate to be made. These are as follows:

1. The institution has demonstrated an unprecedented degree of openness and integrity in communication with the expert team participating in the evaluation. It is beyond any doubt that the entire UBT team has made considerable efforts to reach the current level of operation in a relatively short time, which proves the institution has been run and operated by a team of highly dedicated people.
2. The institution enjoys a reputation of a renowned higher education institution in the Republic of Kosovo by both students and employers, whose graduates are capable of taking up responsibilities required by the labour market.

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3. Finally, the institution is to be complimented for its demonstrated high standards in the available infrastructure, thus making both curricular and non-curricular activities a joy rather than a burden.

However,

1. Although the UBT has introduced a number of regulations aimed at reaching the highest standards of academic and research practice, there are many misalignments and discrepancies between these regulations thus leaving considerable room for arbitrary interpretations.
2. Also, majority of the regulations are still to be fully accepted by the academics and other staff members given that only marginal efforts have been made to promote positive academic undertaking in ways other than through the corresponding rules of conduct.
3. Finally, the UBT's ties with both the local and international community are significant and by all means honourable. Nevertheless, going beyond pure number of such ties and partnerships, and focusing more on generating tangible long-terms outputs the academic process may benefit from is highly recommended.

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program BSc in Energy Engineering and Management offered by the UBT College is *Partially compliant* with the standards included in the *KAA Accreditation manual* and, therefore, recommends *not to accredit* the study program.

Expert

Chair

(Signature)

Dražen Vrhovski

(Date)

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