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UBT
LANGUAGE AND CULTURE PROGRAM

ACCREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

APRIL 2021



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: 13 April 2021

Expert Team (ET) members:

- *Prof. dr. sc. Daniela Angelina Jelinčić*
- *Mr. Mihai Adrian Vicea*

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

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

Sources of information for the Report:

- *Self-evaluation report “UBT COLLEGE B.A. LANGUAGE AND CULTURE” (n.d.)*
- *KAA Accreditation Manual (July 2018)*
- *Syllabi B.A. in LANGUAGE AND CULTURE (n.d.)*
- *Staff CVs*
- *Appendices: Program Development Plan, Program Strategic Plan, Research Strategy Plan, Code of ethics, Students Appeals Procedure, Subcommittees, Organigram, List of Academic staff, List of Publications, List of International Partners, Infrastructure, Quality Assurance Regulation, Regulation for student admission, Exams Regulation, Regulation for academic advancement, and Handbook of students (16 annexes in total)*
- *UBT official website*

Criteria used for program evaluation:

- *Standards & performance indicators for external evaluation according to the Accreditation Manual of KAA, July 2018*
- *General evaluation criteria: Criteria of Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Impact, Sustainability*



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1.2. Site visit schedule

09.00 – 09.40 Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated (*no slide presentation is allowed, the meeting is intended as a free discussion*)

9:45 – 10:45 Meeting with the heads of the study programme

10:50 – 11:30 Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff

11:30 – 12:10 Lunch Break

12:10 – 12:50 Meeting with teaching staff

12:55 – 13:25 Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders

13:25 – 13:35 Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts

13:35 – 13:40 Closing

Online meeting programme	
09:00-09:40	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated
1	Edmond Hajrizi
2	Alma Lama
3	Arbër Çeliku
4	Alisa Sadiku
09:45-10:45	Meeting with the heads of the study programme



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1	Arbër Çeliku
2	Drita Xhemali
3	Manjolla Brahaj
4	Nexhat Çoçaj
10:50-11:30	Meeting with quality assurance representatives
1	Anamari Mecinaj
2	Fatbardha Qehaja
3	Majlinda Ferati-Muja
4	Erëza Mehmeti
12:10-12:50	Meeting with teaching staff
1	Halil Bashota
2	Gjylje Rexha
3	Trendeline Haliti
4	Mimoza Pllana,
5	Eglantina Bilalli
6	Lisjeta Thaçi-Jashari
12:55-13:25	Meeting with employers of graduates
1	Arif Kastrati
2	Enkelejda Zhuja
3	Fazli Rrezja
13:25-13:35	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts
13:35-13:40	Closing



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

UBT was established in 2004, after its official licensing by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology no. 808/02-1 on 18.10.2004. It is also accredited at institutional and programme levels by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency, since beginning of its function. The institution was built on the experience of the Institute of Enterprise Engineering and Management (IEME), started in 2001. Both institutions have been founded by Dr. Edmond Hajrizi with the main purpose of supporting Resilience and Sustainable Development of Kosovo. Thus, the main reason for the establishment of the UBT start-up was to develop and implement advanced management systems, which will support the resilience and sustainable development of an emerging economy. As can be learned from the *Self-Evaluation Report (SER)*, its **mission** is to implement an integrated strategy to establish itself as an internationally competitive, research-intensive university, committed to the transfer of knowledge and the provision of a world class education and service. It should serve Kosovo and the region, by preparing leaders for the 21st century with a global outlook and the skills needed for educational, social, economic, political, environmental and cultural advancement. The philosophy of the institution has been to offer competitive programs in applied education. With that in mind, the focus of this Pristina-based University is on teaching on labour market demands and international practices and is demand driven. A new modern campus in the outskirts of Pristina is currently being built. Also, UBT has 4 other regional centres around Kosovo to support the regional community.

The University offers a range of programs at undergraduate and graduate level. The Language and Culture Program is not yet accredited. The information of the Program's position within the institutional/departmental organogram is not provided in the SER. From the interviews, we found out that the new language-related department is to be created to host this Program. The idea of the Program, only explained during the interviews, is to link knowledge on culture, language and literature of different languages as well as cultural diversity thus providing opportunities for internationalization and mobility of students. Their future employment is envisioned in the translation agencies, journalism, agencies dealing with international relations, embassies, publishing, etc. During the interview, representatives of the university revealed that the idea is to enroll 100 students in the Program. The curriculum predominantly focuses on the German language, alongside providing knowledge on Albanian and English. Supposedly, market research has been done whose results show that there is a need for such a Program and prospective students showed interests for such a Program. The Panel discussion with future employers of graduates revealed that German language is necessary although they also mentioned English as their main need.



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2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

According to the SER, the **mission** of the Language and Culture program is in compliance with the overall mission statement of UBT, which aims at “achieving academic excellence, maintaining and enhancing internationalization, creating a positive work and learning environment, as well as binding ties of collaborations with the community”. The SER states the following Program mission “to prepare students / graduates to promote knowledge of the language and culture of German-speaking countries and to foster international cultural cooperation”. However, as much as it seems in line with the institutional mission, it remains rather vague in how this mission is in line with the Program curriculum. As mentioned, the curriculum evidently focuses on the German language, which is in line with the Program mission and “offers a comprehensive image of German-speaking countries through German language teaching and information about cultural, social and political life”, as stated in the SER. This remains somewhat unclear, due to the fact that the curriculum, beside German-related courses, also offers courses related to the Albanian and English language/culture. In the interviews (mainly with representatives from University), we found out that there is a demand for German language studies which is why the focus of the Program is on German. It would be logical then, that the German language is reflected also in the name of the Program. While the knowledge of Albanian language is a *sine qua non* when preparing students for translation services, it is not clear why there are subjects trying to accommodate vast knowledge on foreign (other than German) cultures, history and on culture or politics in general (e.g. Greek-Roman Civilization and the Development of Literature, Globalization, Cultural Anthropology, Social Identity and Cultural Development, Multiculturalism). While there is some stretched logic behind those courses, the curriculum seems over encompassing if its mission is “to prepare students / graduates to promote knowledge of the language and culture of **German-speaking countries**”. On the other hand, some of these courses (e.g. Multiculturalism, Globalization, International Relations) may contribute to the mission in “fostering international cultural cooperation”. Introduction of the third language (English) in the curriculum has no logic if the mission is zeroed in “language and culture of German-speaking countries”. The external evaluators express fears that this might result with insufficient knowledge of both foreign languages to be taught. While it is difficult to anticipate the final result, the interviewed staff members tried to mitigate the evaluators’ doubts by saying that English in Kosovo is taught since the kindergarten age, which is why the Program will offer prospective students relevant knowledge and abilities to speak English. This has not been an entirely convincing argument since the documentation provided for the evaluation revealed many English-editing requirements. It would be expected that the Language and Culture Program prepared a flawless

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documentation in English, which has not been the case. Thus, it still makes one wonder if “diluting” the Program with other foreign language teaching would be at the expense on German-oriented courses. This is why it is suggested to align the curriculum with the mission by focusing on the German language teaching. As we were informed in the interviews that the idea existed that in future, the new department would expand also to teaching other languages, it would be logical that the future new program would focus on English and/or other foreign languages. The information is provided on the UBT website on the new English Language Program to be accredited, so it is suggested that English-related subjects are part of that and not of the Language and Culture Program.

Concerning the learning outcomes of the Language and Culture Program, SER claims that they are “in line with the National Qualifications Framework and the European Higher Education Area Qualifications Framework” and are based on knowledge, skills and responsibility. Thus, according to the SER, the purpose of the Program is to provide students with “their working knowledge of key aspects of Language and Culture Studies and its professional area, which will allow them to use this knowledge to attain results in structured learning or profession. This will include facts, principles, processes and ideas that they are asked to deeply scrutinize. Secondly, they will be able to use a number of practical and thinking skills to complete tasks and solve problems. In this respect, this will be done by using information to select the appropriate methods and perform them with appropriate tools and materials. Above all, they are expected to take on the responsibility of performing tasks, solving problems and achieving the results appropriate to this level”. As much as the syllabi offers a variety of teaching techniques, which are based on knowledge, skills and responsibility, the content itself seems rather confused and requires re-work and a clear focus.

Regarding the didactic and research concept, the syllabi document provides information on the mixed didactic methods. They are dependent on the course (PPT presentations, essays, readings, tasks, peer participation, exercises, video, discussions/debates, group works or work in pairs, role-playing, independent learning). As the majority of the teaching staff is already employed at the UBT, due to COVID-19 pandemic they currently teach online so e-learning and Moodle is used for that purpose. The syllabi promises an interactive didactic concept using a number of teaching methods. Some concerns are raised in that respect since the SWOT analysis presented in the SER mentions the “lack of interdisciplinarity as a new and innovative didactic concept” (p. 18). During the interviews, the experts were informed that the syllabi were based on teaching staff’s research activities. As can be observed from support materials provided with SER, syllabi didn’t have a unified approach - there is a different structure for documents even if it is the same institution. In their current work within the UBT, they claim to include the results of their research in the teaching activities, while some of the professors



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involve students in their research. Moreover, it has been said that students are offered a financial contribution to work with professors on research activities. No evidence has been provided on that, however, since the Program is yet to be started. The content of the Program seems to be in favour of the existing human resources (teaching staff) and not due to clear objectives of the Program or clear understanding of the students' needs.

As already mentioned, objectives of the BA in Language and Culture Program stated in the SER clearly show the focus on the German language (which seem rather well elaborated offering the working language knowledge alongside translation techniques, literary aspects of language, and balance in spoken/written language) but also touch on other topics (e.g. European multilingualism and European language policy, Greek-Roman Civilization and the Development of Literature, Globalization, Cultural Anthropology, multilingual situations, intercultural communication, English language-related subjects, etc.). It is not entirely clear how these objectives relate to the focus on the German language in the Program.

Internal regulations relating to ethical conduct exist and all staff and students are subject to it.

SER mentions that “studies are carried out in accordance with the general principles of the Faculty of Law” (p. 10), even if UBT also has a Faculty of Media and Communication or Faculty of Political Science, which are more in line with the Program subjects. Using principles from a different field is at least a strange choice for the Program.

Unfortunately it is not clear what Key Performance Indicators will be used for the study Program. SER mentions that “key performance indicators are part of the overall strategy to monitor Faculty progress” (p. 16) but is unclear if there are KPIs generally used at the university level or specific KPIs for each faculty - in this case, the Faculty of Law is mentioned.

Even if the “UBT has a centralized registration system operating at central level”, information is distributed to “staff who need their information or inputs” (p. 16) not as a recurring rule with summaries and comparative data distributed automatically to senior administrators and relevant committees at least once each year. This practice represents a concern that the Program will not be automatically monitored yearly by any committees.

Although it is claimed that all policies, regulations, terms of reference and statements of responsibility relating to the management and delivery of the Program are reviewed at least once every two years and amended according to the institutional framework, no evidence was provided. Thus, it seems to be a formal regulation not a general practice.



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SWOT analysis for mission, objectives and administration presented in the SER is rather generic and just a few elements related to the Program that the institution wants to initiate are mentioned. Weaknesses detect the lack of proactive behaviour of the private sector in voicing their opinions to formulate the mission statement of the Program as well as a low interest to actively participate in implementation of the mission by supporting the practicum and the graduates' absorption (p. 18). During the Panel discussions, it was mentioned by the university staff several times that they have a high demand from the market and also a very good connection with employers. Stakeholders who took part in the meeting mentioned that they take students in practice and they have a long cooperation with the institution. If the cooperation with employers and the private sector has a long standing tradition, it should be based on a clear mission which also involves employers' standing. This calls for a more proactive engagement of employers.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
<i>Standard 1.1.</i> The study program mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution.		X
<i>Standard 1.2.</i> Relevant academic and professional advice is considered when defining the intended learning outcomes which are consistent with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.		X
<i>Standard 1.3.</i> The study program has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept.		X
<i>Standard 1.4.</i> There are formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues. These are made publicly available to all staff and students.	X	
<i>Standard 1.5.</i> All staff and students comply with the internal regulations relating to ethical conduct in research, teaching, assessment in all academic and administrative activities.	X	
<i>Standard 1.6.</i> All policies, regulations, terms of reference and statements of responsibility relating to the management and delivery of the program are reviewed at least once every two years and amended as required in the light of changing circumstances.		X

Compliance level: Fully compliant/Substantially compliant/Partially compliant/Non-compliant



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ET recommendations:

- 1. The mission and the scope of the Program should be defined more clearly*
- 2. Syllabi have to be revised and a clear and unitary approach should be taken using the same framework for all disciplines*
- 3. Regular monitoring of the Program, its review and possible amendment needs to be in place*
- 4. Academic staff for all subjects need to be identified - at least for the first year of study*

2.2. Quality management

Based on the extensive documentation provided as appendices, it is evident that a substantial number of formal policies, procedures and regulations are in place to ensure quality of procedural or academic issues. Some issues even seem over-regulated (e.g. existence of Ethics Committee as well as Ethics Sub-Committee). The impression was gained in the interviews that the QA is well regulated and respected. A long tradition of QA is in place at the UBT. The structure of QA processes is very hierarchical with a number of responsible positions and committees/bodies in place. Issues subjected to the QA are vast (e.g. students' progress, academic staff teaching, administration, technical issues, complaints). Evaluation is usually done by way of questionnaires whose results are analyzed both by administrative and academic staff. Both SER and interview discussions reveal that evaluations are regularly performed and transparent. Student questionnaires are performed once in a semester, while faculty staff evaluations are performed once a year. While experts were informed that no sanctions were in place if dissatisfaction was reported, the approach taken in such cases was to focus on the improvement (e.g. additional training provided). Feedback to students is provided via the leading group of students assigned to every program who disseminate information to other students. Students are also part of the Ethics Sub-Committee.

Discussions with QA representatives and administration revealed that all members of the staff participate in self-evaluations. They claim to collaborate with all decision-making actors in terms of QA topics and they offer support. The SER report provides very generic information on the QA system but states no proof that self-evaluations are done by all the staff. From the Quality Assurance Regulations, though, it is evident that QA mechanisms are directed towards staff, students, learning support process, infrastructure and resources, as well as research. It can be concluded, therefore, that vast aspects of UBT operations are subject to the review. Also, QA regulations in place formally refer to the self-evaluation reports, which are performed in relation to the external evaluations. However, the SER, in the section representing the SWOT

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analysis on quality management (p. 28) reveals the weakness that “not all students, graduates, staff, and industry representatives participate in surveys”, thus proving the failure on this standard.

SER promises that the evaluation processes and planning for improvement is integrated into the planning processes for the new Language and Culture Program. External evaluators, however, were not able to check it against previous practices. It is not yet clear under which faculty the Program will function. While the SER claims that the studies are carried out in accordance with the general principles of the Faculty of Law, the Panel discussion with the UBT management revealed that a new department will be established.

It is evident from the SER that procedures are in place to ensure quality evaluations for the overall program as well as of different components within it. Specifically, *Procedures for program evaluation* serve to “review the programme learning outcomes”, among others. Based on this, one could believe that the future Program will meet this standard. Previous program evaluations against which this could have been checked were not provided. Besides, the SWOT analysis on the quality management provided in the SER (p. 29) specifically mentions the “lack of mandatory whole program annual evaluation system by professors and students as part of SEMS before professors record the grade and students see the grade”. This raises doubts on the compliance with this standard.

Evaluations consider the required standards. The QA representatives informed the experts that KAA standards are taken into consideration. However, as already mentioned, no sanctions have so far been in place, but rather improvements. This is particularly valid for the student dissatisfaction with the teaching process (improvement is ensured with additional training of the teaching staff). When it comes to the improvement of academic staff research activities, the standards are clear but improvements are not demonstrated. Although opportunities for publishing of the research results exist (e.g. impressive library and e-Library, financial incentives for research and conference attendance), research outputs in terms of published articles in prestigious journals are not in place. Thus, improvements cannot really be demonstrated. While experts are not advocating sanctions, it is clear that improvements have not been successful.

According to the SER as well as to the interview discussions, regular surveys with students and staff are collected. Student surveys mainly “allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved”. No information is provided, though if the results of these surveys are taken into account for further development of the study program. As much as external evaluators are aware that this is a new, not yet accredited Program and

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some of the standards, such as this one, cannot be evaluated in anticipation, it is suggested that the existing procedures and practices are taken into account. The inclusion of the following elements should also be regularly considered for (further) development of the study program: student workload, academic success and employment of graduates. The SWOT analysis on quality management in the SER (p. 29) states the weakness seen in the missing "analytical system currently in place that analyses the correlation between entrance examination results and results and progress during the studies until graduation", which shows that improvements are needed in this respect.

Within the (re)accreditation process, a regular periodic evaluation of programmes is performed once every three years so it is highly likely that the plans to do it with the Language and Culture Program will be respected.

The SWOT analysis on the quality management provided in the SER (pp. 28-30) demonstrates that the quality assurance arrangements at the UBT are themselves evaluated and improved. It is highly commendable. It is not clear if this type of activity is performed regularly and for all the accredited programs. The audit procedures are in place though.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
<i>Standard 2.1.</i> All staff participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity.		X
<i>Standard 2.2.</i> Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes.		X
<i>Standard 2.3.</i> Quality assurance processes deal with all aspects of program planning and delivery, including services and resources provided by other parts of the institution.	X	
<i>Standard 2.4.</i> Quality evaluations provide an overview of quality issues for the overall program as well as of different components within it; the evaluations consider inputs, processes and outputs, with particular attention given to learning outcomes for students.		X
<i>Standard 2.5.</i> Quality assurance processes ensure both that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance.		X
<i>Standard 2.6.</i> Survey data is being collected from students, graduates and employers; the results of these evaluations are made publicly available.	X	
<i>Standard 2.7.</i> Results of the internal quality assurance system are taken into account for further development of the study program. This includes		X

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evaluation results, investigation of the student workload, academic success and employment of graduates.		
<i>Standard 2.8.</i> The institution ensures that reports on the overall quality of the program are prepared periodically (e.g. every three years) for consideration within the institution indicating its strengths and weaknesses.	X	
<i>Standard 2.9.</i> The quality assurance arrangements for the program are themselves regularly evaluated and improved.	X	

Compliance level: Fully compliant/Substantially compliant/Partially compliant/Non-compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Ensure that all students, graduates, staff, and industry representatives participate in evaluation surveys*
2. *Ensure the mandatory whole Program annual evaluation both by professors and students as part of SEMS before professors record the grade and students see the grade*
3. *Include student workload, academic success and employment of graduates into the internal quality assurance system*

2.3. Academic staff

The SER reveals partial conditions of employment. The data on the candidates for employment are provided in the tabular form containing their name, qualification, academic title, duration of contract, workload for teaching, administrative activities and research. Workload for exams and consulting are missing although it possibly pertains to the teaching activities. The greatest workload is dedicated to teaching (40%) while the rest is equally distributed on administrative activities and research. Position descriptions and conditions of employment are missing. It is also noted that the list of the staff presented in the SER counts 22 people, while at the same time only 17 faculty members’s CVs were provided (CVs of the following staff members are missing: Hasan Metin, Korab Gashi, Gjylie Rexha, Nexhat Çoçaj and Feride Lohaj), which shows inconsistencies in staff employment related to the Program. During the Panel discussion with the academic staff, the experts were informed that 21 candidates have been envisioned: 15 holding PhD titles, 2 PhD candidates and 4 holding Masters degrees. This again shows inconsistencies in the future Program staff engagement.

While the SER only generally states that the Program is in accordance to the standard and that the academic staff has been preliminarily certified and validated by the KAA, the documents provided in the appendices additionally state that the academic staff are qualified teaching



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professors holding a PhD or a minimum of MSc in relevant field (Organogram). Their MA and PhD studies as well as their research and publications (for those who provided the lists) are linked with the Program and the courses they are supposed to teach. Two out of 22 faculty members have MSc and one MA, while all others hold a PhD title. The Regulation on the Academic Advancement of UBT Academic Staff is in place but the conditions to be fulfilled are not particularly demanding.

As previously mentioned, only 17 CVs were provided out of 22 academic staff members listed, so it was impossible to check if all the staff members occupy not more than two teaching positions. Besides, 2 CVs provided were in Albanian (Halil Bashota and Manjola Brahaj), which also enabled the proper check. For the rest of the academic staff, it is evident that some of them work on other but not teaching positions (e.g. Marleku, Mustafa, Zejnullahu). Some of them work on other teaching positions (e.g. Ejupi) but it is impossible to check if the position is full-time or part-time. One academic staff member (Bilali), according to the CV presented, however, beside her UBT position, works at 1 additional university and at 2 additional highschools. The workload is not available but it obviously entails more than the allowed (1 full-time and 1 part-time).

Concerns are related to the impact of a new Program on the institutional architecture regarding academic staff as they already have obligations in other programs, so it is not clear how those gaps will be filled in after the start of the new Program. Several times during the meetings it was mentioned that new academic staff will be hired after the Program is accredited - this action presents a big risk regarding the quality of the Program (accreditation could be given because of the data provided in SER but implementation will be done with a totally different structure of academic staff).

Further on, the SER demonstrates in the SWOT analysis (p. 36) that there is a lack of full professors within the program with the full-time contract. This is an important issue to be considered.

All listed academic staff members are full-time employees. The Panel discussion revealed that the academic staff should teach 8-10 hours in a week. The staff is distributed according to the workload and this is continuously evaluated. This may result in transferring the workload from teaching to research activities. One staff member covers 10 students.

Both the SER and Panel discussion state that different trainings are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff. In that respect, the UBT Institute for Education and Development organizes different workshops based on the needs. Training needs are identified through evaluation. Last year was focused on the improvement of the pedagogical skills (e.g. student-centred learning, e-learning, group learning, problem based and project-based learning,

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curriculum design, lesson planning, etc). Thus, not only teaching skills improvement is envisioned but also learning materials.

While experts were informed several times in the Panel discussion that the academic staff members are regularly available for consultations with students, it is not completely clear if they engage in the academic community and in the community service. Judging from their CVs and list of publications, it is evident that most of them attend research conferences but hardly meet the criteria related to the research outputs (publication), which would be internationally comparable. Also, most of the academic staff proposed to take part in the Program don't have publication activity in the last 2-3 years (majority of the staff, according to the document supporting the SER, had their last publication in 2016-2017). Thus, their academic engagement performance remains under the radar.

Standard 3.5 from the SER is twisted: formulation in the Accreditation Manual is: “**For each student group** (defined by the statute of the institution) and for every 60 ECTS credits in the study program, the institution has employed at least one full time staff with PhD title or equivalent title in the case of artistic/applied science institutions”. In the report it is presented as follows: “Based on the statute of institution, there is employed at least one full-time staff who holds the academic title PhD (equivalent title in case of artistic/applied science institutions, for every 60 ECTS credits, regarding the study program”. As a result, the institution is providing a list of staff with PhD for each study year but not according to the number of students planned.

Academic staff evaluation is performed annually according to the criteria set in the Regulation for Staff Assessment. Both self-evaluation and student evaluation is available alongside staff research productivity. From the provided documentation though, it is evident that even if the regulations are in place, no greater sanctions are envisaged if the indicators are not fulfilled (e.g. research outputs). According to the meetings with academic staff peer evaluation is not happening, from the total number of participants, only one person mentioned that took part in another educational activity as an observer, and it was a self decision, not part of a process. Also, the SWOT analysis provided in the SER (p. 37) points to the lack of self-criticism in individual staff development plans. Therefore, even though the evaluation activities are performed, they possibly fail to meet their main objective.

Concerning the status of the retired teachers, the experts were informed in the Panel discussions that their status is regulated by the Law: when a member of the academic staff reaches 65, (s)he retired, and may possibly be awarded the emeritus title. After that, s(he) may engage at the UBT as a part-time teacher or in some other activities. However, the SWOT analysis provided

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in the SER (p. 37) states that there is no clear policy as to what age the part-time emeritus full professors can be used after the age of 65. This should be further defined.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
<i>Standard 3.1.</i> Candidates for employment are provided with full position descriptions and conditions of employment. To be presented in tabular form data about full time (FT) and part time (PT) academic/ artistic staff, such as: name, qualification, academic title, duration of official (valid) contract, workload for teaching, exams, consulting, administrative activities, research, etc. for the study program under evaluation.		X
<i>Standard 3.2.</i> The teaching staff must comply with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative instruction on Accreditation.	X	
<i>Standard 3.3.</i> Academic staff do not cover, within an academic year, more than two teaching positions (one full-time, one part-time), regardless of the educational institution where they carry out their activity.		X
<i>Standard 3.4.</i> At least 50% of the academic staff in the study program are full time employees, and account for at least 50% of the classes of the study program.	X	
<i>Standard 3.5.</i> For each student group (defined by the statute of the institution) and for every 60 ECTS credits in the study program, the institution has employed at least one full time staff with PhD title or equivalent title in the case of artistic/applied science institutions.		X
<i>Standard 3.6.</i> Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties.	X	
<i>Standard 3.7.</i> The responsibilities of all teaching staff, especially full-time, include the engagement in the academic community, availability for consultations with students and community service.		X
<i>Standard 3.8.</i> Academic staff evaluation is conducted regularly at least through self-evaluation, students, peer and superiors' evaluations, and occur on a formal basis at least once each year. The results of the evaluation are made publicly available.		X
<i>Standard 3.9.</i> Strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials.	X	
<i>Standard 3.10.</i> Teachers retired at age limit or for other reasons lose the status of full-time teachers and are considered part-time teachers.	X	

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Compliance level: Fully compliant/Substantially compliant/Partially compliant/Non-compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. It is important to employ people who are dedicated to the Program and who do not have other obligations elsewhere (a clear 1 full-time, 1 part-time position should be strictly followed)*
- 2. Academic staff evaluation should be implemented fully not to be based mainly on quantitative indicators with questionnaires filled by students*
- 3. Concrete measures should be taken in order to support academic staff in order to have constantly visible and internationally compared research activity alongside updated CVs*
- 4. Academic staff evaluation should be done with clear implications so that if the criteria are not fulfilled, some sanctions should be in place*

2.4. Educational process content

As mentioned before, there are concerns about the Program curriculum as its focus is on the German language, but also offering other language-related (English and Albanian) or more generic courses (politics-related). While there is some logic to offer generic knowledge on the cultural context, it is feared that introducing English courses might result in insufficient knowledge of both foreign languages to be taught. Too many non German-related courses are offered if the Program mission is “to prepare students / graduates to promote knowledge of the language and culture of **German-speaking** countries”. This is also reflected in the syllabi. Moreover, the qualification objectives include “subject-related and interdisciplinary aspects as well as the acquisition of disciplinary, methodological and generic skills and competencies” (SER, p. 39). On a general level, this is in line with the learning outcomes based on knowledge, skills and responsibility. So first, the Program should equip students with the appropriate use of language (knowledge). While it is impossible to check the result of such a Program since no graduates exist at this moment, the syllabi seem more or less suited to the acquisition of the German language for its everyday use. The rationale for including English language and politics/anthropology-related syllabi is not clear. Rather, more German literature and culture

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courses as well as linguistic courses could be introduced to achieve a thorough curriculum offering high specialization in the field of the Program mission.

Next, the students in the Program should be able to read, listen, write and speak German (skills). Most language and linguistics-related syllabi in the curriculum seem to offer this knowledge, as seen in the documentation provided.

Finally, the Program should prepare students for future life in terms of their independence on the future labour market or contributing to civil society (responsibility). While the Program offers a very broad knowledge on languages and culture (this positively contributing to the development of the students' personality), it is not entirely clear how it will contribute to their employment. The Panel discussion revealed that the graduates' employment is envisioned in translation, journalism, publishing, communication consultancy for business and politics, foreign embassies in Kosovo, etc. If the focus is on translation/interpretation services as well as on jobs requiring everyday use of language, then some of the syllabi seem superfluous (e.g. Globalization, Cultural Anthropology, Social Identity and Cultural Development, Multiculturalism). Also, while literature is important, it is not clear why not specific (German) language-related syllabi (e.g. Greek-Roman Civilization and the Development of Literature) are introduced. If, however, the future employment of graduates is seen in journalism, communication consultancy or publishing, then Albanian courses would suffice. Besides, this type of a job would be expected from the Political Science Program. On the other hand, the UBT already offers a Media and Communication Program and there is no reason to produce overlapping Programs. The specific employment of communication consultancy for business and politics mentioned in the SER (p. 9) has no specific relation to the Program at all. While the proposed curriculum offers politics-related syllabi, for this type of a job no specific language knowledge is needed. Along this line, the evaluators think that this Program should be more specific and should be able to clearly express where the future employment of graduates is seen. The Panel discussion informed us that there was a market need (supposedly based on market research) for German language skills. If that is the case, this could be a clear guideline for the more specific German language-related curriculum.

The relationship of the Program and civil society is not detected.

As much as the forms of teaching and learning described in the syllabi are practice-oriented and require active participation, which is commendable, the individual components of the program are not logically combined, as mentioned previously, due to a rather diffuse



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knowledge this type of Program provides. Thus, it fails to achieve the specified qualification objectives.

Language-related disciplines within the curriculum are provided in a logical flow and involve different required competencies. As previously explained, this is not the case with other syllabi which seem just “attached” to the core German-related courses. More than 7 learning outcomes of the Program are listed although they seem to be mixed with objectives in the SER (see pp. 7-8). Also, learning outcomes presented in the SER on pp. 7-8 and pp. 42-43 are not the same, though similar.

Most of the disciplines within the curriculum comprise the minimal requirements (lecturer, course description, learning outcomes, course content, teaching/learning methods, assessment methods, course literature, ECTS workload, etc.). However, it is not the case with all of them. Some are missing the lecturer, ECTS workload or are using different formats. Language editing would also be an asset.

The SER foresees that future students have to have basic language knowledge (German?) to be admitted. Their knowledge will be tested prior to the admission. Also, the Language Centre at the UBT offers language courses for those who are interested in the Program.

A number of measures are taken to ensure that students and teachers have a partnership relation, according to the SER (e.g. introduction session, student handbook, general/specific program info, Student Portal). The Student Handbook provided as the Appendix material extensively lists the necessary information for the newly admitted students. The Panel discussion persuaded the evaluators that at the beginning of each course, rights and obligations alongside learning objectives are explained to students, which are also re-visited in the course of the teaching. It was also confirmed that it is a practice, although not entirely regular to involve students in the research activities.

The presented syllabi promises a variety of teaching methods beside traditional ex-cathedra approach (e.g. essays, exercises, group work or work in pairs, readings, tasks, peer participation, video, discussions/debates, role-playing, independent learning). It was also confirmed in the Panel discussion.

According to the SER, “student’s knowledge is being assessed continually during the coursework and at the end of each course”. Evaluation methods are also clearly described in the Student’s Handbook describing the general criteria for student final evaluation. However,

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the methods applied are dependent on the course. The Language and Culture syllabi document presents different evaluation methods, some of which are standard (e.g. attendance, colloquia, seminars and final exam) and some of them are more modern and interactive (e.g. quizzes, self-evaluation and peer feedback). They seem appropriate for the different forms of learning. It is impossible to say if assessment mechanisms are conducted fairly and objectively since the Program has not started yet, but the regulations related to the assessment methods exist.

Student achievement is for the most syllabi planned via attendance and colloquia. Some courses plan different, more interactive and modern assessment methods. It is not possible to verify the reliability of the planned methods since the Program has not been accredited yet but it can be said that the methods are standard and can be compared to other similar study programs. Consistency of the standard over time is also impossible to be checked since the Program is yet to start.

At the general level, policies dealing with potential inadequate student achievement or their inconsistent assessment exist. The SER claims that the UBT defines a set of criteria for identifying students at risk of non-completion, which are combined with the evaluation of student learning styles and abilities. Based on this, appropriate pedagogical support is offered. The evaluation of learning styles, according to the SER is done during the first week of a semester, when students take a learning styles inventory based on whose results the teaching staff aligns their teaching methods. Besides, a mentorship program has also been established especially for students with difficulties. This has also been confirmed in the Panel discussion. Tutorials and/or workshops are also provided related to specific problems or to support students in the preparation for the exams. The teaching staff provides regular consultations for all students, and regularly evaluates the student attendance list and their participation in teaching activities. This serves as a basis for possible improvements. The faculty staff are also offered different training activities within the UBT Institute for Development of Education and Academic Affairs (IDEAA) to improve their own teaching skills.

It is not clear if the Language and Culture Program involves practice stages, as practice stages are not part of the syllabi. SER avoids specific wording on the practice stages, except on p. 58 where it mentions that “site visits and practice placements are important features of the teaching and learning process”. It should have been elaborated in the syllabi, though, as to see what type of practice is performed and linked to what disciplines. It is clear, though, that UBT works with potential employers of graduates. The discussion with them revealed that they had so far been involved in cooperation with UBT and had signed cooperation agreements (such as MoU) but their participation in the Language and Culture Program design was rather basic (participation

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in the presentation of their needs based on what the Program has been designed for). Apart from potential employers of graduates, cooperation with international partners is envisaged mainly offering student mobility, according to the SER. These, however mainly entail universities; some of them (e.g. Ministry of Culture, Youth Association for Human Rights, National and University Library of Kosovo) might possibly be those where practice stages could be offered. Since no documentation on this is provided, this remains unclear.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
<i>Standard 4.1.</i> The study program is modelled on qualification objectives. These include subject-related and interdisciplinary aspects as well as the acquisition of disciplinary, methodological and generic skills and competencies. The aspects refer especially to academic or artistic competencies, to the capability of taking up adequate employment, contributing to the civil society and of developing the students' personality.		X
<i>Standard 4.2.</i> The study program complies with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. The individual components of the program are combined in a way to best achieve the specified qualification objectives and provide for adequate forms of teaching and learning.		X
<i>Standard 4.3.</i> The disciplines within the curriculum are provided in a logical flow and meet the definition and precise determination of the general and specific competencies, as well as the compatibility with the study programs and curricula delivered in the EHEA. To be listed at least 7 learning outcomes for the study program under evaluation.		X
<i>Standard 4.4.</i> The disciplines within the curriculum have analytical syllabuses which comprise at least the following: the discipline's objectives, the basic thematic content, learning outcomes, the distribution of classes, seminars and applicative activities, students' assessment system, the minimal bibliography, etc. The full course description/ syllabuses of each subject/ module should be attached only in electronic form to the self-assessment report for the study program under evaluation.		X
<i>Standard 4.5.</i> If the language of instruction is other than Albanian, actions are taken to ensure that language skills of both	X	



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students and academic staff are adequate for instruction in that language when students begin their studies. This may be done through language training prior to the commencement of the program.		
<i>Standard 4.6.</i> The student-teacher relationship is a partnership in which each assumes the responsibility of reaching the learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are explained and discussed with students from the perspective of their relevance to the students' development.	X	
<i>Standard 4.7.</i> Teaching strategies are fit for the different types of learning outcomes programs are intended to develop. Strategies of teaching and assessment set out in program and course specifications are followed with flexibility to meet the needs of different groups of students.	X	
<i>Standard 4.8.</i> Student assessment mechanisms are conducted fairly and objectively, are appropriate for the different forms of learning sought and are clearly communicated to students at the beginning of courses.	X	
<i>Standard 4.9.</i> Appropriate, valid and reliable mechanisms are used for verifying standards of student achievement. The standard of work required for different grades is consistent over time, comparable in courses offered within a program, and in comparison with other study programs at highly regarded institutions.	X	
<i>Standard 4.10.</i> Policies and procedures include actions to be taken in to dealing with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or inconsistently assessed.	X	
<i>Standard 4.11.</i> If the study program includes practice stages, the intended student learning outcomes are clearly specified and effective processes are followed to ensure that those learning outcomes and the strategies to develop that learning are understood by students. The practice stages are allocated ECTS credits and the work of the students at the practical training organisations is monitored through activity reports; students during practice stages have assigned tutors among the academic staff in the study program.		X
<i>Standard 4.12.</i> In order to facilitate the practice stages, the higher education institution signs cooperation agreements, contracts or	X	



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other documents with institutions/organisations/practical training units.		
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Compliance level: Fully compliant/Substantially compliant/Partially compliant/Non-compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Ensure a clear focus of the Program equipping the students with the appropriate use of German-related language and culture knowledge without the “attached” generic and broad courses on culture and politics, and without introducing other languages*
2. *Syllabi should be clearly in line with the possible employment of the students*
3. *Apart from changing the Program with some syllabi, all the syllabi should be aligned and presented in the same format*
4. *Practice stages should be clearly elaborated in the syllabi*

2.5. Students

There is a format admission procedure which is regulated by the Faculty Council Regulation on Admission. It entails the standard type of admissions (completed secondary school). The Language and Culture Program admissions are based on a competition approved by the Academic Council. The Regulation for student admission also regulates students’ transfer and mobility. It was not possible to check if the requirements are consistently and fairly applied for all students since the Program has not started yet. The available documents, however, do not mention the equal rights to all students. It has been confirmed in the Panel discussion that so far all UBT students have had fair treatment, especially those with disabilities. Flexible treatment is also ensured for specific situations students may encounter.

Teaching methods promise an interactive and student-oriented learning which is commendable. Group-work and peer assessment is put forward, which adds to the interactivity of the groups. However, neither the planned number of the Program students nor the size of the groups involved in individual courses are specified so it is not possible to check if the mentioned methods are appropriate.

Feedback on the students’ performance is ensured through various mechanisms (mentoring program, learning styles inventory, tutorials, voluntary workshops). Improvement assistance is offered either through consultations or different workshops. Most of the courses assess



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students' knowledge continuously by way of colloquia or other assessment methods. Thus the results are obtained throughout the study cycles.

Clear procedures regarding the records of student completion rates are in place. Thus, examination register, application, list of students taking the examination in the given examination period, examination report, students' logbook, student files containing information on students' re-examination activities and final grades earned during these activities are kept as a record. Exam application and examination results are kept indefinitely while colloquium documents are stored for three years.

Originality of the student's work is ensured via plagiarism detection software (Turnitin) and via written declarations attesting the originality to be signed by students. The regulations are, therefore in place.

Students' rights are communicated at the Dean's induction session and in the student handbook, which is distributed at the beginning of the academic year. Also, Students Appeal Procedure is in place, which, among other, regulates students' rights to object to the assessment. The information on the right to the appeal is available in the student handbook (mostly referring to the objection of the grade). Evaluators are aware that there is a student representative but it is not clear if the information on this mechanism is communicated to all of the students.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
<i>Standard 5.1.</i> There is a clear and formally adopted admission procedure at institutional level that the study program respects when organising students' recruitment. Admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied for all students.	X	
<i>Standard 5.2.</i> All students enrolled in the study program possess a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent document of study, according to MEST requirements.	X	
<i>Standard 5.3.</i> The study groups are dimensioned so as to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process.		X
<i>Standard 5.4.</i> Feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments is given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed.	X	
<i>Standard 5.5.</i> The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record.	X	



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<i>Standard 5.6.</i> Flexible treatment of students in special situations is ensured with respect to deadlines and formal requirements in the program and to all examinations.	X	
<i>Standard 5.7.</i> Records of student completion rates are kept for all courses and for the program as a whole and included among quality indicators.	X	
<i>Standard 5.8.</i> Effective procedures are being used to ensure that work submitted by students is original.	X	
<i>Standard 5.9.</i> Students' rights and obligations are made publicly available, promoted to all those concerned and enforced equitably; these will include the right to academic appeals.	X	
<i>Standard 5.10.</i> The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs is clearly regulated in formal internal documents.	X	
<i>Standard 5.11.</i> Academic staff is available at sufficient scheduled times for consultation and advice to students. Adequate tutorial assistance is provided to ensure understanding and ability to apply learning.	X	

Compliance level: Fully compliant/Substantially compliant/Partially compliant/Non-compliant

ET recommendations:

- The number of the students to be enrolled in the Program should be clearly specified and the group work organized accordingly as to meet the standard of effective and interactive teaching and learning process*

2.6. Research

According to the SER, UBT holds an institutional research strategy while the Language and Culture Program's research plan is aligned with it. However, no evidence has been found to support the claim that the Program has defined scientific/applied research objectives on its own. Rather, the Appendix document Research Strategy Plan refers to in the future tense in the sense that the integrated research strategy will be implemented. The UBT research strategy, though, has clearly defined research objectives and some of them might be applicable also on the Program level (e.g. establishing research centres; building relationships and partnerships with stakeholders in industry, academia and the public sector). While research priorities are yet to be defined (they are only generally mentioned as relating to language and culture), the future



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Program objectives focus on 1. establishing international conferences for high level research, 2. publication of scientific journals to be included in international databases, and 3. offering solutions to various problems faced by modern society. It is not entirely clear how Language and Culture Program will contribute to the objective no. 3 given its scope, and the problems faced by modern society are not stated. Objective no. 1 seems realistic while objective no. 2. is commendable but in practice requires a lot of effort and is, therefore, be questionable. Thus, although formally, the objectives are stated, they seem like a wish list, thus not being entirely realistic. While the UBT has 10 Research Centers established as the organizational spaces where research activities are supported, not one of them deals with the topics of the Program. Additionally, there are 7 Institutes (without a clear definition of their mission), one of which (Institute of Foreign Languages and Intercultural Competence – IFL) fully complies with the theme of the Language and Culture Program. The Institute's activities, though, rather than acting as research centers (on the UBT website under the section Research and Innovation) seem to offer language courses for the public. Collaboration in terms of interdisciplinary research with IFL is envisioned, which is highly commendable as it also offers opportunities for student research. However, it is not clear how the practice-oriented mission of IFL contributes to research. On the positive side, collaboration with other existing research centres is planned.

In the interviews, we found out that the UBT financially stimulates research which is also confirmed by the UBT website and SER where specific amounts are mentioned for support. Concretely, support is offered through the Research Fund, Research Training and Support to External Research Applications. The UBT website also states that logistic and human resources to support research activities are allocated on the level of Departments by appointing a Research Programme Officer.

Research is clearly stated as a career expectation and teaching staff is clearly communicated on it as this is a part of the UBT Staff Employment, Performance and Progression Policy. It is also expected that individuals have their own research plan as well as that staff development policies are in place at the level of business Departments. The initial staff performance evaluation (baseline criteria) is the responsibility of the Dean, while productivity in the areas of research are published in the Year-End Review. Academic advancement is regulated by the Regulation for Academic Advancement of UBT Academic Staff. While it is evident that expectations of the staff are clearly specified and regulated, the documentation provided for external evaluation was not sufficient to prove that performance in relation to these expectations is considered in staff evaluation and promotion criteria. The interviews with the teaching staff during the online evaluation showed that academic staff is informed about the criteria, moreover they claim that they are part of their contracts. As it is evident from the

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provided documentation that staff members do not publish regularly (at least 1 publication annually as required), it is not clear how they comply with the staff evaluation and promotion criteria.

The Research Strategy Plan does not define what is recognized as research. The SER only states the research outcomes (articles published in indexed journals; conference papers; proceedings and books) without further explanations. It is suggested to address this issue both on the institutional and then also Program level.

As to analyze if the academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity, the staff CV's have been checked against their syllabi. High failures have been recorded here as follows:

1. A number of staff's CVs provided have no dedicated course in the curriculum at all; it is usually the staff CVs which thematically have little or nothing to do with the Program topic (e.g. Alfred Marleku, Artan Mustafa, Nexat Balaj – agriculture (!), Mimoza Hasani-Pllana);
2. A number of staff's CVs do not contain the list of publications. Besides, the provided appendix the List of publications misses information on some staff's publication record so it was impossible to check if their research results are aligned with their teaching activity (e.g. Annamaria Farkas, Majlinda Ferati, Trendeline Haliti-Sylaj – only 1 record);
3. Some staff's publication records differ from the specific syllabi they teach (e.g. Fatbardha Osmani is to teach Albanian phonetic and phonology, while her Undergraduate Degree is in English Language and Literature, Master in Education, PhD in Psychology);
4. Some staff's CVs were provided in Albanian (e.g. Manjola Brahaj, Halil Bashota) so it was not possible to check if they publish on the topics of their teaching. This is why additional check has been done via Google scholar which resulted as compliant for the researchers in question.

Concerning academic scientific production, it is not compliant with the standard requirement of at least an average of one scientific/applied research publication per year for the past three years). There are minor exceptions in this matter which are commendable but most of the staff fails on this criterion. Besides, for the most of the faculty members, the production is focused on the national or regional scientific journals, which are not indexed in the competitive databases and thus do not qualify for the highest academic standards in the international arena.

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Besides that, it cannot be said that they have a consistent and continual proven track record of research results. It is also obvious that some of the faculty members who have a higher teaching workload fail to comply with research publication requirements. While this is highly logical, it is recommended that a balance is found between teaching and research workloads. Even if the balance is to be established, it is absolutely necessary for the vast majority of the faculty members to improve their research results. This should be highly improved as to be in line with the institutional mission “to establish itself as an internationally competitive, research-intensive university”. Also, for the accreditation process, it is of the utmost importance to provide more or less uniform CV formats so that the evaluation experts may perform their duties based on complete information. In this case, as mentioned, some CVs were missing information on the faculty members’ publishing records (intentionally?), some were presented in Albanian, while all of them were presented in different formats. It is recommended that in future, the institution establishes a clear guideline of CV formats with specific information to be provided (uniform “chapter” aligned with the evaluation standards), which would enable an easy evaluation. This would also allow the institution itself to easily monitor the faculty members’ research (and other) outputs. It is also to be mentioned that the language editing of CVs would be an asset as it does not leave a positive impression to read texts with substantial language editing requirements, especially at the Language and Culture Program level, which is expected to “achieve academic excellence”, as stated in the Program mission. This cannot be justified with technical difficulties as there are too many of them throughout the documentation provided. As UBT has a designated QA office, this should have been checked before the accreditation process. On the positive side, some faculty members are active in conferences and a few of them (although seemingly non-relevant for the Language and Culture Program) provide expertise and consultancy to state (or other) institutions.

It is to be stressed that compliance with the *Standard 6.6.* can be detected on a general level and for some of the faculty members. The validation of research through scientific and applied research publications could not have been entirely assessed for the reasons mentioned previously (Albanian CVs, missing publication track record), but where the validation was possible, it was obvious that the publication activities are neither continuous (old publications) nor in the journals indexed in the internationally recognized databases (e.g. WoS, SCOPUS). While SER reveals large plans for knowledge transfer by working with external stakeholders, they seem hardly attainable based on the staff’s current validation of research results.

By checking the Google scholar for faculty staff publication record, it has been noted that some of the staff members do not publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full time staff (e.g. Alma Lama and Vlera Ejupi - South East European University Tetovo, Macedonia; e.g. Lama <https://bit.ly/3egDr7A>, <https://bit.ly/3vCFKYv>;



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Ejupi (<https://bit.ly/2QOUS6c>, <https://bit.ly/3aX7H5k>). Besides, some faculty members do not even have their own Google scholar profile.

As mentioned previously, experts have been informed during the interviews that the academic staff are encouraged to include their research results in their teaching and have developed their syllabi according to their knowledge gained from the research. No clear evidence for this has been provided and it was very difficult for evaluators to check that. If looking at the recommended literature for individual courses, it is evident that for most of them old references are used by other authors.

In the discussions during the interviews, external experts have been informed that policies for ownership of intellectual property are in line with the Albanian law and that the UBT sets out the procedures for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students accordingly. The Research Strategy Plan states that there is the Intellectual Property Policy in place and that the UBT Technology Transfer Centre is in charge of protecting home-grown intellectual property. The Intellectual Service Office is also in place.

Discussion with the academic staff revealed that students have so far been engaged in research projects and other activities by some faculty members. SER provides very generic future-oriented information on this standard.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
<i>Standard 6.1.</i> The study program has defined scientific/applied research objectives (on its own or as part of a research centre or interdisciplinary program), which are also reflected in the research development plan of the institution; sufficient financial, logistic and human resources are allocated for achieving the proposed research objectives.		X
<i>Standard 6.2.</i> Expectations for teaching staff involvement in research and scholarly activities are clearly specified, and performance in relation to these expectations is considered in staff evaluation and promotion criteria.		
<i>Standard 6.3.</i> Clear policies are established for defining what is recognized as research, consistent with international standards and established norms in the field of study of the program.		X
<i>Standard 6.4.</i> The academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity.		X
<i>Standard 6.5.</i> The academic and research staff publish their work in speciality magazines or publishing houses, scientific/applied/artistic		X

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products are presented at conferences, sessions, symposiums, seminars etc. and contracts, expertise, consultancy, conventions, etc. are provided to partners inside the country and/or abroad.		
<i>Standard 6.6.</i> Research is validated through: scientific and applied research publications, artistic products, technological transfer through consultancy centres, scientific parks and other structures for validation.		X
<i>Standard 6.7.</i> Each academic staff member and researcher has produced at least an average of one scientific/applied research publication or artistic outcome/product per year for the past three years.		X
<i>Standard 6.8.</i> Academic and research staff publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full time staff.		X
<i>Standard 6.9.</i> Academic staff are encouraged to include in their teaching information about their research and scholarly activities that are relevant to courses they teach, together with other significant research developments in the field.		X
<i>Standard 6.10.</i> Policies are established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.	X	
<i>Standard 6.11.</i> Students are engaged in research projects and other activities.	X	

Compliance level: Fully compliant/Substantially compliant/Partially compliant/Non-compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Specific scientific/applied research objectives linked to the Program should be defined possibly also in cooperation with the IFL*
2. *Academic staff's research outputs measured in the number of articles published in internationally prestigious journals must be improved*
3. *The Research Strategy Plan should clearly define what is recognized as research, both on the UBT and the Program level*
4. *It is highly advised that the CV formats are aligned on the institutional level*
5. *If staff members are affiliated to the UBT as full time staff, it is necessary for them publish under the name of this institution; otherwise, they can not be considered as UBT staff members*



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2.7. Infrastructure and resources

The Language and Culture Program is planned to be hosted in the UBT Prishtina Campus. Both according to the SER and the video sent as supplementary evaluation material, the Campus is a modern facility containing nicely designed teaching rooms, equipped with the necessary teaching necessities (desks, chairs, blackboard, projector), IT equipment (PCs and notebooks). Printing and scanning is also available for students' use. Impressive library is supposedly the best equipped library in Kosovo. Apart from printed books (250.000), e-Libraries containing publications in internationally relevant databases exist and are available to students. The institution has the spaces necessary for the teaching process. Although the SER states that more information is provided in the Appendix 8.10, it is not clear what it refers to since such an Appendix has not been provided.

According to the financial plan provided in the SER, it is clear that the projected income is in line with the projected expenditures. It is, though, evident that the income heavily relies on the student fees (7x higher than the other sources of income - projects, consultancy, donations in 2021/2022; 11x higher for 2022/2023; and 14x higher for 2023/2024). The envisaged number of the enrolled students in the first year is not clear from the SER. The experts were informed during the Panel discussions that the number of planned students is 100. Besides the SWOT analysis regarding the students states as its weakness that there is an “unpredictable level of drop out of students due to the uncertainties in financial plan, because mostly are financed from the family” and that “the financial support for some students is not sufficient and they are obliged to work besides studying” (p. 66). These are all reasons to suggest the diversification of the budget income and to focus on other sources (e.g. projects) and not to rely on the fees before the Program demonstrates to employ its former graduates. Given the extremely high youth unemployment rates in Kosovo, the Program should first wait for its first results on the labour market.

The video provided as supplementary material shows that the teaching rooms are well equipped to host the students. Even the specific situation related to the COVID-19 pandemic has been taken in consideration and seats have been separated. Also, e-learning is currently in place, while virtual platform is also envisioned.

Reading rooms are provided. It is difficult, however, to check if the number of seats in the reading rooms corresponds to 10% of the total number of students in the study program since the no clear number of the number of students was confirmed. Besides, the video provided can not be a decent substitute for the physical visit. The SWOT analysis of infrastructure and resources (pp. 81-82) provided in the SER mentions “more textbooks in German in specialized

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Program courses” as its weakness. Although the adequacy of subscriptions to Albanian and foreign publications and periodicals was not possible to be checked, the fact that the UBT library is seen as the best in Kosovo adds to a positive evaluation of this criterion. Lack of students’ experience in using the online library, also detected as a weakness in the SWOT analysis, should guide the Program to organize training in that respect.

The experts were informed several times that the needs of students’ with disabilities are carefully taken care of, while the SER states that the UBT infrastructure has been certified as to meet the required standards in that respect.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
<i>Standard 7.1.</i> The adequate long-term implementation of the study program is ensured in quantitative terms as regards premises, human resources and equipment. At the same time, it is guaranteed that qualitative aspects are also taken into account.	X	
<i>Standard 7.2.</i> There is a financial plan at the level of the study program that would demonstrate the sustainability of the study program for the next minimum three years.		X
<i>Standard 7.3.</i> The higher education institution must demonstrate with adequate documents (property deeds, lease contracts, inventories, invoices etc.) that, for the study program submitted for evaluation it possesses the following, for the next at least three years: a) owned or rented spaces adequate for the educational process; b) owned or rented laboratories, with the adequate equipment for all the compulsory disciplines within the curriculum, wherever the analytical syllabus includes such activities; c) adequate software for the disciplines of study included in the curriculum, with utilisation licence; d) library equipped with reading rooms, group work rooms and its own book stock according to the disciplines included in the curricula.	X	
<i>Standard 7.4.</i> The number of seats in the lecture rooms, seminar rooms and laboratories must be related to the study groups’ size (series, groups, subgroups); the applicative activities for the speciality disciplines included in the curricula are carried out in laboratories equipped with IT equipment.	X	
<i>Standard 7.5.</i> The education institutiron’s libraries must ensure, for each of the study programs:		X



<p>a) a number of seats in the reading rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program;</p> <p>b) a number of seats in the group work rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program;</p> <p>c) their own book stock from Albanian and foreign speciality literature, enough to cover the disciplines within the curricula, out of which at least 50% should represent book titles or speciality courses of recognised publishers, from the last 10 years;</p> <p>d) a book stock within its own library with a sufficient number of books so as to cover the needs of all students in the cycle and year of study the respective discipline is provided for;</p> <p>e) a sufficient number of subscriptions to Albanian and foreign publications and periodicals, according to the stated mission.</p>		
<p><i>Standard 7.6.</i> The infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the program is adapted to students with special needs.</p>	X	

Compliance level: Fully compliant/Substantially compliant/Partially compliant/Non-compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *It is advised to diversify the budget income and to focus on other sources (e.g. projects) and not to rely on the student fees before the Program demonstrates to employ its former graduates*
2. *It is advised to organize training for students in using the online library*
3. *It is advised to provide more textbooks in German in specialized Program courses*

3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

The evaluation process was approached in a standard manner: the usual documentation was provided for the ex-ante evaluation accompanied by interviews during Panel discussions with suggested stakeholders. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, physical site visit was not possible. Instead, online meetings were organized. This provided the external evaluators somewhat limited tools in the evaluation process, especially regarding the infrastructure and resources assessment. Instead, a short video material was provided. The documentation provided was not completely clear on each of the required evaluation standards. The SER was helpful but failed to clearly express answers to some issues requested by the standards. It is advised to the



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Program and UBT representatives to simply respond to all the issues relating to the standards in order to avoid misleading connotations in the future. While documentation regarding different procedural issues is abundant and some issues seem almost over-regulated, other documentation related to the Program (especially syllabi and academic staff's CVs) is deficient. The suggestion is to be thorough, to take a unitary approach to the presentation of the CVs and syllabi, to provide all the documentation in English and to provide language editing. Poor language style of the documentation raises concerns of the quality of the whole Language and Culture Program, which should especially promote excellence in that respect.

During the Panel discussion with different stakeholders, a lack of ownership and knowledge on the Program was exhibited. Some stakeholders responded to questions in a rather generic way by reading the parts of the documents provided without strong ideas about the Program itself. Thus a lack of clarity on some Program content-related issues was noted. Discussions between some stakeholders in Albanian were seen by the experts not due to the lack of English language knowledge, but due to finding appropriate answers. All interlocutors, though, were very polite and at their disposal for discussions.

The following table presents the summary of the evaluation:

Mission, objectives and administration	Partially compliant
Quality management	Partially compliant
Academic Staff	Partially compliant
Educational Process Content	Partially compliant
Students	Substantially compliant
Research	Partially compliant
Infrastructure and resources	Substantially compliant
Overall Compliance	Partially compliant

Having considered the mentioned documentation, visual material and results of the Panel discussions with various stakeholders, the accreditation experts recommend the following:

1. It is suggested to define the mission and the scope of the Program more clearly and to revise the educational Program content as to enable future graduates to be employed more easily. The current concept is too broad and without a clear focus. Specific scientific/applied research objectives linked to the Program should be defined possibly also in cooperation with the IFL. Also, the syllabi should involve practice stages, which

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clearly define what the students will do and learn, and which competencies they will acquire. It should be elaborated in cooperation with possible employers.

2. In line with the revision of the Program, qualifying academic staff for all subjects to be taught need to be identified. It is important to employ people who are dedicated to the Program and who do not have other obligations elsewhere (a clear 1 full-time, 1 part-time position should be strictly followed).
3. Academic staff's research outputs measured in the number of articles published in internationally prestigious journals must be improved. As much as some stimulation exists in that respect, more concrete measures should be taken in order to support academic staff in order to have constantly visible and internationally compared research activities, which can eventually result in an increased number of research papers. Financial measures for outstanding individuals can be effective as well as different awards. However, sanctions, although taken as a last measure, could also be in place, if stimulation proves to be inefficient. Before sanctions, though, it is necessary to introduce improvement courses/workshops on the topic of preparation of quality research articles. It is often a shame for the academic staff to ask support in that respect, although it is often the case that they did not have opportunities to learn. Such a workshop could be very stimulating if the issue is approached in an appropriate manner. Lack of self-criticism of the academic staff is a normal defense mechanism; so rather than being criticized, support needs to be offered as well as stimulations. However, the rule of at least one article in a prestigious journal should be followed. An annual planning contract with each individual may be signed in that respect to be revised at the end of the year. Also, academic staff members should publish under the name of the UBT. Further on, more academic staff should be involved in research activities as this a) eventually results in an increased number of publications, b) is a source of additional revenue for the Program supporting its financial diversification, c) provides students with direct learning opportunities. Additional training for the academic staff may be organized as to improve their skills in research project management.
4. The number of the students to be enrolled in the Program should be clearly specified according to the logic of their possible future employment.
5. It is highly advised to plan the Program budget from more sources, not principally relying on the student fees. More projects are advised in that respect as well as sponsorships/donations. Innovative funding schemes could be applied and cooperation with the Management, Business and Economics Department could be established whose

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students may work on this task as part of their own curricula (e.g. grants, financial instruments, market revenues other than fees, hybrid instruments, alternative channels – fin tech and crowdfunding). Also, a skilled financial manager would be supportive.

6. It is suggested to somewhat improve the quality assurance system. Although it is highly regulated and necessary procedures exist, its implementation is somewhat efficient in practice. Thus, it is suggested to ensure that a) all students, graduates, staff, and industry representatives participate in evaluation surveys; b) the mandatory whole Program annual evaluation is done by both by professors and students as part of SEMS before professors record the grade and students see the grade; c) internal quality assurance system includes also the indicators of a student workload, academic success and employment of graduates; and d) academic staff evaluation is based both on quantitative and qualitative indicators, followed by requested improvement based on the evaluation results; e) all official documentation, including the one prepared for the (re)accreditation process passes the quality check.
7. In terms of resources, it is advised to provide more textbooks in German in specialized Program courses.

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study *Language and Culture Program* offered by the UBT is **partially compliant** with the standards included in the *KAA Accreditation manual* and, therefore, recommends **not to accredit** the study program at this moment. After the revision, a new accreditation process is suggested. As some of the issues to be solved are substantial (dedicated academic staff employment, financial diversification of the Program income, improvement of the academic staff research record), it is suggested to dedicate a time to re-work on the issues detected. The experts believe that a too broad focus on the Program as it is at the moment would not offer adequate level of knowledge; however a German language and culture-focused Program is needed and would fill in this gap on the market. The suggested improvement, therefore is not to be seen as a “punishment” but rather as a stimulation to provide excellence both for students as well as for the HEI, thus adding to its competitive advantage not only in Kosovo but also positioning itself in the international arena.

4. APPENDICES (if available)

None.



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