



Republika e Kosovës  
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

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***UNIVERSITY OF PRISHTINA “HASAN PRISHTINA”  
FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE AND VETERINARY  
M.Sc. Plant Sciences  
(previously M.Sc. Field Crops and Vegetables)***

***RE-ACCREDITATION***

**REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM**

*02 May 2021, Vienna*



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Context

#### Date of site visit:

08.04.2021 online meetings per video-conference

#### Expert Team (ET) members:

- Univ.Prof. Dr. Hans-Peter Kaul – BOKU Univ. of Nat. Resources and Life Sci., AT
- Ms. Jadranka Pelikan, M.Sc.Bioproc.Eng. – University of Zagreb, Faculty of Science, HR

#### 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:

- *SER*
- *Syllabi*
- *Staff CVs*
- *Several Annexes (partly in Albanian language)*

#### Criteria used for program evaluation:

CL	Compliance level	%
A	Fully compliant	> 90
B	Substantially compliant	70-90
C	Partially compliant	30-70 <sup>1</sup>
D	Non-compliant	< 30
n.a.	not applicable	

<sup>1</sup> 30-60% according KAA Accreditation Manual, corrected to close the gap



## Abbreviations

EHEA	European Higher Education Area
ET	Expert team
FAV	Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary
HEI	Higher Education Institution
KAA	Kosovo Accreditation Agency
OFQA	Office for Quality Assurance
SER	Self-evaluation report
SWOT	Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
UP	University of Prishtina

## 1.2. Site visit schedule

<b>09.00 – 09.40</b>	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated
<b>09:45 – 10:30</b>	Meeting with quality assurance representatives & administrative staff
<b>10:30 – 11:10</b>	Lunch Break
<b>11:10 – 12:10</b>	Meeting with heads of the study programme 1. Plant Production, BA: Sali Aliu, Imer Rusinovci, Imer Haziri
<b>12:15 – 13:15</b>	Meeting with the heads of the study programme 2. Field Crops and Vegetables, MA: Dukagjin Zeka and Skender Kaciu
<b>13.20 – 14:00</b>	Meeting with teaching staff
<b>14:05 – 14:45</b>	Meeting with students
<b>14:50 – 15:30</b>	Meeting with graduates
<b>15.35 – 16:15</b>	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders
<b>16.15 – 16:25</b>	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts
<b>16:25 – 16:35</b>	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program



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

The Faculty of Agriculture was founded on August 26, 1973. The aim of this foundation has been the faster development of the agricultural sector in Kosovo by graduating well educated people with superior qualifications in agriculture. In 2001, the Senate of the University of Prishtina approved curricula based on the Bologna Declaration for Bachelor Degree. In 2006 the Faculty Council and its academic staff pro-posed expanding the Faculty of Agriculture to the Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary (FAV). The proposal became approved by the Senate of the University of Prishtina (UP) and subsequently the Minister of Education, Science and Technology issued an amending Decision no. 883/01-B, on December 2006. In the academic year 2018/19 in FAV, the lessons are taught by 38 professors and 7 full-time teaching assistants. In addition, there are engaged 16 professors and 2 assistants from UPs other academic units, as well as 32 associates outside UP. According to the report of the Student Services of FAV for the academic year 2018/2019, in all directions at the Bachelor and Master level there are 1760 and 231 active students, respectively.

The program under evaluation for reaccreditation is a 2-year M.Sc. study program with 120 ECTS. It has been designed based upon an equivalent program at the University of Hohenheim, D.



## 2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

### 2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

Mission, objectives and administration	CL
<p><i>Standard 1.1. The study program mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution.</i></p> <p>The program “Plant Sciences (MSc)” fits well into the institution’s mission statement. In particular, it is to emphasize that it contributes to the education of students in a field which is of fundamental relevance for Kosovo. Due to its qualification level of MSc, it shall also contribute to the training of future leaders in science and industry. This is of extraordinary importance in Kosovo due to the difficult situation of its labor markets.</p> <p>Referring to the statements in the Online evaluation meeting, the ET can confirm that UP and its FAV are important national factors, particularly since many regions in Kosovo provide fertile soils and a high density of agribusiness companies. A quite active stakeholder community is available and contributes to a sustainable development. Due to many personal relations of staff with other universities as well as cooperation agreements on faculty level, there is a large international network available to support the mission.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 1.2. 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.</i></p> <p>The faculty established a coherent program, which clearly corresponds at the same time to international standards. The program is designed according to an equivalent program at the University of Hohenheim, D.</p> <p>Particularly from the discussions with the teaching staff as well as with employers and graduates it could be confirmed during the online evaluation meeting that there is academic and professional advice included in the definition of learning outcomes. The SER also indicates that development of the University and its study programs are consistent with the National Qualifications Network and the Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 1.3. The study program has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept.</i></p>	B



<p>The question cannot sufficiently be answered since such a concept is not particularly and detailed mentioned in the SER and also did not become completely clear in the discussions with the faculty management and the academic staff.</p> <p>The study program is composed of lectures, seminars, exercises and excursions, so that the training of students is based on a broad range of didactic methods.</p> <p>The University learning platform SEMS might be used more intensively as an essential component of teaching and allow students more and better learning outside the university.</p>	
<p><i>Standard 1.4. There are formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues. These are made publicly available to all staff and students.</i></p> <p>Formal policies, guidelines and regulations are established and referenced in the SER. They are obviously publicly available via internet.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 1.5. All staff and students comply with the internal regulations relating to ethical conduct in research, teaching, assessment in all academic and administrative activities.</i></p> <p>University statutes and a Code of Ethics are referenced in the SER. Though it can be hardly judged from a site visit per video, whether all staff and students always behave accordingly, the ET got the impression that ethical conduct is the rule.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 1.6. 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.</i></p> <p>It is claimed in the SER that "...the process for curriculum development is carried out in a planned and systematic manner", however any frequency is not indicated.</p>	B
<b>Overall</b>	<b>B</b>

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. *Further intensification of the use of SEMS are recommended, which would support a comprehensive overarching didactic concept.*



## 2.2. Quality management

Quality management	CL
<p><i>Standard 2.1. All staff participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity.</i></p> <p>The SER states that in each semester each of the academic staff reports to the department on the progress of their teaching efforts, but no further information on the procedure is provided.</p>	B
<p><i>Standard 2.2. Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes.</i></p> <p>The FAV has established an Office for Quality Assurance (OFQA) for structured improvement procedures, and an evaluating process is established, based on electronic questionnaires that are filled by the students after the completion of each semester. No further information on the procedure is provided in the SER, especially not about the way the results are translated into adaptation measures. Furthermore the SER mentions “non-participative attitudes” of students.</p>	B
<p><i>Standard 2.3. Quality assurance processes deal with all aspects of program planning and delivery, including services and resources provided by other parts of the institution.</i></p> <p>The SER states that the department continuously supports quality development through program planning. No further information on the procedure is provided in the SER. The online meetings gave the impression that the internal quality assurance system is functional, with clear responsibilities divided at all institution’s levels. The OFQA is involved in all steps of the design of study programs.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 2.4. 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.</i></p> <p>The SER states flatly that the quality of the offered education is monitored and reviewed by the OFQA at the university level. No further information on the procedure is provided in the SER. No key performance parameters are given, and learning outcomes are stated in an arbitrarily looking collection and two inconsistent lists (on page 11 and 12). It is much irritating that learning outcomes of the program are exactly the same as for the basic BSc program Crop Production.</p>	C-D





Further quality parameters of the study program such as number of applications, enrolment, completion rate, duration of the study and grade overview should be more intensively included into the QA mechanism and also provided in the SER.	
<p><i>Standard 2.5. Quality assurance processes ensure both that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance.</i></p> <p>The SER is referring to the periodical KAA reaccreditation process. The ET trusts that the OFQA is adequate to ensure that standards are met and an improvement in performance is stimulated, but the extent of success is hard to judge.</p>	B
<p><i>Standard 2.6. Survey data is being collected from students, graduates and employers; the results of these evaluations are made publicly available.</i></p> <p>Questionnaires are completed by the students. Further surveys by graduates or employers are not mentioned in the SER. Results are not made publicly available. Obviously there are informal consultations with stakeholders or graduates, but a regular process is not defined.</p>	C
<p><i>Standard 2.7. Results of the internal quality assurance system are taken into account for further development of the study program. This includes evaluation results, investigation of the student workload, academic success and employment of graduates.</i></p> <p>In the SER an annual internal self-evaluation report is mentioned, comprising quality in teaching and scientific activity of staff. No further information on the procedure is provided. The quantitative tracing of student workload per ECTS or success of graduates and alumni is not mentioned. The ET, however, trusts that results of the internal quality assurance system are used by the OFQA to further develop the study program.</p>	B
<p><i>Standard 2.8. The institution ensures that reports on the overall quality of the program are prepared periodically (eg. every three years) for consideration within the institution indicating its strengths and weaknesses.</i></p> <p>An annual internal self-evaluation report is prepared, and the re-accreditation by KAA forces to do a periodical self-assessment.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 2.9. The quality assurance arrangements for the program are themselves regularly evaluated and improved.</i></p> <p>The information provided by the SER under Standard 2.9 is not meeting the point. There is no information how the Quality Assurance system at the university level is evaluated and improved.</p>	B-C



However, the QA processes are regularly evaluated by the KAA and updated according to KAA requirements. The ET trusts that the OFQA is monitored by the UP and FAV management.	
<b>Overall</b>	<b>B</b>

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. *A general recommendation across study programs is: The SERs must be carefully prepared and individually adapted to different programs with correct indications of specific facts and figures. E. g. learning outcomes and research need to be set specifically for the programs. Also the program name should be always correct!*
2. *Time series of key performance indicators must be included in the SER. These are e.g.: newly enrolled students, total number of students, number of drop-outs, number of graduations, key budget figures, list of publications, number of publications per professor, list of funded projects.*
3. *The Agro Job Career Center could be supplemented with an Alumni Service in order to trace and obtain data on the employment and success of graduates and to strengthen their connection to their “Alma Mater”.*



### 2.3. Academic staff

Academic staff	CL
<p><i>Standard 3.1. 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.</i></p> <p>A complete list of staff, being involved in the study program, including individual CV has been provided to the ET, but detailed position descriptions and conditions of employment are not included. However, the ET trusts that such documents of employment are/will be provided to candidates by UP. It has been reported in the stakeholder-discussions during the online visit, particularly by teaching staff, that regular competition procedures become applied, including provision of full position descriptions and conditions of employment.</p>	B
<p><i>Standard 3.2. The teaching staff must comply with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative instruction on Accreditation.</i></p> <p>The SER states that the staff members comply with the legal requirements concerning the occupation. There is no evidence to doubt this statement.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 3.3. Academic staff do not cover, within an academic year, more than two teaching positions (one full-time, one part-time), regardless of the educational institution where they carry out their activity.</i></p> <p>The SER states that staff members do not cover more than two teaching positions. The ET has no way of verifying this statement, but trusts in compliance.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 3.4. 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.</i></p> <p>The SER does not explicitly state that all the listed permanent academic staff is engaged full time, but based on the large number of permanent staff both quota seem fulfilled. The ET wants to congratulate to the employment of three young ladies as</p>	A



introduced during the staff interview, who impressed by their excellent education and engagement.	
<p><i>Standard 3.5. 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.</i></p> <p>Obviously the Standard 3.5 is met as far more than three full time staff with a PhD title are employed.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 3.6. Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties.</i></p> <p>The SER states that professional development opportunities for teaching staff member are provided. However, no further information on the procedure is provided in the SER. From the CVs it can be seen that several teaching staff participated in various trainings. Also exchange grants e.g. from ERASMUS were mentioned as attractive, but can unfortunately be used only with substantial limitations due to the visa situation.</p>	B
<p><i>Standard 3.7. The responsibilities of all teaching staff, especially full-time, include the engagement in the academic community, availability for consultations with students and community service.</i></p> <p>The SER states that teaching staff is engaged in student consultations and community service. This was also confirmed during the online meeting.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 3.8. 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.</i></p> <p>A system of regular evaluation of teaching staff by students is established via the SEMS platform. But the consequences of these, especially in case of negative evaluations, are not clear. No information is provided about peer and supervisors' evaluations. The results are obviously visible only for the management, which is reasonable due to protection of personal rights.</p>	B
<p><i>Standard 3.9. Strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials.</i></p>	C



Strategy and procedures for improving the quality of teaching and learning materials are not presented in the SER. Even though there is the Strategic Plan at the Faculty level (2018 - 2022) that contains seven goals among which is “Goal 4: Enhance academic quality and innovative teaching methods”.	
<i>Standard 3.10. Teachers retired at age limit or for other reasons lose the status of full-time teachers and are considered part-time teachers.</i>  There is no statement in the SER on that standard. At least one of the teachers involved in the program is beyond the age of 65, and it is not clear whether the employment is reduced to part-time beyond the age of 65.	B
<b>Overall</b>	B

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. *It is not sufficient to only to claim in the SER that standards are met. There also should be a description of the procedures, how the standards are met.*
2. *Specific budget allocation to additional professional development of teaching staff is recommended*
3. *The ET recommends that the staff evaluation should become more transparent. The results should always be provided to the respective teaching staff as well. Staff should reflect on the results of the questionnaire and give feedback to the students.*
4. *The academic staff should be continuously supplemented by young academics, male and female at equal quota, who are proficient in English and have experience with scientific publications.*
5. *Intensified staff exchange with comparable programs at neighboring institutions, also from abroad, is recommended.*



## 2.4. Educational process content

Educational process content	CL
<p><i>Standard 4.1. 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.</i></p> <p>The study program fulfils the requirements of qualification objectives. However, we know not enough about the labor market, except for a generally high rate of unemployment, which was confirmed in the meetings with graduates and students.</p>	B
<p><i>Standard 4.2. 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.</i></p> <p>The SER confirms that the study program is in compliance with the European Qualifications Framework for Higher Education Area and the National Qualifications Framework. This statement matches with the impressions and experiences of the ET. Another supporting fact is the design of the program according to an equivalent study program from Hohenheim, D. However, the ET does not see itself in a position to confirm that the study program comprehensively complies with the Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 4.3. 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.</i></p> <p>Again, the design of the program according to an equivalent study program from Hohenheim, D, supports compliance with the standard. Also the own experience of the ET with similar MSc programs in Germany and Austria confirm the quality of the program. Learning outcomes, however, are not explicitly listed except for a list of items mentioned under standard 1.3, which can be assumed to be the intended learning</p>	B





outcomes. Anyhow, it is much irritating that learning outcomes of the program are exactly the same as for the basic BSc program Crop Production.	
<p><i>Standard 4.4. 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.</i></p> <p>All required course information is provided in a well-arranged format in the syllabi found in annexes of the SER, comprising course objectives, learning outcomes, thematic content, teaching methods, students' assessment system and recommended literature.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 4.5. If the language of instruction is other than Albanian, actions are taken to ensure that language skills of both students and academic staff are adequate for instruction in that language when students begin their studies. This may be done through language training prior to the commencement of the program.</i></p> <p>Language of instruction in general is Albanian. However, there are a few courses given in English, which is appreciated. The number could even be increased. There is nothing said about the test of adequate knowledge of English by students who enter the program.</p>	B
<p><i>Standard 4.6. 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.</i></p> <p>A regularly good student-teacher relationship and sufficient possibilities for consultations exist. This was also confirmed during the online meetings.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 4.7. 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.</i></p>	A



Teaching and assessment methods are well-defined on course level in the syllabus. The ET cannot finally judge, but trusts that students under special circumstances (illnesses, disabilities, family situation) would be treated with appropriate flexibility. For the lecture format, the attendance must not be necessarily mandatory, which could add additional flexibility for students.	
<i>Standard 4.8. 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.</i>  The way of assessment and examination is defined individually by the course syllabi and published on the FAV website. SEMS is applied as a communication channel.	A
<i>Standard 4.9. 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.</i>  According the SER, the assessment system is defined in the Statute of the University and the work required for different grades is consistent over time. However, no information is provided on the methods how student workload per ECTS and for the whole study program is quantitatively traced.	B
<i>Standard 4.10. Policies and procedures include actions to be taken in to dealing with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or inconsistently assessed.</i>  The SER describes the treatment of repeating failed exams, which is presumably not the target of the standard. If students have complains about inadequate or inconsistent assessment, there are procedures in place to object against unfair assessments.	B
<i>Standard 4.11. If the study program includes practice stages, the intended student learning outcomes are clearly specified and effective processes are followed to ensure that those learning outcomes and the strategies to develop that learning are understood by students. The practice stages are allocated ETCS credits and the work of the students at the practical training organisations is monitored through activity reports; students during practice stages have assigned tutors among the academic staff in the study program.</i>	C





The study program includes no internship, but practice is covered by practical exercises that are focused on the implementation of the theories taught during lectures. This component (exercises) comprise up to 50% of student activity during their assessment and are part of the ECTS credits earned by the courses.	
<i>Standard 4.12. In order to facilitate the practice stages, the higher education institution signs cooperation agreements, contracts or other documents with institutions/organisations/practical training units.</i>	A
Cooperation agreements with companies and potential later employers exist, as confirmed during the stakeholder interviews.	
<b>Overall</b>	<b>B</b>

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. *A regular attendance of seminars and exercises is reasonable to ask from the students. But for the lecture format, the attendance must not be necessarily mandatory. This is a rule typical for schools but not for universities. Other forms of learning the contents should also be possible.*
2. *The ET recommends more elective courses/modules in order to allow students to create individual qualification profiles. Even a certain amount of free electives (from other faculties/universities/abroad) would be desirable, but are obviously not in line with national legislation.*
3. *The ET recommends more courses/modules given in English in order to confront students regularly with English for daily communication and even more with the specific technical/scientific English of the field of studies.*
4. *The ET recommends to introduce interdisciplinary modules (although with one responsible coordinator) and team teaching methods.*
5. *The ET recommends to include two modules on (i) plant protection and (ii) plant nutrition that should introduce recent developments and research results in these fields.*
6. *The faculty should seriously think about an integration of the three plant related MSc programs, i.e. Plant Sciences, Plant Protection and Pomology - Viticulture with Horticulture. There are necessarily many overlaps in the contents, and students could get a much wider choice of elective modules, thus being able to create their own*



*profiles. One program with about 30-40 new students per year seems much more attractive and also efficient for both staff and students.*

## 2.5. Students

Students	CL
<p><i>Standard 5.1. 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.</i></p> <p>“Admission requirements are presented fairly and consistently for all applicants. Students are admitted under the rules set by the University of Pristina, with a public announcement of admission contest published through national media by the University itself.” (SER, p. 33).</p> <p>“The admission of students for studying at the Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary has been established without any exception-ban, except those foreseen by law and the Statute of the University of Pristina. The proposal for student registration is approved by council of the Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary and then is sent to the University Senate for ratification and for announcement of student additions contest” (SER, p. 6).</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 5.2. All students enrolled in the study program posses a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent document of study, according to MEST requirements.</i></p> <p>“As precondition for entry into the Master study programme is the Bachelor studies in Agricultural sciences diploma and passing the graduation test. The number of students that would be admitted is determined by the Ministry of Education. The selection of students for further studies is based on the success in the admission test and the score earned in Graduation test” (SER, p. 6). “Conditions for admission of young students are set by the University of Prishtina, which announces the competition for enrolment of young students” (SER, p. 33). Even though the Statement 5.2. refers to young students, there is no age discrimination at the enrolment.</p>	A



<p><i>Standard 5.3. The study groups are dimensioned so as to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process.</i></p> <p>The Study Programme admits up to 10 students to the 1st year of the Master programme. The ET considers that the study program will ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process. According to the additional documents provided by the FAV, in total 39 student are active and 3 to 7 graduate annually, with the exception of 20 students graduated in the academic year 2018/2019. Is it financially efficient to run a study programme for not more than 40 students?</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 5.4. Feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments is given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed.</i></p> <p>The ET assumes that students will get feedback on their results according to UP internal regulations in QA. The stakeholder stated during the Online Site Visit that the students can participate in the exams three times per academic year. The feedback is provided soon after the exams. The assistance is in a form of consultation meetings with the teachers available twice per week, yet there is no record about it.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 5.5. The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record.</i></p> <p>The results obtained by the UP's students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record. Yet, there is not satisfactory graduation rate of the students. There is no support system that will motivate student to finish their degree. The SER refers also here to the Bachelor's level instead of the Master.</p>	B
<p><i>Standard 5.6. Flexible treatment of students in special situations is ensured with respect to deadlines and formal requirements in the program and to all examinations.</i></p> <p>The only one support mentioned as flexible treatment of students in special situations is three examinations period (SER, p. 34). The ET recommends to improve its strategy for support of students in special situations.</p>	B
<p><i>Standard 5.7. Records of student completion rates are kept for all courses and for the program as a whole and included among quality indicators.</i></p> <p>According to the information provided, there are processes in place to collect and analyse data referring to the student progression and drop-out rates. The institution</p>	B



collects also data on students' satisfaction with their programmes, the learning resources, and administration and support services. The SER (p. 34) states that the collected data will contribute to the quality indicators of the teaching and learning quality. There are no reports or any other documents available supporting the SER. The ET expects that the FAV and the study program will continue the process and be able to provide evidence about its implementation.	
<p><i>Standard 5.8. Effective procedures are being used to ensure that work submitted by students is original.</i></p> <p>The UP established different regulations to deal with academic misconduct, including plagiarism and other forms of cheating. The UP/FAV teachers have no access to anti-plagiarism software in Albanian language. In March 2021, the University adopted the Regulation on the procedure and disciplinary phases against students' misbehaviour that is, among other things, the ground for the plagiarism monitoring and prevention. During the site visits, several groups of interviewees stated that there is a new measure approved to support the originality of submitted theses. In that way, at least the thesis will be under the public eye and therefore more likely original. Until it is set in a function, there are no procedures in place to guarantee the originality of the submitted work. The institution is relying that it will be the teachers themselves who can identify plagiarism in students' work, projects and thesis. The SER states that the teaching staff introduced anti-plagiarism in their teaching processes.</p>	B
<p><i>Standard 5.9. Students' rights and obligations are made publicly available, promoted to all those concerned and enforced equitably; these will include the right to academic appeals.</i></p> <p>The evaluation process has confirmed the presence of information, outside the documents supplied in advance of the visit, that demonstrate institution-wide arrangements for student admissions, rights of representation, student's transfer, student feedback via 'satisfaction surveys', what students can expect during the studies, what is expected of them and what support can be provided if something goes wrong. There is a well established mechanism for students' rights ensured.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 5.10. The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs is clearly regulated in formal internal documents.</i></p> <p>According to the SER (p. 34), the students' transfer among the higher education institutions, faculties and study programs is regulated at University level, with</p>	A



Regulation 2/111 of 14.7.2017, which is public on the University web site. The ET considers this statement compliant to the Standard.	
<i>Standard 5.11. 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.</i>  The assistance is in a form of consultation meetings with the teachers available twice per week, yet there is no record about it – how often and how many students seek for the assistance. Student participants stated that they use this assistance very often, but there is no record of it.	A-B
<b>Overall</b>	<b>B</b>

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. The recommendation regarding low ratio of graduates per year of the study programme is to develop a monitoring and support system that will inform students about their progress and improve students' willingness to finish their study.*
- 2. The University shall make students' theses available to the public in order to discourage possible plagiarism. Additionally, the Faculty should organise workshops for the staff and students on the awareness raising about plagiarism and its consequences for the future of students or academic staff committing it.*
- 3. Consultation processes (teacher – student) should be monitored to provide numbers of students seeking for the assistance per week, duration of the consultation and its eventual outcome on the students' performance.*
- 4. Post-evaluation action plan design and implementation is required, at least once per year, for the academic staff to improve the teaching process and the knowledge transfer for the teaching staff towards the students.*
- 5. The Study programme name is not coherent throughout the SER. When teachers are not aware of the study programme, how students could be? The recommendation regarding the study programme name change is to design banners and other promo materials with the new name and logo and put them on visible places at the FAV.*



## 2.6. Research

Research	CL
<p><i>Standard 6.1. The study program has defined scientific/applied research objectives (on its own or as part of a research centre or interdisciplinary program), which are also reflected in the research development plan of the institution; sufficient financial, logistic and human resources are allocated for achieving the proposed research objectives.</i></p> <p>Information about the study programme such as mission and objectives for the study programme are provided, yet research is not part of it. The FAV has adopted the Strategic Plan for 2018 - 2022 period which contains 7 goals and 28 priority measures. The document presents indicators planned for all department units and study programmes as a cumulative value. Therefore, indicators on the study programme level are not available. In the SER (p. 37) it is indicated that financial and logistical support for research in this program is lacking. On the other hand, FAV presented 19 policy documents at the University level, mostly. Unfortunately, the documents were not available in English language.</p>	B
<p><i>Standard 6.2. Expectations for teaching staff involvement in research and scholarly activities are clearly specified, and performance in relation to these expectations is considered in staff evaluation and promotion criteria.</i></p> <p>According to the SER “Inclusion of teaching staff in research activities and their performance in relation to academic promotion are specified in regulation no. 465...”. The teaching staff stated that the ratio teaching time compared to the research time is defined by the University regulation, but there are no reports available on the implementation of it. Basically, it seems that the teaching staff is occupied very much with the teaching activities with less time available for research.</p>	B
<p><i>Standard 6.3. 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.</i></p> <p>“Clear policies for determining and defining what is acknowledged as research are specified in Regulation no. 465... There are clear policies developed at the Faculty level, but on the individual program there is not an obligatory plan.</p>	A





<p><i>Standard 6.4. The academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity.</i></p> <p>The academic staff presented proof in their resumes the topics and themes of their teaching that can be linked to the Syllabus. However, the performance among staff members is quite variable with a few people have much more success than others.</p>	B
<p><i>Standard 6.5. The academic and research staff publish their work in speciality magazines or publishing houses, scientific/applied/artistic 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></p> <p>The academic staff publish their research results in co-authorship with researchers from the Republic of Kosovo and abroad. Apart from teaching, the academics are usually involved in are: publishing papers and books, participation at conferences and similar event with oral or poster presentations, mobility of academic staff to international institutions and projects' implementation. This is verified in the list of the publications and in SCOPUS. The University provides a modest fund to every researcher for publishing fee and journal's subscription.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 6.6. Research is validated through: scientific and applied research publications, artistic products, technological transfer through consultancy centres, scientific parks and other structures for validation.</i></p> <p>Infrastructure such as scientific parks or consultancy centres are neither described in the SER nor have been a topic during the discussions in the online evaluation discussion, therefore not available. However, such procedures should become developed by the institution and not by specific study programs and established by following a consistent research and knowledge transfer strategy which has to be set up and agreed on prior to this. An important asset for technology transfer might be the new experimental farm facility. Regarding the research validation, it is mentioned under Standard 6.4. and 6.7.</p>	B
<p><i>Standard 6.7. 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.</i></p>	B



<p>This requirement is fulfilled by the members of the teaching staff on an average level. Eight teaching staff published 16 publications (verified in SCOPUS) in total since 2017, or 2 per individual. The CVs present slightly different figures, it is 18 publications listed in total in the same period. The SER states that “Each regular staff member has published on average more than two scientific-research publications in the last three years.” On the individual level, there are no evidence that supports the statement.</p> <p>On the other hand, by participation in other scientific activities such as conference presentations the threshold has been achieved.</p> <p>Unfortunately, Standard 6.7 is not addressing the expected or confirmed quality of publications. To the opinion of the ET, one publication per year in an international peer reviewed journal should be required. Following the recommendations from last year accreditation procedure and report a table has been prepared where the number of “refereed journal articles”, “other journal articles” and “conference proceedings” is listed for all members of the teaching staff in an improved but still not satisfactory way.</p> <p>The FAV Strategic Plan sets a cumulative indicator of at least 50 published papers by the Academic staff to be published by 2022 in total.</p> <p>Regarding the ‘h – index’, it varies between 0 and 6 (according to SCOPUS), where the modes are 1 and 4. The highest number of published papers is 4 within 3 years per one academic staff member. The average individual number varies between 0.33 – 1.33.</p>	
<p><i>Standard 6.8. Academic and research staff publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full time staff.</i></p> <p>This standard is fulfilled, as confirmed in SCOPUS.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 6.9. 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.</i></p> <p>The ET trusts that the teaching staff is integrating own research outcomes as much as available into teaching as this is the regular way of teaching at an University. However, there is substantial potential for increasing quantity and improving quality in this respect. There is no evidence on the encouragement of the teaching staff to include own research results into the teaching process.</p>	B
<p><i>Standard 6.10. Policies are established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.</i></p>	A





According to SER (p. 38), in Kosovo the intellectual property aspect is protected by the Law on Copyright and Related Rights adopted by the Assembly of Kosovo. The aspects of this law include the intellectual property of UP staff and students.	
<i>Standard 6.11. Students are engaged in research projects and other activities.</i>  According to the online meeting findings, students' theses are based on research. The participants stated that there were opportunities for students to participate in research activities. Students said that there were many opportunities for student-teacher mutual project or research activity implementation apart from the MSc. thesis research development and implementation. The SER has not provided any evidence supporting this standard. On the other hand, young researchers' CVs contain several publications while they were students.	<b>B</b>
<b>Overall</b>	<b>B</b>

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. Each Academic staff member should have developed their own plan of research and teaching activities, implement it and monitor its implementation. The plan should include no. of papers planned to publish, no. of workshops attendance with presentations and participation per year and the planned trainings for professional advancement. A cumulative plan for the academic staff should be available for the next reaccreditation.*
- 2. Due to poorly prepared CVs by several teaching staff, we recommend a workshop for the teaching staff about scientific writing including proper citation of own and other people's work.*
- 3. Young researchers should be more supported and involved in the research activities by the senior staff. They should meet the standard, at least the KAA's one of a paper published per year on average in the past three years.*



## 2.7. Infrastructure and resources

Site visits at the locations and in personal presence have been not possible due to Covid-19 restrictions. Evaluation of infrastructure and resources was made on the basis of the information received from the institution and those declared by the participants in the online meetings.

Infrastructure and resources	CL
<p><i>Standard 7.1. 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.</i></p> <p>As confirmed in the online meetings, a new Faculty building and an UP experimental farm in direct neighbourhood will provide excellent conditions for the study program in the near future. Permanent teaching staff is available and accomplished by temporary staff. However, increasing the number of staff, particularly permanent staff would positively contribute to the programs quality and attractiveness.</p>	A
<p><i>Standard 7.2. 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.</i></p> <p>The SER does not contain a financial plan at the level of the study program but only on FAV level. Investment and financial budgets and policies are regulated at higher levels of management including the level of the academic unit and the University. From what is indicated in the SER, allocated budget is sufficient for keeping the study program sustainably running.</p>	A-B
<p><i>Standard 7.3. 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:</i></p> <p><i>a) owned or rented spaces adequate for the educational process;</i></p> <p><i>b) owned or rented laboratories, with the adequate equipment for all the compulsory disciplines within the curriculum, wherever the analytical syllabus includes such activities;</i></p>	B



<p>UP will provide an adequate, clean, attractive and well-maintained physical environment in and around its building, particularly the new building which is short before moving in. Also laboratories are available with the basic equipment. The technical equipment, however, should be improved continuously as far as budget is available, in order to keep pace with international developments in research methodology.</p> <p><i>c) adequate software for the disciplines of study included in the curriculum, with utilisation licence;</i></p> <p>The basic IT supply for students and teachers is available. Additionally, online teaching equipment should be expanded and completed. It has to be mentioned that the use of the learning platform (SEMS) has significantly increased during recent years, partly as a consequence to pandemic restrictions. This system deserves a further expansion in new applications and widespread use.</p> <p><i>d) library equipped with reading rooms, group work rooms and its own book stock according to the disciplines included in the curricula.</i></p> <p>The library mentioned in the SER is rather limited in space (60 m<sup>2</sup>) and number of books (3000). Extension is recommended. Electronic access to scientific literature should be documented in the SER.</p> <p>Further adequate and easily accessible support services through Central University Library as well as Academic Unit Libraries with reading rooms and book stock seem to be available at UP.</p>	
<p><i>Standard 7.4. 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.</i></p> <p>The old buildings are quit short in space. The ET, however, trusts that the number of seats in the lecture rooms, seminar rooms and laboratories in the new university building will be sufficient.</p>	A-B
<p><i>Standard 7.5. The education institution's libraries must ensure, for each of the study programs:</i></p>	B



<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>The library situation is only briefly addressed in the SER (cf. Standard 7.3 d). The comparatively small space suggests that the required working places (seats) for 10% of students (which pertains not only the present program) can hardly be available. There is obviously easy access provided to electronic books, bibliographic references, bibliometric information scientific databases and helpful staff to support students and teachers. The situation should improve after moving into the new building.</p>	
<p><i>Standard 7.6. The infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the program is adapted to students with special needs.</i></p> <p>The buildings currently in use are not suitably adapted for students with physical disabilities, and learning resources for special needs (as blindness, deafness etc.) are not available. Improvements should occur in the new building.</p>	B-C
<b>Overall</b>	<b>B</b>

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. A detailed budget has to be presented for the study program.
2. Appropriate provision for learning resources for students and staff with disabilities or difficulties must be provided.
3. Investments in IT-resources are recommended.



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Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju  
Kosovo Accreditation Agency

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

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program **Plant Sciences, M.Sc.** offered by the University of Prishtina is **substantially compliant** with the standards included in the KAA Accreditation manual and, therefore, recommends **to accredit** the study program for a duration of **5 years** with a number of **15** students to be enrolled in the program.

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

none

#### Expert Team

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02.05.2021

(Signature)

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