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UNIVERSITY OF PRISHTINA

Master of Science in Information and Communication Technologies

ACCREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

May 2021

University of Prishtina, Faculty of Electrical and Computer Engineering



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: 15th April 2021

Expert Team (ET) members:

- *Prof. Dr. Josip Balen*
- *Ms. Laura Palac (student expert)*

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- *Mr. Naim Gashi*
- *Mr. Shkelzen Gerxhaliu*

Sources of information for the Report:

- *Self evaluation report*
- *Regulation for Master Scientific Studies*
- *Regulation for amendments to regulation no. 2/922, dt. 24.10.2019, for Master studies at the University of Prishtina*
- *Regulation on financing of research - scientific, artistic and sports activities at the University of Prishtina*
- *Regulation on the selection procedures related to the appointment, reappointment, and promotion of the academic staff of the University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina"*
- *Regulation on quality assurance and evaluation at the University of Prishtina*
- *Quality improvement plan*
- *Budget Planning and Expenses*
- *Self evaluation report - General Part*
- *Extract of Cadastral Unit from the Cadastral Agency of Kosovo.pdf*
- *Possession list of facilities in use by FECE.pdf*
- *List of laboratory facilities and equipment.pdf*
- *List of software packages used in teaching ICT programme.pdf*
- *Library book stock.pdf*



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- *Full list of academic staff with administrative information.pdf*
- *List of academic staff with workload per week.pdf*
- *Sample of an agreement with a company.pdf*
- *List of workshops that was organized for the academic staff in the last year.pdf*
- *PI for Academic Staff.pdf*
- *Survey for academic staff and courses.pdf*
- *University of Prishtina Strategic plan 2020–2022.pdf*
- *Regulations for financing scientific work.pdf*

Criteria used for program evaluation:

- *Standards & performance indicators for external evaluation according to the Accreditation Manual of KAA, July 2018*

1.2. Site visit schedule

Expert Team

- Prof. Dr. Josip Balen - Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Computer Science and Information Technology, Osijek, Croatia
- Ms. Laura Palac - Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing (FER)

Coordinators of KAA

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



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Site Visit Program

Meeting with the management of the Faculty	
Time	Participants in the meeting
09.00 – 09.40	Dean: Prof.Asoc.Dr. Isak Shabani Vice deans: Prof.Asoc.Dr. Qamil Kabashi Prof.Asoc.Dr. Milaim Zabeli and Prof.Asoc.Dr. Kadri Sylejmani
Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff	
Time	Participants in the meeting
09.45 – 10.30	Coordinator for Academic Development at FECE: Prof.Ass.Dr. Hëna Maloku Head of office for academic development at UP: Besnik Loxha
Meeting with the heads of the study programme	
Time	Participants in the meeting
11.15 – 12.15	Prof.Asoc.Dr.Mimoza Ibrani, Prof.Asoc.Dr.Bujar Krasniqi
Meeting with teaching staff	
Time	Participants in the meeting
12.30 – 13:10	Prof.Dr.Enver Hamiti, Prof.Ass.Dr.Hena Maloku Dr. Driton Statovci, Dr.Zana Limani, Ass.Msc.Jeta Dobruna, Ass.Msc. Rreze Halili



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Meeting with employers of graduates	
Time	Participants in the meeting
13.15 – 14.00	Flamur Gosalci, Head of business development – 3CIS Shpat Berzati , CTO, InterAdria Argita Canhasi, Senior IT training development supervisor – PECB Krenar Rexhepi, Telos Labs Hysni Gaxherri, Engineer – Kosovo Telecom, Ilir Imeri, Engineer – Regulatory authority of electronic and postal communications
Internal Meeting of KAA	
Time	Participants in the meeting
14.05 – 14.15	Only KAA staff
Closing meeting with the management of the Faculty and program	
Time	Participants in the meeting
14:15 – 14:30	Dean: Prof.Asoc.Dr. Isak Shabani Vice deans: Prof.Asoc.Dr. Qamil Kabashi Prof.Asoc.Dr. Milaim Zabeli and Prof.Asoc.Dr. Kadri Sylejmani

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

Faculty of Electrical and Computer Engineering (hereinafter the Faculty or FECE) was established in 1961 (under a different name), on the foundation of the Technical High School, which offered study programs in Civil, Electro-technical and Mechanical Engineering. After some restructuring and name changes, the Faculty got its present name in 2001. The Faculty of Electrical and Computer Engineering has defined its mission in “educating the youth in the fields of Electric and Computer Engineering, at all levels of higher education, with the aim of preparing them for the demands of the labour market in the country and beyond, and for the



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continuous education in this highly dynamic field, and also to contribute directly to the sustainable technological, social and scientific development of Kosovo. The Vision of the FECE is to become a “national and international model of a contemporary and innovative faculty with integrated teaching, whereby practice complements theory and professional skills and research skills are developed for the benefit of society.

The Faculty has six departments: 1) Telecommunications, 2) Computer Engineering, 3) Computerized Automation with Robotics, 4) Power Engineering, 5) Electronics, 6) General Subjects. The studies at the Faculty are concentrated in three main areas: 1) electricity generation and utilization, 2) information processing and transmission, and 3) computer engineering. The third group covers the analysis and design of computer systems, computer networks, software engineering, software systems security, operating systems, distributed and parallel systems, Web and data.

Strategic objectives and strategy for achieving the mission and vision have been developed. There are approximately 2200 students currently enrolled in FECEs Bachelor programmes and 210 in Master programmes. FECE counts among its personnel, 33 full time academic staff, 24 part-time academic staff, and 5 retired professors while there are 13 administrative employees.

The mission of the master program in ICT follows the mission of faculty and university, educating and providing candidates the knowledge and competencies to solve difficult engineering problems, to implement complex systems, to act as a leader of a team, and to conduct research and development in the field of ICT. This program will enable students to acquire the necessary knowledge from: radio network planning and optimization, information theory, wireless and advanced communications networks as well as the application of advanced signal processing.



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2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

According to the SER, the mission of the Master study programme in Information and Communication Technologies is to educate students to solve difficult engineering problems, implement complex systems and conduct research and development in the field of ICT. Mission of this study program is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the HEI. However, experts believe that the University's mission and vision are rather generic because they do not highlight FECEs comparative advantages and unique discriminators in the market, nor imply its strategic orientation with respect to a specific geographical area of interest, research focus or target academic relevance and market share.

During the meeting the FECE management has demonstrated strategic planning and it is important to mention that the recommendations of external experts from previous evaluations are taken in account. Thus, for instance, the FECE recently started using *plagiarismcheck.org* platform for plagiarism checks. Also, a new website that supports the English language version is in the implementation process. The Expert Team strongly recommends that the HEI continues to improve the English version of FECE official website.

According to the heads of this study programme, the main difference between the old programme of Telecommunication and the new one of ICT is that the ICT programme has introduced new wireless technologies and information systems. Also, there have been some changes in students workloads and the number of soft skill courses has increased. However, the curriculum of this program does not contain mandatory internships related to master thesis, instead an informal internship is an integrated element of several courses and has no ECTS points assigned. The interviewed representatives from the industry have unanimously complimented the quality of the graduated students and their engineering skills, and, as such, the study program may be deemed to follow a certain overall didactic concept.

The Master study program was designed with inputs collected from local experts who are directly involved in the industry, companies that the University of Prishtina has cooperation agreements and alumni. Several representatives of companies employing the graduates mentioned that they received the draft version of the programme and gave their feedback with suggestions for improvement that were accepted. Furthermore, it was mentioned that they are



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satisfied with the proposed study programme and consider it modern and up to date, mainly due to the usage of new technologies such as 5G, IoT etc.

The FECE has formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues and these are made publicly available to all staff and students in Albanian. According to the HEIs management, a small number of the policies and regulations are available in English too, but they plan to translate all of them. However, the Expert Team recommends reviewing these documents at least once every two years. A regulation addressing ethical conduct in academic and research undertaking is introduced but it is applicable to academic staff only (see Article 3 of the Code of Ethics). Moreover, in addition to the Code of Ethics, the institution has got a number of other relevant regulations introduced, however, many of them are not publicly available via the FECE website. Finally, some important documents and information which happen to be publicly available are of questionable integrity. Furthermore, after the meetings with management, heads of this study program and teachers, experts gained the impression that staff and students comply with all the internal regulations.

<i>Standard</i>	<i>Compliance</i>	
	<i>YES</i>	<i>NO</i>
Standard 1.1. The study program mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution.	X	
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.	X	
Standard 1.3. The study program has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept.	X	
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.		X



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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.	X	
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.		X

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Continue improving the English version of FECE official website and make all formal policies, guidelines and internal regulations publicly available in Albanian and in English.*
- 2. Introduce practice which would secure a seamless transition between two consecutive planning processes/periods thus enabling effective business and academic continuity.*
- 3. Resolve contradictions and applicability in important regulations such as Code of Ethics and others.*

2.2. Quality management

Quality assurance and management process is based on the *Regulation on quality assurance and evaluation at the University of Prishtina* which is very generally written that leaves a chance for the institutions at the University to further customize it for their own prosperity and development. Unfortunately, this is not the case at FECE since from the enclosed Quality improvement plan it can be seen the superficial approach to the quality assurance and management process. Based on the provided documentation and collected information during the online visit it can be concluded that the study committee members, head of the department, quality assurance officer at FECE and the rest of the academic staff have participated in the quality improvement activities. However, the responsibility and the hierarchy is not known and as a result, it may be noticed that only basic quality assurance procedures aimed at securing long-term institutional and study program development have



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been put in place. Furthermore, the self report is written with a low quality since it is not covering all the standards and is missing important information regarding the study program and the institution.

Moreover, no feedback collection procedure has been set to seek useful information from graduates and employers, as well as the most of the feedback collected is not publicly available. However, during the online meeting with employers it was confirmed that they were involved into the study program development process and that their feedback was accepted. The reporting system is in place but the expert team feels that it is focused primarily to meet the regulatory requirements rather than to improve the quality of the processes it refers to. Therefore, it can be concluded that the quality assurance process is not ensuring that the required standards are met and that there is continuous performance improvement.

One of the major issues in the quality assurance process is also a lack of proper interest of students for the evaluation of academic staff and administration services which resulted in a low number of provided feedback making it rather unrepresentative and not adequate for a quality evaluation of the obtained results. Therefore, it is necessary to develop and implement a mechanism/procedure/regulation that will increase the quantity of students participating in surveys and questionnaires in order to get a representative sample for analysis and evaluation of teachers performance, quality of courses and the study program. Furthermore, the quality assurance process should include a cross-sectional approach including evaluation results, investigation of the student workload, academic success and employment of graduates, etc. and generate integrated analytics to support improvement planning.

<i>Standard</i>	<i>Compliance</i>	
	<i>YES</i>	<i>NO</i>
Standard 2.1. All staff participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity.	X	
Standard 2.2. Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes.	X	
Standard 2.3. Quality assurance processes deal with all aspects of		X

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program planning and delivery, including services and resources provided by other parts of the institution.		
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.	X	
Standard 2.5. Quality assurance processes ensure both that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance.		X
Standard 2.6. Survey data is being collected from students, graduates and employers; the results of these evaluations are made publicly available.		X
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.		X
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.	X	
Standard 2.9. The quality assurance arrangements for the program are themselves regularly evaluated and improved.	X	

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. The communication with all stakeholders included into the study program should be improved and structured.*
- 2. Raise the current quality assurance standard, procedures and operations.*
- 3. Develop and implement a mechanism/procedure/regulation that will increase the quantity of students participating in surveys and questionnaires*



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4. *Introduce feedback collection systems and procedures to gather feedback from other stakeholders such as graduates, employers, local community and local government.*
5. *Improve significantly the quality of the next self report.*

2.3. Academic staff

Academic staff at FECE include in total 33 full time academic staff, 24 part-time academic staff, and 5 retired professors. In this study program 7 full time academic staff and 3 part time are involved, and therefore 70% of the academic staff in the study program are full time employees. Furthermore, 5 full time academic staff holds a PhD title and the standards that 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, are satisfied. The selection and promotion of academic staff to the respective academic title is conducted according to Article 171, 175, 176 and 177 of the Statute of UP and the following Regulations: *Regulation on selection procedures for appointment, reappointment and promotion of academic staff* and *Regulation on selection procedures for part-time staff*. The publication of position openings by UP is usually done twice a year. Requests for new academic personnel are initiated with proposals submitted by the respective departments to the FECE Council that makes a decision to proceed with the publication of a position opening call or not. Several weaknesses in the self evaluation report include procedural difficulties in recruiting new academic staff as well as the formal and procedural limitations on recruiting part time staff from the industry. During the online visit it was stated that all the regulations, procedures and approvals regarding the staff recruitment come from the University and that the Faculty depends on the decisions made on the higher level. Therefore, it is recommended to work with the University on finding a model that will give more autonomy and decision power to the Faculties.

The attached academic staff CVs are covering the majority of the academic and scientific activities for all teachers and therefore and from the available information it can be concluded that the qualifications and experience of the academic staff for the proposed study program are satisfied. However, the self evaluation report is missing the full data in tabular form about full time and part time academic/ staff). Furthermore, the available academic staff CVs on the official FECE web page are not in the same format (some are in .pdf and the rest in .docx) and shape (not covering the same information) and the majority is not available in English

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language. During the meeting with the management and the academic staff it was explained and demonstrated that the new web page which is currently being developed contains the unified profiles for all the academic staff but not all of them have been fully filled with all the necessary information.

The Center for teaching and excellence is responsible for the organization of training and workshops for the academic staff and during the past years various trainings for improvement of academic and scientific skills of the academic staff were organized and in general attended by teachers. Furthermore, new employed academic staff are obligated to take two courses on improvement of teaching methodology and the requirements for the other academic staff is to attend at least two trainings/workshops between each promotion or before signing the new contract. However, the strategic approach to the academic staff development process should be implemented and regularly reviewed and evaluated.

Academic staff evaluation is administered by the Rectorate and is done at the end of each semester through the questionnaires posted on the SEMS (Electronic student management system) platform. Each academic staff gets insight into the results of their performance and the courses that they deliver and poor results are discussed at the department level and at the Faculty Council. The results are also taken into account for promotion of the academic staff and renewal of contracts. The performance of each professor is measured based on the University regulation for staff promotions. However, the number of students that participate in the surveys and questionnaires is low and it should be improved dramatically in order to get a representative sample for analysis and evaluation of teachers performance and quality of courses and study program.

The responsibilities of all academic staff besides teaching include also other engagements such as conducting and correcting exams, students' project and master thesis evaluation, as well as consultations with students. Furthermore, the majority of the academic staff have satisfied community service since they are actively involved in collaboration with local and national institutions, and participate in the boards of national agencies, government institutions, private companies and the Ministry of education. It is ensured by the law, regulation and declaration that academic staff do not cover more than two teaching positions within an academic year regardless of the educational institution where they carry out their activity. Furthermore, during the meeting with quality assurance representatives it was stated

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that the majority of academic staff has only one full time teaching position, and some part time contracts with industry.

The University of Prishtina Strategic plan 2020 - 2022 includes strategies for quality enhancement and improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials but only the improvement of teaching by introducing new methodologies is mentioned. Therefore, improvement of the teaching and assessment methods must be included into the strategies for quality enhancement and the strategic plans, as well as the continuous improvement in the content and quality of learning materials.

<i>Standard</i>	<i>Compliance</i>	
	<i>YES</i>	<i>NO</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.		X
Standard 3.2. The academic staff must comply with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative instruction on Accreditation.	X	
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.	X	
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.	X	
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.	X	



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Standard 3.6. Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of academic staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties.	X	
Standard 3.7. The responsibilities of all academic staff, especially full-time, include the engagement in the academic community, availability for consultations with students and community service.	X	
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.		X
Standard 3.9. Strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials.		X
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.	X	

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Finish the process of creating unified profiles and CVs for all academic staff on the new version of the FECE web page.*
2. *Regularly maintain and update the academic staff profile and CVs available on the FECE web page.*
3. *Implement a strategic approach to the academic staff development process.*
4. *Include improvement of the teaching and assessment methods into the strategies for quality enhancement and the strategic plans, as well as the continuous improvement in the content and quality of learning materials.*
5. *Increase the quantity of students participating in surveys and questionnaires in order to get a representative sample for analysis and evaluation of teachers performance and quality of courses and study program.*
6. *Closely work with the University on finding a model that will give more autonomy and decision power to the Faculties.*



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2.4. Educational process content

The Master of science in Information and communication technologies study program is based on other study programs from the region and above. The study program aims to acquire students with knowledge from radio network planning and optimization, information theory, advanced communications networks and the application of advanced signal processing. Although it is stated that it combines theory developed through modern teaching methodology, as well as the laboratory and experimental practice conducted in ICT laboratories, the curriculum of this program does not contain mandatory internships or internships related to master thesis. The explanation from the academic staff and the Faculty management is that the majority of the students enrolled at the masters program are already employed and that the internship is an integrated element of several courses. However, since the internship is an important part of the educational process and since the FECE has already signed cooperation agreements with local companies where the BSc students are conducting their internships, the expert team recommends to find a model for introducing mandatory internships in the curriculum of the study program and assigning the appropriate ECTS credits to it. Furthermore, since the Diploma thesis is the only course given in the fourth semester it should be conducted at the high level based on research, development and innovation, as well as conducted in collaboration with the industry. During the meeting with employers it was stated that in general they are satisfied with the knowledge and skills that students acquired in the previous study program.

The study program complies with the level 6 of the National Qualifications Framework. The management stated that the enrollment quota for the Master ICT programme will be 30 students per year and experts believe that the proposed quota is too small given today's labor market needs for professions within the ICT field. However, the management stated these numbers are based on the previous student interest and available resources. The disciplines within the curriculum are provided in a logical flow and learning outcomes on the program level meet the precise determination of the general and specific competencies. The courses within the curriculum have analytical syllabuses which are explained and discussed with students in the beginning of each semester (first class of every course). Course syllabuses contain student assessment mechanisms which are also clearly communicated to students at the beginning of every course. External experts noted that some courses do not have well-defined learning outcomes, i.e. in some courses the learning outcomes are not adequate

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for a master degree study (e.g. Advanced Communication Networks, Wireless Communications II, Selected topics in multimedia communications, Cognitive Radio, Vehicular Communications, Satellite Communications, Networks and Communications Security). Furthermore, two elective courses Vehicular Communications and Internet of Things should become mandatory (eg. instead of Advanced Communication Networks) or the part of their content should be given on other courses (such as Advanced Communication Networks or Wireless Communications I and II) since they give knowledge about the state of the art communication technologies that are currently growing exponentially.

It can be concluded that the study program is student-centered since it offers different teaching methods that allow students to actively learn, such as discussions, practical works, projects, seminars and laboratory exercises. Also, professors have sufficient scheduled times in their working hours for consultation for students. It is also important to note that students can rate their professors and the quality of given courses. Unfortunately, students are not informed about the results of these surveys.

Knowledge of English is a prerequisite for enrollment in the master study and in case the student does not have adequate knowledge of English, he/she must take an English language exam organized by the Faculty. Various teaching methods are used to achieve learning outcomes such as lectures, laboratory exercises, seminars, practical works, projects, discussions, etc. Student assessment mechanisms are conducted fairly and objectively. *Regulation for Master Scientific Studies and Regulation for amendments to regulation no. 2/922, dt. 24.10.2019, for Master studies at the University of Prishtina* include the procedures and policies regarding the student enrollment, assessment and complaint procedures, as well as the rights and obligations of students.

<i>Standard</i>	<i>Compliance</i>	
	<i>YES</i>	<i>NO</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,	X	

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contributing to the civil society and of developing the students' personality.		
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.	X	
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.	X	
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.	X	
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.	X	
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.	X	
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.	X	



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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.	X	
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.	X	
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.	X	
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 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
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.	X	

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Make learning outcomes more uniform across all courses in the study program.*
2. *Inform students about results of surveys and questionnaires and measures taken based on those results.*
3. *Sign more cooperation agreements in order to facilitate the practice stages.*
4. *Make an internship mandatory for students and assign ECTS credits accordingly.*
5. *Conduct master thesis in collaboration with industry.*



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2.5. Students

There is a clear and formally adopted admission procedure at the University level that the study program respects based on the *Regulation for Master Scientific Studies and Regulation for amendments to regulation no. 2/922, dt. 24.10.2019, for Master studies at the University of Prishtina*. The admission criteria is consistently and fairly applied for all students and is clearly defined and publicly announced on the University website, the Faculty website and in newspapers.

The University Senate is responsible for the number of candidates to be accepted in the first year, considering the proposed number by the Faculty Council for each study program. Due to a small enrollment quota (maximum 30 students), small study groups will be organized that will ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process. The study program curriculum is published on the FECE website before the beginning of the semester and is available to students. The University has established an Electronic Student Management System (SEMS) to which students have individual access and which is used to store and make available all course syllabuses, materials, records of individual student achievements and other important information.

Assessment of the student's knowledge is done through exams, colloquiums, seminars, laboratory exercises, presentations of the realization of any practical project in the field of engineering, etc. Furthermore, a student has the right to review the assessment of the written exam and if he/she disagrees with the assessment, he/she has the right to file a written complaint to the Dean. In that case, the student takes the exam in front of the commission. All exams are held within the announced exam terms (January, June and September). The Senate of the University of Prishtina (on the proposal of the Study Committee and the Faculty Councils) may decide to announce additional exam terms if it considers that this contributes to the progress of the study process in accordance with Article 150 of the University statute. In addition, the system adapts to students who participate in an international exchange program or conduct an internship abroad by allowing them to take the exams earlier. The FECE keeps records of all student grades through SEMS platform and students can get a printout of their grades if they need it. The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs is also regulated by the University statute (Article 142, Article 143, Article 144). All students' rights and obligations, in both English and

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Albanian versions of the statute, are made publicly available on the official university website.

This study program is student-centered, but needs improving in this field. For students whose mother language is not Albanian exams and literature are provided in their mother tongue. In general, academic staff have sufficient scheduled times in their working hours for consultations with students. Experts recommend improving the infrastructure for students with disabilities and including regulations of the process of adapting exams to students with disabilities to the existing policies and regulations.

The FECE collects and analyses the pass rate and grades of students in all courses through the SEMS platform and during the meetings several examples were mentioned how the obtained data are used to improve the quality of the delivered courses and the whole studying process. Regarding plagiarism, the Faculty recently procured *plagiarismcheck.org* platform that is available for all academic staff for plagiarism check, and the usage is mandatory. Experts recommend the FECE to continue improving the plagiarism and cheating prevention processes.

<i>Standard</i>	<i>Compliance</i>	
	<i>YES</i>	<i>NO</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.	X	
Standard 5.2. All students enrolled in the study program possess a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent document of study, according to MEST requirements.	X	
Standard 5.3. The study groups are dimensioned so as to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process.	X	
Standard 5.4. Feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments are given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed.	X	

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Standard 5.5. The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record.	X	
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.	X	
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.	X	
Standard 5.8. Effective procedures are being used to ensure that work submitted by students is original.	X	
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.	X	
Standard 5.10. The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs is clearly regulated in formal internal documents.	X	
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.	X	

Compliance level: Fully compliant

Recommendations:

1. *Include regulations of the process of adapting exams to students with disabilities to the existing policies and regulations.*
2. *Continue improving the plagiarism and cheating prevention process.*



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2.6. Research

The mater study program has defined scientific and applied research objectives but the learning outcomes are not fully supporting them since they do not include research goals. Furthermore, there is no evidence that students are engaged in research projects and other research activities and the explanation is that the main reason is the lack of funds. However, in the content of majority courses new technologies are included and the academic staff stated and gave several examples of including the state-of-the-art research results in their lectures and laboratory exercises. One of the advantages is that the research of the academic staff harmonizes quite well with the topics they teach that also creates opportunities for academic staff to offer topics for master thesis according to their research interest.

One of the major weaknesses mentioned in the self evaluation report regarding the scientific work is insufficient financial support for scientific research from the government and the University. However, based on the recently approved document *Regulation on Financing Research – Scientific, Artistic and sports Activities at the University of Prishtina* all academic staff at the University will be able to get the financial support for a high quality journal and conference publications.

Expectations for academic staff involvement in research and scholarly activities and performance in relation to these expectations are specified in the work contract, in the Statute of the University and in the *Regulation on the Selection Procedures Related to the Appointment, Reappointment and Promotion of the Academic Staff at the University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina”*. Research indicators are listed in the *Strategic Plan of Actions 2021-2023* of FECE. The research of academic staff is basically validated by scientific publications and is internationally visible. The majority of the academic staff has published research work on similar topics as their teaching activity with an adequate citation score. According to the list of publications submitted, the teachers have published at least an average of one scientific/applied research publication per year for the past three years under the name of the University of Prishtina. However, a low number of publications in top journals from the first and second quartile is present and this should be improved. Furthermore, at the Faculty a total number of currently active scientific and professional projects should be increased but no evidence was provided that academic staff are encouraged to write and submit the projects proposals on various calls.

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Technological transfer is not regulated and not supported in the University. This is not facilitated by the salary system either, as salaries are unified and do not depend on cooperation with companies. However, realization of professional expertise for the needs of the community is foreseen as one of the tasks in the *Strategic Plan of Actions of FECE for 2021-2023*. The University has not yet established intellectual property ownership policies or regulations, although “The development of policy for the protection of the intellectual property of the University and of its commercial utilization” is stated in the Statute of the University as one of the responsibilities of the Senate.

<i>Standard</i>	<i>Compliance</i>	
	<i>YES</i>	<i>NO</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.	X	
Standard 6.2. Expectations for academic 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.	X	
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.	X	
Standard 6.4. The academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity.	X	
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.	X	
Standard 6.6. Research is validated through: scientific and applied research publications, artistic products, technological transfer through		X

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consultancy centres, scientific parks and other structures for validation.		
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.	X	
Standard 6.8. Academic and research staff publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full-time staff.	X	
Standard 6.8. (1) 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	
Standard 6.9. Policies are established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.		X
Standard 6.10. Students are engaged in research projects and other activities.		X

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Plan the funds for students' research work in the budget of new project applications.*
2. *Increase the number of papers published in high quality journals from the first and second quartile.*
3. *Encourage the academic staff to write and submit more projects proposals.*
4. *Develop and implement a regulation on technology transfer.*
5. *The University is recommended to establish an intellectual property ownership policy.*

2.7. Infrastructure and resources

The FECE has been sharing its facility with FME (Faculty of Mechanical Engineering) and FCE (Faculty of Civil Engineering), that consists of two big and two medium amphitheatres, nine smaller lecture halls and eight laboratories that were presented in videos. It seems that



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the FECE has enough premises, human resources and equipment for satisfying the needs of the study program. Furthermore, during the meetings with the management and the academic staff it was stated that each department gets adequate funds on a yearly basis for the new laboratory equipment procurement. However, there is an issue with some well-equipped laboratories since there are not enough technicians to fully exploit the potential of these laboratories for independent work of students.

A general expenses at the Faculty level has been provided where expenses for salaries, as well as faculty level operational expenses, and expenses for computers, new devices, renovations, furniture and other categories are calculated. However, the income is not shown and the financial plan at the level of the study program that would demonstrate the sustainability of the study program for the next minimum three years is also missing. Study programs do not have separate financial plans, the financial needs of the study program are covered by the central administration of the University. As a public institution of higher education, University's financial sustainability is guaranteed by the Mid-Term Expenditure Framework for the next three years. The University is the owner of the space it uses and has the central library.

Considering the number of students (about 2400 students in the whole Faculty and maximum 30 in the study program), the number and size of teaching classrooms and laboratories is adequate. However, the infrastructure is not fully adapted to students with special needs but the Strategic Plan of Actions of FECE foresees concrete activities for improvement.

The role of the library seems to be underestimated since in the self evaluation report library capacities are described in only two sentences and there is no information of compliance with Standard 7.5. The link to "Access to electronic resources" on the University web page is also empty (like several other links on the web page). The self evaluation report (page 99) lists "Lack of funds for the purchase of textbooks for the courses being taught" as one of the weaknesses for infrastructure and resources.

<i>Standard</i>	<i>Compliance</i>	
	<i>YES</i>	<i>NO</i>
Standard 7.1. The adequate long-term implementation of the study program is ensured in quantitative terms as regards premises, human	X	

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resources and equipment. At the same time, it is guaranteed that qualitative aspects are also taken into account.		
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.		X
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: 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	
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.	X	
Standard 7.5. The education institution's libraries must ensure, for each of the study programs: a) a number of seats in the reading rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program; 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; 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; 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;		X



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e) a sufficient number of subscriptions to Albanian and foreign publications and periodicals, according to the stated mission.		
Standard 7.6. The infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the program is adapted to students with special needs.		X

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Work on the employment of more laboratory technicians that will assist the academic staff in laboratory equipment installation and maintenance.*
2. *Plan and implement measures to ensure compliance with the requirements of Standard 7.5.*
3. *Ensure adherence to the Strategic Plan of Actions of FECE concerning infrastructure for students with special needs.*

3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

University of Prishtina as a large public institution has an important role for the local but also regional higher education landscape. The constant involvement of industry representatives in the development of study programs is just one example of good practices. The teaching and administrative processes of the FECE are adjusted to the needs of students and the general goals of the proposed master study program Information and Communication Technologies are in line with the overall mission and strategic goals of the University. However, there are several improvements that are necessary in order to further improve the quality of the proposed master study program:

- Closely work with the University on finding a model that will give more autonomy and decision power to the Faculty and resolve contradictions and applicability in important regulations.
- Introduce practice which would secure a seamless transition between two consecutive planning processes/periods thus enabling effective business and academic continuity.



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- Continue improving the FECE official website by adding the full information regarding the study program and academic staff and by making all formal policies, guidelines and internal regulations publicly available in Albanian and in English.
- Improve significantly the current quality assurance standard, procedures and operations, as well as the quality of the next self report.
- Introduce feedback collection systems and procedures to gather feedback from other stakeholders such as graduates, employers, local community and local government, while increasing the quantity of students participating in surveys and questionnaires.
- Implement a strategic approach to the academic staff development process and improvement of the teaching and assessment methods.
- Increase the number of papers published in high quality journals, as well as the number of scientific and professional projects.
- Develop and implement a regulation on technology transfer and an intellectual property ownership policy.

Considering that the provided documentation is not covering all the standards and is missing numerous important information discussions with the program development team during an online visit to the Faculty of Electrical and Computer Engineering was crucial for several decisions. The expert committee for the accreditation process prepared this report based on defined Standards & performance indicators for external evaluation according to the Accreditation Manual of KAA (July 2018) and gave recommendations for further quality improvement and the following compliance levels:

Standard	Compliance Level
Mission, objectives and administration	Substantially compliant
Quality management	Partially compliant
Academic Staff	Substantially compliant
Educational Process Content	Substantially compliant
Students	Fully compliant
Research	Substantially compliant

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Infrastructure and resources	Partially compliant
Overall Compliance	Substantially compliant

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program Master in Information and Communication Technologies offered by University of Prishtina, Faculty of Electrical and Computer Engineering is Substantially compliant with the standards included in the KAA Accreditation manual and, therefore, recommends to accredit the study program for a duration of three years with a number of maximum 30 students to be enrolled in the program.

4. APPENDICES *(if available)*

None

Expert Team

Member


Signature _____ Josip Balen _____ 03.05.2021.

Member (Student)


Signature _____ Laura Palac _____ 03.05.2021.