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***UNIVERSITY OF PRISHTINA "HASAN PRISHTINA"
FACULTY OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERING
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN MANUFACTURING AND
INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING WITH MANAGEMENT***

ACCREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

29 Apr 2021, Zagreb, Croatia



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: 23 Mar 2021

Expert Team (ET) members:

- *Dr. Dražen Vrhovski*
- *Ms Laura Palac*

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

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

Sources of information for the Report:

- [1] *Self-Evaluation Report, University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina”, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering (FME), Prishtina, 2020.*
- [2] *Syllabi of the study programme.*
- [3] *CVs of the study programme academic staff*
- [4] *Regulation on Establishment and Functioning Principles of the Advisory Board of Academic Units at the University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina”, Prishtina, 2015.*
- [5] *Code of Ethics for the Academic Staff of the University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina”, Prishtina, 2013.*
- [6] *Regulation on Disciplinary Measures and Procedures Regulation on Disciplinary Measures and Procedures, Prishtina, 2017.*
- [7] *Regulation on establishment and principles of functioning of institutes at University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina”, Prishtina, 2013.*



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- [8] *Regulation on Quality Assurance and Evaluation at the University of Prishtina, Prishtina, 2016.*
- [9] *Regulation on the Selection Procedures Related to the Appointment, Reappointment, And Promotion of the Academic Staff at the University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina”, Prishtina, 2021.*
- [10] *A Short Guide for Reviewing and Revising Syllabi, University of Prishtina in cooperation with the HERAS project, Prishtina, 2018.*
- [11] *University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina” Statute, Prishtina, 2012.*
- [12] *University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina”, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Strategic Plan 2017-2022, Prishtina, 2017.*
- [13] *University of Prishtina Information Technology Office, User Manual for Student Electronic Management System (SEMS), (in Albanian), Prishtina, 2018.*
- [14] *University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina”, User Manual of the Management and Monitoring of Lecture Attendance in the Framework of SEMS, Prishtina, 2019.*
- [15] *Document entitled “Teaching evidence. How we take records”, University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina” Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Prishtina, 2021.*
- [16] *Document entitled “Evidence and conformation of the lecture held by professor”, University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina” Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Prishtina, 2021.*
- [17] *Document entitled “Students Attendance Control”, University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina” Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Prishtina, 2021.*
- [18] *Document entitled “How we publish literature”, University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina” Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Prishtina, 2021.*
- [19] *Document entitled “How do we assign the Assistant”, University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina” Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Prishtina, 2021.*
- [20] *Document entitled “Exams evaluation and evidence”, University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina” Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Prishtina, 2021.*
- [21] *University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina” Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Planned Budget 2021-2024, Prishtina, 2021.*
- [22] *Video entitled “Faculty of Mechanical Engineering-University Of Prishtina ‘Hasan Prishtina’_2021” depicting FME infrastructure, [online], available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YaqfxWcCN4Y> [Accessed 14 Apr 2021].*
- [23] *Regulation for Undergraduate Studies – Bachelor, Prishtina, 2019.*
- [25] *Amendment to the Regulation for Undergraduate Studies – Bachelor, Prishtina, 2020.*



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Sources referenced from [1] to [11] were provided prior to the online evaluation interviews, whereas the sources from [12] onwards were requested and received upon the interviewing.

Criteria used for program evaluation:

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

1.2. Site visit schedule

- 09.00-09.40 *Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated*
- 09.45-10.25 *Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff - Joint session*
- 11.00-12.10 *Meeting with the heads of the study programme 1: Manufacturing and Industrial Engineering with Management, BSc*
- 12.15-13.15 *Meeting with the heads of the study programme 2: Manufacturing and Industrial Engineering with Management, MSc*
- 13.20-14.00 *Meeting with teaching staff*
- 14.05-14.45 *Meeting with the students*
- 14.50-15.30 *Meeting with the graduates*
- 15.35-16.15 *Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders*
- 16.15-16.25 *Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts*
- 16.25-16.35 *Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program*



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

The University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina”, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering (hereafter referred to as: FME) was established in 1961 in Prishtina as a joint engineering-related higher education institution named the Technical Faculty, offering study programmes in civil, electrical and mechanical engineering, as well as providing a natural follow up to the students graduating from the Prishtina Technical High School. Over the years, the Technical Faculty had undergone a number of organisational and other such development changes to finally be split into three organisational units in 1988 one of which is the today’s FME. As of the 2018/19 academic year, the FME offers eight (8) study programmes in total, six (6) of which on bachelor level, and four (4) master level programmes [1]. In the 2020/21 academic year, FME got enrolled 232 new students in total, of which 21 in the Manufacturing and Automation programme, and 32 new students undertaking the Industrial Engineering and Management programme [1].

The BSc in Manufacturing and Industrial Engineering with Management program which has been the subject of the undertaken evaluation (hereafter referred to as: Study Programme) is a new study programme originating from the separate programmes called “Manufacturing and Automation” and “Industrial Engineering and Management”. The Study Programme is aimed at educating mechanical engineers with general-purpose capacities, capable to address most of the present and future challenges in industry sectors such as general manufacturing, mining, energy and agriculture. Given the profile of the FME, and the study programme developments so far, the Study Programme is less likely to be seen as a new programme generated by the FME management as a response to the current industry/economy/engineering trends, but rather as organisational change aimed at optimising currently available resources and efforts required. Nevertheless, the programme fits well in the existing programme portfolio and may be seen as providing knowledges and skills complementary to those of the alternative FME study programmes.

Work done as a part of the undertaken expertise has been based on the self-evaluation report prepared by the FME in December 2020, as well as on supplementary information and documentation listed in Section 1.1. All the documentation was provided either by the FME/KAA or has been publicly available via different channels.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the assessment process did not include site visits to FME locations. The evaluation has therefore been done entirely via online interviews and by means



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of document consultation. Although this has not had any influence on the objectiveness of the assessments made, nevertheless the process has still been somewhat hindered by the inability to undertake physical inspection of the FME facilities and operational procedures.

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

- *FME Management, attended by Prof. Dr. Ahmet Shala, Mrs. Fatmire Kuçi, Prof. Dr. Ilir Doçi, Prof. Dr. Rexhep Selimaj;*
- *Academic staff members acting as the heads of the study programme, attended by Prof. Dr. Hysni Osmani, Prof. Dr. Mirlind Bruçi, Prof. Ass. Dr. Afrim Gjellaj and Prof. Dr. Beqir Hamidi;*
- *Quality assurance representatives, attended by Prof. Ass. Dr. Xhevahir Bajrami, Mr. Rifat Krasniqi, Mr. Rinor Berisha and Mr. Liridon Bytyqi;*
- *Teachers, attended by Prof. Dr. Nexhat Qehaja, Dr. Halil Demolli and Mr Besart Berisha;*
- *Student representatives, attended by Endrit Vojvoda, Qendrim Tara, Dorentina Ramadani, Besart Misini and Agnesë Ramadani;*
- *Graduate students representatives, attended by Jetmira Hertica, Fjolla Nasufi and Arlinda Elezi;*
- *Representatives from the industry, attended by Mr. Kemajl Zariqi, representative of the Fabrika Veglave Plus Aparateve Elektrike Ferizaj. Mr Mete Beqiraj, representative of the Kosovo Energy Corporation J.S.C., Mr Hamit Mavriqi, from Turbo Service Engineering Prishtine, and Mr. Endrit Dervishaj from Metal-Ing sh.p.k Isniq-Deçan.*



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2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

The programme self-evaluation report (hereafter referred to as: SER) [1] and the FME strategic development plan [12] provide information on FME mission and vision. Although the formulations used in the two documents slightly deviate from each other, in both cases they refer to a large extent to generic engineering related fields, skills and knowledges, and use rather typical wording to describe target objectives such as “prepare students for the job market”, “contribute to scientific development, research and education” and similar. In this regard, although it may be deemed that the Study Programme has therefore been aligned with the FME mission and vision statements, it needs to be said that, being rather generic, both statements fit for a variety of possible academic and/or business outcomes. The mission and vision statements hence do not suggest FME’s comparative advantages and unique discriminators on the market, neither do they imply its strategic orientation with respect to the specific geographic area of interest, research focus or target academic relevance/market share. In this regard, the Study Programme has indeed been aligned with the FME mission, nevertheless, it does not reflect in any way on the current and future specific strategic needs of both the institution and the local community, neither it recognises any of the critical trends of the 21st century’s industry/economy.

Both the feedback received from the FME management as well as the content of [12] do demonstrate some strategic planning, however, most of the planning seems to be focused on infrastructural development. Moreover, although the expert team fully appreciates and compliments the corresponding developments and investments made so far, the future developments outlined in [12] and [21] seem to be relying on considerable funding which both FME and the University of Prishtina are unlikely to be able to sustain from their own self-generated income. As such, it would somewhat be expected that a strategic development would provide at least some high-level information on funding sources and projects expected to be kicked-off to secure the funding. Nevertheless, no such feedback has been gained.

The interviewed representatives from the industry have unanimously complimented the quality of the graduated students and their engineering capacities, and, as such, the programme may be deemed to follow a certain overall didactic concept. Nevertheless, at the same time it is



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difficult to find any evidence as to how the concept corresponds with new industry trends and technology paradigms as the majority of them are addressed in the elective modules only.

Furthermore, although the feedback from the industry representatives implies appropriate study programme profiling with respect to the actual job market requirements, conflicting and/or questionable strengths and weaknesses identified in the SER suggest otherwise. Thus, for instance, a proof that labour market needs have been accounted for is formulated under the strengths as “provide contemporary and interactive knowledge for teaching students in engineering design and vehicle design as a labour market demand”, even though it remains unclear what are the reasons behind identifying vehicle design as critical to Kosovo economy. Equally so, the academic staff has been qualified as “...prepared for appropriate teaching of students...” even though through the undertaken evaluation process the academic staff has repeatedly been identified as a weak point primarily for reasons having to do with staff age.

The institution has got introduced a regulation addressing ethical conduct in academic and research undertaking but it is applicable to academic staff only (see Article 3 of the Code of Ethics [5]). It is hence not clear what was the logic behind separating ethical (mis)conduct between different stakeholders as their individual contribution to the overarching promotion of ethical behaviour and merit-driven academic recognition is equally important.

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 on the FME web site either entirely or in languages other than Albanian, despite the fact that a new version of the university web site has recently been introduced. Finally, some important documents and information which happen to be publicly available are of questionable integrity. Thus, for instance a strategic plan downloadable from the FME web site (<https://dokumente.uni-pr.edu/>) corresponds to the three-year period starting from 2020 to 2022, which contradicts both the document [12] supporting the FME accreditation process as well as the document available at <https://fim.uni-pr.edu/page.aspx?id=1,68> .

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Resolve contradictions related to strategic planning documentation and make sure that only the finalised and formally approved version is publicised. Given that the documentation contradictions might have generated misconceptions in understanding*



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strategic objectives and expectations as to the future developments by university key stakeholders, undertake dedicated actions to promote the development plan(s) within a wider academic and business community.

- 2. Introduce practice which would secure a seamless transition between two consecutive planning processes/periods thus enabling effective business and academic continuity. In defining the next strategic plan, make sure to reflect actual global trends but equally so local needs and applicability of the new paradigms, technologies and practice into the target geography, instead of designing an everlasting plan fit for all scenarios possible.*
- 3. Resolve contradictions and applicability in important regulations such as the Code of Ethics and promote academic integrity as a key academic value.*
- 4. Promptly resolve issues related to the functionality of the new university/FME web site and make sure all formal policies, guidelines and internal regulations are publicly available in English too.*

2.2. Quality management

From the information collected and documentation consulted, it is evident that all staff participate in the quality assurance (QA) activities and these activities are integrated in the overall planning process. Nevertheless, evidence of poor handling of identified needs for improvements can be seen. Thus, for instance, even though all the stakeholders interviewed appreciate the need for a prompt upgrade of the FME website, this has not been translated in the corresponding QA related documents and planned procedures.

Staff involvement in the QA activities is carried out in coordination with the FME management, the program leader, and academic development coordinator. In the SER it is stated that the University of Prishtina Senate has approved four types of quality evolution instruments: academic staff questionnaires, questionnaire for course evaluation, administrative staff questionnaires and student questionnaires. All of these types of quality evolution instruments are presented to the experts in the SER in the form of a sample evaluation questionnaire. In order to improve the quality, the FME uses results from these self-evaluations as recommendations and they are an integral part of planning for the future academic years as given in Article 213 of the [11]. The implementation of these recommendations is monitored by the Academic Development Coordinator and the Vice-Dean for Teaching matters according to the [1]. According to Article 215 of the [11], quality assessments provide an overview of



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quality issues for the overall program as well as the various components within. However, no feedback collection procedure has been set to seek useful information from graduates and employers, and only unstructured communication with both stakeholders is present. Moreover, most of the feedback collected is not publicly available.

Weaknesses identified during the external evaluation of the program were taken into consideration when the Study Programme was designed as can be seen from Chapter 3 of the SER. The FME has indeed improved the quality of the programme by eliminating some of these weaknesses in the study programme evaluated. Also, according to the management of the FME, in the process of drafting the Study Programme, its contents were compared with the corresponding programs implemented at other universities in the region and beyond, such as University of Zagreb and University of Vienna. Nevertheless, it is not clear to what extent and which aspects were used as benchmarks or performance indicators.

Both [1] and [11] provide the quality assurance process workflow (ag. Article 210-221 of the [11]). After the dedicated university office processes and analyses the survey data, the Academic Development Coordinator at the FME presents the data to the Dean. The Dean, together with the Vice-Deans, communicates the achievements and shortcomings in the teaching, scientific, administrative and managerial work to the Faculty Council, and proposes a plan for the corresponding quality improvements. The Council reviews, completes and approves the proposed activities, which is then followed by the Dean undertaking all necessary actions for the implementation of the plan. The FME periodically prepares reports on the overall programme quality as well as on the performance and realistic status of the implementation of a particular programme.

Even though the University of Prishtina approved the regulation on quality assurance and assessment [8] aiming to establish university-wide QA and evaluation mechanisms and procedures back in 2016, the regulation may be deemed as rather rudimentary and aimed at providing a mere regulatory QA framework. In this regard, the regulation does not seem to have been revised since its introduction such that to address challenges having to do with the rather unsuccessful previous accreditation processes, neither has it introduced standards and protocols for intermediate assessments in addition to those set by Article 14 of the [8]. In addition, under its standards and principles of evaluations the regulation stipulates that it has been aligned with the ENQA's QA standards and guidelines, however, no evidence has been presented which would further prove such claims.



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The interviewed QA representatives have outlined that staff personal development interviews are not a part of a regular QA practice despite the fact that the university runs a dedicated staff personal development office. The QA improvements are therefore based on student and peer-to-peer feedbacks only, however, no clear proofs have been provided as to what sort of concrete analysis is typically done to support strategic planning. It is therefore recommended the QA assessment processes include a cross-sectional approach and generate integrated analytics to support improvement planning.

Further to the above, no feedback collection procedure has been set to seek useful information from graduates, employers and/or local community, and only unstructured communication with these stakeholders is present. Moreover, the [8] regulation mandates the evaluations to be taken at least once every five (5) years whereas more frequent evaluations are accounted for but not mandated nor encouraged. Most of the feedbacks collected are not publicly available despite the regulatory requirements set forth by Article 15 of the [8], neither the way they are structured allow for easy manipulation or keyword searching. As a result, it may be deemed that only basic QA procedures aimed at securing long-term institutional and study programme development have been put in place, and more should be done to raise the current standards of QA-related operations. The reports are prepared regularly, however, it is deemed the reporting is focused primarily to meet the regulatory requirements rather than to improve the quality of the processes it refers to.

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Align fully the quality management related documents with the strategic plan and FME strategic objectives.*
- 2. Introduce measurable KPIs which would be included in and analysed during the semestral or annual reporting process.*
- 3. Prepare and publish reports on the quality of study programmes at least once every three years.*
- 4. Introduce feedback collection systems and procedures to gather feedback from other stakeholders such as graduates, employers, local community and local government.*
- 5. Make findings of the QA assessment processes publicly available and promote positive practices internally and externally.*



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2.3. Academic staff

Teaching staff at the FME include, in total, 19 full time and 6 part-time academics. According to the SER, in the Study Programme both full-time and part-time academics are involved in undertaking the programme. However, no exact information has been provided as to the percentage of the latter. Furthermore, 75% of academics involved in the Study Programme hold a PhD degree and, as such, the institution meets the condition that for each student group (defined by the statute of the institution) and for every 60 ECTS credits in the Study Programme, at least one full time staff with PhD title is employed.

Selection and promotion of teaching staff to the respective academic title is conducted according to Article 171, 175, 176 and 177 of the University of Prishtina Statute [11] and the following regulations:

- Regulation on selection procedures for appointment, reappointment and promotion of academic staff [9] and
- Regulation on selection procedures for part-time staff.

The publication of the University of Prishtina vacancies is normally done twice a year. Requests for new academic personnel are initiated with proposals submitted by the respective department to the FME Council which decides whether to proceed with the publication of the vacancy notice or not.

In the SER, only basic information regarding the full time and part time academic staff was provided and from the available information it was not possible to evaluate fully the qualifications and experience of the academic staff. However, from the CVs [3] and other documentation accompanying the accreditation application, as well as from the feedback accumulated through the interviews it may be concluded that the staff is adequately trained and capacitated to run the given Study Programme. Moreover, the staff gets regularly engaged in the academic community, and is available for consultations with students and community service.

Although links to staff biographies are available online on the FME web page, these have not been active and only content in Albanian is available. Furthermore, even though the FME has accompanied its accreditation application with a sample contract document provided as an annex to the SER, it is not clear whether during the employment procedure all candidates are



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aware of their responsibilities and expectations other than teaching, such as consulting, administrative activities, research and others given that the document has been provided in Albanian only.

Evaluation of the teaching staff is administered by the University Rectorate and is done at the end of each semester through the questionnaires posted on the Student Electronic Management System (SEMS). The results of the academic staff evaluation are taken into account for promotion of the academic staff and renewal of contracts. The performance of each professor is measured based on the regulation for staff promotions [9]. However, it remains unknown how representative is a typical sample of the data collected which the staff performance is assessed against.

It is ensured by the law and the introduced regulations that academic staff do not cover more than two teaching positions in one academic year regardless of the educational institution where the teaching activity is carried out. Also, during the meeting with the QA representatives it was stated that the majority of teaching staff has only one full time teaching position.

Teaching staff has different opportunities for additional development of professional and teaching skills through the university centre for teaching and excellence responsible for staff training as well as for organising various workshops and dedicated lectures for the teaching staff. As said earlier, there is no strategy nor a plan for teaching staff improvements, and no obligatory reporting or perhaps a database summarising all activities undertaken by the teaching staff, like attended trainings, workshops, conferences have been put in place.

The responsibilities of all teaching staff in addition to teaching include also other engagements such as conducting and correcting exams, students' project and bachelor thesis evaluation, as well as consultations with students. Although, some academics reportedly maintain different types of liaisons with national agencies and government institutions, in general, their community service should be improved.

Finally, according to [12], a number of development plans and objectives aimed to improve teaching strategies and raise the quality of learning materials have been defined. However, the document does not provide concrete action measures and the corresponding deadlines, nor is it clear which of the objectives set have been met in the meantime.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant



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ET recommendations:

- 1. Make academic staff CVs available on the FME web page. CVs should be in English and use a unified FME template. A special attention should be given to the sections describing teaching staff research interest and teaching profile.*
- 2. Include planned improvements of the teaching and assessment methods, as well as the content and quality of learning materials into the strategies for quality enhancement.*
- 3. Stimulate student participation 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.*
- 4. A number of academic staff interviewed in the evaluation process have demonstrated relatively poor fluency in English language. As this may hinder both their academic development and research work, it is recommended that the FME strategies for professional development of the teaching staff target English fluency too.*

2.4. Educational process content

Even though both comments from the previous accreditation processes outlined in the SER, as well as the feedback taken from students and graduates clearly recommend special emphasis to be put on practical approach and hand-on experience in addition to the theoretical knowledge, the Study Programme does not seem to address these suggestions.

Furthermore, according to the SER, the sole rationale of making the Study Programme a joint programme undertaking, combining two study programmes taught previously, has been to tackle the continuing decline in the number of students enrolled. However, such an approach does not address the reasons behind the decline and is hence unlikely that the joint undertaking would be any more fruitful than its predecessors. In this regard, in designing the programme content, the Study Programme would be expected rather to provide a valid answer to the trade-off between the considerable effort an FME student would need to invest into his/her study, and the relatively low financial compensation/wage received upon employment. Both the students and the graduates have provided feedbacks clearly pointing out this imbalance. As such, the expert team feels the content of the Study Programme should be somewhat changed indeed first to follow a typical engineering didactic concept, but equally so to recognise the circumstances of the local labour market and the industry.



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An example of the above imbalance has clearly been depicted in the student feedback using learning outcomes of the study courses focusing on the use of the AutoCad software as a case study. In such courses highly complex drawing tasks and visualisations are required to be made, even though the applicability of thus acquired skills in the Kosovo industry is – according to the students and graduates interviewed – rather low. In this regard, it is highly recommended that the Study Programme would be seen as an entry level engineering programme offering considerable flexibility with regards to the skills and capacities expected to be acquired through the programme. Allowing students to take elective modules from study programmes other than the programme enrolled might be one way forward in providing such flexibility.

The Study Programme may be regarded as modelled according to positive engineering practice as well as according to the needs of the expected major improvements of the Kosovo industry sector. However, to a large extent it lacks any significant reference to the modern trends and practices having to do with renewable energy, efficiency and sustainability. Even if it may be deemed that these issues have been integrated in major engineering disciplines through the modules such as “Manufacturing Technologies” or similar, it is not clear why the majority of modules covering disciplines critical to modern way of analysing energy or environment-related challenges have been designated as elective (eg. “Environment protection”, “Sustainable Energy Technology”, “Composite materials” etc.).

In the SER, a set of 24 learning outcomes of the Study Programme has been provided. Although they all seem well formulated, many of them are rather generic and hence further underpin the views outlined in Section 2.1. Furthermore, given that only individual course learning outcomes have been provided in the SER, it is rather difficult to assess how and to what extent each of the study courses contributes to meeting the key programme objectives. In this regard, it is highly recommended that learning outcomes of the Study Programme are thoroughly revised and their contribution to the overall programme mission is valued more concretely. In addition, generic learning outcomes such as “be on trend with modern production developments”, “to know tools and equipment in general”, “application of computer technology” and similar need to be treated as redundant and hence omitted.

Furthermore, all elective modules carry 5 ECTS credits. Given that the majority of mandatory modules carries 6 credits or more, this implies the contribution of elective modules to the overall programme objectives/learning outcomes is minimal. As this would destimulate student



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participation in the elective courses, it is recommended the ECTS scoring is revised once again, and more contribution is attributed to elective courses.

The courses taught all have their content, learning outcomes and assessment methods explained in the syllabi which the students are introduced with at the beginning of semester. However, even though Level 6 of the European Qualifications Framework (available at: <https://europa.eu/europass/en/description-eight-eqf-levels>) the Study Programme is expected to be associated with require advanced knowledge and creative problem-solving skills to be achieved, as well as the ability to manage complex technical and professional project activities, both course descriptions and learning outcomes suggest that, to a large extent, these capacities are planned to be achieved only on a basic level. Examples of the courses focusing on basic level achievements include both compulsory (“Applicative Software”, “Economy of Production”, “Electrotechnics”, “Metrology and Measurement Engineering”, “Manufacturing Technologies”) and elective (“Engineering Statistics”, “Computer Decision Skills”, “Environment Protection”) study courses.

In addition, from both the documentation consulted and the feedback acquired it is not clear whether mechanisms aimed at securing learning outcomes complementarity between different study courses have been introduced. Thus, for instance, even though as many as three (3) courses study computer-based modelling (namely “Engineering Graphics”, “Drawing With Computer” and “CAM Systems”), it is not clear whether they complement each other or make one another redundant. Indeed, it may be deemed that the planned use of the software corresponds to different application domains, still, some level of progression/complementarity in thus acquired competencies should be observed.

The Study Programme demonstrates some questionable pragmatics and there are a few study modules difficult to find a logic behind. Thus, for instance, it is not clear how come that an engineering programme dealing with management studies management as a subject not earlier than IV semester and only as an elective study module (“Basics of Management”). This means that if a student opts for elective modules other than the “Basic of Management” module, important study programme learning outcomes might be missed. Furthermore, the description of the compulsory “Industrial Engineering” study module says that “After completion of this course the student will be able to: Design, build, implement, and secure industrial engineering system” which is more than likely to be an overstatement especially for a BSc-level graduate. Also, the “Computer Decision Skills” module has been described as aimed to “...raise the student's computer skills as a end-user using an advanced approach to Excel in order to



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familiarize him with techniques that apply to other top-level subjects such as operational research and process optimization and quality management”. Given that, at the same time, far more complex IT content such as CAD or Matlab is taught in other modules, it would be reasonable to expect that a Matlab literate would be more than capable to use Microsoft Excel even at advanced levels. As such, study courses such as the aforementioned “Computer Decision Skills” or “Web Applications” are hence found completely redundant. In addition, the Study Programme includes a study module named “Welding I” even though there is no succeeding module like “Welding II” which would rather be expected. It is therefore recommended that the title of the “Welding I” module is changed to either “Welding”, “Introduction to Welding” or similar.

In addition to the questionable learning outcome complementarity and meaningfulness explained above, almost all study courses use the same descriptions of the teaching strategies used. Given that different subjects/disciplines benefit from the utilised teaching strategies and pragmatics differently, it would somewhat be expected that the corresponding descriptions vary between the individual study courses too. Also, the provided syllabi do not include descriptions of the assessment methods used.

Finally, from the feedbacks gathered through the undertaken interviews it is beyond any doubt that the FME enjoys a reputation of a respectable and highly qualified partnering institution. The representatives from the industry speak highly about the qualities of both the graduated students as well as the academic staff. Moreover, they see the graduated students capacitated not merely for junior positions, but also positions involving managerial activities too. However, all of this does not translate into the corresponding number of partnerships the FME has formalised with the industry. The SER clearly identifies this as a weakness of both the FME and the Study Programme (p.15), hence it is recommended that partnership opportunities with industry members other than major publicly owned companies and institutions are promptly assessed and the corresponding partnership agreements are made. This is likely to increase the agility and efficiency of both the Study Programme as well as the institution as a whole.

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Revise key expected study programme outcomes and quantify to what extent each of the individual courses taught contribute to meeting them.*
2. *Align expected learning outcomes with the European Qualifications Framework.*



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3. *Further to the recommendations outlined in the previous section, introduce development plans aimed at capacitating the Study Programme to be taught in languages other than Albanian.*
4. *Identify partnership opportunities with industry members other than major publicly owned companies and institutions and initiate partnership negotiations.*

2.5. Students

According to the SER, admission criteria for enrolment are clearly defined and publicly announced in daily newspapers and on the university website. These criteria apply to all students. Admission of new students is done according to the regulations set forth by the university statute [11]. To enrol in the Manufacturing and Industrial Engineering with Management Bachelor study programme, a student must possess a valid high school diploma or other equivalent study document in accordance with the requirements of the Kosovo Ministry of Science, Education and Technology (MEST), pass the Matura state exam and the entrance exam (in mathematics) organized by the FME.

The study groups are organized to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process. As said earlier, the university has established an electronic student management system (SEMS) [13] to which students have individual access, and which is utilised to store and make available all course syllabuses, materials and other important information such as records of individual student achievements ([15]-[20]).

Assessment of the student's knowledge is done through exams, seminars, laboratory exercises, presentations of the realization of any practical project in the field of engineering, etc. As said earlier, even though the SER suggests descriptions of the assessment methods are provided in the syllabi, no such evidence has been found in the documentation provided. Nevertheless, the feedback gained suggests the assessment methods are properly communicated to students and they are well aware of their expected performance. Students have the possibility of extended duration of studies in accordance with Article 150 of the university statute [11].

The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs is also regulated by the university statute (Article 142, Article 143, Article 144), so are the rights and obligations related to student mobility and student representativeness. These rights are made publicly available in both English and Albanian versions of the statute freely downloadable on the official university website.



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It can be said that the program is student-centered because it offers different teaching methods that allow students to actively learn, such as discussions, practical works, projects, seminars and laboratory exercises. Also, according to the SER, professors have sufficient scheduled times in their working hours for consultation for students. However, the infrastructure for students with disabilities has to be improved.

The FME collects and analyses the pass rate and grades of students in all courses through the SEMS platform and the obtained data is used to improve the quality of the studying process. Regarding plagiarism, in the feedback to the Draft Evaluation Report submitted by the Expert Team, the FME has stated that soon after the evaluation interviews, the University of Prishtina and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kosovo have come to an agreement aimed at delivering a software solution for plagiarism detection. In addition to this, 22 academic staff are claimed to have access to the web platform for plagiarism check (<https://plagiarismcheck.org>).

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Improve ways students and academics are stimulated to exercise affirmative attitude towards academic integrity and introduce plans for proactive promotion of authentic academic work through public lectures, workshops and other such events.*
- 2. If it hasn't already done so, improve accessibility of faculty premises and facilities for disabled students by introducing access ramps, dedicated parking lots, lavatories, text-to-speech assistive tools on the website and other such facilities.*
- 3. Further promote student mobility through ways other than those supported by EU mechanisms.*

2.6. Research

Even though research has been identified both as a Study Programme objective (page 47 of the SER) as well as a key objective of FME strategic development [12], it is hard to find evidence on how such a strategic orientation translates into concrete operation. There is no separate research methods/methodology course in the Study Programme aimed at introducing students



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to basic concepts of research, neither have research methods or practices been significantly mentioned in the descriptions of the courses included in the programme. Also, as commented earlier, despite its reputation of a leading engineering faculty in Kosovo, the FME has failed to demonstrate its capacities to undertake privately funded research projects apart from those having more to do with certification and engineering compliance, rather than advanced technology testing. It hence remains unclear how it is expected that a student would obtain the articulated research competences given that research has only been scarcely mentioned in the learning outcomes. Furthermore, no reference to research is included in the corresponding regulation for undergraduate studies [23] and [24].

As can be seen from the SER (p.147), the FME has taken into account the recommendations from the previous accreditation processes related to inadequate research infrastructure. In this regard, evidence of some positive undertaking can be found both in [21] as well as in the feedbacks from the undertaken interviews.

Expectations for teaching staff involvement in research and scholarly activities, and the performance in relation to these expectations are specified in the work contract, the university statute [11] and in the regulation covering the selection procedures [9]. In this regard, research activities which are considered relevant to the overall FME business objectives are determined indirectly, by means of listing all the activities that are eligible to be financially supported. In addition, research measures and indicators have also been listed in the strategic plan [12], however, without concrete quantifiers which would ease the assessment of whether the given objective is met or not.

Research accomplishments are primarily validated by the number and credibility of the follow-up scientific publications. The research done by FME academics is internationally visible and the listed publications demonstrate focus on local and/or regional energy issues and may be seen as of moderate research significance.

Technological transfer is not regulated nor stimulated by both the university and the FME. In this regard, the salary system has not been set to recognise individual contributions to research, neither it values contributions to setting up cooperation with the industry. However, realization of professional expertise for the needs of the community is foreseen as one of the tasks in both the SER (p.148) and the strategic plan [12].



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From the feedback collected and the documentation consulted it is clear that the academic staff publishes papers under the name of the FME. However, no evidence has been collected proving that academic staff are encouraged to include their research in the teaching process, neither are they actively stimulated to update their curriculum such that to reflect significant research developments in the study field.

The institution does not have established intellectual property ownership policies or regulations, although safeguarding intellectual property has been outlined in the statute [11] as one of the responsibilities of the university senate.

Finally, the prerequisites for student research are insufficient and the curriculum does not address properly research methods and methodology to be used as a fundamental part of the Study Programme. Apart from their final works/thesis, no significant research is done by the students.

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Set up clear strategic objectives and the corresponding development policies as to which disciplines, technologies and research areas the institution will aim to excel in.*
2. *Set up straightforward and universally accepted research performance indicators tailored also to address research contributions other than paper publishing.*
3. *Update the Study Programme such that it would introduce students to research methods and methodology and stimulate joint research projects done by students and academics. This does not necessarily need to be done via a separate new study course but may well be achieved through dedicated trainings, workshops or by integrating research as a discipline into the existing study courses.*
4. *Develop and implement a regulation on technology transfer.*
5. *Establish an intellectual property ownership policy.*

2.7. Infrastructure and resources

As mentioned earlier, inadequate infrastructure had already been commented on in the previous accreditation processes and both the FME and the University of Prishtina have demonstrated



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efforts in complying with the recommendations given. Nevertheless, the FME/University of Prishtina is a publicly funded institution and as such enjoys the comfort of – to a certain extent – secured long-term financial stability through public funds. Although the institution has submitted a document providing basic information on the Study Programme cost breakdown structure [21], this can hardly be treated as serious financial planning. Also, the interview held with the FME management has not provided evidence as to how the Study Programme complements the existing operations financially, neither has been proved that alternative contingency scenarios were analysed to secure long-term financial viability. Another evidence that adequate financial planning has not been a standard operating practice is the fact that the [21] provides a budget structure for a 4-year period which is not a typical planning timeframe in any operational business planning.

The facilities used by the FME for the given Study Programme are owned by the University of Prishtina. According to the feedback collected and documents consulted the university runs a central library, and in addition the department has its own library of 180 m². Considering the total number of students studying at FME, the number and size of classrooms and laboratories seems adequate.

Although the FME locations and premises could not be evaluated physically, there are no reasons to believe the FME is undercapacitated with respect to available infrastructural resources such as classrooms, offices, common areas and other such physical infrastructure needed to underpin the planned study programme. However, from the video material accompanying the accreditation application [22], it may be concluded that only moderate quality equipment has been secured to aid the teaching process of the Study Programme. This is further substantiated by the plans outlined in the [12] especially when it comes to providing teaching infrastructure and laboratory equipment related to alternative energy sources, electric propulsion and other such infrastructure needed to address most recent technology trends.

Finally, the video material sent [22] has failed to provide information on the infrastructure available to students and staff with special needs. However, in the feedback to the Draft Evaluation Report submitted by the Expert Team, the FME has provided concrete evidence confirming some physical infrastructure dedicated for disabled students and personnel does exist. In addition, further measures aimed at introducing facilities such as text-to-speech library tools, dedicated lavatories or parking lots are expected to be included in the new strategic development plan.



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Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Set up clear strategic objectives and the corresponding development policies with respect to the long-term infrastructural development which would correspond to the teaching and research priorities set. Introduce concrete performance indicators and realisation deadlines the realisation of the plan would be measured against.*
- 2. Update the strategic development plan such that to include actions concerning further infrastructure for students with special needs. Introduce concrete quantifiers the realisation of the plan would be measured against.*
- 3. Ensure adequate financial planning is done, and entrepreneurial mindset promoted by both the FME management and senior academics.*



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3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE EXPERT TEAM

The University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina”, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering is an institution with a long history of dealing with different educational matters. The evaluated BSc in Manufacturing and Industrial Engineering with Management programme is a study programme aimed at educating mechanical engineers capable of addressing present and future challenges in a wide range of engineering disciplines. As such, the programme fits well in the existing programme portfolio by providing knowledges and skills complementary to those of the alternative FME study programmes, and, in its essence, it could be deemed as to have recognised the needs of the local labour market. Nevertheless, through the assessment process and number of deficits in the content of the Study Programme have been recognised and as such, the expert team strongly feels further work needs to be done prior to any formal adaptation of the programme.

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

In this regard, in every section a set of recommendations has been given to address the issues raised through the evaluation process. The expert team emphasises that all these recommendations should be seen only as guidelines aimed at improving the overall quality of both the study programme evaluated as well as the institution as a whole. In this regard, it remains to the FME management and staff whether these recommendations would be found affirmative and hence put into practice or disregarded.

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers the study program Bachelor of Science in Manufacturing and Industrial Engineering with Management offered by the University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina”, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering to be *Partially compliant* with the standards included in the *KAA Accreditation manual* and, therefore, recommends *not to accredit* the study program.



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Expert Team

Chair

(Signature)

Dražen Vrhovski

(Date)

Member

(Signature)

Laura Palac

(Date)