



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

University of Applied Sciences Ferizaj
BSc in Industrial Engineering with Informatics

RE-ACCREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

February 2021, Tallinn/Ferizaj



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
1. INTRODUCTION.....	3
1.1. Context	3
1.2. Site visit schedule	5
1.3. A brief overview of the institution and program under evaluation	7
2. PROGRAM EVALUATION.....	9
2.1. Mission, objectives and administration.....	9
2.2. Quality management	11
2.3. Academic staff.....	14
2.4. Educational process content	16
2.5. Students	21
2.6. Research	23
2.7. Infrastructure and resources	26
3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET.....	29



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: 9.02.2021

Expert Team (ET) members:

- Prof. Dr. Peeter Normak

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

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

Sources of information for the Report:

- *Self Evaluation Report (SER).*
- *Strategic Plan of University of Applied Science in Ferizaj 2018-2020.*
- *Statute of the University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj.*
- *Regulation for Quality Assurance.*
- *Regulation for Scientific Research Activities.*
- *Regulation on Selection Procedures Regarding Appointment, Reappointment and Advancement of the Academic Staff at the University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj.*
- *Student Handbook.*
- *Syllabi of the subjects.*
- *Matrix of learning outcomes by subjects.*
- *CVs of the academic staff.*
- *Staff Publication List.*
- *Extracts from the Minutes of meetings of the program committee and with representatives of the business community.*
- *KAA Accreditation Manual.*
- *Administrative Instruction for Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Kosova.*
- *Official website of University of Applied Science in Ferizaj.*



Requested documents:

- *Strategic/Development Plan of the University from 2021 onward.*
- *Regulation on University Election Procedures.*
- *Code of Ethics.*
- *General regulations for student organizations.*
- *Templates of the questionnaires for different stakeholder groups - graduates, students, employers, including the questionnaires for students' evaluation of the program, university services and administration.*
- *Analysis of questionnaires for students' evaluation, university services and administration.*
- *Access to UMS/SMU (student profile).*
- *Access to USAHRE (academic staff profile).*
- *UASF Mobility Regulation.*
- *List of development activities provided to/attended by the teaching staff in 2020.*
- *Minutes of last three Industrial Board meetings.*
- *List of the active contracts with industry (company, purpose, duration, volume, etc).*
- *Total number of laboratory assistants in 2018-2020.*
- *Research funding actually allocated to academic staff (2018-2020).*
- *Action Plan for academic staff for addressing the issues raised in the students' evaluations (they mentioned that after the evaluation, the professor is preparing an Action plan for addressing the issues raised in the evaluation).*
- *Annual Calendar for utilization of tools in the process of evaluation.*
- *Structure of the management on a Faculty level.*
- *Policy for internalization on University and/or Faculty level.*
- *Policy for distribution of the funds for research, conferences, and others for the academic staff (for distribution of those 1000 Euro).*

Received documents:

- *Rules and Procedures for General Elections in UASF.*
- *Code of Ethics.*
- *Regulation for Student Elections at the University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj.*
- *Templates of the questionnaires for different stakeholder groups - alumni, students, employers, including the questionnaires for students' evaluation of the program, university services and administration.*



- *Evaluation Report of the Administration, Administrative Services and Infrastructure by the Academic Staff for the Academic Year 2019/2020.*
- *Access to UMS/SMU (student profile).*
- *Access to USAHRE (academic staff profile).*
- *The Regulation for Undergraduate Studies (Bachelor Studies).*
- *Regulation for Academic Mobilities of the University of Applied Sciences Ferizaj.*
- *The budget of the university for 2021.*
- *Minutes of last two Industrial Board meetings.*
- *List of the active contracts with industry (company, purpose, duration, volume, etc).*
- *Staff Development Plan (in Albanian).*
- *Academic Calendar for Quality Assurance and Academic Processes.*
- *Policy for Internalization Cooperation.*
- *Regulation for Scientific Research Activities.*
- *An explanatory letter on additional documents.*

Criteria used for program evaluation:

- *Standards and performance indicators for external quality assurance (Re/accreditation of bachelor and masters study programs) set in the Accreditation Manual.*

1.2. Site visit schedule

8th of February

12.30 – 14.30 Online training with evaluation experts regarding the process of evaluation, site visit and drafting the report.

9th of February

09.00 – 09.40 Meeting with the management of the university
Prof.Dr. Agron Bajraktari – Rector
Prof.Dr. Bujar Pira – Vice Rector
Prof.As.Dr. Fakije Zejnullahu – Vice Rector
Armend Hysa – General Secretary



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

09.45 – 11.05

Meeting with the heads of the study programme

Prof.Asoc.Dr. Milihate Aliu

Prof.As.Dr. Bashkim Cerkini

Prof.As.Dr. Valdete Braha

Prof.As.Dr. Arben Tërstena

11.05 – 11.40

Meeting with quality assurance representatives

Prof.Dr. Bujar Pira – Vice Rector

Armend Hysa – General Secretary

*Prof.As.Dr. Leonora Rudhani-Haliti – Academic and QA (ECTS)
coordinator*

Fatime Musliu – QA office

Besa Rexhepi – Student services

11.45 – 12.50

Meeting with teaching staff

Prof.Asoc.Dr. Muhamet Ymeri

Prof.As.Dr Rrahim Sejdiu

Prof.As.Dr. Sokol Krasniqi

Prof.As.Dr. Bislim Lekiqi

Prof.As.Dr. Artan Veseli

Mr.Sc. Ismet Malsiu

MSc. Etleva Blakaj

12.50 – 13.30

Lunch break

13.30 – 14.15

Meeting with students

Fatjeta Imeri

Adhurime Lika

Donika Halili

Liridon Leka

Leotrime Loki

Bashkim Leka

Shpetim Hasallari



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju
Kosovo Accreditation Agency

14.15 – 14.40	Meeting with graduates <i>Donika Guri</i> <i>Alber Guri</i> <i>Leotrim Shabani</i> <i>Arjeta Ramadani</i> <i>Irfan Hajdini</i> <i>Burhan Palloshi</i> <i>Burim Lushi</i>
14.45 – 15.25	Meeting with employers of graduates <i>Arben Krivenjeva</i> <i>Fitim Zejnullahu</i> <i>Alban Bytyq</i> <i>Nehat Ademi</i> <i>Hajredin Ibish</i> <i>Fevzi Berisha</i>
15.30 – 15.40	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts
15.40 – 15.50	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program

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

The University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj (UASF) was established in 2015 as a public university through reorganization of the Faculty of Applied Technical Sciences of the University of Prishtina. UASF is currently the only university of applied sciences in Kosovo.

The ***Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering with Informatics*** is offered at the Faculty of Engineering and Informatics. The faculty also offers an *Engineering and Informatics* master's program. Additionally, a third – new – BSc in *Applied Informatics* has been developed.



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According to SER, 231 students are studying at this faculty, of which 170 on the bachelor and 61 on the master program. The number of applications for bachelor studies has dropped dramatically over the past five years: from 300 in the 2016 to 44 in the 2020.

The vision, mission and values of the university as these are formulated in the SER (their wording differs slightly in different university documents, probably due to different translation options):

The **Vision**: “A national model of a modern, innovative and of an integrative education university, where practice complements theory, professional and research skills are developed for the benefit of society.”

The **Mission** Statement: “We are committed to providing quality education to prepare qualified professionals, dedicated researchers and educated and responsible citizens, to develop a professional career and lead a productive life.”

The **Values**:

- Learning – The University appreciates employment-oriented education, balancing theory and practice, focusing on active learning and critical thinking, and stimulating responsibility and desire for lifelong learning.
- Ethics – The University addresses the dignity of each of its members with respect, honesty, equality and integrity.
- Collaboration – Building partnerships with students, alumni, businesses and industry, local and international government institutions, the Accreditation Agency and the community to which the University serves.
- Excellence – We strive to be perfect and exalted in education, creativity and innovation.
- Diversity – Embrace different ideas, beliefs, cultures and ethnicities.

Although UASF has five faculties each lead by a dean, they share a common administrative staff. Therefore, the faculties do not form independent structural units.

UASF has institutional accreditation from year 2016.

The experts were given access to the university intranet *U-Share*. It contained university regulations and other documents, CVs of some staff, and some documents of some faculties. Although most of the documents were in Albanian, it was clear that the website was in its early stage of development.



2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

What follows are the comments on each standard, numbered according to the numbering of the standards in the *KAA Accreditation Manual*. There is a table at the end of each section that lists the compliance assessment for each standard.

2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

- 1.1. The mission statement of the university does not specify any focus area of the university, stating only that the university is committed to provide quality education. On the other hand, industrial engineering naturally falls within the scope of any university of applied sciences. Thus, the study program is consistent with the stated mission of the university.
- 1.2. The University has an Industrial Board where 20 companies are represented. Members of the business community were involved in defining the learning outcomes of the study program. The experience of the University of Applied Sciences in Salzburg as well as the partners in Erasmus+ project EUFORIA and HERAS project were used. The study program was also discussed at Industrial Board meetings (although this was not reflected in the minutes of the meetings of the Industrial Board), some of which recommendations are already implemented. On the other hand, during the meeting with representatives from the private sector (employers of the graduates) some more significant recommendations concerning the content of the study program were made. This means that companies' suggestions could be taken into account even more widely. Moreover, SER did not discuss the compliance of the study program with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.
- 1.3. The overall didactic concept was not explained in the SER. The staff explained during the meetings that the theory is illustrated with a big number of practical case-studies, and that critical thinking is promoted. The staff has direct link to local companies that allows them to be informed about the problems and activities of the companies. However, the fact that raising the issue of an overarching didactic and research concept caused some confusion among staff may indicate a lack of a common understanding of the overall concept of the study program.
- 1.4. The main document stating the structure and administration is a thorough (72 pages) Statute of the University. It should be noticed that although the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo approved the Statute on 10.12.2020, the Web contained on 13.02.2021 still the previous – provisional – statute of the university. Specifics of bachelor studies is stated in the *Regulation for Undergraduate Studies (Bachelor Studies)*, another quite thorough (17 pages, 46 articles) document.



- 1.5. Ethics is accepted as one (out of five) of values of UASF: “The University addresses the dignity of each of its members with respect, honesty, equality and integrity.” For ethical issues, the university has a separate regulation (*Regulation of the University Code of Ethics*). There is formed the *Ethics Committee* of the university. Aspects of ethics are also covered in the learning outcomes of the study program, and are included in the description of some courses (for example, *Computer Skills*).
- 1.6. The Faculty management compiles semi-annual reports where the progress of the teaching process is analyzed, the main difficulties are identified and recommendations for improvement proposed. There are set six strategic objectives for each intervention field of the college, and measures for each strategic objective determined.

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

Compliance level: 67% - substantially compliant.

ET recommendations:

1. State the vision also of the study program.
2. Define explicitly the overarching didactic and scientific concept of the study program.

10



2.2. Quality management

- 2.1. The study program is one of the first programs of the university, having its roots already from mid 1970-ies. Therefore, the study program has reached certain stability. On the other hand, relatively big part of the text of SER has been mechanically – and not always adequately – copied from the SER of the master program *Engineering and Informatics* from 2019. For example, what the opportunity “Possibility of enrolling students from varieties of fields of studies” (page 27 of the SER) means in the case of bachelor studies? This indicates that self-evaluation and improvement processes are partly formal.
- 2.2. The university has a thorough (42 articles) *Regulation for Quality Assurance*. Procedures for study program improvements are stated: the recommendations of program committee are discussed at the Academic Committee and decided by the Senate. Main evaluation processes take place semi-annually. For students, paper-based questionnaires are used. Staff’s peer-evaluation is not yet systematic, consisting mainly on observations – and subsequent discussion – of each other lectures. For staff’s self-evaluation, an electronic system is under development.
- 2.3. The quality issues belong to the scope of the Vice Rector for International Cooperation and Quality Assurance. The processes are unified. However, the quality processes seem not to be effective on all aspects. For example, both lecturers and students pointed to the lack of laboratory assistants/technicians, which hinders the use of these laboratories, especially for independent work in addition to scheduled classes. This problem has been going on for years, with no visible improvement. During the meeting with the students, they presented a number of proposals for improving the quality of education. This shows that the dialogue with the faculty administration in this area has so far been insufficient or that the opinions of students have not been sufficiently taken into account. Moreover, there are no competency requirements for persons in charge of the study program. For a long-term sustainability of a study program, analysis of relevant local, national and international strategies, development trends and competitive situation should be conducted. In this respect, the SER is unfortunately general in nature: “In November 2018 the University Senate has decided to establish a Strategic Development Council which will consist of representatives of businesses, local governments, alumni, civil society, etc.” The fact that the Strategic Development Council is mentioned nowhere else in the SER of 78 pages, indicates that it does in fact have no significant role in the quality assurance of study programs.



- 2.4. Although the university has adopted the *Regulation for Quality Assurance* and established the Quality Assurance Committee, the implementation of the quality assurance processes is in fact still ongoing. This can also be deduced from the fact that the quality management chapter 2.2 of SER only dealt with the university's general curriculum quality mechanisms (thus fitting into the corresponding chapter of any curriculum's SER). The SER did not address specific quality issues of *Industrial Engineering with Informatics* study program. However, the main procedures required by KAA for conducting accreditation/reaccreditation are implemented.
- 2.5. For quality assurance of the study program, students' feedback at the end of each semester seem currently to be the only implemented regular instrument. The questionnaire covers all basic aspects of the university life. Students' assessment for the teaching staff is internal and shared only with the teacher, with the Program Director and the Dean of the respective faculty as well as with the university's senior management. The program committee is supposed to play the key role for quality assurance of a study program. The current practice of having a program committee comprised of all academic staff teaching for this program contains a certain conflict of interest. The fact that not all required standards are met is a clear indication of ineffective quality assurance processes.
- 2.6. The data collection from the graduates and employers are in the implementation phase, the Alumni Virtual Platform is under development. The ET was not able to find the results of any evaluation in the public web.
- 2.7. The university does not have any automated form of monitoring the student workload and the employment rate of graduates. The implementation of the Alumni Virtual Platform will supposedly facilitate the work with alumni and the analysis of the study program.
- 2.8. The *Regulation for Quality Assurance* states (Article 13) that the evaluation of study programs is done once in three years, and other evaluations are done either once a year or once a semester. Nevertheless, the previous international evaluation of the *Bachelor in Industrial Engineering with Informatics* was conducted 7 years ago (2014).
- 2.9. According to the *Regulation for Quality Assurance*, "Approval of the strategy for quality assurance of teaching, as part of the overall strategy of the institution from the Senate which is public and a subject of periodic investigation". This document was approved by the Senate of the university on 18.02.2020, its previous version (under the name *Regulation for Quality Assurance and Evaluation Procedures*) was approved on 04.04.2019.



Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
<i>Standard 2.1.</i> All staff participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity.		X
<i>Standard 2.2.</i> Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes.	X	
<i>Standard 2.3.</i> Quality assurance processes deal with all aspects of program planning and delivery, including services and resources provided by other parts of the institution.		X
<i>Standard 2.4.</i> Quality evaluations provide an overview of quality issues for the overall program as well as of different components within it; the evaluations consider inputs, processes and outputs, with particular attention given to learning outcomes for students.		X
<i>Standard 2.5.</i> Quality assurance processes ensure both that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance.		X
<i>Standard 2.6.</i> Survey data is being collected from students, graduates and employers; the results of these evaluations are made publicly available.		X
<i>Standard 2.7.</i> Results of the internal quality assurance system are taken into account for further development of the study program. This includes evaluation results, investigation of the student workload, academic success and employment of graduates.		X
<i>Standard 2.8.</i> 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	
<i>Standard 2.9.</i> The quality assurance arrangements for the program are themselves regularly evaluated and improved.	X	

Compliance level: 33% - Partially compliant.

ET recommendations:

1. Identify the reasons for the declining popularity of the study program and take appropriate countermeasures.
2. Introduce a system for systematic analysis of relevant local, national and international strategies, development trends and competitive situation.



3. Develop a procedure for collecting systematic feedback from the alumni and employers.
4. Develop competency requirements and responsibilities for the persons in charge of the study program, as well as mechanisms to ensure that these requirements are met.
5. Develop principles for setting up program committees dominated by non-university stakeholders (employers, graduates, policy makers, representatives of other relevant educational institutions, etc).

2.3. Academic staff

- 3.1. UASF as a public university follows strictly all regulations concerning employment.
- 3.2. Legal requirements set for teaching staff are met: according to the study program in SER, 14 lecturers (out of 21) have a PhD degree and are elected by open competition.
- 3.3. According to the CV-s submitted, the formal requirements concerning employment of academic staff by other institutions are met.
- 3.4. About 88% of all teachers have full-time employment, and consequently, they cover the big majority of courses.
- 3.5. There are three full-time lecturers on the study program who hold a PhD degree. Additionally, as the majority of teachers teach also on other study programs, the calculations are made over the whole university. There are currently six Bachelor programs (180 ECTS each) and three MSc programs (120 ECTS each). Therefore, $6 \times 3 + 3 \times 2 = 24$ full-time teachers with a PhD is needed. In fact the university has employed 32 full-time teachers with a PhD. The University has employed also 15 full-time teachers without a PhD.
- 3.6. Regular workshops are organized for academic staff on online teaching (including on the use of MS Teams and LMS Moodle), use of SPSS, Erasmus mobility and other topics. A special program is designed for new teachers - introduction to the academic procedures, principles of ethics and academic integrity, etc. The university also allows each faculty to spend up to 1000€ per year to cover research costs (participation on international conferences, internship etc.). However, in 2020, this option was used only five times for a total amount of 2134€.
- 3.7. Although some community services are offered both in the premises of the university and outside, mainly to the neighboring schools (for example, lectures to the schoolchildren), their share is relatively small. For example, in an interview with teachers, they estimated their division of academic activities over time as follows: 70% for teaching and 30% for research (consequently for community services 0%).



Concerning students, they rated teachers positively in terms of their availability for consultations.

- 3.8. Although the university regulations foresee conducting staff assessment by students as well as peer reviews, their impact is questionable. For example, in a situation where each lecturer should publish on average at least one research article each year, several lecturers have not published any article in the last three years. Thus, regulatory compliance appears to be incomplete. The SER states that Dean "draws up an improvement plan for each staff member and meets with the staff concerned at least twice a year to discuss development and the steps taken to improve teaching by academic staff" (SER, page 21). Based on this, the scope of development interviews does not cover all academic activities of lecturers.
- 3.9. The *Strategic Plan of University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj 2018-2020* has devoted section *Excellence in Education*, together with subsections *Outstanding Student Experience* and *Providing Efficient and Quality Student Services* (the Strategic Plan for 2021-2025 was under development and was not submitted to the ET). The *Regulation for Quality Assurance* defines the quality assurance and evaluation procedures also for educational work as well as for text books and other learning resources.
- 3.10. There are no retired full-time teachers – the average age of teachers is about 46 years.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
<i>Standard 3.1.</i> Candidates for employment are provided with full position descriptions and conditions of employment. To be presented in tabular form data about full time (FT) and part time (PT) academic/ artistic staff, such as: name, qualification, academic title, duration of official (valid) contract, workload for teaching, exams, consulting, administrative activities, research, etc. for the study program under evaluation.	X	
<i>Standard 3.2.</i> The teaching staff must comply with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative instruction on Accreditation.	X	
<i>Standard 3.3.</i> Academic staff do not cover, within an academic year, more than two teaching positions (one full-time, one part-time), regardless of the educational institution where they carry out their activity.	X	
<i>Standard 3.4.</i> At least 50% of the academic staff in the study program are full time employees, and account for at least 50% of the classes of the study program.	X	



<i>Standard 3.5.</i> For each student group (defined by the statute of the institution) and for every 60 ECTS credits in the study program, the institution has employed at least one full time staff with PhD title or equivalent title in the case of artistic/applied science institutions.	X	
<i>Standard 3.6.</i> Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties.	X	
<i>Standard 3.7.</i> The responsibilities of all teaching staff, especially full-time, include the engagement in the academic community, availability for consultations with students and community service.		X
<i>Standard 3.8.</i> Academic staff evaluation is conducted regularly at least through self-evaluation, students, peer and superiors' evaluations, and occur on a formal basis at least once each year. The results of the evaluation are made publicly available.		X
<i>Standard 3.9.</i> Strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials.	X	
<i>Standard 3.10.</i> Teachers retired at age limit or for other reasons lose the status of full-time teachers and are considered part-time teachers.	X	

Compliance level: 80% - Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. Define the mission and role of the Faculty of Engineering and Informatics in the provision of community services and plan corresponding activities.
2. Develop and implement a holistic and effective system of annual development interviews for employees with their superiors.

2.4. Educational process content

- 4.1. The study program is unique in Kosovo and the graduates are widely needed. The fact that it aims to focus on the development of practical skills of the students is also commendable. However, there are few aspects that are either inadequate or at least questionable:
 - 4.1.1. The set of learning outcomes is adequate. On the other hand, SER claims that graduates are, among other things, able to work as a "leader in the manufacturing industry" (SER, page 23). The question arises, what is meant



by "leader" in this case? The study program has a single Internship module (5 ECTS), among the learning outcomes of which there are no leadership competencies.

- 4.1.2. The modules in the study program have in fact strong focus on theory. The existing relationship between theoretical and practical activities is typical of traditional universities rather than universities of applied sciences. The share of theory is bigger than share of practice even in modules that traditionally are considered as practical (for example, *Applied Software* or *Programming*). The desire to have a larger share of practical work and internships (business experience) was expressed by both students and alumni. The importance of this was also emphasized by employers.
- 4.2. The study program covers a relatively broad field of industrial technology that is typical for undergraduate programs. Local enterprises belong mainly to wood, metal or polymers' industry. The study program focuses more on metal and polymers' industry as the study programs of the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Wood Technology focus on wood industry. It is claimed in the SER that the study program is designed in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. However, no correspondence or even a general discussion on the correspondence is presented. For example, National Qualifications Framework states that the graduates "are expected to exhibit independence in research and problem solving tasks. They must have the ability to collect and interpret relevant data (usually within their field of study) to arrive at judgments that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues." On the other hand, the study program does not have clearly stated scientific/applied research objective (cf section 6.1), and data handling related learning outcomes are not mentioned in any course description.
- 4.3. There are listed 10 learning outcomes. These present in totality a coherent and compact set. However, the learning outcomes and the objectives of the study program are not always in harmony – the objectives are more ambitious than the study program in fact guarantees:
 - 4.3.1. Objective: to provide **quality education in engineering and computer sciences**. In fact, the study program contains the minimum amount of computing courses required to train industrial engineers.
 - 4.3.2. Objective: to prepare industrial engineers who will be able to adapt and solve various complex industrial problems and who are constantly learners to develop a professional career and **become the leaders of tomorrow**. This has been commented in subsection 4.1.1.



More emphasis could be placed on general competences in the learning outcomes. The importance of general competences was stressed both by representatives of alumni and employers, in particular:

- ability to use social networks for professional development,
- communication skills,
- work culture (incl. adherence to deadlines and agreements).

- 4.4. The syllabi contain all the necessary components and were submitted in electronic form. They could have more details. For example, the syllabi of Mathematics I and II do not have any indication on tools used (Concretization means “Projector, computer, white board, laboratory” does not say anything about computer software used).
- 4.5. The language in which the study program will be offered is Albanian.
- 4.6. The student-teacher relationship seems to be a partnership. The students also highlighted the helpfulness and good availability of the lecturers at the meeting with the experts.
- 4.7. The teaching methodology and assessment methods are described in very general terms in the syllabi. As it was explained to ET during the meetings, teachers are free to decide on teaching and assessment methods. The students had no comments or objections on that. Students are directed to do enough independent work - they say that it takes them an average of 20 hours a week to work independently.
- 4.8. Learning outcomes and other aspects are discussed already on the first class.
- 4.9. The grading system that is used in all Balkan countries is used. The grades are 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 where 5 marks failing and 6-10 are positive. The passing level is 50% as widely used in Europe.
- 4.10. Students who are not satisfied with the evaluation of their work have the right to request evaluation by commission, as foreseen in the *Regulations for Undergraduate Studies (Bachelor Studies)*. The *Code of Ethics* defines the steps the university should undertake in such cases to teachers. Students indicated that in case of problem they can also contact the professor or the major of the class.
- 4.11. There is Internship (5 ECTS) in the study program organization of which is determined by the *Regulation on Student Internship*. This document specifies responsibilities of parties involved, supervision of students during internship, and other important aspects. It contains also the template of the report (*Student Internship Form*) of the students as well as the template of *Memorandum of Understanding* between the university and company. Learning outcomes and the content of internship is described in the course syllabus in very general terms. Moreover, how should the concretization means “Projector, computers, whiteboard and markers” be understood in this context? During



the meeting with the students, they repeatedly expressed their desire to have a longer and more extensive internship.

- 4.12. The SER states that “The University has signed over 80 cooperation agreements with companies in various fields of industry. One of the objectives of the agreement is to enable enterprises to provide students access to realization: internships, various research, including diploma work” (page 24 of SER). The ET was provided a list of 78 companies with whom the university has signed a cooperation agreement.

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



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

Compliance level: 64% - Substantially compliant.



ET recommendations:

1. Make sure that the learning outcomes of the subjects cover the competences of level 6 of the National Qualifications Framework.
2. Harmonize the learning outcomes and the objectives of the study program.
3. It is strongly recommended to review the relationship between theoretical and practical learning in the subjects: increase the share of practical training.
4. Specify the learning outcomes and content in the description of the Internship module, also increase the volume of the internship.

2.5. Students

- 5.1. The admission procedure of new students is conducted according to the clauses set in *Statute of the University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj* and in accordance to the legal regulations established by MEST and KAA.
- 5.2. The enrollment criteria are set in *Statute of the University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj* and in *The Regulation for Undergraduate Studies (Bachelor Studies)*: successful completion of secondary school in Kosovo and possession of a diploma or successful completion of primary and secondary school with at least 12 years of education and possession of respective diploma(s).
- 5.3. One group of students consists of maximum 100 students for theoretical, up to 50 for practical courses and up to 30 for professional subjects. During the meeting with the experts, the students expressed satisfaction with the size of the study groups.
- 5.4. The communication of the student evaluation results is made not later than 7 days from the date of the exam, according to the official schedule. If a student is not satisfied with their grade then they have the right to make a written complaint to the Dean within 24 hours of their publication and request an evaluation through a commission.
- 5.5. The electronic University Management System retains all records for each student, including assessments, colloquium scores, final exam scores etc. The students are provided with the appropriate certificates (Grade Certificate, Diploma and Diploma Supplement).
- 5.6. The exam from the same subject can be repeated up to 4 times (the 4th to a commission). At the student's request, the dean may authorize the student to take the exam at a different time (for example, if the student is doing an internship abroad during the exam period).



- 5.7. The university operates a University Management System, which stores data on the completion of all subjects and study programs. The Strategic Plan of the university for 2018-2020 has “Proportion of graduates achieving a successful result (rank, transfer or other award)” as one of the KPI-s and the related target to increase the number of graduates by 20%.
- 5.8. There is currently no plagiarism detection system at the university for students’ work implemented. However, clauses concerning academic plagiarism form a whole article in the *Code of Ethics*.
- 5.9. The rights and responsibilities of students are stated in the *Regulation for Undergraduate Studies (Bachelor Studies)* which is a publicly available document.
- 5.10. The transfer of students between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs is clearly stated in *Student Transfer Regulation*, which is also a publicly available document.
- 5.11. Academic staff are required to be available to students on a regular basis (at least twice a week), for both academic and advisory purposes. Additional hours of consultations with academic staff may be organized. Consultations can be organized in individual or group form. The university has introduced and tested a system for analyzing students’ work (together with assignment of a personal tutor). In a meeting with experts, the students expressed a desire to make this practice more university-wide.

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



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

Compliance level: 91% - Substantially compliant.

ET recommendations: introduce a plagiarism detection system at the university for students' work.

2.6. Research

- 6.1. The study program does not have clearly stated scientific/applied research objective; research is mentioned in one objective – “to promote the spirit of research and independent work as well as teamwork for all students when they face the solution of various engineering problems”. *The Strategic Plan of the University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj 2018-2020* includes a thematic strategy “Student and Students Experience”. This thematic strategy contains eight activities. The activities will be coordinated by the Institute of Applied Sciences creation of which has been proposed. The Innovation Centre of the Institute having 3D printers, 3D scanners and CNC machines will also support academic activities on the study program. The problem is that the Institute of Applied Sciences is still (3rd year!) in the implementation phase. The lack of laboratory technicians is a factor that also hinders student research.

23



- 6.2. Expectations for teaching staff involvement in research and scholarly activities are specified in the work contract, in the *Statute of the University* and in the *Regulation on Selection Procedures Regarding Appointment, reappointment and Advancement of the Academic Staff at the University of Applied Sciences Ferizaj*. The performance in relation to these expectations is considered in the self-assessment reports.
- 6.3. Research is considered as a strategic goal of the University. The objectives, strategies, key performance indicators and targets in research are stated in the *Strategic Plan of the University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj 2018-2020*. Internationalization, cooperation with the industry and development laboratories are supposed to support the studies on all study programs, including industrial engineering with informatics study program.
- 6.4. The mission of the study program is “to develop specialized professionals in the field of Engineering, with a focus on product development and design using the latest IT hardware and applications easily adaptable to the demands of the labour market” (SER, page 12). However, out of 21 teachers, only five have research papers more or less devoted to the industrial engineering. There were a disproportionate number of articles on banking and fiscal policy in general, while there were virtually no articles on product development. Remark that the same problem was raised in the Evaluation Report of 2014: “Needed effort to publish in the field of the programme.”
- 6.5. The research of about 2/3 of academic staff is internationally visible (for example, in *Google Scholar, GS*). According to GS, there are no citations to the articles of about 50% of the teachers. This means that the scientific impact of several teachers is essentially non-existent (the highest GS h-index of teachers is 3). Moreover, research and development activities are absolutely not visible on the university’s web page. During the meetings with the ET, the teachers and employers highlighted the following problems: 1) by teachers – difficulties in obtaining visas and 2) by employers – the lack of effective forms of communication between companies and universities.
- 6.6. Research is basically validated by scientific publications. No information was provided about technological transfer. This is not facilitated by the salary system either, as salaries are unified and do not depend on cooperation with companies.
- 6.7. According to the list of publications submitted, about 1/3 of teachers has published at least an average of one scientific/applied research publication per year for the past three years. The share of joint publications prepared in cooperation with the colleagues from UASF is relatively small. This indicates that no research groups have been formed yet.
- 6.8. The regular academic staff within the Faculty publishes papers on behalf of the University.
- 6.9. It is claimed in the SER (page 30) that “During the process of selection and promotion of the academic staff it is required that the scientific papers be relevant to the field of study



of the candidate as well as to the subjects in which they will compete for appointment and promotion.”

- 6.10. The university has not yet established intellectual property policies.
- 6.11. The prerequisites for student research are insufficient - the curriculum does not deal with research methods (research methods are not mentioned in any module description), and the use of laboratories for research purposes is limited.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
<i>Standard 6.1.</i> The study program has defined scientific/applied research objectives (on its own or as part of a research centre or interdisciplinary program), which are also reflected in the research development plan of the institution; sufficient financial, logistic and human resources are allocated for achieving the proposed research objectives.		X
<i>Standard 6.2.</i> Expectations for teaching staff involvement in research and scholarly activities are clearly specified, and performance in relation to these expectations is considered in staff evaluation and promotion criteria.	X	
<i>Standard 6.3.</i> Clear policies are established for defining what is recognized as research, consistent with international standards and established norms in the field of study of the program.	X	
<i>Standard 6.4.</i> The academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity.		X
<i>Standard 6.5.</i> The academic and research staff publish their work in speciality magazines or publishing houses, scientific/applied/artistic 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
<i>Standard 6.6.</i> Research is validated through: scientific and applied research publications, artistic products, technological transfer through consultancy centres, scientific parks and other structures for validation.		X
<i>Standard 6.7.</i> Each academic staff member and researcher has produced at least an average of one scientific/applied research publication or artistic outcome/product per year for the past three years.		X
<i>Standard 6.8.</i> Academic and research staff publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full time staff.	X	



<i>Standard 6.9/6.8.</i> Academic staff are encouraged to include in their teaching information about their research and scholarly activities that are relevant to courses they teach, together with other significant research developments in the field.	X	
<i>Standard 6.10.</i> Policies are established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.		X
<i>Standard 6.11.</i> Students are engaged in research projects and other activities.		X

Compliance level: 36% - Partially compliant.

ET recommendations:

1. Decide on the research priorities in industrial engineering of the Faculty and form the research groups accordingly.
2. Specify scientific/applied research objectives of the study program which harmonizes with the research priorities of the Faculty.
3. Develop and implement a motivation system that supports cooperation of teachers with companies.
4. Describe the research and development results on the faculty's website.
5. The university is recommended to establish an intellectual property ownership policy.
6. Update the study program either by adding a course in research methods, or adding topics of research methods to different existing courses.

2.7. Infrastructure and resources

- 7.1. The university has modern buildings and has assigned considerable resources for buildings and equipment. As the number of applications has considerably decreased over the last five years (from 300 in 2016 to 44 in 2020), the number of students has correspondingly decreased as well – there were 68 third year students and only 46 second year students. Therefore, the need for premises, teachers and equipment is decreasing.



- 7.2. The study programs do not have separate financial plans. The sustainability of the study program is problematic – there was no convincing explanation for the dramatic decrease in the number of applications and enrollments. This may be due, among other things, to the issues identified as problems by the students who met the experts: insufficient promotion of the study program among high school students as well as too few practical lessons and trainings in companies during the studies.
- 7.3. 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. According to the SAR, “The University has two amphitheatres (lecture halls) with 150 and 350 seats, 15 classrooms for groups of up to 75 students, two IT cabinets, two industrial spaces for workshops, four lab space and many accompanying spaces”. There are 53 offices for teaching staff.
- 7.4. Considering the number of students (about 1500 active students in the whole university), the number and size of teaching classrooms is adequate. Should the university decide on a more practical approach to teaching and learning (which is highly recommended), the composition of laboratories and other physical space (smaller rooms for group work and space for socializing) should also be revised to allow, among other things, their more intensive use by students for independent tasks and research.
- 7.5. The big majority of books is published within last 10 years. The lecturers prepare thorough course materials for the courses where the suitable textbooks are not available; these course materials are free for students.
- 7.6. The facility possesses electrical stairs, elevators, emergency exits as well as the entire infrastructure which is needed for students with special needs.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
<i>Standard 7.1.</i> The adequate long-term implementation of the study program is ensured in quantitative terms as regards premises, human resources and equipment. At the same time, it is guaranteed that qualitative aspects are also taken into account.	X	
<i>Standard 7.2.</i> There is a financial plan at the level of the study program that would demonstrate the sustainability of the study program for the next minimum three years.		X



<p><i>Standard 7.3.</i> The higher education institution must demonstrate with adequate documents (property deeds, lease contracts, inventories, invoices etc.) that, for the study program submitted for evaluation it possesses the following, for the next at least three years:</p> <p>a) owned or rented spaces adequate for the educational process;</p> <p>b) owned or rented laboratories, with the adequate equipment for all the compulsory disciplines within the curriculum, wherever the analytical syllabus includes such activities;</p> <p>c) adequate software for the disciplines of study included in the curriculum, with utilisation licence;</p> <p>d) library equipped with reading rooms, group work rooms and its own book stock according to the disciplines included in the curricula.</p>	X	
<p><i>Standard 7.4.</i> The number of seats in the lecture rooms, seminar rooms and laboratories must be related to the study groups' size (series, groups, subgroups); the applicative activities for the speciality disciplines included in the curricula are carried out in laboratories equipped with IT equipment.</p>	X	
<p><i>Standard 7.5.</i> The education institution's libraries must ensure, for each of the study programs:</p> <p>a) a number of seats in the reading rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program;</p> <p>b) a number of seats in the group work rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program;</p> <p>c) their own book stock from Albanian and foreign speciality literature, enough to cover the disciplines within the curricula, out of which at least 50% should represent book titles or speciality courses of recognised publishers, from the last 10 years;</p> <p>d) a book stock within its own library with a sufficient number of books so as to cover the needs of all students in the cycle and year of study the respective discipline is provided for;</p> <p>e) a sufficient number of subscriptions to Albanian and foreign publications and periodicals, according to the stated mission.</p>	X	
<p><i>Standard 7.6.</i> The infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the program is adapted to students with special needs.</p>	X	

Compliance level: 83 % - Substantially compliant.



ET recommendations:

1. In upgrading the facilities:
 - a. review the set of laboratories and their organization to allow their off-schedule use by students;
 - b. foresee more smaller rooms for group work;
 - c. reserve more space for students' learning and socializing outside the classrooms.

3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

The following recommendations need to be considered in relation to the program accreditation:

1. Any development is only possible if the necessary resources are available. The experts were not able to get acquainted with the development plan of the university for the forthcoming period or the financial perspective, but we draw attention to the importance of strategic choices, especially in case of scarcity of resources. The strategic choice determines the extent to which investment is made in R&D, laboratories, support staff, business collaboration, etc. Making strategic choices is time consuming, as all key stakeholders need to be negotiated. This is also the reason why this report avoids very specific recommendations - the existence of quality assurance mechanisms is most important, even more important than the implementation of some specific proposal.
2. Some of the important proposals listed above will take several years to fully implement:
 - a. Increasing the share of practical training requires the development of the necessary laboratory base (and the hiring of the necessary laboratory technicians).
 - b. The formation of research groups in industrial engineering involves hiring new teachers and changing the research profile of some existing teachers. As the employment contract of a number of lecturers expires in 2021 or 2022, it is necessary to start addressing the key issues of strategic development of the study program immediately.
3. The main activities of the university are relatively well covered by regulatory documents. Much more problematic is the fact that the requirements set out in these documents are not always properly followed - in some cases the requirements are met formally or not at all. Therefore, the proper functioning of quality assurance mechanisms is critical. The fact that the number of applicants to study on the study program has dropped from 300 to 44 in the last 5 years, and the reasons for this have not even been investigated, is an example of the failure of quality assurance mechanisms.



4. Conducting research and development projects was not discussed in the SER, was not reflected in the CVs of the lecturers and on the university website. This shows that the role of research and development activities are largely underestimated in the activities of the university. It is assumed that the research activities at a university of applied sciences are of an applied nature and carried out in close cooperation with local companies.

Overall compliance:

Standard	Compliance level
1. Mission, objectives and administration	Substantially-compliant
2. Quality management	Partially-compliant
3. Academic staff	Substantially compliant
4. Educational process content	Substantially compliant
5. Students	Substantially compliant
6. Research	Partially compliant
7. Infrastructure and resources	Substantially compliant
Overall compliance	Substantially compliant

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering with Informatics study program offered by University of Applied Science in Ferizaj is **substantially compliant** with the standards included in the *Accreditation Manual* and, therefore – considering the time required to carry out a proposed (item 2 above) restructuring – recommends to accredit the program for a duration of **five years** with 100 students to be enrolled on the study program.

Expert Team

Chair

Peeter Normak

27.02.2021

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)