# UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES IN FERIZAJ
# BSC IN INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE
# AND FURNITURE DESIGN

# RE-ACCREDITATION

# REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

February 2021

Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo

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

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Visit Agenda

Date: 23rd of February 2021

| Expert Team |
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- Prof. Dr. Alexander Petutschnigg
- Mikus Dubickis, Student Expert

| Coordinators of KAA |
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- 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

| Site Visit Program |
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### 23rd of February

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

> *Prof.Dr. Agron Bajraktari – Rector*
>
> *Prof.Dr. Bujar Pira – Vice Rector*
>
> *Prof.As.Dr. Fakije Zejnullahu – Vice Rector*
>
> *Armend Hysa – General Secretary*

**09.45 – 10.55**      Meeting with the heads of the study programme
> *Prof.As.DrRrahim Sejdiu*
>
> *Prof.As.Dr. Muhamet Ymeri*
>
> *Prof.As.Dr. Ramadan Topuzi*

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*Prof,As.Dr.Leonora Rudhani*

**11.00 – 11.40**     Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff
*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 – 12.35**     Meeting with teaching staff
*Prof.As.Dr. Sokol Krasniqi*

*Prof.As.Dr. Bislim Lekiqi*

*Prof.As.Dr.Ismajl Mehmeti*

*Mr.Sc. Etleva Blakaj*

*Mr.Sc.Florit Hoxha*

*Mr.Sc.Flamur Salihu*

**12.35 – 13.10**     Lunch break

**13.15 – 13.55**     Meeting with students
*Erblina Hasani*

*Eurolinda Shabani*

*Xhenetë Mjaku*

*Festina Vranoci*

*Endrit Ademi*

*Endrit Sadiku*

*Leona Jahiri*

**14.00 – 14.40**     Meeting with graduates
*Lorita Rama*

*Rinidon Bislimi*

*Resul Qorrolli*

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*Rinore Caka*

*Almir Osmani*

*Fitim Sejdiu*

*Arbnore Avdija*

**14.45 – 15.25**      Meeting with employers of graduates

*Enver Haziri – EuroArt,*

*Nexhmendin Sadiku – Daqa,*

*Bujar Baliu – ANB Baliu,*

*Avni Bajrami – Oxa Group,*

*Arianit Kastrati – Nica Swiss,*

*Nehat Ademi – N.T.P. Doqi.*

*Fahri Bega – Veneta Tours*

**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

| Nr. | Study programs | Experts | Responsible persons of study programs |
|-----|---------------|---------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | Interior Architecture and Furniture Design, BSc, 180 ECTS (Re-accreditation) | Prof. Dr. Alexander Petutchnigg<br>Mikus Dubickis, Student Expert | Ramadan Topuzi<br>Leonora Haliti Rudhani<br>Rrahim Sejdiu<br>Muhamet Ymeri |

Other information

**Overall instructions for HEIs:**
1. Each meeting should be attended by maximum 6 persons;
2. The students selected for the meeting should reflect a diversity in terms of study cycle, year of study, students with special needs if any, etc;
3. The teaching staff selected for the meeting should reflect a diversity in terms of full-time and part time, local and international, etc;
4. The students, graduates and employers of graduates should not be employed at the institution;

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5. Anyone whose attendance won't be agreed in advance with KAA and the Expert Team will be asked to leave the interview session;
6. Nametags are to be provided for all people attending the meetings.

**Contacts of the participants from KAA:**
Shkelzen Gerxhaliu – 044 836 831
Arianit Krasniqi – 045 499 951
Ilirjane Ademaj Ahmeti – 044 169 225

### 1.2. Documents provided before the visit

- *Self Evaluation Report (SER).*
- *Regulation for Quality Assurance.*
- *Code of Ethics*
- *Staff CVs*
- *Module Syllabuses*
- *List of staff publications*
- *MoM with program committee and Industrial Board*
- *Matrix of learning outcomes by subjects.*

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

The University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj (UASF) was established by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) and was ratified by the Parliament of the Republic of Kosovo on July 16, 2015. The tradition of academic and scientific work in Ferizaj dates back to 1976, and then – linked to the Higher Technical School (HTS) with the machinery and wood industry section set up in 1988 year. The current mission of the University is:

- "*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.*"

According to the website of the University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj (UASF), it has the following 5 faculties:
- Faculty of Engineering and Informatics;
- Faculty of Tourism and Environment;
- Faculty of Architecture, Design and Wood Technology;

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- Faculty of Management;
- Faculty of Applied Arts.

The University currently has 1450 full-time students studying in nine study programs, of which 1249 are in bachelor studies and 201 are in master studies.

## 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

The Mission of the University is given in the following statement

"We are committed to provide quality education, to train qualified professionals, dedicated researchers and educated and responsible citizens to develop a professional career and lead a productive life."

The institution has set Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) at the level of the study program. The data they provide is reviewed at least annually with overall performance reported to the main decision making bodies on the academic and industrial side.

In the institution systems for central recording and analysis of course completion, program progression, completion rates and program evaluations, with summaries and comparative data distributed automatically to senior administrators and relevant committees at least once each year are established.

Statistical data on indicators, including grade distributions, progression and completion rates are retained in an accessible central database and regularly reviewed and reported in periodic program reports for the different stakeholders in the institution. These statistical reports are the basis for decisions done by the decision making bodies.

The concepts of gender justice and the promotion of equal opportunities for students in special situations such as, for example, students with health-related impairments, students with children, foreign students, students with an immigrant background and/or students from educationally disadvantaged families are dealt with in the different organizational bodies at the level of the study program. These issues are dealt with individually with participation of students representatives, academic staff and the quality management department.

| Standard | Compliance | |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | No |
| Standard 1.1. The study program mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution | X | |

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|---|---|---|
| Standard 1.2. Relevant academic and professional advice is considered when defining the intended learning outcomes which are consistent with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area | X | |
| Standard 1.3. The study program has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept. | | X |
| Standard 1.4. There are formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues. These are made publicly available to all staff and students. | X | |
| Standard 1.5. All staff and students comply with the internal regulations relating to ethical conduct in research, teaching, assessment in all academic and administrative activities | X | |
| Standard 1.6. All policies, regulations, terms of reference and statements of responsibility relating to the management and delivery of the program are reviewed at least once every two years and amended as required in the light of changing circumstances. | X | |

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant.

**ET recommendations:**

1. Integrate the university goal of combined teaching and learning in the mission statement.
2. Develop a strategic plan and objectives for the development of applied research.

### 2.2. Quality management

The program evaluation mechanisms are including the information of graduates, employment of graduates, employer feedback and subsequent performance of graduates. This information is used to improve the learning outcomes. The reports are provided to program administrators per course. Appropriate adjustments are made in plans for teaching according to the course reports. The reassessment of the program is conducted at least once every five years, and policies and procedures for conducting this reassessment are published. The Program review involves experienced faculty from other institutions. Students participate in the design and implementation of quality assurance processes.

| Standard | Compliance | |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | No |
| Standard 2.1 All staff participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity. | X | |
| Standard 2.2 Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes | X | |

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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Standard 2.3 Quality assurance processes deal with all aspects of program planning and delivery, including services and resources provided by other parts of the institution. | X | |
| Standard 2.4 Quality evaluations provide an overview of quality issues for the overall program as well as of different components within it,; the evaluations consider inputs, processes and outputs, with particular attention given to learning outcomes for students. | X | |
| Standard 2.5 Quality assurance processes ensure both that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance. | X | |
| Standard 2.6 Survey data is being collected from students, graduates and employers; the results or these evaluations are made publicly available. | | X |
| Standard 2.7 Results of the internal quality assurance system are taken into account for further development of the study program This includes evaluation results, investigation of the student workload, academic success and employment of graduates. | X | |
| Standard 2.8 The institution ensures that reports on the overall quality of the program are prepared periodically (eg. every three years) for consideration within the institution indicating its strengths and weaknesses. | X | |
| Standard 2.9 The quality assurance arrangements for the program are themselves regularly evaluated and improved. | X | |

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant.

**ET recommendations:**

Publish the results of the periodical survey with students and staff on the University Webpage on a regularly basis.

### 2.3. Academic staff

The number of academic staff is sufficient and seems to be sufficient to solve the given questions in teaching and the collaboration with companies. The importance of practical competencies is increasing and therefore the staff has to be flexible to teach also in an industrial environment.

The teaching staff are encouraged to develop strategies for the improvement of their own teaching and maintain a portfolio of evidence of evaluations and strategies for improvement.

There are numerous internal and external training courses to improve the competencies of the staff in the university. Additionally the possibilities to join teacher exchange programs are given to the staff. The planning of these activities is done together with the head of faculty based on the self report. Annually a meeting between the head of faculty and every teacher to develop an individual action plan is organized. The action plan is the guideline for the annual

activities of the teacher. To give the staff the possibility to join scientific conferences or write scientific publications a budget of approximately €1000,- is given to every professor per year.

Training programs in teaching skills are provided for both new and continuing teaching staff including those with part time teaching responsibilities; these include effective use of new and emerging technology. The extent to which teaching staff are involved in professional development to improve quality of teaching is being monitored and discussed annually with the head of faculty. The results of the academic staff evaluation are taken into account for promotion purposes and renewal of contracts. In the program under re-accreditation, there are no staff over the year 65 engaged in the teaching process.

| Standard | Compliance | |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | No |
| Standard 3.1. Candidates for employment are provided with full position descriptions and conditions of employment. To be presented in tabular form data about full time (FT) and part time (PT) academic/ artistic staff, such as: name, qualification, academic title, duration of official (valid) contract, workload for teaching, exams, consulting, administrative activities, research, etc. for the study program under evaluation. | X | |
| Standard 3.2. The teaching staff must comply with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative instruction on Accreditation | X | |
| Standard 3.3. Academic staff do not cover, within an academic year, more than two teaching positions (one full-time, one part-time), regardless of the educational institution where they carry out their activity | X | |
| Standard 3.4. At least 50% of the academic staff in the study program are full time employees, and account for at least 50% of the classes of the study program. | X | |
| Standard 3.5. For each student group (defined by the statute of the institution) and for every 60 ECTS credits in the study program, the institution has employed at least one full time staff with PhD title or equivalent title in the case of artistic/applied science institutions. | X | |
| Standard 3.6. Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties. | X | |
| Standard 3.6. Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties. | X | |
| Standard 3.7. The responsibilities of all teaching staff, especially full-time, include the engagement in the academic community, availability for consultations with students and community service. | X | |

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| Standard 3.8. Academic staff evaluation is conducted regularly at least through self-evaluation, students, peer and superiors' evaluations, and occur on a formal basis at least once each year. The results of the evaluation are made publicly available. | X | |
| Standard 3.9. Strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials. | X | |
| Standard 3.10. Teachers retired at age limit or for other reasons lose the status of full-time teachers and are considered part-time teachers. | X | |

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant

**ET recommendations:**

Elaborate clear and understandable objectives for the development of research capabilities for teaching staff.


### 2.4. Educational process content

The main bodies for the development of new study programs is the Scientific Committee. When it is recognized that new contents are necessary, these contents are integrated in the course. The procedure for the changes in the program level is based on contacts with the stakeholders, mainly through the industrial board. The academic feasibility of the study program is ensured by taking into account the expected entry qualifications, a suitable design of the curriculum, a student workload that has been checked for plausibility as well as an adequate number of examinations.

Teachers use new IT resources (e-mail, personal web page, topics, bibliographies and other resources in electronic format and communication with students) and auxiliary materials, such as whiteboard, flipchart and video-projector. The adjustment of modules is also done based on the industrial and alumni responses. The information about the changes is given on two ways. The first source for necessary changes in the content of a lecture is given by the self-report and the second type of initiation is done by the Industrial board that is meeting regularly within a year. The effectiveness of planned teaching strategies in achieving different types of learning outcomes is regularly assessed and adjustments are made in response to evidence about their effectiveness.

Modules can be adjusted without specific accreditation, as this can be done within the existing accreditation. The lecturer can change the content of a content based on the syllabus committee. The changes are written down in the syllabus and have to be certified by the program committee, the scientific council and the senate.

Benchmarks are not taken on international level as the competitiveness of the institution cannot be seen without consideration of the economic situation in Kosovo. Much more the institution

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is relating the key performance indicators to institutions and regions that are comparable to Kosovo and the study program in Ferizaj.

The practical work is done within a specific course and is carried out at industrial partners the detailed educational concept was not described in the SER but the discussions showed high levels of satisfaction from student and company representatives.

| Standard | Compliance | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | Yes | No |
| Standard 4.1. The study program is modelled on qualification objectives. These include subject-related and interdisciplinary aspects as well as the acquisition of disciplinary, methodological and generic skills and competencies. The aspects refer especially to academic or artistic competencies, to the capability of taking up adequate employment, contributing to the civil society and of developing the students' personality. | X | |
| Standard 4.2. The study program complies with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. The individual components of the program are combined in a way to best achieve the specified qualification objectives and provide for adequate forms of teaching and learning. | X | |
| Standard 4.3. The disciplines within the curriculum are provided in a logical flow and meet the definition and precise determination of the general and specific competencies, as well as the compatibility with the study programs and curricula delivered in the EHEA. To be listed at least 7 learning outcomes for the study program under evaluation. | X | |
| Standard 4.4. The disciplines within the curriculum have analytical syllabuses which comprise at least the following: the discipline's objectives, the basic thematic content, learning outcomes, the distribution of classes, seminars and applicative activities, students' assessment system, the minimal bibliography, etc. The full course description/ syllabuses of each subject/ module should be attached only in electronic form to the self-assessment report for the study program under evaluation. | X | |
| Standard 4.5. If the language of instruction is other than Albanian, actions are taken to ensure that language skills of both students and academic staff are adequate for instruction in that language when students begin their studies. This may be done through language training prior to the commencement of the program. | X | |
| Standard 4.6. The student-teacher relationship is a partnership in which each assumes the responsibility of reaching the learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are explained and discussed with students from the perspective of their relevance to the students' development. | X | |

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| Standard 4.7. Teaching strategies are fit for the different types of learning outcomes programs are intended to develop. Strategies of teaching and assessment set out in program and course specifications are followed with flexibility to meet the needs of different groups of students. | X | |
| Standard 4.8. Student assessment mechanisms are conducted fairly and objectively, are appropriate for the different forms of learning sought and are clearly communicated to students at the beginning of courses. | X | |
| Standard 4.9. Appropriate, valid and reliable mechanisms are used for verifying standards of student achievement. The standard of work required for different grades is consistent over time, comparable in courses offered within a program, and in comparison with other study programs at highly regarded institutions. | X | |
| Standard 4.10. Policies and procedures include actions to be taken in to dealing with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or inconsistently assessed. | X | |
| Standard 4.11. If the study program includes practice stages, the intended student learning outcomes are clearly specified and effective processes are followed to ensure that those learning outcomes and the strategies to develop that learning are understood by students. The practice stages are allocated 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 | |
| Standard 4.12. In order to facilitate the practice stages, the higher education institution signs cooperation agreements, contracts or other documents with institutions/organisations/practical training units. | X | |

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant.

**ET recommendations:**

Ensure the educational quality especially while the work based learning in the practice modules.

### 2.5. Students

There is a clear and formally adopted admission procedure at the institutional level that the study program respects when organizing students' recruitment. The experts' team did not find any evidence that admission requirements would not be consistently and fairly applied for all students (S. 5.1.). All students enrolled in the study program possess a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent document of study, according to MEST requirements

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(S. 5.2.). Considering the information gathered during the evaluation visit, the experts' team believes that:

- The study groups are dimensioned to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process (S. 5.3.). The academic staff that participated in the evaluation visit demonstrated a very good understanding of student-centred learning as well as interactive teaching, however, the HEI could consider the implementation of institutional mechanisms (requirements and reward) that are promoting the usage of diverse teaching and learning methods. In addition, it is recommended to plan the number of students in practical classes not larger than 20 students.
- Feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments is given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed (S. 5.4.).
- Flexible treatment of students in special situations is ensured with respect to deadlines and formal requirements in the program and to all examinations (S. 5.6.).
- 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 (S. 5.11.).

The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record (online Management System – SMU) (S. 5.5.). However, the experts' team did not found that the records of student completion rates are kept neither for all study courses nor that the records are kept for the program as a whole and did not find that this aspect would be included among quality indicators (S. 5.7.). Considering the information gathered during the evaluation visit, the experts' team also cannot confirm that there are systems (institutional mechanisms) established for monitoring year-to-year progression rates and program completion rates (P.I. 5.2.). There is no procedure for monitoring and coordinating student workload across courses: "The University does not have an automatized way of monitoring student work in a specific subject in the study program. The dean of the respective faculty monitors the passing statistics in each subject and takes the necessary measures to address student difficulties in passing certain subjects" (P.I. 5.2.). At the same time, as it was revealed during the visit, it is planned to consider the students' perception of the workload in the nearest future. Overall, it would be beneficial for both – HEI and students to establish these procedures.

Effective procedures are being used to ensure that work submitted by students is original: "The University is part of the Erasmus+ Capacity building funded project ReaserchCult through which University has secured access to anti-plagiarism software for staff ad students for the next three years" (S. 5.8.). However, it is crucial to ensure that the software for detecting plagiarism is available at all times, not just for a limited period.

Students' rights and obligations are made publicly available (Statute and Student handbook) (S. 5.9.), however, the Statute stipulate the right of appeal only in case of exclusion. The students' transfer between higher education institutions and study programs (S. 5.10.) as well as recognition rules for foreign qualifications are regulated by Statute, however, the experts' team cannot confirm that recognition rules for qualifications obtained outside higher education institutions (informal education, experience, etc.) are defined (P.I. 5.1.).

"The University does not have a specific matrix to monitor the assessment of teaching results" (P.I. 5.3.). However, it would be beneficial to explain in more detail the criteria used to evaluate the tasks performed by students (e.g., by using matrices or other means to ensure that the planned range of domains of student learning outcomes is addressed (see more: Constructive Alignment by Biggs, 1999, 2003)). There are study courses in which it would be necessary to update the list of compulsory and recommended literature (P.I. 5.5.)

The professional fields for which students are being prepared are not monitored (P.I. 5.6.). It would be beneficial to do that on a continuing basis with necessary adjustments made in the program and in text and reference materials to ensure continuing relevance and quality. The University has started work on providing a support service for students (P.I. 5.4.). Given the P.I. 5.4., it is recommended to supplement/clarify the *QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS FOR STUDY PROGRAMMES, ADMIN AND INFTRASTRUCTURE* with the following aspects:

1) student counseling in case of emotional problems,
2) student counseling in case of financial problems,
3) student counseling in case of family-related problems,
4) career guidance,
5) student counseling in international matters,
6) legal advice,
7) interdisciplinary guidance.

| Standard | Compliance | |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | No |
| *Standard 5.1.* There is a clear and formally adopted admission procedure at institutional level that the study program respects when organising students' recruitment. Admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied for all students. | X | |
| *Standard 5.2.* All students enrolled in the study program posses a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent document of study, according to MEST requirements. | X | |
| *Standard 5.3.* The study groups are dimensioned so as to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process. | X | |
| *Standard 5.4.* Feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments is given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed. | X | |
| *Standard 5.5.* The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record. | X | |
| *Standard 5.6.* Flexible treatment of students in special situations is ensured with respect to deadlines and formal requirements in the program and to all examinations. | X | |
| *Standard 5.7.* Records of student completion rates are kept for all courses and for the program as a whole and included among quality indicators. | | X |

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| *Standard 5.8.* Effective procedures are being used to ensure that work submitted by students is original. | X | |
| *Standard 5.9.* Students' rights and obligations are made publicly available, promoted to all those concerned and enforced equitably; these will include the right to academic appeals. | X | |
| *Standard 5.10.* The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs is clearly regulated in formal internal documents. | X | |
| *Standard 5.11.* Academic staff is available at sufficient scheduled times for consultation and advice to students. Adequate tutorial assistance is provided to ensure understanding and ability to apply learning. | X | |

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant.

**ET recommendations:**

- Consider the implementation of institutional mechanisms (requirements and reward) that are promoting the usage of diverse teaching and learning methods.
- Plan the number of students in practical classes not larger than 20 students.
- Establish procedures for monitoring year-to-year progression rates and program completion rates. Collect student completion rates at the study program level and include this aspect among quality indicators.
- Design recognition rules for qualifications obtained outside higher education institutions (informal education, experience, etc.).
- Establish procedures for monitoring and coordinating student workload across courses.
- Explain in more detail the criteria used to evaluate the tasks performed by students (e.g., by using matrices or other means to ensure that the planned range of domains of student learning outcomes is addressed).
- Ensure that the software for detecting plagiarism is available at all times, not just for a limited period.
- Students' rights and obligations should include the right to academic appeals (and not only in case of exclusion).
- Consider updating the list of compulsory and recommended literature (study course descriptions).
- Monitor the professional fields for which students are being prepared on a continuing basis with necessary adjustments made in the program and in text and reference materials to ensure continuing relevance and quality.
- Supplement/clarify the QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS FOR STUDY PROGRAMMES, ADMIN AND INFTRASTRUCTURE with the following aspects - student counseling in case of emotional problems, student counseling in

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case of financial problems, student counseling in case of family-related problems, career guidance, student counseling in international matters, legal advice and interdisciplinary guidance.

### 2.6. Research

The study program doesn't have a well defined research strategy. In the self report this issue is addressed. Research is done mainly by the professors and the actual funding is done by a fix amount per professor. The aim is to increase the research project volume in the future and this is actually initiated by collaboration based on educational activities. From the head of department as well as research active colleagues  assistance and support is given to teaching staff to develop collaborative research arrangements with colleagues in other institutions and n the international community. Furthermore the study program periodically organizes scientific sessions, symposiums, conferences, round tables, with the involvement of teaching staff, researchers, students and graduates. In these activities also industrial partners are involved.

Strategies are introduced for identifying and capitalizing on the expertise of teaching staff and students in providing research and development services to the community. Students are engaged in the research projects according to their level of studies. Especially in market analysis and business development courses the integration of students in questionaires starts in the first semesters.

National research funding is very limited. Nevertheless the institution is monitoring and supporting staff's contribution to attracting financial resources through research/applied/artistic projects and products. Staff capacity to generate such financial returns is considered in the individual performance review system. The international applications for research funding were not satisfying but it is assumed that this will change as soon as the testing-center is getting into activity.

The cooperation with local industry and with other research agencies is encouraged. When appropriate, these forms of cooperation involve joint research projects, shared use of equipment, and cooperative strategies for development.

| Standard | Compliance | |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | No |
| Standard 6.1. The study program has defined scientific/applied research objectives (on its own or as part of a research centre or interdisciplinary program), which are also reflected in the research development plan of the institution; sufficient financial, logistic and human resources are allocated for achieving the proposed research objectives. | x | |
| Standard 6.2. Expectations for 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 | |
| Standard 6.3. Clear policies are established for defining what is recognized as research, consistent with international standards and established norms in the field of study of the program. | | X |

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|---|---|---|
| Standard 6.4. The academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity. | X | |
| Standard 6.5. The academic and research staff publish their work in speciality magazines or publishing houses, scientific/applied/artistic products are presented at conferences, sessions, symposiums, seminars etc. and contracts, expertise, consultancy, conventions, etc. are provided to partners inside the country and/or abroad. | X | |
| Standard 6.6. Research is validated through: scientific and applied research publications, artistic products, technological transfer through consultancy centres, scientific parks and other structures for validation. | X | |
| Standard 6.7. Each academic staff member and researcher has produced at least an average of one scientific/applied research publication or artistic outcome/product per year for the past three years | | X |
| Standard 6.8. Academic and research staff publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full-time staff. | X | |
| Standard 6.8. Academic staff are encouraged to include in their teaching information about their research and scholarly activities that are relevant to courses they teach, together with other significant research developments in the field. | X | |
| Standard 6.9. Policies are established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students. | | X |
| Standard 6.10. Students are engaged in research projects and other activities | X | |

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant.

**ET recommendations:**

1. Develop a comprehensive strategic research development plan" with clear objectives, actions and measurable indicators.

2. Encourage staff to publish at least one paper per year and support junior researchers to improve their abilities.

3. Utilize the testing institute to improve the applied research component in research and lecturing

### 2.7. Infrastructure and resources

The technical and organizational plans are developed for the provision and improvement of infrastructure and resources, and the implementation and effectiveness of those plans is monitored on a regular basis

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Furthermore for every laboratory a senior staff member is assigned the responsibility for oversight and development of infrastructure and resources.

The effectiveness and relevance of infrastructure and resources is regularly monitored through the evaluation, that include surveys of student usage and satisfaction. Infrastructure and resources are modified in response to evaluation and feedback.

These conclusions are derived based on the data given in the self report, the results of the online discussions and the requested additional plans concerning the infrastructure. A site visit was not possible due to Covid restrictions.

| Standard | Compliance | |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | No |
| Standard 7.1. The adequate long-term implementation of the study program is ensured in quantitative terms as regards premises, human resources and equipment. At the same time, it is guaranteed that qualitative aspects are also taken into account. | X | |
| Standard 7.2. There is a financial plan at the level of the study program that would demonstrate the sustainability of the study program for the next minimum three years. | X | |
| Standard 7.3. The higher education institution must demonstrate with adequate documents (property deeds, lease contracts, inventories, invoices etc.) that, for the study program submitted for evaluation it possesses the following, for the next at least three years: | X | |
| a)      owned or rented spaces adequate for the educational process; b)      owned or rented laboratories, with the adequate equipment for all the compulsory disciplines within the curriculum, wherever the analytical syllabus includes such activities; c)      adequate software for the disciplines of study included in the curriculum, with utilisation licence; d)      library equipped with reading rooms, group work rooms and its own book stock according to the disciplines included in the curricula. | X | |
| Standard 7.4. The number of seats in the lecture rooms, seminar rooms and laboratories must be related to the study groups' size (series, groups, subgroups); the applicative activities for the speciality disciplines included in the curricula are carried out in laboratories equipped with IT equipment. | Only online evaluation | |
| Standard 7.5. The education institution's libraries must ensure, for each of the study programs: a)      a number of seats in the reading rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program; | Only online evaluation | |

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

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant.

**ET recommendations:**

1. Improve the availability of literature and software in the library and in the teaching process.
2. Make a clear plan how to integrate the new testing facilities in the existing research and teaching process.

## 3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

Overall compliance:

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

Summary of Recommendations:

| Standard | Recommendation |
|---|---|
| 1. Mission, objectives and administration | 1. Integrate the university goal of combined teaching and learning in the mission statement. <br><br> 2. Develop a strategic plan and objectives for the development of applied research. |
| 2. Quality management | Publish the results of the periodical survey with students and staff on the University Webpage on a regularly basis. |
| 3. Academic staff | Elaborate clear and understandable objectives for the development of research capabilities for teaching staff. |
| 4. Educational process content | Ensure the educational quality especially while the work based learning in the practice modules. |
| 5. Students | 1. Consider the implementation of institutional mechanisms (requirements and reward) that are promoting the usage of diverse teaching and learning methods. <br> 2. Plan the number of students in practical classes not larger than 20 students. <br> 3. Establish procedures for monitoring year-to-year progression rates and program completion rates. Collect student completion rates at the study program level and include this aspect among quality indicators. <br> 4. Design recognition rules for qualifications obtained outside higher education institutions (informal education, experience, etc.). <br> 5. Establish procedures for monitoring and coordinating student workload across courses. <br> 6. Explain in more detail the criteria used to evaluate the tasks performed by students (e.g., by using matrices or other means to ensure that the planned |

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|---|---|
| | range of domains of student learning outcomes is addressed). |
| | 7. Ensure that the software for detecting plagiarism is available at all times, not just for a limited period. |
| | 8. Students' rights and obligations should include the right to academic appeals (and not only in case of exclusion). |
| | 9. Consider updating the list of compulsory and recommended literature (study course descriptions). |
| | 10. Monitor the professional fields for which students are being prepared on a continuing basis with necessary adjustments made in the program and in text and reference materials to ensure continuing relevance and quality. |
| | 11. Supplement/clarify the QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS FOR STUDY PROGRAMMES, ADMIN AND INFTRASTRUCTURE with the following aspects - student counseling in case of emotional problems, student counseling in case of financial problems, student counseling in case of family-related problems, career guidance, student counseling in international matters, legal advice and interdisciplinary guidance. |
| 6. Research | 1. Develop a comprehensive strategic research development plan" with clear objectives, actions and measurable indicators. |
| | 2. Encourage staff to publish at least one paper per year and support junior researchers to improve their abilities. |
| | 3. Utilize the testing institute to improve the applied research component in research and lecturing |

| 7. Infrastructure and resources | 3. Improve the availability of literature and software in the library and in the teaching process. |
| | 4. Make a clear plan how to integrate the new testing facilities in the existing research and teaching process. |

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the Bachelor of Science in Interior architecture and Furniture design study program offered by University of Applied Science in Ferizaj is **substantially compliant** with the standards included in the Accreditation Manual and, therefore recommends to accredit the program for a duration of **five years** with 100 students to be enrolled on the study program.

**Expert Team**

| **Prof. Dr. Alexander Petutchnigg** | **08.04.2021** |
| (Signature) | (Print Name) | (Date) |

| **Mikus Dubickis, Student Expert** | **08.04.2021** |
| (Signature) | (Print Name) | (Date) |

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