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

UNIVERSITY OF PRISHTINA

INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

25th of May 2020



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	2
1. Introduction.....	3
1.1. Context	3
1.2. Site visit schedule	4
1.3. A brief overview of the institution	5
2. INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION	5
2.1. Public mission and institutional objectives.....	5
2.2. Strategic planning, governance and administration	6
2.3. Financial planning and management.....	8
2.4. Academic integrity, responsibility and public accountability	10
2.5. Quality management.....	12
2.6. Learning and teaching.....	14
2.7. Research.....	16
2.8. Staff, employment processes and professional development.....	18
2.9. Student administration and support services	20
2.10. Learning resources and facilities	22
2.11. Institutional cooperation	23
3. Overall evaluation and judgments of the ET.....	26



1. Introduction

1.1. Context

Institutional Reaccreditation Procedure at University of Prishtina

Date: 13th of May 2020

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Coordinators of KAA

- Naim Gashi, Executive Director
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Sources of information for the Report

- SER
- On-line interviews

Criteria used for insitutional evaluation

- Standards and guidelines of KAA



1.2.Site visit schedule

Site Visit (on-line) Program

13th May 2020

09.00 – 11.00	Meeting with the management of the institution <i>(no slide presentation is allowed, the meeting is intended as a free discussion)</i>
11.10 – 12.00	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative services
12.00 – 12.50	Lunch break
13.00 – 14.00	Meeting with the heads of faculties (5-6 deans in total)
14.00 – 14.50	Meeting with teaching staff
14.50 – 15.10	Short break
15.10 – 16.00	Meeting with students
16.00 – 16.40	Meeting with graduates
16.40 – 17.20	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders
17.20 – 17.35	Internal meeting – Expert Team and KAA
17.35 – 17.45	Closing meeting with the management of the institution



1.3.A brief overview of the institution

University of Prishtina (UP) is the main national higher education institution in Kosovo. It was established in 1969 by the Assembly of SAP Kosovo, which enacted the Law on the Establishment of the University. University of Prishtina provides education, research and serves to the society. It provides artistic creativity, professional counselling and other areas of academic activities. The Statute of the UP specifies the rules and processes at the University. The same Statute has been updated in 2012. The UP consists of 14 faculties/academic units, it has around 1200 employees of which around 900 are academic staff. The UP has more than 40 000 students, studying at all levels, bachelor master and doctoral.

2. INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION

The institutional evaluation consists of 11 sub headings through which the administration, organisation and management of the institution, as well as teaching and research are assessed.

2.1. Public mission and institutional objectives

University presented their mission in the submitted SER document opting for a bottom-up approach, presenting firstly the academic units of the UP and their missions and objectives. On one side, it reflects a big institution made of highly independent academic units as they referred in the SER (although considering their level of independency and autonomy in relation to the ‘University, it would be better fitted to name them ‘faculties’ as they usually call them) covering a wide range of disciplines. On the other, it shows in a way overtly the relationship of the faculties and the ‘University’. University is an umbrella organisation.

Analysing individual missions and objectives it was not easy to identify a red thread that connects them. Interestingly, they did not follow even the same format, so some kind of individuality and expressing their institutional personality and character was also readable in their presentations. While some faculties defined their missions and objectives in a quite operational and, straight forward, way, the others were more descriptive and general. To some



point ET also recognised a variable level of motivation across different faculties, which was reflected in way objectives were stated and/or different components of their activities (for example, while some considered important to refer to their international activities, others did not consider this aspect to be included; or some faculties considered challenges to be relevant, others did not focus on them etc).

When it comes to the mission and objectives of the University, which is actually an objective of the evaluation process, it is more general mission that could fit to any university, and somehow allowing to define any (or many) individual missions. Again, considering the fact that the UP is a big comprehensive university, such an approach could be seen as a pragmatic and possible approach. At the same time, it shows that University of Prishtina is missing real unity, and it is primarily an umbrella structure.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *In order to support further institutional development, it would be important to identify more strongly institutional mission and its role in the context of Kosovo;*
2. *Apply more deductive approach in defining the missions of the faculties, which will assure the full alignment with the University.*

2.2. Strategic planning, governance and administration

UP included in the SER a Strategy till 2019 (due to administrative procedure), however on the University web site a new strategy 2020 to 2022 is available (<https://www.uni-pr.edu/inc/doc/PLANI-STRATEGJIK2.pdf>) and it is accompanied with the Activity plan. It covers all the main university activities, a base for faculties functioning. It is written in a very readable way and it has recommendable structure. The activity plan strives to indicate how the mission will be fulfilled in the indicated period. University defined priorities in its Strategy as well as nine strategic areas of focus and objectives of strategic initiatives. It is also clearly stated that there will be flexible, continuous monitoring which will allow the institutions to adopt changes of the strategic planning if needed.

However, Strategy does not have short-term medium and long-term actions, probably also due to actually very short cycle of the whole Strategy. In other words, Strategy should cover a bit



longer period, it requires vision of the university leaders and university government, which is extremely hard to define in such a short life cycle (3 years). In addition, although the activity plan has objectives, aims, activities, indicators, timeline, responsible staff and resources, it is not clear who will report to whom, how often and what steps will be undertaken if some developments are not following the plan. Also, it is not possible to measure change, development, since the indicators are defined vaguely, in a descriptive manner.

Another relevant issue is the fact that faculties' strategies and action plans do not overlap the institutional, which actually directly means that they do not derive from the institutional (University) Strategy. While University strategy covers only 3 years, faculties' strategies cover longer periods from four to six years. This is actually the reflection of the relationship of the Rectorate (University) and the faculties.

Although a modern university should pay balanced attention to education, research and the third role of universities -innovation and transfer technology - which in fact will support knowledge development in society as well, there is no document mentioning this aspect, at least not directly and transparently. This is an area of institutional development which will also require strategic thinking and structural changes.

University develop some new offices, services and broaden the scope of its activities, however, it still seems to be an issue and challenge for positioning itself in relation to the faculties and their autonomy. One on side, administrative staff is still lacking all the required skills, and on the other there is a threat of over-increasing the number of administrative staff in case each faculty will have all the services and with same level of competencies.

Very soon, such a big system, if it will try to modernise itself further, will become very difficult to manage. Deans expressed a need to be more decentralised. University governing is trying to define common areas of work, relevant for all the stakeholders. Financing is still not based on a lump sum, which means in other words that the Rector has very limited space for manoeuvre and for creating new things. When the ET asked what is the budget the Rector has on a disposal for common, university activities, there was no clear answer. Apparently, if the University is striving to further develop and to be an efficient, modern institution, it will need to revisit the structure of the institution, as well as the distribution of roles and responsibilities.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant



ET recommendations:

1. *According to the institutional mission, strategy and action plan, each faculty should develop and align their strategies, missions and activities with the university;*
2. *Institutional Strategy should cover a longer period in order to enable more visionary approach, and to have defined short, medium, and long-term objectives.*
3. *Activity plan must have measurable indicators, benchmarks and target indicators;*
4. *It is important to balance so called centralised and decentralised functions, but to develop appropriate mechanisms to avoid bureaucratic burden;*
5. *In order to make the system more effective and more efficient it is important to foster some central offices to support students, research, innovation, transfer technology;*
6. *The third role of the modern institution needs to be identified - innovation and transfer technology – and to be included in institutional strategy and action plan;*
7. *It is extremely important to implement changed system of funding university, (a lump sum; responsibility of the referent Ministry;)*
8. *The administration needs further professionalisation in order to carry on all the relevant tasks of modern institutions, which also want to foster its internationalisation;*
9. *To work further on clear definition of roles and distribution of responsibilities both on university level and faculty level, while at the same time developing mechanisms for more efficient system;*

2.3.Financial planning and management

University of Prishtina is aware of the importance of financial planning and management and provides within SER 2020 a lot of historical analysis for the 2014-2019 period and several estimations for 2020-2022 period: total budget allocated for the period 2014-2019, funds dynamics, the structure of the budget by main categories in 2019, the amount of cash collected and allocated from its own source revenues in 2019 compared to the same period in 2018, funding sources and estimations for the period 2018-2022 etc. According to SER:

- many details/comments refer to the previous strategic plan: *“Aiming at successful implementation of the strategic plan of the University of Pristina “Hasan Prishtina” 2017-2019, by utilizing the experiences of partner universities and international projects, with the objective of maintaining continuity compiled by the working group led by the Rector of the University, from the second half of 2019, the working group*



continued its work on drafting the strategic plan of the University of Pristina “Hasan Prishtina” for the period 2020-2022” (SER, page. 47);

- *the institution considers as a weakness: “lack of financial autonomy makes mission implementation difficult” (SER, page 50);*
- *“the UP budget is mainly financed by the Kosovo Consolidated Budget with a share of 77.81%” (SER, page 59);*
- *“as for budget expenditures, most of them are dedicated to operating expenses with a share of 77.8%” (SER, page 59).*

The Expert Team appreciates the transparency in providing financial information and the effort in financial analysis and calculation for all estimations. Nevertheless, ET is reserved in considering financial resources sufficient in reaching the objectives, as the strategic plan for the current period at the visit time is not yet institutionally approved. University of Prishtina has provided realistic estimation on an annual budget and a three-year budget, as well as financial policies which address its financial sustainability.

Investment projects foreseen for 2020-2022 reveal ambitious projects (SER, page 60) related to different tools, investments, construction of facilities etc for different faculties. The research financing plan at the University of Pristina level includes budget allocation (SER, page 64) for the period 2018/2019-2021/2022 referring to the following categories: human resources, infrastructure, international cooperation, connection to the economy and society, management; among these categories, international cooperation and connection to the economy and society as financial allocations have decreased substantially in 2019/2020 compared to 2018/2019 (SER, page 64).

According to the status of the university, the central administration is accountable for professional, administrative and technical matters related to Accounting and Finance, piece of information also published on the website (<https://www.uni-pr.edu/page.aspx?id=2,13>). This area is coordinated by the Secretary-General, which is subordinated to the rector and vice-rectors (SER, page 52). The institutional budget, does not allow budget changes above 5% without the consent of the Minister of Finance (SER, page 65) which makes many initiatives to be reconsidered in the next year/years.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant



ET recommendations:

1. *Increase the budget allocation for international cooperation;*
2. *Apply for external funds/special projects for renovation of buildings and infrastructure;*
3. *Create a local/institutional decentralized evidence of expenditures and incomes on cost units (faculties).*

2.4. Academic integrity, responsibility and public accountability

Academic integrity and ethical issues are specified and regulated in many institutional documents and considered and analysed by the activity of many structures:

- main documents considering ethical issues are (SER, page 66):
 - ✓ *“The Statute of University, 2012*
 - ✓ *Regulation no. 1/751, dated 19.7.2013 of the Code of Ethics,*
 - ✓ *Regulation no. 1/629, dated 14.7.2016, of the work of the Ethics Council*
 - ✓ *Regulation no. 857, dated 11.04.2017, on disciplinary measures and procedures against academic staff of the University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina”*
 - ✓ *Regulation no. 2/747, dated 1.10.2019, on the selection procedures regarding the appointment and re-appointment of academic staff at the University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina””*
- relevant structures that guarantee academic integrity are (SER, page 66):
 - ✓ *“Senate*
 - ✓ *Steering Council,*
 - ✓ *Ethics Council,*
 - ✓ *Disciplinary Committee, and*
 - ✓ *Complaints and Appeals Committee”*

The university has adopted in 2013 the Code of Ethics which “*is mandatory to all academic staff at the University of Prishtina*” (SER, page 66). “*Responsible for monitoring and implementing the Code of Ethics is the Ethics Council consisting of 5 members of the UP academic staff, proposed by the Rector and approved by the Senate. The mandate of the Ethics Council is 4 years*”. (SER, page 67). Nevertheless, the Code of Ethics is not revised on a regular basis and it does not generate a public report to reveal its results.

The institution is publishing clear and detailed information regarding its academic staff, its research and academic activities, the programmes it offers, the number of students enrolled, as

10



well as many statistics
(<https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiMDBkNWZyY2EtMGVhZC00YWMwLTk2MDYtNjk0MWZhMmE1MTRlIiwidCI6ImMwMzRjM2I0LWQwMmItNDM2MS04M2YwLTNiMWI5ZWE0MzcwYyIsImMiOjh9>).

In addition:

- a new regulation will be finalized: “*The Regulation on the Prevention and Protection from Sexual Harassment and Harassment at the University of Prishtina has been drafted and is in public discussion*” (SER, page 68);
- “*to ensure full transparency, the University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina" has published its doctoral dissertations on its official web site. The lack of anti-plagiarism software is causing prolonged verification procedures of dissertations and therefore the prolongation of procedures at the Doctoral Council*” (SER, page 67).

During the discussions at the site visit (online), the management of the institution agreed on the need of being better off in terms of the extension of the Code of Ethics, being honest and accepting that there is always place for improvement. In addition, teaching staff agreed that plagiarism is a huge problem to deal with and consider that penalizing students is a solution to it, in the absence of a software.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Revise the Code of Ethics at least at every 4 years (for example, at the beginning of a new mandate of the Ethics Council) and include new articles and formal mechanisms as necessary;*
2. *Create a regulation regarding the conflict of interest and outside professional activities (or integrate in the Code of Ethics);*
3. *Make public (available online) the results of the code of ethics application, self-evaluation reports and decisions of governing bodies;*
4. *Create a programme of academic writing for students, beginning from bachelor programmes;*
5. *Invest in an anti-plagiarism software for staff and students.*



2.5. Quality management

According to the SER, the quality assurance system at University of Prishtina is regulated by a set of Internal Regulations and the Regulation on Quality Assurance in line with the legal framework in Kosovo, such as the Law on Higher Education, the Administrative Instruction on the Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions in Kosovo and the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). The regulations describe processes, mechanisms, instruments, reporting, data collection, timeframes, responsibilities and units involved in the processes.

The main internal regulations are:

- *Regulation no. 4/132, dated 30.12.2016, for Quality Assurance;*
- *Regulation on the evaluation and utilization of evaluation results of academic staff;*
- *Regulation no. 2/111, dated 14.7.2017, on academic and student mobility at UP;*
- *Regulation on Institutional Accreditation Procedures and Study Programs; 7.02.2020;*
- *Regulation no. 1/775, dated 9.9. 2014 for doctoral studies;*
- *Regulation no. 2/283, dated 3.10.2013, for the publications of the University of Prishtina Hasan Prishtina;*
- *Regulation no. 360, dated 10.02.2020, on re-accreditation / Institutional accreditation procedures and study programs,*
- *Regulation no. 1/751, dated 19.7.2013 of the Code of Ethics (SER – page 71)*

Quality assurance processes and management at the overall institutional level are managed by the Office for Academic Development, which closely cooperates with Central Commission for Quality Assurance and quality assurance coordinators at the faculty level as well as with the Vice-Rector for Development and Quality. During the site visit, the ET identified that each faculty has also a vice-dean in charge with QA, but it is not very clear to ET how they share their responsibilities with quality assurance coordinators at faculty level.

The Commission for Quality Assurance includes members from academic staff, administrative staff and students and the mandate is four years.

The roles and responsibilities of the Office for Academic Development and Central Commission for Quality Assurance, and the relationship of these to other administrative and



planning units are clearly specified in the Regulation of Quality Assurance (Art. 7, Art.8, Art. 9).

The ET considers the financial and human resources allocated to QA are in line with strategical aims considering QA for this year, but looking at the long-term strategic plan of staff promotion and infrastructure expansion the current budget does not meet the needs of the UP..

UP uses regular survey with students and staff. The institution implements semester survey with students, considering teaching processes and students facilities, but the results of the surveys are not made publicly available. Obtained data is collected, stored and processed in the institutional database. Through the Quality Management System (electronic platform), the evaluation process has been significantly facilitated. Statistical analysis are realized for the annual Self-evaluation Report. After each internal periodical evaluation, Office for Academic Development prepares Development Plan and Annual Work Plan at institutional level and each faculty is responsible to design its own Action Plan in order to fulfil institutional requirements. The ET considers that the quality assurance has the ability to act as an early warning system in detecting irregularities and provide potential causes and solutions for them. The University organizes informal consultations with different stakeholders, but it is necessary to do this in a formal and regular way, applying periodical surveys. During the visit, students confirmed to ET that they noticed changes following the observations made. The teaching staff appreciated also the openness of the management to them proposals for improvement or implementation of the new teaching or research directions.

Discussions between the evaluation team and the representatives of the management have shown that everyone knows his responsibilities in the field of quality assurance and they are aware that this is an ongoing process to which everyone must contribute. It is not the same situation with the teaching staff or students who are not very familiar with the processes in place of internal quality assurance system. Even if students are members in different organizational structures of the University, they are not engaged in the design and implementation of quality assurance processes, mechanisms and instruments. The institution should increase its efforts to promote the development of quality culture as a common understanding of quality values, for which every individual of the institution is responsible, a set of shared ideas, beliefs and values about quality united when everyone inside the academic community is sincerely engaged and motivated.

The QA assurance system and processes are regularly evaluated by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency and updated according with KAA requirements



Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Publish the results of the satisfaction surveys so that to increase the transparency and trust in these instruments, which can support the institution in safeguarding its response rates;*
2. *Ensure that the QA system and the data collection instruments cover the whole range of institutional activities (graduates and employers);*
3. *Increase the internal commitment for the constant quality improvement and develop the quality culture across the institution Maybe to organize workshops, round tables or other kind of activities which could involve people from the entire academic community.*

2.6. Learning and teaching

The institution has drafted and adopted policies and procedures applicable to all academic programs; the institution monitors the extent to which those policies and procedures are effectively implemented. Main document applied in the teaching and learning processes (SER, page 82) are:

- *“UP Statute*
- *Regulation on Bachelor Studies*
- *Regulation on Master Studies*
- *Regulation on Doctoral Studies*
- *Regulation on Disciplinary Procedure*
- *Code of Ethics of Academic Staff*
- *Regulation on Publications*
- *Administrative Instruction no. 20/2012 Comparability and Equivalence of Diplomas and Study Programs before the Bologna System and of the Bologna System*
- *Administrative Instruction no. 2019 Application of Students’ Payment in Public Universities*
- *Regulation no. 06/2011 on the Civil Servants Leave”*



All the programmes meet high standards of learning and teaching through initial approvals, regular changes and monitoring of performance. Some other changes have taken place to ensure that all programs meet required performance standards:

- *“the University of Prishtina has reduced the number of study programs over the last three years by fusing similar programs and closing those programs that are not guaranteed employment in the labour market”* (SER, page 83);
- *“the rules for the organization of exams are set out in the Statute of the University as well as the regulations on Bachelor and Master studies, and Doctoral studies, where applicable”*. (SER, page 84);
- *“the University of Prishtina has developed regulations and procedures for the writing of diploma theses. The Statute of the University of Prishtina clearly defines the process of drafting the diploma”* (SER, page 86);
- *“the university implements contemporary student-centred teaching methods and uses spaces and laboratories to acquire practical skills”*. (SER, page 87).

Development of the curricula is in the attention of the institution. The development of a study programme is a continuous process; it includes: evaluation of the existing programme; compilation of an improved program/ respectively a new programme; implementation of a new programme; evaluation of the revised programme. (<https://www.uni-pr.edu/page.aspx?id=2,26>). In addition, the university has adopted in 2018 a *“Short guide for reviewing and revising syllabi”* which is public document (<https://www.uni-pr.edu/desk/inc/media/02BA1AB5-2325-4800-9BD5-1FBF4EBA253F.pdf>); the syllabus elaboration becomes formal and regulate the elements to contain: course description, goals, learning outcomes, student workload, teaching methodology etc. a lot of attention is given to practical work of students; in 2019, 1288 students and graduates were offered internship in different institutions (SER, page 192).

The programmes listed in the Annex 1 of SER includes all programmes run at all the faculties. Many of them have the same title at bachelor level and graduate level which creates a lot of confusion among potential students in terms of unclear differences in terms of content and competences; some examples: Sociology is for both BA and MA (SER, page 131), Physics for both Bsc and Msc, Geography for both Bsc and Msc, (SER, page 132), Management and informatics for both Bsc and Msc (SER, page 135) etc. In addition, students appreciate a lot



the quality of teaching, but the graduates still admit that there is a lack of soft skills that they would have liked to have more developed before entering the labour market.

The discussions during the site visit (online) revealed the concept of active learning that professors use and adopt in order to ensure students are motivated to learn; teaching strategies are suitable for different kinds of learning outcomes and participate in activities to improve their teaching effectiveness: professors invite lecturers from industry, use case studies in teaching and develop the virtual learning. They confirm they revise the syllabi even every semester.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Involve students and partners in the curriculum design/changes in a formal way;*
2. *Reconsider the title of some master programmes different than those for bachelor degree (example: not Sociology, but Advanced Sociology; not Physics, but Advances Physics;*
3. *Increase the soft skills competences for students not only by extracurricular activities (which are clearly provided), but within regular and curricular activities.*

2.7. Research

University of Prishtina is a main research higher education institution in Kosovo, and as such has been focused on research accordingly to the context in which functions. It has to be acknowledged that the national context is of limited capacity, in particular considering the available funds, but also regarding the infrastructure. The fact that many staff members were educated at foreign institutions and that they kept collaborative relationship with their alma mater institutions, does help to be more research active and productive. It has been also noticed that significant number of academic staff has a good command of English (and probably some other world languages) which certainly helps to be well connected and to participate in research activities internationally. It has been also evidenced that the participation in research projects has been increased from the last evaluation period, which is a good sign of institutional developments. Also, some new investments are done for improving the equipment and infrastructure in general.



However, going back to the new Strategy and the Activity plan, research is one of the priorities, but with some kind of mixed objectives, unbalanced in terms who is the target stakeholder, still modest in ambitions, with no clear participation of different stakeholders and their roles in doing research and contributing to research productivity. In majority of documents, when talking about academic staff, the main synonym is ‘teaching’ staff, which automatically actually tells us about the main perception of the academic staff. In the section on university finances, in overall budget distribution it is not clear how much money is allocated to research. There is actually no entry for research money. When academic staff is asked did they receive and how much money for research, it is hard to provide an answer. The answer is mainly related to money for travelling, participating in seminars, conferences, without having a clear notion of money, a grant to do research. There is no clear division between different category of projects, not sufficient awareness and distinction between research projects, professional projects, different programmes, and finally relevance of competitive projects.

The University managed to have a significant increase of research papers, especially in the last 5 years, and, as stated, all of those stated were published in international journals. In order to make a next step in supporting research activity and to have clear indicators for strategy and the action planning, it would be important to have indicators what is a yearly production of papers per staff member as well as to try to make categories of international papers, according to their international recognition. When it comes to close following of research quality, ‘international’ is becoming too broad and could easily mask a quality.

ET has observed that there is also need to better prepare research office which will have professional staff that will be able to give a full support to researchers, in particular related to international projects, EU projects. This would not be efficient and possible to be done on a faculty level, but university level. Such office is very demanding in terms of skills and competencies and it could contribute significantly to the overall success of researchers, in particular in submitting proposals.

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Research should take more space and to be better defined in all institutional documents;*



2. *Institutional allocation of money for research need to be transparently defined and communicated with academic staff;*
3. *An adequate administrative support need to be developed and to provide a continuous support to researchers on the institutional level;*
4. *New indicators for research activities and research productivity need to be defined for the institution (regardless the minimum criteria defined on a national level);*
5. *Innovation and transfer technology, as one of the research impacts, need to get more in the focus of the University.*

2.8. Staff, employment processes and professional development

The institution uses a set of policies and regulations that are available to all teaching and administrative staff. It includes rights and responsibilities, recruitment processes, supervision, performance evaluation, promotion, support processes, and professional development:

- Academic staff at institutional level and at different faculties – appointment, re-appointment and advancement;
- Part-time staff regulations;
- Administrative staff regulations.

The recruitment processes ensure that staff have the specific areas of expertise, qualification and experience for the positions they occupy. The recruitment processes ensure equitable treatment of all applicants. Several annexes prove the institutional preoccupation in this matter, of being transparent and equal. The recruitment process is based on competition: *“the UP, based on the increased demand for academic staff and the projection of needs for the coming years, has announced the competition for admission of academic staff”*. (SER, page 98).

Professional development is well considered at institutional level, more for academic staff and less for administrative staff:

- *“the UP also organizes regular training on teaching excellence for the academic staff, where, upon each successful completion of the course, the academic staff is provided with a teaching certificate. This special course also serves the process of promoting academic staff. Over 500 trainings were delivered by the Centre for Teaching Excellence at the University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina””* (SER, page 98);



- *“the university has been selected as a model for cluster development and as a model for the development of other universities in Kosovo, the focus is to strengthen the Lifelong Learning Centre”* (SER, page 98);
- *“the academic unit is obligated to provide the newly recruited teaching staff with an orientation about the institution, the student development programs and strategies, including the staff list by creating the email address in the ESMS electronic system”* (SER, page 98);
- *“the University also encourages continuous engagement in scientific activities through its offices”* (SER, page 98).

ET appreciates the effort of the institution in diminishing the ratio of students per full time staff member and considers it adequate for the programs offered: *“In the academic year 2019/20, the staff/student ratio was 1/29. While monitoring the workload of staff closely through, the quality office, the management of the relevant academic unit, and the central management in the rectorate”* (SER, page 129).

Staff employed in the institution hold relevant qualifications so that they are able to effectively manage educational, scientific, research, creative activities and administrative processes. ET appreciates the effort of the members of the Centre for Career Development where a lot of activities have been carried out since 2015: facebook activity and mainly, a new platform: “Platform “e-Carrier””, questionnaires on students’ needs etc. (SER, page 107).

Academic staff evaluation is done through especially by students at least every year. The results of the evaluation are not made publicly available. In addition, a weakness is considered the fact that for promotion of academic staff, the feedback the students provide for teaching is not considered: *“The evaluations of the academic staff by students are not provided in the procedures of academic staff advancement”*. (SER, page 109); they also suggested that the recruitment should consider the lecturing skills. Teaching loads are equitable across the institution; there is a maximum number of theses to coordinate which does not exceed 10 theses (revealed during the online site visit).

Compliance level: Substantially compliant



ET recommendations:

1. *Increase students' motivation to provide feedback by publishing a report on the teaching evaluation they have contributed for, at least as a statistical report and list of measures that were taken for improvement;*
2. *Integrate the feedback of students into the academic staff promotion procedure;*
3. *Consider in the regulation for academic staff recruitment the lecturing skills;*
4. *Create a development plan for administrative staff.*

2.9. Student administration and support services

Admission to the study programmes offered by the University of Prishtina is done according to the Statute of the University and specific requirements of the faculties. The admission process is done according to the law, with an emphasis on the fact that only the candidate's academic competences matter, while absolutely no discriminatory criterion is allowed. The conditions for the students' admission, transfer, mobility and progress, as well as the requirements for graduation are specified in the study contracts, are made public, and the results of these procedures are monitored, at all levels of institution.

UP does not only post information about the admission on the website, it has also numerous promotion campaigns of the study programmes among the potential candidates: brochures, information days for potential students etc. At the beginning of the academic year, the University organizes orientation days for newly enrolled students of the University. The evaluation team's discussions with the students highlighted that the student's representative of the Student Parliament are also active at the beginning of the academic year, providing support to new students.

Students are receiving scholarships, based on professional performances. Also, the University states that it supports students who come from unfavourable environments (students whose families are in social assistance, students of war invalids families, students who have remained without a parent as a result of the last war, war veteran students or their children's etc.) by totally waiving their tuition fees. Also, according with them performance, students could benefit of the Erasmus + Mobility Grant. The number of external mobilities has increased in recent years, but students present at the meeting with the evaluation team emphasized that they would like the number to increase even more

According to the information provided, there are processes in place to collect and analyse data referring to the student progression and drop-out rates. The institution collects also data on

20



students' satisfaction with their programmes, the learning resources, and administration and support services. There is a coherent usage of the data to support decision making and also for quality assurance purposes.

All information required for all phases of the student life cycle are publicly available on the website or on intranet, but they are not centralized in the form of a student handbook.

Even if the first Article of the Code of Ethics mentions "The Code of Ethics presents a system of values; it aims to establish rules of conduct for **the academic staff** and is mandatory to be applied at the University of Prishtina", it has clearly requirements dedicated to students, teaching staff and administrative staff. The application of the code is ensured by a series of procedures, among which the appeals procedure. The appeals procedure is intended to protect the person and student from unfair decisions. The regulations make clear the grounds on which academic appeals may be based. Students presented at the meeting confirmed that the procedure is public available and known by students.

There is no anti-plagiarism software, but University of Prishtina plans to acquire such software. Until then, there are no procedures in place to guarantee the originality of the submitted work. The institution is relying that it will be the teachers themselves that can identify plagiarism in students' work, projects and thesis. As confirmed during the meeting with teaching staff, they did not implement a clear plagiarism prevention strategy in their teaching processes.

University of Prishtina has a Career Development Office that deals with career planning and employment counselling. The main responsibilities of the office are student's career orientation, job counselling and mediation, and internships for University students. "**The "e-Career" Platform** is the official platform of the Career Development Centre for professional orientation, career education and counselling for students and graduates of the University of Prishtina launched in **October 2017** with 84490 users, 92569 in 2018, and 108079 in 2019" (SER – page 114)

UP does not provide specialized psychological counselling, but discussions with students identified that UP, through the study programme Psychology, offers psychological services, if someone need it. During this difficult period of pandemic, teachers, students and graduates of the Psychology programme organized a Call Centre where anyone can call for psychological support.

During the discussion with students, ET identified various extracurricular activities involving students, most of them refer to trainings and other activities that follow the development of transversal competencies.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant



ET recommendations:

- 1. Increase the number of international mobilities of students.*
- 2. Ensure a student handbook is made widely available within the institution, covering all information relating to admission, progression, recognition and certification, regulations, the rights and responsibilities of students, actions to be taken for breaches of discipline, responsibilities of relevant officers and committees, and penalties that may be imposed.*
- 3. Regulate alternative mechanisms to ensure the originality of the work submitted by students as prevention activities, dedicated workshops, courses etc.*

2.10. Learning resources and facilities

First of all, ET should mention the fact that regarding the learning resources and facilities, the evaluation was made on the basis of the information received from the institution, including a 20 minutes presentation movie, and those declared by the participants in the meetings during the online site visit.

The University of Prishtina is located in three different campuses which provide a safe environment for students and academic and administrative staff.

Based on the discussions taking place during the online site visit and the movie presented by UP, the facilities respond to the needs of education and research in accordance with the areas where the educational process takes place. In the classrooms or laboratories of the University, there are modern equipment used in the teaching, learning or research processes. Students mentioned that they would like more recreational spaces and meeting and group working places. Also, students pointed out several times during the discussion that there are not facilities and learning resources for students and staff with physical disabilities or other special needs.

Financing of the University of Prishtina is done on the basis of the financial plan from the Kosovo budget funds. In recent years the budget has increased, assuring adequate financial resources for acquisitions, cataloguing, equipment, and for services and system development, but in line with the UP's strategy for the next years, UP will need more support from the Kosovo budget. Complete inventories are maintained of equipment owned or controlled by the institution including equipment assigned to individual staff.

UP provides adequate and easily accessible support services through Central University Library as well as Academic Unit Libraries. In the central unit as well as in the academic units,

22



is allowed free access to electronic books, bibliographic references, bibliometric information scientific databases. The libraries offer inspiring learning environments, extensive print and electronic collections and helpful staff to support students and teachers.

There are quality assurance processes conducted regularly to collect feedback from students and staff about the adequacy and quality of facilities and resources. Adequate computer equipment is available and accessible for teaching, staff and students throughout the institution, additional to necessary softs specific for the study fields. A major part of the management, administrative and academic activities of the UP is digitized. Different structures as Information Technology Service provide guidance to academic, administrative and management staff or to student on ways of using new platforms or new softs.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Ensure appropriate provision for learning resources is made for students and staff with learning disabilities or difficulties;*
2. *Ensure more recreational spaces for students.*

2.11. Institutional cooperation

The institutional internationalization strategy of UP is part of the Institutional Strategic Plan and includes several objectives in the area of internationalization and institutional cooperation:

- (a) Implement study programs/levels in English with international partners;*
- (b) Enhance and functionalize global partnerships;*
- (c) Increase the number of applications for mobility and scholarships (Office for International Cooperation);*
- (d) Support staff for joint projects to receive international funding;*
- (e) Increase the efficiency of verification of transcripts and documents (at the request of international partners);*
- (f) Electronic database for the management of international projects and donations;*
- (g) Increase cooperation with international non-university public or private corporations.*

The institution has created and assigned this portfolio to the Vice-Rector for International Affairs that is directly mandated and accountable for the initiatives and results in this area. The



administrative units which support the vice-rector are the Office for International Cooperation and the Career Development Centre.

University of Prishtina is member in several international associations: University Association (EUA), Danube Rectors Conference (DRC), L'Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF), Eurasian Universities Union (EURAS), IUC (Inter University Center Dubrovnik). From 2016 until the end of 2019, 169 international cooperation agreements have been signed.

Based on the discussions taking place during the site visit, staff and students are encouraged and supported to develop collaborative arrangements with the international community. UP has drafted the Regulation of Student Academic Mobility at the University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina" which "encourages and promotes academic and staff mobility and regulates the mobility issue." (SER – page 116). Engagement in international cooperation and contributions to the community are not included in promotion criteria and staff performance review.

UP was involved as a leader or as a partner, in several international projects, in different area and the institution continues to take part in such kind of projects. Various teams of researchers (staff and students) were involved in projects as:

- The Albanian Alps / Mountains as a potential UNESCO Biosphere Reserve for transboundary ecosystem management and conflict prevention 'Funded by German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), 2019.
- Environmental Health Studies, Funded by: Austrian Development Cooperation, HERAS Program. Project partners: University of Salzburg and University of Pristina. Implementation period: 2017-2019.
- The genus *Achillea*: morpho-anatomical, phytochemical and molecular plant characteristics - a case study for conservation of natural resources, funded by: HERAS - Higher Education, Research and Applied Science (Kosovo) (Austrian Development Agency). Implementation period: 2018-19.
- The Austrian ALLED-2 Cluster project / Hub - development project to serve industry and vocational schools in the Republic of Kosovo,
- THREE BRIDGE BRIDGE" - exchange of students in artistic performances between three Universities: Prishtina, Tirana and Tetovo.
- PIRAP SEE Platform for the Implementation of Risk Assessment of Pesticides in South-Eastern Europe, funded by BMBF-Germany, for the preparation of the project within the framework of HORIZON 2020 European Community funded programs.



– Etc.

The institution organizes events of international visibility and outreach (conferences, summer schools, etc.) identified by ET on the website of institution, one of the events with the longest tradition being the Pristina International Summer University (PISU), organized since 2001.

UP is developing good relations with local business enterprises, and the local community in general. This has led to mutually beneficial cooperation and collaboration in a variety of regional initiatives. The internship programmes not only provide students with experience and knowledge of the realities of work in the “real” world, but it often leads to getting a permanent job after graduation. In this context it was suggested during discussions with staff and external stakeholders that student practical projects and internships should come earlier in the curriculum, and that the internship programme should be more expanded.

During the interviews, there was a positive feedback to UP provided by employers and other external stakeholders as regards the graduates of the university, but also some recommendations, as to pay more attention into developing student’s soft skills or to introduce a course of Academic writing for all study programmes. The collaboration includes not only internships for students, partnerships for applied research, continuing education and human capital development, but also includes consultancies, involvement in institutional development strategies etc.

The University has also established the Alumni Association. The mission of the Alumni is “*to contribute to the development and improvement of the quality of the University and to help and serve University students to integrate in the labor market as easily as possible*” (SER – page 105), but the contact with alumni is not organized in a regular basis.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Focus on diversified opportunities of international mobilities (study stay but also internship stays, both for students, and staff);*
2. *Indicate the participation in the international projects and the contributions in the community as one of the performance evaluation criteria for staff;*
3. *Continue the efforts to keep the contact with alumni in a regular way, using regular surveys.*



3. Overall evaluation and judgments of the ET

According to the KAA Accreditation manual, in order to be granted a positive decision for program re/accreditation, every education provider has to demonstrate at least a **substantial compliance** level in the overall judgment. Therefore, failure in meeting at least an overall substantial compliance level entails delaying, withdrawing, suspending or denying accreditation.

University of Prishtina demonstrated **an overall substantial compliance**, with only one partial compliant area of evaluation. According to the Manual requirements, the Expert Team recommends **to reaccredit the University of Prishtina** for the period of **5 years**.

Expert Team

Chair

	Melita Kovacevic	May 22, 2020
_____ (Signature)	_____ (Print Name)	_____ (Date)

Member

	Margareta Platis	May 22, 2020
_____ (Signature)	_____ (Print Name)	_____ (Date)

Member

	Oana Sarbu	May 22, 2020
_____ (Signature)	_____ (Print Name)	_____ (Date)