UNIVERSITY "HAXHI ZEKA" PEJË

Master of science in Business Informatics

ACCREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

03 May 2021, Peja

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1.1. Context

Date of site visit: 18 March 2021

Expert Team (ET) members:

- *Dr. Nana Dikhaminija*

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

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

Sources of information for the Report:

- *Self-evaluation report "MASTER IN BUSINESS INFORMATICS ", 2020*
- *KAA Accreditation Manual 11.07.2018*
- *Syllabi*
- *Staff CVs (Full time, part time)*
- *Annexes:*
    1. *Statute of the University*
    2. *Strategic Plan of University "Haxhi Zeka" in Peja 2020 – 2024*
    3. *Research Strategy 2020-2024_ Broshur*
    4. *Code of Ethics_Teachers&Students*
    5. *Draft_Rules of procedure of the ethics council of the UNHZ*
    6. *Compatibility-UHZ_UnivOfLjubljana-FELU*
    7. *Compatibility-UHZ_UnivOfMannheim*
    8. *Compatibility-UHZ_UnivOfUtrecht-BusinessInformatics*
    9. *Regulation on Quality Assurance and Quality Assessment at the University "Haxhi Zeka"*
    10. *Strategy for QA 2020-2024*
    11. *Quality Assurance Guide 30.04.2020*
    12. *Evaluation Questionnaire Student – Teacher*

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13. *Evaluation Questionnaire Student - Teacher OnlineTeaching*
14. *Evaluation Questionnaire Student – Administration*
15. *Evaluation Questionnaire Student – Administration (Online Teaching)*
16. *Evaluation Questionnaire Academic Staff Self-Assessment*
17. *Evaluation Questionniare Dean- Teacher*
18. *Evaluation Questionniare Employer*
19. *Evaluation Questionnaire Graduates – University*
20. *Report from the Qualty Evaluation 2020*
21. *Academic Staff Handbook*
22. *Academic Development Plan 2020*
23. *Manual of Planning and Performance of Academic Staff*
24. *Law No.03 L-212 Law on Labour*
25. *Regulation for Postgraduate Studies*
26. *Performance indicators for the study program_Regulation_English*
27. *Student Mobility-Internship Agrements*
28. *Summary of several agreements of UHZ with various Institutions of interest to studentsand staff*
29. *Regulation for student parliament work at Haxhi Zeka 2018*
30. *Regulation on scholarship allocation at Haxhi Zeka University 2018*
31. *Regulatory for establishment and principles of functionin of institutes at UHZ 2017*
32. *ResearchStrategy 2019-2024*
33. *Annual plan of the scientific activites-2020*
34. *Research_Eurostat-Recognition*
35. *List of Research Publications Academic Staff (BF) 2017,2018,2019*

Requested documents:

- Minutes of meeting of Industrial Board with the discussion related to the program;
- Minutes of university committees approving the program;
- Example of the entrance exam for this program from the previous years;
- the curriculum map with the prerequisites for all courses.

Received documents:

- Minutes of meeting of Industrial Board with the discussion related to the program;
- Minutes of university committees approving the program;

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Criteria used for program evaluation:

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

1.2. Site visit schedule

Expert Team

- Dr. Nana Dikhaminija

Coordinators of KAA

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

Site Visit Program

18th of March

09.00 – 09.40   Meeting with the management of the institution *(no slide presentation is allowed, the meeting is intended as a free discussion, meeting with Dean, Vice dean)*

09.45 – 10:50   Meeting with the heads of the study programme

10:55 – 11:35   Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff

11:35 – 12:30   Lunch break

12:30 – 13:20   Meeting with the teaching staff

13:25 – 13.55   Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders

14:00 – 14.10   Internal meeting – Expert Team and KAA

14:10 – 14.20   Closing meeting with the management of the institution

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

University "Haxhi Zeka" (UHZ) was formally established in 2011 as a result of transforming the academic unit of the University of Prishtina to an independent university. It should be mentioned that UHZ also has students from the Bosniak community, offering certain educational programs in Bosnian language. The University "Haxhi Zeka" in Peja (UHZ) is a public higher education institution in Kosovo that currently offers 13 bachelor and master studies in the areas of Business, Management inTourism, Hotel and Environment, Law, Agribusiness and the Arts to 11,000 students. The educational programs are organized according to the Bologna system, three-year with 180 ECTS, respectively 4-year with 240 ECTS at the Bachelor level, while two-year with 120 ECTS, respectively 1-year with 60 ETCS.

Mission of the University is "to continue its positive academic and artistic tradition, create environment and transformative academic experiences in order to achieve the full potential of students, implements advanced scientific standards and helps the economic development of Peja region and the country in general". As stated in SER, the Haxhi Zeka University puts its efforts to be a modern and respected university, offering quality teaching, research and artistic creativity, act as a reliable partner for businesses, the community and local and international higher education institutions, as a promoter of regional development and a supporter of sustainable development of Kosovar society in general.

As part of this evaluation process, university has applied for accreditation of "Business Informatics" master program. The program is offered by the Faculty of Business, which has long academic experience: This faculty was developed based on the institution "Higher School of Economics" in Peja, that was established in 1960. From 1970, the Higher School of Economics - Commerce merged and became an academic unit of the newly established University of Prishtina (founded in 1970). In 2002 the "Higher School of Economics - Commerce" was reformed based on the provisions of the Bologna Declaration and was renamed the "University School of Business", and from the academic year 2004/2005 this school was further developed and renamed "Faculty of Business", as an academic and scientific unit of the Public University of Prishtina. In 2012, the Faculty of Business in Peja became the basis for the development of the newly established University "Haxhi Zeka" in Peja, and became an academic and scientific unit of the University.

During the cite visit, the management of the faculty declared that the need of this program emerged due to accumulated experience of the faculty and academic personnel in business and informatics directions, as well as based to close collaborations with the local business community. The interviews with the employers and members of the Industrial Board confirmed this.

The "Business Informatics" program in the Master cycle is designed with account of the similar local and international programs, such as: University of Ljubljana, University of Utrecht, University of Mannheim.

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2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

The program is developed by Faculty of Business and the need for adding such program was conditioned by several reasons:

- the faculty has the similar bachelor program "Bachelor of Science in Applied Business Informatics";
- the faculty and academic personnel had sufficient experience in ICT for business;
- the business partners of the faculty expressed interest in graduates of such program that was also confirmed by the job market analysis of Kosovo.

The mission of the Master of Science in Business Informatics program is "to continue to develop a research opportunity for lecturers, students and graduates in order to contribute to the development of Peja and the country by creating a computerized environment and a transformative academic business program". Also, SER mentions that mission of the program is "to contribute to the preparation of competitive students for the labor market, as well as to become the future leader in the field of Business Informatics that will serve the overall development of society." According to SER, "the Business Informatics program produces and trains students who, through research-based studies, will be willing to understand how businesses operate in digital working conditions, how they are organized, and how informatics is used in business. Students will be trained in solving business problems with computer tools." While the program mission in fully in line with the mission of the university "Haxhi Zeka", it is very general and do not contain program specifics. In addition, objective of the program is not clearly defined in SER, however program learning outcomes are given in details. It will be beneficial for the program to clearly define its mission and objectives using the program learning outcomes.

To design the program, the program development team started working in 2017 and researched more than 20 different universities with the similar programs, as well as their direct partners. The main programs used for comparison were: University of Ljubljana (www.uni-lj.si/eng), University of Utrecht (https://www.uu.nl/masters/en/business-informatics/courses), University of Mannheim (https://www.uni-mannheim.de/en/academics/programs/masters-program-in-business-informatics/#c36300).

The program contains courses that cover the functional areas of business and management and Applied Informatics. Graduates of the program can pursue further research studies, but also can manage information systems in various organizations and companies. Main career paths of the graduates are envisioned as:

- **ICT researcher** - Prepares for a career as a future scientist and focuses on researching innovations in information science applied to business.
- **ICT Analyst** - Prepares for a career as a consultant providing ICT-related business advice or services, or ICT-related business matters.
- **Entrepreneur in ICT** - Prepares for a career as an independent entrepreneur developing ICT products applied in business.

The learning outcomes of the program were developed based on the requirements of the Regulation of Master studies – UHZ in line with the requirements of the Kosovo curricular framework which is harmonized with the standards and procedures of the European Higher Education Area. The study program is fully compatible with the framework of the European Area of Higher Education qualifications. The learning outcomes were mainly designed by the program development team with the help of the industrial board that was confirmed during interviews with the business representatives. However, minutes of the meetings of industrial board, as well as meetings of faculty is very general and give only information about decision to develop the program, not the details of the discussion. The learning outcomes are defined as the competencies that the graduates of the program will gain:

- A systematic understanding of knowledge, including where appropriate, relevant knowledge outside the field of informatics, business and management;
- Develops knowledge and critical understanding of key concepts, methodologies, current technological advances, theoretical approaches and assumptions in Informatics and business, as well as an interdisciplinary perspective in the field of Informatics applied in different business segments;
- Will have the highest level of research and implementation competencies of experts in the field of business informatics;
- Will be able to create a field of specialization of the Master in Business Informatics, which corresponds more closely to his personal, professional and employment ambitions;
- Will have theoretical and practical knowledge of business transformation and digitalization, development of new business models and advanced use of information technology in business operations;
- Will acquire the necessary knowledge in the fields of development and introduction of information systems;
- Will know how to strategically plan digital business, informatics in an organization, information infrastructure and architecture as well as integration systems;
- Will know how to model and improve business processes, design solutions, introduce software solutions, ensure their quality and review them;
- Will know how to use information tools in developing software solutions or providing information services;
- With the theoretical and practical experience gained, he/she will be able to lead a department for informatics, business processes or digital business;

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- Will acquire knowledge about the use of information technology and content knowledge e.g. business process management, accounting and finance, marketing, logistics and methodological knowledge required;
- Develops skills to: collect, review, evaluate and interprete the information;
- Develops detailed knowledge and research experience in a field of business informatics discipline;

- Develops analytical skills and critical thinking within and outside the business informatics discipline; and
- Gains the ability to pursue academic or research studies in the field of business informatics at a higher level of education.

The defined learning outcomes are very detailed and sometimes overlap. For proper performance indicators and program compliance check it is advised to revise the learning outcomes and create the shorter list of distinct outcomes with no overlap.

The educational program is designed in the way that combines research and theoretical knowledge areas, as well as practical skills. Practical skill development is integrated in most subjects. In general, the program uses modular system and are based mainly on narrow subjects of specialization within the relevant department. The teaching methods cover lectures, seminars, theoretical exercises, practical and field work, professional and scientific visits, discussions, professional consultations and independent works of students.

To improve the programs at the faculty, various sets of data are collected and analyzed that is given in detail in SER and confirmed during the interviews with the management, quality assurance staff and students. The offered program is new, so no data was gathered yet, but the procedures for program improvement in general cover the following reports that is sent by Dean to the senior management at the end of each semester:

- Data on student attendance at lectures and exercises
- Data on the progress of the learning process
- Data on practical work and other student exercises
- Data on the progress of exams and other assessments
- The results of the evaluation of students or their success in the exam period
- Data on diplomas and the number of graduates
- Data on additional activities organized by the academic unit
- Data on scientific projects, participation in conferences and papers published by academic staff

Formal policies, guidelines and regulations are defined by Strategic Plan of the University, Research Strategy, Regulation of Quality Assurance, Academic Staff Handbook and a few other regulations related to academic process.

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All these policies, regulations and guidelines are public, presented on the Website and accessible for all interested parties. All academic staff is required to give additional consultations to the students if necessary related to the courses. Academic staff and students are required to adhere to the institution's Code of Ethics. Interviews with the academic staff and students confirm that they know well Code of Ethics and procedures to resolve the violations of Code of Ethics.

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Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 1.1. The study program mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution.	x	
Standard 1.2. Relevant academic and professional advice is considered when defining the intended learning outcomes which are consistent with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.	x	
Standard 1.3. The study program has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept.		x
Standard 1.4. There are formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues. These are made publicly available to all staff and students.	x	
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. *Clearly define mission and objectives of the program;*
2. *Keep minutes of meetings of faculty units and industrial board related to the program development;*

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2.2. Quality management

The Faculty of Business has the Quality Office that is part of the Central Quality Office of UHZ. UHZ Statute emphasizes that every staff at the academic units of the university and all the services offered by the university are subject of the evaluation. The quality management process is organized according to Regulation on Quality Assurance and Evaluation of UHZ that was updated in 2019 after the university evaluation process. This Regulation aims to regulate the quality assurance and evaluation system, mechanisms, processes, instruments, timelines and all other activities undertaken by university units. The regulation goals are:

- To make quality assurance processes regular;
- To use the results of the quality assurance processes for decision-making and strategic planning of the academic units of the university;
- To make every academic and administrative staff understand their responsibility in quality assurance processes;
- To actively involve all the stakeholders in quality assurance processes, especially academic staff, students, industry and other relevant actors;
- To increase the transparency and credibility of quality assurance processes.

Office of quality and evaluation of the Faculty of Business is headed by a **quality and evaluation coordinator** and two quality officers (one for the Bosnian courses). According to SER, the regular activities of the Quality Assurance Office cover:

- Monitoring of syllabi and teaching materials by the academic staff;
- Checking the passing percentage and final exam reports;
- Support of ad hoc commissions for the evaluation of existing programs;
- Supporting syllabus review processes and study programs;
- Organizing student evaluations for academic staff;
- Organizing evaluations with students for administrative services;
- Preparation for the external evaluation process at the institutional level or study programs;
- Coordinating the implementation of recommendations given by external evaluators.

As this program is new, there are no surveys related to it. However, the university provided the surveys for other existing programs as an example. The university also provided the minutes of Industrial Board and the Faculty related to the program development process, however it does not describe the process or required changes. In the same time employers and members of the Industrial Board described during the interview their involvement in the program development and the subjects they offered to add to the program.

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According to the Regulation on quality assurance and evaluation, article 6, the review of programs is done for a 3-5 year cycle. However, as this program is new and the field of Business Informatics is developing fast, it is advised to review the program at least in 2 years.

Interviews confirm that staff of the Faculty of Business participate is evaluated by several components: student surveys, self-assessment and assessment by dean. Teaching and research activities of academic staff is accessed and career development depends on these assessments. In the same there are measures to help the academic staff in case some problems are revealed during the assessment. To develop the quality of academic staff, several workshops are offered related to teaching methodologies, development of syllabus, publishing research papers. Some professors participate in exchange programs through Erasmus+.

The quality office develops reports on the basis of graduate surveys, employment data, employer feedback and graduate follow-up. This is used to check the achievement of the program benchmarks. These reports are also shared with the program heads for continuous development of the program.

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	
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 of these evaluations are made publicly available.	x	

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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: Fully Compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *The University should keep a track of all suggestions by the stakelholders, especially by the employers and students, and corresponding changes in the program. Students should be involved more actively in the program improvement, not only based on the surveys.*
2. *Quality assurance part of SER has a lot of overlapping descriptions. For better keeping the track of the program development and improvement, it is advised to describe one aspect clearly only once.*

2.3. Academic staff

SER of the study program gives a detailed table of academic staff that contains information on their scientific degree, position, teaching load, exam and consultation hours, administrative activities and overview of research activites. The table shows that three full professors, four associate professors, two assistant professors and tvelwe teaching assistants are involved full-time in the educational program. In addition, one full professor, three associate professors and one assistant professor are teaching part-time in the program. The CVs and inverviews with the academic staff proves that they have good qualification for teaching the corresponding cources. Their contracts comply with the requirements of the university regulations.

According to Article 166 of the Statute of University "Haxhi Zeka", the staff in regular employment cannot have another full-time employment contract in any of the Higher Education Institutions. Also, full-time staff who may be engaged, elected or appointed to another public institution do not have the right to be elected to governing bodies, but have the right to be elected. This was also confirmed by the interviews with the academic staff.

80% of the academic staff teaching in the program are full-time employees. 17 of them have doctoral degrees and others are graduating PhD students.

Each academic staff is evaluated yearly by three components: self-assessment, student surveys and assessment by dean. These components are translated into the number value by the priority: Dean Assessment - 50%, Self-assessment - 30%, Student surveys - 20%. The results are used for their career development. In additon, if some problems are revealed during the evaluations, the faculty has special methods to solve them, including discussion of the problem, oral warning, written warning and even suspension.

Substantial part of the academic staff participates in exchange programs with international universities and SER gives the overview of this participation during the last 4 years. In addition, faculty conducts the surveys of the professors to define what trainings they need. The trainings mainly are offered by international projects such as Erasmus+, related to syllabbus development, writing a research paper and teaching methodologies. When the university had to move online due to pandemics, special training modules were developed and offered to the academic staff on using SEMS (learning management system of UHZ).

Academic staff is encouraged to do research by special prizes for publishing in the scientific journals recognized by Scopus and Web of Science. Also, if the academic staff is presenting at the international conference, their travel expences are covered by the university. Academic staff is also actively involved in thelocal community projects on volunteer basis.

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At the beginning of each academic year each teacher should review his / her syllabus and update it if the data is outdated. Then, after receiving the answer from the student evaluation, 10% of the lower grades are discussed by the course teachers and the program committee to find the improvements of the program. If the academic staff has an opportunity to work on research project in international university, they can leave for one year but keep the full yearly salary.

Academic staff is selected through job announcement. When the new academic staff is joining the university, they have short trainings to understand all the requirements under the regulations of the university. Contract with the university contains all the obligations related to teaching, communication with students, research, extracurricular activities, etc. The contract also implies that the full-time staff cannot have teaching job in more than two institutions. Academic staff submits statement confirming that to the university. The statements are submitted to an E-accreditation Portal made by Kosovo Accreditation Agency where they can be confirmed by all the universities and KAA.

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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 3.7. 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	
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:
1. *University should have regular trainings in teaching methodologies for academic staff and also help them to obtain more international research grants.*

2.4. Educational process content

The Master Program in Business Informatics was developed based on the Regulation of Master studies - UHZ and requirements for performance indicators for the educational program, that takes into account the Kosovo curricular framework harmonized with the standards and procedures of the European Higher Education.

The program integrates the areas of informatics, management and business and pays equal attention to knowledge gaining and research areas. The program covers 120 ECTS, consists of 12 mandatory courses, master thesis and 8 elective courses.

The program has 15 learning outcomes which sometimes overlap with each other. It is advised to categorize the learning outcomes clearly and remove overlaps that would be beneficial for future program evaluation and assessment of correspondence to program benchmarks. In addition, there is no curriculum map that would show the mapping of each course outcomes to the program learning outcomes. Also, the courses should show their prerequisites if there are any.

SER of the program includes all the syllabi that mainly contain course objectives, student outcomes, topics, teaching and assessment methods, however, some syllabi need to be corrected due to the following problems:

1) Some courses have overlapping the forms of teaching and learning with the using of information systems. They have the following structure:

   Forms of teaching and learning:
   - *Presentation of the learning topic in Power Point*
   - *Repetition of the previous topic by a certain group of students, analysis and discussions*
   - *Case study or assignment (for the lesson of exercises) related to the taught topic*

   Means of concretization / IT
   - *Introducing the learning topic at Power Point*
   - *Using SPSS and Stata software*
   - *Repetition of the previous topic by a certain group of students, analysis and discussions*
   - *Case study or assignment (for the exercise class) related to the taught topic.*

   The teaching methods should be different from methods of using information systems in teaching. These courses are:
   - Qualitative methods in scientific research
   - Information systems and business communication

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- Electronic Commerce
- Knowledge Management
- Cyber Security with Risk Management

2) Some courses have improperly defined assessment methods. For example, the following courses only give the grading criteria, but not assessment methods:
- Quantitative methods and techniques in scientific research
- Interactive Software Systems
- Supply Chain Management
- Digital Finance

3) Some courses have high weight of final exam, that is not fruitful:
- Electronic Commerce – final exam – 80%;
- Knowledge Management – final exam – 80%;
- Finance and accounting information systems. – final exam – 70%;
- Cyber Security with Risk Management – final exam – 80%;

4) Some courses need more current literature as their corresponding fields developed fast during the last years:
- Information systems and business communication – latest literature – 2015;
- Electronic Commerce – latest literature – 2013;
- Business Intelligence – latest literature – 2012;
- Web design for business – latest literature – 2010; also, in this course some books are from 2002, that is mostly useless for the business web design today;
- Cyber Security with Risk Management – latest literature – 2015;
- Entrepreneurship and Innovation – latest literature – 2012;

In addition, it will be better if IT project management course contain modern methods of project management, such as Agile or SCRUM.

The program has a mandatory internship. The syllabus of the internship is very short and do not give details on how the student will be assessed. It is necessary to have more elaborated syllabus for the internship that will show the types of internships, workload and assessment methods. In addition, there is no list of companies provided in SER or otherwise with whom the program has agreement of internship. However, during the interview several business representatives expressed interest in giving internships to students.

The program was developed by the initiative of academic staff, approved and reviewed on several stages by university education/scientific committees and quaility assurance and involved the help of local companies that is confirmed by the minutes of industrial board meetings. The interest

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and involvement in the development of the program also was greatly emphasized during the interviews with the employers. They are sure that the graduates of the program will be demanded and well-paid on the job market.

University has the mechanism for the students to discuss their grades with the instructor in case they are not content with the results. They can also file a complaint to the faculty Dean, who sets up a committee with three members. The decision of the committee is final. If the instructor does not comply to the rules, it is subject to "Code of Ethics Regulation in UASF". The student has the right to be re-examined up to three times in the courses which they have failed. A fourth re-examination can be allowed by the dean, if the student files a complaint and is able to present a convincing argument.

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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	
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: Substantially Compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Correct the assessment methods in the courses listed above;*
2. *Correct the overlapping of teaching methods and IT means;*
3. *Update the literature in the courses listed above;*
4. *Prerequisites for each course should be defined either in the program structure or in the each syllabus.*
5. *Add modern methods of IT Project Management to the IT Project Management Course.*
6. *Elaborate the syllabus for internship to specify all the steps of the internship – what kind of companies will offer internship to the students, what will be student's responsibility as an intern, how his work will be assessed during internship. Also, make formal agreements with the companies for the internship.*

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2.5. Students

The experts did not meet students as part of the site visit having in mind the fact that the program subject of this accreditation is a new program and there are no students yet enrolled. Conclusions shared in this part are made based on the information provided in the SER and all provided documents active on a University and Faculty level.

The admission of students is a formally adopted procedure based on the regulations in line with Article 16.4 of the Law on Higher Education. The procedures for enrollment, according to the University policies is published openly. As SER states and is confirmed by interviews, the competition for the admission of new students is usually announced during the month of July (first Entrance Exam Term) and during the months of August-September (Supplementary competition) and is open to all citizens of Kosovo and the region in general. The competition is announced at least 30 days in advance.

For the enrollment, candidates should meet the following criteria: they should be graduates of business, informatics or management fields from the programs with at least 180 ECTS, know English and successfully pass the exam prepared by the Faculty of Business. The SER states that the exam covers the topics from informatics, management, business, with special emphasis on Business Informatics. The experts requested the exam sample, but the university did not provide based on the reasoning that it is a new program and they do not have a sample. In general, the admission criteria consist of the school grades – 30% and results of the entrance exam – 70%. The applicant should pass at least 40% of the entrance exam, otherwise will not be accepted even if there are open spaces left.

The number of students that might be enrolled in this program on a yearly level is 60 and university material and human resources are totally sufficient for this number. The study groups are different depending on whether there are theoretical or practical subjects covered, as reported in the SER. In case of theoretical subjects all 60 students will have class together, and in case of practical work the group will be split into two.

During the educational process, exam dates are published on the university website. Students ses exam results at SEMS (Student Electronic Management System). Exams are scheduled in the way that students do not have more than one exam every day.

When scheduling exams it is ensured that the student does not have more than one exam in it so that students are not charged at the time of their exams. According to university regulations, the professor has to submit exam reports to the administration within 48 hours after publishing of the results. The students can discuss with the professor if they are not satisfied with the grades and they can file a written complaint to the Faculty Dean. The Dean appoints a commission of three

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members, including the professor of the course to evaluate the complaint. The evaluation is final and cannot be argued by the student. For the fairer process, the professor of the course should not be included in the commission.

Interactive teaching and learning processes are ensured. From the shared courses 'descriptions provided in the SER, the experts can conclude that the academic staff is using different teaching methods, such as lectures, group, and individual work, presentations, lab work, and others.

All the exam results of the student are kept in SEMS and showed in his/her academic record. If the student needs to take an exam earlier due to participation in international exchange program or internship abroad, this can be arranged by the Dean.

The student passing rates are kept and analyzed by Quality Assurance Office. The SER shows the passing rates for all the students during year 2018.

To check the plagiarism of the student work, the university has a special anti-plagiarism software, that naturally works better for English language works than for Albanians. However, it is improving as the more work is added to the software database. In addition, the university has procedures against plagiarism, that is well-known to the academic staff that was confirmed by the interviews. For the master theses, students sign the declaration confirming the originality of their work. All the master thesis are sent to the National Library of Kosovo as a physical copy, as well as on CD.

The rights and obligations of students are published openly and are defined in the Statute of the University. The transfer of students between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs is clearly regulated in the formal internal documents. The transfer and recognition of studies from other institutions of Higher Education is regulated according to the the Statute (Article 132). For the credit recognition the university has several agreements with the local and international universities. Decisions regarding to changing of the program or transfering to another university are made by the Faculty Dean on the basis of proposal from the Collegium of Postgraduate Studies and the approval of the necessary departments.

All professors and assistants in coordination with the quality coordinator set the official schedule for giving advice and consultations to students. In addition to this schedule students during working hours, the students can contact the professors through their official e-mail. Also, through SEMS students are always informed in all aspects regarding the relevant subjects and this system automatically delivers all notifications in the official e-mail of the student. The university has in function the tutor system that helps the students with the difficulties in the learning process.

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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	
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	

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Compliance level: Fully Compliant

ET recommendations:

1. Commission for appealing the grade should not involve the professor who gave the grade.

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2.6. Research

The study program has general objectives for research. Interviews with the heads of the programs, professors and employers showed that they see well the opportunities of theoretical research, as well as collaborative applied research. SER states that research objective of the program is to provide a new research knowledge and skills in the field of business and applied informatics, giving opportunity to conduct scientific research and provide practical solutions to many different complex situations the business face in the legal context. However, it would be beneficial for the program to clearly define the research types and procedures the students will undertake. The professors involved in the program have good research experience that is showed in SER by the number of their publications in the internationally recognized scientific journals. The research is encouraged by prizes for publications in good journals and funding the participation in the conferences, though university needs to allocate finances specifically for research, at least as small research grants, and help the academic staff to get funding in the international scientific grants.

At the beginning of the new year every academic staff submits the individual development plan to the Faculty Dean that shows their plans of scientific activity. Evaluation of the staff is based on the fulfillment of this plan. The evaluation of scientific research results is taken into account during the promotion of the staff.

In general, all research plans of the university are specified in UHZ Strategic Plan (2020-2024) and in the Scientific Research Strategy 2019-2024. These documents cover the research activities of the academic staff and students, including the preparation of research projects, conducting scientific and applied research, publications in the credible scientific journals, participation in local and international conferences. In addition, UHZ has established the Scientific Research Group which monitors all scientific and research activities at all academic units. As SER states, there are also regulations drafted to establish the scientific institutes and publishing scientific journals at the level of academic units. As a result, the Faculty of Business is publishing a scientific journal Empiricus and during the last five years, has organized five international scientific conferences in the field of economics and business.

It is beneficial that the university has benchmarks for scientific research and plans to achieve the following outcomes by 2024:

- **Outcome 1**: There are sufficient professional and financial resources for research activities.
- **Outcome 2**: Increases the number of scientific and applied research by the academic staff of the university.
- **Outcome 3**: The number of publications in international scientific journals increases and there is

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a university scientific journal.

- **Outcome 4**: High participation of academic staff in international scientific conferences and frequent organization of international scientific conferences by the university.
- **Outcome 5**: UHZ contributes to the enrichment of artistic and cultural activity and creativity at home and abroad.

As stated in SER and confirmed by the interviews, the Faculty of Business clearly understand the importance of increasing research funds. But it should also be emphasized that even in these conditions several academic staff participate in international scientific research projects, funded by UHZ, the Ministry of Education and Science of Kosovo, Erasmum+, Gizi and several partner universities of UHZ. However, the university still has to develop clear plan in the direction of research commercialization and entrepreneurship that will be specifically beneficial for the current educational program.

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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	
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	

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Compliance level: Substantially Compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Clearly define the research objectives of the Business Informatics study program taking into account the program specifics;*
2. *Allocate funding for small research grants for the program;*
3. *Strenghthen the research commercialization structure of the university in collaboration with industry partners;*

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2.7. Infrastructure and resources

The SER gives the detailed information on the infrastructure and resources available for the current program. There are available 10 classrooms with a capacity of 866 seats, 1 library with 84 seats, computer room with 40 seats and 10 cabinets for lecturers with a capacity of 30 seats. The regular academic staff consists of 14 professors and 13 assistants in the respective fields. In the same time, university has 159 computers. The SER shows that there is only one computer room with 40 seats. This program will have 60 students and they will sit together during theoretical component of the courses and split into two groups during the practical work. Taking into account that the Faculty of Business has other programs too, that require computers, it is advised to add more computer classes, especially if the Faculty has 159 computers as stated in SER. It is useful that student surveys contain questions related to infrastructure, as this data can be analyzed and used by the Business Faculty to determine the current needs for resources and future infrastructural development.

The Faculty of Business doesn't have a Data Center or subscription to Cloud services. As research in Business Informatics often requires big data analytics, it would be beneficial to have some kind of Data Center or offer special subscription to Cloud Computing services to the professors and students. In addition, as program of Business Informatics is currently closely related to entrepreneurship, it will be good for the Faculty to establish entrepreneurship center and corresponding co-working space.

Budget of the program is given only on the general level, not showing detailed financial expenses and plan necessary to check the financial stability of the program. However, the funding of the program is guaranteed by the University since it is a Public Institution of Higher Education. Even in this condition, it would be beneficial to have the detailed budget of the program.

The Faculty of Business has sufficient infrastructural resources to implement the program for 60 students. It also has the necessary software that are used in the courses: Nvivo, STATA, SPSS. The library is equipped with a reading room with a capacity of up to 84 seats and it offers 1360 books (3754 copies in total) that are used in the educational programs. Due to online accreditation visit, it is impossible to check if all the books used in the curriculum is at the library. In addition, since some courses require update of the literature, they need to be purchased. SER states that there are 3 buildings and each of them has accessible entrances. There are 10 rooms with 30 places in total for professors that is sufficient for their work and office hours.

The university has implemented a learning management system – SEMS (Student Electronic Management System) that is described in detail in SER. This system gives the Faculty of Business the possibility to well organize and analyze all the data related to educational processes, and the

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students can manage their whole educational portfolio, as well as communicate with the professors through the system. SEMS was especially useful during the pandemic lockdown, when the university moved to online teaching.

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: a) owned or rented spaces adequate for the educational process; b) owned or rented laboratories, with the adequate equipment for all the compulsory disciplines within the curriculum, wherever the analytical syllabus includes such activities; c) adequate software for the disciplines of study included in the curriculum, with utilisation licence; d) library equipped with reading rooms, group work rooms and its own book stock according to the disciplines included in the curricula.	x	
Standard 7.4. The number of seats in the lecture rooms, seminar rooms and laboratories must be related to the study groups' size (series, groups, subgroups); the applicative activities for the speciality disciplines included in the curricula are carried out in laboratories equipped with IT equipment.	x	

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Standard 7.5. The education institution's libraries must ensure, for each of the study programs: a) a number of seats in the reading rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program; b) a number of seats in the group work rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program; c) their own book stock from Albanian and foreign speciality literature, enough to cover the disciplines within the curricula, out of which at least 50% should represent book titles or speciality courses of recognised publishers, from the last 10 years; d) a book stock within its own library with a sufficient number of books so as to cover the needs of all students in the cycle and year of study the respective discipline is provided for; e) a sufficient number of subscriptions to Albanian and foreign publications and periodicals, according to the stated mission.	x	
Standard 7.6. The infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the program is adapted to students with special needs	x	

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

   1. *Add the Data-center to the Faculty of Businees or offer special subscriptions to Cloud Computing services for the professors and students;*
   2. *Develop the Entrepreneurship center and co-working spece for students;*
   3. *Ensure regularly and adequate update of the books in the library, from both Albanian and foreign literature.*
   4. *Develop detailed financial plan to ensure the proper developent of the program.*

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3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

The Panel would like to commend the programme development team for their proactive engagement with the Panel during the accreditation visit. There was a very strong sense of teamwork and ownership exhibited by the programme development team. It is evident that a good level of care and attention has been given to the development of the new programme. for the upcoming cohorts of students. Having considered the documentation provided and discussed it with the programme development team, the accreditation Panel recommends the following:

Standard	Compliance Level
Mission, objectives and administration	Substantially compliant
Quality management	Fully compliant
Academic Staff	Fully compliant
Educational Process Content	Substantially compliant
Students	Fully compliant
Research	Substancially compliant
Infrastructure and resources	Substantially compliant
Overall Compliance	**Substantially compliant**

The overall compliance is assessed by the experts at the level of **Substantially Compliant.**

However, the following recommendations need to be considered to improve the program:

1. Clearly define mission and objectives of the program;
2. Keep minutes of meetings of faculty units and industrial board related to the program development;
3. The University should keep a track of all suggestions by the stakelholders, especially by the employers and students, and corresponding changes in the program. Students should be involved more actively in the program improvement, not only based on the surveys.

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4. Quality assurance part of SER has a lot of overlapping descriptions. For better keeping the track of the program development and improvement, it is advised to describe one aspect clearly only once.

5. University should have regular trainings in teaching methodologies for academic staff and also help them to obtain more international research grants.

6. Correct the assessment methods in the courses listed in the Standard 2.4;

7. Correct the overlapping of teaching methods and IT means in some syllabuses;

8. Update the literature in the courses listed in the Standard 2.4;

9. Prerequisites for each course should be defined either in the program structure or in each syllabus.

10. Add modern methods of IT Project Management to the IT Project Management Course.

11. Elaborate the syllabus for internship to specify all the steps of the internship – what kind of companies will offer internship to the students, what will be student's responsibility as an intern, how his work will be assessed during internship. Also, make formal agreements with the companies for the internship.

12. Commission for appealing the grade should not involve the professor who gave the grade.

13. Clearly define the research objectives of the Business Informatics study program taking into account the program specifics;

14. Allocate funding for small research grants for the study program;

15. Strenghthen the research commercialization structure of the university in collaboration with industry partners;

16. Add the Data-center to the Faculty of Businees or offer special subscriptions to Cloud Computing services for the professors and students;

17. Develop the Entrepreneurship center and co-working spece for students;

18. Ensure regularly and adequate update of the books in the library, from both Albanian and foreign literature.

19. Develop detailed financial plan to ensure the proper developent of the program.

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the Master of Business Informatics study programme offered by University of Haxhi Zeka **substantially compliant** with the standards included in the KAA Accreditation Manual and, therefore, recommends to accredit the above study programme for a duration of **three** years with **60** students to be enrolled on the programme.

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Expert Team

Members
Prof. Dr. Nana Dikhaminija

N. Dikhar

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

Signature   Nana Dikhaminija   03.05.2021

4. APPENDICES *(if available)*

None

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