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***UNIVERSITY “HAXHI ZEKA”  
MASTER PROGRAMME SUSTAINABLE FOOD PRODUCTION  
SYSTEMS***

***ACCREDITATION***

**REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM**

*29th March 2021*



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Context

**Date of site visit: 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

**Expert Team (ET) members:**

- Prof. Dr Tenure Drazenka Komes
- Delia Gologan, MSc student

**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 and annexes*
- *Discussions during the online site-visit*
- *Additional documents requested after the site-visit*
- *Video presenting the faculty premises*
- KAA Accreditation Manual 11.07.2018
- *Syllabi*
- *Staff CVs*

**Requested documents:**

- *The simulation of timetable for the first semester*
- *The list of faculty members (academic staff) mentioning for each the no. of teaching hours in this program, the no. of teaching hours in the rest of the programmes of the faculty and the no. of hours for other responsibilities they might have with the University (e.g. consultation hours, membership in a committee etc.)*



- *Details about the library (no. of seats, no. of computers, list of books from the bibliography of this programme that are already in the library and the list of scientific databases to which access is granted)*
- *QA report created at the end of the academic year 2019- 2020 and an Action plan for the academic year 2020-2021, based on the recommendations of that report.*

#### **Received documents:**

- *A simulated timetable only for the first semester*
- *The list of academic staff for the Master program*
- *Details about the library (no. of seats, no. of computers, list of books from the bibliography of this programme that are already in the library and the list of scientific databases to which access is granted)*
- *UHZ report from the evaluation results of the academic year 2019/2020 and recommendations for improvement given by the Quality Management and Evaluation Council*
- *Implementation plan of the UHZ based on the recommendations of the Council for Quality Management and Evaluation, for the academic year 2020-2021*

#### **Criteria used for program evaluation:**

- *Standards & performance indicators for external evaluation according to the Accreditation Manual of KAA, July 2018*
- *Criteria of Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Impact, Sustainability*
- *ESG*



## 1.2. Site visit schedule

### Expert Team

- Prof. Dr Tenure. Drazenka Komes
- Delia Gologan, MSc student

### 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

<b>09.00 – 09.40</b>	Meeting with the management of the institution
<b>09.45 – 10:45</b>	Meeting with the heads of the study programme
<b>10:50 – 11:30</b>	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff
<b>11:30 – 12:20</b>	Lunch break
<b>12:25 – 13:05</b>	Meeting with the teaching staff
<b>13:10 – 13.55</b>	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders
<b>14:00 – 14.10</b>	Internal meeting – Expert Team and KAA
<b>14:10 – 14.20</b>	Closing meeting with the management of the institution



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

The Faculty of Agrobusiness is an academic unit of the University Haxhi Zeka University. This university was formally established in 2011 and is now the second largest public university in Kosovo.

The Faculty of Agrobusiness (FAB) offers 3 undergraduate study programs: Plant Production Technology, Agronomy and Agroecology and Food Technology. Currently, the FAB has 559 students enrolled in these three Bachelor programs. According to the SER, all three programs were accredited in 2019.

From the 2021/2022 academic year the Faculty of Agrobusiness aims to also offer the Master programme Sustainable Food Production System which is designed as a MSc type of program addressed to professionals.

Although the SER pointed out that the Master study will focus on research-based teaching and learning in order to train students for the labor market, there are numerous challenges facing the faculty in achieving this goal:

- Advancement of teaching at all levels
- Development of curricula, teaching methodology, modern literature, etc.,
- Intensive engagement in research
- Continuous training of academic staff
- Improvement of infrastructure.

The main strength of this Master program is that it is the only program in Kosovo in this field, followed by that the study program is designed and linked to the private sector and that advanced scientific subjects are diversified and cover all aspects related to sustainable food production systems. Therefore, there are also opportunities to develop the programme in a positive way.

There is one general mention the Expert Team (ET) has to make in the beginning of the report: this presents the current situation of the infrastructure and resources of UHZ in relationship with the KAA standards of quality, in the attempt to assess the university capacity of implementing this new program in a qualitative manner. UHZ mentioned its intention to offer this program as a joint program with the Universum College, but offered little to no details about the partnership between the two institutions, the potential share of responsibilities regarding the development and implementation of the program and the resources put in common. So the next chapters of this report are based on the evaluation of the ET of what UHZ could offer.



## 2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

### 2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

Taking into account the challenges of the modern society related to food production, through the study program Sustainable Food Production systems, the Faculty of Agrobusiness aims to train new professional staff in the field of sustainable food production systems. The aim of the Faculty management through this first Master's program offered in this faculty is to contribute to the economic development of the country, especially to the Dukagjini region with the largest potential for the agro-industrial development.

At the general level of information provided, the mission of this study program is in compliance with the overall mission statement of Haxhi Zeka University, however, more focus can be put onto research given this is a MSc type of program. At this point the SER only mentions the research component generally: „*The mission and objectives of this study program will be achieved through the active participation of students and the academic staff in research in the field of sustainable agri-food production*” (SER, p8).

Regarding the consistency of the program with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area, the SER mentions in one part very general information regarding the advanced knowledge gained through this program, without the specific qualifications that students should acquire upon completion of their studies, while listing some skills and competencies to be achieved by the end of the studies, in other sections of the SER. Although in the SER level 7 of learning outcomes was mentioned, in the syllabi of many courses inappropriate active verbs were used in learning outcomes, and in some subjects, they were not even listed. The curriculum of the program is in line with its mission and it should be supplemented with the learning outcomes of the master program.

With regard to the didactic and research concept, in the SER very general statements on didactical approaches and research activities were provided. Among selected teaching and learning environments (locations, activities, media), in the SER and syllabi the following forms were listed: lectures (Power Point), seminars, theoretical exercises, practical and field work, professional and scientific visit, discussion, consultations and independent work of students. These teaching methods along with small study groups can create the favourable context for interactive teaching-learning process. The faculty management should ensure that these teaching methods are familiar to all academic staff members and that they benefit of frequent teaching training for continuously updating their teaching competences.



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Although the research-based teaching and learning for each staff member is written in the SER as the main goal of the Faculty of Agrobusiness and according to the strategic plan of UHZ there is a project application in order to improve the teaching methodology is foreseen, there is no concrete plan on how to accomplish this.

In that direction, it is commendable to mention that the master program has been developed thanks to the participation of the Faculty of Agrobusiness in the STEPS project (Erasmus +). Besides UHZ, universities from 3 Western Balkan and 3 EU countries also participated in this project and supported the development of this Master program and in later stage they will also support the establishment of laboratories and other prerequisites for its implementations. During the online meetings, it was clarified that this is a joint study program offered by FAB and the Universum College. The students attending this program at UHZ will have the opportunity to attend the same program at the Universum College after first semester. The Universum College is specialized in the management field, thus the possibility of offering to students two possible specializations within the program. However, the ET underlines the importance of better preparing a joint program – which means splitting the responsibilities among the partners, including in the program description the choice offered to students for two specialties, the infrastructure and resources put together etc. At this point, the ET has to evaluate this program as a program offered by one institution based on the information provided in the SER and during the online site-visit.

Relevant academic and professional advice was considered when designing the program, both during the STEPS project and separately: *“Expert recommendations from the Institute of Agriculture in Peja and other enterprises involved in the production of agricultural products such as: Agroproduct Syne, Koal seeds, etc., were very welcomed in terms of conceptualization of practical work/internship in the study program especially in relation to new techniques in the field of sustainable primary production”* (SER, p8).

Additionally, the SER underlines the important role of the Advisory Board in designing the program. The Advisory Board consists of representatives from the private and public sectors and honorary guests from agrobusiness projects, in encouraging joint research projects in the field of sustainable food production was highlighted. The ET commends the involvement of the private sector in this board and recommends that UHZ continues the efforts of permanently inviting them to review the study programs, to work on common research projects and to create practical stages and internship opportunities for students.

Since the usage of e-learning was not mentioned in the SER, but was referred to during the meeting with different target groups, it can be concluded that this approach slowly began to be applied at the Faculty, even before the COVID-19 pandemic.





During the meetings with target groups, the expert gained the impression that formal policies, regulations and guidelines dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues are made publicly available to all staff and students, but the Expert Team (ET) was not able to find them on the website. This aspect should be rechecked by the FAB management. *“There are several committees within the Faculty such as: Appeals Committee, Disciplinary Committee and Studies Committee”* (SER, p10). However it is not clear whether they succeed in verifying if all staff and all students follow the internal regulations, besides the code of ethics: *“The Code of Ethics/Conduct was approved by the Decision of the Steering Council, no.779 / 14, dated 02.06.2014. The academic staff and students comply with internal regulations related to the code of ethics throughout teaching, research, and other academic and administrative activities”*(SER, p11).

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 the intended learning outcomes at the descriptive levels of the European Framework of Qualification.*
- 2. Complete the strategic plan for the Faculty of Agribusiness, which will better cover all aspects of the achievement of the program.*
- 3. Clearly define the research concept (objective) of the program and develop activities specific to research-linked teaching.*
- 4. Develop concrete plans to accomplish the desired objective regarding research-based teaching including methods to encourage teachers to share during their lectures respect research results (both from their own research activity and from around the world).*

## **2.2. Quality management**

According to the SER it can be assumed that the quality control and evaluation is well established and actively involves the academic community in quality assurance processes. However, it is the impression of the ET that all so many procedures make the system be perceived as a burden, rather than an improvement instrument. This might lead, in time, to a purely formal implementation of these instruments without the prospect of the results being relevant or used for the improvement of the programs – which some of the stakeholders present at the online site-visit confirmed. This should be avoided by the UHZ and FAB management.

It is commendable that, in addition to the Quality Assurance Office and the Central Committee at the University level, in 2021 UHZ also established the Quality Coordinators Offices at five faculties, including the FAB.

Currently the FAB has 6 QA instruments (surveys for students, professors, dean, alumni, industry, administrative) to assess performance – based on the results they propose concrete steps to improve. Supplementary to these instruments, there are also some additional committees that deal with special aspects of the internal QA (e.g. for including a new range



of factors in the QA system). On the regular basis they make analyses based on the performance of teachers (e.g. scientific research)

All staff of the Faculty of Agrobusiness participates in self-assessments and cooperate with the reporting and improvement processes in their field of activity (SER, p14). All this activity is based on the Statute of the University and the Regulation on Quality Assurance and Evaluation from 2019, Instruction for Quality Assurance, which have clearly defined the institutional quality assurance system, processes, mechanisms, instruments, reporting, data collection, timelines, quality control, and responsibilities of all individuals and entities involved in these processes.

The Faculty of Agrobusiness declares to have provided all adequate human, financial and material resources for leading and managing quality assurance processes at all organizational levels (the evaluation of programs study and organization of studies, evaluation of the quality of teaching, and evaluation of research activities) (SER, p15). Performance and quality assessment include the academic and administrative staff of the FAB, but it is not clear whether the surveys also refer to infrastructure, learning materials and administrative services. The FAB should check that QA instruments evaluate all aspects of the academic life, including these three already listed here, as well as progress towards learning objectives. Appropriate adjustments are made in teaching evaluation and the plans after examining course reports.

Assessment of teaching academic staff and administration by students will be done at the end of each semester, while the evaluation of academic staff by Dean, academic staff self-evaluation and questionnaires with graduates and employers will be conducted each year.

In the SER it was stated that evaluation and planning for improvement processes are integrated into the normal planning processes, but no evidence was provided on site how this is achieved practically and on which concepts or methodologies the quality assurance system of UHZ is based on.

Alumni clubs have also been established within the UHZ- a mechanism that will be consulted for this purpose by the head of this program. The ET encourages UHZ to hurry up in implementing this instrument as it has the potential of collecting relevant data for the program.

The SER mentioned that due to the necessary improvements, the electronic system SEMS has not been used for online evaluation there and evaluation and planning for it is carried out onsite. However, the online site visit discussions indicated that the SEMS was already partially used for this. If it has not yet been implemented for all QA instruments, the



university could invest in these improvements and simplify the QA procedures by implementing them electronically.

The SER (p16) states that *the Regulation as well as the Strategic Plan has required the reporting and publication of the results of the evaluation*. The summary of reports have been sent to the management and now it is envisaged to increase the transparency of quality assurance processes by ensuring that: academic staff members will receive their evaluation results and all members of the academic community will be informed about the results of the evaluations as well as the actions that the university intends to implement to improve the current situation. Although, according to the SER, summary reports are also published on the university website, the ET did not find them. The FAB should make sure that they are published – as this is a great gain for transparency.

According to the submitted Report from the evaluation results of the academic year 2019/20, and recommendations given by the Quality Management and Evaluation Council, an Implementation plan for this academic year was created. It is evident that most of the shortcomings regarding all 7 evaluated general areas are noticed and their implementations/improvements are expected mostly during 2021. Quality assurance occurs through quality self-assessment for the FAB. Results and recommendations for improvements are implemented once a year, at the beginning of the academic year and are based on the University's Statute, which regulates quality assessments to achieve the objectives, adjust the work and save the measures taken.

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
Standard 2.7. Results of the internal quality assurance system are taken into account for further development of the study program. This includes evaluation results, investigation of the student workload, academic success and employment of graduates.	X	
Standard 2.8. The institution ensures that reports on the overall quality of the program are prepared periodically (eg. every three years) for consideration within the institution indicating its strengths and weaknesses.	X	
Standard 2.9. The quality assurance arrangements for the program are themselves regularly evaluated and improved.	X	

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. *Establish an Alumni tracking system and include in the QA standards/indicators referring to this*
2. *Discuss the course evaluation results and the improvement plans with the students.*
3. *Publish annually the evaluation results from the general surveys on the website, along with a list of measures that the faculty plans to take to improve the current situation.*
4. *Allocate a budget to the QA activities that will cover for the salary of a full-time employee for the QA structures and trainings in QA for those responsible of QA.*
5. *Re-evaluate periodically the load implied by all the QA methods and only keep those that bring added-value to the program. The QA system should be usefull, not a burden.*
6. *Consider motivating the teachers with good results.*

**2.3. Academic staff**

According to the SER (p21) “*The FAB is based on the University Statute which defines the rights and responsibilities of staff and at the same time guarantees them the freedom of expression, the freedom to publish the results of their scientific work, and the freedom to express their opinions without the risk of losing its job*”. Additionally, “The procedures for



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the selection of academic staff for appointment, re-appointment and promotion are made in a transparent manner and with the public announcement”. During online meeting academic staff confirmed practical application of both statements highlighting a transparent Plan of promotion of academic staff in the next 5 year, but the ET also acknowledges the difficulties that derive from a centralised management system at the level of university and encourages the faculty to continue its efforts in becoming more autonomous.

It is evident from the online meeting with academic staff as well as their submitted CVs that academic staff at the FAB is able to deliver satisfactory level student learning experience through inclusive, relevant programmes and curricula while being professional and collaborative.

The responsibilities of full-time staff seem to vary; and range from regular teaching, material design and student consultations to departmental events and meetings, as well as research activities. Regarding the academic staff workload, each staff member has a set teaching rate of 6 hours of lectures per week for a professor, and 10 hours per week for a teaching assistant. On top of this each academic staff is required to provide consultation hours, coordinate final thesis and undergo research activities.

Taking into account the Administrative Instruction for Accreditation of the Master Program, the requirements for academic staff are filled since for each group of students (defined by the HEI Statute) and for every 60 ECTS credits of the program, the institution has at least one full-time staff with a PhD degree in the field of study, at least 50% of academic staff are full time employees who are responsible for at least 50% of the teaching hours of a study program. Over 80% of the FAB academic staff who will teach in the Sustainable Food Production Systems are regular staff. The academic staff of FAB consists of full time 5 prof. dr, 9 associate professors, 2 assistant professors, and 6 assistants. In accordance with Article 171 of the Statute of UHZ, the following criteria for the title of Full Professor at FAB are summarized as follows: doctor of science and high level of academic competence and scientific experience in the subject which is evidenced by at least 5 published papers in international scientific journals, as first author or correspondent author, active participation in national and international conferences, etc.

The online site-visit revealed that during the last year 3 academic staff members were promoted and other 3 were hired. For new programmes offered by an institution it is important to have some flexibility in hiring new specialists in the field (to support both the teaching within the new program and the research activity linked to it).

So far, FAB has not provided specific training for new staff, however this activity is foreseen as part of the revised Strategic Plan at the University level which foresees offering of various





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workshops depending on the needs of the academic staff. Such training should be complemented by an induction period during which the inclusion of new staff members can be eased by presentations of the rules and practices as well as introductions with the colleagues and the faculty environment.

According to the regulation, the assessment of academic staff activity is foreseen to be done from several evaluative levels: the supervisor (Board, Rector, Dean or Vice-Dean), students and self-evaluation. The grade weight given by each assessor is differentially measured according to this priority: dean 50%, self-evaluation 30% and students 20%. Upon completion of the evaluation report by the Dean/Vice-Dean, the study commission may study the evaluation made for different individuals either on its own initiative or at the request of the individual academic staff member. He/she can give his/her opinion on the evaluation performed, but also on the needs of the academic staff member for improvement or development in specific aspects. So far, following the completion of the evaluations, reports have been drafted which are sent to the senior management for review, respectively the Rector and the Senate, and that the findings of this report have been integrated into the review process of the Strategic Plan of UHZ. The stakeholders mentioned during the online site-visit that there is an annual ceremony to reward the best teachers- this could be institutionalised as a manner of rewarding those teachers with favourable evaluations from all parties, while those with unfavourable results should be encouraged and supported to undergo further training to improve themselves.

In terms of academic staff development, in view of the professional development of academic staff and the improvement of contemporary teaching and assessment methodologies, the FAB has taken the opportunity over the last years to benefit from UHZ schemes of academic improvement and staff development but also from two projects from Erasmus + (BUGI and STEPS) enabling its academic staff to be involved in several study visits and regional and international conferences.

This program will admit 25 students per academic year and will have a total of 120 ECTS credits, so three program heads are assigned, one more than required by Administrative Instruction no. 015/2018.

Although pursuant to the UHZ Statute, the regular academic staff of the UHZ after a period of five years may be exempted (salary not terminated) from engaging in UHZ for up to one year to participate in long-term study visits, post-doctoral research and specializations, the FAB management is not satisfied with the response of staff and more attention will be paid to this aspect in the future.

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In order to continuously improve the pedagogical, didactic and methodological skills of the regular academic staff, the Faculty will commit itself to providing as many opportunities as possible for the provision of courses, seminars and other training so that they are continuously trained. Some such trainings have already been organized and teachers confirmed attending them in the past.

Concerning student work, a tutorial system will also be implemented for this study program whereby full-time professors in this study program will be assigned a specific group of students for monitoring through regular group and individual meetings.

The UHZ continually works to stimulate, provide conditions, monitor and control the professional work outcomes of the academic staff and include them in the teaching process in order to improve teaching strategies. In fact, their ability to improve and their teaching performance results are seen through their work with students, professional attitude towards teaching and the proper fulfillment of all teaching obligations, providing exam preparation, relevant teaching methodology, mentoring, research, and a willingness to improve and develop their pedagogical skills.

A member of the academic staff retires at the age limits, but with the possibility of engaging part-time in the teaching process even after retirement until the age of 70.

The SER mentioned as weak points of the academic staff: the unsatisfactory relationship with the students and their level of English. Both of these aspects can be easily tackled by the faculty management and improved in the next years, by increasing both the number of trainings offered to teachers (as already mentioned above) and the number of mobility opportunities created for them. The ET commends on the flexibility of teachers to adapt to new contexts which was proved during the last year (marked by the COVID-19 pandemic) when teachers – who were already involved in other programs of the university – adapted to online teaching using Google instruments. The Faculty management mentioned that they intend to value this experience and maybe even develop their own online teaching platform. The ET recommends valuing the experience and continuing to use e-learning integrated in the teaching-learning process, but the necessity of developing a new platform for this should be re-evaluated since it might be resource-consuming but with little added value to the already existing instruments (e.g. Google, Microsoft Teams, Zoom etc. already provide instruments that can be used).

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	X	





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.		
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:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

- FAB should recognize that teaching observations/peer-observations should be carried out throughout academic year on a multiple basis to obtain a full picture on staff performance (Staff participation in regular peer-observations as well unannounced*



*observations for sharing best academic practices/the intention to engage academics in critical discussion about learning and teaching overall as well as enhance teaching quality at the programme level).*

- 2. Encourage international mobility for academic staff and consider the introduction of a three-months stay abroad as a mandatory requirement for the promotion of all assistants to the title of assistant professors.*
- 3. Motivate and further evaluate academic staff who apply and participate in international projects.*
- 4. Intensifying the training opportunities for teachers.*
- 5. Consider rewarding those teachers with good results in evaluations (either in teaching or in research).*

## **2.4. Educational process content**

The curriculum covers a range of skills and competencies required to work in the sustainable food production sector, both in public and in private sector. As a Master program it has a strong focus on the most advanced methods of obtaining sustainable food products, acquiring practical/research skills, teamwork, interdisciplinary work, develop of innovative solutions and application of acquired knowledge in the practice. However, it is labeled as a MSc type of program and should have a consistent part of research-based teaching and/or involving students in research like activities in order to support them developing research competences. This is the type of program that usually encourage students to continue their studies with a PhD upon graduation.

The curriculum of this program has a logical flow and is in line with European Higher Education programs and is structured by combining the main and elective courses during 2 years (4 semesters) of study.

The program consists of 6 compulsory and 17 elective courses, among which all relevant branches of the food industry are included. The ET commends on this very high percentage of electives, which is unusual, as the general practice is to have a core of compulsory courses and an additional 25-30% elective courses. The risk the ET sees in having so many electives for one year is that given the small number of enrolled students, when they split into smaller groups for the electives there might be cases in which one elective is selected by only 1-2 students. The faculty management should decide a minimum quota of students per elective



which if it is not reach the elective cannot be held and thus the students are move to another elective of their choice. All courses have 5 ECTS credits and a total of 120 ECTS credits are required to obtain the MSc degree in Sustainable Food Production Systems, where 90 ECTS credits are taken from the courses and 30 ECTS credits from the Master Thesis. The ET understands why this ECTS credit allocation is like this now, but recommends that the faculty management/heads of the program assess the student workload per each course every year in order to adjust the number of credits allocated to each discipline – it is highly improbable that all disciplines will require the same amount of workload.

The courses consist of lectures, seminars, practice, assignments and project proposals. The ratio between theory and practice will be 60% to 40%.

Beside the traditional form of teaching, there are some other modes of active teaching that will also be applied to this program and have proven to be very effective, such as “blended learning”, “problem based learning”, “flipped classroom”, student-led learning, etc. Although in the SER level 7 of learning outcomes was mentioned, the syllabi provided reveal different quality levels of course descriptions. The majority of syllabi are characterized by using active verbs for defining learning outcomes at the course level, but some course descriptions are developed in a very traditional way emphasizing mainly the provision of knowledge using inappropriate active verbs in learning outcomes, while in some courses, they were not even listed.

Perhaps the reason for this uneven description of learning outcomes is mainly a matter of wording and can be improved by making these parts more explicit in the course descriptions. The ET also observed that attendance is mandatory for most courses and is part of the evaluation system, which is not a common practice in an endeavor focused on learning outcomes.

The disciplines represented in the curriculum are provided in a logical flow and they meet the defined competencies at a general level. All in all, only some of the intended skills and competencies at the program level are presented in two short paragraphs, without learning outcomes at the study level.

As the main strength of this Master program is that it is the only program in Kosovo in this field, followed by that the study program is designed and linked to the private sector and that advanced scientific subjects are diversified and cover all aspects related to sustainable food production systems.

Although as true weaknesses of the SER concern the insufficient number of text books and materials in Albanian language, theoretical teaching more than necessary, insufficiently trained academic staff on modern teaching and lack of some specific laboratory equipment



for the FAB laboratories, during the online meetings the Expert team clearly recognized that both management and academic staff strive to improve them in the period until the beginning of the Master's study, however there is rather a short time left for this. In this regard, the collaboration and cooperation agreements that the faculty has with many companies in Peja and Dukagjini region will certainly be important and it opens the possibility of including internships in the curriculum.

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	X	



outcomes are explained and discussed with students from the perspective of their relevance to the students' development.		
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. The program is strongly advised to develop a coherent teaching strategy which contains a variety of teaching and learning formats that are appropriate for different types of learning outcomes, types and levels of competencies and different student groups.*
- 2. The university should put to value the experience of 2020-2021 and include e-learning in the teaching-learning process.*
- 3. Review all courses regarding a consistent, state of the art use of learning taxonomies and active verbs for defining learning outcomes.*



4. Consider redistribution of compulsory courses in other semesters and/or introduction of new compulsory courses.
5. Consider the possibility of a student internship becoming a regular part of the curriculum with an appropriate number of ECTS credits.
6. All written exams should be made anonymous in terms that examiner cannot identify the student. Only the anonymous code should appear for the examiner on each student exams papers in written exam.
7. More courses taught in English will contribute to strengthening internationalization allowing foreign students to follow the programme.
8. Intensifying research and innovative activities involving students.
9. Periodically reevaluate the student workload per discipline to reallocate the ECTS credits among disciplines in a more realistic manner.
10. Reevaluate the student workload per discipline and the no.of ECTS credits allocated to each discipline – e.g. reduce the ECTS credits of the final work.

## 2.5. Students

According to the SER, the enrolment in the Master Program "Sustainable Food Production Systems" is offered to all interested candidates who have completed Bachelor studies of 180 ECTS, and generally meet all the criteria set forth in the Law on Higher Education, the Statute of UHZ, the Regulation on Master Studies, Administrative Instruction (GRK) No.03 / 2018 on foreign languages in the second and third cycle program.

Admission requirements and procedures follow the procedures of the UHZ with the selection criteria being adapted to the needs of this program. The practice within the UHZ is that first entrance exam term is usually announced during July and Supplementary competition during August-September- since this is a new program, it will adjust its first admission session according to the calendar of KAA (depending on when the faculty receives the KAA decision of admission or not). The ET recommends that the FAB management start advertising for the program, clearly mentioning on the website which are the admission criteria and the fact that the exact date of the entrance exam will be announced during the summer, depending on the KAA decision. This way potential interested students could start preparing themselves for the entrance exam. However, there is no proof that the admission procedures and criteria are implemented objectively and fairly, though the QA structures could also monitor this aspect.





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The total number of students that will be enrolled in this program each year is 25 students and the quota was set by the Faculty management in line with the institutional resources for quality teaching. For now, this would mean that the MA program offers places for one third of the BA graduates of the same faculty. Since the number is not very high, the faculty management should consider intensifying its institutional efforts to support the students during their academic studies in order to ensure their successful graduation. Losing students during the two years of studies (due to them abandoning studies) could make the program financially unsustainable. The students, after completing all exams and defending their diploma thesis, will be awarded a University Degree - Master in "Sustainable Food Production Systems".

The Faculty has established an Electronic Management System (SEMS) for Students assessment and through this system students are always informed of all relevant matters as they receive all information on their official emails. The SER mentions that all regulations regarding the rights and obligations of students are published on the UHZ official website, however the ET could not find them all (it might be explained by them being actually published on the SEMS platform as students were aware of them being easily accessible).

In addition, the SER mentions that UHZ students are informed about their rights and obligations during the "Welcoming week" and through brochures summarizing the rights to the academic complaint issued by the UHZ administration. The ET recommends that this "Welcoming week" should be organized by the future students of this program also, in a format adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the University Statute the following methods are used to evaluate and define the academic success of students: examination, colloquium-periodic tests, workshop work, professional practice and practical test during exercises. The ET recommends the faculty to motivate the academic staff to offer periodic feedback to students regarding their progress in relationship with the pre-set learning outcomes.

Annual progress rates and student progress through courses are monitored and analysed to identify and provide assistance to any category of students who may have difficulties. The SER mentions that this is provided in accordance with Article 109 point 4 of the Statute, however, there should be a transparent institutional policy on dealing with students in special situations (e.g. medical leave or students who have a recent death in the family) and on how to ensure that they recover any missing lectures or exams.

After each exam period, the quality office makes statistics on the level of students' passing and at the end of each semester, the quality office issues statistics on the evaluation of professors by students through a questionnaire. On the number, date of the exam, and the evaluation criterion, students are informed through the course syllabus.

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The faculty should put to value the good collaboration with the industry that was already set-up during the design phase of the program and create practical stages and internship opportunities for the future students. QA mechanisms for the practical stages should also be developed as soon as possible. Advice on career development or mobility can be obtained by students at the university in the offices provided. The career office of the faculty/university could support the students of this new program to identify job opportunities.

Students upon graduation at Master level complete the statement on the originality of the work and their works are subject to strict plagiarism control. In the SER it is stated that UHZ has sanctioned acts of plagiarism, and these sanctions are set out in the UHZ Statute, Master Studies Regulation and Code of Ethics. During the online meeting the representatives said that an effective procedure has been developed in ensuring the originality of student work, however it seems to the ET more like an individual effort rather than an institutional procedure. Currently the greatest role and responsibility in this belongs to the academic staff, which can also contribute to the prevention of plagiarism with certain measures. For example, measures to prevent plagiarism could include teaching students about academic writing and correct ways to cite other authors/papers or to acquire an anti-plagiarism software for checking the final thesis. In terms of software that would be the best solution, the limiting factor is the Albanian language.

The UHZ has in place procedures dealing with student transfers from other programs and/or other institutions, based on the ECTS system. However, since this will be an unique program in the country, special attention should be granted to adapt these institutional procedures to the context and specificities of this particular program.

The UHZ has in function the tutorial system which as a mechanism helps to increase the quality and overcome the difficulties that students face in the learning process and each professor involved in the Master program has a 4 hours weekly consultation schedule. There is no reason to believe this will be different for this new program.

Within the UHZ and the FAB, students are represented in the Faculty Council and they are organized in Student Council. The ET recommends that the future students of this program will also be involved in these structures as well as QA structures at the level of the program/faculty, the committee of ethics and other decision-making bodies. It is important that all these structures include all stakeholders and allow the students to have a voice within the program/faculty/university since they are the beneficiaries of the educational process.





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 organizing students' recruitment. Admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied for all students.	X	
Standard 5.2. All students enrolled in the study program possess a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent document of study, according to MEST requirements.	X	
Standard 5.3. The study groups are dimensioned so as to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process.	X	
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	

**Compliance level:** Partially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. *The university is strongly recommended to establish a system to check corresponding examination papers and theses for plagiarism and take appropriate measures.*



2. *Consider review-ing the appealing procedure so that in encourage students to report situations in which their evaluation might be unfair, without making them loose their chance during that particular exam session.*
3. *Initiate international agreements to organize mobilities abroad for the students of this new program.*
4. *Motivate teachers to offer periodical/continuous feedback to students regarding their progress towards meeting the learning outcomes.*
5. *Within the new building provide sufficient capacity of tuition premises and premises in which student associations could meet or in which cultural activities could take place.*
6. *Organize the “Welcoming week” for the students (during 2021 adapt it to the requirements imposed by the rules of preventing COVID-19 pandemic.*
7. *Establish and make transparent an institutional policy on dealing with students in special situations who miss lectures and/or exams.*
8. *Make sure that the students of this program will benefit of all services already available within the university/faculty.*
9. *Adapt certain procedures to the needs and specificities of this particular program – e.g. the student transfer procedures, the QA procedures for the practical stages etc.*

## 2.6. Research

According to the University Strategy for Scientific Research 2019 - 202429, in which, among the objectives, is the opening and development of research programs, it is expected that all current resources for the development of a new Master study based on scientific research of academic staff are balanced.

Expectations for inclusion of teaching staff in research and academic activities are clearly defined and performance related to these expectations is considered in the criteria for staff evaluation and promotion. The discussion with academic Faculty members during the online meeting showed that academic staff is informed about the criteria for evaluating and promoting staff and considers them achievable. The ET feels that more institutional support and a reward system for performances in research would motivate and help the academic staff members to reach the internal standards regarding research and constantly improve their results.



In the SER states that each member of the academic staff at the Faculty of Agrobusiness at the beginning of the new academic year submits to the Deans the individual development plan that includes research and scientific activity for that academic year, determining the number of scientific papers that will be published in international scientific journals with impact factor, the number of international scientific conferences where he will take parts, number of research projects and other scientific and research activities. Although this maybe a motivating approach, in the end the most important are results of that plan that are considered during the performance appraisal process and during the appointment /promotion procedures of the academic staff. Therefore, it might be considered to omit that part of the dean's job and to focus on the results at the end of each year, not just during the appointment /promotion procedures.

The research plan at FAB is implemented within the overall research program at the University level, foreseen in the UHZ Strategic Plan (2020 - 2024).

According to standard 6.3 the faculty should have clear policies defining what is recognized as research. These should be consistent with international standards and established norms in the field of study of the evaluated program. However, the policies described by the faculty regarding the evaluation of research only comprise of general information, including draft regulations for the establishment of scientific institutes and scientific journals at the level of academic units, confirming compliance with the standards. Nevertheless, the academic staff seemed to know which are their responsibilities regarding their research activity. The ET recommends that these practices become clear and transparent institutional policies, that are easy to follow by everyone.

Over the past three years the FAB academic staff has published a solid number of scientific papers in international scientific journals/platforms, such as: WoS, Scopus, etc., which has influenced the overall results of the University, according to Webometrics. An insight into the list of publications of the academic staff who will be engaged in the Master program (SER), shows that almost each academic staff member has produced at least an average of one scientific publication within the last three years, except 4 staff members who have not published papers since 2017 or even 2013.

In addition to the scientific and academic research, the FAB and its academic staff are implementing two joint projects with other regional and international universities and from both of them (STEP and BUGI), the FAB has benefited in several ways, including: support for the development of the MSc study program, participation in various international activities abroad, a grant for a greenhouse and support for the supply of laboratory equipment (at the procurement stage).



At the beginning of 2020, the Steering Council of UHZ has approved the Code of Ethics for its academic staff and students, in which are created the necessary policies regarding intellectual property and clear procedures of defined in relation to scientific research activities and the commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.

In the SER states that the Faculty of Agribusiness in collaboration with the Faculty of Business and the Faculty of MTHM organizes the International Scientific Conference entitled "Promoting Sustainable Development in Business, Tourism and Agribusiness in the Balkans" where hundreds of researchers attend it, but the frequency of its maintenance is not stated.

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



<i>Standard 6.9.</i> Policies are established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.	X	
<i>Standard 6.10.</i> Students are engaged in research projects and other activities	X	

**Compliance level:** Partially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. *Develop a research strategy at the faculty level including clear funding opportunities. The Advisory board with stakeholders from the industry could contribute to setting up more focused research strategy.*
2. *The study program needs to add the scientific/applied research objectives based on the priority areas of research and an interaction between research and educational activities.*
3. *The program should develop and implement measures for better involvement of students in research activities. E.g. stimulate students to apply for the independent research grant and funds from the external funding, donors and projects.*
4. *Establishment of a research service office at the faculty level would support academic staff in grant acquisition, project management and publishing.*
5. *Motivate and valorize staff to apply and participate in international projects and publish in high impact per reviewed journals.*
6. *Intensify networking with international universities in the organisation of conferences.*

**2.7. Infrastructure and resources**

The financial plan of the Master program is part of a three year university level financial plan prepared on the basis of a Medium-Term Expenditure Framework at the country level that will demonstrate the sustainability of the study program for the next three years. For the first year the University budget is approved, while for the other two years are estimates based on the strategic plan.

In the building of the Faculty of Agribusiness there are an amphitheatre, two rooms, four laboratories and offices for management, administration and academic staff.



Since the currently available facilities meet the minimum requirements for a quality and effective curriculum management, the Faculty of Agribusiness has made an agreement with the National Institute of Agriculture in Peja and with the food enterprises operating in the Peja region to enable students and teachers access to the most advanced laboratories of aforementioned institutions.

The lack of infrastructure will be partially solved by implementing activities within the STEP project because these activities also support the implementation of Master of Sciences on “Sustainable Food Production Systems” in terms of provision of laboratory-infrastructure preconditions/procurement of laboratory-instrumental equipment.

In line with the activities and obligations within the STEPS project and WP5, particularly the activity 5.2 Development of research labs, the FAB timely initiated procedural and technical (training, small-scale demonstrations) activities for the development of two types of laboratories “Food Quality Control Lab”, and “Food Production Systems Management Lab”.

The FAB shares the library with the Faculty of Law where the library is located. In the Agrobusiness library there are 159 book titles, 55 seats and 15 computers. A list of 16 online libraries that were granted access by students and academic staff during 2020 was provided, which will which will be largely extended to 2021. The FAB does not have its own IT room, but students have at their disposal IT room located at the Business Faculty.

The Electronic Student Management System (SEMS) provides access to various materials such the EBSCO e-library as lectures, syllabuses, schedules and various announcements for the students and the academic staff. Additionally, this system utilizes the SEMS interface through the Google Platform (Google Meet) giving students, professors and assistants access to distance learning during pandemic situation. The institutional efforts to ensure access to more international journals or article databases should be intensified both for supporting teaching and learning, as well as research activities.

In frame of STEPS projects 10 PC were purchased and installed in a lab where 20 students will practice. During 2021 the project will developed the online platform for the use of teachers and students, which will be in two languages: Albanian and English. Moreover, the library benefited from useful book donations and such opportunities should be looked after (intensified).

The infrastructure and facilities of the FAB is adopted to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

In the University Strategic plan 2019-2024 it is foreseen to build the new building of the Faculty of Art which will enable the creation of new premises and offices for the needs of the Faculty of Agrobusiness.





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 utilization 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	
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 recognized 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		X



publications and periodicals, according to the stated mission.		
Standard 7.6. The infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the program is adapted to students with special needs	X	

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. *Applying for projects that invest in infrastructure development and the purchase of new, advanced equipment.*
2. *Foresee sufficient premises and offices within the new building for the successful implementation of all forms of teaching and learning.*
3. *Provide continuous access to students and academic staff to a number of online libraries, international journal databases and recent research results.*
4. *Encourage the academic staff to publish learning materials for their courses in Albanian and/or English*
5. *Continuously increase the number of new books in the library, especially in English.*





### 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 validation event. 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 design of the programmes for the upcoming cohorts of students. Having considered the documentation provided, the resources put forward by the University of Haxhi Zeka 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	Substantially compliant
Academic Staff	Substantially compliant
Educational Process Content	Substantially compliant
Students	Partially compliant
Research	Partially compliant
Infrastructure and resources	Substantially compliant
<b>Overall Compliance</b>	<b>Substantially compliant</b>

The overall compliance is assessed by the experts at the level of **Substantially Compliant**. The program is unique and its relevance for the Kosovar community is well-argued. It benefits of dedicated teachers, the opportunity to have been developed in cooperation with international experts and universities, as well as the commitment of the faculty management to ensure its qualitative implementation and sustainability.

The ET appreciates the efforts put-up by the heads of the program in preparing it.

However, the following recommendations need to be considered until the next external evaluation for the programme's re-accreditation:

- 1. Improving the SER:** future SERs should be accompanied by concrete examples of the way the program meets a certain standard, as well as relevant annexes when they are very important to exemplify the meeting of a particular standard.
- 2. Strive for greater autonomy of the faculty by establishing regulations for all important aspects of activities at the faculty level** that will increase the efficiency and quality of the



implementation of faculty activities. This will allow the QA system to better address the specificities of the faculty and its programs.

3. **Completing the list of KPIs** (quality standards) for the assessment of the teachers performance with criteria referring to:
  - Regular module monitoring/ review processes and participation in course team meetings (e.g. Course Committee);
  - Student performance data, career progression and feedback from Alumni
    - Participation in faculty learning and teaching events and conferences;
  - Peer observation of teaching as required (with development of appropriate observation criteria);
  - Staff appraisal in terms of identifying staff development requirements;
  - Staff membership of the educational and professional bodies;
  - Staff involvement with learning and teaching research initiatives.
  
4. **Effectively deploying diverse methods to fulfil performance management function** in full. For example: introducing teaching observation that should be collaborative and centred around a professional and supportive dialogue. This can particularly be achieved when design of the process includes planning, presentation, teaching approach and aids to share good practices in teaching (as well indicate one's performance). Finally, it is important to assess student response to one's teaching (e.g. general atmosphere, level of student engagement, etc.) and to constantly offer feedback to students regarding their progress towards meeting the learning outcomes, so that together with the student the teacher can develop individual strategies for improving this progress.
  
5. **Developing a differentiated catalogue of intended learning outcomes** which is complemented by significant explanations on how these learning outcomes and the associated competences are to be acquired by students (relate to the relevant descriptor levels of the European Qualification Framework).
  
6. **Strengthening e-learning and online teaching** starting from the experience the teachers gained during the COVID-19 pandemic. Both approaches should be integrated systematically in the teaching strategies. In order to reach an extensive deployment of online teaching methods, an extensive program of teacher training offering appropriate courses for teachers should be implemented, standards for e-learning and online-teaching



should be defined and made parts of the course evaluation and of the self-assessment of teachers.

7. The FAB has to **develop clear research strategy** that will include the priority areas of research, an interaction between research and educational activities, satisfying student engagement, establishment of a research service office, etc. In order to reach level of recognition of the FAB as a center of scientific excellence, it is necessary to acquire larger funds and projects and to conduct high quality research. In that direction, the FAB and the Ministry should develop a strategy to ensure that state-of-art equipment is a key strategic research area.
8. **Internationalization** is the key to the ambition to close the gap to the higher ranking institutions. For this, the FAB needs to have long term ambition and seek to improve in publications in high impact journals, increase international exchange of students and academic staff and strengthen the research funding from external resources.
9. **Rigorously monitor the implementation of all the above mentioned recommendations** (as part of the QA system).
10. **Implementing the program in the format discussed and evaluated by the Expert team** (the responsibility for the program belongs to UHZ), while considering implementation in a joint way only later. During the first years of accreditation, the students could benefit from internal mobility in the Universum College or from invited lecturers from Universum College.

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the Master programme Sustainable Food Production Systems offered by University of Haxhi Zeka is **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 **25** students to be enrolled on the programme.



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### Expert Team

**Chair**

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	<b>Prof. Dr. Tenure Drazenka Komes</b>	<b>19th April 2021</b>
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)

**Member**

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	<b>Delia Gologan</b>	<b>19th April 2021</b>
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)