PBHE "Universum College"
Programme Evaluation
BSc. in Computer Science

REACCREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

Zagreb, May 2021

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: April 27th 2021

Expert Team (ET) members:

- Prof. Dr. Damir Kalpić

Sources of information for the Report:

- *Accreditation manual*
- *KAA Manual Annex 4.4. Template of the External Review Report for programs_09.07.2018*
- *Sample of a Final evaluation report*
- *Self-evaluation report - Program Evaluation, BSc. in Computer Science, PBHE "Universum College", January 2021.*
- *CVs*
- *Syllabus*
- *KAA Manual Annex 4.4. Template of the External Review Report for programs_09.07.2018*
- *Sample Compliance calculation - Banking and Finance BSc.Prishtina Univer...*
- *Links to Universum documents of web*
- *Virtual visit and meeting according to Site visit schedule*

Criteria used for program evaluation:

- *Accreditation manual*
- *Personal experience in evaluations*
- *Personal experiences as university professor*

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1.2. Site Visit Program

Programme Accreditation Procedure at Universum College
Date: 27 April 2021

Expert Team

- Prof. Dr. Damir Kalpić

Coordinators of KAA

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

Site Visit Program

27th April

09.00 – 09.40 Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated *(no slide presentation is allowed, the meeting is intended as a free discussion)*
- Suat Berisha – Chairman of Board of Trustees
- Alejtin Berisha – President of Universum College
- Filip Ruxhi – Vice President for Innovation and Extranal Relations

09:45 – 10:25 Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff
- Arlinda Qehaja – Vice President for Operations of Universum College
- Uran Raci – Deputy CEO of Universum College
- Atdhe Zogaj – Head of Quality Assurance Office of Universum College
- Qendresa Kukaj -

10:25 – 11:15 Lunch break

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11:15 – 12:15   Meeting with the heads of the study programme
- Arianit Krypa – Responsible person of the program
- Agron Bislimi - Responsible person of the program
- Muzafer Shala - Responsible person of the program
- Hadis Karatashi - Responsible person of the program

12:20 – 13:20   Meeting with teaching staff

- Mendim Mustafa – Lecture
- Muse Rama - - Lecture
- Meriton Kabashi - Lecture
- Florina Lutfiu – Lecture
- Qendresa Kukaj - Lecture
- Armend Berisha - Lecture
- Besart Prebreza- Lecture
- Rrezart Prebreza- Lecture

13:25 – 14:05   Meeting with students
- Rinor Kadriu – Student
- Maltin Gerxhaliu – Student
- Celik Hasani– Student

- Djellza Lushi – Student
- Xhenis Behluli Student
- Qemajl Rudi Student
- Albert Konushevci Student
- Bardha Islami Student

14.10 – 14:50   Meeting with graduates
- Qendrim Rexha – Alumni
- Laberion Zebica – Alumni
- Labeat Matoshi – Alumni
- Rrona Bunjaku – Alumni

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- Maltin Sahiti - Alumni

14:55 – 15:35   Meeting with employers of graduates

15:40 – 15:50   Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts

15:50 – 16:00   Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program

No	Study programs	Experts	Responsible persons of study programs			
1	Computer Science/ BSc, (Reaccreditation)	Prof. Dr. Damir Kalpić	Agron Bislimi	Ardian Gojani	Arianit Krypa	Mandeep Chaudhary

Other information

Overall instructions for HEIs

1. Each meeting should be attended by maximum 6 persons;
2. The students selected for the meeting should reflect a diversity in terms of fields of study, programme, study cycle, year of study, students with special needs if any, etc;
3. The teaching staff selected for the meeting should reflect a diversity in terms of faculties and programmes, full-time and part time, local and international, etc;
4. The students, graduates and employers of graduates should not be employed at the institution;
5. Anyone whose attendance won't be agreed in advance with KAA and the Expert Team will be asked to leave the interview session;
6. Nametags are to be provided for all people attending the meetings.

Contacts of the participants from KAA:

Shkelzen Gerxhaliu – 044 836 831
Arianit Krasniqi – 045 499 951

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

A detailed insight in the institution and programme under evaluation can be found in the Self-evaluation report - Program Evaluation, BSc. in Computer Science, PBHE "Universum College", January 2021. Here will be presented a brief overview. Universum College was established in March 2004 in Prishtina and Ferizaj in order to provide high quality, accessible and affordable educational opportunities to Kosovar and international students through teaching excellence, life-long learning, applied research and partnership building, attempting to form the students to be thoughtful, responsible and successful.

Among the offered studies, here is of primary interest of reaccreditation BSc. in Computer Science, which could be followed by the proposed MSc. in Data Science and Analytics.

Universum College is the most internationalized higher education institution in Kosovo, co-operating with respected educational institutions in the world. The education uses digital technology and Universum College is ranked in Top 1000 of the best Business Schools in the world and MA in Management programme is placed in top 17 best management programmes of Leadership and Management in Southeast Europe.

There is growing evidence about the positive correlation between effective leadership and continuous improvement of the Institution. It is attempted to apply "Leading at Every Level" model to provide faculty and academic leaders with information about the management and leadership expectations, available tools and resources for ongoing learning and professional development. They are prepared for managing and leading others in project or research teams, committees, or while supervising staff members or graduate students. The structure of the Universum College top management act is based on the principles of respect for normative acts, academic freedom, and refraining from political agenda.

During the 2020/2021, Universum College has established a new leadership Department of Innovation and External Relations. Each department consists of an Academic Director (leader) and Programme Coordinator. There exist lists of responsibilities for each of them.

Graduates from the proposed graduate Computer Science programme should be able to:
● think critically and analyse real problems
● find, evaluate, and use resources
● work collaboratively
● demonstrate versatility
● demonstrate problem solving abilities

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● communicate effectively

● function well in a global community

● deal with uncertainty and diversity

● continue learning after graduation

The teaching-learning process is well described in the mentioned Self-evaluation report and should provide proper expected outcomes.

2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

The declared mission of Universum College is to support their students to become good citizens, successful and broad-minded leaders and thrive in Revolution 4.0 of the digital and globalized era.

The Universum College mission is building upon the following strategic pillars:

● Student and Learning at the Centre

● Quality Improvement

● Innovation and Entrepreneurship

● Digital Transformation

● Internationalization

Their institutional objectives are:

● To provide high quality, accessible and affordable educational opportunities to students;

● To encourage personal and social development of students through activities outside the classroom;

● To provide students with an understanding and appreciation of world culture;

● To develop the College as a life-long learning centre;

● To continue development as the most internationalized HEI in Kosovo;

● To continue the development of dual-study programmes with local and international companies;

● To foster applied research that is done in close partnership with the industry;

●To incorporate digital tools in teaching and student learning

The detailed and well-written description of the strategic pillars can be found in Self-evaluation report - Program Evaluation, BSc. in Computer Science, PBHE "Universum College", January 2021.

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Tables of compliance to standards were copied from the Sample Compliance Calculation but with modified Compliances corresponding to estimations for the Universum BSc. in Computer Science. The first one is presented below. Before it, a table with comments on some of the standards is included.

Standard	Comment
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.	Public availability was not always visible.
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.	Certain Standard's requirements formulated as "available to **all** staff and students" , "**All** staff and students comply…" and "**All** policies, regulations…" appear exaggerated and in practice hardly achievable. It would be successful if instead of the required "all", e.g. only 90% were satisfied in practice.
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.	According to the statements of alumni, results of student enquiries were promptly used in order to improve some of the noticed weaker points. They were studying in the first 3 years cycle and witnessed considerable improvements being constantly performed.

Standard	Compliance*	
	Yes	No
Standard 1.1. The study programme 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	

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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 levels were defined with 4 discrete possible values**:**
- Fully compliant
- Substantially compliant
- Partially compliant
- Non-compliant

using the following guidelines, as required by the KAA Accreditation manual:

1.1. fully compliant – all the standards included in a particular general area are met. If the institution exceeds the standards and meets some of the performance indicators, commendations are appropriate. This recognition provides the institution motivation to pursue even greater levels of excellence in their quality management practices;

1.2. substantially compliant – 70 – 90% of the standards included in a particular general area are met, while the others are not yet in line with stated expectations. Also, there is potential for requirements of the standards not to be satisfied before the next review (examples may include the loss of key faculty members due to retirements, declining student enrolment, or projected reductions in financial or personnel resources, and others);

1.3. partially compliant - 30 – 60% of the standards included in a particular general area are met. Also, the institution lacks the strength of compliance with the standards to ensure that the quality of the institution will not be compromised;

1.4. non-compliant – less than 30% of the standards included in a particular general area are met. The institution does not satisfy the requirements of the standards.

With 5 "**YES**" and 1 "**NO**" in the above table measuring the **Mission, objectives and administration** the Compliance level would be **5/6 = 0.83 or 83%**, implying "**Substantially compliant**".

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ET recommendations:

1. *Monitor the labour market needs and adapt by offering new courses. Also some existing courses may appear to become obsolete.. If in doubt, declare the new courses as elective and likewise declare some existing compulsory courses as elective. The students' interest will show what they find attractive.*
2. *Introduce extracurricular courses to offer them to interested stakeholders.*
3. *Continue with your successful internationalisation efforts, despite possible current obstacles.*

2.2. Quality management

During the independent meetings with students, with graduate students (alumni), with employers of the alumni, as foreseen in the Site visit schedule, high level of satisfaction has been noticed by all the stakeholders. It was accentuated that constant improvement efforts are performed, which do show visible positive effects.

The students are very satisfied with their studies and with the achieved results. Likewise, the employers are eager to employ the students even before they had completed their study.
There were present students who already work in parallel with the study, and to not enjoy any additional conveniences due to their remarkable additional efforts.

It is worthwhile mentioning that they eagerly expect introduction of corresponding MSc. studies on the same institution. They explicitly expressed preference to continue their studies on Universum, if possible. This is a strong motivation to Universum for introduction of the planned MSc. studies of Data Science and Analysis. Some students expressed the wish to go abroad but intend to return home after having acquired additional knowledge.

In the Self-evaluation report, the declared "Number of Students per Year" was put to 400. This is a relatively high number which may fit the demand on the market but Universum management must be aware that one of the greatest assets of a higher education institution is the high quality of students who enrol. By inadvertently increasing the number of enrolled students, the education process drops in quality. It is not only due to a less favourable teacher / student ratio but also due to the dropping average quality with increased number of students. To maintain same excellency, much more educational effort must be invested to achieve the same results with somewhat weaker student population. Currently Universum can boast having among the best students locally available. Unfortunately, this number is biologically limited and cannot be artificially raised to satisfy the labour market requirements.

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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 (e.g. 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: 8/9 = 0.89 = 89% ≈ 90%, Fully compliant

ET recommendations:
1. *Collect information from your Erasmus exchange students about their experience gained with quality management activities in different countries.*
2. *Standard 2.6. should be modified rather than literally complied to. Unfavourable results for some teachers should not be immediately publicly visible, before efforts for improvement have not been attempted.*

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3. *In order not to jeopardise the quality of your students and consequently graduates, keep the enrolment quota relatively low, but continue to supply the labour market with high-quality professionals. Therefore, the suggested enrolment quota is 200 students per year.*

2.3. Academic staff

A private institution has presumably more freedom than the state-owned ones, to attract and keep excellent teachers. However, the highest academic rank in this field at Universum is currently assistant professor. This seems to be mostly the case because only state-owned university currently enjoys the right for academical promotion. It is probably only the question of time when private universities will have to adopt the same procedures. The situation with staff may deteriorate when Kosovo joins the EU. The brain-drain will be difficult to control. There is no simple cure in this regard, but one should not be taken by surprise. Better financial stimuli for the staff of a private institution can be hardly expected only from tuition in a not too rich country, where good state-owned institutions require no tuition. However, a welcome possibility is to take advantage of the allowed and stimulating Universum policy to engage in non-trivial scientific and professional projects for local needs.

A hint if the local legislation allows, would be to honour the researchers' financial contributions to the Universum and to their Department, in addition to the standard honouring of publications. We apologise if Universum is already following that practice and we had missed that information.

The fact that Universum can lead its own policy and favour engagement in projects can bring certain advantage compared to state owned universities, compensating the intrinsic disadvantage in the students' obligation to pay tuition.

Regarding the staff, a general objection is that their CVs are not presented in the same standardised format. Some of them are partly or only in Albanian. Some mention remarkable achievements in education, in real-life projects, experience abroad and publications, while some have no such references, or have missed to mention them.

It appears to be common knowledge that highly educated computer scientists are in short supply, not only in Kosovo but likewise elsewhere. It is for us impossible to check the compliance to Standard 3.3. as we cannot dispose of all the higher education data in Kosovo and in vicinity, to check all their simultaneous engagements. Fulfilment of Standard 3.5. is

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difficult to check but due to known short supply of such staff, it can be expected that the requirement cannot be always satisfied. Regarding the Standard 3.8. academic staff evaluations are not publicly exposed, except for top achievers. This can be regarded as correct behaviour and as common also elsewhere. Negative inquiry outcomes could prematurely ruin reputation of some teachers, so a chance should be given to them to improve the impression they leave at the student audience. Therefore, the practice at Universum is acceptable, even if it does not formally comply to the respective standard.

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		X

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occur on a formal basis at least once each year. The results of the evaluation are made publicly available.		
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: 7/10 = 70%, Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Prescribe a standard form for CVs and provide that the English versions are compulsory present. CVs should also contain achievements in real-life projects. It would be useful to add some information regarding the financial effects for Universum of individual's engagement in projects. If for any reason the amount of money would not be appropriate for public information, maybe relative categories from 0 (nothing) to 5 (plenty) could be introduced, where the conversion of category to amount of money may remain Universum's secret but it could influence the staffer's status.*

2. *Support the Faculty staff initiatives to solve local challenging real-life problems and encourage publishing their achievements in real-life projects, while employed in Universum, as papers featuring case studies in relevant journals.*

3. *Occasionally engage distinguished professionals from industry to provide invited lectures for the students and/or to be co-mentors for students' theses dealing with real-life problems from practice.*

2.4. Educational process content

General remark is that the courses descriptions are mostly well-written but present shortened versions. Weekly plan (the distribution of classes) is completely missing. ECTS points must be looked for in the Self-evaluation report. There is a synchronisation problem. The courses in the folder Syllabus do not perfectly match the courses in Self-evaluation report pp 60-61. Mathematics for computer science I & II cannot be found in Syllabus.

The recommendation in the previous External review Report was:

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"Consider the possibility of replacing Calculus I and Calculus II by more relevant courses. Besides of more deep treatment of discrete mathematics (including number theory), some other important areas of mathematics (for example, numerics or data analysis) and mathematics-related topics (for example, modelling and/or simulation) could be discussed. As the study programme is called Computer Science, the courses in mathematics should first of all serve the courses in computer science, not so much follow the intrinsic logic of mathematics.

The Universum's reaction in Self-evaluation report was:

"We have melted Calculus 1 and 2 in only one subject, named Mathematics for Computer Science 2. We have prepared an updated syllabus that will treat relevant topics suitable for Computer Science students. Also, we have divided Discrete Structures in two parts, in this way we will discuss important areas of mathematics."

This reaction corresponds only partially to the recommendation and it is visible in Self-evaluation report, but not in Syllabus. In Syllabus there is no Mathematics for Computer Science, there is still Calculus II. Two parts of new Discrete Structures do not fully correspond to the recommendation nor to the course name. Introduction of a course "Probability and statistics" could be maybe more appropriate. A natural continuation of study at Universum would be MSc. in Data Science and Analytics and "Probability and statistics" could be one of the missing prerequisite courses that could help also students from other fields to become able to join that MSc. study.

Introduction of numerical methods, modelling, simulation, optimisation, soft methods like genetic algorithm, could be useful suggestions for the future.

The course Introduction to Programming and Web Technologies has the learning outcome "Students will be able to identify the most prevalent computer programming languages" is not very impressive and should be substituted with e.g.:

"Students will be able to write independently a program fulfilling a required simple functionality".

ECTS points should result from estimation of STUDENT's time consumption, not the teacher's. Although Universum declares that 1 ECTS corresponds to 30 hours of work, it is also formally acceptable that in some cases it is only 25. Therefore, it is not a formal error. However, it is advisable that the estimate is as realistic and relatively uniform as possible. It

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is also useful while exchanging students, in order that they mostly encounter what they had expected.

Social science/humanities courses usually require less efforts for students. 4 ECTS could be more appropriate for the following courses:

•	Ethics and Technology
•	Entrepreneurship
•	Society and Technology

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		X

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studies. This may be done through language training prior to the commencement of the program.		
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 KAA 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 = 9/12 = 75% , Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Synchronise the syllabus with Self-evaluation report and include Weekly planning.*
2. *Organise lectures from industry.*
3. *Organise lectures on how to become an entrepreneur.*

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4. *Organise lectures by CEOs and company owners.*
5. *Introduce a course on Agile Software Development Methods.*
6. *Introduce extracurricular courses for industry.*
7. *Introduce a regular but also as an extracurricular course "Probability and Statistics" for employees and for future students willing to enrol in MSc. in Data Science and Analytics, but who are lacking respective knowledge.*

2.5. Students

There is a clear and formally adopted admission procedure at the institutional level that the study programme respects when organizing students' recruitment. No evidence was found that admission requirements would not be consistently and fairly applied for all students (S. 5.1.). All students enrolled in the study programme possess a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent document of study, according to MEST requirements (S. 5.2.).

Considering the information gathered form Self-evaluation report and meeting with students andalumni:

- the study groups are dimensioned to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process (S. 5.3.). The academic staff that participated in the evaluation visit demonstrated a good understanding of student-centred learning.
- At Universum College, the following are considered as academic misconduct and dishonesty:
  - o Plagiarism
  - o Multiple Submission
  - o Collusion
  - o Cheating in Examinations
- feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments is given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance and software tools if needed (S. 5.4.).
- Flexibilities consist of flexible study and lecture hours.
- academic staff is available at scheduled times for consultation and advice to students. Adequate tutorial assistance is provided to ensure understanding and ability to apply learning (S. 5.11.).
- It cannot be confirmed that are institutional mechanisms established for monitoring and coordinating student workload across courses as well as for monitoring year-to-year progression rates and program completion rates. However, it would be beneficial for to establish these procedures that might also help in estimating more realistically the respective number of ECTS points.
- According to the meetings information, 60%-70% of students complete their studies in time. That is not bad but it could maybe even be increased if for passing a year all the respective courses had to be passed.

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- Tutoring and workshops are organised for the students and their success is monitored in order to launch corrective measures if needed.
- Universum College has established clear regulations for the assessment criteria which describe the multitude of assessment methods and strategies which are employed by the college academic staff with the mission of ensuring a fair student assessment that contributes to the process of academic excellence. In all courses there are various assessment which serve as means for all students to demonstrate their achievement and show that they mastered the course content. Practically, this means that student's final grade is not entirely dependent on his/her final exam. Detailed description can be found in the Self-evaluation report.
- On the Visit meeting the students expressed positive remarks regarding the dual study.
- The Career Office is interdisciplinary and offers a variety of services:
    - Career counselling
    - Training & workshops
    - Networking [Employer Connection]
    - Psycho-social counselling
    - Services for alumni

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 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

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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: 8/11 = 0.727 ≈ 73%, Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:
1. *Establish procedures for monitoring and publishing year-to-year progression rates and program completion rates. Collect student completion rates at the study programme level and include this aspect among quality indicators.*
2. *Establish procedures for monitoring and coordinating student workload across courses and, if necessary, modify the respective ECTS points.*
3. *Monitor the academic or professional fields for which students are being prepared on a continuing basis with necessary adjustments made in the program and in text and reference materials to ensure continuing relevance and quality.*
4. *Organise students' visits to workplace environments.*
5. *Continue the support to dual studies.*
6. *Introduce lecturing of some courses in English, eligible for visiting students but also the domestic students should be admitted. It would be a step towards international studies.*

2.6. Research

Universum states in the Self-evaluation report that it is not a research-intensive institution, but it sees itself primarily as a teaching institution. The research however does take place. It reflects the current strengths of the institution and illustrates how applied research is used to strengthen the study programmes and to keep their curriculum up to date with the recent developments in

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respective industries. Universum's strategic investment plan foresees to increase the research fund to comply with the needs of the current labour market. They intend further expansion of their research range, quality, and products.

Universum declares to be implementing an integrated teaching, research, and staff development policy by making it obligatory for staff to spend a substantial proportion of their working time in conducting research. This will give students the opportunity to participate in ongoing research along with their teachers. Focus will be on applied research and creation of knowledge.

To prepare industry-ready graduates, relevant job-specific skills are needed, provision of appropriate industry engagement, understanding of responsibilities and practice of working in the respective industry. The College designs programmes that provide students with practical learning opportunities, while having direct contact with industries and including research activities paired with publishing opportunities.

The above Universum's statements are a sound base for further activities. The already achieved wide co-operation abroad and in Kosovo is a proof that the applied strategy is effective and efficient.

Leading and participating in projects with the specified research topics that partially match their teaching topics should be included and accentuated in Universum teaching staff's CVs.

More publications could be expected but it is important to maintain the practice that concrete relevant research is the principal goal and publications are a by-product of it, and not the research's only goal. It must be mentioned that some of the most productive researchers have spent time abroad and published there, while not being affiliated to Universum.

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	

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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 6.9/6.8. 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 6.10. Policies are established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.	X	
Standard 6.11. Students are engaged in research projects and other activities.	X	

Compliance level: 7/11 = 0.636 ≈ 64%, Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Make sure that all the full time employed academic staff publishes under the name of the Universum.*
2. *Encourage academic staff to include in their teaching information about their research and scholarly activities that are relevant to the study courses they teach, together with other significant research developments in the field.*

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3. *Define procedures for the commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students (Intellectual Property Policy).*
4. *Develop mechanisms for students' engagement in applied research projects and other activities, monitor the outputs, outcomes, and impact.*
5. *Continue with successful policy of international co-operation, enforce research with colleagues in other institutions and in the international community, and monitor the outputs, outcomes, and impact.*
6. *Consider the organization of scientific sessions with the involvement of teaching staff, researchers, students, and graduates.*
7. *Consider further enforcing of strategies for identifying and capitalizing on the expertise of teaching staff and students in providing research and development services to the community.*
8. *Consider monitoring and supporting staff's contribution to attracting financial resources through applied projects and products. Consider including the staff's capacity to generate such financial returns in the individual performance review system.(As already recommended in Chapter 2.4. Recommendations)*

2.7. Infrastructure and resources

Unfortunately, we could not observe the Faculty premises in situ, but according to multiple sources, they seem to be excellent.

Having in mind intrinsic economic instabilities and unexpected problems on the global level, like the current COVID-19 pandemic, hardly can anybody guarantee the Standard 7.1 long-term and Standard 7.2 fulfilment in three years from now.

Supposedly the requests in 7.5. cannot be satisfied to each detail but "YES" prevails. Literature in domestic language usually is lacking, but learning English is a necessity.

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

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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**	
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 = 4/6 = 67%≈70%, Substantially compliant

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ET recommendations:

1. *Missing literature in Albanian should not be regarded as a serious problem. It can happen that while a textbook is being translated, it becomes obsolete. Nowadays, practically every professional in Computing must be fluent in English and able to work in international environment. If necessary, provide additional courses in English.*
2. *Support attempts to attract foreign students by holding some lectures in English. Domestic students can also apply.*
3. *Provide literature considered interesting for specific future employments.*

4. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, physical presence at Universum was not possible, so one had to rely more on written materials and meetings via video link.

Some recommendations in each of the chapters are given. The impression is positive, and it is obvious that the Study has been adequately polished during the first 3 years cycle. If you continue keeping the motivation high and by attracting the best student population and by promoting co-operation with local industry but also with institutions and companies abroad, using also the possibility to work on-line, the study has favourable perspective. It will also become an attractive prerequisite for the planned MSc. in Data Science and Analytics.

International co-operation, schooling and working abroad are very useful and usually attractive so that our most important recommendation would be to motivate your outgoing quality staff and students to plan a return to their homeland, making it more prosperous.

Overall compliance:

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

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

In conclusion, in line with the Manual requirements, the Expert Team recommends **to accredit** the program.

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that according to our knowledge and information Universum is an excellent, well internationally connected institution, and the proposed syllabus for accreditation reflects a good study but it lacks some required information like Weekly planning and full synchronisation among course descriptions in Syllabus and in Self-evaluation report.

I understand the urgent need on the labour market for Universum Computer Science alumni. However, increasing the enrolment quota over certain number, drops the quality, as of student population so of the education. It may even happen that while enrolling more, less of them graduates. I believe that the programme can optimally proceed if enrolling not more than 250 students per year. Under this condition it has been found that **BSc. in Computer Science** offered by **PBHE "Universum College"** is *Substantially compliant,* with the standards included in the *KAA Accreditation manual* and, therefore, it can be recommended *to accredit* the study programme for a duration of *3 years* with a number of **250** students to be enrolled in the programme each year.

Expert Team

Chair

Professor emeritus Damir Kalpić, PhD   7 May 2021

_____

(Signature)   (Print Name)   (Date)

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