UBT COLLEGE PRISHTINA

INSTITUTIONAL

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

February 21, 2022

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Context

Due to pandemic restrictions, the review visit was conducted online. The expert team (ET) was provided with relevant documentation before the visit and was provided with the video of premises after the visit. The support by Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) was very efficient throughout the whole evaluation process.

Date of site visit: *04 FEB.2022*

Expert Team (ET) members:

- *Prof. Dr. Olgun Cicek, YODAK*
- *PhD. Maiki Udam, University of Tartu*
- *Ms. Marija Vasilevksa, Student expert*

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- *Ilirjana Ademaj Ahmeti, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring*
- *Shkelzen Gerxhaliu, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring*
- *Kastriot Ilazi, Senior Officer for IT*

Sources of information for the Report:

- *Self-evaluation report and other documents of the UBT College provided prior to the site visit*
- *Interviews during the site visit*
- *Video on the UBT premises*
- *Additional documents provided upon the request of the expert team after the site visit*

Criteria used for institutional and program evaluations

- Accreditation Manual of KAA

1.1. Site visit schedule

4th of February 2022

09.00 – 10.25	Meeting with the management of the institution
10.30 – 11.30 services	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative
11.30 – 12.30	Lunch break (to be provided at the evaluation site)
12.35 – 13.35	Meeting with the heads of faculties/study programs
13.40 – 14.30	Meeting with teaching staff
14.35 – 15.25	Meeting with students
15.30 – 16.20	Meeting with graduates
16.25 – 17.10	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders
17.10 – 17.25	Internal meeting – Expert Team and KAA
17.25 – 17.35	Closing meeting with the management of the institution

A brief overview of the UBT COLLEGE:

UBT College was built on the experience of the Institute of Enterprise Engineering and Management (IEME) in 2004. Studies in UBT are provided in three broad areas: (1) ICT, and natural science, (2) Engineering, manufacturing and construction and (3) social science, which are divided into 44 study programmes. The number of students is about 10 000. UBT has 20 academic units and offices and contact points in all regions of Kosovo as well as abroad (Austria, Hungary). UBT is accredited as an institution since 2009.

The governance of UBT is regulated by the Statute of the institution. As a private bearer of higher education, UBT statutory regulations respond to the requirements and practices sanctioned by the Law on Higher Education, the Administrative Instruction for the Accreditation of Private Bearers of Higher Education (PBHE), Administrative Instruction for the Licensing of PBHE, Administrative Instruction for Business Registration of the Ministry of Trade and Employment Law of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. UBT is governed by: UBT Governing Board, Academic Council, President and Executive Council. Every statutory body has standing and ad-hoc structures, sub-committees and working groups. The Governing Board is collectively responsible for the management and control of affairs of the College and for ensuring that an effective system of internal control and representation is implemented in the institution.

UBT College is part of the wider UBT Ecosystem. Its main products and service relate to (i) higher education and research, (ii) executive academy for professional development, (iii) vocational training centre and (iv) services.

Deans of Faculties are responsible for academic management of studies. Faculties are responsible for unit academic strategy, student examination, teaching and learning, research and development, links with industry, operational and procedural aspects including quality policy implementation. The number of Faculties is jointly proposed by the President and Academic Council. The faculty has the following structure: Dean and Faculty Council. Depending on the size and level of development, the Faculty Deans are assisted by Vice-Deans for Academic and Student Affairs, Vice-Dean for Research and Vice-Dean for External Relations. Faculty Councils are composed ex officio by programme chairs, Faculty management, staff representatives, student representatives and industry representatives. The faculty is responsible to the Rector of UBT on managerial affairs whilst the responsibly for academic affair is delivered to the Academic Council.

(SER 2022 p.4-6), (UBT Strategy Integrated p.3-4)

2. INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION

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

2.1. Public mission and institutional objectives

2.1.1 Mission

The institution has a defined mission statement that includes three main pillars: teaching, research and community service. Based on the document review and interviews during the site visit, it was clear that the mission of the institution has not been defined or revised, based on a consultation/involvement of external and internal stakeholders. The mission is set by the Leadership team of the UBT. **(UBT Strategy Integrated, p.3), (UBT Quality Manual, 2019 p.3)**

In delivering the mission statement for the benefit of students and all other stakeholders, the institution has identified several strategic objectives: (i) *achieving academic excellence* - the institution aspires excellent quality standards and consistent active learning approaches which offer authentic experiences and an inspiring, values-based learning environment to a diversity, (ii) developing research, innovation and social responsibility - offer innovative ways for learners, spin-in and spin-out companies as well as external clients to engage with enterprise supports and applied research, thus creating new knowledge and new employment, (iii) creating a *positive working and learning environment*- the institution aims to offer a high-quality and supportive working and learning environment for all types of students (full-time, part-time, priority groups) and staff, (iv) *maintaining and increasing internationalization and regional partnerships* - formation of the new local and international higher education alliances and continued excellent performance against international and regional efficiency and effectiveness benchmarks and (v) *partnering with the community* - will continue to forge strong links with industry and wider society, which will be supported through mainstream funding, alternative income streams and volunteering arrangements in order to provide service to industry and the community at institutional, staff and student level. **(UBT Strategy Integrated, p.16)**

The mission and vision of the institution were developed through a process of staff consultation and wide debate led by the core management. The resulting mission and vision reflect the fundamental values of the institution and are systematically deployed to all UBT activities via strategy and programmes that are reviewed on annual basis as part of the business cycle. A task force was established to explore more closely the values of the institution. With the support of external partners, the task force used a survey of all staff to identify what are and what people feel should be the values of UBT. The findings of the task force have been discussed with staff through a series of meetings and presentations. The aim of the initiative was to improve the collective understanding and move the institution towards common goals.

UBT leadership, both members of core management and middle management, act as role models for a culture of excellence by personal and active involvement in improvement activities. Improvement initiatives are either generated by regular assessment and review activities, EFQM and ISO models. Improvement actions such as strategy reviews,

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organizational realignments, facilities management, drive for excellence etc have been triggered and implemented by core management with active support from all ladders of management. Effectiveness of leadership is reviewed firstly through a series of questions in the staff satisfaction survey and secondly through the annual performance appraisal. Core management away-days are organized every year focusing on themes important for UBT development. Leadership effectiveness is also reviewed informally through open and democratic culture at UBT, through personal interaction and use of electronic groups. Empowerment and trust are essential elements of UBT. (SER 2022, p.16-17)

On the basis of the information stated in the SER, information gained during the interviews and also with regard to the fact that the mission statement is published and shared with the community on the website of the UBT, however, it is not recognized by the internal stakeholders of the institution.

Compliance level: <mark>Substantially- compliant</mark>

ET recommendations:
1. *Mission statement to be set with the involvement of the internal and external stakeholders as well as to be specific for the institution*
2. *Mission statement should reflect and distinguish between the medium- and long-term institutional objectives*
3. *The mission of the institution should be revised, based on a consultation process involving external and internal stakeholders.*

2.2. Strategic planning, governance and administration

The governance of UBT is regulated by the Statute of the institution. As a private bearer of higher education, UBT statutory regulations respond to the requirements and practices sanctioned by the Law on Higher Education, the Administrative Instruction for the Accreditation of Private Bearers of Higher Education (PBHE), Administrative Instruction for the Licensing of PBHE, Administrative Instruction for Business Registration of the Ministry of Trade and Employment Law of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. UBT is governed by: UBT Governing Board, Academic Council, President and Executive Council. Every statutory body has standing and ad-hoc structures, sub-committees and working groups. The Governing Board is collectively responsible for the management and control of affairs of the College and for ensuring that an effective system of internal control and representation is implemented in the institution. **(UBT Strategy Integrated p.3)**

This Strategy supports our College mission and vision of advancing knowledge and transforming lives through high quality education and research. Building on our previous Institutional Cooperation and Internationalisation Strategy, we aim to be a learning organisation enriched by the diverse experiences, values and cultures of our students and staff. In broadening our view of the world, we aim at preparing our students to play their role as global citizens, and, as a College deeply rooted in our location – an anchor institution - have a positive impact in Kosovo's and the region's social and economic development. **(UBT, Institutional cooperation strategy p.2)**

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Pursuant to the Law on Higher Education and the Statute of College UBT on the competencies of the drafting a strategic plan of UBT, Steering Council of UBT appointed a professional commission for revising the strategic plan of UBT .

While drafting the strategic plan of UBT, the Commission conducted an assessment of external environment and industry analysis to define the strategic position of UBT and revise the strategic outcomes of UBT College. **(UBT Strategy Integrated, p.3)**

It is on the documents as the legal requirements by the government that the election criteria and processes of the decision makers and other elected positions are clear, transparent and published in institutional regulations.

Strategic planning is not integrated with annual and longer-term budget processes that provide for regular adjustments. (No evidence found).

The implementation of the strategic plan is monitored on short- and medium-term targets, and outcomes are evaluated through annual operational plans.

The institution has a decision making system and internal operating regulations in conformity with current legal provisions as indicated in the "Statute of UBT College , 2018".

Student representation is clearly defined and explained in the Student Union Statute. The election process, organs and functions are listed as well. (UBT Student Union Statute, 2019)

The responsibilities of administrative staff are clearly defined in position descriptions and they match the qualifications of the individual. "Statute of UBT College , 2018", "Regulation on Labor relations and responsibilities"

Compliance level: Fully Compliant

ET recommendations:
1. *UBT must ensure the involvement of internal and external stakeholders, as well as consultation with the academic community while preparing the strategic plan.*
2. *The Strategic planning should be integrated with annual and longer-term budget processes that provide for regular adjustments.*
3. *The implementation process and the outcomes of the strategic plan should be monitored as per the short- and medium-term targets.*

2.3. Financial planning and management

Based on the current financial performance, student enrolment trends, as well as future development plans, UBT claims to go through a stable financial period which enables economic sustainability and further development in all planned processes. UBT indicates its main sources of income to be student fees, making 88% of revenues in 2021. In 2022, UBT is

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hoping to increase its income from research projects and donations, although during the accreditation visit, the projects were still in the preparatory/application phase. Investments in labs and other fixed assets participate around 25% on average throughout the years of planning. Staff item continues to be the largest expense for the university. The budget presented to the experts confirms UBT's fiscal sustainability.

A five-year budget proposal is prepared on the basis of the business plan and according to UBT strategy. The draft budget is reviewed by Rectors' Office before it is sent to the Finance Office. According to the SER and interviews during the visit, the definition of the financial procedures is facilitated by the Finance Office that also monitors the consistency of their application. The Finance Office operates as a service to Project Leader/Expense Managers in the implementation of procurement requests. Approval of the agreed procurements is given by designated officials from the Senior Management, Secretary or by the Rector himself. The Finance Office also confirms that a service or good has been delivered according to the contract. After confirmation, the accountant pays the invoices.

Budget monitoring is done through a series of quarterly budget reports. Initial budget allocations to expense managers are based on the agreed annual allocations derived from the Business Plan and hence from the Strategy. Budget reports are based on a number of indicators showing the performance of payment planning and the use of the allocated budget to date. The financial software has been updated with features to allow Business Area Leader to enter their planned payments.

UBT is subject to national and international accounting systems as determined by the Law on Business in Kosovo, Regulations of the Ministry of Finance and other Administrative Instructions issued by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. UBT is part of the Ministry of Finance Treasury Department Top Corporates and Partners in Kosovo. The institution is considered to be in fully conformity with legal tax provisions. UBT is subject to regular external and internal auditing. The purpose of external auditing is to assess the institutional finance and accounting system and advice on the best practices. The external auditing practice determines the institutions' conformity with tax laws and provisions, procurement and asset provisions and business transactions.

Compliance level: <mark>Fully compliant</mark>

ET recommendations:
1. *UBT is encouraged to diversify its sources of income, in particular through research projects.*

2.4. Academic integrity, responsibility and public accountability

UBT has a Code of Ethics defining the principles, procedures and measures in order to defend the values of integrity, cooperation, responsibility, knowledge and academic freedom. The Code of Ethics requires that all internal stakeholders, including students, act consistently with high standards of ethical conduct and avoidance of plagiarism in research, and avoid conflicts

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of interest. Although the students are mentioned as stakeholders, the Code of Ethics is not directly applicable to them, as there are no principles or measures related to, for example, cheating or plagiarising in student works.

According to the SER, the Code of Ethics is available to all stakeholders requiring it. At the interviews, all participants confirmed that they were well aware of the Code of Ethics.

UBT has established an antiplagiarism software `Turnitin` to prevent plagiarism among staff and students, as a part of Ethics and Intellectual Property Rights. Turnitin is an anti-plagiarism system used to detect plagiarism in suspected documents. Work submitted to Turnitin is checked on a large database with various sources. Turnitin controls and protects the content of 81% of the 500 websites that have impact factors. The results of this plagiarism test are then submitted to the teacher / instructor in a report. The plagiarism software is used for Bachelor Thesis as well as the submitted articles to conferences and other related activities. Moreover, if the student submits an assignment, term paper or a take home final which does not pass the plagiarism check, the student shall be a subject to provide his/her case to departmental ethical committee. The student has a right to appeal to ethical committee.

Violations of the Code of Ethics come before Faculty Sub-Committee for Ethics as the first instance. The Institutional Ethics Committee serves as the second and final instance dealing with ethical violations. The institutional Ethics Committee is comprised of three staff representatives, two members from administration (HR/Research) and a Student Union representative. The violations handling procedure is described in the Ethics (Sub) Committee Standard Operating Procedure.

UBT publishes periodic reports of ethical cases handled at the College or Faculty level and they are published on the college webpage.

The review panel can confirm that all internal regulations, procedures and important decisions of the governing bodies of UBT are publicly available on college's webpage. Also, the relevant information about the academic staff, research and academic activities, programs it offers, number of students enrolled, expected learning outcomes of its programs, qualifications they give, teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, passing rates and learning opportunities for students, employment graduation information and scholarship opportunities are presented there. The review panel could not find self-evaluation reports or information on tuition fees.

Compliance level: <mark>Fully compliant</mark>

ET recommendations:
1. *UBT should add clear principles, measures and procedures of the academic integrity for students (cheating, plagiarising, etc) to the Code of Ethics or study regulations.*
2. *Results and reports of previous accreditations as well as information about tuition fees should be made public on UBT's webpage.*

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2.5. Quality management

The education provider has formally adopted a quality assurance policy that describes the institutional quality assurance system, its processes, mechanisms, instruments, reporting, data collection, timeframes, quality cycle, responsibilities of all individuals and units involved in these processes. The policy is a public document available on the web site as well. **(UBT, Quality Manual 2019)**

The College Quality Assurance Manual was produced and revised to conform to the ESG 2015 Guidelines on internal quality assurance. It describes the key structures, processes, policies, procedures, performance measures and quality assurance mechanisms that facilitate a systematic approach to embedding a quality improvement approach within the institution.

The quality assurance system of UBT College. The institution is committed to the provision of higher education of the highest quality, relevant to the needs of the individuals and organisations in Kosovo. The achievement of the highest quality requires that the College have in place quality assurance and control procedures that enable the institution to identify areas that may be improved and undertake the actions necessary to make these improvements. The College is committed to ensure an ethos of quality in all of its activities and to embed a culture of continuous improvement in the provision of services to students and to the wider community. Quality assurance procedures and improvement initiatives are based on the analysis of information, data and reports gained through a structured process of evaluation, monitoring and feedback from internal and external stakeholders. (SER 2022. P.61)

The Quality Manager is the administrative officer responsible for coordinating and implementing the and evaluation of academic programmes, student services, resources and stakeholder engagement policies. The institution has also recruited Quality Assurance Officers in all Faculties and Departments. Quality Assurance processes at Faculty level are overseen by Quality Assurance Sub-Committees policies adopted by the Quality Assurance Committee. The institutional Quality Assurance Office is fully staffed and has a separate budget line to implement all quality assurance processes. The Quality Assurance Committee regulates the academic and administrative service evaluation, quality improvement and approval of quality standards, preparation and supervision of the self-evaluation process, makes the necessary preparations for the external evaluation of UBT reviews policies and procedures in the context of quality improvement, coordination of internal control standards, identifies the situation and performance indicators, develops improvement activities and periodic monitoring.

UBT has on office designated for Quality Assurance (quality circle). The establishment of the Office for Quality Assurance within the university has shown a relief in the involvement process of all other groups in the university, as well as in the follow up of a continuous quality improvement. The Office for Quality Assurance has its organizational chart, which defines the functions of all staff in the process of quality assurance. The Office for Quality Assurance drafts an annual development plan, in which it foresees indicators and criteria for quality assurance. OQA (Office for Quality Assurance), QAC (Quality Assurance Commission) and QAG (Quality Assurance Group are obliged to issue an evaluation report for the entire calendar year by the end of each year. Measures foreseen by the report are reviewed by the Commission for Quality Assurance which then makes a decision for their application in practice. (For further

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details please see the Administrative Guidance UBT has also established a modern system of quality assurance, which is certified by quality assurance standards criteria of ISO 9001:2015. This system is evaluated by external experts and is certified by an accredited European and international institution. **(Quality Manual p.79)**

UBT is committed to providing a spirit of quality in all its activities and to foster a culture of continuous improvement in service delivery for students and the wider community. Quality assurance procedures and improvement initiatives are based on the analysis of information, data and reports obtained through a structured process of evaluation, monitoring and feedback from stakeholders, internal and external.

This **integrated system** and process-oriented quality management at UBT is implemented to ensure higher quality and performance in the institution, based on continuous development and advancement and integration of quality instruments and updating of quality indicators in a comprehensive quality management system and staff culture for quality inclusion. The integrated quality management system helps in the maintenance and quality development of operations, where through measurements of performance indicators and methods used ensures progress towards certain objectives.

UBT is ranked in the Times Higher Education in the best half of the ranking alongside the most reputable institutions in the world, while it is the most ranked institution from the Western Balkans region. With this position, UBT places Kosovo for the first time in this ranking, thus showing the excellent achievements of UBT's 20 years of work.

UBT, has been praised by WURI for its outstanding innovative role, ranking among the 51-100 top universities for Real Impact on Crisis Management, Real Impact on Entrepreneurial Spirit, Real Impact on Ethical Values and Real Impact on Industrial Applications. Furthermore, UBT it is ranked among the 52-100 best universities for Real Impact on Mobility and Student Opportunities and among the 101-200 best universities for Real Impact.

UBT was praised for its social impact and achievement of sustainability following the publication of the results from the Positive Impact Rating - PIR at the Global Forum of Principles for Responsible Management Education - UN PRME.

UBT is rated by Impact Rankings 2021 for high results in the implementation of sustainable policies related to industry, innovation and infrastructure (SDG 9), contribution to peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16), health and physical well-being (SDG 3), the multidimensional partnership for sustainable development (SDG 17) as well as poverty eradication (SDG 1).

UBT has become part of the "European University Association" (EUA), thus further strengthening the internationalization of Kosovo abroad.

UBT has become part of the network of universities that have signed the document Magna Charta Universitatum. **(SER, p.227)**

Based on the evidence referred above and the interviews with the Quality Manager and the Leadership, ET agreed that UBT has a quality assurance system in place and documented as well as implemented by the related units. The monitoring and improvement part of the quality

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cycle as well as establishing a quality culture across the college needs to be established on a solid basis and a timeline.

Compliance level: <mark>Substantially compliant</mark>

ET recommendations:
1. *UBT should strengthen the Quality Office to support the management of the quality assurance process throughout the institution and its remote campuses.*
2. *QA functions need to be integrated with the planning and development strategies at all cycles*
3. *QA data and analysis should be used for enhancement and improvement of the services*
4. *UBT should establish a structure to coordinate and monitor the quality system in remote campuses and also set benchmarking among them.*

2.6. Learning and teaching

UBT has based the administration of studies on the following documents: Law of Higher Education, the Statute of UBT, legislative documents of the school and the Regulations for Organisation of Studies. The beginning and the end of studies and dates for examination sessions are fixed in the academic calendar.

UBT has implemented consistently ECTS and the college claims that student learning outcomes of each program are consistent with the National Qualifications Framework and with the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. The latter is consistent with the feedback from alumni and employers during the visit.

The Academic Council, Rector, Deans and Faculties are responsible for the organisation, harmonisation and management of teaching courses the College. Faculties as academic units are responsible for the administration and implementation of the teaching process. The Subject Leader is responsible for organisation and carrying out of courses. The Subject Leaders are appointed on the basis of academic experience and merit and are judged to best suited for the given post during the foreseen mandate. The Subject Leaders are responsible for assuring the normal running of all types of teaching courses carried out within the scope of the given subject as well as performing all necessary administrative tasks.

The curricula describe objectives, learning outcomes, content and learning outcomes of the syllabuses, and the assessment methods. According to the SER, the final exam counts for 50-100 percent of the final grade. Assessment is dictated by the Study Regulations. The exam should assess the learning outcomes. The review panel was not convinced that the final (usually written) exam is the best method to assess all learning outcomes of the course.

According to SER, the assessment methods are guided by Guidelines for Student Assessment of College ESLG and Guide for Constructive Alignment of Learning Outcomes with Learning Activity and Assessment Methods. The Guide for Constructive Alignment of Learning Outcomes with Learning Activity and Assessment Methods is allegedly specific for each faculty, hence each faculty is responsible to develop such a guide in order to meet the specifics of assessment methods applicable to the nature of studies in the respective faculty. The review

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panel was provided a sample Guide for Constructive Alignment of Learning Outcomes with Learning Activity and Assessment Methods of Law Faculty. The panel found it comprehensive and updated and wondered why this approach had not been implemented college-wide, as it was not related to any specific field of studies. The panel learned that there has been only one training about constructive alignment which makes the real implementation of this approach questionable.

According to the SER, the development and review of curricula in UBT takes into account the mission and vision of UBT, its educational philosophy, national educational policies and the social economic environment within which graduates will work. The general structure of curricula at College is uniform and has been worked out by the Study Commission of the Academic Council and approved by the Board. The respective departments draw up the objectives of the curricula and education programmes within the certain confirmed rules. After a discussion in the department, the curriculum is presented to the Study Commission for amendments and additions. The final version of the curriculum is presented to the Academic Council for approval. The SER described the curriculum development process in a reliable detail.

UBT claims in its SER that there are four specific ways how the review of the curricula is carried out: (1) Student feedback – at the end of every semester departments organise feedback questionnaires in almost every course and seminar. MA students are often consulted orally by programme directors. (2) Alumni feedback – The institution and departments organise feedback questionnaires among its alumni. However, during the visit, the interviewed alumni was not familiar with such questionnaires, although they confirmed that they had tight contacts with UBT. (3) Curriculum Committee – the curriculum committee is responsible for all the changes and modifications in the study programme. The committee includes both practitioners in the field of study, academics and student representatives. (4) Dean and Faculty Council – based on student feedback and advances in scholarship, the Dean, upon the decision of the Faculty Council, periodically reviews individual courses and makes suggestions for improvements that must be submitted to the Academic Council. The Council will complete and present to Academic Council an Annual Programme Report for each programme as per the Standard Operating Procedures and Key Performance Indicators. The Faculty Management will consider the reports, critical performance related issues and recommendations. Programme appraisal by students is implemented by the Faculty Quality Assurance Committee. Appraisal is obtained from the Student Questionnaire which are agreed at institutional level. Each student carries out a formal survey using the Standard Questionnaire at least once per academic year. A short summary is prepared for every subject and Lecturer. Sensitive information is reported only to the Dean.

The institution undertakes a regular periodic evaluation of programmes once every three years. This procedure is implemented as part of the accreditation process and is essential to ensure that the offer is catered to student needs and labour market. The evaluation process serves to review the programme learning outcomes, programme teaching and learning methodology, assessment and its courses. The review panel did not find any evidence, though, that differences in quality between programmes are investigated and identified. On the contrary, the diversity of approaches to teaching and assessment methods (i.e., implementation of constructive

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alignment), seems to be high across the college, as the faculties are left free to choose any approach they wish.

Compliance level: <mark>Substantially compliant</mark>

ET recommendations:
1. *UBT is recommended to monitor differences (teaching and assessment methods, qualification of staff etc) in the programs and address them accordingly.*
2. *Constructive alignment principles should be agreed across the college and respective trainings/consultations provided to the teaching staff.*
3. *The alumni surveys should be systematically implemented and the results of their feedback introduced into quality assurance activities.*

2.7. Research

UBT has developed a Research Strategy and a Research policy. The Research Strategy is in coherence with the Strategic Plan of the college but seems to cover only one year - 2021.

In the Research Strategy, UBT has prioritized and selected three main disciplinary sectors of research:

I.   Small and medium enterprises (SME) sector
II.   Service sector
III.   Government sector

The named sectors are divided into more specific topics with research questions and measurable actions/outcomes. For some reason, the strategy contains a long list of all interest areas of teaching staff which are not directly connected to the focus areas.

The Research Policy sets the framework for the development and implementation of research policy at UBT within which academic staff carry out their required research obligations, and in which graduate students can engage and be supported in their research.

According to the SER, UBT started distributing academic titles in 2021 taken the recommendations of the previous accreditation report. UBT has a new regulation which complies with the state standards (laws and regulations) that defines the procedures in order to be awarded for the academic titles that are mentioned in the related law and administrative regulation. This action also serves as a performance review system for the research activities at the beginning, because the academic staff are obliged to make publications in the platforms that are determined by the appropriate authorities in order to be awarded for the academic titles. According to the standards of the Kosova accreditation agency every academician should have at least (Scopus or web of science indexed) one publication in order for the accreditation of the bachelor programs whereas the number of the publications required for the MA and MS programs is 2. UBT declares that this change in the standards serves as a very motivating dynamic for the academic staff to publish and increase the quality of research. Automatically, those who publish are awarded and this change serves as an academic performance system until the highest academic rank full professorship will be distributed by UBT. This might take up to

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5 years since the law and administrative regulations for private higher academic institutions is relatively new; thus, at the moment this standard is not fully met, although the review panel commends UBT for its effort towards achieving this goal.

The research budget is relatively low at the moment. The income in 2021 was only 228,500 euros (total budget approx. 12 mil) and expenditure to research 527,632 euros that makes 4% of all expenditures. In 2022, UBT plans to double expenditures to research, and hopes even triple the income. During the visit, the sources/projects for income were still in an application phase.

According to the SER, advice and policy in research matters is coordinated through a number of bodies and committees: The Research Department, chaired by Director of Research, is the College senior management body. It advises the academic council on research strategies to be pursued develops policy and reviews progress in these areas. The Research Department manages the research funds, the internal administration of the performance-based Research Fund, and externally funded research from government agencies. Departments are required to support the research activities of their staff and postgraduate thesis students by appointing a Research Program Officer Research Program Officer coordinates the activities research centers and supports the monitoring of the external research. Private sector research contracts, consultancy services, intellectual property management and commercialization are concluded and managed by the Vice-Rector on behalf of departments' research centers. Academic and research staff members are required as part of the development planning process to prepare a research plan and to review that plan annually in consultation with their Heads of Departments. This plan should include such issues as research objectives, opportunities for collaboration, timetables and expected outputs. It should also reflect any special agreements reached regarding the apportioning of teaching, administration and research duties and research training and/or development opportunities for research according to the career stage of the staff member. Heads of Departments are required to consider workload issues in the distribution of supervisory responsibilities before approving enrolment proposals by postgraduate research students.

UBT validates research through scientific and applied research publications, artistic products, technological transfer through consultancy centres, scientific parks and other structures (e.g., laboratories). UBT staff publishes International Journal of Business and Technology, Proceedings of UBT Annual International Conferences, and Academic Books, Professional Review and Reports.

UBT knowledge Center is the platform that UBT tracks the publications and research outcomes of its academic staff. UBT Knowledge Center is established in 2017, as one of the main pillar of UBT. The aim of the Knowledge Center is capturing data to produce information and create knowledge. Knowledge Center consists of three essential parts: a digital environment to advance local knowledge visibility, an organizational environment to enhance boundary crossing collaboration, a digital academic library environment to enable discovery of and access to published academic scholarship.

UBT encourages its staff and students to publish under the name of UBT and is expecting from its staff to use the outcomes of their research in teaching.

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In the SER, it was written that the UBT Technology Transfer Centre (TTC) supports staff and students of UBT with protecting homegrown intellectual property, industry engagement and the commercialization of in UBT generated research. However, the review panel did not find any evidence of policies for ownership of intellectual property and procedures for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.

Compliance level: <mark>Substantially compliant</mark>

ET recommendations:
1. *UBT is recommended to establish policies for ownership of intellectual property and set out procedures for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.*
2. *UBT is encouraged to further strengthen research through financial measures as well as staff requirements, both in recruitment and in the annual performance review.*

2.8. Staff, employment processes and professional development

UBT values its people and has established a culture that allows the mutually beneficial achievement of organizational and personal goals. The institution is committed to develop the capabilities of its people and promote fairness and equality. Staff at UBT is cared for, rewarded and recognized in a way that motivates, builds commitment and enable staff to use their skills and knowledge for the benefit of the organization. There are several essential principles that guide UBT HR policy: people plan supports the institutional strategy, people knowledge and capabilities are developed, people are aligned, involved and empowered, people communicate effectively and people are rewarded, recognized and cared for. The UBT staff community has increased steadily in recent years. UBT staff includes a community of 1000 teachers, researchers and administrative support staff. **(SER-2022, p.133)**

A comprehensive set of policies and regulations included in the **"Regulation Labor relations and responsibilities for working duties" V.2 , 2019** and under the **Article 72 of the "Statute of the UBT College HEI"- 2018**. Both includes rights and responsibilities, recruitment processes, supervision, performance evaluation, promotion, support processes.

"There are two key strategies that UBT uses to link people to the strategy: recruit people who will have the requisite skills and competencies at entry and to train people on the job." (SER 2022, p.135)

In 2018, UBT has reviewed and provided job descriptions to include the detailed profiles of the desired skills, knowledge and attitudes of jobholders. These profiles have helped the organization to both carry out the recruitment processes but also realigning staff to new positions depending on the scale of change management.

The inclusion of staff in the matrix has given new impetus to the development of Staff Development Plan. The Plan describes the skills of each staff member and maps these against the current utilization by different areas and business enablers. This allows the identification of areas where the supply and demand of skills do not match. Furthermore, using UBT Strategy it is possible to predict staff and skill requirement of the business areas and enablers of the next

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years. The end result is a clearer plan of how the needs of UBT can be met over the strategy cycle, re-training and internal mobility. UBT has in the past three years succeeded in re-orienting 7 skills in line with the needs defined in the strategy. **(SER-2022, p.136)**

Under the Staff Development Policy individual plans, e.g. to gain higher qualifications, will be supported as well as College-wide staff development initiatives such as teaching and learning seminars and international staff mobility. (Ref: Staff Contract)

Staff receive an induction session prior to the commencement of each academic year. The Dean delivers the induction session and the Staff handbook is distributed at this session. Staff receive general and programme specific information at this session including the timetable, the assessment schedule, and overview of the subjects being delivered that semester as well as the teaching and learning strategies. An overview of the library and how to access its online facilities is presented during the College's Induction days. (Ref:Staff Employment handbook, New staff induction agenda)

Based on official statistics of Kosovo Agency of Statistics and Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology the UBT College has a low level in terms of number of staff and staff to student ratio (11.8).

*Full Time Academic Staff and Students number in HEIs in Kosovo 2020/2021: (**https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/6292/statistikat-e-arsimit-n%C3%AB-kosov%C3%AB_2020-21.pdf**)

Best Practises of EFQM and Quality Management Standards for Human Resources Management are in place in UBT. Also relevant criteria for Higher Education based on the Law and Regulation are implemented.

UBT full time academic staff has qualifications required as per their role. 319 academic staff hold PhD while 209 hold MSc on their respected field. (SER-2022, p.140)

The formal staff appraisal process supports the review of performance of roles, the achievement of goals and objectives, and the implementation of staff development plans by line managers. It also focuses on future goals, objectives and development plans in the context of evolving operational responsibilities and career development. **(UBT Staff Employment, Performance and Progression Policy)**

The Year-End Review is a report that creates a record of staff productivity in the areas of research, teaching, service and administration. Deans are responsible for performing the initial staff performance evaluation using a point-based numerical assessment of distribution of efforts in line with the performance criteria set in the Regulation for Staff Appraisal. **(SER-2022, p.163)**

During the previous year the staff development component was focused on providing effective pedagogical skills and training at IDEAA Institute of UBT – Institute for Development of Education and Academic Affairs. Pedagogical skills training for the faculty has focused on the following topics: student-center learning, curriculum design, writing learning outcomes, lesson planning, design and delivery, group learning, problem based and project-based learning, E-learning, Assessment and integrating key skills into the curriculum.

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UBT Staff Evaluation and Promotion Policy is built to evaluate staff on three pillars: education, research, social impact and leadership. The weight placed on each pillar depends of the type of staff contract. **(SER-2022, p.163)**

The most common challenges that arise from the process include complaints about poor pedagogical skills, poor research skills and technical skills. Issues that may involve staff unethical behaviour are referred to the Ethics Sub-Committee. However, complaints about staff skills are dealt with through Individual Improvement Plans focusing on didactics, research and technical skills. (SER-2022, p.164)

Based on the documents reviewed, interview with all staff and internal discussions, ET come to conclusion that UBT has staff, employment and professional development policies and procedures are in place and functioning. However, academic staff evaluation process and staff professional development process needs to be better structured, openly announced and periodically improved.

Compliance level: <mark>Substantially compliant</mark>

ET recommendations:
1. *Academic staff evaluation is initially done by the Deans only. There needs to be a peer evaluation as well as superiors' evaluation. The results of the evaluation should be made publicly available.*
2. *UBT should clearly state the performance results and if not satisfactory level than establish clear requirements for improvement and monitor the progress.*
3. *The institution should have a clear plan and evidences for all staff professional development, a structured approach in identifying such needs, and allocates appropriate resources for its implementation and betterment.*

2.9 Student administration and support services

UBT is famous among the students for its engineering and technologies studies, where currently 38.8 % of the total number of students are enrolled. The students that the ET met during the site visit are satisfied and happy to be part of UBT and they strongly believe that they will find jobs after their graduation.

The UBT`s Statute and the document titled Regulation for UBT College studies for the first cycle specifies that students are admitted to the study programs based on the competition specified by the Academic Council and that in some cases other requests might also be specified. A public call is made upon which a Commission for Entrance Examination is appointed separately in each Faculty. What is not specifically clear is whether there are some additional requirements or tests for entrance for some study programmes. In addition, regulations for admission of students for master programmes are available only on UBT`s website.

UBT has a well-developed and user-friendly website that has detailed information about UBT, the programs and the courses followed by the requirements. In addition, the online application

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form is also available on the website. Moreover, the graduates during the site visit shared that while studying they were informed that a certain percentage of scholarships per field is available. However, information about the tuition and administrative fees and for the scholarships on UBT`s website.

The Dean, School Coordinator and Career Officer organize an introduction session with new students on which the student`s handbook is distributed, as reported in the SER. The students` handbook is also published on the website. What is important to be highlighted is the role of the Career Office in the introduction part. The Career Office is proved to be successful in career planning and guiding, academic counselling, and employment advice to the students that are already enrolled in UBT. This was confirmed also by the students that ET met. However, UBT is including the professional orientation and the introduction orientation as one process, as it can be concluded from their website (https://bit.ly/3LMTKYr). Both orientations are not the same and UBT should separate those processes. The orientation or introductory session is also not included in UBT`s Regulation for first-cycle studies.

According to SER, UBT provides merit-based scholarships, a tuition-reduction scheme for vulnerable groups and a work and study scheme for students willing to engage in administrative affairs in UBT. Moreover, students that demonstrated achievements during their studies might get a 25% discount on tuition fees. On UBT`s website, there are no new information for the scholarships. The highest number of students got 20% of financial support in 2019/2020.

A Student Management Information System collects a set of data and information for the students such as enrolment of new students, records of examinations, grades, and academic progression, workflow process and financial data. In addition to this are the key performance indicators and a system defined in the Quality Manual with different types of evaluations among which programme evaluation. However, the quality assurance system does not assure that the statistical data is used for quality assurance purposes, as well as in supporting decision making.

The SER shares information that the appeal procedure is regulated and the students are informed about the procedure. However, the SER, the documents and the regulations when presenting the appeal procedure are referring to the disciplinary procedure. Based on this the ET would like to highlight the importance of dividing the disciplinary procedure and the appeals procedure. In addition to this, the Code of Ethics stipulates that academic misconduct, plagiarism and cheating are treated as wrong behaviour. UBT also has software for checking plagiarism. However, the Code of Ethics is mostly focused on the academic staff, leaving the academic misconduct, and other forms of cheating that might be conducted by the students not fully regulated.

The Quality Manual specifies that there is a regular audit for measuring the students and staff satisfaction from the students` services and the infrastructure. UBT commits to regular checking and improvement of the provided services.

Finally, students are supported and motivated to participate in extracurricular activities for which many opportunities are provided based on the UBT`s position in society, the industry and the institutions.

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Compliance level: Substantially Compliant

ET recommendations:
> *1.   UBT should ensure that the information about the tuition and administrative fees and for the scholarships are available on the UBT`s website and widely communicated among future students.*
> *2.   UBT should institutionalize and structure the orientation session for the new students.*
> *3.   UBT should divide the disciplinary procedure and the appeals procedure.*
> *4.   UBT should regulate specifically the students` misconduct and other forms of cheating that might be conducted.*
> *5.   UBT should ensure psychological counselling services for students among the other services.*

2.10 Learning resources and facilities

UBT operates in several locations and branches in Kosovo and has additional places outside of Kosovo. In particular, in Kosovo UBT has campuses in Pristina, Lipjan, Prizren, Ferizaj, Peja and Gjilan. From the SER and the provided video for presenting UBT`s facilities, it can be concluded that the institution provides adequate, clean, attractive and well-maintained facilities.

UBT`s budget, as mentioned above in the report is stable. Moreover, from the provided documents, investments in labs and other fixed assets participate around 25% on average throughout the years of planning.

UBT`s library collection contains 270.000 books available in many languages, as reported in the SER and in the video for presenting the UBT`s premises. The library has a digitalized catalog that includes information on books related to its subject of study.
Access to online databases, research and journal materials relevant to the institution programs are available both for the students and for the staff. In specific, UBT provides access to the following online databases: EBSCO, SAGE Journals and JSTOR Journals. Moreover, UBT has an agreement on interlibrary loans and sharing of resources and services with international libraries such as with Library of University of Helsinki, Finland; Library of Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic; Library of Agricultural University of Tirana, Albania; and with national ones, such as with the National Library of Kosovo, in Pristina and the Dukagjini-Publishing House in Peja, Kosovo.
In addition, in the library, there are laptops that can be used for academic purposes. It works on working days and on Saturdays, which is not proven to be the case with the associated facilities and services.

The quality assurance processes do include requesting feedback from academic staff and students about the adequacy and quality of facilities, mechanisms for considering and reporting to their views. According to the Quality Manual, the infrastructure and resources are subject to

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a regular audit that serves to measure students and staff satisfaction with services provided. It also aims to ensure that facilities, learning resources, and equipment are compatible with the intended learning outcomes. In addition, this includes the regular library and information system evaluation that aims to serve as insurance that books and ICT are in line with programme requirements.

Limited provision for both facilities and learning resources is made for students and staff with physical disabilities or other special needs (such as visual or hearing impairments). From the video shared with the ET it can be concluded that there are sanitary nodes for women and men with disabilities and there is an elevator, but not on all campuses. On the other side, the graduates that the UBT team met during the site visit shared that maybe the infrastructure is not 100% adjusted to the needs of students with disabilities.

UBT ASSETS Inventory Management platform is used for the management of the laboratory inventory and other equipment.

90 fully equipped laboratories and other equipment needed for research, teaching and learning processes are part of UBT`s campuses. UBT is proud of their technological equipment, and that they have included digital tools in the teaching and learning process among which EON Reality, Augmented and Virtual through their designed Center. The management proudly highlighted that they are a digitally and innovation-oriented institution with well-equipped facilities on all of their campuses. This was also confirmed by the students and staff.

Despite the laptops included in the library, UBT has several IT labs equipped with PC and notebooks, as reported in the SER. A learning system for supporting learning and teaching activities is available.

Compliance level: Substantially Compliant

ET Recommendations:
> *1.UBT should adjust all facilities and learning resources to the needs of the students and staff with physical disabilities or other special needs (such as visual or hearing impairments).*
> *2. UBT should ensure that all facilities and services are available for extended hours beyond normal class time to ensure access when required by users.*

2.11 Institutional cooperation

The Institutional Cooperation and Internalization Strategy is the document that regulates both institutional and international cooperation. Through reviewing the document, it can be concluded that UBT aims to be a learning organization enriched by the diverse experiences, values and cultures of our students and staff. Moreover, UBT aims to prepare its students to play their role as global citizens, and, to have a positive impact on Kosovo's and the region's social and economic development. The particular document includes objectives and guidance for both institutional and international cooperation divided on two parts followed by planned

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actions to be undertaken for achieving the objectives. Having this in mind it can be concluded that UBT tries to create a portfolio for institutional cooperation through their International Relations Office is responsible for this sector.

UBT has more than 400 partnerships with universities, entities and organizations from Europe and USA. The formalization of the cooperation and division of responsibilities are included in MoUs, Inter-Institutional Agreements (IIAs) and others. After reviewing the provided Signed MoU with one University from Italy and one II it can be concluded that UBT tries to specifically appoint and divide the responsibilities with its partners. Moreover, through the cooperation with the various institutions, a long list of projects has been initiated and implemented as reported in the SER and analyzed on UBT`s website (https://bit.ly/3sRxW5t). Nevertheless, UBT has a portfolio of internationally organized events for the students and the staff. In that regard they declare themselves as famous through the organization of the following international events: Global UBT Fest, UBT Annual Conference and Joint International Conferences, Staff International Week, Open Info Days, Info Sessions and International Days, and other events organized for marking international days that are of UBT`s interest.

The SER shares that UBT is motivating the students and staff to participate in international study mobilities, forums, events, internships, summer schools and others. During the site visit, ET learned that UBT provides financial, but most other types of support (providing recommendations and others) for conferences and resource projects. This was also confirmed during the site visit by the staff and students.
Despite the motivation and the encouragement provided by UBT`s management, there are small numbers of students and staff that have used the mobilities opportunities. For example, in 2019 there were no student or staff mobility exchanges. The numbers have increased during 2020 which is surprising, especially having in mind the world pandemic caused by the Covid-19. However, the predictions for the staff and student mobilities for 2022-2025 are relatively high, showing around a 100% increase of the current numbers.

The Quality Manual and the document titled Staff Development Policy regulates the staff performance review and promotion criteria. In specific, UBT has a Performance Management System that involves setting individual targets for each staff member in agreement with their supervisor and aligned with the faculty`s needs, and the annual review of outcomes. In addition, the Staff Development Plan specifies that college-wide staff development initiatives such as teaching and learning seminars and international staff mobility will be taken in consideration in the performance review. Having this in mind, the engagement in international cooperation and contributions to the community are not specifically included in promotion criteria and staff performance review.

Local employers and members of professions are invited to join the External Cooperation Office with respective positions of the International Cooperation Office, Industry Cooperation Office, and Alumni Office. In addition, they are invited to participate in conferences, joint activities, evaluation of the quality of the study programmes, contribution to important national commissions and stakeholder recognition events are some of the mechanisms designed to support stakeholder engagement. This was also confirmed by the representatives from the industries with whom ET met during the site visit. However, the cooperation with them is not

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formally structured and structured. It might be beneficial if UBT structured the cooperation with the industry.

Regular contact is maintained with alumni, through different types of activities such as "STARTUP WORLD CUP & SUMMIT" and UBT's Alumni Journal which has the first publication in January 2021.

Compliance level: Substantially Compliant

ET Recommendations:
1. UBT should appoint one member from the management team as responsible for institutional and international cooperation despite their International Relations Office.
2. UBT should continuously take action and provide more support and encouragement for their staff and students to be included in the international activities.
3. UBT should include the engagement in international cooperation and contributions to the community in the promotion criteria and the staff performance review.
4. UBT should structure the cooperation with the industry and establish a body for cooperation with them.

3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND JUDGEMENTS OF THE ET

Overall compliance:

Standard	Compliance level
1. Public mission and institutional objectives	Substantially compliant
2. Strategic planning, governance and administration	Fully Compliant
3. Financial planning and management	Fully Compliant
4. Academic integrity, responsibility and public accountability	Fully Compliant
5. Quality management	Substantially compliant
6. Learning and teaching	Substantially compliant
7. Research	Substantially compliant
8. Staff, employment processes and professional development	Substantially compliant
9. Student administration and support services	Substantially compliant
10. Learning resources and facilities	Substantially compliant
11. Institutional cooperation	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 institutional 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 and based on average **Substantially compliant**, the Expert Team recommends the institution to be accredited for **3 years.**

Expert Team

Chair

	PROF.DR OLGUN CICEK	**21 FEB.2022**
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)

Member

	PhD. MAIKI UDAM	**21 FEB.2022**
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)

Member

	Ms. MARIJA VASILEVSKA	**21 FEB.2022**
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)