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UNIVERSUM COLLEGE PRISTINA

INSTITUTIONAL

FINAL REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

March 7, 2022



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Due to pandemic restrictions, this evaluation was conducted online. The expert team (ET) was provided with relevant documentation well before the site visit date and was provided with some more documentation and materials after the site visit (upon the request), too. The support by colleagues from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) was very effective and helped the ET to conduct all the necessary steps during the whole evaluation process.

Date of site visit: February 8, 2022

Expert Team (ET) members:

- *Prof. Milan Pol, Masaryk University*
- *Prof. Magdalena Platis, Bucharest University*
- *Ms. Laura Palac, student expert*

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- *Naim Gashi, Director of KAA*
- *Arianit Krasniqi, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Accreditation*

Sources of information for the Report:

- *Self-evaluation report (SER) and other documents of Universum College Pristina provided prior to the site visit*
- *Interviews*
- *Additional documents provided to the ET after the visit upon request*

Criteria used for institutional and program evaluations

- *KAA Accreditation Manual*



1.2. Site visit schedule

09.00 – 10.25	Meeting with the management of the institution
10.30 – 11.30	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative services
11.30 – 12.30	Lunch break
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

1.3. A brief overview of the institution under evaluation

Universum College is a private higher education institution, and it was established in 2005 in Pristina and in Ferizaj. It currently provides a broad range of programs. It is eleven bachelor programs and four master programs. As for bachelor programs, they are as follows: Business and Management; Political Science; Computer Science; English; Digital Journalism; Cyber Security; Physiotherapy; Dental Hygiene; Nursing; and Graphic Design. The four master programs are as follows: Management; Diplomacy; Data Science and Analytics; and Sustainable Food Production Systems (the latter as joint degree with University of Peja). Besides it, Universum College is accredited by Pearson Education and offers two Level 5 programs in Integrated Design and Nursing. And recently, Universum College has been



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accredited by the University of Northampton (U.K.) to offer double degrees in Business, Management, Design and Computer Science in undergraduate and graduate levels.

2. INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION

2.1. Public mission and institutional objectives

Universum College has drafted a new mission statement not long ago. It is formulated as follows: “...to support students to become good citizens, successful & broad-minded leaders and thrive in the Revolution 4.0, the digital and globalized era.” (SER, p. 7). *The Universum College claims they do this “... by providing one-on-one academic & life coaching, putting our students and learning at the center in an innovative, digitally enhanced environment that fosters creativity, inquiry, teamwork, innovation and entrepreneurial mindsets. Our commitment with quality, teacher excellence and applied research builds the bases for a strong and vigorous nation and region.”* (SER, p. 7). This can be said the mission statement of the Universum College includes all three main pillars of higher education institution: education, (applied) research, and community service.

The Universum College stated in its documents that the process of development of the mission statement was a consultative one, involving g both internal, and external stakeholders. This was proven during the interviews, too.

The data which ET gained during the evaluation process also indicate the mission is recognized by people – members of the Universium College community.

As such, the mission statement has a good potential to serve as an effective guide for strategic planning, decision-making and operations of the Universum College. The mission statement of the Universum College clearly relates to five “strategic pillars” of the institution: Student and Learning at the Center; Quality Improvement; Innovation and Entrepreneurship; Digital Transformation; and Internationalization. (SER, p. 7)

This can also be said, the institutional objectives are well consistent with the mission statement and support its realisation. These objectives are emphasizing high quality, accessible and affordable educational opportunities to students; encouragement of personal and social development of students through activities outside the classroom; provision students with an

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understanding and appreciation of world culture; development the College as a life-long learning center; development of the College as the most internationalized HEI in Kosovo; development of dual-study programs with local and international companies; fostering applied research that are done in close partnership with the industry; incorporation of digital tools in teaching and student learning. (SER, p. 8) The institutional objectives indicate the effort of the Universum College to be an open, up-to-date, and dynamically developing institution in all main areas of its operation. As such, they can have a very positive role in the development of the institution.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

N/A

2.2. Strategic planning, governance and administration

Universum College has its strategic plan for the period 2018-2022, and this plan relates to both branches, with some specifications for them included in the plan. According to the SER and also as shared during the interviews, new strategic plan for the period 2022-2027 shall be drafted starting from spring 2022.

It has been proven during the interviews, the strategic plan was drafted in consultation with the academic community as well as external stakeholders.

As already mentioned in the section 2.1, the strategic plan is emphasizing five pillars related to main aspects of the Universum College operation. Each of these pillars is then elaborated into a set of aims that clearly indicate the way pillars are built on. These objectives represent a complexity that covers key aspects of each of the pillar in the Universum College's life reality. Such approach can be appreciated. At the same time, this would be good to see a more clear integration of these pillars/aims with annual and longer term budget processes. Also, monitoring would deserve to have an explicit attention in this context.

This can be said the Universum College has a clear decision-making system and internal regulations for its operation, in line with the existing legislation.



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Selection procedures are clearly described in the SER, the election processes are also clear and acceptable at the Universum College.

Responsibilities of the decision-making bodies are defined in a standard way, Board of Trustees is the main governing body (having an overall policy in focus), the Academic Council deals with specifically academic issues. Student representation is ensured in these bodies, too. Senior administration and management functions are clearly differentiated, including decision-making structures at the Universum College. Apart from top managerial positions, each study program has its Academic Director.

A number of committees focused on specific areas of the Universum College's operation is established and work (they focus on academic affairs, accreditation, research and faculty/student development, academic integrity, curriculum development, student advancement and retention, project work, and more).

Administration of the Universum College seems to be effective in terms of organization, staffing levels and qualification. It seems to function rigorously, as it was indicated during the interviews, too. The responsibilities of administrative staff are clearly defined in position descriptions; they seem to match the qualification of people who are in these positions.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

1. Consider a possibility to explicitly link individual aims (ways to build the strategic pillars) with budgeting.
2. Consider a possibility to monitor ways of meeting the aims more explicitly.

2.3. Financial planning and management

Universum College Pristina demonstrates it has sufficient financial resources in the short as well as medium term to reach its mission and objectives. Although the main income comes from student tuition fees, the Universum College managed to increase the income from other sources, too, in recent years, namely from project and research grants, commercial activities and donations. In spring 2022 a construction of a new campus in Pristina will start with the



help of loans and private funding. Meanwhile, the campus in Ferizaj is no more a subject of the rent, it is owned by the Universum College.

It seems the Universum College has a realistic annual as well as three-year budget; its financial policies address the sustainability of the Universum College. It is worth mentioning that among Universum College expenditures (staff costs; research and development projects; office and maintenance, including equipment and library purchase expenditure; capital investments and loans) there is also financial aid for students which is effectively used, as it was confirmed during the interviews.

The budget of Universum College is centralized, a specific budget for Ferizaj branch has been drafted, though.

Oversight and management of the Universum College's budgeting and accounting are carried out by a specialized office which is responsible to a senior administrator.

Accurate monitoring of expenditure and commitments against budget are in place, with regular reporting.

Accounting systems comply with accepted professional accounting.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

N/A

2.4. Academic integrity, responsibility and public accountability

The institution defends the values of academic freedom, institutional autonomy and ethical integrity through the Code of Ethics and the Academic Integrity Committee is responsible for its upholding and the analysis and resolution of any potential breaches with the rules set forth in the Code of Ethics.



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During the meeting with the management of the institution it was mentioned that the Code of Ethics, along with other internal regulations, procedures, self-evaluations and decisions of governing bodies are made publicly available.

The Expert Team considers that the institution applies the rules set out in the Code of Ethics. For example, measures are taken to prevent unethical behaviour such as plagiarism and cheating, and students are encouraged to behave ethically.

All the relevant and accurate information regarding the academic staff, research, academic activities, and programs the institution offers is made publicly available on the official website of the institution. This information is available in Albanian and English.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

N/A

2.5. Quality management

Quality Improvement is one of the strategic pillars of the Universum College (UC) mission and the main institutional objective is “to provide high quality, accessible and affordable educational opportunities to our students” (SER, page 7). This pillar “is not limited only to the policies that measure this component, but also refers to the academic freedom of the faculty and students to provide feedback and take initiative in order to bring-forth changes that are important for the growth of the institution” (SER, page 10). The institutional interest in the quality improvement is demonstrated from the strategic plan which is publicly communicated on the website in a friendly manner (<https://www.universum-ks.org/en/strategic-plan-and-mision/>). The institution explains that “the overall institutional quality improvement policy is a sum of the quality of each academic program, administrative unit, students’ services, HR Office, Finance, IT, etc.” (SER, page 30). It is stated that the quality assurance policies cover the quality of: Academics (Individual study programs), Local and international cooperation and Operations and student services. Nevertheless, the institution has not 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.

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The UC has employed adequate staff to manage the quality assurance issues and processes. Universum College has established the Quality Assurance and Institutional Effectiveness Committee, consisting of members from different departments in order to ensure equal representation. Currently, the QAU is managed by five full-time members who are supported by Academic Directors of each department (SER, page 30). The structure of the QA units includes, apart from the head, a data collection analyst, and responsible persons for curriculum development, policies and regulations and administration. The discussion with the quality assurance representatives and administrative at the online site visit proved that the institution has adequate human, financial and material resources for investing in the quality assurance processes. The quality management unit is established within the institution's central administration operates effectively.

Mistakes and weaknesses are recognized by those responsible and used as a basis for planning for improvement. An example provided during the dialogue with the QA representatives was a period when Moodle was not active and accepting this, the platform was then, fixed and became functional.

Quality assurance functions throughout the institution. The entire community is aware of the documents flow and takes part of the improvement processes. The quality assurance system covers the whole range of institutional activities: The Internal Review Procedure includes several review processes mentioned in SER, page 31 (Academic Program Internal Report, External Review of Program, Programmatic meetings between Academic Program staff, Quality Assurance Unit, and Universum Administration, Student surveys administered at mid semester and the end of each semester, Course Level Assessment - Mid semester evaluation form for each course across the programs, Students evaluation through dialogue/ focus groups, Statistics from the annual periodic review, Staff Evaluations/Assessments, Peer-to-peer evaluation, Enforce of recommendations from KAA accreditation reports, Evaluation from Pearson (this mainly for the Pearson Programs, but the recommendations improve the quality of the institution as a whole), Employment of Graduates, Graduate exit survey, Alumni Survey). In addition to these all, the participants at the date of the visit confirmed their involvement; the dialogue with the QA representatives confirmed that every year 25% of the courses are evaluated through peer-to-peer mechanisms and that they have sharing methods to communicate the evaluation results. Additional documents were also provided as evidence, such as: Mid-Semester Assessment, Mid-semester Course Assessment Checklist, Peer-to-peer evaluation, Semester Assessment, Study Plan for Students, UC Graduate student Exit Survey. Therefore, ET accepts that regular evaluations are carried out at the end of each semester and reports prepared that provide an overview of performance for the institution as a whole and for organizational units and major functions within it.



Evaluations take into account inputs, processes and outputs, but give particular attention to the quality of outcomes. According to SER, page 36: “In order to uphold the quality policies set forth by Pearson, the organization provides Universum College with all the necessary templates to achieve the learning outcomes. Pearson also allocates an External Examiner early in the planning stage, to support us with planning assessments and pedagogical activities. Additionally, Pearson organizes specific training events and supporting activities to enable us to carry-out its programs”. Evaluations deal with performance in relation to continuing routine activities as well as to strategic objectives. They also ensure that required standards are met, nationally and internationally.

Universum College Committees explains all the committees set up for institutional development which are eight (SER, page 18); one committee is the Accreditation Committee aiming for the developing and maintaining timelines, procedures and policies, for accreditation within the guidelines provided by the accreditation bodies, but all the other committees have quality related objectives. ET admits that academic and administrative units within the institution participate in the processes of quality assurance and contribute to its continuous improvement. Moreover, according to SER, page 16 beginning with October 1st, 2018, 25% of all the decision-making bodies within Universum College are represented by students.

The forms and survey instruments are used for several activities across the institution. The mid-semester assessment includes questions about the students’ satisfaction related to the professor, material of the course and overall services provided by the college, while the semestrial assessment includes, apart from teaching related questions, more detailed criteria about services provided by the institution, such as: Career Office, Office of Finance, IT service, International Scholarship Office, Student Services Reception Office, Program coordinators. In addition, professors are asked about the underperforming students in the specific form. Survey data is collected from students, staff, graduates; these categories were represented during the site-visit and confirmed. Unfortunately, the companies that took part in the dialogue with the ET mentioned that they are not filling any questionnaire, but that they verbally communicate with the institutional management. In addition, none of the surveys’ results are publicly available. Statistical data is being retained in an accessible central database and support the process of monitoring quality. There is clear evidence that quality assurance data is used to guide enhancement and as a base for improvement.

The quality assurance arrangements are themselves regularly evaluated, reported on and improved. For example, the Guidelines for Internal Review of Academic Programs states that the results of the report will be reported to promote transparency (Part III. Procedure), but the report is not public.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant



ET recommendations:

- 1. Adopt formally 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; make the document public.*
- 2. Encourage the employers to take part in the institutional surveys (in a formal way) and consider their feedback as source for development.*
- 3. Increase the transparency by making reports publicly available as statistical documents, considering the data protection rules; include in all public documents the dates of their formal adoption.*

2.6. Learning and teaching

The Universum College has published and adopted sufficient regulations and procedures for its academic programs. The institution ensures that all programs meet high standards of learning and teaching by gathering statistics and monitoring the performance of each study program. Based on these data, specific changes in the curricula are recommended. In the SER it is mentioned that the institution has determined different KPIs for each study program such as: number of registered students for the department, overall retention rate, department overall passing rate, department overall grade, student to professor ratio, students satisfaction rate, etc.

Each study program is presented through general and specific objectives of the program, the curriculum and syllabuses expressing learning outcomes and the assessment methods for each discipline taking into consideration the planned learning outcomes. These various assessment methods serve as means for all students to demonstrate their achievement and show that they have mastered certain aspects of the course content. Also, during the meeting with students, it was confirmed that the distribution of the ECTS credits is fair. Each program of the Universum College is aligned to the National Qualifications Framework and to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

In the SER it is stated that teachers were trained on teaching methodologies and ways to develop teaching resources in order to enhance the student learning experience. During the

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meeting with the teachers, it was confirmed that they attend various lectures, workshops and training for their academic and professional skills improvement.

Students stated that they are included in the quality assurance process as well as the improvement of the institution as a whole. Students evaluate every aspect of the institution through questionnaires. Given that the institution uses different learning methods such as Fieldwork, Problem Based Learning, Mentorship Teaching etc. and involves students in the QA process and considers their recommendations for improvement, it can be concluded that the institution is developing a student-centered environment.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

N/A

2.7. Research

According to the mission and vision, UC is more a teaching institution than a research oriented, but committed to consider the latter a priority (SER, page 73). A research strategy has been developed and their objectives are publicly available (<https://www.universum-ks.org/en/research-strategy/>): Providing a research friendly environment and infrastructure; Encouraging faculty to join and conduct research projects; Obliging students to conduct research in their course projects; Linking research and teaching through teaching curriculum and course syllabus activities. The objectives consider the importance of the research integration into teaching, the need for applied research. During the discussion with the ET, professors participating declared that they benefited from institutional project support and support for publication of articles. There is a clear institutional trend to focus on research in the coming years, as: “the budget for research will increase steadily in the next four years in order to allow achieving the necessary goals set up by the institution and especially the Research and Development Committee” (SER, page 73-74). The research support mechanism include: The Research and Staff Development Committee, The Research Institute of Universum College ISEPS, The Research and Innovation Hub, The Research Conundrum.



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In addition, “The Research and Staff Development Committee has undertaken a number of initiatives to train our staff to comply with recent changes to Accreditation Manual, especially concerning research” (SER, page 77); unfortunately, there is not enough evidence regarding a specific research plan for staff with benchmarks and performance targets.

The institution has formally adopted an adequate research budget for the current needs with the institutional commitment to increase it in the coming years. The budget considered for the category of “Income from Project and Research Grants” is going to increase from € 365,000.00 in 2021/2022 to € 485,815.00 in 2024/.2025 (SER, page 24). Sufficient financial, logistic and human resources are available for achieving the proposed research objectives.

In order to validate the applied research publications and technological transfer, Universum College is in the process of developing Research and Innovation Hub, which is going to be financed through an Erasmus + project in the field of Capacity Building for Higher Education, according to SER, page 75. In the “Academic Publications of Faculty” section of the SER (page 84), presents a list of academic research papers and publications but this includes only some old, published books (in 2008 and 2010) and some translated books (in 2013-2015). A list of research projects is published on the website (<https://www.universum-ks.org/en/research-projects/>) and other publications here: <https://www.universum-ks.org/en/institutional-publication/>. Therefore, ET is reserved in considering that research is validated through scientific and applied research publications at the date of the visit.

Academic staff member and researchers has produced at least an average of one scientific/applied research publication or artistic outcome/product per year for the past three years; The provided CV’s are not entirely updated (some include publications of 2017 as the recent one). Expectations for teaching staff involvement in research activities are specified, and performance in relation to these expectations is considered in the individual performance review system and in promotion criteria. The recruitment process requires for “Demonstration of a high level of academic competence and scientific experience for the given position: a. Active participation in national and international conferences. b. Well-known artistic creations or works or public presentations. c. Long-term experience in basic and applying research projects”, according to SER, page 88. UC has developed Key Performance Indicators for each position/unit and faculty members where the achievement of KPIs is overseen by the Academic Director of each department (SER, page 88).



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Teaching staff is 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. Professors participating in the meeting with the ET explained the process of integration the research into teaching. In addition, “Universum College aims to encourage its respective academic staff to adopt research-based teaching methodology”, as stated in SER, page 88.

Academic and research staff partially publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full-time staff. For instance, in one CV provided as additional document, Filip Ruxho, PhD Candidate published under the name of the European University of Tirana, Albania, Doctoral School using a personal gmail address and not an institutional one (E-mail: routzio@gmail.com - <https://www.ijern.com/journal/2018/April-2018/16.pdf>). At the same time, links in the CVs are not operational.

According to SER, page 83: “Regulation on research work also provides a specific provision on academic integrity, protection of intellectual property as well as support provided by the legal office at UC. In case of misuses or theft of intellectual property published by Universum staff or students, the legal office at Universum provides the necessary support and guidance to the victim of theft or misuse. Legal procedure can be initiated individually or as a legal member/employee of UC”.

The institution has a Code of Ethics which includes Preliminary provisions of the Universum’ Code of Ethics, Meaning and demonstration of code nominations and codes definitions Main Objectives, Ethical and professional obligations and acknowledgment of lessons - academic lessons, Rights and responsibilities of academic and non-academic staff at Universum College, Ethical and conduct obligations of students at Universum College, Gifts provided by students, Final provisions of the Ethical Code (SER, pages 26-27). There is no clear research related procedure to ensure the safeguarding of ethical principles in research. Professors participating in the meeting confirmed that the software against plagiarism is only in Albanian (Akademia).

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Include clearly specified indicators and benchmarks for performance targets in the research plan; this plan should be generated from the research strategy.*

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2. *Monitor that the research is updated in the staff CV's and on the institutional website.*
3. *Invest in a plagiarism software in English.*
4. *Create a research related procedure to ensure the safeguarding of ethical principles in research.*

2.8. Staff, employment processes and professional development

A set of policies and regulations is included in the **ACADEMIC STAFF HANDBOOK** provided as additional document; it provides regulations and information for the teaching staff, but not for the administrative staff. The recruitment processes ensure that staff has the specific areas of expertise, qualification and experience for the positions they occupy. The recruitment processes ensure equitable treatment of all applicants. According to SER, page 87: “Universum College has internal regulation which sets out the criteria and procedures for recruiting academic and administrative staff. Universum College employs a process of recruitment that is in complete compliance with local labour law. Furthermore, to ensure a standard of quality, the student/staff ratio at Universum College is approximately 18:1 which is in line with comparable international institution. Universum College tries to keep this ratio as low as possible when considering the need for new academic staff”. Criteria used by the institution for the staff recruitment are explained in SER, page 88. A list of the full time staff with long term contracts is provided in SER, pages 99-103.

New teaching staff is given an effective orientation to ensure familiarity with the institution and its services, programs and student development strategies, and institutional priorities for development. The participants in the meeting with ET confirmed that they benefited of orientation support and that are satisfied with their career development. They are also involved, apart from teaching and research in different institutional activities, such as – being member of the Academic Council or of the International Office. Teaching loads are equitable across the institution, taking into account the nature of teaching requirements in different fields of study. They would even consider the current job as the dream job and that what they really miss is something that is beyond the institutional efforts (such as the visa liberalization).

All staff employed in the institution (academic, scientific, administrative) hold the relevant qualifications so that they are able to effectively manage educational, scientific, research, creative activities and administrative processes. The institution is willing to invest in further qualification of the faculty members (SER, page 134). According to SER, page 87: “The application form clearly identifies the required qualifications based (S8.3) on the open position. Universum College tries to define the required qualification, experience, and specific field of expertise related to the open position in order to recruit the candidate with the characteristics



that are more compatible with the position. In this way the college tends to create transparency and equal treatment of all applicants who are interested in the open position. To ensure that candidates are fully aware of their responsibilities, a full position description along with specific KPIs are provided to them”.

Academic staff evaluation is done at least through self-evaluation, students, peer and superiors' evaluations, and occur on a formal basis at least once each year. The evaluation of the academic / administrative staff is done in 3 forms (SER, page 92): Mid-semester and semester evaluation by students; Evaluation by professional parties; Regular evaluation by the Head of Department (Academic Director). Nevertheless, the results are not made publicly available.

The dialogue with the academic staff revealed the need for more English literature, considering that the students speak very well English. In addition, they confirmed that they have a rule based on which the literature must not be older than 10 years. They explained that they are monitored to have at least one publication/year and that they get support for this from the institution. In addition, academics are encouraged to regularly change the curriculum including practical and professional practice for students (example - for Business).

The institution has a plan for staff professional development. It was provided as appendix to SER the document called “Copy of Training and Development for staff”, which describes workshops and trainings for faculty offered through CELT in the fall of 2012 and in the spring of 2013, which are 10 years older. Therefore, this is not relevant for the current period of time and ET considers that the plan should be structured considering the needs, the available resources for its implementation, for both categories of staff – teaching and administrative.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Create in an employment handbook or manual accessible administrative staff or extend that for the academic staff and cover the regulations on rights and responsibilities, recruitment processes, supervision, performance evaluation, promotion, support processes, and professional development.*
- 2. Make the results of the staff evaluation publicly available, based on a formal standardized report considering only statistical explanations and following the data protection rules.*
- 3. Create an annual staff development plan based on the current needs of both teaching and administrative staff.*



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2.9. Student administration and support services

The admission procedure and criteria are clearly defined and publicly announced on the official website of Universum College. Also, all the relevant and accurate information regarding the academic staff, research, academic activities, and programs the institution offers is made publicly available on the official website of the institution. This information is available in Albanian and English. At the beginning of every academic year orientation sessions are organized for new incoming students. New students are provided with relevant information through presentations, Student Handbooks and brochures given during the orientation sessions. Additionally, Universum College informs all students about the scholarship opportunities and qualifications prior to admission. Scholarship opportunities are made publicly available.

The institution monitors and analyses pass rates, dropout rates, grades and student progression in every course through the DMIS software. These data are used for quality assurance purposes. Also, students have to participate in mandatory questionnaires during and at the end of each semester. In these questionnaires, students evaluate each course they take, their professors, student services, and their overall education experience. Students have confirmed their satisfaction with these surveys. Also, they confirmed that the results were discussed with them during lectures.

Student has a right to appeal if he/she feels dissatisfied with an assessment outcome. There is a clear procedure defined in the institution's regulations and policies for this. Also, there are appropriate policies and procedures placed to deal with academic misconduct and unethical behaviour such as plagiarism and cheating. The institution uses software for detecting plagiarism in papers written in Albanian. The Expert Team recommends also including plagiarism software in English.

The institution provides academic counselling, career planning and psychological counselling to students through various offices. Also, students can join various Student clubs and organizations based on their interests, where they meet new people and engage in different social activities.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

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ET recommendations:

1. *Include plagiarism software in English.*

2.10. Learning resources and facilities

According to SER, page 122: “Space, infrastructure, equipment and resource investments are in full compliance with the strategic plan provisions. Compliance with strategic plan in every implementation and investment is a must, in order to attain all the institutional objectives for growth and advancement” and “The Campus in Outskirts of Pristina is the second campus located in the city of Pristina which is a newly added capacity with a large, modern and a comfortable interior, and green natural exterior providing tranquility to students and staff. This campus has an interior area of 5330 m² consisting of building A and building B, as well as a vast area of 9000m² exterior”. All heads participating in the meeting with the ET mentioned about this campus and the effort the institution made for it. The description of the heads of faculties and study programs revealed that the new building included high technological equipment. Moreover, this modern campus provides a sustainable environment and recreational spaces for staff and students. In fact, the institution pays a lot of attention to sustainability issues (<https://www.universum-ks.org/sq/universum-center-for-sustainable-development/>).

Facilities and services are described in SER (page 125); these include: Library, Career Office, Student Services, Student IT Lab, VR Lab, Electronics and Robotics Lab, Canteen and Coffee Shop, Sports Field, Individual Study Rooms, Student Lounge, Student Union, Parking Space, Facilities for the disabled students (first floor rooms provided for disabled students). Nevertheless, SER, page 126 states that: “Even though the building does not have the elevators, we make sure that lectures take place on the lowest floor available and make sure that a student services personnel helps”. Adequate financial resources are provided for acquisitions, cataloguing, equipment, and for services and system development. Nevertheless, some investment for special needs students must be considered.

Responsibilities of technical and IT staff are described in SER, page 128, as well as the Software and Online Learning System. The institution has been using the Moodle platform to provide teaching materials to students. In addition, “Big Blue Button is a platform used for online lectures. It is a very advanced platform and has many features to make online learning very interactive such as direct quizzes, polls, work groups, breakdown rooms and evaluation of students’ interactivity during the online lectures” (SER, page 129).



SER, page 132, states that beyond electronic subscriptions, based on experts' recommendations, the institution has subscribed to leading journals of the fields of study, such as Economic Affairs; Economic Policy; International Affairs; International Economic Review; International Finance; Journal for Common Market Studies; Public Administration; Journal for Small Business Management and International Journal of Management Reviews. These journals are in print. Therefore, adequate facilities are provided to host learning resources in a way that makes them readily accessible. Up to date computer equipment and software are provided to support electronic access to resources and reference material. Reliable and efficient access to online databases, research and journal materials relevant to the institution's programs are available for users. Moreover, the library has been part of a realistic action plan and several investments increased the learning resources to students.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Continue to invest in facilities considering the students with special needs.*
2. *Continue to invest in English literature.*

2.11. Institutional cooperation

Universum College has a well-defined strategy for institutional co-operation and also for internationalization. The ambition of the Universum College especially in the field of internationalization is declared as to be the front running player in the Kosovo higher education sector in this respect. And it needs to be said the Universum College is very active here.

The strategy for internationalization is explicitly pointing out (1) increase of student, faculty and staff mobility; (2) internationalization at home; (3) increase of knowledge, skills and perspective exchanges with different partners; (4) involvement in International Projects; and (5) increase the number of double degree offerings. In the strategy for industrial relations the emphasis is especially on (1) increase industry relations through the dual study programs; increase of industry knowledge exchange through Co-op; increase of professional training for industry through national staff and international staff exchange programs; contribution to industry knowledge creation through marketing research; enabling digital transformation.

Universum College has strengthened the office that deals with internationalization and co-operation of the institution, and this office is directly linked to the member of senior



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management of the institution (VP for Innovations and External Relations). A newly appointed Director for Industry Relations and Business Development should also support this package of activities at the Universum College.

This was evidenced that Universum College has a sufficient number of agreements and memorandums with relevant institutions in Kosovo and abroad; the responsibilities of partners are clearly defined in these agreements.

It can be confirmed that Universum College is actively involved in a number of relevant international projects; also, the institution under the evaluation is active in organizing different events of international visibility and outreach, such as conferences etc.).

As already indicated, international mobility of students as well as staff is one of the high priorities, and this needs to be appreciated. Universum College manages to provide students and staff with numerous valuable opportunities to get international learning and other experience at a number of higher education institutions abroad. Number of outgoing students and staff are impressive, the same can be said about incoming staff. A certain potential for growth can be seen in a number of incoming students (if to compare with mobility numbers in other categories).

Universum College, as already stated earlier, is also realizing double degree programs in co-operation with several higher education institutions in Europe which is also the initiative to be appreciated in the context of internationalisation.

Staff and students at Universum College are supported to get involved in international activities is supported; this issue is also involved as a part of the evaluation of the staff performance. Also, staff is encouraged to participate in forums in which significant community issues are discussed. Universum College has developed its own Co-op program, through which it enables businesses and institutions to design specific courses according to their needs and interests and this way to balance between the possibilities of Universum College and the needs of the labour market.

Universum College has also developed a set of courses provided to external partners within the lifelong learning framework. Another useful effect of close co-operation of the Universum College and industries are good internship opportunities for the students. Of different



programs, and also possibilities of the Universum College to get involved in applied research. This all was proven successfully developed and maintained during the interviews with different stakeholders.

Also, alumni seem to be a part of the dialogue of Universum College and external stakeholders. In general, this can be concluded that activities of Universum College towards external community in Kosovo and abroad are very well developed, lively and productive for the fulfilment of the mission of the Universum College.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Continue in the effort to increase a number of incoming mobility students (possibly by enlarging the English language study offer to them).*

Summary:

Standard 1	fully compliant
Standard 2	fully compliant
Standard 3	fully compliant
Standard 4	fully compliant
Standard 5	substantially compliant
Standard 6	fully compliant
Standard 7	substantially compliant
Standard 8	substantially compliant
Standard 9	substantially compliant



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Standard 10 fully compliant

Standard 11 fully compliant

CONCLUSION:

We recommend accrediting Universum College Pristina branch for 5 (five) years.

Expert Team

Chair

Milan Pol

March 7, 2022

Member

Magdalena Platis

March 7, 2022

Member

Laura Palac

March 7, 2022
