UBT College

PROGRAM RE/ACCREDITATION

MASTER IN MECHATRONICS ENGINEERING

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

Innsbruck, June 2022

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: 25 May 2022

Expert Team (ET) members:

- *Dr. Andreas Mehrle*
- *Jadranka Pelikan, PhD candidate*

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

1. *Flamur Abazaj, SO for Monitoring and Evaluation*
2. *Ilirjane Ademaj Ahmeti, SO for Monitoring and Evaluation*

Sources of information for the Report:

- *SER Master in Mechatronics Engineering, 2022*
- *Academic staff CVs*
- *Study programme Syllabi*
- *Supporting documentation*
- *UBT web page https://www.ubt-uni.net/en/home/*

Criteria used for institutional and program evaluations

- *KAA (2021). Accreditation Manual*
- *KAA (2021). The Manual for External Evaluations of Higher Education Institutions*

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1.2. Site visit schedule

Time	*Meeting*
09:00 – 10:00	*Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated (Joint Meeting)*
10.05 – 10.55	*Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff (Joint Meeting)*
11:00 – 11:50	*Meeting with the heads of the study programme*
11:50 – 12.20	*Lunch break (provided at the evaluation site)*
12:20 – 13:05	*Meeting with teaching staff*
13:10 – 13:55	*Meeting with students*
14:05 – 14:50	*Meeting with graduates*
14:55 – 15:40	*Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders (Joint Meeting)*
15:40 – 15:50	*Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts*
15:50 – 16:00	*Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program*

1.3. A brief overview of the institution under evaluation

University for Business and Technology (UBT) is a private university and was founded 2001 under its former name Institute for Enterprise Management and Engineering in Prishtina. Meanwhile it comprises of five branches outside of the capital (Lipjan, Prizren, Ferizaj, Gjilan and Peja) and a total of 25 accredited programs. Many of them can be subsumed under business and technology but especially lately, medicine related programs like nursing and pharmacy were added.

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UBT's mission

UBT offers a dynamic and innovative 21 century academic environment. UBT provides a supportive and challenging opportunity for the students, faculty and staff in participatory and self-governance setting.

Building on a tradition of teamwork between Students, faculty, staff and administrators, UBT is committed to enhance its participation as an active member of community by providing learning opportunities driven by teaching and research excellence, intellectual interaction and creativity.

UBT is a preeminent center of intellectual and cultural activity in Kosovo, improving the region's quality of life through the skills, knowledge, experience and engagement of its faculty, staff, students and alumni

reflects that general approach and is in line with its mission

The UBT will be a modern and leading higher education institution in Kosovo, committed to apply excellence in teaching, learning and research within an inclusive student-centered environment through applying a multi-disciplinary approach that will contribute to the economic, social and cultural development of Kosovo and beyond

From the latter a set of strategic goals are derived

- Transdisciplinary = Cross Disciplines and Internationalization
- Leadership and Innovation
- Resilience, Sustainable Development, Small Scale Ecosystem
- Achieving Academic, Business and Governance Excellence
- Maintaining and increasing Internationalization and regional partnerships
- Creating Positive Living, Working and Learning Environment
- Partnership with the Community – Co-Creator
- Research based Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Social Responsibility

The 120 ECTS master program "Mechatronics Engineering" under re-accreditation was initially accredited under the title "Mechatronics Management". The last re-accreditation took place in 2016 for 50 students per year. It then offered three specialisation ("Mechatronics Management", "Industrial Product Design" and "Production Process Engineering and Technology") in semester three comprising of 20 ECTS each.

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With the current re-accreditation the program should also be renamed "Mechatronics Engineering" with three further specializations ("Artificial Intelligence", "Biomedical Engineering" and "Energy Engineering") following the same model and enlarged to 60 students per year. This is surprising, since during the last 5 years never more than 20 students were enrolled in the first year with a falling tendency. Depending on the way one counts, the change to now six concentrations accounts for 11% to 21% of the overall study program. Other changes are only of technical nature.

2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

The institutional evaluation consists of 7 subheadings through which the administration, organisation and management of the institution, as well as teaching and research are assessed.

2.1. Mission, Objectives and Administration

The mission of the mechatronics master program is highly generic without taking into account any specifics regarding program content, cultural context or geographic position. It simply states that UBT mechatronics wants to deliver the best teaching and research. More notable than the actual content of the mission is what is not included like references to socio-ethical factors like sustainability, equality or internationality. Although this is in line with the mission of the HEI it remains largely unsatisfactory.

The same can be said about program learning outcomes, which to a large extend limit themselves to list "development of advanced knowledge of theory, methods and practice used to develop" and "the ability to apply engineering methods and tools to" followed by one of the following: "mechanical components", "electronic circuits" and "embedded solutions" or similar. Only in the last section "Other competencies and attributes" the second cycle qualifications of the Framework of the Qualifications for the European Higher Education Areas are addressed.

The program was developed as part of a TEMPUS project in collaboration with Technical University of Vienna and others. Further it is stated that ABET and ACM guidelines were considered for the definition of learning outcomes.

The didactic concept of the program is based on a broad variety of teaching forms, which mostly emphasize the power to put theoretical knowledge into practice. Further, the favourable teacher-student ration is stressed a lot, which is also the result of low inscription numbers. On the research side, such a concept does not seem to exist.

A total of 77 policies and regulations are listed on the HEI's English webpage of which only 24 are linked to a document and therefore publicly accessible. In the Albanian version, this translates to 27 out of 67. It is supposed that those missing are communicated otherwise since this concerns important

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procedures like internships, enrolment and PhD studies. It is evident from the SER that the HEI comprises of an elaborate system of councils and committees for the definition of above policies and regulations. Later in the SER mention an annual monitoring of programs as well as a 3-year cycle but how often which guideline is updated, remains unclear. The versions on the webpage were mostly compiled in May 2020.

The code of ethics and the respective reports of the last three academic years are among the documents available. To the surprise of the experts, 75 out of 97 cases at the college level concern "misconduct by administration". Upon inquiry, it was found out that just a few concern the mechatronics faculty and only a single case was actually labelled as breaking the code of ethics.

Statistical data is available and KPIs defined. Those include mostly student matters but also alumni, tutors, teachers and external faculty.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 1.1. The study program mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution		x
Standard 1.2. Relevant academic and professional advice is considered when defining the intended learning outcomes which are consistent with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.	x	
Standard 1.3. The study program has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept.		x
Standard 1.4. There are formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues. These are made publicly available to all staff and students.		x
Standard 1.5. All staff and students comply with the internal regulations relating to ethical conduct in research, teaching, assessment in all academic and administrative activities.	x	
Standard 1.6. All policies, regulations, terms of reference and statements of responsibility relating to the management and delivery of the program are reviewed at least once every two years and amended as required in the light of changing circumstances.	x	

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

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1. *Develop a mission and vision for the program, which is not interchangeable with any program of any HEI in the European higher education area and helps to sharpen the profile.*
2. *Define a clear didactic and research concept, which supports your mission and vision.*
3. *Make all policies and regulations available on the webpage.*

2.2. Quality Management

As already mentioned the HEI is no short of councils and committees. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that responsibilities for processes are well distributed. In addition, there is a dedicated quality department at college level, which ensures harmonizing procedures among faculties. Staff is subject to an evaluation process, which is compiled into a quality report on a yearly basis.

The dean is primarily responsible for taking actions on basis of this report as well as for the compliance to policies and regulations. Since the report includes also aspects level, the interaction between college and faculty sufficiently is guaranteed. Therefore, continuous improvement is possible even if not ensured.

Teachers are evaluated individually as well as students' satisfaction with lectures. However, no indication could be found that this would explicitly measure and address learning outcomes other than by averaging grades.

Through the yearly quality report mentioned above, large amounts of data is gathered and processed. It also became evident that results are used for internal purposes such as improvement of quality. Publication for a broader audience of stakeholders is neither mentioned nor could evidence thereof be found on the HEI's homepage.

For long terms quality reviews as well as improvement of the quality system itself the HEI seems to rely on the periodic reaccreditation process of Kosovo Accreditation Process which takes place either every 3 or 5 years.

It should be mentioned that the HEI, in addition to the compulsory national accreditation, voluntarily underwent AQ Austria and EFQM certification in 2017 and 2019 respectively.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 2.1. All staff participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity.	x	

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Standard 2.2. Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes.	x	
Standard 2.3. Quality assurance processes deal with all aspects of program planning and delivery, including services and resources provided by other parts of the institution.	x	
Standard 2.4. Quality evaluations provide an overview of quality issues for the overall program as well as of different components within it; the evaluations consider inputs, processes and outputs, with particular attention given to learning outcomes for students.	x	
Standard 2.5. Quality assurance processes ensure both that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance.	x	
Standard 2.6. Survey data is being collected from students, graduates and employers; the results of these evaluations are made publicly available.		x
Standard 2.7. Results of the internal quality assurance system are taken into account for further development of the study program. This includes evaluation results, investigation of the student workload, academic success and employment of graduates.	x	
Standard 2.8. The institution ensures that reports on the overall quality of the program are prepared periodically (eg. every three years) for consideration within the institution indicating its strengths and weaknesses.	x	
Standard 2.9. The quality assurance arrangements for the program are themselves regularly evaluated and improved.		x

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:
1. *Define follow-up procedures for the annual quality report instead of assigning responsibilities alone. Define thresholds and critical values.*
2. *Publish the evaluation data.*
3. *Review the quality assurance arrangements periodically on initiative of the HEI instead of relying on external reviews and their recommendations.*

2.3. Academic Staff

The SER, interviews and additional documents provided sufficient information for the Mechatronics Engineering Master study programme's academic staff assessment according to the KAA standards for Master studies. In general, the staff employment procedures are defined by the national legislation, implemented, and monitored at the University level. The teaching and academic staff is qualified with the necessary competences for the academic and teaching positions obliged by the Regulation for academic advancement (2019). The number and workload of the academic staff ensures proper

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execution of teaching and research activities and other assigned duties. In total, the study programme accommodates 42 members of the academic staff out of which five are visiting professors from Austria, Bulgaria, Italy and Switzerland for extracurricular classes delivery. The KPIs states that the study programme teaching staff went to 17 mobility activities since 2017/2018 academic year. At the same time, there were 17 teaching visits in total, out of which UBT employed several of them on full-time basis.

The SER (pg. 37 - 38) states that each of the listed teaching staff holds PhD degree. The teaching staff is full time employed by the faculty. There is no evidence on how many teaching positions the academic staff hold apart from this study programme. The academic staff, at the beginning of the academic year should sign and deliver the statement that they are not engaged in more than two teaching positions (one full-time, one part-time) and for the later one they should obtain a written approval from the University Management for teaching with part time.

Faculty members have the possibility of promotion to academic titles and to a vertical mobility in general. To achieve new appointments to academic positions each member of the academic staff is required, apart from teaching, to participate in scientific research with publication of the research results in peer-reviewed journals and books proscribed by the national legislation and approved by the University Assessment Committee. It is evident that the academic staff is more focused on teaching than on research activities, due to lack of reward for excellence in research and publication, as mentioned during the interviews. Yet, the QA Annual Report presents that more than 95 % of the academic and administration staff are satisfied with UBT and work quality.

The UBT and the partners provide trainings and seminars for the academic staff professional development in terms of micro credentials and technical skills improvement. The Institution provided 55 certificates of non-formal education for 27 staff members in fields of: IT and technology (25 certificates), education and psychology (20 certificates), management (7 certificates) and 2 certificates for research workshop attendance. Additionally, The Institution provided 12 certificates of the academic staff conference participation.

Consultations are part of the syllabi therefore, the academic staff is obliged to conduct consultations with students before and after the exams and to present the counselling schedule for 10 hrs per week, according to the KPIs table the Institution provided.

The quality of teaching at the UBT is under regular assessment (The QA Regulation of UBT, 2019) externally and internally. The ET requested the report summary of the annual and 5-year evaluations, the Institution stated: "According to the quality assurance policies at the College, we make an annual quality assurance report, and improvements plan is made in accordance with the findings of the quality report. The Dean ensures that the findings from the quality report are included in the annual develop plan in order to have a continuous process of improving the overall performance of the faculty." The

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ET confirms that the QA findings and suggestions are discussed at the Faculty level according to the meeting minutes. However, the Institution provided the Research plan, UBT strategy, UBT Quality assurance regulation, Staff development plan and Technology and educational investment plan, yet none of them contain measurable indicators, start, and target values.

The standard 3.10. is not applicable.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 3.1. Candidates for employment are provided with full position descriptions and conditions of employment. To be presented in tabular form data about full time (FT) and part time (PT) academic/ artistic staff, such as: name, qualification, academic title, duration of official (valid) contract, workload for teaching, exams, consulting, administrative activities, research, etc. for the study program under evaluation	x	
Standard 3.2. The teaching staff must comply with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative Instruction on Accreditation.	x	
Standard 3.3. Academic staff do not cover, within an academic year, more than two teaching positions (one full-time, one part-time), regardless of the educational institution where they carry out their activity.		x
Standard 3.4. At least 50% of the academic staff in the study program are full time employees, and account for at least 50% of the classes of the study program.	x	
Standard 3.5. For each student group (defined by the statute of the institution) and for every 60 ECTS credits in the study program, the institution has employed at least one full time staff with PhD title or equivalent title in the case of artistic/applied science institutions.	x	
Standard 3.6. Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties.	x	
Standard 3.7. The responsibilities of all teaching staff, especially full-time, include the engagement in the academic community, availability for consultations with students and community service.	x	
Standard 3.8. Academic staff evaluation is conducted regularly at least through self-evaluation, students, peer and superiors' evaluations, and occur on a formal basis at least once each year. The results of the evaluation are made publicly available.		x
Standard 3.9. Strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials.	x	
Standard 3.10. Teachers retired at age limit or for other reasons lose the status of full-time teachers and are considered part-time teachers.	n.a.	

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

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ET recommendations:

1. *The academic staff should sign and deliver the statement that they are not engaged in more than two teaching positions (one full-time, one part-time) and for the later one they should obtain a written approval from the University Management for teaching with part-time schedule at the beginning of the academic year.*

2. *The Institution should create the academic staff development and improvement plan with measurable target values set on annual basis.*

3. *Each staff member should attend at least one workshop or seminar for micro credentials development per year and at least one from the specific field of teaching.*

4. *The Institution should create the research plan with measurable target values set on annual basis with cumulative and individual target values.*

5. *Each staff member should attend at least two international conferences with presentations, annually.*

2.4. Educational Process Content

A large number of program learning outcomes (PLOs) for the program are defined, albeit partially in a featureless way, see section 2.1 Mission, Objectives and Administration. Subject-related, methodological and generic skills and competences are included therein. Mapping of PLOs to courses was provided upon request. However, it is doubtful whether all PLOs can be achieved by all students or just the group choosing a certain concentration.

E.g. the "Development of advanced knowledge of theory, methods and practice used to develop mechanical components and systems for mechatronic products." should be provided by two courses from the main curriculum ("Robotics and Automation Systems" and "Micro-Mechatronics") which both focus on programming according to the syllabi. It is expected that only the students choosing Concentration II ("Industrial Product Design") and Concentration III ("Production Process Engineering and Technology") will achieve this learning outcome.

To others like "Development of advanced knowledge of theory, methods and practice used to develop electronic circuits used in mechatronic products." only one course in the whole curriculum ("Advanced Electrical and Electronics Engineering") contributes (although 4 are named). In the view of the expert team, none of the students will have learned that skill.

The syllabi themselves are meaningful and include all relevant information such as content, learning outcomes, literature, teaching form, etc. In addition, the form(s) of assessment is/are defined clearly and exhaustively. The newly created courses initially lacked ECTS in the curriculum and some of them where missing in the course descriptions but this was corrected upon request.

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The language of teaching generally is Albanian with the exception of a few classes held by incoming professors. The HEI claims in the SER that it takes measures to simultaneously translate English lectures, which is a remarkable fact. In general, there are few international lectures but surprisingly in semester 2 one of them is teaching 3 out of 7 courses.

Student-teacher ratio in general is favourable which enables cooperative interaction. Together with the high number of practical classes, this ensure good studying conditions for the students. Typically, one subject would include several instruction forms, which all contribute to the final grade. No evidence could be found that assessment would not be fair and objective. However, rubrics for grading are vague and open the floodgates to arbitrariness and for sure do not contribute to consistent and time-invariant grading. In order to circumvent this problem, there are informal but regular meetings on grading.

Procedures are in place if a student objects to a grade. Typically, this will lead to a repetition of the exam in front of a commission (oral exam) or re-evaluation of the exam by a commission (written exam). However, the time limit of 48 hours for an appeal to grading seems very short.

Since an internship is not part of the curriculum, standards 4.11 and 4.12 do not apply.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 4.1. The study program is modelled on qualification objectives. These include subject-related and interdisciplinary aspects as well as the acquisition of disciplinary, methodological and generic skills and competencies. The aspects refer especially to academic or artistic competencies, to the capability of taking up adequate employment, contributing to the civil society and of developing the students' personality.	x	
Standard 4.2. The study program complies with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. The individual components of the program are combined in a way to best achieve the specified qualification objectives and provide for adequate forms of teaching and learning.		x
Standard 4.3. The disciplines within the curriculum are provided in a logical flow and meet the definition and precise determination of the general and specific competencies, as well as the compatibility with the study programs and curricula delivered in the EHEA. To be listed at least 7 learning outcomes for the study program under evaluation.	x	
Standard 4.4. The disciplines within the curriculum have analytical syllabuses which comprise at least the following: the discipline's objectives, the basic thematic content, learning outcomes, the distribution of classes, seminars and applicative	x	

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activities, students' assessment system, the minimal bibliography, etc. The full course description/ syllabuses of each subject/ module should be attached only in electronic form to the self-assessment report for the study program under evaluation.		
Standard 4.5. If the language of instruction is other than Albanian, actions are taken to ensure that language skills of both students and academic staff are adequate for instruction in that language when students begin their studies. This may be done through language training prior to the commencement of the program.	x	
Standard 4.6. The student-teacher relationship is a partnership in which each assumes the responsibility of reaching the learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are explained and discussed with students from the perspective of their relevance to the students' development.	x	
Standard 4.7. Teaching strategies are fit for the different types of learning outcomes programs are intended to develop. Strategies of teaching and assessment set out in program and course specifications are followed with flexibility to meet the needs of different groups of students.	x	
Standard 4.8. Student assessment mechanisms are conducted fairly and objectively, are appropriate for the different forms of learning sought and are clearly communicated to students at the beginning of courses.	x	
Standard 4.9. Appropriate, valid and reliable mechanisms are used for verifying standards of student achievement. The standard of work required for different grades is consistent over time, comparable in courses offered within a program, KAA Accreditation Manual – Updated 2021 21 and in comparison, with other study programs at highly regarded institutions.		x
Standard 4.10. Policies and procedures include actions to be taken in to dealing with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or inconsistently assessed.	x	
Standard 4.11. If the study program includes practice stages, the intended student learning outcomes are clearly specified and effective processes are followed to ensure that those learning outcomes and the strategies to develop that learning are understood by students. The practice stages are allocated ETCS credits and the work of the students at the practical training organizations is monitored through activity reports; students during practice stages have assigned tutors among the academic staff in the study program.	n.a.	
Standard 4.12. In order to facilitate the practice stages, the higher education institution signs cooperation agreements, contracts or other documents with institutions/organizations/practical training units.	n.a.	

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Define program learning outcomes, which are supported by several compulsory subjects so that all students can achieve them. If program learning outcomes can only be achieved by selecting a certain concentration, mark them as such.*
2. *Define rubrics for grades other than "beyond medium with some mistakes" or "good, with many mistakes". Find a scheme, which leads to consistent and reproducible results for all subjects.*

2.5. Students

The Statute of UBT (Article 54) proscribes admission procedure as well as the adopted Regulation for student registration (2020). The Regulation clearly defines:

> *...the basic academic and administrative criteria in the process of enrolling students in UBT College. UBT College registers students in accordance with the decision of accreditation and licensing of programs. The registration of students is done based on the public competition published through the means of information as well as on the electronic platforms of UBT (website, social media, brochures, bulletin board, etc.) in accordance with the criteria and conditions determined by the competition. The registration of students is done on the basis of signing a contract or an agreement between UBT College and the student through which the obligations of both contracting parties are determined, accepting and including the obligations arising from the internal acts of UBT as and legal obligations in the Republic of Kosovo.*

UBT adopted the Regulation on master studies which defines the criteria for admission to the Master programmes at UBT. The UBT's web page with the listed regulations and polices does not provide links to all documents including the aforementioned Regulation (https://www.ubt-uni.net/en/ubt-en/about-ubt/regulations-and-policies/). The applicants are obliged to deliver the documentation which verifies that they achieved 180 ECTS in their previous education or equivalent.

In 2021 UBT adopted the Decision on tuition fee (1,500 euro for one academic year) for students enrolled to the Mechatronics MSc study programme in 2021/2022. Article III of the Decision states that there are possibilities for the tuition fee reduction for the enrolled students when the criteria are met. The MSc Mechatronics students can apply for the scholarship discount in total of 30 % for UBT graduates only. Additionally, the Rector can approve special cases of deduction. Over the past five years, the scholarship incentives were allowed to 0 – 7 students according to their grade. In overall, the average students' performance is in the range from 79 % to 83 % with the average attendance varying between 72 % to 81 %, according to the KPIs received.

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The Institution with the SER requests enrolment of 60 students to the Study programme Master in Mechatronic Engineering, yet the SER did not provide the information about the current number of the students enrolled. Currently, the allowed number of students enrolment to the 1st year of this study programme is 50. According to the received KPI's, the admission to the 1st year of this study programme decreased largely over the past five years: 2017/2018 = 21, 2018/2019 = 23, 2019/2020 = 11, 2020/2021 = 6, 2021/2022 = 9. Similarly, the 2nd year enrolments were 2017/2018 = 17, 2018/2019 = 18, 2019/2020 = 7, 2020/2021 = 5, 2021/2022 = 9. Regarding the gender, majority of students are male 73.7 % - 100,0 % (1st year) and 70,6 % - 100,0 % (2nd year). The dropouts varied between 0 – 3 students. In the previous five years there were 3 international students. The graduation of the study programme varied over the years, as well: 2017/2018 = 5, 2018/2019 = 7, 2019/2020 = 9, 2020/2021 = 10, 2021/2022 = 3, and in general it is quite low.

The SER stated that with large number of premises and other facilities available to students the quality of studying is rather high due to smaller study groups. The interviewees confirmed that the size of the student groups is satisfactory and that the lectures and activities at the Faculty are participatory and interactive, and the academic staff uses a variety of instructional methods to ensure quality learning. The ET confirms that due to low number of the enrolled students there is an opportunity for a high-quality programme performance.

The SER explains that the students' academic achievement is evaluated in a variety of ways, including systematic, formative, and summative evaluation. The students' performance and results of the assessments are almost immediately available. The assistance mechanism consists of consultations, individual and group ones, in person when possible or online during the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the Regulation at UBT, all student records are archived and available upon request. The individual results are recoded and available to the student and potential employers in the Diploma Supplement.

The SER (pg.71) states that " Students with physical disabilities, learning difficulties, ongoing illnesses or short-term illness or injury are required to register accordingly, on admission to the College to ensure they receive the appropriate assistance during their studies. In so far as is possible, College staff endeavour to assist students with disabilities in meeting their full academic potential."

The records of the students' performance for all courses are kept at the Student office and through SMIS. According to the SER (pg.71) the exam log and applications are administered using the Student Management Information System (SMIS). Documents related to exam results are kept indefinitely while colloquium documents are stored for one academic year.

Standard 5.8. regarding procedures of plagiarism prevention among students and their work seems to be effective. The Sub-Committee of Ethics of UBT received 97 complaints out of which the following

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were at the Faculty level: 5 administrative complaints about the schedule of lectures and exams and the delay in the processing of grades in two subjects; and 3 the code of ethics break which have been reviewed by the ethics committee such as: 2 copy of bachelor students in exams and 1 plagiarism detected.

The Institution provided evidence of Turnitin effective check of the thesis against plagiarism.

The Statute of UBT (Articles 21 and 55) define clearly student rights and obligations. The document is publicly available.

One student participated in the Erasmus programme of student mobility and regarding transfers for this study programme, within past five years 2-3 students left the study programme, while 3-10 students came to the Study programme, all of them within UBT.

According to the KPIs, the consultations for students are available 10 hours weekly, and tutoring delivered 50 hours per year. The administration office working hours are from 08:00 hours to 17:30 hours from Monday to Friday.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 5.1. There is a clear and formally adopted admission procedure at institutional level that the study program respects when organizing students' recruitment. Admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied for all students.	x	
Standard 5.2. All students enrolled in the study program possess a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent document of study, according to MEST requirements.	x	
Standard 5.3. The study groups are dimensioned so as to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process.	x	
Standard 5.4. Feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments is given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed.	x	
Standard 5.5. The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record.	x	
Standard 5.6. Flexible treatment of students in special situations is ensured with respect to deadlines and formal requirements in the program and to all examinations.	x	
Standard 5.7. Records of student completion rates are kept for all courses and for the program as a whole and included among quality indicators.	x	
Standard 5.8. Effective procedures are being used to ensure that work submitted by students is original.	x	
Standard 5.9. Students' rights and obligations are made publicly available, promoted to all those concerned and enforced equitably; these will include the right to academic appeals.	x	

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Standard 5.10. The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs are clearly regulated in formal internal documents.	x	
Standard 5.11. Academic staff is available at sufficient scheduled times for consultation and advice to students. Adequate tutorial assistance is provided to ensure understanding and ability to apply learning.	x	

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Regarding the drop-outs from the study programme the Faculty should develop the support system that will reduce the unwillingness of the enrolled students to finish their study and to decrease the average duration of studying per student.*

2. *The Faculty should develop marketing plan to attract more students to this Master study programme, including its name change from Mechatronics Management to Mechatronics Engineering.*

3. *Student rights and obligations are dispersed among various documents and thus difficult for students to inform themselves. The Faculty should compile all rights and obligations in one document and publish it on the UBT's web site.*

4. *The Faculty should provide more opportunities for student exchange and mobility.*

2.6. Research

The Institution provided the Research plan which does not define specific financial, logistic and human resources neither measurable indicators or target values, therefore, the ET cannot accept it as valid.

Faculty members have an obligation of promotion to academic titles and a possibility to a vertical mobility in general. To achieve new appointments to academic positions each member of the academic staff is required, apart from teaching, to participate in scientific research with publication of the research results in peer-reviewed journals and books proscribed by the national legislation and approved by the University Assessment Committee. According to the number of publications available on SCOPUS base, it is evident that the academic staff is more focused on teaching than on research activities, due to lack of reward for excellence in research and publication, as mentioned during the interviews. Even though most of the academic staff published more than 3 publications during their professional and research activities, yet out of 37 teaching staff members only 9 published one paper or more (in average) per year since 2018/2019 academic year. The ET has taken into account the pandemic situation, therefore, the minimum of 3 publications extended to 5-year period instead to 3-year as suggested by the standard (6.7). By comparison of the published papers and the academic staff CVs, it is evident that there is a lack of continuity in research and publishing after appointment into new academic title. The

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Institution provided the list of 37 full-time academic staff and the folder containing 51 CVs of the academic staff which is a mixture of full-time staff engaged in the MSc and probably in BSc study programmes, including the staff with external affiliations from universities of Ankara, Podgorica, Vienna, Rome and private sector companies in Ljubljana and UK. The Institution should pay attention to the affiliations of the recently employed academic staff while publishing papers.

The selection, appointment and promotion of the academic staff is done according to the development of academic scientific, research, creative activities. All academic staff is required to engage in research. Promotion of the academic staff is based on the number of scientific publications in international credible journals. Based on the database, the faculty has set strategic objectives in the field of research for each teacher in accordance with the institutional strategy in order to raise the scientific product in all academic units. And students are encouraged to take part in such research. They participated in conferences with presentations, 11 in total, and authored 9 publications since 2017/2018 academic year.

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

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Standard 6.8. Academic and research staff publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full-time staff.	x	
Standard 6.8. Academic staff are encouraged to include in their teaching information about their research and scholarly activities that are relevant to courses they teach, together with other significant research developments in the field.		x
Standard 6.9. Policies are established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.	x	
Standard 6.10. Students are engaged in research projects and other activities.	x	

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *The academic staff should continuously publish papers, at least one paper per year, in average, within the reaccreditation timeframe.*
2. *Each academic staff member should have developed their own plan of research and teaching activities, implement it and monitor its implementation. The Plan should include number of papers planned to be published, number of workshops attendance with presentations and participation per year and the planned trainings for professional advancement. Cumulative plan for the academic staff should be available for the next reaccreditation.*
3. *Young researchers should be more supported and involved in the research activities by the senior staff. They should meet the standard of a paper published per year in average in the past three years.*
4. *The Academic staff should prepare their CVs in a template that is universal for UBT in English language with clearly presented dates of education and academic advancement, a list published papers and similarly, a list of conferences attended with presentations and the courses they deliver during full-time and part-time jobs. Additionally, each CV should follow the same citation style.*
5. *The mobility of staff needs to be improved. To do so, it should be mandatory the mobility abroad of young staff academic before they get a permanent position.*

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2.7. Infrastructure and Resources

The Study programme Master in Mechatronics Engineering is one of many study programmes conducted at UBT Prishtina. The facility is new, well equipped, with a large library and accessible to disabled persons.

UBT acts as a 5G Technology Center - Testbed that was inaugurated recently, worth around 50 mil. euro, according to the interviewees. The supporting documents the HEI provided clearly state that:

> *In the framework of online services UBT has invested in its (ISP) Network and Data Center, in the innovative Campus which will serve to enable services and communication through an internal virtual Dark Fiber network of UBT and as such increases the speed and the efficiency of all online services.*

UBT - licensed as an internet service provider and has launched its own internet, thus being independent from getting internet from other providers.

UBT is very proud about their IT solutions stating that: "…offering the full implementation of CLASSROOM 3.0 and becoming the first Institution in the world, even ahead of all prestigious universities and schools, to achieve this."

Additionally, UBT introduced EON Reality since 2021 when it opened the Center for Virtual and Augmented Reality. Also, the HEI claims that they were: " The first educational institution which created 20,000 thousand VR and AR lectures during pandemic time."

UBT provided a youtube link presenting new facilities as the largest and most modern Center of Science, Technology and Innovation in Kosovo. UBT Smart City Center, has been inaugurated in the building with 28 thousand square meters space, with a special architecture based on high construction standards, laboratories, dormitory, library, kitchen, incubators, small industries, space for new businesses, creative centers, as well as sports spaces, will be the place of future generations, where their knowledge will increase even more within this unique center.

The SER states that as a result of international collaboration, UBT

> *has succeeded in earning projects respectively in: Mechatronics Laboratory, Efficient Energy, Computer Science Lab, Data Science and Artificial Intelligence, Materials Science Laboratory, GIS Laboratory, Design Studio, TV Studio etc. Along with a wide range of modern infrastructure and facilities, UBT meets the demands in compliance with the most innovative trends required by the international trends.*

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UBT facilities are spread to different locations as: Campus in Pristine, UBT Science and Innovation Campus - Park in Lipjan, UBT Prizren Campus, UBT Ferizaj Campus, UBT Peja Campus, UBT Gjilan Campus with total of 45775.19 m^2. This study programme is conducted in Prishtina.

Page 106 of the SER claims that there are available for the students and the academic staff, in total:

a computer laboratory equipped with 72 computer PC and 8 notebooks. Additionally, the institution also operates a Learning System (LS) for supporting learning and teaching activities. To provide comfortable and easy access to all virtual tools and info environments of the Faculty there will be a LS Page which will open automatically and present all information related to modules, email, mailing lists, etc.

Additionally, the SER states that all rooms are equipped with modern teaching equipment and are easily adaptable to various modes of teaching. The College also has printing and photocopy equipment for students. It will be possible for students to print in color, scan and copy materials.

The financial plan is not quite sustainable, particularly for the Master study programme in Mechatronic Engineering where is quite a low number of admissions. The previous name was Mechatronics Management, and it seems that the market is not interested in management but in STEM, ie engineering, interviewees claimed. Therefore, the ET assumes that UBT decided to adjust the study programme name to the market trends in order to increase sustainability.

The SER presents 1345 m^2 of space for classrooms and laboratories with 645 seats. The SER states that the library is stocked with about 80,000 titles, an important resource for academic staff, scientific research and students. The library is large, it is 415.8 meter square which is very comfortable for learning and study. The total number of books related to mechatronics is 1657 with 541 titles. UBT also offers full access to libraries and electronic academic platforms such as BIONE, EBSCO HOST, IMF, Cambridge Journals and JSTOR, UBT Koha, Sage Journals to the students and the academic staff.

As for the access to persons with difficulties in movement, UBT claims at their web site that they pay a special attention to vulnerable groups, including disabled ones.

Due to impossibilities to visit the site physically, the ET trusts that the claims and the statements regarding infrastructure, library and the budget are true, especially the ones supported by evidence.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 7.1. The adequate long-term implementation of the study program is ensured in quantitative terms as regards premises, human resources and	x	

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equipment. At the same time, it is guaranteed that qualitative aspects are also taken into account.		
Standard 7.2. There is a financial plan at the level of the study program that would demonstrate the sustainability of the study program for the next minimum three years.		x
Standard 7.3. The higher education institution must demonstrate with adequate documents (property deeds, lease contracts, inventories, invoices etc.) that, for the study program submitted for evaluation it possesses the following, for the next at least three years: a) owned or rented spaces adequate for the educational process; b) owned or rented laboratories, with the adequate equipment for all the compulsory disciplines within the curriculum, wherever the analytical syllabus includes such activities; c) adequate software for the disciplines of study included in the curriculum, with utilization license; d) library equipped with reading rooms, group work rooms and its own book stock according to the disciplines included in the curricula.	x	
Standard 7.4. The number of seats in the lecture rooms, seminar rooms and laboratories must be related to the study groups' size (series, groups, subgroups); the applicative activities for the specialty disciplines included in the curricula are carried out in laboratories equipped with IT equipment.	x	
Standard 7.5. The education institution's libraries must ensure, for each of the study programs: a) a number of seats in the reading rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program; b) a number of seats in the group work rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program; c) their own book stock from Albanian and foreign specialty literature, enough to cover the disciplines within the curricula, out of which at least 50% should represent book titles or specialty courses of recognized publishers, from the last 10 years; d) a book stock within its own library with a sufficient number of books so as to cover the needs of all students in the cycle and year of study the respective discipline is provided for; e) a sufficient number of subscriptions to Albanian and foreign publications and periodicals, according to the stated mission.	x	
Standard 7.6. The infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the program is adapted to students with special needs.	x	

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *The HEI should sign agreements with public and private companies to send their employees to get enrolled in the Master in Mechatronics Engineering.*
2. *HEI could develop a job-related exchange or experience for their graduates. In tha tway they will be more attractive on the job market.*
3. *Apart from the mentioned above, UBT should find more sustainable ways of financing.*

3. FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

The expert team could, based on the SER and the interviews assess all standards with either fully, substantially or at least partially compliant. Therefore, an overall assessment of "substantially compliant" is justified and a student quota of 50 students for three years is recommended. Although technically resources of the HEI would also allow a higher quota, declining interest in the program starting from an already moderate level does not suggest an increase.

The expert team was particularly impressed by the dedication of the department's faculty, which was very informative during the interviews and answered in a clear and straight manner. This was in strong contrast to some passages of the SER, which has its length and was not always written for shedding light on the standards. A particularly striking example are the standards concerning the internship (standard 4.11 and 4.12). The SER elaborates in great length about the ECTS system in general, a summer academy and collaboration with industries – instead of simply stating that no internship is included in the curriculum. Also chapter "2. Quality Management" seemed to be a more a patchwork of existing regulations and procedures rather than an original comment on the standards.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant
Student quota recommended 50 students/Three Years

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Expert Team

Chair

	Dr. Andreas Mehrle	20 June 2022
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)

Member

	Jadranka Pelikan, PhD candidate	20 June 2022
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)

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