

University Haxhi Zeka (UHZ), Peja
Agro-Environment and Agroecology/BSc

Reaccreditation

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

30.06.2022, Peja
(remote online)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	2
1. INTRODUCTION	2
1.1. Context.....	2
1.2. Site visit schedule	4
1.3 A brief overview of the institution and program under evaluation	7
2. PROGRAM EVALUATION.....	7
2.1. Mission, objectives and administration.....	7
2.2. Quality management	9
2.3. Academic staff	12
2.4. Educational process content.....	15
2.5. Students.....	18
2.6. Research.....	20
2.7. Infrastructure and resources	23
3. APPENDICES (if available).....	25

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit (remote online): 14.06.2022

Expert Team (ET) members:

- *Prof. Dr. Reiner Doluschitz*
- *Marko Komso, Student Expert*

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- Shkelzen Gerxhaliu, SO for Evaluation and Monitoring
- Flamur Abazaj, SO for Evaluation and Monitoring

Sources of information for the Report:

- *Self Evaluation Report of the University Haxhi Zeka*
- *Site visit in Peja (remote online) on 14.06.2022*

Criteria used for program evaluation:

- *KAA - The Manual for external evaluation of higher education institutions - February 2021*
- *Standards and performance indicators for reaccreditation of bachelor study programs*
- *Annexes and additional documentation*

<i>CL</i>	<i>Compliance level</i>	<i>%</i>
A	Fully compliant	> 90
B	Substantially compliant	70-90
C	Partially compliant	30-70 ¹
D	Non-compliant	< 30
n.a.	not applicable	

30-60% according KAA Accreditation Manual, corrected to close the gap

Abbreviations

EHEA	European Higher Education Area
ET	Expert team
FA	Faculty of Agribusiness
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
KAA	Kosovo Accreditation Agency
KAA18	KAA Accreditation Manual – July 2018
SER	Self-evaluation report
SWOT	Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
UHZ	University Haxhi Zeka

1.2. Site visit schedule

Site Visit Programme

Time	Meeting	Participants
09:00 – 09:45	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prof. Asoc. Dr. Nexhdet Shala, Dean of Agribusiness Faculty - Prof. Asoc. Dr. Ibrahim Hoxha, Vice Dean for budget, finance and infrastructure - Prof. Asoc. Dr. Ismajl Cacaj, Vice Dean for Teaching, student affairs and research - MSc. Ukë Selimaj, Secretary of the Faculty
09:50 – 10:35	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prof. Asoc. Dr. Arsim Elshani, Coordinator of quality from Faculty of Agribusiness - Prof. Asoc. Dr. Naser Bajraktari, Member of Quality and Evaluation Management Council - MSc. Ukë Selimaj, Secretary of the Faculty - MSc. Myhybije Zallqi, Official of Student Affairs - MSc. Abetare Pelaj, Official of finances - MSc. Floriana Zogaj, Official of Archive and protocol
10:40 – 11:40	Meeting with the heads of the study programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prof.Ass.Dr. Milaim Musliu, Head of the study programme, - Prof. Asoc.Dr. Naser Bajraktari, Head of the study programme, -Prof. Ass. Dr. Gjokë Duhanaj, Head of the study programme
11:40 – 12:25	Lunch break (provided at the evaluation site)	
12:25 – 13:10	Meeting with teaching staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prof. Dr. Agim Rysha, Professor at Faculty of Agribusiness - full-time -Prof. Ass. Dr. Defrime Berisha, Professor at Faculty of Agribusiness - full-time

		<p>-Prof. Ass. Dr. Astrit Bilalli, Professor at Faculty of Agribusiness - full-time</p> <p>-Prof. Ass.Dr. Arieta Camaj Ibrahim, Professor at Faculty of Agribusiness - full-time</p> <p>-Prof. Asoc.Dr. Shqipe Husaj, Professor at Faculty of Agribusiness - part time</p> <p>-MSc. Jetmir Prekalla, Assistant at Faculty of Agribusiness, part time</p> <p>-Msc. Granit Kastrati, Assistant at Faculty of Agribusiness - full-time</p> <p>- Prof.Asoc.Dr. Nazmi Hasanaj, Professor at Faculty of Agribusiness - full-time</p>
13:15 – 14:00	Meeting with students	<p>- Arbnor Jagoda, students from Faculty of Agribusiness – first year</p> <p>- Lulzim Shala, students from Faculty of Agribusiness - second year</p> <p>- Yllka Berisha, students from Faculty of Agribusiness – second year</p> <p>- Elsa Pudarolli, students from Faculty of Agribusiness – second year</p> <p>- Erodita Morina, students from Faculty of Agribusiness - second year</p> <p>- Agron Bobi, students from Faculty of Agribusiness – second year</p> <p>- Adoniz Kelmendi, students from Faculty of Agribusiness – third year</p> <p>- Fabian Hamzaj, students from Faculty of Agribusiness - third year</p>
14:05 – 14:50	Meeting with graduates	<p>- Diesa Morina Graduated from Faculty of Agribusiness</p> <p>- Valdet Muriqi, Graduated from Faculty of Agribusiness</p> <p>- Floriela Devolli, Graduated from Faculty of Agribusiness</p> <p>- Artur Morina, Graduated from Faculty of Agribusiness</p>

		- Isuf Demhasaj, Graduated from Faculty of Agribusiness - Ema Brovina, Graduated from Faculty of Agribusiness - Petrit Kelmendi, Graduated from Faculty of Agribusiness
14:55 – 15:40	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders	- Zana Lipoveci, The human resources department at Elkos Group - Besnik Lila, SHPK Boost Berries - Jehona Abdullahu Dabiqaj, Beekeeping ALDI - Fiolla Avdylaj, Agro product Alban Ibrahim, Koal Seeds - Korab Dinaj, Beer Factory - Naim Delijaj, Food and Veterinary Agency, Republic of Kosovo
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	

Overall instructions for HEIs:

1. No presentations of any kind are allowed, as the meetings are intended to be free discussions
2. The students selected for the meeting should reflect a diversity in terms of fields of study, programme, study cycle, year of study, students with special needs if any, etc.
3. The teaching staff selected for the meeting should reflect a diversity in terms of faculties and programmes, full-time and part time, local and international, etc.
4. The students, graduates and employers of graduates should not be employed at the institution.
5. Anyone whose attendance won't be agreed in advance with KAA, and the Expert Team will be asked to leave the interview session.

1.3 A brief overview of the institution and program under evaluation

The University Haxhi Zeka is embedded in an agricultural dominated landscape, surrounded by a couple of agribusiness companies like a brewery, dairy and juice and vegetable processing factories. Therefore, by providing knowledge and skills in various aspects of plant production, agro-environment and food processing technology the bachelor study programmes “Plant Production Technology”, “Agro-Environment and Agroecology” and “Food Technology” are well corresponding with the mission of UHZ, which is: “Haxhi Zeka University continues its positive academic and artistic tradition, it creates an environment and transformative academic experiences to achieve its aims. It also applies advanced scientific standards and assists the economic development of the Peja region and the country in general”,..., “to prepare leaders for making Kosovo a more competitive country”.

2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

Standard 1.1. (CL A) The study program mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution.

In the SER, pg. 7 it is indicated: “The mission of the program is to provide quality education and to prepare professional candidates for the labour market in the fields of Agro-Environment and Agroecology which will contribute to the economic development of the Peja region and the country.

This mission is in line with the overall mission of “Haxhi Zeka” University (see also 1.3) which states that “Haxhi Zeka University continues its positive academic and artistic tradition, it creates an environment and transformative academic experiences to achieve its aims. It also applies advanced scientific standards and assists the economic development of the Peja region and the country in general”.

Referring to the statements in the site-visit it can be confirmed and agreed by the ET that UHZ is an important regional factor, particularly since the region provides fertile soils and a high density of Agribusiness Companies as well as a significant share of organic agriculture. Numerous co-operations between UHZ and the private sector are established and a quite active stakeholder board is established and contributes to a sustainable development. This holds also true for the co-operation with other Kosovar HEI in the field.

Standard 1.2. (CL A) 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.

Particularly from the discussions with the academic staff and with the graduates and employers of graduates it could be confirmed during the online site visit that there is academic and professional advice included in the definition of learning outcomes.

It has been confirmed in the online site visit that there is an updated Strategic Plan 2019-2024 available at UHZ level and it has been confirmed as well that the development of the University and its study programs are consistent with the National Qualifications Network and the Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA.

Standard 1.3. (CL B) The study program has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept.

As it had been in the reaccreditation procedure 2019, the question still cannot sufficiently be answered since such a concept is still not particularly and detailed mentioned in the SER and also did not become completely clear in the discussions with the management of the institution, the academic staff and the students.

However, elements of such an overarching concept are visible and include the University Center of Quality assurance in teaching and general regulations for the development and establishment of study programs. In addition, it has been mentioned by students, graduates and by academic staff that there is a University-wide Learning Platform (SMU) available, also including some e-learning features. However, it seems that this concept is still in the process of establishing and there is not much progress visible compared to the reaccreditation in 2019. The ET has the impression that the potential provided by such a platform is still not fully used yet. As mentioned during the site visit discussions, the platform is designed for University-wide utilization.

Standard 1.4. (CL n.a.) There are formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues. These are made publicly available to all staff and students. KAA Accreditation Manual – July 2018

It is mentioned in the SER, pg. 9 that “The Faculty of Agrobusiness organizes its academic and scientific activities following the Strategic Plan 2020-2024 of University "Haxhi Zeka". ... There are formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues. These are published on the [Web page](#) (...) of University Haxhi Zeka and are made public to all staff and students”.

The ET trusts that such regulations are available. However, neither the documents provided to the ET nor the discussions with different status groups of the University provide indications for sufficiently answering this question.

Standard 1.5. (CL n.a.) *All staff and students comply with the internal regulations relating to ethical conduct in research, teaching, assessment in all academic and administrative activities.*

Ethical conducts are referred to at several passages in the SER, e.g. pg 87. The ET does not see itself in a position to assess the ethical conduct of all staff and students. However, the ET trusts that staff and students comply with the regulations.

Standard 1.6. (CL B) *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.*

It is mentioned in the SER, pg. 12, that “The management of the Faculty and its academic staff in regular meetings review the progress of the management of the program and activities of this faculty where notes are taken about possible changes when there will be an opportunity for change. All policies, regulations, terms of references and statements of responsibility relating to the management and distribution of the program are reviewed at the beginning of each academic year. They are amended as necessary in certain circumstances of the change.”

The ET trusts that these reviews are performed as described, but cannot evaluate the extent to which these processes are being carried out. Furthermore, there are compulsory accreditation and re-accreditation procedures initiated and established and frequently conducted by KAA on a regular basis. International experts from the respective fields of the study programs are an essential backbone-component of such procedures.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant (B)

ET recommendations:

- 1. The available learning-platform should be used to a larger extent and more frequently to implement and foster an overarching didactic concept.*
- 2. Strengthen and foster QA-processes and offices.*

2.2. Quality management

Standard 2.1. (CL A) *All staff participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity.*

It is confirmed in the SER (pg. 15) that self-assessment of the academic staff is performed once a year, after termination of the academic year.

ET has met only a selected number of the staff in the interviews and cannot comment on “all” staff. Interviewed staff members showed respective awareness and the ability for self-reflection and self-evaluation. ET trusts that the staff is following the reporting and improvement processes of the UHZ.

Standard 2.2. (CL B) *Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes.*

It can be quoted from the SER (pg. 15) as follows: “Evaluation and planning processes for improvement in the Faculty of Agribusiness are integrated in the normal planning processes based on the Statute of the University (Article 211, point 1) which regulates management measures at all organizational levels, the evaluation of study programs and organization of studies, evaluation of the quality of teaching, and evaluation of research activities. The Faculty of Agribusiness has adequate human, financial and material resources for leading and managing quality assurance processes. To better plan the evaluation process, UHZ conducts quality evaluation through six (6) regular questionnaires which are provided by quality assurance regulations as well as through ad-hoc evaluations and focus groups. The results obtained from these questionnaires are used for improvement and planning.”

Reflecting to such infrastructural efforts the ET conclude that evaluation and improvement processes are integral parts of the quality management of the University. Students are evaluating courses by standardized questionnaires with optional free text comment. Documentation of respective results takes place in the dean’s office. Professors with poor results get a feedback meeting with the dean. Temporary teaching staff might be not receive a prolongation of their contracts in such cases. Best professors receive honors in annual public meetings.

Standard 2.3. (CL A) *Quality assurance processes deal with all aspects of program planning and delivery, including services and resources provided by other parts of the institution.*

The SER (pg. 16) confirms a comprehensive setting of elements forming an overall quality assurance process. Such elements include continued self-evaluation at the institutional and study levels, design and approval of new study programs, review of existing study programs, assessment of teaching process, scientific and artistic research, administration, academic staff and all other fields of activity of the University, a continuous monitoring and periodic audit of study programs, periodic external quality assurance, and international mobility cooperation and internationalization.

Other areas will be applied upon request and as needed or in the case of different requirements, e.g. by MEST, Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA), etc.

Faculty management is involved in designing of study programs. Delivery of courses and eventual shortcomings are reported to the management. External services such as internships in companies and institutes are discussed with supervisors of the hosting institutions.

Standard 2.4. (CL B) *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. KAA Accreditation Manual – July 2018*

Learning outcomes are evaluated on course level by assessment, which includes attendance, homework, interactive exercises, seminar work, tests and final exam, written and oral.

Further quality parameters of the study program such as enrolment number, completion rate, and grade overview are recorded as stated in the SER.

Standard 2.5. (CL B) *Quality assurance processes ensure both that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance.*

The SER (pg. 16) confirms that continued self-evaluation at the institutional and study levels is operational: “The Dean of FAB will ensure that the appropriate conditions exist for the implementation of evaluation activities within the quality assurance system, while the Quality and Evaluation Officer will implement the activities foreseen in the calendar of quality assurance activities.”

However, “continuing improvement in performance” cannot be judged by the ET team, because time series of quantitative quality parameters are only very partially provided at the moment.

The just currently established Quality Officers at the level of each faculty could be responsible for collecting, analysing, processing data, particularly time series of key indicators and drafting recommendations. The final report should include the Evaluation Procedure, the Evaluation results, proposed recommendations, deadlines for implementation of proposed recommendations.

Standard 2.6. (CL B) *Survey data is being collected from students, graduates and employers; the results of these evaluations are made publicly available.*

Standardized surveys of students, graduates and employers are mentioned in SER (pg. 17; questionnaires for teachers evaluation by dean, academic staff self-evaluation, teachers evaluation by students, administration evaluation by students, special evaluation forms for employers and graduates). According to the opinion of the ET, such survey data of students, graduates and employers, if being collected, should be treated confidentially and not being made “publicly available” rather than individual participants would explicitly agree.

Standard 2.7. (CL B) *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.*

The ET trusts that results of the internal quality assurance system are used by the management to further develop the study program.

Standard 2.8. (CL A) *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.*

According to SER (pg. 18) “Quality assurance occurs through quality self-assessment for the Faculty of Agribusiness. The results and recommendations for improvements are implemented once a year, at the beginning of the academic year and are based on the University Statute (Article 211, point 2), which regulates quality assessments to achieve the objectives, adjust the work and save the measures taken.”

Standard 2.9. (CL A) *The quality assurance arrangements for the program are themselves regularly evaluated and improved.*

The ET trusts that the UHZ management is supervising, evaluating and improving the internal quality assurance system.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant (B)

ET recommendations:

- 1. All professors should get a feedback of the students' evaluation in a compiled anonymous form independent of the result*
- 2. Professors should discuss the evaluation results and ways of improvement with the students*
- 3. Quantitative performance parameters such as number of applicants, number of enrolment, completion rate, grade overview should be provided to the ET team*

2.3. Academic staff

Standard 3.1. (CL B) *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. KAA Accreditation Manual – July 2018*

Following the statement in the SER the policies and regulations for the employment of academic staff at the FAB derive from publicly accessible documents which are described in the SER. Detailed job descriptions and employment conditions are initially published when the vacancy is announced, then after the appointment, the duties and responsibilities are described in the employment contract.

The SER (pgs. 20-21) shows a comprehensive table with relevant data on teaching staff.

In the online site visit session it has been summarized that currently 8 Associate Profs., 5 Assist.Profs., 5 Regular Assistents are engaged in the study program and the Faculty respectively. Additionally, a total of three young Professors with PhD became employed in 2021

Standard 3.2. (CL A) *The teaching staff must comply with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative instruction on Accreditation.*

The ET trusts that academic staff does comply with legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative Instruction on Accreditation.

Standard 3.3. (CL A) *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.*

The academic staff having been present during the site visit fulfills this request. However, it is difficult for the ET to prove this for the complete number of academic staff within the study program under evaluation. Teaching import and export vice versa has been reported during the site visit discussions. Major partners are University of Pristina and University of Mitrovica.

Standard 3.4. (CL A) *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.*

The following estimated numbers for the study programs under evaluation have been reported to the ET during the site visit: About 64 % of the academic staff is regularly full time, about 36% on different kind of part time contracts.

Standard 3.5. (CL A) *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.*

According to the SER and the information provided during the site visit this requirement is well fulfilled, see Standard 3.1.

Standard 3.6. (CL C) *Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties.*

There was no formal procedure reported during the discussions in the online site visit. The academic staff taking part in the discussion reported about respective courses, mostly done during visits abroad and/or in the framework of Intl. projects and in many cases quite some time ago.

The SER (pg. 22) confirms: “The faculty continually monitors and stimulates the pedagogical and research-scientific activity of the academic staff and collaborators. To enhance continuously the pedagogical, didactic, and methodological skills of the regular academic staff the Faculty will be committed to creating as many opportunities for offering courses, seminars, and other trainings so that they are continuously trained.”

Standard 3.7. (CL A) *The responsibilities of all teaching staff, especially full-time, include the engagement in the academic community, availability for consultations with students and community service.*

According to the information provided during the online on-site visit this request is well fulfilled. The academic staff taking part in the on-site visit discussions reported that they offer such kind of consultancy for students on a regular basis.

Standard 3.8. (CL A) *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.*

There is a formal procedure established for academic staff evaluation done by students. This is based on a standardized questionnaire which is filled in anonymously. It is highly recommended by the ET that this process continuously becomes more transparent. The entire results should be reported to each teacher. Staff should reflect to the results of the questionnaire and even more importantly to the comments in the free comment section of the questionnaire. Finally, the actions taken and expected impacts should be reported back to the students in a feedback-loop.

Standard 3.9. (CL C) *Strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials.*

It has been mentioned in the online site visit that improving teaching strategies and quality of learning material is part of annual review cycles.

With respect to teaching materials the SER (pg. 23) states: "Concerning the strategy for improving the quality of teaching materials, the program provider in collaboration with the subject teachers in this program will ensure that the material provided for reading to students is of a high quality, updated, and available on time and easily for students."

An even more active learning platform would also contribute to achievement of such goals and should be fostered.

Standard 3.10. (CL C) *Teachers retired at age limit or for other reasons lose the status of full-time teachers and are considered part-time teachers.*

It has been mentioned in the online on site visit that retired professors are not involved in teaching.

However, the SER (pg. 22) indicates "that occurs in the Faculty of Agribusiness according to article 177 of the UHZ statute, a member of the academic staff retires at the age limits, but with the possibility of part-time engagement in the teaching process after retirement until the age of 70."

UHZ is taking advantage of that.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant (B)

ET recommendations:

1. *Teaching assistants should get regular access to didactic training and further scientific education, not only temporarily (projects, visits abroad), but on a regular permanent basis provided and supported accordingly by the University.*

2.4. Educational process content

Standard 4.1. (CL A) *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 to KAA Accreditation Manual – July 2018 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.*

The ET encourages cooperation with business partners that will help the programme in specific areas. As stated in the SER, the study programme is in line with the National Qualifications Framework and the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area. Through the programme students manage to get the necessary credits that are required.

The study programme has clear qualification objectives for the field of Agro-Environment and Agroecology.

The study program “Agro-Environment and Agroecology” has clearly employment oriented qualification objectives (SER pg. 25). FAB established an Advisory Body with members and guests from companies and institutes in agribusiness to steadily adjust the study program to societal needs.

During the site visit graduates and employers recommended that students from the program would have more practical experience, language proficiency and soft skills, research experiences and extension service competencies.

Standard 4.2. (CL A) *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.*

The study methods are described in the syllabuses for each course. In general, the programme focuses on problem-solving skills, case studies, project work, problem-based learning, and simulated learning.

The syllabus of the study program Agro-Environment and Agroecology is arranged according to the Bologna system and the ET trusts that this will also cover the National Qualifications Framework.

Standard 4.3. (CL B) *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.*

The programme's focus provides a logical flow and leads to the development of general and specific learning outcomes in the curriculum. The programme offers elective courses for individual student focus.

Standard 4.4. (CL A) *The disciplines within the curriculum have analytical syllabuses which comprise at least the following: the discipline's objectives, the basic thematic content, learning outcomes, the distribution of classes, seminars and applicative activities, students' assessment system, the minimal bibliography, etc. The full course description/ syllabuses of each subject/ module should be attached only in electronic form to the self-assessment report for the study program under evaluation.*

Syllabuses of the curriculum are well documented. The structure of the syllabi is standardised and sufficiently described by the faculty staff members.

The individual course descriptions comprise: course objectives, learning outcomes, thematic content, teaching methods, students' assessment system and bibliography. Course contents are reasonable and contribute to the qualification objectives of the study program.

Standard 4.5. (CL n.a.) *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.*

The language of instruction is Albanian. Language training will not be required. English skills are not regulated by the Faculty of Agribusiness.

Standard 4.6. (CL B) *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.*

Envisaged learning outcomes are described for each course in the syllabus. The ET trusts that the degree of achievement of the learning outcomes will be verified in students' assessments and discussed in individual consultations, when necessary.

Standard 4.7. (CL n.a) *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.*

Teaching strategies consist of different teaching methods described and customised for the courses and documented in the syllabuses.

Standard 4.8. (CL A) *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.*

Students are requested to use empirical research which is adequate for a bachelor thesis. The ET trusts that the assessments are communicated at the beginning of the course and are conducted fairly and objectively during and at the end of the course.

***Standard 4.9. (CL A.)** Appropriate, valid and reliable mechanisms are used for verifying standards of student achievement. The standard of work required for different grades is consistent over time, comparable in courses offered within a program, and in comparison with other study programs at highly regarded institutions.*

An overall assessment monitoring is established at University level, which generates for every assessment a report.

***Standard 4.10. (CL B)** Policies and procedures include actions to be taken in to dealing with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or KAA Accreditation Manual – July 2018 inconsistently assessed.*

The ET trusts that such regulations are laid down in the statutes of UHZ (<http://unhz.eu/lajmet-dhe-ngjarjet/rregullore/>).

***Standard 4.11. (CL B)** If the study program includes practice stages, the intended student learning outcomes are clearly specified and effective processes are followed to ensure that those learning outcomes and the strategies to develop that learning are understood by students. The practice stages are allocated ETCS credits and the work of the students at the practical training organisations is monitored through activity reports; students during practice stages have assigned tutors among the academic staff in the study program.*

The respective program contains seminar papers, homework, exercises, presentations, colloquia, and in some subject's class discussions are organised between groups of students related with practical topics, addressed in lectures

***Standard 4.12. (CL A)** In order to facilitate the practice stages, the higher education institution signs cooperation agreements, contracts or other documents with institutions/organisations/practical training units.*

UHZ has signed more than 30 cooperation agreements with companies and institutes in the vicinity of Peja and from the field of the study programs content.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant (B)

ET recommendations:

1. *The ET encourages cooperation with business partners that will help the programme in specific areas*
2. *Cooperation with business partners already existing should be strengthened, e.g. at the Advisory Board Level*
3. *Internships should be integrated into the syllabus and ECTS credits should be awarded*
4. *Examples of written exams should be presented by next accreditation site visit*

2.5. Students

The evaluation process has confirmed the presence of information, outside the documents supplied in advance of the visit, that demonstrate institution-wide arrangements for student admissions, rights of representation, student feedback via ‘satisfaction surveys’, what students can expect during the studies, what is expected of them and what support can be provided if something goes wrong.

University of Peja ‘Haxhi Zeka’ and its Faculty of Agribusiness have established different regulations to deal with academic misconduct, including plagiarism and other forms of cheating: Code of Ethics for Academic Staff, Code of Ethics for Students, Code of Ethics for Non-Academic Staff. University of Peja ‘Haxhi Zeka’ is in possession of a plagiarism detection software which they use to control student papers.

Standard 5.1. (CL A) *There is a clear and formally adopted admission procedure at institutional level that the study program respects when organising students’ recruitment. Admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied for all students.*

The admission procedure is described in SER (pg. 68). Procedure and criteria are clearly stated. The ET trusts that the admission criteria are fairly applied to all candidates.

Standard 5.2. (CL A) *All students enrolled in the study program possess a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent document of study, according to MEST requirements.*

According to SER (pg. 68), admission requires at least a high school diploma.

Standard 5.3. (CL n.a.) *The study groups are dimensioned so as to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process.*

This standard cannot be evaluated by the ET, because detailed information about student numbers and study groups was not provided.

Standard 5.4. (CL A) *Feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments is given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed.*

At UHZ the quality office is monitoring the annual progress rates to identify and provide assistance to any category of students who may have difficulties.

Standard 5.5. (CL B) *The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record. KAA Accreditation Manual, updated version*

The Quality Office at the faculty keeps all records on student enrollment and completion of their studies.

Standard 5.6. (CL A) *Flexible treatment of students in special situations is ensured with respect to deadlines and formal requirements in the program and to all examinations.*

According to the SER (p. 60), a tutorial system is implemented to help students who encounter problems in a subject by organizing additional classes and by orienting them to relevant material that enables students to overcome shortcomings.

Standard 5.7. (n.a.) *Records of student completion rates are kept for all courses and for the program as a whole and included among quality indicators.*

See Standard 5.5.

Standard 5.8. (CL B) *Effective procedures are being used to ensure that work submitted by students is original.*

UHZ has developed an own anti plagiarism software, which is in function, checking every student thesis before its final submission. The procedure is effective, yet the challenging part is the threshold of plagiarized text.

Standard 5.9. (CL A) *Students' rights and obligations are made publicly available, promoted to all those concerned and enforced equitably; these will include the right to academic appeals.*

The SER (pg. 70) states that the UHZ adopted policies regarding students' rights and obligations which are publicly available.

Standard 5.10. (CL A) *The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs is clearly regulated in formal internal documents.*

The UHZ adopted policies regarding transfer and mobility of students which are publicly available.

Standard 5.11. (CL A) *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.*

The members of the teaching staff and the students confirmed in the interviews that sufficient time is available for individual counselling.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant (B)

ET recommendations:

1. *Software for professional detection of plagiarism should be applied more intensively.*
2. *Student statistics have to be developed and continuously per cohort for the last 5 years, comprising: applications, enrolments, cohort size at year (n), graduations.*

2.6. Research

Standard 6.1. (CL C) *The study program has defined scientific/applied research objectives (on its own or as part of a research centre or interdisciplinary program), which are also reflected in the research development plan of the institution; sufficient financial, logistic and human resources are allocated for achieving the proposed research objectives.*

The SER (Pg. 73) indicates: “The research plan related to this program will be implemented within the general research program at the University foreseen by the Strategic Plan and the Strategy for scientific research. The Faculty of Agribusiness has several agreements signed with various national and international units and institutions for cooperation in the field of research and mobility of students and professors. As a result of these agreements and work, the staff has published papers in international peer-reviewed scientific journals and participated in international, regional, and national conferences. The results of this research have also influenced the compilation of the content of this program.”

Against this background the ET highly recommends to put research more in the center of all kind of strategic considerations and to establish incentives and procedures to allow and foster high-level research activities.

Standard 6.2. (CL B) *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.*

According to the SER (pg. 74) research activities and scientific publications are criteria for staff evaluation: “All research and scientific activities of the academic staff are considered during the performance appraisal process and during the appointment / promotion procedures of the academic staff. So, these criteria are regulated by special regulations approved by the UHZ Senate and the UHZ Statute. Expected quantity and quality should be defined in the regulations of UHZ”.

Standard 6.3. (CL C) *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.*

The SER is lacking clear policies for defining what is recognized as research, consistent with international standards and established norms in the field of study of the program. However, in the discussion with graduates and employers quite detailed ideas for applied research have been expressed.

Standard 6.4. (CL C) *The academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity.*

The publications by the FAB staff are from the field of study and are related to the subjects they teach. Publications are presented in standard 6.5 and SER pgs. 74-86.

Standard 6.5. (CL B) *The academic and research staff publish their work in speciality magazines or publishing houses, scientific/applied/artistic products are presented at conferences, sessions, symposiums, seminars etc. and contracts, expertise, consultancy, conventions, etc. are provided to partners inside the country and/or abroad.*

“The academic staff of the Faculty of Agribusiness has published scientific papers in international scientific journals. In the SER (pgs. 74 to 86) is a summary of the scientific and research work of the academic staff provided.

It had been mentioned by the graduates during the online site visit that there are plenty of topics for applied research, good and proven collaboration experiences with quite a number of students.

However, according to the impression in the online site visit there still is quite a large potential for increasing quantity and improvement of quality of research.

Standard 6.6. (CL n.a.) *Research is validated through: scientific and applied research publications, artistic products, technological transfer through consultancy centres, scientific parks and other structures for validation.*

Infrastructure such as scientific parks or consultancy centers are neither described in detail in the SER nor have been mentioned in the online site visit by partners from different levels.

It is recommended by the ET that such procedures should become developed by the institution and established by following a consistent research strategy which has to be set up and agreed on prior to this.

A table listing scientific publications can be found in the SER, pgs. 74-86.

Standard 6.7. (CL B) *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.*

The SER (pg. 86) confirms that “Each member of the academic staff within the academic year on average has realized a scientific paper published in international scientific journals with impact factor and a participation in international scientific conferences”.

Standard 6.8. (CL A) *Academic and research staff publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full time staff.*

The ET trusts that academic and research staff is publishing under the name of UHZ. Random checks have been positive.

Standard 6.9. (CL B) *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.*

The ET trusts that the teaching staff is integrating own research outcomes into teaching as this is the regular way of teaching at a University. This has been confirmed in the online site visit by the staff attending the meeting.

However, as mentioned in Standard 6.5, there is substantial potential for increasing quantity and improving quality in this respect of performing research.

Standard 6.10. (CL n.a.) *Policies are established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.*

The ET trusts that ownership and intellectual property is protected by regulations of UHZ and published on the website.

Standard 6.11. (CL B) *Students are engaged in research projects and other activities. KAA Accreditation Manual – July 2018*

Students of the study program “Agro-Environment and Agroecology” do some practical laboratory courses. However, according to laboratory spaces available, this could be expanded.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant (B)

ET recommendations:

- 1. The ET highly recommends to put research more in the center of all kind of strategic considerations and to establish incentives and procedures to allow and foster high-level research activities. Suitable procedures and actions are mentioned in the comments by ET.*

2. *The ET recommends that validation procedures for scientific outputs should be developed and established by following a consistent research strategy, which has to be set up and agreed on prior to this.*
3. *Young researchers should be more supported and involved in the research activities by the senior staff.*

2.7. Infrastructure and resources

Because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic situation the ET was not able to travel on site. The evaluation procedure was conducted by online platform. The information for this chapter was provided by the Faculty of Agrobussines in the form of a video, documents and during the interviews with the management of the faculty.

Buildings are in a good condition and extensions are under construction. Lab space is available but instrumentation is poor and investments are required. Lecture halls, seminar rooms and laboratories are available. The number of seats in the lecture rooms, seminar rooms and laboratories are sufficient.

There is a library at the faculty that is sufficient at the moment but needs more subscriptions to specific magazines to help the students with their papers.

Standard 7.1. (CL B) The adequate long-term implementation of the study program is ensured in quantitative terms as regards premises, human resources and equipment. At the same time, it is guaranteed that qualitative aspects are also taken into account.

Land and buildings are still possible from former military installations. Buildings are in a good condition and extensions are under construction. Lab space is available, but instrumentation is poor and investments are required. Shortcomings are partly compensated by performing internships and thesis work in cooperation with surrounding agribusiness companies and the Agricultural Institute of Peja. The SER states that the spaces currently available to the students, academic staff (13 professors (associate or assistant), 5 assistants and 3 new professors) and administrative staff meet the minimum requirements for a quality and effective management of curricula, including this Program which is under evaluation.

Standard 7.2. (CL B) 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.

The FAB presents the Financial plan in the SER (pg. 90) which is a 3-year plan.

Standard 7.3. (CL A) The higher education institution must demonstrate with adequate documents (property deeds, lease contracts, inventories, invoices etc.) that, for the study program submitted for evaluation it possesses the following, for the next at least three years:

- a) *owned or rented spaces adequate for the educational process;*

- b) *owned or rented laboratories, with the adequate equipment for all the compulsory disciplines within the curriculum, wherever the analytical syllabus includes such activities;*
- c) *adequate software for the disciplines of study included in the curriculum, with utilisation licence;*
- d) *library equipped with reading rooms, group work rooms and its own book stock according to the disciplines included in the curricula.*

Lecture halls, seminar rooms and laboratories are available. The ET trusts that there is relevant documentation supporting this standard (a - d).

Standard 7.4. (CL A) *The number of seats in the lecture rooms, seminar rooms and laboratories must be related to the study groups' size (series, groups, subgroups); the applicative activities for the speciality disciplines included in the curricula are carried out in laboratories equipped with IT equipment.*

The SER (pgs. 90-92) provides data on number of seats in the classrooms and the inventory list of existing equipment in the laboratories and IT equipment as well.

Standard 7.5. (CL B) *The education institution's libraries must ensure, for each of the study programs:*

- a) *a number of seats in the reading rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program;*
- b) *a number of seats in the group work rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program;*
- c) *their own book stock from Albanian and foreign speciality literature, enough to cover the disciplines within the curricula, out of which at least 50% should represent book titles or speciality courses of recognized publishers, from the last 10 years;*
- d) *a book stock within its own library with a sufficient number of books so as to cover the needs of all students in the cycle and year of study the respective discipline is provided for;*
- e) *a sufficient number of subscriptions to Albanian and foreign publications and periodicals, according to the stated mission.*

The ET cannot verify the number of seats in the library (reading and work group rooms), since the SER does not provide specific and comprehensive information on this substandard.

Standard 7.6. (CL A) *The infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the program is adapted to students with special needs.*

The SER (pg. 93) states: "The infrastructure and facility dedicated to implementing this Program are adapted to students with special needs. In addition, the faculty building provides access for these categories."

Compliance level: Substantially compliant (B)

ET recommendations:

1. *Insufficient equipment in existing laboratories should be improved.*
2. *Reading and work group seats for students should be available according to the standard.*
3. *Update the library with specific journals and subscriptions*

OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program “Agro-Environment and Agroecology (B.Sc.)” offered by the Faculty of Agribusiness of the University Haxhi Zeka, Peja is *Substantially compliant (CL B)* with the standards included in the *KAA Accreditation manual* and, therefore, recommends to *accredit* the study program for a duration of 3 years with a number of 50 students to be enrolled in the program.

3. APPENDICES (if available)

Expert Team

Member



	Prof. Dr. Reiner Doluschitz	30.06.2022
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)

Member



	Marko Komso	30.06.2022
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)