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University of Prishtina (FSHMN)
Hasan Prishtina

Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences
Master of Computer Science

PROGRAM ACCREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM



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DATE, PLACE

May 27, 2022

University of Prishtina

Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences

Department of Mathematics

Computer Science Program



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: May 27, 2022

Expert Team (ET) members:

- ***In-person:*** Ahmad Zargari, Ph.D., Professor and Associate Dean, School of Engineering and Computer Science, Morehead State University, Kentucky, USA.
- ***Virtual visit:*** Mr. Marko Komso, Student Expert

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- Flamur Abazaj, SO for Monitoring and Evaluation
- Ilirjane Ademi Ahmetaj, SO for Monitoring and Evaluation

Sources of information for the Report:

- Self-evaluation Report (SER);
- Documents (Agreements, Rules, CVs, Strategies, Manuals, List of Publications, Statues, Syllabi)
- Dr. Ahmad Zargari interviewed program representatives in-person on May 27, 2022
- Mr. Marko Kosmo virtually met with the representatives on May 27, 2022
- Website of the Institution

Criteria used for institutional and program evaluations

- KAA Accreditation Manual, 2021
- Criteria for Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Impact, Sustainability



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1.2. Site visit schedule

- 09:00 – 9:45 Meeting with the management of the faculty where the program resides.**
- 9:50 – 10:35 Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative services**
- 10:40 – 11:40 Meeting with the heads of faculties/study programs**
- 11:40 – 12:25 Lunch break**
- 12:25– 13:10 Meeting with teaching staff**
- 13:15 – 14:00 Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders**
- 14:00 – 14:10 Internal meeting – Expert Team and KAA**
- 14:10 – 14:20 Closing meeting with the management of the institution**

1.3. A brief overview of the institution under evaluation

In 1971, the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences (FMNS) in Prishtina was established as an Academic unit of the University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina" for the purpose of educating students on the science fields of mathematics and nature in order to prepare graduates for the job market and also as school teachers for elementary and secondary schools of the Republic of Kosovo. In addition, the FMNS contributes on scientific development, research, and education by cooperating with various national and international partners through different projects.

According to the self-evaluation report, the priorities of the FMNS are in line with the priorities of the University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina" and the 2020-22 strategic plan the focus on 1) Quality increase in education and scientific research, 2) Research encouragement, and 3) Program development and sustainability. Also, the objectives the faculty of mathematics and

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natural science are: Advancement of teaching quality, advancement of scientific research work in the related fields, training of students for teaching and preparing them for the job market, and improvement of cooperation with the institutions inside and outside the country, whether they are institutions of higher education or public and private economic institutions. The FMNS is comprised of five departments including, 1) Chemistry department, 2) Department of Mathematics, 3) Department of Physics, 4) Department of Biology, and 5) Department of Geography. The SER indicates that Computer Science program is housed in the Mathematics Department.

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.

****This Expert Team report does not include the Standard 2.5 “Students” component of the program evaluation because there were not any students in this proposed new program.***

2.1. Mission, Objectives and Administration

As stated in the self-evaluation report, the Computer Science MSc program’s objective is to “share and apply knowledge in Computer Science by educating generations of science professionals and academics who will be successful, ethical and effective in solving problems, who will contribute to the economic well-being of our country and who are ready to face the complex challenges of the century.” The SER also describes that the program is systemized in four main areas of Data science; Mathematics, Management, and Other. In meeting with the management staff of the Computer Science - MSc program, the expert team was informed that the program’s student learning outcomes (SLOs) are in line with the National Qualifications Framework and the European Qualifications Framework on Higher Education. Also, the faculty has received input from local public/private professionals and companies, have consulted with the ACM and IEEE guidelines during the development of the program.

Upon completion of the program, graduates are expected to analyze advanced principles of computer science, successfully practice in applied and theoretical field, and have the opportunity to advance in doctoral studies. Students will be prepared to utilize and apply new technologies in the field of computer science, apply communication and organizational skills in the context of ethical issues related to the field of study or society, think critically and creatively to solve local or global problems, remain relevant



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through lifelong learning by continuing to develop their technical competencies and become contributors to society, and apply knowledge and skills to solve problems effectively and efficiently.

Standard: Mission, Objectives and Administration	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: Substantially compliant (84%)

ET recommendations:

- Computer Science is an evolving field of study that demands continuous curriculum and program development and delivery of the program must be reviewed frequently.



2.2. Quality Management

Quality management

The SER describes in detail the quality management organization and processes. During the expert team's conversation with the QA representatives and administrative staff, the ET was informed that structures, tools, procedures for quality enhancement are in place in the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences – Department of Mathematics where this CS program resides.

The problem-based teaching and learning approach is strengthened. The Faculty respects all the criteria set by the KAA regarding the quality. In the opinion of the ET a continuous responsive process guarantees the involvement of all stakeholders that processes are integrated into the normal planning and working processes. The ET is also convinced that required standards are met and that there is improvement of performance on a continuous basis. A specific COVID19 impact evaluation was not conducted. The expert team was informed that the extremely low percentage of students participating in the survey does not show real quality assessment results. Therefore, questionnaires are made mandatory to have more data to collect and analyse and improve the QA process.

Standard - Quality management	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 2.1. All staff participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity.	X	
Standard 2.2. Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes.	X	
Standard 2.3. Quality assurance processes deal with all aspects of program planning and delivery, including services and resources provided by other parts of the institution.	X	



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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 considered 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: Fully compliant (100%)

ET recommendations: N/A

2.3. Academic Staff

According to the SER and meeting with the program heads and teaching staff, the expert team confirms that the procedure for hiring academic staff is regulated by the approved regulations within the University. For each position, a request is made by the Department, according to the program needs, and then the request is further processed to the Senate and the Board of Directors, who also approve the request and announce the position in the general competition of the University.

To apply for the position as a regular academic staff, the conditions required by the competition in question must be met. The expert team was informed the department is in the process hiring permanent teaching

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staff. It is reported that the Mathematics Department has 21 faculty, eight of these faculty are listed as permanent scientific/artistic staff who are assigned to the MS Computer Science program. Meeting with the teaching staff, the ET found that the faculty were very enthusiastic about offering the master's program. However, the expert team cannot not confirm that the proposed program has sufficient qualified teaching staff in the CS-related discipline.

With regard to curriculum and program development which is an essential component of the Computer Science graduate program, the SER describes that main strategies for quality improvement are focused on professional development of the academic staff.

Although the teaching staff is encouraged to visit institutions abroad to explore new practices, it is not clear that if the current faculty have the time and sufficient funds to visit institutions abroad, to teach new graduate courses, conduct research, and contribute to professional service.

Standard 2.3: Academic Staff	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	



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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.	X	



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Compliance level: Substantially compliant (80%)

ET recommendations:

- To prepare students with the required skills that enables them to work successfully and to conduct research, the program needs additional full-time faculty whose Ph.D. degree is in Computer Science.
- Considering the faculty teaching load and academic background, to implement a successful MS degree in Computer Science, additional full-time faculty is needed.
- Teaching staff should be given the time and opportunity to involve with academic community, be available for mentoring students and engage in community service.

2.4. Educational Process Content

According to the Self-evaluation report, the master's program in Computer Science has been developed based on contemporary curricula and in consultation with leading CS related professionals such as Association of Computing Machinery (ACM) and IEEE. The proposed program is intended to admit students from variety of fields including mathematics, computer science, management, and other related disciplines in order to prepare them for employment in private and public organizations, and completing Ph.D. degree.

In the first semester, the program begins with some of the core courses in Computer Science and Mathematics, providing a good foundation for understanding the top-level courses in subsequent semesters. The second and third semester courses are built on top of each other and provide additional opportunities for students to master more advanced computer science concepts. Required courses provide comprehensive computer science training, but students also have the option of choosing elective courses to pursue specific interests or curiosities.

The ET was informed that this program was developed with input from employers, students, graduates, and industry. As a result of meetings with teaching, administrative, and employers, the visiting team confirms that the graduate degree program in computer science is a highly in-demand program, and its graduate are needed for the economic development of the region.



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The Expert Team has reviewed the program structure and courses, and believe that to implement and sustain a MS degree in Computer Science, faculty with Ph.D. degree and contemporary laboratories are needed.

Standard 2.4: Educational Process Content	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 4.1. The study program is modelled on qualification objectives. These include subject-related and interdisciplinary aspects as well as the acquisition of disciplinary, methodological and generic skills and competencies. The aspects refer especially to academic or artistic competencies, to the capability of taking up adequate employment, contributing to the civil society and of developing the students' personality.	X	
Standard 4.2. The study program complies with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. The individual components of the program are combined in a way to best achieve the specified qualification objectives and provide for adequate forms of teaching and learning.	X	
Standard 4.3. The disciplines within the curriculum are provided in a logical flow and meet the definition and precise determination of the general and specific competencies, as well as the compatibility with the study programs and curricula delivered in the EHEA. To be listed at least 7 learning outcomes for the study program under evaluation.	X	
Standard 4.4. The disciplines within the curriculum have analytical syllabuses which comprise at least the following: the discipline's objectives, the basic thematic content, learning outcomes, the distribution of classes, seminars and applicative activities, students' assessment system, the minimal bibliography, etc. The full course description/ syllabuses of each subject/ module should be attached only in electronic form to the self-assessment report for the study program under evaluation.	X	



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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, and in comparison with other study programs at highly regarded institutions.	X	
Standard 4.10. Policies and procedures include actions to be taken in 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 ECTS credits and the work of the students at the practical training organisations is monitored through activity reports; students during practice stages have assigned tutors among the academic staff in the study program.		X



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Standard 4.12. In order to facilitate the practice stages, the higher education institution signs cooperation agreements, contracts or other documents with institutions/organisations/practical training units.	X	
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Compliance level: Substantially compliant (85%)

ET recommendations:

1. Develop and utilize laboratories (hardware and software) that reflect the contemporary advanced Computer Science field of study.

2.5. *Students – Not Applied

Because the Expert Team visited a new program that is considered for accreditation, the team did not meet graduate students.

Standard 2.5: Students	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 5.1. There is a clear and formally adopted admission procedure at institutional level that the study program respects when organising students' recruitment. Admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied for all students.		
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.		
Standard 5.3. The study groups are dimensioned so as to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process.		



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Standard 5.4. Feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments is given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed.		
Standard 5.5. The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record.		
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.		
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.		
Standard 5.8. Effective procedures are being used to ensure that work submitted by students is original.		
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.		
Standard 5.10. The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs is clearly regulated in formal internal documents.		
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.		

Compliance level: N/A

ET recommendations: N/A



2.6. Research

Reviewing the SER and based on interviews with the teaching staff, heads of the program, and management of the faculty, it is of the ET opinion that a research plan is one of main elements of the faculty development plan in the University of Pristina. The faculty of Natural Mathematical Sciences and the Department of Mathematics has made considerable contributions to the scientific research through their presentations and publications (cumulative 30+ publications/presentations). Also, one of the main criteria for promoting teaching staff to higher academic ranks is scientific research and professional achievement that is clearly specified in the regulations for the advancement of staff of the University of Pristina.

Although the faculty indicated that the quality and quantity of scientific work will be enhanced in the future with the development of the Master of Science in CS, it is not clear that how will a faculty who has published one paper in 2017 have the time to conduct scholarly research with additional graduate-level teaching load.

The visiting team did not have the opportunity to meet with undergraduate bachelor's studies (BS CS) students to discuss whether they are engaged in research. The teaching faculty believe that the master's students will be more involved with research which will result is enhancement of published scientific work. Reviewing the SER, and meeting with the teaching staff, **the ET is of the opinion that to establish a productive and sustained research agenda that involves graduate students' additional full-time faculty is needed.**

Standard 2.6: Research	Compliance	
	Yes	No
<i>Standard 6.1.</i> The study program has defined scientific/applied research objectives (on its own or as part of a research centre or interdisciplinary program), which are also reflected in the research development plan of the institution; sufficient financial, logistic and human resources are allocated for achieving the proposed research objectives.	X	



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<i>Standard 6.2.</i> 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	
<i>Standard 6.3.</i> 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	
<i>Standard 6.4.</i> The academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity.		X
<i>Standard 6.5.</i> The academic and research staff publish their work in speciality magazines or publishing houses, scientific/applied/artistic products are presented at conferences, sessions, symposiums, seminars etc. and contracts, expertise, consultancy, conventions, etc. are provided to partners inside the country and/or abroad.	X	
<i>Standard 6.6.</i> Research is validated through: scientific and applied research publications, artistic products, technological transfer through consultancy centres, scientific parks and other structures for validation.	X	
<i>Standard 6.7.</i> 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
<i>Standard 6.8.</i> Academic and research staff publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full-time staff.	X	
<i>Standard 6.9.</i> 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	



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

Compliance level: Substantially compliant (72%)

ET recommendations:

- Engage students in scientific research
- The CS faculty research should focus on contemporary CS field.
- Encourage all academic staff to produce at least an average of one scientific/applied research publication per year.
- Allocate resources for attending international/national conferences and submit papers to the CS related journals.

2.7. Infrastructure and Resources

The expert team confirms that the Department of Mathematics has sufficient office space available to full-time academic staff, retired teachers, and other part time academic staff. All offices are equipped with computers, printers and internet, and are mostly shared by the teaching staff.

According to the Self-Evaluation Report, within the University there exists software for student management with the possibility of using Google Classroom to place documents, quizzes and other materials for students. During the pandemic, the University used the Google Meet platform for lectures with students but also for staff meetings and meetings on various projects.

The SER describes that the University of Prishtina has its own budget, allocated by the Government of Kosovo. Part of this budget is also allocated to the Faculty of Mathematical Natural Sciences, which includes the Department of Mathematics. **However, it is not clear to the expert team what specific budget/funds has been or will be allocated to the infrastructure and resources needed for the proposed program**

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In addition to lack of clarity regarding the budget/funds and space allocated to maintain and sustain the proposed program, the infrastructure and facilities do not currently meet the requirements of students with special needs.

Standard 2.7.: Infrastructure and Resources	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 7.1. The adequate long-term implementation of the study program is ensured in quantitative terms as regards premises, human resources and equipment. At the same time, it is guaranteed that qualitative aspects are also taken into account.		X
Standard 7.2. There is a financial plan at the level of the study program that would demonstrate the sustainability of the study program for the next minimum three years.		X
Standard 7.3. The higher education institution must demonstrate with adequate documents (property deeds, lease contracts, inventories, invoices etc.) that, for the study program submitted for evaluation it possesses the following, for the next at least three years: a) owned or rented spaces adequate for the educational process; b) owned or rented laboratories, with the adequate equipment for all the compulsory disciplines within the curriculum, wherever the analytical syllabus includes such activities; c) adequate software for the disciplines of study included in the curriculum, with utilisation licence; d) library equipped with reading rooms, group work rooms and its own book stock according to the disciplines included in the curricula.	X	



Standard 7.4. The number of seats in the lecture rooms, seminar rooms and laboratories must be related to the study groups' size (series, groups, subgroups); the applicative activities for the speciality disciplines included in the curricula are carried out in laboratories equipped with IT equipment.	X	
Standard 7.5. The education institution's libraries must ensure, for each of the study programs: a) a number of seats in the reading rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program; b) a number of seats in the group work rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program; c) their own book stock from Albanian and foreign speciality literature, enough to cover the disciplines within the curricula, out of which at least 50% should represent book titles or speciality courses of recognised publishers, from the last 10 years; d) a book stock within its own library with a sufficient number of books so as to cover the needs of all students in the cycle and year of study the respective discipline is provided for; e) a sufficient number of subscriptions to Albanian and foreign publications and periodicals, according to the stated mission.	X	
Standard 7.6. The infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the program is adapted to students with special needs		X

Compliance level: Partially compliant (66%)

ET recommendations:

- Allocate adequate budget/funds for the infrastructure, laboratories, and faculty resources to ensure long-term implementation of the study program.
- Ensure that the infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the program meet the needs of students with special needs.
- Develop a financial plan that would demonstrate the sustainability of the proposed study program for the next minimum three years.



3. FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

In conclusion, the Expert Team findings suggest that the Master of Science in Computer Science program “Computer Science, MSc” that is being proposed by the University of Prishtina for accreditation is substantially compliant with the standards included in the KAA Accreditation Manual. The ET recommends that the program be **required** to employ additional CS faculty and provide contemporary CS Lab spaces.

Recommended student quota is 30 students for three Years.

OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

Standard	Compliance Level
Mission, objectives and administration	Substantially compliant
Quality management	Fully compliant
Academic Staff	Substantially compliant
Educational Process Content	Substantially compliant
Students	N/A
Research	Substantially compliant
Infrastructure and resources	Partially compliant
Overall Compliance	Substantially compliant

The overall compliance is assessed by the experts at the level of **substantially compliant**.



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Expert Team

Member

Ahmad Zargari

June 15, 2022

(Signature)

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(Date)

Member

Marko Komso

June 15, 2022

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)