



Republika e Kosovës  
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



Agjencia e Kosovës për Akreditim  
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Kosovo Accreditation Agency

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***FACULTY OF MEDICINE  
UNIVERSITY OF PRISHTINA "Hasan Prishtina"***

***CLINICAL MEDICINE PhD***

***(RE/ACCREDITATION)***

**REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM**

June 2022



Republika e Kosovës  
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*DATE, PLACE*  
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Context

**Date of site visit: June the 15<sup>th</sup> 2022**

**Expert Team (ET) members:**

- *Dr Luc Hittinger, Chair*
- *Dr Mihaly Boros*
- *Jadranka Pelikan*

**Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):**

- *Ilirjane Ademai Ahmeti; KAA Officer*
- *Arianit Krasniqi, KAA Officer*

**Sources of information for the Report:**

- *SER Clinical Medicine, PhD*
- *CV*
- *Syllabi*
- *Annexes*
- *Complementary documents*
  - Approval of the Ethical commission for the research which involves human, example, (in English or Albanian language)
  - Approval of the Ethical commission for the research conducted using animals, example, if any in the past 5 years (in English or Albanian language)
  - Research paper (published) in which the research was conducted with humans
  - Research paper (published) in which the research was conducted using animals, if any in the past 5 years
  - Plan or programme of the doctoral study
  - Example of the annual student report
  - Example of the annual mentor report on student progress
  - Example of the monthly student report
  - Example of the monthly mentor report on communication with the supervisor



- Contract/ agreement signed between the Institution and the PhD candidate (example)
- The Institution provides professional development opportunities for supervisors
- Participation in international academic networks and similar activities (certificate for at least three members of the academic staff)
- The certificates of professional development education the supervisors attended (at least from three supervisors) within the past five years
- List of appointed supervisors with the number of current students mentoring
- Workload table for all the supervisors engaged in the PhD study programme – monthly report
- *Number of students that have completed their PhD Studies*
- *Links to English website with: research, publications, projects, and scientific papers published from PhD students*
- *Follow up of the PhD graduates over the last 2-3 years*
- *KPIs*

#### Criteria used for program evaluation:

- Standard & performance indicators for external evaluation according to the accreditation
- Manual of KAA

#### 1.2. Site visit schedule

2. Programme Accreditation Procedure at Faculty of Medicine, 3. University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina"	
Programme:	Clinical Medicine, PhD (Re-accreditation)
On-line site visit on:	June 15, 2022
Expert Team:	Dr. Luc Hittinger Dr. Mihaly Boros Jadranka Pelikan
Coordinators of the KAA:	Ilirjane Ademaj Ahmeti, KAA Officer Arianit Krasniqi, KAA Officer

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**Site Visit Programme**

Time	Meeting	Participants
09:00 – 09:50	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated	Prof. Dr. Suzana Manxhuka Kërliu,  Prof. Ass. Valon Krasniqi, Prof. Ass. Fatos Sada,  Prof. Ass. Pranvera Breznica  Prof. Ass. Armond Daci
09:55 – 10:55	Meeting with the head/s of a doctoral programme	Shemsedin Dreshaj  Shpend Elezi  Cen Bytyqi  Ibrahim Rrudhani  Serbeze Kabashi-Muçaj
10:55 – 11:40	Lunch break	
11:40 – 12:30	Meeting with representatives of relevant doctoral committees, administrative and QA staff involved in doctoral programmes	Prof. assoc. Kreshnik Hoti, Besnik Loxha, Denis Raka
12:40 – 13:30	Meeting with research-teaching staff and supervisors	Prof. Aurora Bakalli, Prof. Burim Neziri, Prof. Vlora Ibishi, Prof. Kreshnike Dedushi
13:35 – 14:25	Meeting with doctoral candidates	Dr. Vigan Mahmutaj, Dr. Greta Begolli, Dr. Dafina Ademi, Dr. Rajmonda



		Nallbani, Dr. Violeta Hyseni, Dr. Taulant Shala
14:25 – 14:35	Internal meeting between expert team and KAA	
14:35 – 14:45	Closing meeting with the management of the institution/doctoral programme	

### 1.3 A brief overview of the institution and programme under evaluation

The faculty of Medicine was official created in 1969. It merged with the Hospital Center of Prishtina in 1973. It started as a faculty of General Medicine. In 1975/6, the first generation of the Department of Dentistry was registered, followed by the branch of Pharmacy in 1996/7, those of Physiotherapy in 2001/2 and the branch of Midwifery and Nursing in 2003/4. Finally, a branch of Health Management was created with the University of Vienna. It works as an academic unit and carries out educational activities with different Kosovo's Institutions.

The Faculty of Medicine offers 5 study programs (integrated and basic):

1. **General medicine** with a duration of 6 years - the title obtained is Doctor of Medicine
2. **Dentistry** with a duration of 6 years - the title obtained is Doctor of Dentistry
3. **Pharmacy** with a duration of 5 years - the title obtained is Master of Pharmacy
4. **Physiotherapy** lasting 3 years - the title obtained is a Bachelor of Physiotherapy
5. **Nursing** with a duration of 3 years - the title obtained is a Bachelor of Nursing.

PhD Studies are also offered in: Preclinical Medicine, Clinical Medicine, Dentistry, Experimental Biomedicine and Public Health.

#### The main objectives of organizing the General Medicine program are:

- Continuous improvement of the quality of teaching and learning by applying interactive methods with the student at the center
- Achieving clinical and laboratory skills and performance for an independent job;
- Development of research capacities, research work;



- Preparing students for international exchanges with higher education institutions in Europe and beyond;
- Providing modern infrastructure for quality education
- Providing adequate and up-to-date literature.

Recently, needs for Ph.D. study and graduate students in Medical Faculty are increasing as a result of changing in Ph.D. study programs and the needs for building and renewing capacities of academic and scientific staff in UP. Based on this situation Medical Faculty has proposed and is committed to continuing the program of doctoral study (Ph.D.) in Clinical medicine.

With this program, students gain experience, intensify scientific research activities, increase research mobility, strengthen innovation and internationalize their field of work, which is very important for the development of Kosovo. In addition, the program introduce high quality, modern doctoral program (PhD), fully compliant with the Bologna Declaration, thus contributing to the creation of preconditions to reform doctoral cycle (PhD) in general for future programs.

The doctoral program "**Clinical medicine**" includes in itself some fundamental principles that characterize it, such as: interdisciplinary approach and cooperation of relevant experts among themselves as basis of complementarities for the development of scientific research in the field of Medicine and biomedicine, in all levels of research (molecular, cells, organisms and population). The program intends to continue academic cooperation with international partners (University of Ghent, University of Edinburgh, University of Vienna and University of Graz, etc.), close consultation and involvement of students, public and private partners, ensuring consistency and quality of thorough partnership and cooperation between them. Moreover, issues such as quality, internationalization, mobility, promotion of scientific research, development and building a knowledgeable society are the focus of this particular program.

Prototype for the Ph.D. study program is the Ph.D. Program and Doctoral Program of Applied Medical Sciences at Medical University of Vienna, Austria (<https://www.meduniwien.ac.at/web/en/studies-further-education/phd-doctoral-programmes>). The study program was adapted to the needs for Kosovo. This will ensure to reach the requirements of the European standards of higher education programs and will



refer about the comparability of the study program in biomedicine with one or two other (European) countries. Criteria of ECTS, the structure of modules, contents of modules, practical and theoretical ratio and self-learning tasks of students were adapted to the requirements and conditions of Kosovo.

The Doctoral programme in Clinical Medecine was first accredited in 2007, and being evaluated for re-accredited for the third time.

## **2- PROGRAMME EVALUATION: Doctoral programme in Medicine, PhD**

### **2.1 INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE, ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AND FUNDING**

The Objectives of the Ph.D. program in “Clinical medicine” are:

- Strengthening research capacities, as well as improvement of internationalization and mobility aspects within the Ph.D. cycle;
- Addressing the urgent need to build expertise in the field of Clinical medicine in Kosovo;
- Development, accreditation and continuation of the PhD program Clinical medicine and implementation of interdisciplinary team work at the UP in line with Bologna requirements and recent trends;
- Achievement of general knowledge base on Ph.D. program development and implementation through capacity and institution building measures.

The Faculty of Medicine has allocated sufficient academic and administrative staff, spatial, physical and financial resources in order to support the doctoral program – Clinical medicine.

46 teaching professors are appointed for this PhD program and academic staff from Faculty of Medicine deliver more than 90% of courses at doctoral level. The new Central Faculty building offers sufficient space and modern lecture amphitheatres, rooms. The UP allocates a budgetary line to financially support the PhD programs in the Faculty of Medicine.

From total academic staff, most of them are PhD in the research field of the doctoral programme and there are more than 5 professors which have at least 3 articles, as first or corresponding author, published in international relevant publications in the last 5 years, cited in platforms: Web of science and SCOPUS. The list of published articles is available at web page of Faculty.





The profile of the program is based on interdisciplinary approach. As such, the program is focus on specific research and enable candidates to undertake in-depth scientific research work on their own, but also to get professional skills and qualifications related to the future professions. This includes targeted training of Ph.D. candidates in entrepreneurship and knowledge transfer between university and professional environment and vice versa – for the benefit of the society as a whole – especially with regard to the economic and social impact of the candidates' work.

The Ph.D. Commission of Faculty of Medicine and Council of Faculty according to Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) reports annually with the overall performance of study programs. The report includes the analysis of course completion, program progression, completion rates, and program evaluations, with summaries and comparative data distributed automatically to senior administrators and relevant committees at least once a year.

The financial plan of the Medical Faculty is annually revised and projected in long-term aspects to ensure the sustainability of the study program. The students' number in the study program, among other factors, is planned to correspond to the size and the volume of these setting to be able to accommodate groups of different sizes according to the curricula. The libraries have sufficient stock of the literature, mainly in English, but also in Albanian and other languages, with titles covering more than 50% of the subjects of the study program. The facilities and premises dedicated to the study program are accessible for students with special needs.

The Faculty of Medicine conducts regular reviews and updating of the programme, including the study curricula and program.

Call for PhD education is announced publicly, including in the institutional website in official languages of Republic of Kosovo and in English, with all the relevant information.

During the on-line visit, the ET could confirm the informations of the SER, in particular in human and building resources. It also verified the increase in the quality of the publications in the recent years and observed a clear improvement (75 publications in journals indexed in Scopus 2021). It has learned that 6 PhD candidates have completed their PhD studies in the last 2 years and that no PhD student has dropped out of their studies in the last 2 years. In terms of budget, those of the year 2022 (4.35 Meuros) was explained during the on-line visit and the expected budgets for the years 2023 (4.4 Meuros) and 2024 (4.45 Meuros) presented



in complementary documents. During the on-line visit, the ET has learned that the review of the study program was done every 3 years, and verify that the PhD opportunities are presented in the Website of the Faculty of Medicine. It finally has learned that the KPI of academic staff is still in development by the Higher Education Research and Applied Science and the Austrian Development Agency.

#### CORE

1.1 The institution* has established institutional regulations for doctoral programmes that are either a) part of the existing regulations, but as a separate named section, or b) a free-standing document	X
1.2 The institution has allocated sufficient human (academic and administrative), spatial, physical and financial resources, specifically to support its doctoral programmes.	X
1.3 The institution has sufficient academic staff with a doctoral degree so that at least 50% of courses at doctoral level are delivered by academic staff from that institution. Further, at least 5 academic staff must have a PhD in the research field of the doctoral programme and have at least 3 papers, as first or corresponding author, published in international relevant publications in the last 5 years. Relevance of publications is defined according to international criteria for the particular field of science- indexed in WoS <sup>1</sup> and/or SCOPUS <sup>2</sup> ).	X

*\*The institution may be a university, faculty, department, depending who is the main organiser and carrier of the PhD programme; while disciplinary programmes are usually organised by the department, or faculty, interdisciplinary programmes may be inter-departmental, inter-faculty or university-level.*

*programmes may be inter-departmental, inter-faculty or university-level.*

#### SUPPLEMENTARY

1.4 The institution conducts regular reviews and updating of the programme.	X
1.5 Doctoral education opportunities are shown on the institutional website, in an official language of Kosovo, and in English, and include all relevant information.	X
1.6 The Institution has a clear strategy for the delivery of its doctoral education. If this is embedded in a general institutional strategy, it is explicitly recognised in a separate section.	X

#### Compliance level:

<sup>1</sup> WoS (SCIE, SSCI and AHCI)

<sup>2</sup> SCOPUS (excluding predatory journals or publishers)



Fully compliant

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. Increase the number of PhD Candidates completing their PhD study per year, in order to obtain a balance between the candidates coming in the program (10/year) and those finishing their study.*
- 2. Use as soon as they will be ready KPIs for the PhD academic staff.*

## **2.2 SELECTION AND ADMISSION CRITERIA**

The call for Ph.D. education, with all the relevant information on the admission procedure for the Clinical Medicine program is announced publicly, including at the institutional website in official languages of Republic of Kosovo and in English. In accordance with the statute of the HEI the recruitment of Ph.D. students is competitive, transparent, consistent and fair. The general conditions and requirements for the registration are as follows:

- Final degree in the diploma studies of Medicine (360 ECTS) or an educational level equivalent to a master degree.
- Candidates must speak and write fluent English.
- Candidates who during previous studies have managed to earn a point grade average of minimum 8.0. Those with higher point grade average acquire more points during the admission process, a mechanism which is clearly defined in the open call procedures.
- Students who have obtained the diploma in Academic Institutions outside Kosovo should apply for the process of recognition of Diploma at the NARIC (National Academic Recognition and Information Center) in the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MEST) of Kosovo.

The number of positions is determined by the criteria of “Regulation for Doctoral Studies” at University of Pristina (UP 1/96 dated 24.06.2021), in accordance with the number of mentors who fulfil mentorship criteria. The academic units propose the number of students for enrollment, in accordance with the conditions set by the KAA, while the senate makes the final decision on the number of students and the announcement of the public competition, taking into account the research, teaching and mentoring capacities of the unit academic. The study group in the Clinical Medicine program currently consists of 10 full-time students.

A Commission nominated by the Dean of the Medical Faculty, in cooperation with the Central Council for Doctoral Studies, selects from the candidates. The process is based on the open call and the Regulation for Doctoral Studies. The applications received are assessed by the



members of the Commission to define that a candidate meets the minimum criteria. Thereafter the applicants take part in a mandatory prequalification interview, where the level of English language skills and the scientific methodology knowledges of the candidates are checked. The English knowledge is evaluated with a maximum of 20 points. If the candidate proves to have an international TOEFL certificate with at least 79 points (or IELTS with at least 5.65 points), he/she automatically gets 10 points, while the other points are received during the entrance exam.

The scientific research activity is evaluated with a maximum of 15 points. Special emphasis is given to the scoring of the research work conducted by the applicants (as evidenced by publications) in the last 5 years as follows:

- For each article indexed in WOS and/or SCOPUS (Q1, Q2): first/ corresponding author 5 points, others 2 points.
- For each article published and indexed in SCOPUS (Q3, Q4) or SCOPUS without quarterly specifications: first author / corresponding 4 points, the others 1.5 points.
- For each article published in other international journals indexed on the platforms specified in the applicable regulation on selection procedures regarding the academic staff: first author 3 points, second 2 points, the others 1 point.
- For each article published in local academic journals, published by the University of Prishtina or its centers or institutes, the Academy of Sciences and Arts of Kosovo, the Institute of Albanology and the Institute of History, which are subject to professional review: first author 2 points, the others 1 point.
- For a university book published in the last five years in the narrow field: main author 5 points, co-author 3 points in total. The monograph in the field where the candidate applies is evaluated with 4 points.
- For each oral presentation of the work in international scientific gatherings (conferences, congresses, symposia) indexed and published in the summary of presentations: the first author 2 points, the others 1 point.
- For each presentation in the form of a poster in international scientific gatherings (conferences, congresses, symposia) indexed and published in the summary of presentations: the first author 1 point, the others 0.5 points.
- For each oral presentation in scientific gatherings (conferences, congresses, symposia) of local character: the first author 1 point, the others 0.5 points.

Academic units can set special conditions (criteria), if they do not conflict with the Statute of University of Prishtina and the Regulation for Doctoral Studies. The special conditions are



specified in the relevant competition published after the accreditation of the doctoral program and are valid for the entire accreditation period.

Finally, the Commission decides on the admissions on the basis of the competition results and the Regulation for Doctoral Studies. The students enrolled should fulfil all financial obligations as defined by the financial plan of the HEI. The names of the accepted candidates, with all the data of the selection criteria, are publicly announced on the website of the academic units and on the website of the university.

No major shortcomings were identified in this item. The Administration confirmed during the interviews that the ratio of applicants to admissions is on average 10:1, which demonstrates a high level of competition for the entrance to the program. Estimates or ranges of student dropouts are not presented in the SER, but the Administration and all groups of stakeholders stated that the current student admission number (n=10) meets the labor market needs, expectations and job opportunities.

The length of PhD studies is clearly and well regulated, the duration is not less than 3 years, organized in 6 semesters for a full study. In case of request and approval, this period can be extended up to 6 years from the day of registration.

#### CORE

2.1 Doctoral candidates must be selected on the basis of a competitive and transparent process.	x
2.2 Applicants for a doctoral programme must have an educational level equivalent to a masters degree.	x
2.3 In the selection process doctoral candidates' potential for research should be assessed	x
2.4 Applicants must be able to demonstrate a satisfactory working knowledge of English	x

#### SUPPLEMENTARY

2.5 Both, full-time and part-time doctoral candidates must have a clearly defined time for completion of their studies.	x
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#### Compliance level:



Fully compliant/ Substantially compliant/ Partially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. The PhD student enrolment number is directly related to educational quality, therefore the admissions must be proportional to the program's capacity in all directions (academic/invited persons, technical - material base, laboratory and hospital capacity). The right equilibrium between the local needs for graduates with PhD degrees, and the labour market should be kept up.*
- 2. English skill levels can be evaluated by the Common European Framework of References for Languages system (CEFR) as well, as recommended by the European Council. English level B2 ("upper intermediate"), the fourth level of CEFR, may be appropriate for the selection process.*
- 3. Recognition of the quality of the scientific output of the applicants is proposed on a larger (1-10 point) scale. The current ratio between the first authorship in a Q1 publication (5 points) and lectures, oral presentations of scientific results at local conferences (1 point) does not reflect sufficiently the quality of research. Scientific excellence should be taken into account and better recognized during the entrance exams.*

### **2.3 DOCTORAL PROGRAMME STRUCTURE/CONTENT**

The prototype for the Clinical Medicine Ph.D. program is the Ph.D. Program and Doctoral Program of Applied Medical Sciences at Medical University of Vienna, Austria, but the structure of modules, contents of modules, practical and theoretical ratio and self-learning tasks, the criteria of ECTS, were adapted to the requirements and conditions of Kosovo.

The program is built on an interdisciplinary approach and cooperation of relevant complementarities for the development of all levels (molecular, cells, organisms and population) of scientific research in the fields of biomedicine and the curriculum consists of courses based mainly on seminars, tutorials, individual research work, workshops, laboratory and clinical research settings. The SER comprehensively describes the curriculum structure, most actions and procedures related to the Standards are addressed. The professional content and structure of the training, the teaching and learning support methods used are up-to-date, meet the professional requirements and are suitable for achieving the learning outcomes. Certain descriptions are however rather general and repetitive, use normative statements instead of detailing the actions and procedures but most of these issues were clarified during the on-line site-visit.



The curriculum is regularly updated and meets the international standards of PhD studies; it has a research-based structure, and clearly contributes to critical thinking and the development of research skills. Another main aim of the program is to support innovation and life-long learning. The Expert Team agreed that the admission numbers and the student-tutor ratios are adequately planned for the educational program with matching teaching methods. Evidence was provided that the duration of full-time PhD study, and the possibility to extend the duration in the form of part-time study is defined and regulated by the HEI.

The components of program follow a logical sequence. In year 1, semester 1, a student collects 30 ECTS from mandatory and elective modules. In semester 2, the student collects 6 ECTS from elective modules and 24 ECTS from research activities, presentation of results and thesis seminars. In the second year, in semester 3, the student collects 30 ECTS from thesis project proposal (approved by supervisor 6 ECTS) and approval at Central Council of Doctoral Study (24 ECTS). In semester 4, the student collects 20 ECTS from publication of the results in an international journal of the respective field of study, 5 ECTS from presentation of results of doctoral thesis in international science conferences (as first author) and 5 ECTS from publication in local journals. Alternatively the PhD student may collect 10 ECTS from presentation of results of doctoral thesis in 2 international scientific conferences (as first author). Finally, in year 3, in semesters 5. and 6. the student collects 60 credits through the successful public defense of doctoral thesis. The objective of the courses of the first and second semester of curriculum is to develop the research skills with elements of methodology, ethics, and good research practices.

The syllabi of compulsory and elective courses give clear information on the details of the program and the number of ECTS/credit hours allocated per course. The number of contact hours, depending on the different teaching-learning methods varies, and corresponds to the content of the course/module/clerkship and the learning outcomes. Based on this structure, the completion of mandatory and elective subjects will result in  $6 \times 30 = 180$  ECTS, with a total of 125 hrs lectures, 165 hrs seminars, 185 hrs exercises and laboratory skills and 4025 hrs self-learning, giving a grand total of 4500 hrs of education. Briefly, this curriculum is well organized into theoretical and practical directions too, with the aim to strengthen the integration of clinical and basic sciences. In many cases these links, however, are not well defined or are not presented, which makes the analysis somewhat difficult, to find out where is the next stage which serves to link theoretical and practical knowledge. In several cases the „teaching tools” include „practical exercises in health care institutions” which „will be allocated to themes of the module”. This happens not only in „clinical” subjects, but in case of Biostatistics and Research Methodology” or „Good Laboratory and Clinical Research Practice” or



„Experimental Models in Biomedicine” (and so on). Here a more detailed explanation of the content of practices, the description of practicals, and the relationship between the modules and the intended learning outcomes (LOs) would surely be necessary (and a diagram showing the integrative links between clinical and basic medical sciences in this part of the curriculum would be useful). Biostatistics and Research Methodology should be divided into 2 courses to reduce the student workload. This study programme does not include qualitative methods in research which are very important in biomedical studies. The programme should also put more attention on microcredentials and transferrable skills.

The modalities for mobility of students and academic staff in other institutions are listed in the program and the process of monitoring is also clearly defined according to the requirements and internal regulations. According to the description in the SER, students establish initial contact with a supervisor in the first semester, while officially the supervisor is selected in the second semester of the study. The way and intensity of communication between supervisors and students seems to be appropriate.

The PhD regulation of the HEI describes a transparent and well organized procedure of acceptance of doctoral research proposal. The process of selection of supervisor and acceptance of doctoral research proposal of the PhD student is coordinated by the supervisor, the Doctoral Council of Faculty of Medicine and the Doctoral Studies Central Council of the University.

According to SER and the PhD curriculum, the PhD student is obliged to gain other relevant experiences, such as presentations at academic conferences, workshops and other important activities. Likewise, according to the Regulation for Doctoral Studies (Article 6) the University of Prishtina offers opportunity for joint or collaborative programs, and provided a list of several agreements for collaborations with other academic universities. Although this approach is commendable, the success of the regulation should be demonstrated better, as it seems that this highly important point needs to be strengthened.

According to SER and the SEMS (Electronic System for Management of Students) contains accessible and relevant data on cohorts of PhD candidates (but the website at <https://notimi.uni-pr.edu/> could not be checked due to password protection).

#### CORE

3.1 Doctoral programmes must be research-based although they may include course work and other activities that contribute to critical thinking and the development of research skills.	x
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3.2 Doctoral programmes must have a time limit of 3 or 4 years for full-time doctoral students and of 7 years for part-time students.	x
3.3 The programme should enable individual research opportunities; courses should not exceed 1/5 of ECTS (36 credits) of total credit hours or 20% of the total workload; programme must develop transferable skills, and provide sufficient training in the methodology, ethics and integrity of research.	x
3.4 The programme should encourage mobility and participation in learning opportunities in other institutions.	x
3.5 The programme must have an established process for monitoring the progress of doctoral candidates.	x
3.6 A doctoral candidate must have a supervisor/s allocated within the first 12 months.	x
3.7 Acceptance of a doctoral research proposal must be subject to clearly defined and transparent procedures.	x

*\* The institution may be a university, faculty, department, depending who is the main organiser and carrier of the PhD programme; while disciplinary programmes are usually organised by the department, or faculty, interdisciplinary programmes may be inter-departmental, inter-faculty or university-level.*

*programmes may be inter-departmental, inter-faculty or university-level.*

#### SUPPLEMENTARY

3.8 Doctoral candidates' mentors and members of the doctoral committee should be involved in institutional bodies relevant for doctoral education.	x
3.9 Doctoral candidates should be allowed to take courses outside the institution, as well as afforded opportunities to gain other relevant experience, such as presentations at academic conferences, workshops and other relevant activities.	x
3.10 The majority of course work should be based on tutorials, seminars, discussion groups, workshops and individual work rather than predominantly didactic methods of instruction.	x
3.11 There should be evidenced data collection on cohorts of doctoral candidates.	-
3.12 If there is insufficient research capacity the institution is considering different approaches, such as joint programmes, collaborative programmes); a serious endeavour needs to be documented (please, see S 4.5).	-

#### Compliance level:

Fully compliant/ Substantially compliant/ Partially compliant

#### ET recommendations:



1. *Statistics, data for incoming and outgoing mobility of researchers, supervisors and students of the program should be made available at the website.*
2. *The rules, procedures needed for the extension of the program (to 6 years, criteria, regulations for suspension the 3-years term (like in case of illness or maternity) should be better described.*
3. *International collaboration is essential for a planned growth; short- and longer term strategic plans are suggested in this direction.*
4. *It is of importance to check the efficiency of the program regularly with solid performance indicators (admissions versus completions, drop-out rates, scientometry etc).*
5. *All syllabi should be revised with the learning outcomes written according to the NQF, prior the new academic year.*
6. *Biostatistics and Research Methodology should be divided into 2 courses to reduce the student workload, prior the new academic year.*
7. *This study programme does not include qualitative methods in research which are very important in biomedical studies. Therefore, the qualitative methods research should be an obligatory course.*
8. *More attention should be paid to microcredentials, short courses and trainings to recognize the transferrable skills of the doctoral candidates.*

## 2.4 RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT CAPACITY

The process of reaccreditation is conducted online, and it was not an easy task for the ET to evaluate the equipment and its availability to the doctoral candidates. Therefore, the ET approximates that the infrastructure and facilities are sufficient for the doctoral study conducting.

The SER (pg.48) states that “ The Faculty of Medicine with the strategic plan of UP has continuously increased the infrastructural development and the budget for scientific studies. There is a regulation for involvement in scientific projects at local and international levels. In the MP program, the priority is to increase the quality of scientific activity on diploma topics. Ongoing clear policies have been developed to define research, in line with international standards and norms.”

The ET received evidence on international ethical standards application in research of the PhD candidates.

CORE



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4.1 Infrastructure and facilities must be up-to-date and compatible with the area of research of a whole doctoral programme and doctoral research projects.	x
4.2 It must be evident, and clearly documented, that research is performed according to international ethical standards.	x
4.3 An Ethics Committee should be responsible for approving research involving humans and animals. Members must be active researchers, with publications in relevant international journals with no record of any kind of misconduct of research, plagiarism or any other ethical issue, no identified conflict of interest, and committed to data protection.	x
4.4 No supervisor should have more than three doctoral candidates.	x

*\*The institution may be a university, faculty, department, depending who is the main organiser and carrier of the PhD programme; while disciplinary programmes are usually organised by the department, or faculty, interdisciplinary programmes may be inter-departmental, inter-faculty or university-level.*

*programmes may be inter-departmental, inter-faculty or university-level.*

**SUPPLEMENTARY**

4.5 In case of a need to up-grade research capacity, a joint doctoral programme with another university, preferably from abroad could be accepted (the whole programme with all the components needs to be documented, following all the applicable standards); other forms of collaboration with other institutions from abroad may also be acceptable.	n.a.
4.6 Taking in to account the field of research, employment opportunities, and its research capacity, the institution should consider the scheduling of enrolment of new cohorts of students.	X
4.7 The institution should support research quality by requesting and reporting on research-paper quality and publication, external research funding, the establishment of research groups, etc.	x

**Compliance level:**

Fully compliant/ Substantially compliant/ Partially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. *Each doctoral candidate performing research involving humans and/or using animals should be obliged to present the Ethical Committee approval for the research.*
2. *The research quality should be improved in terms of establishment of the continuous research debate groups, not only as one semester course (even if it is an extracurricular).*



3. *The researchers, both PhD candidates and the academic staff supporting them, should have developed an individual annual plan for research, publications and further improvement i.e education. Its implementation should be monitored.*

## 2.5 SUPERVISION

The interviewees stated that PhDs have a supervisor from their area of research. The ET checked the list of the CVs attached, there are several of them very experienced researchers. The PhD candidates confirmed that their communication with the supervisor is quite frequent, very often on a weekly basis.

### CORE

5.1 A doctoral candidate must have at least one supervisor (two is advisable), covering the research area/topic that is the focus of his/her doctoral research.	x
5.2 Supervisors must be a member of academic staff of the institution, hold a PhD and an approved academic title, be an active researcher, with a minimum of three years' research experience following the award of his/her PhD; he or she must have at least 3 papers published in international relevant publications in the last 5 years (relevance of publications is defined according to international criteria for the particular field of science- indexed in WoS and/or SCOPUS).	x
5.3 Supervisors must have experience in research projects and participation in international academic conferences and workshops relevant to the field.	x
5.4 The number of doctoral candidates per supervisor should be compatible with the overall work load of a supervisor.	x
5.5 Supervisors and doctoral candidates must meet regularly (at the very least monthly) to discuss the candidates' research and monitor progress. These meetings must be documented.	x
5.6 Responsibilities of the institution, supervisor and doctoral student must be set out clearly in a policy document.	x

*\*The institution may be a university, faculty, department, depending who is the main organiser and carrier of the PhD programme; while disciplinary programmes are usually organised by the department, or faculty, interdisciplinary programmes may be inter-departmental, inter-faculty or university-level.*

*programmes may be inter-departmental, inter-faculty or university-level.*

### SUPPLEMENTARY



5.7 The Institution provides professional development opportunities for supervisors.	x
5.8 Participation in international academic networks and similar activities should be documented.	x

**Compliance level:**

Fully compliant/ Substantially compliant/ Partially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. *Each supervisor should attend the workshop for mentors and provide the attendance certificate by the next reaccreditation.*
2. *The monthly report of the PhD candidate progress or meeting minutes should be documented and available to the ET.*
3. *The HEI and the PhD candidate should formalise their relationship with a mutually signed contract.*

## 2.6 ASSESSMENT

Doctoral candidates are required to publish at least 1 paper as a first or corresponding author in a peer-reviewed journal relevant to the field (indexed in WoS and/or SCOPUS).

Protocol for the assessment process, including the composition of the evaluation committee is laid down in article 17 and 18 of the PhD regulation of U.P. The evaluation committee is composed of three members appointed by the academic unit committee. One of the members should be from a university abroad. The supervisor cannot be a member of evaluation committee.

After the official submission of doctoral thesis to the faculty, with the consent and opinion of the supervisor, the doctoral study council of the academic unit reviews the reasoning of the mentor within 1 month and proposes to the council of the academic unit the appointment of members of the doctoral thesis evaluation commission. Simultaneously with the appointment of the commission for the evaluation of the doctoral thesis, the academic unit publishes the title and resume of the thesis in Albanian and English on its website for a period of 30 days.

The commission for the evaluation of the doctorate, within 2 months from the appointment, compiles the written report for the evaluation of the doctoral thesis and submits it to the council of the academic unit. In the next session the council of the academic unit decides on acceptance, return or rejection of the dissertation.



If the thesis is returned for completion-change a period of 2-6 months is given, within which period the completion-change must be completed. The completed or amended thesis must be submitted to the council of the academic unit together with the opinion of the committee for the evaluation of the doctoral thesis.

In instances of the approval of the report of the evaluation commission, the council of the academic unit forms the commission for doctoral defense. The commission for defense of doctoral thesis consists of 3 members. Within 1 month from the date of submission, the positive decision of the council of the academic unit regarding the thesis, is reviewed by the central commission of doctoral studies, which in case of fulfillment of the conditions provided by this regulation proposes to the senate the ratification of the doctoral thesis.

The senate, within 1 month from the date of the positive recommendation from the central commission of doctoral studies, takes a decision regarding the ratification of the doctoral thesis. The doctoral student, in agreement with the dean of the academic unit and with the commission for protection of the doctoral thesis, makes the public defense of the doctoral thesis within 2 months from the day of ratification in the senate.

The supervisor participates in defense of the doctoral dissertation on the side of the doctoral student and has no right to make decisions. The defense of the doctoral dissertation is done with physical presence and is public. The Commission for the Defense of Doctoral Thesis makes the evaluation immediately after the public defense of the doctoral thesis. The evaluation of the defense of the doctoral thesis may be: a) defended, with great success; b) defended, very well; c) defended, with good success; d) defended, with sufficient success; e) did not defend. In case the defense commission assesses that the doctoral student has failed to defend the doctorate due to non-compliance with the defense procedures, the doctoral student loses the right to defend the doctoral dissertation. In case the defense commission assesses that the doctoral student has failed to defend the doctorate due to insufficient preparation, the commission may decide that the doctoral student should be offered a period of 1 year to repeat the defense process.

Ph.D. title can be revoked at any time in case that fabrication, cheating, plagiarism or infringement of author's rights during preparation of doctoral thesis is identified as described in article 19 of the PhD regulation of U.P.

During the on-line meeting, the role and the function of doctoral council was explained. All the academic staff and students did not report any complaint about the assessment and all the standards list below were positively verified. In addition, narrow scientific expertise were performed by external experts.



**CORE**

6.1 Doctoral candidates are supported and required to publish at least 1 paper as a first or corresponding author in a peer-reviewed journal relevant to the field (indexed in WoS and/or SCOPUS).	X
6.2 Doctoral candidates must confirm that the doctoral thesis is their original work.	X
6.3 Doctoral candidates must submit their thesis to the doctoral committee within the stipulated time frame and participate in an oral public defence.	X
6.4 The institution must have a clearly documented protocol for the assessment process including the composition of the evaluation committee, which should comprise at least three members	X
6.5 The institution must have clear criteria for the assessment of doctoral theses	X
6.6 The institution must have clear regulations governing the instance of a negative assessment.	X
6.7 Institutions must have clear policies and procedures to address any kind of misconduct such as unethical practice, plagiarism, fabrication of data, etc.	X
6.8 All the members of the committee for the evaluation of the public defence must be established authorities in the research field. The committee must have at least one external member from a domestic or international institution.	X
6.9 A supervisor may not serve as a member of the evaluation committee.	X

**SUPPLEMENTARY**

**None**

**Compliance level:**

Fully compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. None

**2.7 DOCTORAL RESEARCH OUTCOME**

The final outcome of the doctoral program Clinical medicine is the public defense of PhD thesis. The PhD studies are finalized by successful public defense “Doctoral viva” of doctoral thesis.



The doctoral thesis reflects the reasonableness of topic and expectations of original scientific contribution of the proposed research, research expenses evaluation, and a statement that the dissertation has not been presented with same topic in other university studies, or in any other university. Furthermore, the doctoral thesis represents an addition to the current knowledge in the field of clinical medicine. As assurance for this element is publication of part of PhD thesis in high ranked journals, which in principle accept papers with novel ideas/findings. Doctoral program provides to successful candidate a set of competences that will provide him/her, with a choice for career path.

The successful finishing of PhD study, the Doctoral research outcome, the property right of research patent and other responsibilities are presented in Article 18, 19, 20 and 21 of PhD regulation of University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina".

The entire doctoral dissertation is published on the university website at least 1 month after the defense. The doctoral dissertation in printed form is kept in three copies in the archive of the academic unit, 3 copies in the archive of the university and 3 copies in the central university library.

There are provisions in the regulation of U.P. for cases where the result of doctoral thesis may lead to an award of patent. In such cases The Commission for the Protection of Doctoral Thesis must implement procedures for legal and commercial protection of research results in accordance with intellectual propriety regulations.

In the on-line meeting and in the complementary documents the ET has learned that the format of the thesis was a hardcopy but that on-line copy will be put in place in a near future. The ET also has learned that the student scientific work participated in 52 scientific publications over the last 10 years, 12 since 2018, 6 in the field of infection diseases. In terms of follow-up of graduates over the last 2-3 years: 37.5% have an academic position, 37.5 % work in the private sector, 87.5% work in Kosovo and 12.5% abroad, none of them continue in postdoc studies.

#### CORE

<b>7.1</b> The final outcome of the doctoral programme is a thesis. There is no singular, stipulated, format for the thesis. However, the copy must be publicly available. This may be on-line, but a hardcopy must be held in the institution's library and elsewhere, as deemed appropriate.	<b>X</b>
<b>7.2</b> The thesis should reflect original thinking and represent a valuable addition to the knowledge base of the topic	<b>X</b>





7.3 Doctoral programmes should provide a successful candidate with a set of competences that will provide him, or her, with choice of career paths	X
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**CORE**

7.4 Where a doctoral candidate does not complete his/her PhD studies successfully the institution may wish to consider issuing a certificate recording the courses he/she attended during the course of study.	X
7.5 There is a defined procedure for the assessment and public defence in cases where the results may lead to the application and award of a patent.	X

**ET recommendations:**

1. Stimulate the on-line publication of the thesis
2. Increase the number of publications related to the PhD study program and enlarge the fields
3. Facilitate the mobility of the PhD candidates and help them to do postdoctoral studies.

**3 OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET**

Subject	Core	Core compliant	Suppl	Suppl compliant
Institutional structure, administrative support and funding	3	3	3	3
Selection and admission criteria	4	4	1	1
Doctoral programme structure/content	7	7	5	3
Research environment capacity	4	4	3	2
Supervision	6	6	2	2
Assessment	9	9	0	0
Doctoral research outcome	3	3	2	2
All	36	36	16	13

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the doctoral programme in Clinical Medicine offered by University of Prishtina "Hasan Pristina" Faculty of Medicine is **Fully compliant** with the standards included in the *KAA Accreditation manual for doctoral programmes* and,



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Kosovo Accreditation Agency

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therefore, recommends *to accredit* the study program for a duration of **5 years** with a number **10 students** to be enrolled in the program.

#### 4 APPENDICES (*if available*)

1. A
2. B
3. C



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Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju  
Kosovo Accreditation Agency

### Expert Team

**Chair**

**Luc Hittinger**

**29.06.2022**

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