



Republika e Kosovës  
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



Agjencia e Kosovës për Akreditim  
Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju  
Kosovo Accreditation Agency

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## ***UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCE FERIZAJ***

### **MANAGEMENT AND INNOVATION IN TOURISM-MSc**

#### **REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM**

*JUNE 04 2022*



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Context

#### **Date of site visit:**

04.04.2022

#### **Expert Team (ET) members:**

- Prof.Dr.Olgun Çiçek, YÖDAK, N.Cyprus

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

- *Leona Kovaci, KAA Officer*
- Arianit Krasniqi, KAA Officer

#### **Sources of information for the Report:**

- Self-Evaluation form of the study program
- Statue of the University
- Regulation for Bachelor Studies
- Code of Ethics
- Interview results
- University Web-page

#### **Criteria used for institutional and program evaluations**

- Standards & performance indicators for external evaluation according to the Accreditation Manual of KAA, July 2018



## 1.2. Site visit schedule

2. Programme Re-accreditation Procedure at University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj	
Programme:	<b>Management and Innovation in Tourism MSc</b>
Online site visit on:	<b>04.04.2022</b>
Expert Team:	Prof Dr. Olgun Cicek
Coordinators of the KAA:	Leona Kovaçi, KAA Officer Arianit Krasniqi, KAA Officer

### Site Visit Programme

Time	Meeting	Participants/Comments
<b>09:30 – 10:15</b>	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated	Agron Bajraktari Bujar Pira Florit Hoxha Sokol Krasniqi Petrit Hasanaj Bashkim Cerkini
<b>10:20 – 11:05</b>	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff	Armend Hysa Bujar Pira Leonora Rudhani Besa Rexhepi Fatime Musliu
<b>11:15 – 12:15</b>	Meeting with the heads of the study programme:	Alberta Tahiri Afrim Loku
<b>12:15 – 13:15</b>	Lunch break (lunch provided at place)	
<b>13:15 – 14:00</b>	Meeting with teaching staff	Mimoza Zhubi Arbresha Meha Bashkim Mustafa



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		Gazmend Deda Rrahim Sejdiu Flamur Salihu Anyla Shala Bardhyl Bejtullahu
<b>14:05 – 14:50</b>	Meeting with students	Arlinda Ibishi Diellza Misini Tetovare Kolshi Eugen Lipovica Donika Guri Arjeta Ramadani Drilon Sylejmani Ardhmëri Mehmeti
<b>15:00 – 15:45</b>	Meeting with graduates	Yll Haziri Mirjeta Blenishti Armelinda Firza Bernadeta Gjorgjeviq Manjola Salihu
<b>15:50 – 16:35</b>	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders	Aferdita Hoxha - Rubis Hotel Flamur Bahtijari - AS Travel Arianit Kastrati - OXA Group Nehat Ademi - NTP Doqi Fitim Bajrami - Eurometal Heset Hajdini - Eco System Besim Demolli - StarGraf Vllaznim Jakupi - TV Festina
<b>16:35 – 16:40</b>	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts	
<b>16:40 – 16:45</b>	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program	



## 2.1. A brief overview of the institution under evaluation

The University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj is the only public institution in Kosovo specializing in applied sciences, with the aim to offer practice-oriented education and related to the labor market. This fact not only makes UASF a preferred institution for Kosovar youth, but also adds to the responsibilities and obligations of the institution itself to provide the highest quality services in meeting the demands of students, the local and regional community and above all businesses, as one of the most important actors of UASF. Although young as a university, the tradition of academic and scientific work in Ferizaj dates back to 1976, when the Assembly of Kosovo with Decision 692-2 established the Center for Higher Education. The growing number of students, with a relatively small number of programs (four bachelor programs in total), increases the challenges and responsibilities of UASF itself for continuous development to keep pace and meet the needs of regional and Kosovar businesses.

The University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj (UASF) is a relatively new institution of higher education in Kosovo. It was established by a Decision of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) on July 6th 2015, ratified by the Parliament of the Republic of Kosovo on July 16th 2015. In the frame of the UASF currently there are five active faculties: 1) Faculty of Engineering and Informatics, 2) Faculty of Tourism and Environment, 3) Faculty of Architecture, Design and Wood Technology, 4) Faculty of Applied Arts, and 5) Faculty of Management. UASF, otherwise, is the first higher education institution in Kosovo of its kind, an equivalent of the applied sciences system in German-speaking areas.

The Master of Science (MS) Program, Management in Tourism and Innovation is offered within the Faculty of Tourism and Environment. Within this faculty is it also offered the bachelor program Management in Hospitality and Tourism which was re-accredited last year, whereas the actual MS program Management in Tourism and Innovation is in the process of accreditation. Within this faculty are currently studying 96 students in two programs.

## 3. 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.*



### 3.1. Mission, Objectives and Administration

The institution has a defined mission statement as "We are committed to providing quality education, to training qualified professionals, dedicated researchers and educated and responsible citizens to develop a professional career and lead a productive life." Based on the document review and interviews during the site visit, it was clear that the mission of the institution has not been defined or revised, based on a consultation/involvement of external and internal stakeholders. The mission is set by the Leadership team of the UASF. It is also written in broad and general terms.

On the basis of the information stated in the SER, information gained during the interviews and also with regard to the fact that the mission statement is published and shared with the community on the website of the UASF. It is also advised to consult with the stakeholders when redefining the mission.

The mission of the program is to develop specialized staff of professionals in the field of management and innovation in tourism, to influence the development and advancement of this field in Kosovo, and also to prepare cadres that can be integrated in the labor market in Kosovo and abroad. This mission is in line with the mission of the institution "...to prepare qualified professionals, educated and responsible citizens, to develop a professional career and lead a productive life."

Standard	Complaint?	
	Yes	No
1.1. The study programme mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution	X	
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	
1.3. The study programme has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept	X	
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	
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	

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1.6. All policies, regulations, terms of reference and statements of responsibility relating to the management and delivery of the programme are reviewed at least once every two years and amended as required in the light of changing circumstances.		X
<b>Overall Compliance</b>		

**Compliance level:** **Substantially-compliant**

**ET recommendations:**

1. *The mission statement needs to match with the institutional values and objectives to be unique for the institution.*
2. *The mission statement ha*
3. *Mission statement to be set and/or revised with the contribution of the internal and external stakeholders.*

**3.2. Quality Management**

The education provider has formally adopted a quality assurance policy that describes the institutional quality assurance system, its processes, mechanisms, instruments, reporting, data collection, timeframes, quality cycle, responsibilities of all individuals and units involved in these processes. The policy is a public document available on the web site as well.

in 2019, the University Senate established the Quality Assurance Committee, which is chaired by the Vice Rector for International Cooperation and Quality Assurance.

The University has expanded and digitized the self-assessment system. The University is also conducting peer review of academic staff, evaluation by managers and self-evaluation of academic staff.

For quality assessment purposes, the university has adapted the following self-assessment mechanisms:

- Student evaluation of the program
- Student evaluation of university services and administration
- Student assessment of academic staff and subject matter
- Staff evaluation of university services and administration
- Self-assessment of academic staff (course evaluation)
- Peer evaluation
- Evaluation of academic staff by the manager





- Evaluation by graduates;
- Evaluation by businesses / employers

The University has drafted a quality assurance regulation which specifically regulates all aspects of quality assurance. This regulation will be reviewed at least once every three years and amended as necessary. Also, so far self-assessment reports have been made over periods of up to three years. From this year the University plans to compile a self-assessment report at least once every three years. This will be part of the new quality assurance regulation. Students are part of all activities and structures at the University, including in the Quality Assurance Commission.

Standard	Complaint?	
	Yes	No
2.1. All staff participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity	X	
2.2. Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes		X
2.3. Quality assurance processes deal with all aspects of programme and delivery, including services and resources provided by other parts of the institution.	X	
2.4. Quality evaluations provide an overview of quality issues for the overall programme as well as different components within it; the evaluations consider inputs, processes and outputs with particular attention given to learning outcomes for students.	X	
2.5. Quality assurance processes ensure both that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance	X	
2.6. Survey data is being collected from students, graduates and employers; the results of these evaluations are made publicly available.	X	
2.7. Results of the internal quality assurance system are taken into account for further development of the study programme. This includes evaluation results, investigation of the student workload, academic success and employment of graduates.	X	
2.8. The institution ensures that reports on the overall quality of the programme are prepared periodically (eg every three years) for consideration within the institution indicating its strengths and weaknesses.	X	
2.9. The quality assurance arrangements for the programme are themselves regularly evaluated and improved.		X
<b>Overall Compliance</b>		



**Compliance level:** **Substantially compliant**

*ET recommendations:*

1. *USAF should strengthen the Quality Office to support the management of the quality assurance process throughout the institution and its remote campuses.*
2. *QA functions need to be performed through digital tools*
3. *QA data and analysis should be used for enhancement and improvement of the services*
4. *USAF should establish a structure to coordinate and monitor the quality system and also set benchmarking.*

### 3.3. Academic Staff

There are three full-time doctoral teachers and other teachers from the Faculty of Tourism and Environment and other faculties of the University. All staff engaged in teaching have PhD. Out of 11 academic staff listed, one is Assoc.Prof. and the others are Assistant Prof. They all are full time at USAF and have active contracts with the institution.

Standard	Complaint?	
	Yes	No
3.1. Candidates for employment are provided with full position descriptions and conditions of employment.	X	
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	
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	
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	



3.5. For each student group (defined by the statute of the institution) and for every 60 ECTS credits in the study programme, the institution has employed at least one full staff with PhD title or equivalence.		X
3.6. Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties.	X	
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	
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	
3.9. Strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials		X
3.10. Teachers retired at age limit or for other reasons lose the status of full-time teachers and are considered part-time teachers.	NA	
<b>Overall Compliance:</b>		

**Compliance level:** *Substantially compliant*

**ET recommendations:**

1. *New Teaching and learning methods and technologies should be implemented by all the academic staff*
2. *Academic staff is expected to be more self-critical through the self-assessment process.*
3. *The adoption and implementation of new digital tools by the staff must be encouraged.*

**3.4. Educational Process Content**

The program has been developed in line with the National Qualifications Framework in terms of graduates' skills and competencies to apply knowledge, understanding, and problem-solving skills in new or unfamiliar environments within a broad context of the multidisciplinary field of study.



The program is also developed based on building and developing graduates skills from basic studies (bachelor), and with the intention to increase the employment rate of graduates from this program. In the phase of development (drafting) of the program, the businesses from the industry sector, part of the Industrial Board, were consulted, in order to define the competencies and skills required, and which the program should take into account.

The program also aims to build general competencies that enable graduates to adapt more easily to changes in the labor market and industry. These competencies are modeled on different subjects which develop managerial competencies in the tourism sector, clients, entrepreneurial and innovation.

Standard	Complaint?	
	Yes	No
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	
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	
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	
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/	X	



module should be attached only in electronic form to the self-assessment report for the study program under evaluation.		
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
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
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	
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	
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
4.10. Policies and procedures include actions to be taken in to dealing with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or inconsistently assessed.	X	
4.11. If the study program includes practice stages, the intended student learning outcomes are clearly specified and effective processes are followed to ensure that those learning outcomes and the strategies to develop that learning are understood by students. The practice stages are allocated ETCS credits and the work of the students at the practical training organizations is monitored through activity reports; students during practice stages have assigned tutors among the academic staff in the study program.	X	
4.12. In order to facilitate the practice stages, the higher education institution signs cooperation agreements, contracts or other documents with institutions/organizations/practical training units.		X
<b>Overall Compliance:</b>		



**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. It is recommended to design professional development courses for faculty members in teaching methods and assessment strategies, in order to upskill faculty members especially with the new teaching methods and using digital tools
2. Provide opportunities for students to engage more with practical work in their seminar papers or case studies in tourism enterprises

### 3.5. Students

The Master Program in Tourism Management and Innovation is the existing program and currently 96 active students are enrolled. In this program from year to year the number of students has increased, for example in 2019/2020, 41 students applied, in 2020/2021, 69 students applied and in 2021/2022 over 74 students. While during 2020 – 2021, 12 students have graduated. Based on the university statute and the master studies regulations, the student can have flexibility in organizing the exam based on the requirements when he / she participates in some form of international mobility or even tactical work / study abroad.

The University is quite transparent in communicating policies on student rights and responsibilities, including student conduct and complaints procedures which are clearly stated, published in the university statute, and are available to all students and staff. university. The University is part of the ReaserchCult project funded by Erasmus + Capacity Building called Enhancing Research in Higher Education in Kosovo - Research CULT. With the support of the project, the University has access to the Plagiarism Control platform for plagiarism control and so far all seminar papers and master topics go through this system.



<i>Standard</i>	<b>Compliance</b>	
	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Standard 5.1. There is a clear and formally adopted admission procedure at institutional level that the study program respects when organizing students' recruitment. Admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied for all students	X	
Standard 5.2. All students enrolled in the study program possess a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent document of study, according to MEST requirements	X	
Standard 5.3. The study groups are dimensioned so as to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process.		X
Standard 5.4. Feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments is given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed.	X	
Standard 5.5. The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record.	X	
Standard 5.6. Flexible treatment of students in special situations is ensured with respect to deadlines and formal requirements in the program and to all examinations		X
Standard 5.7. Records of student completion rates are kept for all courses and for the program as a whole and included among quality indicators.		X
Standard 5.8. Effective procedures are being used to ensure that work submitted by students is original	X	
Standard 5.9. Students' rights and obligations are made publicly available, promoted to all those concerned and enforced equitably; these will include the right to academic appeals	X	
Standard 5.10. The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs are clearly regulated in formal internal documents.	X	



Standard 5.11. Academic staff is available at sufficient scheduled times for consultation and advice to students. Adequate tutorial assistance is provided to ensure understanding and ability to apply learning.		X
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**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. The institution should allocate more staff to deal with student issues timely and effectively
2. It is advised that the industry relations to be strengthened to provide more employment opportunities for graduates.

**3.6. Research**

The University has drafted the Regulation of Scientific Research. This regulation defines the rules, procedures and other supporting documents for the organization of scientific research activities of academic staff, researchers and students. The Research Regulation requires each academic staff to publish an average of one paper per year.

In order to manage and support research activities, the University has established a Commission for Research and Science consisting of:

- Vice Rector for Teaching, Science and Student Affairs (Chairman),
- Three Academic Staff with the title of Assistant Professor and above,
- A student representative delegated by the Student Parliament
- Research Support Officer.

Research is one of the main pillars of the UASF Strategic Plan 2018-2020, and Strategic Plan 2021-2026 which is in the process of drafting. This plan includes the spectrum and quality of research and laboratory work at UASF involving both staff and students and in particular those of postgraduate studies.

In the last three years the MSc program academic staff in Management and Innovation in Tourism have published 116 papers in journals and many papers in international conferences presented.

Standard	Complaint?	
	Yes	No





6.1. The study program has defined scientific/applied research objectives (on its own or as part of a research center or interdisciplinary program), which are also reflected in the research development plan of the institution; sufficient financial, logistic and human resources are allocated for achieving the proposed research objectives.		X
6.2. Expectations for teaching staff involvement in research and scholarly activities are clearly specified, and performance in relation to these expectations is considered in staff evaluation and promotion criteria.	X	
6.3. Clear Policies are established for defining what is recognised as research, consistent with international standards and established norms in the field of study of the program.		X
6.4. The academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity.	X	
6.5. The academic and research staff publish their work in specialty magazines or publishing houses, scientific/applied/artistic products are presented at conferences, sessions, symposiums, seminars etc. and contracts, expertise, consultancy, conventions, etc. are provided to partners inside the country and/or abroad.	X	
6.6. Research is validated through: scientific and applied research publications, artistic products, technological transfer through consultancy centers, scientific parks and other structures for validation.		X
6.7. Each academic staff member and researcher has produced at least an average of one scientific/applied research publication or artistic outcome/product per year for the past three years.	X	
6.8. Academic and research staff publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full-time staff.	X	
6.9. 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	
6.10. Policies are established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.		X
6.11. Students are engaged in research projects and other activities.		X
<b>Overall Compliance:</b>		

**Compliance level:** Partially compliant



**ET recommendations:**

1. *It is recommended to increase the funding to support research and scholarly works*
2. *Library resources must be strengthened in the field of tourism*
3. *Industry engagement as well as support needs to be developed for the collaborative / industry research*

**3.7. Infrastructure and Resources**

The University is a Public Institution of Higher Education and financial sustainability is guaranteed by the Medium Term Expenditure Framework for the next three years. As a Public Institution of Higher Education and under the umbrella of MEST, the University is the owner of the space it uses, where are its laboratories and workshops, has licenses to use software or licensed or school with free license for purposes academic.

The university has two amphitheatres with 150 and 350 seats, 15 classrooms for groups of up to 75 students, two IT cabinets, two industrial spaces for workshops, four spaces for laboratories and many other ancillary spaces. The university has spaces of over 7000m<sup>2</sup> including spaces for workshops and laboratories. The University Library has different types of publications, some with more than one copy, reading chairs for students and there is space for students with chairs and desks where students work in groups and individually. The university has access for people with special needs, and the elevator for access for people with special needs on all floors of the building.

<i>Standard 7</i>	<b>Compliance</b>	
	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
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 considered.		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	
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**Compliance level:** Partially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. It is recommended the financial planning also include the risk management strategy with regards of incomes and expenditures, that will guarantee the financial sustainability is achieved
2. It is recommended students support services are designed in the library (Information seeking; working with sources; referencing) and the training are delivered for students.
3. It is recommended the usage of academic databases is being promoted actively within the academic staff and students.

**4. FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET**

*As per the evaluations, assessments and judgements mention on above areas, the expert team agreed to state that the MSc program has achieved most of the standards and criteria at substantial level. Therefore, it is recommended to grant UASF re-accreditation for three years.*

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**Student quota recommended 50 (fifty) for Three Years**

**Expert Team**

**Member**

(Signature)

**PROF.DR.OLGUNÇIÇEK**

(Print Name)

**04/06/2022**

(Date)