



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

University Haxhi Zeka (UHZ), Peja
Plant Production Technology/BSc

Reaccreditation

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

12.04.2022, Peja



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	2
1. INTRODUCTION	3
1.1. Context.....	3
1.2. Site visit schedule	4
1.3. A brief overview of the institution and program under evaluation	5
2. PROGRAM EVALUATION.....	5
2.1. Mission, objectives and administration.....	5
2.2. Quality management	7
2.3. Academic staff	10
2.4. Educational process content.....	14
2.5. Students.....	18
2.6. Research.....	21
2.7. Infrastructure and resources	24
3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET	28



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: 22.03.2022

Expert Team (ET) members:

- *Prof. Dr. Reiner Doluschitz*
- *Jadranka Pelikan, PhD-candidate*

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- *Leona Kovaci*
- *Arianit Krasniqi*

Sources of information for the Report:

- *Self Evaluation Report of the University Haxhi Zeka*
- *Site visit in Peja on 22.03.2022*

Criteria used for program evaluation:

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

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

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



Abbreviations

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

1.2. Site visit schedule

09.00 – 09.45	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated
09.50 – 10.30	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff
10.35 – 11.30	Meeting with the heads of the study programme
11.30 – 12.00	Lunch break
12.00 – 12.50	Meeting with teaching staff
12:55 – 13.35	Meeting with students
13.40 – 14.20	Meeting with graduates
14.25 – 15.05	Meeting with and employers of graduates and stakeholders
15.05 – 15.10	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts
15.10 – 15.15	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program



1.3. A brief overview of the institution and program under evaluation

Insert general information about the institution and the program under evaluation, its legal status, its mission, and others.

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

2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

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

The study program mission is indicated in the SER as follows: The study program “is to provide quality education and to prepare professional candidates for the labor market in the fields of plant production, which will contribute to the economic development of the Peja region and the country.”

This mission is in compliance with the mission statement of the institution as mentioned above.

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



Standard 1.2. (CL A) Relevant academic and professional advice is considered when defining the intended learning outcomes which are consistent with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

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

It had been confirmed in the online site visit that there is an updated Strategic Plan 2022-2024 available at UHZ level and it has been confirmed as well that the development of the University and its study programs are consistent with the National Qualifications Network and the Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA.

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

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

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

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

It is mentioned in the SER that “There are formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues. These are published on the [web page](#) (annex 10) of University Haxhi Zeka and are made public to all staff and students.”

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



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

It is mentioned in the SER, page 10: “[Code of Ethics](#) (annex 15) was approved by the Decision of the Steering Council in 2020. The academic staff and students comply with internal regulations related to the code of ethics throughout teaching, research, and other academic and administrative activities.”

The ET does not see itself in a position to assess the ethical conduct of all staff and students. However, the ET trusts that staff and students comply with the regulations.

***Standard 1.6. (CL B)** All policies, regulations, terms of reference and statements of responsibility relating to the management and delivery of the program are reviewed at least once every two years and amended as required in the light of changing circumstances.*

Review processes concerning the delivery of the program are described in the SER (page 10). The ET trusts that these reviews are performed as described, but cannot evaluate the extent to which these processes are being carried out. Furthermore, there are compulsory accreditation and re-accreditation procedures initiated and established and frequently conducted by KAA on a regular basis. International experts from the respective fields of the study programs are an essential backbone-component of such procedures.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant (B)

ET recommendations:

- 1. The available learning-platform should be further used to a larger extent and more frequently to implement an overarching didactic concept. This holds particularly true during times of pandemic. The potential available is far not absorbed yet.*

2.2. Quality management

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

It is confirmed in the SER (pg. 13) that self-assessment of the academic staff is performed once a year, after termination of the academic year.



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

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

It can be quoted from the SER (pg. 13) as follows: “The UHZ has operationalized the University Quality Assurance Office (QAO) and established the Central Commission for QA. In addition to the QAO and the central committee at the university level, this year [2022] UHZ has also established the Quality Coordinators Offices (QCO) at the level of academic units / faculties, in its 5 faculties, including the FAB, where 1 member from academic staff is engaged in the capacity of Quality Officer.”

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

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

The SER (pgs. 13 and 14) confirms a comprehensive setting of elements forming an overall quality assurance process. Such elements include continued self-evaluation at the institutional and study levels, design and approval of new study programs, review of existing study programs, assessment of teaching process, scientific and artistic research, administration, academic staff and all other fields of activity of the University, a continuous monitoring and periodic audit of study programs, periodic external quality assurance, and international mobility cooperation and internationalization.

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

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



Standard 2.4. (CL B) *Quality evaluations provide an overview of quality issues for the overall program as well as of different components within it; the evaluations consider inputs, processes and outputs, with particular attention given to learning outcomes.*

Learning outcomes at course level undergo an assessment procedure including parameters such as attendance, homework, interactive exercises, seminar work, tests and final exam, written and oral.

A total average for non-textual questions will be calculated for each study program and can be applied for horizontal comparisons of study programs. The evaluation results for each single question can be found separately in the statistical report generated by the SEVC system

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

The SER (pgs. 13 and 14) confirms among other issues that continued self-evaluation at the institutional and study levels is operational, including design and approval of new study programs and review of existing study programs.

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

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

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

According to SER (pgs. 14 and 15) the main instruments of internal quality evaluation include questionnaires for teachers evaluation by dean, academic staff self-evaluation, teachers evaluation by students, administration evaluation by students, special evaluation forms for employers and graduates. However, standardized surveys of students, graduates and employers are not mentioned in SER and interviews.

All stakeholders are informed about the result of the evaluation obtained through questionnaires. This data is made public on the university website.

However, according to the opinion of the ET, such survey data of students, graduates and employers, if being collected, should be treated confidential and not being made “publicly available” rather than individual participants would explicitly agree or the results should be made available to the students through the SEMS system.



Standard 2.7. (CL B) *Results of the internal quality assurance system are taken into account for further development of the study program. This includes evaluation results, investigation of the student workload, academic success and employment of graduates.*

The ET trusts that results from the internal quality assurance system are used by the management to further development and improvement of the study program. Work load is documented in the SER and appears to be adequate. Results of course evaluation, academic success and employment of graduates have been provided in Annex documentation.

Standard 2.8. (CL A) *The institution ensures that reports on the overall quality of the program are prepared periodically (eg. every three years) for consideration within the institution indicating its strengths and weaknesses.*

The KAA-system of reaccreditation is taking care for such periodical reports, which are delivered by the institution in form of the SER. SWOT analyses and respective interpretations were provided in the SER.

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

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

Compliance level: Substantially compliant (B)

ET recommendations:

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

2.3. Academic staff

Standard 3.1. (CL B) *Candidates for employment are provided with full position descriptions and conditions of employment. To be presented in tabular form data about full time (FT) and*



part time (PT) academic/ artistic staff, such as: name, qualification, academic title, duration of official (valid) contract, workload for teaching, exams, consulting, administrative activities, research, etc. for the study program under evaluation.

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

The SER (pgs. 17-19) shows a comprehensive table with relevant data on teaching staff.

In the online site visit session it has been summarized that currently 12 regular fulltime staff are engaged in the study program and the Faculty respectively. Additionally, a total of three young Professors with PhD became employed in 2021.

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

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

Standard 3.3. (CL A) *Academic staff do not cover, within an academic year, more than two teaching positions (one full-time, one part-time), regardless of the educational institution where they carry out their activity.*

It has been mentioned in the online site visit session that there have been problems in this respect in recent years. Those problems have been solved meanwhile and its fulfillment of such request had been confirmed.

However, it is difficult for the ET to prove this for the complete number of academic staff within the study program under evaluation. An estimate of 20% teaching import and export vice versa has been reported during the site visit discussions. Major partners are University of Pristina and University of Mitrovica.

Standard 3.4. (CL A) *At least 50% of the academic staff in the study program are full time employees, and account for at least 50% of the classes of the study program.*

There is a quite clear statement in the SER: “The academic staff who will teach in the Bachelor Program are regular 67% are regular staff while 33% are engaged staff. Regular academic staff cover most bachelor lectures.



Standard 3.5. (CL A) *For each student group (defined by the statute of the institution) and for every 60 ECTS credits in the study program, the institution has employed at least one full time staff with PhD title or equivalent title in the case of artistic/applied science institutions.*

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

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

There was no formal procedure reported during the discussions in the online site visit. The academic staff taking part in the discussion reported about respective courses, mostly done during visits abroad and in many cases quite some time ago. It has to be mentioned as a strength that quite a few professors have visited HEI abroad, in some cases in the framework of EU-projects, and had the opportunity to participate in activities for additional professional development. In contrast to professors, teaching assistants are missing opportunities for professional development. The SER (p.19) states that “the faculty continually monitors and stimulates the pedagogical and research-scientific activity of the academic staff and collaborators... During the last three years, the faculty staff has attended trainings (for teaching methodologies organized by UHZ, in the framework of the Bugi project in Ljubljana and the STEPS project in Bosnia and Herzegovina, trainings have been attended for the implementation of projects for urban agriculture and sustainable systems food production as well as in the HERAS + project for project design) and participation in various international, regional, and national conferences”.

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

According to the information provided during the online site visit this request is well fulfilled. The academic staff taking part in the discussions reported that they offer such kind of consultancy for students on a regular basis, minimum twice a week, particularly after termination of exams. Online consultations were offered during difficult and restrictive pandemic times.

Standard 3.8. (CL A) *Academic staff evaluation is conducted regularly at least through self-evaluation, students, peer and superiors' evaluations, and occur on a formal basis at least once each year. The results of the evaluation are made publicly available.*



There is a formal procedure established for academic staff evaluation done by students. This is based on a standardized questionnaire which is filled in anonymously.

It is highly recommended by the ET that this process continuously becomes more transparent. The entire results should be reported to each teacher. Staff should reflect to the results of the questionnaire and even more importantly to the comments in the free comment section of the questionnaire. Finally, the actions taken and expected impacts should be reported back to the students in a feedback-loop.

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

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

With respect to teaching materials the SER (pg. 20) states: “Concerning the strategy for improving the quality of teaching materials, the program provider in collaboration with the subject teachers in this program will ensure that the material provided for reading to students is of a high quality, updated, and available on time and easily for students.”

An active learning platform would also contribute to achievement of such goals.

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

There is a clear statement in the SER as follows: “According to the [Labor Law](#) (Annex 22), the retirement age for academic staff is 65 years old, but with the possibility of part-time engagement in the teaching process after retirement until the age of 70.” This is applied in Kosovo due to the fact that in the Kosovo market we have a shortage of professionals in narrow fields with high level specialities. This became confirmed during the online site visit.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant (B)

ET recommendations:

- 1. Teaching assistants as well as fulltime professors should get regular access to didactic training and further scientific education.*
- 2. Such kind of trainings, participation in conferences, visits abroad should be made possible on a regular basis as well and sufficiently supported.*



2.4. Educational process content

Standard 4.1. (CL A) *The study program is modelled on qualification objectives. These include subject-related and interdisciplinary aspects as well as the acquisition of disciplinary, methodological and generic skills and competencies. The aspects refer especially to academic or artistic competencies, to the capability of taking up adequate employment, contributing to the civil society and of developing the students' personality.*

The study program “Plant Production Technology” has clearly employment oriented qualification objectives (SER p. 22). FAB established an Advisory Body with members and guests from companies and institutes in agribusiness to steadily adjust the study program to societal needs. According to the SER (p.7), “the Advisory Board aims to coordinate the requirements and needs of the labour market, regional businesses through study programs in the field of Agriculture. It has also made a special contribution to the development of the objectives of this program in the field of Agribusiness by providing opportunities for students to conduct internships in businesses, proposing changes to further study programs and implementing joint projects between academia and business”. Regarding the internship availability for students, “The Faculty of Agribusiness has internship agreements with various companies operating in Kosovo and especially in the Dukagjini Region (SER, p.9).

Standard 4.2. (CL A) *The study program complies with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. The individual components of the program are combined in a way to best achieve the specified qualification objectives and provide for adequate forms of teaching and learning.*

The syllabus of the study program Plant Production Technology is arranged according to the Bologna system and provides adequate forms of teaching. The program is oriented towards similar study programs of European universities (Giessen, Hohenheim, Milan, Zagreb) and complies with the framework of the EHEA. The ET confirms that this will also cover the National Qualifications Framework.

Standard 4.3. (CL C) *The disciplines within the curriculum are provided in a logical flow and meet the definition and precise determination of the general and specific competencies, as well as the compatibility with the study programs and curricula delivered in the EHEA. To be listed at least 7 learning outcomes for the study program under evaluation.*

The SER provides 40 syllabi containing learning outcomes of the study program “Plant Production Technology”. Revision of all learning outcomes is necessary. Some of them are not at



all in the correlation with the study programme learning outcomes or competencies. Almost none of them presents at least 7 learning outcomes, and some of the courses have learning outcomes that should be properly written, the course *Seeds and seedling production* lacks learning outcomes.

The courses are arranged within the syllabus in a logical and useful order. A B.Sc. Thesis with 10 ECTS is placed in the 6th semester as an obligatory course

Standard 4.4. (CL C) *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.*

The individual course descriptions comprise course objectives, learning outcomes, thematic content, teaching methods, students' assessment system and bibliography. The quality of course description differs among the various courses. Course contents are reasonable and contribute to the qualification objectives of the study program. Yet, the ECTS scores are not in line with the student work hours, the students seem to be overloaded in several courses according to the SER syllabi. The ECTS should be revised.

The courses should have **English language titles** in the syllabi.

The syllabi contain sections of **main and additional literature**. There is different information in the syllabi regarding the literature within the SER and the additional detailed syllabi. They should be coherent. The courses with outdated literature (more than 10 years) as the main sources of knowledge and teaching: Chemistry, Mathematics, Agrometeorology, English language, Pedology, Organic chemistry, Weeds in plants, Cereal technology, Plant nutrition, Microbiology, Seeds and seedling production, Plant physiology, Basics of genetics, Basics of pomology, Malt processing technology, Crops field production, Post harvesting technology. Several courses listed new and outdated literature in the main source section, this section should contain only recent literature (ie published within last 10 years, at least). Agrometeorology course lacks the publication year of the literature.

The **course titles and the learning outcomes** should be coherent, the syllabus Informatics applied in Agriculture listed learning outcomes not related to the course title.

Standard 4.5. (CL A.) *If the language of instruction is other than Albanian, actions are taken to ensure that language skills of both students and academic staff are adequate for instruction*



in that language when students begin their studies. This may be done through language training prior to the commencement of the program.

The language of instruction is Albanian, the FAB provided 30 h of lectures in foreign language. There is no need for prior language training.

Standard 4.6. (CL A) *The student-teacher relationship is a partnership in which each assumes the responsibility of reaching the learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are explained and discussed with students from the perspective of their relevance to the students' development.*

Envisaged learning outcomes are described for each course in the syllabus. The ET trusts that the degree of achievement of the learning outcomes will be verified in students' assessments and discussed in individual consultations, when necessary. The SER (p. 56)

Standard 4.7. (CL n.a) *Teaching strategies are fit for the different types of learning outcomes programs are intended to develop. Strategies of teaching and assessment set out in program and course specifications are followed with flexibility to meet the needs of different groups of students.*

"Different groups of students" are neither defined in the KAA (2021) nor in the SER. The ET team trusts that students under special circumstances (illnesses, disabilities, family situation) are treated with appropriate flexibility, see also Standard 5.6.

Standard 4.8. (CL A) *Student assessment mechanisms are conducted fairly and objectively, are appropriate for the different forms of learning sought and are clearly communicated to students at the beginning of courses.*

The ET trusts that the assessments are communicated at the beginning of the course and are conducted fairly and objectively during and at the end of the course.

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



Learning outcomes are evaluated on course level by assessment, which includes attendance, homework, interactive exercises, seminar work, tests and final exam, written and oral. Form of assessment is described for each course and appears appropriate, valid and reliable. The ET cannot evaluate, whether the standard of work required is consistent over time and similar between courses of the same study program and courses in EHEA. This would require to participate in oral exams (which is not possible) or to evaluate written exams, which not have been provided by FAB.

Standard 4.10. (CL A.) *Policies and procedures include actions to be taken in to dealing with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or inconsistently assessed.*

The FAB provided the Regulation for Bachelor studies of the HZ University in Peja, in English language, containing directives on students' inadequate achievements (Articles 15, 26, 39 and 55).

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

The FA is maintaining very good contacts to companies and institutes of the labor market in the vicinity of Peja, where the students are performing practical internships. The internships are accompanied by a tutor of the study program and by a mentor at the hosting institution. The students are keeping activity records. However, the internships are not integrated into the syllabus and ECTS credits are not allocated to the practical stages.

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

UHZ has signed more than 30 cooperation agreements with companies and institutes in the vicinity of Peja. The SER (p 57) lists the organization where students can perform internship, such as LLC "KOAL SEEDS" Istog, Brewery in Peja, Dairy and Dairy Products Factory "Vita", Factory of non-alcoholic soft drinks "DolceVita"; "Tango"; Factory of non-alcoholic refreshments "Bibita", Vegetable processors, etc.). M & SILLOSI-Xërxë Rahovec - wheat,



flour processing, meat processing factory "BUQUKU", IBT, fresh milk factory "Jeta e re", Bread factory "Oreksi", Confectionery factory "Gllareva", Fab vein "StonCastel" of Rahovec.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant (B)

ET recommendations:

1. *Revision of almost all learning outcomes is necessary.*
2. *The course titles and the learning outcomes should be coherent.*
3. *The ECTS should be revised and compliant to the working hours of students.*
4. *The literature listed in the main section source should be published within last 10 years. Older literature can be provided as additional.*
5. *Internships should be integrated into the syllabus and ECTS credits should be awarded*
6. *Examples of written exams should be presented by next accreditation site visit*

2.5. Students

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

The SER (p. 59) states that the admission procedure is described in the Statute, Article 83, of the HZ university, which is compliant to the Article 29 of the Law on Higher Education of Kosovo. The Regulation for Bachelor studies (2020) also, describes the conditions for admission of regular and part-time students. The ET trusts that the admission criteria are fairly applied to all candidates.

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

According to the SER (p. 59), admission requires at least a high school diploma.

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

The PPT study programme annually enrolls up to 50 students, the 2nd year enrollment varied between 10 and 25 students and the 3rd year enrolled 6-27 students in past five years. The ET believes that the groups are small enough for students to be able to achieve the learning outcomes.



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

The SER (p. 60) describes the procedure on students' performance including student's rights to complaint according to the Article 46 of the Regulation for Bachelor Studies. Students have opportunities to attend individual consultations with their professors 2 times weekly. Additionally, the FAB has established and implements the tutorial system for students which provided 240 teaching hours during the last academic year, mainly in mathematics.

Standard 5.5. (CL A) *The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record.*

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

The UHZ adopted the Manual on key performance indicators for study program (2020). The ET requested the selection of the KPI indicators to verify this standard. The received information is as follows: number of students enrolled per number of applicants, number of students applied to the exams per academic year, number or percentage of students who passed the exams per year of the PPT study programme, number of students enrolment to 2nd year (2021/2022, 2020/2021, 2019/2020, 2018/2019), total and by gender, number of students enrolment to 3rd year (2021/2022, 2020/2021, 2019/2020, 2018/2019), total and by gender, number of international students (2021/2022, 2020/2021, 2019/2020, 2018/2019), total and by gender, student attendance, number of students receiving awards at the University level, best students receiving awards per academic year, best students receiving awards per academic year and per course,

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

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

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

See Standard 5.5.



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

UHZ has developed own anti plagiarism software, which is in a function, checking every student thesis before its final submission. The procedure is effective, yet the challenging part is the threshold of plagiarized text. The interviewees stated that the acceptance level of plagiarized text is up to 30 % which is unacceptable to the ET. The example of the plagiarism checking results showed that the thesis has 22,27 % of non-original (plagiarized) text in comparison to internal sources, while in comparison to internet texts it is considered original. The academic community recognized plagiarism as the attribution of someone else's work as own. Therefore, this standard is not entirely met due to high level of acceptance of plagiarized work.

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

The SER (p. 60) states that the UHZ adopted policies regarding students' rights and obligations which are publicly available. The ET received its English language translation of supporting this standard.

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

The SER (p. 61) states that the UHZ adopted policies regarding transfer and mobility of student which are publicly available. The ET received its English language translation of supporting this standard. Additionally, the FAB provided information about number of students transferring from the study programme and to the study programme.

Standard 5.11. (CL A) *Academic staff is available at sufficient scheduled times for consultation and advice to students. Adequate tutorial assistance is provided to ensure understanding and ability to apply learning.*

The members of the teaching staff and the students confirmed in the interviews that time is available for individual counselling. The consultation hours are listed in the syllabi.

Compliance level: Fully compliant (A)

ET recommendations:



- 1. The plagiarism policy should be adopted with clear level of acceptance of plagiarised texts and self-plagiarised as well. Tolerance to plagiarism of someone else's work should be zero.*
- 2. Academic staff and students should attend the training on academic integrity and anti-plagiarism.*
- 3. The FAB should prepare and publish through the SEMS brief power point or video about academic integrity with a special focus on anti-plagiarism.*

2.6. Research

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

“The research plan related to this program will be implemented within the general research program at the University foreseen by the Strategic Plan and the Strategy for scientific research.” (SER, Pg.63). Respective documents mentioned have not been made available to the ET. Neither the research plan of the FA nor the research program of UHZ are presented in the SER.

“The Faculty of Agribusiness has several agreements signed with various national and international units and institutions for cooperation in the field of research and mobility of students and professors.” (SER, Pg.63).

Provision of examples is requested by the ET.

“In order to motivate staff, based on [Regulation for scientific research](#) (annex 27), and the strategic plan, the university awards the “researcher of the year” award to each academic unit.” Such efforts should be further expanded.

It has been mentioned during the online site visit that applied research, frequently done with Agribusiness companies, are increasing in number as well as student involvement is progressing. Sufficient laboratories and other equipment needed is available due to statements in the online site visit.

Generally, it has to be stated that research still does not have very high priority and is not of such importance for both, the study program and the institution. One of the reasons is that there is very limited financial budget available for research, neither from the institution nor from third party research funds and donors. On the other hand, representatives from Agribusiness industry indicate to have significant research needs in numerous fields and subjects. The majority of the interviewed academic staff members expressed interest in research and they are



aware of the linkage between research and the highly requested higher level scientific publications. Currently there are not sufficient financial, logistic and human resources allocated for achieving the proposed research objectives.

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

Standard 6.2. (CL B) *Expectations for teaching staff involvement in research and scholarly activities are clearly specified, and performance in relation to these expectations is considered in staff evaluation and promotion criteria.*

According to the SER (p. 63) research activities and scientific publications are criteria for staff evaluation. Expected quantity and quality should be defined in the regulations of UHZ.

According to an individual research development plan, handed in by staff members, the evaluation of the performance of the academic staff by the supervisor is realized, where a great weight in this evaluation is occupied by the research-scientific activity (SER, p.63).

Standard 6.3. (CL C) *Clear policies are established for defining what is recognized as research, consistent with international standards and established norms in the field of study of the program.*

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

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

“The results of the publications by the FAB staff are of the field of study and are related to the subjects they teach. Publications are presented in standard 6.5”

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

“The academic staff of the Faculty of Agribusiness has published scientific papers in international scientific journals. In the SER (pgs. 63 to 74) is a summary of the scientific and research work of the academic staff provided.



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

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

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

Infrastructure such as scientific parks or consultancy centers are neither described in detail in the SER nor have been mentioned in the online site visit by partners from different levels. It is recommended by the ET that such procedures should become developed by the institution and established by following a consistent research strategy which has to be set up and agreed on prior to this.

A table listing scientific publications can be found in the SER, pgs. 64-74.

Standard 6.7. (CL B) *Each academic staff member and researcher has produced at least an average of one scientific/applied research publication or artistic outcome/product per year for the past three years.*

A list of publications of the teaching staff of the study program Plant Production Technology is included in the SER (pgs. 64-74) It can be assumed that this request (at least an average of one scientific/applied research publication per year) will be met.

The ET recommends that separate tables are prepared for refereed journal articles, other journal articles and conference proceedings. Also, number of publications and h-index of a scientific database like SCOPUS have to be presented for each member of the teaching staff, divided into groups of full time, part time, and teaching assistants.

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

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

Standard 6.9. (CL B) *Academic staff are encouraged to include in their teaching information about their research and scholarly activities that are relevant to courses they teach, together with other significant research developments in the field.*



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

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

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

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

Standard 6.11. (CL B) Students are engaged in research projects and other activities.

Students of the study program “Plant Production Technology” do some practical laboratory courses. However, according to laboratory spaces available, this could be expanded.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant (B)

ET recommendations:

- 1. The ET highly recommends to put research more in the center of all kind of strategic considerations and to establish incentives and procedures to allow and foster high-level research activities. Suitable procedures and actions are mentioned in the comments by ET.*
- 2. The ET recommends that validation procedures for scientific outputs should be developed and established by following a consistent research strategy, which has to be set up and agreed on prior to this. Segmentation of the publications listed in SER, pgs. 64 – 74 should be made available.*
- 3. Young researchers should be more supported and involved in the research activities by the senior staff.*

2.7. Infrastructure and resources



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

Land and buildings are available from former military installations. Buildings are in a good condition and extensions are under construction. Lab space is available, but instrumentation is poor and investments are required. Shortcomings are partly compensated by performing internships and thesis work in cooperation with surrounding agribusiness companies and the Agricultural Institute of Peja. The SER (p.77) states that the spaces currently available to the students, academic staff (14 professors and 5 assistants) and administrative staff meet the minimum requirements for a quality and effective management of curricula, including this Program which is under evaluation.

Standard 7.2. (CL C) *There is a financial plan at the level of the study program that would demonstrate the sustainability of the study program for the next minimum three years.*

The FAB presents the Financial plan in the SER (p. 78) which is a 3-year plan. The budget total amount is 837,300 euro out of which 765,300 euro for wages and salaries, 3,000 euro for IT and other equipment, for laboratories equipment 60,000 euro and for books 9,000 euro. The Financial plan does not provide information on other expenses such as electricity, communication, and other expenses. Therefore, the ET can not easily estimate the study programme compliance level with this standard.

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

a) owned or rented spaces adequate for the educational process.

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

- 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.*



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

The SER (p. 78-79) provides data on number of seats in the classrooms and the inventory list of existing equipment in the laboratories and IT equipment as well. There are available to students as follows: “amphitheatre, 130 seats; room number I, 50 seats; room number II, 30 seats; laboratories I, II, III and IV have 15 seats each. Classrooms are equipped with projector, blackboard, internet network, heat system. In each room there is equipment for online recording of lectures”.

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

- a) a number of seats in the reading rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program;*
- b) a number of seats in the group work rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program;*
- c) their own book stock from Albanian and foreign speciality literature, enough to cover the disciplines within the curricula, out of which at least 50% should represent book titles or speciality courses of 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.*

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

The FAB provided the list of 116 books out of which 2 are available in English language (2010) while 114 are available in Albanian. Regarding the publishing years, 45 books are published since 2011 that are considered relevant. The most recent book is published in 2017. There are 69 books which are considered outdated, 53 books are published within (2000 – 2010), 6 books



are from the decade 1990 – 1999 and 1 book is older and for the rest there is no date of publishing.

The FAB provided the list of online libraries available to the UHZ which consists of 16 titles with the links included.

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

The SER (p.79) states that the premisses are compliant to the needs of disabled persons.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant (B)

ET recommendations:

- 1. A detailed budget has to be presented for the study program.*
- 2. Insufficient equipment in existing laboratories should be improved.*
- 3. Reading and work group seats for students should be available according to the standard.*
- 4. Purchase of sufficient number IT equipment for on site and online learning.*



3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

(Insert overall observations referring to the evaluation process, the quality at study program level, approach to the site visit, etc.)

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program “Plant Production Technology (B.Sc.)” offered by the Faculty of Agribusiness of the University Haxhi Zeka, Peja is *Substantially compliant (CL B)* with the standards included in the *KAA Accreditation manual (2021)* and, therefore, recommends to *accredit* the study program for a duration of *3 years* with a number of 50 students to be enrolled in the program.

Expert Team

Member

Prof. Dr. Reiner Doluschitz

20.04.2022

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)

Member

Jadranka Pelikan, PhD-candidate

20.04.2022

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)