UNIVERSUM COLLEGE
BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT BA

RE-ACCREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

JUNE 9th, 2022, PRISHTINA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: June 9th, 2022

Expert Team (ET) members:

1. *Prof. PhD Magdalena Platis*

2. *Marija Vasilevska, Student Expert*

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- *Shkelzen Gerxhaliu, SO for Evaluation and Monitoring*

- *Flamur Abazaj, SO for Evaluation and Monitoring*

Sources of information for the Report:

- *Self - Evaluation Report - PROGRAM EVALUATION BA Business and Management (Prishtina Campus)*
- *Syllabi for the BANKS AND FINANCE IN BUSINESS (BA) – appendices to SER*
- *CVs – appendices to SER*
- *Regulations applied to programme (31 word and pdf documents, some in Albanian, some in English) – appendices to SER*
- *Memorandum of understanding – 4 documents*
- *KAA Accreditation Manual, July 2018*
- *KAA - THE MANUAL FOR EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS – February 2021*

Additional documents – requested by the ET:

1. The Statute in English
2. The Code of Ethics in English
3. The questionnaire for collecting feedback from the industry
4. The Internal Quality Standards in English (Udhëzime për rishikime periodike të brendshme të programeve akademike Standardet dhe Vlerësimet e Kualitetit të Brendshëm)

5. The documents used for the practice stages – criteria to follow during the stage, activity reports, feedback from the company and tutors regarding the internship

6. The Memorandum of Understanding with the Coca Cola Kosovo and Raiffeisen Bank in Kosovo

7. The policy describing what is recognized as research, consistent with international standards and established norms in the field of study of the program and policy related to the ownership of the intellectual property

8. One report (the most recent ones) for each of the evaluation survey related to the programme of Business and Management BA

9. Print screen from the Moodle where the reports on evaluations are shared with staff and students

10. The list of the research publications of the latest 3 years (or link)

Additional documents received by the ET:

- 25 documents for the requested documents

Criteria used for program evaluation:

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

- *Criteria of Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Impact, Sustainability*

1.2. Site visit schedule

09:00 – 09:45	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated	Alejtin Berisha, CEO Shqipe Gerguri-Rashiti, VP Filip Ruxho VP
09.50 – 10.35	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff	Uran Raci, Arlinda Berisha
10:40 – 11:40	Meeting with the heads of the study programme	Shqipe Gerguri, Flamur Bunjaku Marigona Krypa
11:40 – 12.25	Lunch break (provided at the evaluation site)	
12:25 – 13:10	Meeting with teaching staff	Filip Ruxho Nazim Haliti Sejdi Xhemaili Mejreme Ymeri, Muhamed Hajdari Artan Aliu

13:15 – 14:00	Meeting with students	Elmedina Ramadani Dafina Boshnjaku Enkelë Kabashi Rea Krasniqi Erzana Januzi Blinera Krasniqi Donikë Bogiqi
14:05 – 14:50	Meeting with graduates	Ard Simnica Gabriela Ukaj Saranda Mula Hekuran Syla Herolinda Kodraliu
14:55 – 15:40	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders	Viva Fresh Raiffeesien Bank Coca Cola IBAS We Do Arjeta
15:40 – 15:50	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts	
15:50 – 16:00	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program	

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

Universum College has two different campuses. The BA in Business and Management program is accredited in both campuses – Prishtina and Ferizaj. The programme under the current re-accreditation evaluation is in the main campus, of Prishtina. The programme has the level 6 of qualification according to NQF and the diploma issued is of Bachelor of Arts in Business and Management, providing 184 ECTS in a duration of 3 years (as a minimum period). The campus coordinator can be contacted at: info@universum-ks.org and the general overview (mainly the objectives and the curriculum) of the programme is described at: https://www.universum-ks.org/en/business-and-management/. In addition, recently, Universum College has been accredited by the University of Northampton in the UK to offer double degrees including the field of business and management for the undergraduate and graduate level (SER, page 5 and meeting with the heads of the study programme.

2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

The institution was established in 2005, and operates in Prishtina, the capital city, and Ferizaj, the second largest and one of the most economically developed cities in Kosovo. Universum College has developed and advanced a strategy that aims at fulfilling the objectives of its faculties and programmes. The mission of the Universum College is to support their students to become good citizens, successful & broad-minded leaders and thrive in the Revolution 4.0, the digital and globalized era (SER, page 7). In addition, "The College strives for excellence in fulfilling its central and primary purposes of teaching, scholarship, and research and places emphasis on the quality of teaching. Its mission is to provide high quality and affordable educational services to Kosovar, regional and international students. Through excellence in teaching, lifelong learning, applied research, and partnership building, its aim is to prepare students to be successful, responsible citizens, and to support economic development in Kosovo and the region" (https://www.universum-ks.org/en/about-us/). In accordance with the institutional mission, the programme mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution, as it provides one-to-one academic & life coaching, putting the students and learning at the centre in an "innovative, digitally enhanced environment that fosters creativity, inquiry, teamwork, innovation and entrepreneurial mindsets"; the programme delivery commit with "quality, teacher excellence and applied research building the bases for a strong and vigorous nation and region" (SER, page 7).

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 (SER, page 12). The meeting with the external stakeholders revealed the diversity of forms of cooperation with the programme and the institutional management, for example – participation in the career fair, internship provider, counselling, recruiting of students and graduates and engagement in the dual studies, as mentors, when they provide weekly reports about the student work.

The study programme has 7 clearly stated objectives (SER pages 11-12) which show a well - defined didactic concept, revealing the interest in the transfer of management knowledge into practice, including both private and public sector, and the interest in the local and international business environment. The study program does not have a clear research concept, the only objective related to the research being the commitment to the extension of the support for research and development. ET appreciates this as a positive intention to the research area

development, but at the visit date cannot appreciate a well-defined research concept for the Business and Management programme, BA.

There are formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues. Many of these are made publicly available to all staff and students; most of them are developed at an institutional level and apply to all programmes. For example, students read about the entry requirements and about transfer of students at https://www.universum-ks.org/sq/admission-sq/, they learn about study programmes at https://www.universum-ks.org/en/study-programs/, and about campus life, including student services at https://www.universum-ks.org/en/study-programs/#. International students have their own page at: https://www.universum-ks.org/sq/i-students/. Some institutional documents are publicly available, for example, the Strategic Plan - https://www.universum-ks.org/en/strategic-plan-and-mision/, Research Strategy - https://www.universum-ks.org/en/research-strategy/. Moreover, the Moodle platform where staff and students have access include a special area on regulations (rregullatore); a print screen of the Moodle was provided as additional document (Additional document 9). ET would consider an important step forward from a quality perspective the possibility of creating a special area on the website for all the relevant documents for staff and students.

All staff and students at the Business and Management BA programme comply with the internal regulations relating to ethical conduct in research, teaching, assessment in all academic and administrative activities. All staff and students can access a link provided on the website: https://www.universum-ks.org/en/akademia-antiplagiarism/ to use the Akademia Platform and to fight against plagiarism. Moreover, the Code of ethics apply to all staff and students: "This code includes and regulates the whole set of principles, ethical, moral and professional behaviors, which all staff and students of Universum College, during their work and behavior, must adhere to" (Additional document 2.1); it covers professional responsibilities for the teaching staff, right for all staff categories, responsibilities of the leadership, as well as ethical responsibilities for students.

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 (SER, page 16). The meetings with the head of the programme revealed the interest in reviewing the process of programme delivery every year.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Create a programme level mechanism to work together with the stakeholders on a well-defined overarching research concept;*
2. *Create a special website area and include all the relevant documents for staff and students (in addition to the Moodle communication of regulations).*

2.2. Quality management

The Universum College has settled an internal quality assurance system consisting of a quality assurance strategy and a Quality Assurance Unit. The Internal Quality Standards and Evaluation document, provided as additionally requested document to ET, is used as a baseline for internal regulation and promotion of quality assurance. The ET would like to acknowledge Universum College for the wide spread of tools and methods applied for checking the quality of the study programmes.

The teaching staff members are motivated to participate in the internal review procedure. As the ET learned during the site visit (meeting with the teaching staff) the teaching staff are receiving the conclusions and data collected from the students' surveys and are jointly discussing the results with the students. The Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching also serves for capacity building of the staff for their involvement in the reporting and improvement processes (SER, page 18). This Center is regularly organizing training sessions to address the needs of the teaching staff identified from the self-evaluation processes (meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff).

From reviewing the provided example of the students` survey, it can be concluded that the internal quality system includes all aspects of the programme delivery. In particular, the survey includes the following sectors: Course and Professors; Self-evaluation; University and Resources. (Copy of Questionnaire per Students_English- appendix to SER)

ET would like to commend the Universum College for the variety of tools used for collection of data and checking the quality of the programmes. In particular, the following tools are used: Academic Program Internal Report; External Review of Program; Programmatic meetings between Academic Program staff, Quality Assurance Unit, and Universum Administration; Student surveys administered at mid-semester and the end of each semester; Course Level Assessment - Mid-semester evaluation form for each course across the programs; Students evaluation through dialogue/ focus groups; Statistics from the annual periodic review; Staff Evaluations/Assessments; Peer-to-peer evaluation; Enforce of recommendations from KAA accreditation reports; Evaluation from Pearson (this mainly for the Pearson Programs, but the recommendations improve the quality of the institution as a whole); Employment of Graduates

and Graduate exit survey (SER, page 20 & Additional documents 4, 5.1; 8.1-8.7); These tools are used for the collection of data from the students, academic staff and graduates. However, there is not a formal collection of data from the employers and industry sector for checking the quality of the study programmes. Introducing a survey for them as part of their internal quality system would be important to be considered.

The following example of forms was provided for a review to ET: Peer-to-peer evaluation, alumni survey example, graduate student exit survey and student`s survey. From analyzing them it can be concluded that the surveys are collecting a variety of data, such as investigation of the student workload, academic success, and employment of graduates (Additional documents 5.1; 8.1-8.7; SER 21-27). ET analysed them in detail and can conclude that they do not include checking the learning outcomes for students.

The results from the data collected from all the above listed forms are compiled in reports that are available through the electronic platform accessible for the students and staff as ET learned during the site visit (meeting with the quality assurance representatives and administrative staff). However, the reports representing the results of these evaluations are not made publicly available and a convenient format could be decided on with adequate personal data protection.

The Internal Quality Standards and Evaluations document (Additional document 4) specifies that the aim of the periodic review of the academic programme among the other things is clarification and improvement of the plan and strategy of the academic programs by aligning them with the overall institutional mission. During the site visit, the teaching staff and students shared few examples of how the internal quality assurance process resulted with improvements of the curricula, such as introduction of digital courses (meeting with teaching staff; meeting with students).

The quality assurance arrangements are themselves regularly evaluated and improved. As prescribed in the Internal Quality Standards and Evaluations (Additional document 4), the tools for reviewing the quality of the overall internal quality assurance system are conducted periodically, at least once every three years. This process is connected and depended on the KAA`s accreditation cycle or feedback from the stakeholders.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:
1. *Create a formal survey for collection of feedback and inputs from the industry sector as part of the internal quality system;*

2. *Consider inputs, processes and outputs, with particular attention given to learning outcomes for students in the internal quality assurance, especially in the tools for requesting feedback from the students.*

2.3. Academic staff

Academic staff employed for the programme are provided with full position descriptions and conditions of employment. The SER presented in tabular form data about 23 full time (FT) and 7 part time (PT) academic staff, including names, qualifications, academic titles, duration of the official (valid) contract, and general workload. The recruitment process is managed according to standards and look for high professionals. All the meetings were very well organized, and all participants were very good English speakers. Moreover, the meeting with the management of the faculty proved the interest in head hunting of the institution to attract the most qualified staff in the field. In addition, "once the applications from candidates are received, the screening process is done by the Human Resources Office followed by a technical online interview conducted by representatives of the same office. Shortlisted candidates are called for an on-campus interview. Depending on the position, either the Academic Council or the Executive Director (depends on the profile of the staff) assigns up to three individuals to interview the potential candidates"; a generalized recruitment process is also presented in a clear diagram (SER, pages 28-29).

The teaching staff complies with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative instruction on Accreditation. The description of the staff competences is part of the CVs presented to the ET as additional documents; only about 2/3 of the provided CVs are following an institutional template. The staff qualification is publicly available at https://www.universum-ks.org/en/academic-staff/. The mechanism for staff recruitment is described in the Statute of the College provided as additional document: "after the CEO opens the call for applications for an academic position, the CEO gathers all the relevant data from every application and along with and external examiner and the Academic Director of the department of study, where the concerned academic staff will be positioned, selects three of the best candidatures and proposes them to the Academic Council. If the external examiner shall not be found, the Academic Director of the concerned department of study, shall appoint one academic staff from the concerned department, which will substitute the external examiner's position" (Additional document 1).

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. This is regulated by internal rules, and it is marked specifically in the contract of each

academic staff (SER, page 32). The number of hours included in the workload is also clear, provided in SER (SER, pages 29-31). Moreover, according to the same table, 77% of the academic staff in the study program are full time employees and cover more than 50% of the classes in the study program, more precisely 87% (SER, page 32). In addition, professors retired at age limit or for other reasons lose the status of full-time teachers and are considered part-time teachers (SER, page 40).

The Business and Management Programme BA allocates 184 ECTS. Therefore, for each student group (defined by the statute of the institution) and for every 60 ECTS credits in the study programme; in fact, 10 out of the 23 full time academic staff have the PhD, which means that the institution has employed more than one full time staff with PhD title or equivalent title.

Multiple opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties, if needed. The management of the programme consider that the existing partnerships create new opportunities for the academic staff, as well as for their students; in addition, international partnerships allow staff to share expertise in enriching teaching and learning, and staff development planning. Some of the teaching staff participating in the meeting confirmed that they had returned from abroad events. The institution has published the opportunity for staff to apply for the international staff week at: https://www.universum-ks.org/en/international-staff-week/. Other 4 categories of staff support are provided to ET as appendices to SER: CELT as a vital part of the academic culture of Universum, providing consultation, resources, and programs; funding and staff development; the other 2 categories are very old information and ET is reserved in considering them actual: workshops and trainings to be offered to faculty through CELT in the fall of 2012 and 2013, which would be 10 years ago examples (Training and Development for Staff – appendix to SER). Other opportunities are to be mentioned, in relationship to projects, for example: "REBUS – Ready for Business – which train the staff for practical entrepreneurship; ITEM – which aims at improving and increasing academic capacities of staff and professional capacities of students; E-VIVA - Enhancing and Validating Service-Related Competencies in Versatile Learning Environments in western Balkan Universities - This project aims at creating a blended learning approach to facilitate and validate competence development related to service orientation in informal learning contexts in higher education institutions; INTERBA – Internationalization at Home: Embedding Approaches and Structures to Foster Internationalization at Western Balkans- Provides guidelines and best practices on how to foster internationalization, promote cooperation and international partnerships through research, joint projects, student and faculty networking; DRIVE- Developing Research and Innovation Capacities in Albania and Kosovo- This project aims at contributing in the development of the research and innovation capacities of HEIs in Albania and Kosovo by

enhancing their institutional capabilities, staff skills and networking". (SER, pages 34-35). Other free accesses to courses are regularly encouraged, such as the courses of Coursera platform or Big Blue Button platform- BBB (SER pages 37-38).

The responsibilities of all teaching staff, especially full-time, include the engagement in the academic community, availability for consultations with students and community service. Both teaching and research are considered for academic staff promotion and the criteria are different for every academic position (Statute of the College, article 26). At least one hour/week for consultation is confirmed during the meetings with the teaching staff and the students; most of the syllabi include 2-4 hours of consultation hours / week. Moreover, regarding the engagement of staff in the academic community and the community service, this is a voluntarily engaged activity. The teaching staff participating in the meeting provided an example of engagement in relationship to the SDG 9 (Sustainable Development Goal on Industry, innovation, and infrastructure) of high impact in Kosovo.

Academic staff involved in the Business and Management BA programme is subject of evaluation including three types: 1. Mid-semester and semester evaluation by students; 2. Evaluation by professional parties; 3. Regular evaluation by the Head of Department (SER pages 39-40). Unfortunately, the management of the faculty and the head of the programme know the evaluation results are not publicly available, although evaluation is regularly conducted. The provided documents do not include a clear document of self-evaluation for the academic staff, which could be easily integrated in the evaluation form filled by the head of department, which is done on clear KPIs which were developed together between management and professors (SER, page 40); in other words, the same document could include first the self-evaluation filled in by each professor and then, the same values of the KPI could be adjusted by the head.

The SER team considers as evidence for improving the teaching strategies and the quality of the learning materials the following: "The projects currently being implemented are under the ERASMUS + K2 frame and aim at applying innovative methodologies in teaching and learning, that will enable academic staff to become familiar with the latest platforms in the field of education as well as enhance the quality of teaching materials, methodology and strategies as required by standard" (SER, page 33). However, this is more an argument for the opportunities provided to staff, already mentioned, and accepted by the ET. Nevertheless, strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials. In all strategic documents and mainly in the Strategic Plan of the college it is stated the importance of the digital transformation. During the meetings, all the participants confirmed the latest changes in the correlation of teaching and learning with the digital

technologies: "Due to technology innovation, many industries had to transform to compete in the ever-changing global market. The education is not exempt from these changes, thus, at Universum College digital transformation is taken seriously. Hereby, Universum College is committed to make the following digital transformation to improve" (https://www.universum-ks.org/en/strategic-plan-and-mision/).

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:
1. *Review all the staff opportunities and make sure you do not include opportunities that are no longer available;*
2. *Create a statistical report to be published on the website regarding the results of the evaluation of the academic staff, following the requirement of the personal data protection; this would be an important promotional message to attract candidates;*
3. *Include in the evaluation of the academic staff done by the head of department a section for the self-evaluation considering the same indicators (KPI); the head will then adjust the value of each indicator or will confirm it through its evaluation;*
4. *Check the CVs of staff and encourage them to use the same template.*

2.4. Educational process content

The Business and Management BA programme 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 main qualification objecives of the programme are: "a) a clear sense of the organizational environment and readiness to take on employment in a management position; b) in-depth knowledge of modern approaches to business management; c) an understanding of the relationship between people, organizations, and business management in different organizational structures; d) an understanding of financial requirements for business, including published financial information, and an ability to make judgments about financial performance companies; e) an understanding of the central importance of innovation in a range of different organizational contexts – entrepreneurial startup firms, small firms and other organizations, and large business corporations; and, f) an understanding of the broader social context of the working environment, and the opportunity to assess their own personal development needs for successful future carrier" (SER, page 40). The aspects considered in the above description refer to especially to academic competencies, to the capability of taking up adequate employment, contributing to the civil society and of developing the students' personality. In addition, all the stakeholders participating in the

meeting confirmed the high quality of the students during the internship programmes and of the graduates they selected to employ.

The Business and management BA programme complies with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. The overview of the programme shows an allocation of 184 of ECTS; all semesters have 30 ECTS, except semester I and IV which have 32 ECTS from a Study Skills course of 2 ECTS and from the Internship Program and Career Orientation Course of 8 ECTS. According to SER: "The course of Study Skills and Internship and Career Orientation have an added value to the student success and wellbeing in the transformation from high school to an academic entity" (SER, page 41). Therefore, the program offers a unique environment for studying business and management that equip students for an exciting future career in either the private or public sector. The individual components of the programme are combined in a way to best achieve the specified qualification objectives and provide for adequate forms of teaching and learning; these all are clearly described in the syllabi provided as appendices to SER.

The subjects 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 programmes and curricula delivered in the EHEA. The disciplines are studied from simple to more complex content, from a general approach to a specific approach of the field. 7 learning outcomes are listed in SER: "Demonstrate knowledge in business and management concepts and tools, including accounting, marketing, human resource management and supply chain management; Reflect upon work-based examples of business activities which will support informed career choices; Develop and enhance student's writing, teams, leadership, entrepreneurship and communications skills; Facilitate the development of students' critical and analytical thinking in order to excel in a dynamic business environment; Assess challenges and solve problems in business situations; Apply market research methodologies to identify entrepreneurial opportunities; Articulate ideas persuasively and logically and collaborate with others toward a common goal" (SER, page 42). In the syllabi, the learning outcomes are therefore defined for every subject.

The disciplines within the curriculum have analytical syllabi which comprise at least the following: Description of the course, Learning Outcomes, Assessment Methodology, Teaching Methodology, Mandatory and suggested textbooks, Class Plan, Description of each assessment methodology (SER, page 66, and the syllabi as appendices to SER). After the programme overview, the SER includes the description of the subjects – course description and aims of it, learning outcomes for the discipline, teaching methodology, the assessment methods, and the

ratio between theoretical and practical part of teaching, as well as the technical equipment required for the teaching and the literature requested by the professor (SER, pages 70-134).

The main responsibility in reaching the learning outcomes is given to the teaching staff. They have developed a positive relationship with their students. According to the KPI, professors have a guest lecture during the semester from the industry; students mentioned during the meeting that they well appreciated the guest lectures providing useful case studies from the business area. However, the allocation of 6 ECTS for almost all subjects is not justified, as the workload cannot be the same for all subjects. Therefore, ET considers that the process of achieving the learning outcomes is partially adequate, as some subjects would require more hours and others less, considering the students' work effort. Moreover, the ECTS must reflect the effective volume of learning based on the defined learning outcomes and their associated workload; some disciplines are general, while some are specific, therefore, the volume of learning must be differentiated in order to reflect the real volume of learning / the student effort.

Teaching strategies are fit for the different types of learning outcomes and the syllabus of every subject describes a variety of teaching methods, from lectures, seminars, readings, to the use of some research tools (Knowledge and Management Syllabus), from debates, discussion to individual work or teamwork. 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, due to the variety of methods. Moreover, the college most recent practices tend to follow a contemporary approach towards teaching, including various online materials and an the interest to challenging the conventional teaching, including the mentorship teaching (SER, pages 43-44).

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. All syllabi include the assessment methods clearly described and the students participating in the meeting were aware of the diversity of the methods used by their professors. For example, at Essentials of Management: "Students who attend all lectures will get 10% of the final grade. There will be a mid-term exam accounting to 20%. The seminar work will amount to 20%. The final exam, containing 12 questions, will constitute 50% of the final grade", while at Microeconomics: "Students who attend all lectures will get 10% of the final grade. There will be a mid-term exam accounting to 20%. The seminar work will amount to 20%. Participation in class and exercise sessions will constitute 20% of the final grade. The final exam will constitute 40% of the final grade" (SER pages 170 and 172).

Professors at the programme of Business and Management BA work together to avoid overlapping in teaching; the participants in the meeting mentioned that they had one full day of training to avoid teaching overlapping at the beginning of the semester. The standard of work required for different grades is consistent over time, but it is difficult to appreciate as all the subjects (with only 2 exceptions) are allocated the same 6 ECTS. There is no evidence on formal benchmarking regarding a comparison with other study programme at highly regarded institutions, although a double degree has been developed with the Kajaani University Applied Sciences in Finland – BA in Business and Management; (SER, page 212). "Universum College courses take into consideration the marketplace development so the students are equipped with the most necessary and applicable skills and knowledge" (SER, page 57). The industry collaboration is taken into consideration, but a formal benchmarking with similar programmes at national, regional, and international level would enhance the quality development of the programme.

Policies and procedures include actions to be taken in dealing with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate. These regulations are adopted at an institutional level and refer to "academic misconduct and dishonesty: Plagiarism; Multiple Submission; Collusion; Cheating in Examinations" (SER, page 62). The programme follows the Misconduct procedure and the Appeals Policy, considering 3 stages – informal, review and appeal hearing (SER, pages 63-65). These are adequate regulations.

The study program includes practice stages, and the intended student learning outcomes are clearly specified in the syllabus for the Career Orientation and Internship; the course has 8 ECTS and its learning outcomes cover the following ones: "They are able to identify, name and list their interests, values, abilities, in order to compete worthily in the labor market; Have knowledge of the varieties of career choices, having real information on what a contemporary career looks like in a given field; Are able to set goals and define strategies for achieving the set goals; Develop the ability to interview as well as the necessary documents for job application" (Syllabus of the course, as appendix to SER). Students are monitored through activity reports; students during practice stages have assigned tutors among the academic staff in the study program. Moreover, the stakeholders participating in the meeting mentioned that they provide weekly evidence on the students work in the company during their internships.

In order to facilitate the practice stages, the higher education institution signs cooperation agreements, contracts or other documents with institutions/organisations/practical training units. Most important cooperation agreements that were several times mentioned during all the meetings include the Memorandum with the Coca Cola HBC Kosovo signed in 2007 (provided as additional document); another one is with Vision Agency signed in 2018. The management

of the faculty and programme also mentioned the cooperation with the Raiffeisen Bank in Kosovo, also represented at the meeting with the external stakeholders. It would be important to have the agreement periodically reviewed and if the case, extended.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:
1. *Consider the allocation of ECTS for all the subjects according to the real effort / student workload as the current allocation include 6 ECTS for almost all subjects; ECTS must reflect the effective volume of learning based on the defined learning outcomes and their associated workload;*
2. *Create a programme level mechanism to benchmark the programme development in relationship to national, regional and international similar programmes;*
3. *Create a mechanism to review the agreements in order to adapt to the changing educational needs (as that with the Coco Cola was signed in 2007).*

2.5. Students

The students are one of the Universum College`s strengths. The ET met a group of students and graduates that were highly motivated, satisfied with the particular study programme, with a clear vision for their future and excellent knowledge of English language. Most of them shared that the cooperation between the Universum College and the industry sector was the crucial reasons for choosing this programme. The Universum College is undertaking serious steps to be sure that the students are at the centre of their studies.

Through analyzing all provided documents as part of the SER, ET can conclude that there are formal admission requirements settled (SER, page 139-142). The requirements are included in the General Entry Requirements and are available on the College`s website (https://bit.ly/3NYq1fS ). Moreover, the admission requirements are promoted widely among the future students through different tools such as the Universum College`s website, social media accounts, or in-person meetings. In addition, the Universum College pays special attention to promoting the scholarships opportunities for the future students. The following target categories are seen as future students to the particular study prgramme: freshmen who graduated high school, unemployed graduates, employees with another degree and the ones without degrees, encouraging the female candidates from ethnic minorities to apply (SER, page 140-142). The transfer of students from other higher education institutions is regulated.

Possession of a high school diploma and passing the Matura test as prescribed by the MEST is one of the conditions for admission to the Universum College, as shared in the SER (SER, page 139) . The admission criteria are also available online on the Universum College`s website https://www.universum-ks.org/en/admission/ .

The ET understands from the Head of the academic staff (meeting with the heads of the study programme) that the study groups include a maximum of 50 students per group. The participants in the meetings during the site visit declared that such dimensioning is ensuring effective and interactive teaching and learning process (meeting with the teaching staff).

Universum College has a specific document regulating the grading for the written examinations (Written Examinations, appendix to SER). The students that ET met during the site visit shared that their exams are consistent. Different aspects of their learning process are included in their grades, such as group work assignments and others. They are in a regular evaluation by their professors, as they shared (meeting with the students). In addition to this, SER informs that the academic staff employs different forms of feedback, such as mid-semester student evaluation, semester student evaluation and student evaluation through dialogue and focus groups. The syllabuses provided as annexes to the SER confirm this (Syllabuses, appendix to the SER). In case needed, tutors supporting the students are provided (meeting with the teaching staff). Having this in mind ET can conclude that feedback to students is given promptly and with mechanisms for assistance when needed. In addition, the ET learned that there is a certain level of flexibility for the students in special situations.

The records of student completion rates are kept for all courses and for the program. The students can easily access them through the DMIS Software. Among the other information, this software includes the students' and staff background data and personal information, students` grades, financial reports, and students` passing/failure rate per course (SER, page 143). There is also a Student Success Strategy developed on a College level that includes objectives and tools for student services and success that also includes Study Plan (SER, pages 155-158).

The Universum College has an Anti-Plagiarism tool - software for identification of possible plagiarism in the Albanian language covering also translated content from English to Albanian. The Head of programme shared that they are encouraging all academic staff to use the software. Moreover, they are trying to address plagiarism by covering it in the curriculums as part of the study programme, as ET learned during the site visit (meeting with the Heads of the programme). In addition to this, the students pointed out their awareness of the importance of plagiarism during the meeting with ET (meeting with the students). A specific regulatory document titled Citing References & Avoiding Plagiarism serves as an additional guideline for the students (Citing &Avoiding Plagiarism, appendexis to the SER). Academic misconduct for

the students is also regulated in the Universum College Students Handbook. However, it is important to be highlighted that the Code of Ethics does not regulate plagiarism as bad behavior (Additional document 2.1).

The Universum College Student Handbook prescribes the students` rights. The students club, the official College`s website and the DMIS Software are used for the promotion and sharing of information to the students including their rights (SER, page 143-154).

The SER states that the academic staff has consultancy hours for the students including the ones who are transferring from other institutions. The academic staff pointed out that they have regular one-hour consultations which were confirmed by the students during the site visit (meeting with the students).

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

-

2.6. Research

The research activity is described as an important component of the institution; therefore, all the research issues refer to the institutional strategy and budget. Moreover, the meeting with the faculty management confirmed that the college is not a research institution, that they are not organising doctoral studies, but that they pay attention to applied business. Therefore, the Business and Management BA programme does not have on its own at the visit date a clearly defined scientific research approach, with concrete and measurable objectives (SER pages 164-169). The institution has a Research and Innovation Hub, but this is an institutional unit that provides support: "Improving research capacities and infrastructure; Improving research cooperation; Incorporating research in curricula and teaching methodology; Improving research skills among staff and students; Initiate new project within the institution; Support innovation and industry relation through research; Identify the research topics based on the institutional focus and needs" (SER, page 167). Research objectives for the business and management field could be related to the collecting data from direct customers to the product feedback and the development of new products that are in demand etc.

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. The Statute of the College states the academic performance for different

academic position, considering research an important criterion; for example, for the promotion to the professor, the criteria include the following ones: "(a) the candidate should have spent at least six years in university teaching and/or research; (b) the candidate should have published a minimum of 15 original academic papers and/or books in his field of focus - where at least five of them have been individually authored by the candidate; (c) the candidate should have at least six academic papers published during the work at Universum College; (d) the candidate should have had an academic record of not less than 3.5 out of 5 during his/her university teaching period; (e) the candidate should have addressed theses in at least five international scientific conferences, in his fields of study" (Article 26).

At an institutional level, an appendix to the document called Institutional Research Directions and Support (provided as additional document 7) include a set of research activities: "5.1. Conducting basic, advanced and applied research in order to develop scientific research in the fields of: public administration, political science, sociology, international relations and diplomacy, justice, human rights, security studies, informatics, language, literature and translation, communication and media, economics, business, ecology, energy and health and other fields from the socio-economic field and modern sciences and technologies; 5.2. Organizing of local, regional and international scientific conferences, workshops and seminars, scientific research and cooperation with other research institutions in the country and abroad; 5.3. Preparation of studies and analyzes for public administration, judiciary, economics, linguistics and literature, informatics, environment, health and the like; 5.4. Processing and analysis of technical documentation from the areas highlighted in point 5.1 of this paragraph; 5.5. Patenting; 5.6. Preparation of expertise in the above areas and quality control of technical documentation; 5.7. Compilation of investment programs and other programs; 5.8. Organizing seminars for the professional development of the academic staff in the scientific fields relevant to the college; 5.9. Publishing activity (publishing books, university textbooks, monographs and scientific journals); - other scientific research activities in the fields covered by the study programs in the college". However, these refer to all the College fields and what has to do with the field of business and management is too general and cannot be considered research recognition, consistent with international standards and established norms in the field of study of the program. This policy should be generated from the institutional document and elaborated at the programme level.

The academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity. A list of the staff publication is publicly available at: https://www.universum-ks.org/en/staff-publication/, but this is not up-to-date. In addition, a list of the scientific articles was provided as additional document to the ET (Additional document 10). For example, Prof. Flamur Bunjaku teaches International Financial Markets and publishes articles related to

investments in the stack market, foreign direct investment etc. Moreover, "CELT will provide training on the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Researchers; one joint paper authored by a junior teaching staff under the mentorship of a senior colleague published annually" (SER, page 175).

The academic staff publish their work in speciality magazines or publishing houses, scientific 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 list of the staff publications demonstrates the most recent work of the academic staff engaged in the Business and Management BA programme. The research is therefore mostly validated through scientific and applied research publications.

The publications list includes only the articles and conferences of 8 members, while the programme has 23 full time staff. Therefore, there is no clear evidence that each member of the academic staff has produced at least an average of one scientific/applied research publication per year for the past three years. The institution provides support for publication: "Academic staff who might need financial support to pay the publication fees will submit the request with relevant authorities. The Research Committee will review the request and decide to either cover the fees fully or partially" (SER, page 176).

Academic and research staff do not publish all the time under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full-time staff. For example, professor Ganimete Podvorica published in 2020 a paper under another university and school (Monmouth University, Leon Hess Business School) for a paper communicated in the list requested as additional document (Additional document 10): DOI:/10.18690/lexonomica.12.2.243-260.2020. Moreover, professor Drita Shaqiri has a recent paper (2020): Interrelationships between national culture and the organizational climate in hospitals. Journal of Scientific Research and Studies, ISSN 2375-8791, where the affiliation is not Universum College, although she is a full time professor at Universum College (http://www.modernrespub.org/jsrs/pdf/2020/March/Shaqiri.pdf); in addition, the e-mail used in the publication is the personal e-mail of gmail not the institutional e-mail.

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. Students participating in the meeting appreciate the knowledge and competences of the academic staff, and the staff efforts to engage students in projects, such as to generate a solution for a Coca-Cola cocktail, or their engagement in data collecting about a specific market, cases in which students were mentored by professors.

Policies are established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students, at an institutional level, not at the programme level. "Regulation on research work also provides a specific provision on academic integrity, protection of intellectual property as well support provided by the legal office at UC. In case of misuses or theft of intellectual property published by Universum staff or students, legal office at Universum provides the necessary support and guidance to the victim of theft or misuse. Legal procedure can be initiated in the individual name of the person as a legal member/employee of UC" (SER, page 177).

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:
1. *Define 3-5 scientific or applied research objectives that can be achieved through the existing resources at the programme level;*
2. *Develop a regulation at the programme level defining what is recognized as research, consistent with international standards and established norms in the field of study of the business and management;*
3. *Update the list of staff publication on the website; create a mechanism to update the list annually;*
4. *Monitor the research productivity of the academic staff involved in the programme.*

2.7. Infrastructure and resources

Taking into consideration the limitations of the online site visit the ET team when evaluating the standards infrastructure and resources took into consideration the videos and photos available on the Universum College`s official channels (https://bit.ly/3xzMPf5), the information provided in the SER (SER, pages 182-198) and the inputs gathered from the participants in the interviews conducted during the site visit.

The general conclusion is that the Universum College has invested in modern campuses, including the ones in which the bachelor's programme Business and Management is conducted. The programme is allocated in the campus located in the city of Prishtina which is a new one with an area covering 5330 m2 that includes two buildings. Libraries, Innovation Hubs, places for sports recreations, and group work was noticed when reviewing the available multimedia materials from the campus. In addition, the ET learned that the College plans to build a new smart campus consisting of 11,676 m2 by the academic year 2023/2024 (meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated). Finally, all participants in the

meetings shared highly positive impressions of the infrastructure and resources with the ET. Based on this, the ET can conclude that adequate long-term implementation of the study program is ensured in quantitative terms followed by qualitative aspects as regards premises, human resources and equipment.

The Statute of the Universum College in its Article number 30 regulates that the College shall have a budget for performing its function consisting of planned revenues and other income sources (Additional document 1). From the provided information in the SER, it can be concluded that Universum College is foreseeing the importance of regular investment in infrastructure and resources. Moreover, the commitment toward investment in academic and research programmes and equipment is visible and acknowledged by the staff, students and administration. What should be acknowledged related to the finances is the connection and cooperation with the industry. During the site visit, ET learned that the industry financially supports more than 300 students from the whole College with covered tuition fees, out of which 50% are from the particular study programme (meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated). Although specific numbers and budget calculations have not been provided by the College ET concluded that the financial sustainability is ensured.

Universum College owns the campuses, labs and all equipment used for the implementation of all study programmes, including the campus in which the bachelor's programme Business and Management is located. As reported in the SER, the Universum College has an agreement with Microsoft, specifically Azure for Educational and Research purposes, which is applicable for most of the curriculum courses, primarily geared towards Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) courses. Moreover, the Universum College has its own e-learning system (Moodle) where students can gain information regarding their courses. In addition, the College has an Anti-Plagiarism tool as the only anti-plagiarism software for identification of possible plagiarism in the Albanian language. Finally, SER shares a list of different software that are used in the Universum College. (SER pages 191-192)

ET found evidence that the library and the literature provided for the students and staff is sufficient and with the tendency of enlargement based on their needs. As reported in the SER, there are approximately 40000 books and 1500 titles in Albanian, English, Serbo-Croatian, and other languages available on the particular campus from these fields: Business and Management, Finance, Marketing, Public Administration, International Relations, Law, Education, Computing, Languages, Medical/Nursing, Design, Journalism, in English and Albanian (SER, page 193). In addition, an Action Plan for enlarging the capacities of the library and investments for it has been provided. Access to electronic libraries is provided followed by electronic subscriptions to different journals in the Universum`s study fields. The SER

informed about a project that aims to establish four college libraries in Kosovo, one in each of the Unviersum College`s campuses in Ferizaj, Gjakova and Prishtina.

As reported in the SER, among the other criteria for the development of the Universum College`s facilities are those to be inclusive and accessible for students with disabilities and special needs (SER, page 183). However, the premises of the Universum College are not adjusted for students with special needs (meeting with the Heads of the programme, Video for presenting the facilities; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V8oNOFRMe7E). The information provided in the SER and the ones shared by the participants during the online onsite visit confirmed that commitment. The management of the College is aware of this challenge and are trying to mitigate it by organizing classes for the students with special needs on the ground floor. In addition, ET learned that College`s staff is providing additional support to the students with special needs such as tutors (meeting with the teaching staff).

From the provided data, information, and the collected inputs during the online site visit, it can be concluded that the Bachelor Studies Business and Management offered by the Universum College are fulling the infrastructure and resource criteria to a great extent.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:
   1. *The programme, faculty and the institution management should fully take into consideration the needs of the students with special needs and physically adjust the campuses for their needs.*

3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

ET appreciates the effort of the faculty and program management to provide proper clarification to all questions during the site visit. Quality standards are meant to help internal decisions not only in the period of the external evaluations, but during the regular continuous activity. Establishing a quality culture and consolidating the progress takes time. ET appreciates the institutional, the faculty and the programme management efforts towards the digitalisation, as well as all the positive links with the industry in the field of business and management. It is clear that the leadership of the institution, faculty and programme are aware of the needs of their staff and students and of all the possibilities the local context of higher education in Kosovo provides. Final recommendations of the ET would be:
   • to continue to invest in the quality management for internal programme development by consolidating the already achieved positive results (for example the digital tools,

the industry links, the internationalisation approach) and by addressing the missing ones with realistic approach (for example the research issues);

- to follow the standard-based recommendations already mentioned.

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program Business and Management BA offered by THE UNIVERSUM COLLEGE is substantially compliant with the standards included in the KAA Accreditation manual and, therefore, recommends to accredit the study program for a duration of 3 years with a number of 250 students to be enrolled in the program.

Expert Team

Chair

	Prof. PhD Magdalena Iordache Platis	**June 20th , 2022**
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)

Member

	Marija Vasilevska, Student Expert	**June 20th , 2022**
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)