



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

“HAXHI ZEKA” UNIVERSITY IN PEJË

INSTITUTIONAL

FINAL REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

April 5, 2023



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 under evaluation	8
2. INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION	8
2.1. Public mission and institutional objectives	8
2.2. Strategic planning, governance and administration	10
2.3. Financial planning and management.....	12
2.4. Academic integrity, responsibility and public accountability	13
2.5. Quality management	15
2.6. Learning and teaching.....	20
2.7. Research.....	22
2.8. Staff, employment processes and professional development.....	26
2.9. Student administration and support services.....	31
2.10. Learning resources and facilities.....	34
2.11. Institutional cooperation	37



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: 13. 3. 2023

Expert Team (ET) members:

- *Prof. Milan Pol, Masaryk University, Czech Republic*
- *Prof. Joke Denekens, University of Antwerp, Belgium*
- *Jadranka Pelikan, student representative, University of Zagreb, Croatia*

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- *Ilirjana Ademaj, KAA Officer*
- *Leona Kovaci, KAA Officer*

Sources of information for the Report:

- *Self-evaluation report and other documentation provided by the institution.*
- *Site visit interviews and visit to the facilities.*

Criteria used for institutional and program evaluations

- *KAA Accreditation Manual*



1.2. Site visit schedule

Time	Meeting	Participants/Comments
09:30 – 10:50	Meeting with the management of the institution (<i>no slide presentation is allowed; the meeting is intended as a free discussion</i>)	<p>Prof. Dr. Armand Krasniqi, Rector of “Haxhi Zeka University” in Peja</p> <p>Prof. Dr. Edmond Beqiri, Vice-Rector for International Cooperation and Quality Assurance</p> <p>Prof. Ass. Dr. Alma Shehu Lokaj, Vice-Rector for Teaching, Student Affairs, and Scientific Research</p> <p>Prof. Ass. Dr. Vjosa Hajdari, Vice-Rector for Infrastructure, Budget, and Finance</p> <p>Prof. Ass. Dr. Mersiha Kalac, Member of the Board</p> <p>LL.M. Tirana Baftiu Hasani, General Secretary</p>
11:05 – 11:55	Meeting with: 1. Quality assurance representatives 2. Administrative services	<p>MSc. Gentiana Kastrati, Director of the Office for Quality Assurance and Evaluation</p> <p>Luan Lulaj, Officer for Quality Assurance and Evaluation</p> <p>Valbona Luta, Director of student affairs</p> <p>Abedin Selimaj, Director of the Office for Career Development</p> <p>Arberora Haxhija, Director of Office for International Cooperation</p> <p>Durim Hoxha, Director of Teaching and Academic Affairs</p> <p>Veton Jahmurataj, Director of the Library</p> <p>Adnan Lataj, Director of the IT office</p>



12:05 – 13:00	Meeting with Deans of Faculties (Head of programs in case of smaller colleges)	<p>Prof. Dr. Halit Shabani, Dean of the Faculty of Business</p> <p>Prof. Assoc. Dr. Adem Dreshaj, Dean of the Faculty of Management, Tourism, Hospitality, and Environment</p> <p>Prof. Assoc. Dr. Avdullah Robaj, Dean of the Faculty of Law</p> <p>Prof. Assoc. Dr. Nexhdet Shala, Dean of the Faculty of Agribusiness</p> <p>Prof. Assoc. Ma, Hysen Nimani, Dean of the Faculty of Arts</p> <p>Prof. Ass. Dr. Fisnik Morina, Vice-Dean for Teaching, Student Affairs and Scientific Research, Faculty of Business</p> <p>Prof. Assoc. Dr. Albona Shala, Vice Dean for Finance, Budget and Infrastructure, Faculty of Management, Tourism, Hospitality, and Environment</p> <p>Prof. Assoc. Ma. Mimoza Dranqolli, Vice Dean for Teaching, Student Affairs and Scientific Research, Faculty of Arts</p>
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch break (to be provided at the evaluation site)	
14:00 – 14:50	Visiting tour of the facilities and infrastructure	
14:50 – 15:40	Meeting with teaching staff	<p>Prof. Ass. Dr. Suada Ajdarpasic, Faculty of Business, Full Time</p> <p>Prof. Assoc. Dr. Theranda Beqiri, Faculty of Business, Full Time</p> <p>Prof. Assoc. Dr. Mimoza Hyseni, Faculty of Management, Tourism, Hospitality, and Environment, Full Time</p>



		<p>Prof. Ass. Dr. Thelleza Latifi, Faculty of Management, Tourism, Hospitality, and Environment, Full Time</p> <p>Prof. Ass. Dr. Orhan Çeku, Faculty of Law, Full Time</p> <p>Prof. Ass. Dr. Astrit Bilalli, Faculty of Agribusiness, Full Time</p> <p>Prof. Assoc. Mr. Astrit Pallaska, Faculty of Arts, Full Time</p> <p>Prof. Ass. Dr. Ujkan Bajra, Faculty of Business, Part Time</p>
15:45 – 16:35	Meeting with students	<p>Arbër Iberdemaj, General Law, LLB, IV</p> <p>Jeton Kelmendi, International and European Law, LLM, I (With special needs)</p> <p>Endrit Gorçaj, Music Education, MA, I</p> <p>Albulena Belegu, Management in Tourism, Hospitality, and Environment, BSc, III</p> <p>Erodita Morina, Food Technology, BSc, III</p> <p>Valentina Murati, Human Resource Management, MSc, I</p> <p>Albiona Kelmendi, Business Management, BSc, III, (Vice President of the Student Parliament)</p> <p>Almedina Hodzic, Business Management, BSc, (Bosnian language), III</p>
16:50 – 17:35	Meeting with graduates	<p>Nora Draga, Faculty of Management, Tourism, Hospitality, and Environment</p>



		<p>Rozafa Hajdari, Faculty of Business</p> <p>Qëndresa Kukaj, Faculty of Business</p> <p>Lindita Pajazitaj, Faculty of Law</p> <p>Granit Cenaj, Faculty of Law</p> <p>Dijesa Morina, Faculty of Agribusiness</p> <p>Kujtesa Begolli, Faculty of Arts</p> <p>Denis Spahija, Faculty of Business</p>
17:40 – 18:30	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders	<p>Zana Lipoveci, Elkos Group</p> <p>Fatmir Asllani, Municipality of Peja</p> <p>Irfete Pasha, Agency for Finance in Kosovo (AFK)</p> <p>Driton Idrizi, Devolli Corporation</p> <p>Blerim Baloku, BK-Partners, private executor</p> <p>Dukagjin Nishiqi, NGO Syri i Vizionit</p> <p>Shefqet Dervishaj, Tax Administration of Kosovo</p> <p>Kastriot Pehlivani, Peja Brewery</p>
18:30 – 18:40	Internal meeting – Expert Team and KAA	
18:40 – 18:50	Closing meeting with the management of the institution	



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

1.3. A brief overview of the institution under evaluation

The “Haxhi Zeka” University in Pejë (HZU) was established on November 14, 2011, with the teaching process starting since October 2012. First years of its existence the HZU’s was closely linked with the University of Pristina. At the moment, the HZU functions as fully independent public higher education institution which is structured into five faculties (Business; Management, tourism, hospitality and environment; Agribusiness; Law; and Arts). Currently it offers eight bachelor and six master programs realised in Albanian language, and two bachelor and one master programs realised in Bosnian language. According to the Self-evaluation report (SER), there are 3.807 students, 84 academic and 151 non-academic staff at the HZU now. Last years of the HZU’s operation are typical with a more intensive development in a number of areas.

2. INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION

2.1. Public mission and institutional objectives

The mission of the HZU was recently a subject of a public debate at the HZU in the context of review and analysis of strategic framework of the university. Current mission statement is formulated as follows: “The ‘Haxhi Zeka’ University is an academic institution that transfers knowledge in order to realize the potential of students towards the dynamic labour market, is dedicated to scientific research, artistic activity and internationalization, and serves the economic development of the Peja region and the country in general” (SER, p. 24). Such a formulation of the mission clearly reflects all three main pillars on which current higher education institutions are supposed to be built: teaching, research/development, and the so-called third role.

The vision of the HZU is in a positive correlation with the mission statement and it is formulated as follows: “The ‘Haxhi Zeka’ University is a leader with an integrated and contemporary study curriculum in harmony with market demands in the field of business, agribusiness, environment, tourism, arts, justice, application of information technology and other relevant fields” (SER, p. 25).



Values of professional integrity, inclusion and equality, freedom of expression and thought, competitiveness, and community services are then declared as the set of guiding values for the HZU's operation.

This can be concluded that the mission and vision statements, as well as values and responsibilities as declared by the HZU are well formulated and have a potential to serve as a solid basis for institutional development.

The HZU declares – and this was proven repeatedly by different stakeholders during the interviews – that the mission statement has been discussed within the academic community and also with different stakeholders beyond the institution. This was mainly done in the context of drafting the new strategic plan of the institution. The efforts to synchronize the mission statement and the strategic plan seem to be evident here and can be viewed as a positive move.

During the interviews it was proven that the mission statement is recognized by the members of the HZU community and beyond – this was ensured by a series of meetings with different groups of relevant stakeholders. The mission statement is also published at the webpage of the HZU.

The steps which the ZHU undertook in the effort to develop necessary link between the mission statement development and the strategic plan development resulted in the situation that the HZU's mission statement has a potential to serve as an effective guide for strategic planning, decision making and operations of the HZU.

The 2023-2026 Strategic Plan of the HZU points out eight objectives and these seem to be consistent with the mission statement and support its realisation. The links between the strategic objectives and the mission statement are clear and logical.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *None*



2.2. Strategic planning, governance and administration

The HZU has a new strategic plan for the period 2023-2026. It is partly built on the priorities of the previously existing strategic plan (drafted for the period 2020-2024), but it reflects in a significant extent changes that are currently going on in the HZU. The 2023-2026 Strategic Plan of the HZU contains eight main (strategic) objectives, and they are as follows: (1) Internal Management (Responsibility, efficiency, consistency, communication and cooperation); (2) Teaching and Learning (Advancements in the quality of teaching and learning); Quality Assurance (Consolidated system: continuous quality improvement within the university); Science, Research and Art (Enhancement of scientific research and artistic activity); Internationalization (International and inter-institutional cooperation); Students (Greater student motivation, satisfaction and activism); Entrepreneurship (Development of the functional relationships between the university and stakeholders); and Infrastructure (Creation of a modern student campus according to contemporary standards).

It seems, the current strategic plan is well thought over and it covers important areas/issues of the HZU's operation and development.

The SER as well as information collected from the respondents during the site visit interview brought the evidence that the strategic plan was drafted in a participatory manner, in consultations with the academic as well as administrative staff of the HZU, as well as with external actors (community, business, alumni) who are in productive relations with the HZU. The whole process is described in a sufficient detail in the SER (pp. 32-33).

There is a clear link between the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan of the HZU and the budgeting, both on annual, and on long-term basis. The budget for 2022 and the estimations for 2023-2025 were provided in the SER.

This can also be confirmed that the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan of the HZU takes a realistic account of the aspects of internal as well as external environment and it can (and probably will) positively contribute to the development of the university. They internal aspects mainly concern academic potential, administrative potential, student internships, international projects, student scholarships, status of the students, physical spaces for HZU's functioning. In most of these aspects the HZU intends to proceed further. In some cases, this has already been supported by recent developments (strengthening the body of academic staff, developing



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

some new physical spaces, for instance). The external aspects include budget, labour market, technology development, involvement of the HZU in the community, and more.

Monitoring of how the strategic plan is implemented is planned to be done on a three-month basis. Strategic Plan Implementation Committee, and the regulations to support this task are in place.

The internal structure of the HZU is developed in line with current legislative provisions, and this concerns decision-making system as well as internal rules of procedure and regulations, too. Organisational structure includes academic and organisational units. As for academic units, the division of power and responsibilities is regulated and is on the university level linked to the Steering Council (governing body), the Rector and his team (managerial, executive body), and the Senate (the highest academic body). Students are represented in the Senate. The faculty levels include Faculty Councils (decision-making bodies), and the Deans and their teams (executive bodies). Students are represented in the Faculty Councils. Organisational (administrative) units are led by the Secretary General and contain the administration offices and the library.

The responsibilities of the decision-making bodies seem to be clearly defined and roles and responsibilities for general policy and accountability, senior administration for management and academic decision-making structures are distinguished and pursued in practice.

Student representatives are members of decision-making bodies (Student Parliament, Student Council). Apart from the Senate and Faculty Councils, students are also represented in Study Committee, Ethics Committee, Quality Management and Assessment Council, and Quality Assurance and Assessment Committees in academic units. Student elections take place every two years. The mechanism of the election of student representatives is clear. The HZU in its SER admits problems with low activity of the students, though. Administration of the HZU is effective, as concerns organization, staffing levels (limits done by the Ministry), and qualifications, and they operate rigorously. Altogether there are 151 administrative staff members at the HZU, and there are also eight vacancies, according to the SER. The organizational chart is clear, and it is also available at the website of the HZU.



Responsibilities of administrative staff are clearly defined in the job descriptions, and they match the qualifications of the individuals. Low level of English language mastery is stated as one of the weaknesses in the SER.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Enhance possibilities of improving English language proficiency of the administrative staff, and wherever necessary also the academic staff.*
2. *Consider possibilities to make students more actively involved in the university life.*
3. *Consider possibilities to decentralize the budget to the level of faculties.*

2.3. Financial planning and management

The income of the HZU comes from several sources. Main financial allocations come from the state. Some financial resources come from the tuition fees and other payments done by students, payments for commercial services and other services, donations, gifts, contracts with external bodies. The SER confirms a low funding from own source revenues as a weak point of the institution. (SER, p. 55)

The HZU can, however, demonstrate that it has sufficient financial resources in the short term (one year) period. And it can also demonstrate that it has sufficient financial resources for medium term period to achieve its mission and objectives defined in the strategic plan.

According to the SER, the HZU has invested and budgeted in the period 2020-2022 9,448.782 Euro. As for recent years, there has been a constant increase in the HZU's budget. The 2023-2026 Strategic Plan of the HZU includes allocations (or their estimates) for all eight strategic objectives. Significant increases are visible for instance in relation to internationalization; rather modest allocations relate, on the other hand, to the research and art.



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

The supervision and management of the HZU's budgeting and accounting is done by a specialized office that reports on a regular basis to a senior administrator. The office for operational management of the HZU's budget are Procurement Directorate, Certifier, and Budget and Finance Directorate (they all report to National Audit Office). The Budget, Finance and Infrastructure Department is led by the Vice-rector for budget, finance and infrastructure.

The process of financial management is monitored in detail through the chief administrative officers and their office – they prepare timely reports. Chief Administrative Officer receives regularly financial reports and provides them with the Steering Council for review and approval. Two monitoring reports are carried out by the National Audit Office and Internal Audit Unit.

The HZU uses accounting systems that conform to professional accounting standards and that are following the law on financial reporting. The so-called Kosovo Financial Management Information System (KFMIS) is an integral financial management application in place, and it is used in the HZU, too.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Consider possibilities to increase external funding that would come not directly from the state.*
2. *Consider possibilities to invest more into research.*

2.4. Academic integrity, responsibility and public accountability

According to the KAA Standard 4.1. for institutional re/accreditation, the HZU has developed and approved following Codes of Ethics (SER, p. 56): Code of Ethics for academic staff; Code of Ethics for students; Code of Ethics for administrative staff; Code of Ethics and Integrity in Scientific Research. The institution with the codes of ethics and academic integrity protects the values of academic freedom, institutional autonomy and ethical integrity. Besides to the mentioned, the Codes' purpose is to achieve the highest standards in teaching and research conduct supporting cultural, social and economic development of the Republic of Kosovo.

13



The code of ethics requires that all internal stakeholders act consistently with high standards of ethical conduct and avoidance of plagiarism in research, teaching, performance evaluation, and in the conduct of administrative duties, and avoid conflicts of interest. The HZU implements two anti-plagiarism software tools for the students' final thesis check.

According to the statements collected during the site visit interviews, it is allowed to have 30 % to 40 % of plagiarized text in the thesis. This requires approval from the supervisors to examine what kind of plagiarism it is about. For example, when quoting texts, the software will alert that there is a plagiarized text.

The codes of ethics are obligatory for all academic staff, students and administrative staff regardless the form and type of their employment, contract, appointment including part-time and full-time staff and students.

The Code of ethics of the academic staff has been approved in June 2022. It defines the purpose; scope; professional rights; ethical principles; types of unacceptable behaviors; ethical principles and unacceptable behaviors for teaching and student related processes; ethical principles and unacceptable behaviors for research and knowledge conduct; ethical principles and unacceptable behaviors for maintaining the relationship with colleagues; ethical principles of the accountability towards the university and its public image in the society; responsibility to the university and its public image in the society – unacceptable behaviors; Ethics Council establishment and scope of work; denunciation of the violation of the Code of Ethics.

The Code of Ethics for students has been adopted in January 2023 at the HZU. It presents the HZU principles and values for students to follow professional and academic integrity; Inclusion and equality; freedom of expression and thought; competitiveness; community service. The Code of Ethics consists of the articles defining the purpose; field of action; duties and responsibilities of students; reporting alleged ethical violation; the procedure and time limits for the initiation of the disciplinary procedure; pronouncement and appropriateness of the disciplinary measure; review procedure and taking measures by the Ethical Council.

The Code of Ethics for administrative staff has been adopted in February 2020. Its intention is to establish rules of standard conduct for administrative personnel by implementation of the principles and values proscribed and to avoid unacceptable ways of work and/or behavior. The Code consists of articles proscribing the purpose; field of action; mission; using the "name" of university; the institution and staff rights and obligations; anti-discrimination policies; responsibility for the university assets; gifts and favors including reaction to offers; confidentiality of information; communication and information tools; official website of university; forms of communication, including to third parties; forms of written and electronic



communication; sexual harassment; conflict of interest and disciplinary measures including the disciplinary body.

The Codes of Ethics are adopted and incorporated in daily performance of the academic staff, student and administrative staff. Processes and mechanisms are clearly described in the Codes. The Ethics Committee has a clearly described role and a way of conduct when there is a report of the Code's violation.

The HZU presented minutes from the Ethics Committee meetings and transcripts of the interviews conducted with the persons involved in the case of the Codes violation, procedures undertaken and the final recommendation for the HZU.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Promote Codes of Ethics on workshop or similar event for students to make them more acquainted with these documents.*
- 2. Make sure that after the anti-plagiarism software check of the students' thesis, the type of text(s) reported as plagiarized is clarified, and there is no tolerance against the real plagiarism.*

2.5. Quality management

The HZU has formally adopted a quality assurance policy that is described in the SER as "Since its establishment, the Haxhi Zeka University in Peja, has provided for quality control and evaluation in its Statute, Articles 206-217, which stipulate that the university runs its own quality assurance system in order to maintain the quality and achieve the objectives of the university. According to the provisions of the statute, all actors within the university are subject to evaluation, and this evaluation includes the entire spectrum of the University and its services".

The Regulation on the Assurance System and Quality Assessment was revised in 2022. The SER mentions that according to this revision the system was more decentralized with responsibilities and activities more assigned to academic units. This regulation defines processes, mechanisms, instruments, reporting, data collection, timelines, quality cycle,



responsibilities of all individuals and units involved in these processes as is demanded by the KAA standards. The regulation is accessible to everyone on the university's website.

Other documents that support the quality assurance and assessment system are Guidelines on quality assurance; Regulations on study programs; Guidelines on study programs; Rules of procedures of the Quality Management and Assessment Council.

The evaluation panel is convinced that the system is well defined in the different regulations and documents. This can also be said, however, that:

- The system is rather a “control system” than a system that support enhancement of quality processes and quality culture.
- The system is rather centrally driven internally, because actions are mainly:
 - o defined by the Central Quality Assurance Commission in reaction on satisfaction measurements (surveys from students each semester for all courses)
 - o executed by the Central Quality Assurance Office
 - o with accountability of both structures to the Vice-Rector for Internal Cooperation and Quality Assurance.
 - o Deans can only do proposals, that have to be approved by the Assembly.
- Decentralization has taken place by appointing:
 - o Quality Coordinators and officers, assigned at each faculty to help realizing the centrally defined/approved actions.
- Students are represented in all structures at central as well as lower levels.
- The system is rather externally driven by the norms and criteria of the KAA.
- This is advisable to create a system that is enhancing quality and not only controlling quality and is embedded in daily practice. In this way a quality culture will be realised:
 - o Go further in the process of decentralisation by installing in each faculty a structure for innovation and quality assurance in education. Coordinators and Officers, supported by 1 FTE administrative support. Appoint for this position experts in innovation in teaching and learning.
 - o Use as steering mechanism on yearly base as for example a call for projects (as we do for research) of innovation in education (topic decided with the rector and vice rectors and the deans of all faculties) with well defined outcomes and with research on education.
 - o Involve students more in a broader way and not only in evaluation of teachers (only satisfaction level).
- This could help to operationalize an integrated data management system, easily accessible and smoothly running and giving evidence that progress is been made over time.



- Also, the surveys aligned with the goals of the strategic plan 2023-2026, make instruments, should be made more valid and reliable, and detection of “hindrances” in the processes as for example the moment to fill in the surveys by students (before exams!) would be helpful.
- Advisably, for every action the PDCA cycle should be closed, and results should be communicated with stakeholders. In this way the system could become more transparent and visible.

According to the SER the quality assurance system seeks that “quality assurance processes within the university are regular activities that contribute to the development of a quality culture within the university”. The evaluation panel has found evidence for this statement during the interviews with teachers, students, employers and graduates. The SER also states that the results of quality assurance processes serve as a guide for university decision-making and strategic planning. The evaluation panel has found no evidence for an integrated data management system, easily accessible and monitoring quality over time.

As already stated above, the SER admits that there is a lack of initiative of student organisation. Possibly the reason for this lack of initiative is the fact that there is no proper feedback about the results of the surveys students have filled in. They do not see what has been changed because of their remarks in the questionnaires.

The HZU aims at active involvement of the academic community in quality assurance processes, especially academic staff, students, industry and other actors. The evaluation panel has seen motivated staff, students, alumni and employers but not acting with healthy criticism (defining mistakes and weaknesses) to give suggestions for quality enhancement in a way they take responsibility to create an internal, specific and unique quality culture for Haxhi Zeka University.

SWOT analysis of the HZU admits reluctance to give real answers to internal evaluation questionnaires. The evaluation panel concludes that relations with alumni are very good via career office. Students and alumni have been involved in SWOT analyses of the SER, they had the opportunity to review the SER, they found the “new approach” of the leaders very good. Employers are also very positive about the vision and mission of the university and are very satisfied with the competences of graduates. 95% the same in comparison with other institutions, 5% better skilled. Involvement of students is focusing on staff evaluations (satisfaction)



As for the enhanced transparency and credibility of the quality assurance processes, the evaluation panel is not convinced that the internal quality assurance system has enough power at the moment to monitor over time, in an integrated easy accessible data management system and covering all processes. According to the lack of an integrated data management system it is not possible to make the cycle of planning, implementation, assessment and review fully transparent for the defined actions. An overview of performance for the institution as a whole and for the academic units and major functions is not yet available for the moment. As mentioned in the SWOT analysis “Failure to completely digitize the internal evaluation system”.

The 2023-2026 Strategic Plan foresees:

- Increased number of administrative staff within the central Quality Assurance Office
- Trainings for staff directly responsible for quality assurance
- Training for students, academic and administrative staff, for quality assurance processes
- Increased participation of students and internal and external parties in quality assurance processes
- Revision of internal documents, instruments and quality assurance structure (will start in March 2023)
- Design of new questionnaires and realization of evaluations of different fields
- Holding meetings/workshops with students, academic staff, administrative staff, for awareness/sensitivity on the importance of quality assurance, and for improvement
- Advancement of digital infrastructure for quality assurance procedures
- Exchange of professional experiences on quality assurance, with local, regional and international organizations/projects, local and regional universities, international universities

Financial resources are provided for building human capacity in leadership and management of the processes of quality assurance.

Structures are in place, central and decentral, responsibilities are well defined at central level. The possibilities for academic units to take more responsibilities and to work on enhancement of quality and quality culture are not clearly defined, especially not in relation to central structures. The evaluation panel missed financial input for projects in the frame of the strategic actions for enhancement of the system, with specific actions defined by and according to the needs of the departments. Therefore the evaluation panel is not convinced that the system is fully integrated into normal planning and processes.

Human resources are well developed central and decentral to operate effectively.



There is no culture of “good practices”.

According to the regulations all academic and administrative units of the institution have to participate in the processes of quality assurance.

The evaluation panel is aware of the fact that the new strategic plan starts in 2023 and that it is too soon to demonstrate already at this moment progress in the different defined actions. Especially evaluation of the system is not yet possible at output level, standards are set for inputs and processes.

Compliance level: substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Create a system that is enhancing quality and not only controlling quality and is embedded in daily practice. In this way a quality culture will be realised*
 - Go further in the process of decentralisation by installing in each faculty a structure for innovation and quality assurance in education. Coordinators and Officers, supported by one person for administrative support. Appoint for this position experts in innovation in teaching and learning.*
 - Use as steering mechanism on yearly base as for example a call for projects of innovation in education (topic decided with the rector and vice-rectors and the deans of all faculties) with well defined outcomes and with research on education.*
 - Involve students more in a broader way and not only in evaluation of teachers (only satisfaction level)*
- 2. Operationalise an integrated data management system, easily accessible and smoothly running and giving evidence that progress is been made over time.*
- 3. Optimize surveys, aligned with the goals of the strategic plan 2023-2026, make instruments, tools more valid and reliable.*
- 4. Detect “hindrances” in the processes as for example the moment to fill in the surveys by students (before exams).*
- 5. Make sure that for every action the PDCA cycle is closed and that results are communicated with stakeholders. In this way the system can become more transparent and visible.*



2.6. Learning and teaching

The institution has drafted and adopted policies and procedures applicable to all academic programs; the institution monitors the extent to which those policies and procedures are effectively implemented.

The Haxhi Zeka University in Peja has adopted policies and procedures that are based on the national legislation on higher education, and which are applicable to all academic programs.

According to the Law on Higher Education in the Republic of Kosovo, teaching in public universities and other HEIs is provided in accordance with the Bologna system and principles of the European Higher Education Area, and it is student-centered.

Therefore, the HZU Statute as the foundation policy defines, apart from general provision articles, the mission statement; rights and duties; university governance and university board roles and duties; the rector – process of election, role and responsibilities; the three vice-rectors – their process of election, roles and responsibilities; general secretary of the university - process of election, role and responsibilities; the University's Senate as the highest academic organ of the university – process of election, roles and responsibilities; the organizational structure of the university which consists of academic units and organizational units and their detailed descriptions; central university library; faculty establishment, roles – such as involvement in academic research and publishing and in education (bachelor, master and PhD studies – currently there are no PhD studies accredited in the HZU); faculty structure, council, dean and boards elections and appointments; Student Council establishment, role, elections, responsibilities; Students organizations, studies and study programs; study commission; admission to studies; determination of academic success; thesis for bachelor and master studies; doctoral studies; academic titles; recognition of studies; academic year; study language (Albanian and Bosnian); change of leadership studies; student status, rights and responsibilities; organizing student activities, research and scholarships; university employees and non-academic staff and their rights and responsibilities; university honors; management procedures, quality control and management, financial management; budgetary procedures; student fees; financial control, quality control and evaluation; quality assurance and assessment; reports and key performance; administration and data, administration procedures and offices; records and documentation keeping; university publishing activity and final provisions.

The HZU developed the strategic document (see previous chapters of this report).

There are regulation on bachelor studies, regulation on master studies at the HZU, which provide procedures for the monitoring, evaluation and review of the programs. The HZU monitors the extent to which those policies and procedures are effectively implemented – evidence provided as the meeting minutes.



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

There is an effective system for ensuring that all programs meet high standards of learning and teaching through initial approvals, regular changes and monitoring of performance at the HZU. The policies the HZU adopted proscribe the procedures for learning and teaching, improvements of the study programs and performance monitoring as an obligation, at least as a part of the re/accreditation procedures. The procedures are compliant to the KAA and ENQA procedures.

The institution monitors quality indicators, identifies and investigates differences in quality between programs, and takes action required to ensure that all programs meet required performance standards. The HZU has approved the Guidelines on determining the indicators for evaluating the performance of study programs as Key performance indicators obligatory to all faculties. Each faculty should collect at least the data as follows: student enrollment; student/teacher ratio; student attendance (participation) rate; exam completion rate/graduation rate; percentage (%) of international students; student drop-out rate, research grants; number of publications for academic staff and works with student.

The evaluation panel confirms that the standards 6.4. and 6.5 regarding the syllabi are met. The syllabi are based on the learning outcomes, and which are consistent to the National Qualifications Framework (for the syllabi the Evaluation Team examined, randomly).

There are effective processes in place to ensure the fitness and effectiveness of the assessment methods for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. The procedures are clearly described in the Regulation on Bachelor Studies, Regulation on Master Studies, Regulations on PhD Studies and Regulation of Study Programs at the HZU.

Teaching staff are appropriately qualified and experienced for their particular teaching responsibilities, they use teaching strategies suitable for the different kinds of learning outcomes and participate in activities to improve their teaching effectiveness.

According to the data of the Key performance indicators provided by each of the five faculties of HZU, teachers meet the standard. Yet, the attention should be paid to publishing a paper standard which obliges the academic staff to publish at least one paper per year (in average) in the last three years. In addition there is a need to publish papers with students and to participate on conferences, preferably international ones.

The learning methods and environments are student-centered and stimulate students' motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process. During the site visit and



the interviews the evaluation panel witnessed the efforts the HZU puts into student-centered approach od teaching, yet there is a need of constant improvement.

Teaching quality and the effectiveness of programs is evaluated through student assessments and graduate and employer surveys with evidence from these sources used as a basis for plans for improvement. The evaluation panel during the site visit and the interviews recognized that the HZU teaching staff improves continuously.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Consider possibilities to improve key performance indicators by collecting more data (quantitative in particular), such as exact number of published papers per academic year; exact number of supervisor-student published papers as co-authors; exact number of students' participation on conferences per year, exact number of projects in which students participated to a certain level and similar.*
- 2. Make sure all teaching staff participates in workshops and/or seminars dedicated to student-centered ways of teaching.*
- 3. Make sure all academic staff develop their own annual plan that contains measurable indicators for planned number of papers and participation on conferences. The HZU QA should monitor the implementation rate and put it into the key performance indicators.*
- 4. Make sure students have sufficient number of elective courses available. There seems to be a high threshold (30 students per course, except in arts programmes where the minimum is 10 students) as a minimum to open an elective course. The evaluation panel believes this number should be lower.*

2.7. Research

The SER defines the purpose of the Scientific Research and Artistic Activity Strategy as “to promote quality in the scientific research and artistic work of regular academic staff, to encourage career advancement, to reward the efforts and dedication of scientific and artistic researchers.” Meanwhile the university hopes that this strategy contributes also to increase the quality of teaching and social and economical development of the region. According to the

22



employers and graduates the strategy and the concrete plans are consistent with the economic and cultural development needs of the region. The plan is on the website of the university.

The Scientific Research and Artistic Activity Strategy has 4 main goals:

- Enhancement and development of scientific research and artistic activity.
- Enhancement of international cooperation in the field of scientific research and artistic activity.
- Create a stable infrastructural environment in the field of research.
- Financial support for scientific research and artistic work.

Furthermore the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan has been set the following expected outcomes:

Outcome 1: Improved infrastructure for scientific research and artistic creativity; **Outcome 2:** Fostering of scientific research and artistic activity; **Outcome 3:** Operationalization of the "Institute for Science and Arts" (ISA); **Outcome 4:** Increased numbers of scientific research and artistic creativity.

The main bodies responsible for the scientific research activities are:

- The Vice-rector for Teaching
- Student Affairs and Scientific Research
- The Scientific Research office
- The Scientific Research Group
- The Academic units (deans and Unit Council), the Institute for Science and Arts (Scientific Board of the ISA) and last but not least the Finance and Research Office.

The Scientific Research and Artistic Activity Strategy defines clear actions, responsibilities and indicators/benchmarks for each of the four goals. A plan for monitoring is not yet in place.

Students are involved in research activities as writing conceptual written research assignments, drafting seminar papers, writing reviews of literature topics. In this way the nexus between teaching and research is realized in the program.

Updating of the syllabi is foreseen. Each academic staff member has to put his/her research in his/her syllabus. The target is only 80% of syllabi.

There is a detailed financial plan with allocated money for each goal, defined per action. It is remarkable that no financing is foreseen for operationalization of the "Institute for Science and Arts" (ISA) and increased numbers of scientific research and artistic creativity.



The vision how to realize growth and quality in research and how to motivate and support academic staff is missing. The evaluation panel has not seen a strategic approach to support and encourage engagement of staff in research. Giving money for a publication is the “last step” in a long way of performing research activities. In the SWOT analysis it is mentioned under weaknesses insufficient publications by academic personnel in high quality and credible international scientific journals. Under threats the SWOT says “insufficient commitment of academic staff” to research work.

A stable “research environment” has to be created, with concrete support on the level of choices for topics, choices for methodology, support in gathering and processing of data. Individual initiatives are honoured but much gain can be made by creating teams for collaboration more and more interdisciplinary.

Research priorities are not determined. There is no analysis of which research/research groups have to be defined as high level performance research (high output) and essential to support for sustainability on long term. Which research has potential and has to be supported to grow? How to foster interdisciplinary research?

Concrete actions should be promoted, such as offering different work arrangements in favour of research such as sabbaticals, reducing teaching workload for those who want invest more in research. Possibilities to go abroad for longer periods to work and collaborate in research groups with high capacity. Giving money for international mobility for congresses and symposia to create international collaboration is good but not enough to create international collaborative networks.

The university gives support for articles, conferences, small projects. The SER gives an overview of these activities and the financing per academic unit. Growing trends are obvious, but for MTHE, for example, a downward trend in publications is seen since 2021! Is the quality assurance system able to detect causes and to take adequate measurements?

Furthermore, there is no evidence that each academic staff member has produced at least one scientific/applied research publication/product per year for the past three years. Although there is a regulation to “punish” staff members that are not actively involved in publications the evaluation panel has not found evidence that this regulation is used in cases where there is no production of articles during one to three years. Above that “punishment” is not a good strategy to enhance people to change behaviour.

The installation of the ISA is a first step in the good direction. Building capacity in an interdisciplinary way. Hopefully, this institute can develop good practices on a broader scale and is able to invest in expertise to become more competitive in the field of attracting money not only regional, national but especially international. Experts are needed to support academic staff in writing grants. It is remarkable that financing is decreased for 2023 because of lack of European funds. With the very ambitious strategic plan more financing has to be attracted.

Hopefully, the Scientific Research Office with the Coordinator and the scientific Research Group take on the responsibilities to support academic staff.



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

At the level of validation much gain has to be realised as for transfer of research findings into structural validation in society with spin-offs and patents. The potential opportunities for knowledge transfer and applied research links with regional businesses, to support innovation is well defined in the strategic plan and employers are very positive to collaborate. Job creation is a realistic perspective.

Employers and students were very positive about the strategic plan and especially the intention to strengthening the collaboration in the field of services to society between university and industry.

The university is creating win-win situations for research opportunities with direct outcomes of knowledge transfer and job creation for the graduates.

The evaluation panel wants to support the vision of the university to realize the nexus between teaching – research and social services as defined as “transformational learning”. In this way innovation project are embedded in the program and the outcome will benefit the community.

University has to support active participation of “all” students in the research processes. The involvement of students in research activities would give them the opportunity to learn research skills, organizational and networking skills. In transformational learning all students can take part in research projects, present research papers at conferences.

The Performance Planning and Evaluation Manual gives an overview of the mechanisms of evaluation of academic staff. Evaluation is done by the supervisor, through self evaluation and by students. Academic staff was positive about this evaluation system.

Expectations for teaching staff involvement in research activities is specified in the work contracts and performance is validated in the promotion criteria. Once the highest academic title has been achieved, there is no measure to be sure to continue research activities.

Awards as “Best work of the year” and “Researcher of the year” are good practices to support research activities.

Code of ethics in Scientific Research defines the ethical principles that guide the university community: Research quality assurance; Honesty in developing and communicating results with transparency, fairness and impartiality; Respects for colleagues; Care for cultural heritage and the environment; Social responsibility for research; Research activity is built on the principle of academic freedom.

According to the SER, Code of Ethics for Academic staff, Code of Ethics for students, Code of ethics for administrative staff, Regulations on Scientific Research and Artistic Activities, Scientific Research and Artistic Strategy and the research Development Plan are all dealing with principles, norms, standards and criteria of research ethics.



For the evaluation panel all those documents are very well elaborated but too much to read by all members of the university. Communication with all stakeholders about ethics has to be defined as priority.

Programme (SAP) for detection of plagiarism is used and functions well according to teachers and students.

Compliance level: substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Involve all students in research projects, obligatory.*
2. *Strengthen the nexus between teaching and research with tasks in different modalities (tutoring-led, research led, research-based, research- oriented).*
3. *Allocate more financial, logistic and human resources for achieving the proposed research objectives.*
4. *Encourage the ISA to create a safe research environment in interdisciplinary groups.*
5. *Improve further the collaboration with local/regional employers in order to stimulate transformative learning, to realize job creation and to augment knowledge transfer and applied research.*
6. *Increase support for researcher in writing applications for international grants.*
7. *Create opportunities as sabbaticals, reducing teaching time in favour of research time.*
8. *Create more possibilities for academics to go abroad for longer periods in strong research groups.*
9. *Organize trainings in scientific research skills and methods.*
10. *Stimulate students and young academic members to start PhD studies.*

2.8. Staff, employment processes and professional development

Rights and responsibilities, recruitment processes, supervision, performance evaluation, promotion, support processes and professional development are regulated by law No 04/L-037 on higher education, Law No 031-212 on Labor, Law No 06/L-114 on public officials and by internal acts as the Statute of the university, several regulations as on selection procedures, internal organization and systematization of jobs, job descriptions. A handbook for academic staff and for administrative staff has been drafted.

The recruitment processes ensure that staff have the specific areas of expertise, qualification and experience for the positions they occupy: the selection of academic staff is based on the



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

public competition according with the Statute of HZU, the Law of Higher Education and the Regulation on Evaluation Procedure for the Election and Advancement of Academic Personnel. The recruitment and status of administrative staff is regulated by the Law on Civil Service.

Conditions for appointment and promotion to all grades of academic staff are described in the University Statute. Conditions of employment for administrative staff are defined in the competition announcement in accordance with the Systematization of job positions.

Proposals of the academic units for the appointment, re-appointment or advancement of the academic staff are examined by the Studies Committee.

The senate of the university determines whether the candidate meets the conditions under articles 171,172,173,174,175 of the university Statute and the Regulations on selection procedures related to appointment, re-appointment and advancement of regular academic staff at the HZU.

Rules of Procedure of the Complaints Committee within the Senate have been defined in order to increase transparency, accountability and ensure equal treatment of all candidates presented in competition and to give them the right to contest the decisions of the Senate. Analogical rules are in place for external collaborators for lectures and exercises.

During the interviews with management and the staff the evidence was found that staff members adhere with the regulations and that there are no complaints regarding the rules and regulations as mentioned above.

The university ensures that candidates for employment are provided with full position descriptions reflecting their duties and responsibilities prior to employment through the Handbook for Academic Staff.

New teaching staff is given separate meetings to familiarize with the work system, with the applied teaching methodologies, with the main forms of assessment, with the profile of the students, as well as with the organization of the teaching process as a whole. The Handbook for Academic Staff facilitates this process.

New academic personnel is also informed about their rights and obligations and about digitization procedures applied within the university.



The new academic staff is obliged to attend the Centre of Excellence basic training on contemporary teaching methods, training on using the student management system and other digital equipment. The senior academic staff is not obliged to attend trainings. The evaluation panel advises to create a set of training especially for senior staff so that they also are trained in new teaching methodologies and research skills and methods.

Due to the recruitment of new academic staff, as well as the promotion of PhD assistants under the title of assistant professor, the ratio students/professors has been ameliorated. The SER gives an overview of it in the table 31, page 110.

The university still has to increase academic staff. The criterion for having 1 doctor of science for every 60 ECTS for each accredited program has recently been fulfilled.

As for FACULTY	Total students	Regular academic staff	Engaged acad. staff	Academic staff - Student Ratio
Faculty of Business	1459	31	10	36
Faculty of Law	1218	11	9	70
Faculty of MTHE	482	13	3	30
Faculty of Agribusiness	463	17	10	17
Faculty of Arts	185	12	9	9
Total	3807	84	41	30

The workload for academic staff is six hours (max. 12) of lectures per week for a professor and 10 hours (max. 20) of exercises per week for an assistant.

Generally, the staff employed in the institution (academic and administrative) hold the relevant qualifications (defined by Law and Regulations) so that they are able to effectively manage educational, scientific, research, creative activities and administrative processes.

Of 84 regular academic staff, 62 have the scientific degree of Doctor of Science, 10 are pursuing doctoral studies.



The manual on evaluating the performance of academic staff specifies the criteria and processes for performance evaluation.

First level: evaluation by supervisor (50%) checking the achievement of detailed objectives for each activity, giving a value according to the evaluation scale in the manual. Second level: the assessment of the learning process is done by the academic staff themselves through a self-evaluation form (30%) and Third level: by the student evaluation (20%). Low results three times leads to termination of the contract of the academic staff. Evaluation is done on a yearly basis.

Teachers are evaluated in several ways:

- Academic staff self-evaluation: once in a year, results are made public on the website.
- Student on teacher: questionnaire after each semester, results are made public on the website.
- Dean on teacher: once in a year, also made public on website.

SWOT analysis in the SER indicates as weaknesses that individual plans do not present the real needs of the staff, and also do not present a critical point of view. According to the teachers these evaluation formats are helpful to realise more self improvement and motivation to work on quality.

The improvement of academic staff performance is regulated by the Manual on Planning and evaluation of Academic Staff performance. Each academic staff member writes yearly an individual development plan and is supervised by the dean or supervisor. The focus of evaluation is on teaching process, scientific work, academic administration activities, social services.

There are five levels of achievement: level 5: 81-100%: excellent, level 4: 61-80%: very good, level 3: 41-60%: good, level 2: 21-41%: sufficient, level 1: 0-20%: insufficient.

As already indicated, when three years in a row level 1 is measured, academic staff is dismissed. For external collaborators only two semesters with level 1 gives no engagement anymore the next academic year.

A clear and transparent performance evaluation scale is steering this evaluation.



The Academic development plan is a detailed plan of measures and activities to improve the quality of the work of academic staff and to support the professional development of the academic staff. With the self-evaluation the academic member identifies his/her needs for improvement/development.

A list gives an overview of possible trainings to follow by teachers but not of the attenders of the trainings nor of the impact of the training on the performance of the teachers. No real programme is proposed, and no financial implications are mentioned. No portfolio system is in place at the moment, and no system is in place for checking for relevance of content of courses.

Plans for the development for administrative staff are drafted by the Human Resources Management Unit once in a year. These plans make an analysis of the professional development of existing staff as well as training needs of the administrative member, and the number of vacancies for which competition will be announced for each category.

2020: 11 trainings foreseen, not carried out because of Covid-19 crisis.

2021: 11 trainings by KIPA (Ministry of Internal Affairs)

2022: 12 training by KIPA, 10 online, 2 in presence

2020: 3 vacancies

2021: no vacancies

2022: 8 vacancies

There is no evidence that staff are given specific KPIs to reflect measurable expectations they have to meet.

A general point under the threats in the SWOT analysis points at inadequate mastery of English language by staff, which does not create real opportunities for opening international study programmes in English. This point was obvious during the interviews when evaluation panel mostly had to work with the interpreters.

Compliance level: substantially compliant



ET recommendations:

1. *Develop at an “aggregated” level a staff development plan for academic and administrative staff, define the trainings needed and make sure that trainings are followed not only by new staff but also by senior staff.*
2. *Make it possible to monitor progress.*
3. *Allocate enough financial resources for staff development.*
4. *Provide more trainings in English language performance and in research skills.*
5. *Allocate resources for the implementation of the development plan.*
6. *Ensure that the level of provision of teaching staff (the ratio of students per full time staff member) is adequate for the programs offered and is taking into account the nature of teaching requirements in different fields of study, especially arts.*
7. *Provide benchmarks and KPIs for all staff and the work completed by them in order to effectively manage the institution’s activities.*
8. *Stimulate young academic members to start their PhD studies.*
9. *Increase the number of qualified academic staff.*

2.9. Student administration and support services

Admissions requirements are clearly specified and appropriate for the institution and its programs; admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied.

The HZU has adopted the Regulation on Basic Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Art Studies adopted in April 2022 and the Regulation on the Master Studies.

The Regulation on Basic Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Arts Studies Article 5 defines that new enrollment of students is a competitive procedure and it is open to candidates who completed their high school education and secondary school leaving state exam (“matura”) as well as to candidates who have completed four-year secondary school program without state such an exam (they need an approval by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology).

According to the SER (p.128), there are two systems of evaluation of the candidates applying to the study program:

a) For students who have a high school diploma and have not taken the secondary school leaving exam (“matura”): The maximum number of points according to the following criteria is 100 points, divided as follows:

- Success in high school up to 30 points;



- Success in the entrance exam up to 70 points.
- b) For students who have a high school diploma and have successfully passed the “matura” exam: The maximum number of points according to the following criteria is 100 points, divided as follows:
- Success in high school up to 30 points;
 - Matura success up to 30 points;
 - Success in the entrance exam up to 40 points.

The evaluation panel confirms that the HZU meets this standard entirely.

Complete information about the institution, including the range of programs and courses, program requirements, services, scholarship opportunities, tuition and administrative fees and other relevant information are made publicly available prior to application for admission.

The SER (p.129) states that information about study programs is provided to students and is available on the website of each academic unit for each study program. The Guide for new students provides new students with details on: study programs; enrollment conditions; scholarship criteria; student rights; student payments and similar.

The evaluation panel checked the website of the HZU (<https://sems.unhz.eu/Home/LoadData>) and confirms that there are evidences about publication call for enrollment available.

A comprehensive orientation program is organized for starting students to ensure thorough understanding of the range of services and facilities available to them, policies and procedures at the institution and of their rights and responsibilities.

The SER (p. 129) states that “The HZU organizes the welcome week for new students, through which they are offered a detailed program in order for them to be informed about and understand the services and policies of the institution, where special emphasis is placed on informing them about their rights and obligations while they are HZU students.”

The evaluation panel confirms this statement by information provided by participants during the interviews.

A range of scholarships and financial support are available to students in order to both stimulate and reward performance, as well as to socially support students with disadvantaged backgrounds. These two categories and their criteria are operated separately; these scholarships and financial support can be cumulated.

The HZU has adopted the Regulation for Scholarship Allocation of the HZU in Peja which defines criteria, conditions and procedures for university scholarship awards for undergraduate students (Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Arts) and postgraduate (Master of Science and Master of Arts) at the HZU. According to the Regulation, there are several types of financial support mechanisms for students, the most frequent is 10% scholarship fee decrease. There is

32



a possibility of total exemption of the student fee for students in difficult situations as stated in the Regulation.

The table 33 (SER, p. 130) provides number of students who received scholarship during the past three years: year 2019/2020 number of students is 72; year 2020/2021 number of students is 43; year 2021/2022 number of students is 80.

There are effective processes in place to collect and analyze reliable data referring to the profile of the student population, student progression, success and drop-out rates, students' satisfaction with their programs, learning resources and student support available, career paths of graduates. The statistical data is used for quality assurance purposes, as well as in supporting decision making.

The Student Affair Office and administration collect data and keep all records at the HZU.

The SER (p. 130) provides number of graduated students which is less than 5% in each academic year. The dropout rate are below 3%.

A student handbook is made widely available within the institution, covering all information required for all phases of the student „life cycle” – admission, progression, recognition and certification – including all concerning regulations, the rights and responsibilities of students, actions to be taken for breaches of discipline, responsibilities of relevant officers and committees, and penalties that may be imposed.

The HZU designed and distributed the guide for students available at the website.

Student appeal procedure is specified in regulations, published and made widely known within the institution. The regulations make clear the grounds on which academic appeals may be based, the criteria for decisions, and the remedies available. The appeals procedures guarantee impartial consideration by persons or committees independent of the parties involved.

The HZU Statute defines students' rights among which are the procedure to appeal in case there is a need to it. The evaluation panel confirmed during the interviews that this procedure is known to the students and the teaching and administrative staff.

Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to deal with academic misconduct, including plagiarism and other forms of cheating.

The Codes of Ethics for Academic staff, Code of Ethics for students and Code of Ethics, Regulation on disciplinary measures and procedures for students of the HZU as well as anti-plagiarism systems and Regulations for Bachelor and Master studies, all of these documents



include measures against misconduct, plagiarism, cheating and similar. The evaluation team confirmed the mechanism in work by the meeting minutes of the Ethic Council.

The range of services provided, and the resources devoted to students reflect all requirements of the student population. Formal plans are developed for the provision and improvement of student services; the implementation and effectiveness of those plans is being monitored on a regular basis. There is a supporting system for students' needs at HZU.

The effectiveness and relevance of student services is regularly monitored through processes that include satisfaction surveys. Services are modified in response to evaluation and feedback. There is evidence of semestral and annual evaluations performed by students and the courses improvement accordingly.

Academic counselling, career planning and employment advice as well as personal or psychological counselling services are made available with easy access for students from any part of the institution. There is evidence of supporting services to students available on the HZU's website.

Opportunities are provided through appropriate facilities and organizational arrangements for extracurricular activities for students. Arrangements are made to organize and encourage student participation in extracurricular activities. There is the evidence collected during the site visit supporting this standard to a certain extent. It should be more developed.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *HZU should encourage student participation in extracurricular activities.*

2.10. Learning resources and facilities

In the SER is mentioned that the budget is too small to respond to the demands regarding the spaces and other services of the university.



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

Books, journals, scientific journals, statistical reports, sheet music and other materials are available in Albanian and English and also in German and Serbian. Library has two locations, one in the Faculty of Business and one in the Faculty of Law. More than 3615 titles are available. Access to the relevant databases (14 platforms, in cooperation of the National library of Kosovo and the Association of Electronic Libraries) is provided and rooms with computers are in place.

The SWOT analysis defines several weaknesses, for instance insufficient number of physical literature in the library, lack of recreational spaces for students for the organization of sport events, old facilities, insufficient budget to cover HZU needs for capital investments, lack of dormitories, lack of professional staff (IT, construction office).

The ESMS provides also access to lectures, materials prepared by professors. Syllabi are on the official website. Access to databases is possible via the computers rooms in the two locations of the library: eight computers in Faculty of Business and 16 in Faculty of Law.

According to the evaluation panel, there are not enough computers. Students are not complaining but working with databases is not fully implemented. Students don't seem to like working with databases. Library is open from 8.00 till 16.00, on Saturday and Sunday from 8.00 to 16.00. The regulation on the operation of the central library defines in article 12 the "borrowing rules" and in article 13 the borrowing deadlines.

During site visit the evaluation panel has seen classrooms, labs, library, e-rooms, student organization office, student services, buffet, administration, amphitheaters, concert hall, courtroom etc. All rooms were easily accessible, clean, and well maintained. (company for cleaning, company for physical security and company for maintenance of heating, water system and air conditioning in the facilities).

The new building for the Faculty of Arts meets the needs of students and professors with 5000 m². Nearly 6 hectares of outdoor spaces can be used by students with a very beautiful panorama on the mountains.

Renovation of the facilities of the Faculty of Business and MTHE was possible in 2021 with financing of the Kosovo Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy project financed by the World Bank.

The legal clinic was established with funding of Erasmus+ program of the EU.



The renovations of the facilities for the Faculty of Law will start in 2023.

In the Faculty of MTHE, a laboratory was established with financing of the Swiss office for a project about integrated water resources management.

With regard to the results of an evaluation with students and staff about the satisfaction with the infrastructures, concrete measures have been taken to implement improvements.

According to the SER, many measures have been taken to facilitate access for people with disabilities as for example building ramps at the entrances of the facilities. Special facilities on the ground floors for connection for IT are in place. Student services are available on ground floors.

In the Faculty of Law special toilets for people with disabilities are located.

Evaluation panel has seen many irregularities in the floors (with small differences in height, easy to fall when visibility is not well) and some facilities without building ramps.

Complete inventories are maintained of equipment.

All teaching rooms are equipped with information technology (147 PCs for staff, 136 PCs for students), 35 projectors, 35 printers, 12 multifunction printers, 23 photocopiers, WIFI coverage in all areas of the university is in place.

IT Office operates within the central administration. Officers provide technical and operational support to students and staff using information and communication technology.

IT office provide trainings for students and staff to use the information systems.

Compliance level: fully compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Increase the allocation of finances.*
- 2. Increase the number of library physical resources in both Albanian and English Language.*



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

3. *Try to develop a modern e-library with sufficient digital resources.*
4. *Provide more areas for recreational spaces, sports facilities, medical services and accommodation for students.*

2.11. Institutional cooperation

The 2023-2026 Strategic Plan of the HZU contains as one of the eight strategic objectives Internationalization with five outcomes and clearly stated sets of outcome indicators. In the budget part the financial allocations related to it indicate there is supposed to be an increase/growth. Also, the 2022-2024 HZU Strategic Plan dealt with internationalization in a separate chapter in a sufficient detail. The HZU was involved in the project QUADIC (financed by the EU) and the Strategy for International Cooperation and Project Management was drafted within this initiative. This can be said the HZU has sufficient instruments to take institutional decisions and use resources for enhancement of internationalization.

Vice-Rector for International Cooperation and Quality Improvement is the top leader of the HZU who is responsible for all internationalization processes at the institution. Vice-Rector's Office is supported in this agenda by the International Cooperation Office of the HZU.

This can be confirmed the HZU has various agreements and memoranda of understanding with partners and relevant international organization, and partners' responsibilities seem to be clearly defined in these agreements. The total of 42 higher education institutions and other organizations are a part of this portfolio. This was evidenced that from 2020 to 2022, 23 new



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

agreements were signed. A closer look indicates, however, that some of these agreements are not fully used yet.

It can be appreciated that the HZU is actively involved in different international projects, mainly as the partner. There are examples of these projects, such as Western Balkan Urban Agriculture Initiative, MSc in Sustainable Food Production Systems, Quality Development of International Cooperation and Project Management, Enhancing Research Culture in Higher Education in Kosovo, and more.

Also, the HZU is involved in organization of international visibility and information events. A good example of this is the Summer University organized by the HZU in 2022 with participants from seven countries. This event is also a good example of cooperation of the HZU with municipality and business community (the evaluation panel was informed that 80% of the expenses were covered by partner organizations). Apart from this, the HZU organized several international conferences and other events which supported international visibility of the institution.

The HZU is encouraging its staff and students to participate at international mobilities and other international events – partly also providing its own funding for this. There is a record of mobilities realized by students and the staff.

It seems that the HZU includes international activities of its academic staff into the review and promotion criteria of the staff performance (this is embedded in the Academic Staff Performance Evaluation Manual, for instance).

The HZU uses some mechanisms to promote cooperation with higher education institutions and international organizations/networks.

The HZU seems to be a visible body being involved in local, regional as well as national activities that go beyond the HEIs' scope. Also, the HZU encourages its staff to be involved in forums where community issues and plans related to community development are discussed. One of the examples is involvement of some HZU's staff in municipal strategic planning in the region, as it was confirmed during the interviews, too.



The HZU has established relations with local industries and employers, and this seems to be beneficial for the program development as well as for the development of other activities of the institution. Students seem to benefit in this case by having a chance to get involved in internships and other study-work related possibilities. On the other hand, there was the evidence that the HZU makes relevant offers to business, employers and the community, too – short term courses, conferences and more.

Local employers and representatives of business community are involved in the Advisory Board, which is the platform cooperating with the HZU, and also providing the institution with the feedback and some other important information to consider when developing the HZU.

Also, the HZU seems to cooperate with alumni who have their own organization for about two years now. Alumni were confirming lively contacts with the HZU, in particular its Career Office and the teaching staff. They seem to be informed about latest developments at the HZU.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Consider possibilities to encourage students to get more involved in international activities.*
2. *Make sure all the international agreements are effectively used.*

OVERALL EVALUATION AND JUDGEMENTS OF THE EVALUATION PANEL

Standard 1	Fully compliant
Standard 2	Fully compliant
Standard 3	Fully compliant
Standard 4	Fully compliant
Standard 5	Substantially compliant
Standard 6	Substantially compliant



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

Standard 7	Substantially compliant
Standard 8	Substantially compliant
Standard 9	Fully compliant
Standard 10	Fully compliant
Standard 11	Fully compliant

In conclusion, the evaluation panel considers that:

The “Haxhi Zeka” University in “Pejë is fully compliant with the standards included in the KAA Accreditation Manual and, therefore, and recommends *accrediting it* for a duration of 5 years.



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

Expert Team

Chair

Milan Pol

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)

Member

Joke Denekens

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)

Member

Jadranka Pelikan

5 April 2023

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)

Member
