UBT College

ENERGY AND MANAGEMENT ENGINEERING, BACHELOR PROFESSIONAL (level 5)

Re-accreditation

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

June 13, 2023, Prishtina / Online Malmö

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: 13 June 2023

Expert Team (ET) members:

- *Dr Javier Farfan*
- *Lali Giorgidze, Student expert*

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- *Ilirjane Ademaj, KAA Officer*
- *Shkelzen Gerxhaliu, KAA Officer*
- *Arianit Krasniqi, KAA Officer*

Sources of information for the Report:

- *Self-evaluation report "Energy and Management Engineering, Bachelor Professional, level 5, 120 ECTS (Re-accreditation)"*
- *KAA Accreditation Manual (February 2021)*
- *KAA Accreditation report template*
- *KAA Manual for External Reviewers*
- *Syllabi*
- *Staff CVs*
- *Annexes*
- *Filled template for lab specifications and capacity (attached), Filled template for lab specifications and capacity (attached), Sample of student feedback questionnaire (both programmes), if possible in English or in Word.doc file so that we can use Word.doc translation function, Sample of graduate feedback questionnaire (Both programmes), if possible in English or in Word.doc file so that we can use Word.doc translation function, Sample of external stakeholder questionnaire (both programmes) if possible in English or in Word.doc file so that we can use Word.doc translation function, Sample of student feedback report (both programmes) if possible in English, Sample of internal staff evaluation report (Both programmes) if possible in English, Report(s) produced based on the feedback from alumni (for both programmes), List of KPIs for student evaluation (both*

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programmes), List of KPIs for staff evaluation (both programmes), List of KPIs for graduates (both programmes), Programme completion rates for the last 5 years (for both programmes, if applicable) – number of students enrolled and number of students completing studies from each cohort, Link of the website where policies and procedures for conducting re-assessment of the programmes are published, Report on the overall quality of the program prepared within the institution, if possible in English or in Word.doc file so that we can use Word.doc translation function for translation, Links to training programmes/platforms for teaching skills for academic staff (for both programmes) or any evidence of this being conducted, Criteria according to which students are assessed during internship (for both programmes), Link of the web-page where applicants can see information about the programmes and admission, Evidence of access to scientific portals and research (science direct, scopus, etc.), Description of 2-3 assignments (indicating titles of courses) and the examples of these assignments completed by students, Remade syllabi for both programmes (refer to the list of corrections below), Sample of completed thesis

Criteria used for institutional and program evaluations

- *Standards & performance indicators for external evaluation according to the Accreditation Manual of KAA, February 2021, Self Evaluation Report, courses syllabi, site visit, staff CVs, lab capacity template and others.*

1.2. Site visit schedule

Site Visit Programme

Time	Meeting	Participants
09:00 – 09:55	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated (for both programs)	
10.00 – 11.00	Meeting with the heads of the study programme	
	~~Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff (for both programs)~~	Next day
11:00 – 12:00	Lunch break	
	~~Visiting tour of the facilities and infrastructure (for both programs)~~	Next day
12:00 – 12:45	Meeting with teaching staff	

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12:50 – 13:35	Meeting with students	
13:40 – 14:25	Meeting with graduates	
14:30 – 15:15	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders	
15:15 – 15:25	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts	
15:25 – 15:35	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program	

1.3. A brief overview of the institution under evaluation

UBT College (UBTC) is portrayed as the largest private education institution in Kosovo. Founded in 2001, the institution received license as an education provider in 2004 and has since then received other certifications. UBTC currently branches into four main areas of education:

1. ICT, mathematics and natural sciences
2. Engineering, manufacturing and construction
3. Social sciences
4. Medical sciences.

The program under evaluation in the current report belongs to the second area, Engineering, manufacturing and construction. Currently, according to their webpage, UBTC is host to 25 accredited study programs, hosting 17000 students with 500 employees and 300 visiting staff, for a ratio of 21.3-34 students per staff considering all staff or permanent employees only respectively. The webpage also mentions 250 scholars, which brings the students to scholar ratio of 1 to 68.

UBTC presents itself as a demand-driven institution, aiming to provide education and training to cover for the areas under high demand in Kosovo, one of these areas is of course the energy sector. For Kosovo, a country of almost 1.9 million people and almost 11 thousand square kilometres, currently the electricity production is mostly sourced from local coal reserves. As the world transitions towards carbon neutrality, availability of trained professionals to facilitate the transformation of Kosovo's power system and its integration to Europe's energy economy is an utmost important mission. Therefore, the realization of UBTC's objectives are vital to the development of the energy sector of Kosovo.

Nevertheless, having the right purpose and mission is not enough. Hence, we conduct this review to guarantee that accreditation is given only if the quality of the program meets the standards set by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA), while taking into account the

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demands and needs of the everchanging Kosovar energy sector and society, while protecting the environment.

2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

The institutional evaluation consists of 7 subheadings through which the administration, organisation and management of the institution, as well as teaching and research are assessed.

2.1. Mission, Objectives and Administration

Concerning the **Standard 1.1.** "The study program mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution." The mission of UBTC appears clear and concise in their webpage as: "UBT offers a dynamic and innovative 21 century academic environment. UBT provides a supportive and challenging opportunity for the students, faculty and staff in participatory and self-governance setting. Building on a tradition of teamwork between Students, faculty, staff and administrators, UBT is committed to enhance its participation as an active member of community by providing learning opportunities driven by teaching and research excellence, intellectual interaction and creativity. UBT is a preeminent center of intellectual and cultural activity in Kosovo, improving the region's quality of life through the skills, knowledge, experience and engagement of its faculty, staff, students and alumni.".

In contrast, the study program's mission as stated in pages 56 and 57 of the SER is significantly lengthier and more disperse. The program's mission is divided into two paragraphs than rather than complementing each other appear to be two iterations of the same mission statement. Both mission statements naturally focus and provide basis for the economic, social and industrial development of Kosovo as well as the professional development of the students.

In principle both mission statements align. However, an effort could be made to redefine the mission statement of the program to be made clearer and more concise. In general, the SER is perceived as unnecessarily large. For future programmes it would be recommended to present clearer and more concise information with focus on what is strictly relevant to the evaluation.

As abovementioned, an effort could be made to have the mission statement for the program composed in a clearer and more concise manner. That being said, in the current state of the mission statements for both the program and UBTC there are no aspects that are directly mutually exclusive. For future reference, it would be wise to have both the mission statements of the university and the program in the SER, as it facilitates the comparison and evaluation of the status of compliance.

Similarly, it is possible that having the mission statement of UBTC in the SER could facilitate the composition of a mission statement for the program that is in clear harmony with the

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institution's statement. Also, it could provide a solid reference for the style, length and target of the mission statement for the program.

Regarding the **Standard 1.2.** "Relevant academic and professional advice is considered when defining the intended learning outcomes which are consistent with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area." one should consider the declared expected learning outcomes, presented in the SER as following:

On successful completion of the program students will have:

- An ability to apply knowledge of mathematics, science, and engineering
- An ability to design and conduct experiments, as well as to analyze and interpret data
- An ability to design a system, component, or process to meet desired needs within realistic constraints such as economic, environmental, social, political, ethical, manufacturability, and sustainability
- An ability to function on multi-disciplinary teams
- An ability to identify, formulate, and solve problems regarding technicians in the field of energy
- An understanding of professional and ethical responsibility
- An ability to communicate effectively
- An ability to communicate effectively with a range of audiences
- An ability to recognize ethical and professional responsibilities in engineering situations and make informed judgments, which must consider the impact of engineering solutions in global, economic, environmental, and societal contexts
- The broad education necessary to understand the impact of engineering solutions as technicians in the field of energy in a global, economic, environmental, and societal context
- An ability to engage in independent learning and recognize the need for continual professional development
- A knowledge of contemporary issues
- An ability to use the techniques, skills, and modern engineering as technicians in the field of energy tools necessary for engineering practice
- In-depth understanding of specialist bodies of knowledge within the engineering discipline as technicians in the field of energy
- Discernment of knowledge development and research directions within the engineering discipline as technicians in the field of energy
- Knowledge of contextual factors impacting the engineering discipline as technicians in the field of energy
- Understanding of the scope, principles, norms, accountabilities and bounds of contemporary engineering practice in the specific discipline
- Application of established engineering methods to complex engineering problem solving
- Application of systematic engineering synthesis and design processes
- Application of systematic approaches to the conduct and management of engineering projects
- Ethical conduct and professional accountability

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- Effective oral and/or written communication in professional and lay domains
- Creative, innovative and pro-active demeanour
- Professional use and management of information
- Orderly management of self and professional conduct
- Effective team membership and team leadership

It can be seen that the list of learning outcomes is very extensive, but in some instances somewhat vague or unfitting. For example, the learning outcome "In-depth understanding of specialist bodies of knowledge within the engineering discipline as technicians in the field of energy" could be considered unfitting, as it might not be appropriate for a level 5 technical program, as it could not reasonably be expected for a technician with an education degree focusing on field work, to then have "in-depth" understanding of specialist-level knowledge. At least certainly not just by completing the program.

An example of a vague learning outcomes is "A knowledge of contemporary issues". Such a statement can mean everything and nothing at the same time. Contemporary issues can mean the war in Ukraine, climate change, the political struggle in the USA, etc. thus this should be rephrased to refer at the specific contemporary issue it targets, or otherwise be removed. Also, repetition of learning outcomes such as "An ability to communicate effectively" directly followed by "An ability to communicate effectively with a range of audiences", since both sentences effectively mean the same.

UBTC, however, appears to take advice from industry and professionals when developing the learning outcomes, as it was mentioned during the audit visit. That being said, the learning outcomes do require a significant amount of refinement.

On **Standard 1.3.** "The study program has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept.", the program appears to have a solid basis in respect to its didactic approach. Based on the audit visit, for a technical level 5 program it has a strong emphasis in hands-on experience and a significant share of lab activities.

Although there is not much of a research concept, but at this level of studies research is not necessarily too relevant. Instead, the program accurately focuses on the technical preparation of field workers for the energy sector, which is suitable for a technician degree.

On **Standard 1.4.** "There are formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues. These are made publicly available to all staff and students.", during the audit visit it was mentioned that there is a robust feedback system. Said feedback system operates at different levels, obtaining feedback from students, courses and teachers. Also, during the audit visit it was mentioned that in the decision-making board meetings, representatives from students and teachers partake in the process.

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From the SER report, again a huge improvement could be made. The section on this particular standard presents completely irrelevant and unrelated information for three whole pages. The only part that truly addresses is in page 67, where the stakeholders are defined, and the way evaluations take place and how often is presented.

On **Standard 1.5.** "All staff and students comply with the internal regulations relating to ethical conduct in research, teaching, assessment in all academic and administrative activities.", during the audit visit the topic of ethics was discussed. The presence of channels for anonymous complaints was mentioned to exist, and from the students side, it appears that steps were taking place to address the presence of plagiarism, both in the classic and novel ways, e.g. artificially generated text.

Furthermore, as specified in the SER, UBTC has appointed an institution-wide ethics committee, as well as faculty ethics sub-committees, which in turn are in charge of evaluating and dealing with potential ethics violations.

Finally, on **Standard 1.6.** "All policies, regulations, terms of reference and statements of responsibility relating to the management and delivery of the program are reviewed at least once every two years and amended as required in the light of changing circumstances.", during the audit visit it appeared that different decision-making bodies were having regular meetings although not at formally defined periodicity.

Instead, it gave the impression that many of these meetings happened on a need-to basis, which then resulted in significantly more often reviews of the policies, regulations, etc. In the SER, the section on this standard goes in length to elaborate about the different bodies in charge of the aforementioned policies, regulations, etc. However, the only mention of the periodicity of the meetings comes in the second paragraph, first stating that "The Faculty Council is the principal academic body of the Faculty", followed by "The Council meets at least twice per semester.". The wording is consistent with the perception obtained during the audit visit, establishing a minimum periodicity but without clearly defining it in a concise manner, such as "the first Friday of every second month" or something similar. Regardless, it is apparent that the reviews happen at a higher frequency than the minimum required.

Standard	**Compliance based on the review made by the student expert**	
	Yes	**No**

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Standard 1.1. The study program mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution.	**X**	
Standard 1.2. Relevant academic and professional advice is considered when defining the intended learning outcomes which are consistent with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.		**X**
Standard 1.3. The study program has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept.	**X**	
Standard 1.4. There are formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues. These are made publicly available to all staff and students.	**X**	
Standard 1.5. All staff and students comply with the internal regulations relating to ethical conduct in research, teaching, assessment in all academic and administrative activities.	**X**	
Standard 1.6. All policies, regulations, terms of reference and statements of responsibility relating to the management and delivery of the program are reviewed at least once every two years and amended as required in the light of changing circumstances.	**X**	

Compliance level: 83% Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. The mission statement, especially for the faculty, should be significantly refined. At its current form is too lengthy (covering almost a whole page) and too vague. There are no rules about the length or scope of the mission statement, and thus is still in compliance with the requirements. However, the length and vagueness of the statement make it quite difficult to evaluate in regards to the compatibility with the institution's mission statement. The lengthiness and vagueness of the statement could give grounds for other reviewer to find noticeable discrepancies and evaluate based only on those.
2. The list of learning outcomes is the part that requires the most work. It contains repetitions of meaning, extremely vague statements and statements that cannot functionally refer to a level 5 technical degree program. In its current form, it appears as though had been the unfiltered notes of a brainstorming session.
3. Several of these sections are too lengthy and tend to deviate from the intended topic. Whether if that is a purposeful feature or the result of disorganized composition of the text, it makes it really difficult to extract the relevant information from the SER. Based on previous experience, the SER as a whole is around twice the length of other reports, and sometimes less is more.
4. Many of the things that were made clear during the audit visit are somehow not clear in the SER, which creates problems for the evaluation. Examples of this in the current

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section include the frequency of meetings for policy evaluation, the availability of those policies to teaching personnel and students, etc.

2.2. Quality Management

Standard 2.1. All staff participates in self-evaluation and cooperate in reporting and improvement processes within their area of responsibility.

It is commendable that UBT College holds ISO 9001 Certificate - providing international standard for quality management systems, and a Certificate from EFQM that is a framework that UBT uses to assess and improve its overall performance and drive organizational excellence. Both certifications promote the importance of self-evaluation and employee involvement, but they cannot be a sole guarantee foe universal staff members' participation in self-evaluation. The extent to which staff members will participate in self-evaluation depends on various factors - including the regulatory framework, organization's culture, leadership practices, etc. The ET found that the Quality Manual and Quality Regulation of UBT College emphasize the importance of staff participation in quality assurance as a means to enhance the quality of their work and foster continuous improvement. Quality Manual and Quality Regulation of UBT College form a regulatory framework for gathering feedback from staff through self-evaluation and emphasize their participation in improvement processes within their area of responsibility.

Despite this emphasis on participation of staff in self-evaluation, however, the SER and interviews with staff provided insufficient evidence to convincingly demonstrate active participation of staff in the self-evaluation process. There were the following evidences for that. Firstly, the SWOT analysis of the SER mentioned involvement of staff in the process of self-evaluation but the SER itself lacked reflection of staff on past performance and goal-setting for future improvement in relation to the programme, as well as indications that all staff members have critically analyzed their performance, identified strengths and areas for growth. Secondly, the ET has been provided with the Annual Report of 2020-2021 which summarizes feedback from staff on general conditions of work at UBT college; compiling a report based on feedback of staff is an example of a practice for inclusion of feedback (and possibly of self-reflection) from staff, but this report did not describe participation of staff in self-evaluation specifically for the programme under review. Thirdly, in the feedback report that has been provided by the faculty as the additional evidence (#5) it was noted that only 53.68% of professors valued interactions with colleagues. The reason for this outcome could be the overall organizational culture, leadership style etc. Overall, these consequences led the ET to conclude that there is a gap between the regulatory expectations and actual implementation and/or documentation of staff engagement in self-evaluation processes.

Participation and active engagement of staff in self-evaluation process and supporting overall culture of participation of staff in self-evaluation could be achieved by communicating importance of active participation of staff, as well as the benefits of self-reflection and goal-setting. It would also be helpful to set clear guidelines and expectations

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regarding participation of staff in self-evaluation processes, and provide trainings or workshops for staff members on effective self-evaluation techniques, including gathering feedback and setting meaningful goals. Participation of staff in self-evaluation processes and consequently in decision-making can also be done by fostering supportive and inclusive culture that encourages and values self-evaluation among staff and promotes open dialogue.

Standard 2.2. *Evaluation and planning processes for improvement are integrated into normalplanning processes*.

Evaluation activities, such as data collection and analysis are explicitly included as part of UBT Quality Regulation and Quality Manual. These regulations also highlight consideration of needs and expectations of internal and external stakeholders in planning process. The faculty has also developed Annual Development plan for the Level 5 program under the review. But the integration of evaluation and planning for improvement into normal planning processes appears to be inadequate based on the SER and assessment of the annual development plan. The SER does not provide evidence on how planning processes for the programme have been informed by collected data, and there is no analysis of needs, gaps, and areas for improvement for the programme has been identified and were fed into the development strategies and action plans. The UBT College has developed Annual Development plan for Energy Engineering Level 5, BA and MA programmes but the limitations of this plan include incomplete alignment with the timeline of the programme (the plan covers 2022-2023 years, but some activities e.g. compilation of syllabi for 2021-2022 academic year) are planned for 2022-2023. The plan involves information on responsible units for completing planned activities but in relation to the areas of teaching and learning specific objectives are absent. Further lack of key performance indicators or target benchmarks in this plan create ambiguity regarding the planning processes of the programme. The ET requested to receive information on KPIs of the programme as additional evidence but the KPIs provided were relevant to past – e.g. KPIs for graduates provided information for 2020-2022 years that would not be valid for tracking progress towards achieving specific goals in relation to graduates of the programme in future. KPIs provided in relation to staff development, and student evaluations were not measurable and time bound, meaning that it is difficult to measure progress and identify timeframe of activities in relation to staff development and student evaluations based on the developed KPIs. The absence of specific objectives within the plan may be hindering the ability of the faculty to measure progress and assess the achievement of desired outcomes, while the omission of KPIs further makes it difficult to measure the capacity and monitor performance for evaluating the effectiveness of the planned activities. As such, the ambiguity surrounding the program planning to which the listed activities relate, raises concern about the clarity and coherence of the planning process.

The ET suggests that for enhancing the integration of evaluation and planning for improvement, it is recommended to revise the annual development plan of the programme by adjusting it so that it covers the complete planning period (desirably for the next 5 years) eliminating any activities that fall outside the designated timeframe. It is also recommended to clearly define objectives for programme planning that provide a clear direction for the activities and enable effective evaluation and measurement of progress.

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Finally, it is important to identify relevant KPIs for the programme that align with the objectives and enable the monitoring of performance and the evaluation of outcomes for future. By addressing these shortcomings, the integration of evaluation and planning for improvement can be strengthened, enabling more effective monitoring, evaluation, and continuous improvement of the program.

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

Quality regulations at UBT College encompass all aspects of program planning and delivery, services and resources provided by other parts of the institution. This includes assessing the curriculum, instructional materials, faculty qualifications, student support services, facilities, and any other resources that contribute to the program's overall quality.

Standard 2.4. *Quality assessments provide an overview of quality issues for the overall programme as well as the various components therein; assessments consider inputs, processes and outcomes, with particular attention given to learning outcomes for students.*

It is commendable that the quality regulations of the UBT College highlight importance of internal scrutiny by the faculty for programme development, and that the faculty plans to gather feedback from students, graduates, staff, and external stakeholders in relation to quality matters of the programme. However, it is essential to note that quality assessments should also include specific measures addressing practical components of the programme specifically for Level 5 programmes and of other resources that play a significant role in the overall student experience and the program's effectiveness. The samples of general satisfaction surveys that UBT College provided for the programme are very generic and may not capture the specific quality standards required for Level 5 programme. Therefore, to ensure comprehensive quality assessment, it is recommended to incorporate specific measures tailored to practical components, study environment etc. that play a significant role in the overall student experience and in the overall effectiveness of the programme. This could include but not limited to evaluating the relevance and quality of practical/practice components, monitoring the support provided to students during these components, and assessing the adequacy and accessibility of study environments for academic purposes. These targeted measures will provide a more accurate and detailed understanding of the program's strengths and areas that require attention, enabling effective quality improvement initiatives.

Standard 2.5. *Quality assurance processes ensure that the required standards are met and that there is continuous performance improvement.*

The quality assurance framework of UBT college establishes clear procedures that define the required standards and processes for assuring quality of program development and delivery. However, it is concerning that there is a lack of evidence regarding the implementation of these processes, making it difficult to determine if the required standards are being effectively put into action. The participation of all staff in self-evaluation, which is a crucial component of QA, could not be observed or confirmed (see 2.1 section of the report). This raises questions about the level of engagement of staff/or opportunities for staff for actively assessing and

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improving the quality of the program. Furthermore, the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that are supposed to measure progress and evaluate performance in relation to the programme, lack measurability and time-bound criteria. Without specific, measurable and time-bound KPIs, it becomes challenging to track progress, assess achievements, and drive continuous improvement effectively. The SER mentioned that for ensuring that the programme is up-to-date to international standards of the field, benchmarking has been conducted, but the SER did not provide sufficient information on how the institution adapted its practices and approaches to address limitations imposed by the local context. Understanding and addressing local contextual factors are vital for ensuring the relevance and effectiveness of the program within its specific environment.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the college holds ISO 9001 and EFQM certificates; while it is commendable to have these certifications, as they indicate that the institution has established quality management systems and follows certain recognized frameworks, these certifications alone do not provide a comprehensive assessment of the program's specific quality and effectiveness. Quality assurance processes of the programme should go beyond certifications and incorporate a robust system of internal evaluation, continuous improvement, and stakeholder engagement. They should focus on the specific requirements and expectations of the program, taking into account its unique context, objectives, and desired outcomes. Partnership and engagement with staff, students, industry representatives, and other stakeholders (and not only their involvement) in the evaluation and improvement processes is crucial for ensuring a holistic and comprehensive approach to quality assurance.

To address these concerns and strengthen the quality assurance processes it is recommended to ensure that established procedures and standards are effectively put into action, with clear evidence of their implementation and adherence. It is also important to foster participation of staff in self-evaluation, develop measurable and time-bound KPIs, enhance benchmarking practices by emphasizing in the self-evaluation process how the institution has adapted practices to address local context limitations. This information is crucial for understanding the program's effectiveness within its specific setting. And finally, it is needed to complement international certifications with program-specific assessments, evaluations, and feedback mechanisms that address the specific aspects of the program's quality, including but not limited to curriculum relevance, learning outcomes, teaching methodologies, resources, and student support services, avoiding overreliance solely on feedback from students.

Standard 2.6. *Survey data are being collected from students, graduates and employers; the outcomes of these assessments are made public.*

The faculty has developed quality assurance questionnaires and as additional evidence provided a sample of report summarizing the findings based on the feedback of students, graduates and employers. However, it should be noted that that the ET found several areas of concern in relation to these reports and credibility of the overall process. Firstly, according to the faculty, the provided sample report on feedback of students provides summary of feedback from students for both programmes – Level 5 programme in Energy and Management Engineering and Level 7 programme - MSc in Environmental Engineering and Energy. Due to this it was difficult for the ET to distinguish which findings of the report were relevant to the Level 5 programme and to Level 7 programme. Secondly, the report does not include

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information on the year of developing this report/collecting data from students, as such it is not clear if similar evaluations are consistently implemented. Ambiguity around this report has also been caused due to the fact that MSc programme in Environmental Engineering is currently under the process of initial accreditation. So, it is not clear how the faculty managed to collect feedback from the students of Level 7 programme along with feedback from students of Level 5 programme. Additionally, the ET was not able to talk with the students of the Level 5 programme of Energy and Management Engineering, which raised concerns in relation to credibility of the data collection from students of the programme. The ET had similar concerns in relation to sample reports developed on analysis of feedback from programme graduates and external stakeholders. Additionally, the surveys provided for graduates and external stakeholders lacked reflection on the specific aspects of the programme and the provided feedback could be very well applied to all programmes of the College. Another area of concern that the ET had was that it was not possible to meet the graduates of the programme. The ET also found that quality evaluations of the programme under review are not made publicly available. To ensure transparency and accountability, it is important that the results of quality evaluations are made publicly available. This can allow stakeholders, including prospective students, to access relevant information about the program's performance and outcomes.

The SER mentioned that the faculty conducts regular meetings (particularly during reaccreditation process of the programme) with employers, to discuss skills and knowledge that employers need and are not offered by the program. However, during the interviews, the employers could only speak in general terms about the need for the program and did not provide specific insights into the appropriateness or effectiveness of specific components of the programme, approaches to teaching and learning offered in the programme etc. Likewise, the report presented as the additional evidence summarizing feedback from external stakeholders involved only generic feedback in relation to image of the UBT College among stakeholders and willingness of stakeholders to collaborate with the institution. It also was not clear when this feedback from employers was requested, that raises doubts in relation to regularity of the exercise.

To enhance programme quality assurance particularly in terms of enhancing employer engagement and collecting relevant feedback from them, it is recommended to develop a systematic approach for gathering relevant data from employers, specifically for the programme. Collaboration and engagement with employers for Level 5 progarmme is even more important as programs of this level aim to provide practical and industry-specific knowledge and skills to students. So, enhancing already existing collaborations with employers is vital to stay up to date with current industry trends, evolving job requirements, and technological advancements; it is also important that quality assurance mechanisms gather relevant and programme-specific data from employers for developing work-based learning components such as internships, apprenticeships, or industry placements of the programme in future, in which employers can provide valuable insights, mentorship, and supervision during these experiences.

Standard 2.7. *The outcomes of the internal quality assurance system have been taken into account for the further development of the study programme. This includes assessment outcomes, student workload, academic success, and graduate employment.*

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The quality assurance framework of UBT College involves consideration of different outcomes for the further development of the programme. However, the ET lacked evidence that the outcomes of internal QA system had really been considered for the further development of the programme. The SER mentions that initially the programme was developed based on Kosovo's needs and indeed, the SER provided a strong argumentation of the need of programme; the need of launching the programme has been supported well by the management of the college, academic staff and external stakeholders too. The faculty described in a very detailed form how the programme has been changed content-wise, but there were no specific reports available for the programme that would illustrate how or if the outcomes of the internal QA have been carefully considered and fed into the modifications of the programme, to provide a more comprehensive and up-to-date educational experience for students.

Standard 2.8. *The institution ensures that reports on the overall programme quality are prepared periodically (e.g. every three years) for review within the institution indicating its strengths and weaknesses.*

Quality assurance framework of UBT College involves periodic evaluation of the overall quality of the programme, indicating its strengths and weaknesses and this evaluation usually coincides with the external evaluation procedure conducted by KAA. In cases when the accreditation is granted for more than 3 years, the ET recommends organizing evaluation of a program by the faculty, regardless of whether external accreditation is planned. This could have several benefits and advantages for the faculty and for the programme. Firstly, it can provide an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of teaching methodologies, learning outcomes and enable the faculty to address any areas of development proactively. This kind of proactive approach will also help to ensure that the program meets the required standards and criteria set by external accrediting body. Finally, internal evaluation of the overall programme quality demonstrates the institution's commitment to maintaining quality standards independently, regardless of external accreditation, while highlighting institutional autonomy, accountability and commitment to quality.

Standard 2.9. *The quality assurance programme arrangements are regularly self-evaluated and improved.*

The SER mentioned that regular evaluation and improvement of quality assurance arrangements for study programmes is made through professors updating syllabi; the ET suggests that this may not provide a comprehensive assessment of the program's quality assurance arrangements as it may be overlooking some important aspects. The ET recommends the faculty to periodically review and update policies and procedures for quality assurance, considering their effectiveness, this could range from change of content/structure of surveys, updating/modifying self and peer assessment methodologies etc. for ensuring better fitness of quality assurance arrangements to the purpose. It could also be helpful to engage in external benchmarking activities to compare practices of peer institutions in relation to improvement of quality assurance arrangements of the programme, that could provide insights into areas of strength, identify best practices, and support continuous improvement efforts for improving quality assurance arrangements.

The ET would like to note that the SER indicates a potential misunderstanding or confusion regarding student involvement in processes of updating quality assurance arrangements. It appears that there may be a need for clarification between students' participation in general QA processes and students' specific involvement in the design and updating of QA arrangements. It is necessary that the faculty addresses this distinction to ensure effective student engagement and their meaningful contribution to the improvement of QA practices, and not only in quality of their study experiences. It is commendable that students participate in surveys but it is also necessary that they are not only the source of feedback on quality of teaching, but are also consulted on the design of quality assurance mechanisms/arrangements, and are empowered to contribute to improvement initiatives specifically in relation to quality assurance arrangements.

Standard	**Compliance based on the review made by the student expert**	
	Yes	**No**
Standard 2.1. All staff participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity.		**X**
Standard 2.2. Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes.		**X**
Standard 2.3. Quality assurance processes deal with all aspects of programplanning and delivery, including services and resources provided by other parts of the institution.	**X**	
Standard 2.4. Quality evaluations provide an overview of quality issues for the overall program as well as of different components within it; the evaluations consider inputs, processes and outputs, with particular attention given to learning outcomes for students.	**X**	
Standard 2.5. Quality assurance processes ensure both that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance.		**X**
Standard 2.6. Survey data is being collected from students, graduates and employers; the results of these evaluations are made publicly available.		**X**
Standard 2.7. Results of the internal quality assurance system are taken into account for further development of the study program. This includes evaluation results, investigation of the student workload, academic success and employment of graduates.		**X**

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Standard 2.8. The institution ensures that reports on the overall quality of the program are prepared periodically (e.g. every three years) for consideration within the institution indicating its strengths and weaknesses.	**X**	
Standard 2.9. The quality assurance arrangements for the program are themselves regularly evaluated and improved.		**X**

Compliance level: 33% Partially complied

ET recommendations:

1. Address the gap between the regulatory expectations and actual implementation/and or documentation of staff engagement in self-evaluation processes in relation to the programme, possibly by providing trainings/workshops for staff on self-evaluation techniques, and use this experience in developing self-evaluation reports for the programme in future
2. Foster supportive and inclusive culture that encourages self-evaluation and open dialogue among staff that can foster a sense of accountability and shared learning; this could possibly be done by establishing opportunities for staff to discuss their self-evaluations in relation to the programme with supervisors and colleagues
3. Revise the Development Plan of the programme for the next 4-5 years, in which faculty will clearly define objectives for programme development plan, that provide a clear direction for the activities and enable effective evaluation and measurement of progress
4. Identify relevant measurable and time-bound KPIs for the programme that align with the objectives of programme development plan and that can enable the monitoring of performance and the evaluation of outcomes for future
5. Supplement general satisfaction surveys with specific measures addressing critical components such as practice-components and library resources to facilitate a more thorough evaluation of the program's overall quality and provide actionable insights for continuous improvement
6. Complement international certifications with program-specific assessments, that address the specific aspects of the program's quality, including curriculum relevance, learning outcomes, teaching methodologies, resources, and student support services, by considering risks of overreliance on feedback from students in relation to these areas
7. Eensure transparency of quality assurance and accountability through quality assurance, by making quality evaluations publicly available (in anonymized form) that can allow stakeholders, including prospective students, to access relevant information about the program's performance and outcomes
8. Develop a systematic approach for gathering relevant data from employers specifically for the programme; this among others could include development of comprehensive employer satisfaction surveys that capture evaluation of graduates' performance, job readiness, program's contribution to graduates' skill sets, as well as for other aspects for which employers can provide valuable insights
9. Develop mechanisms for engaging on quality matters specifically, with alumni of the programme and reflect on this feedback for programme development
10. The ET recommends organizing overall evaluation of the program by the faculty in every 3 years, regardless of whether external accreditation is planned; this could

contribute to the development of quality culture, highlight institutional autonomy, and demonstrate accountability and commitment to quality

11. Periodically review and update policies and procedures for quality assurance, considering their effectiveness and fitness to purpose; for this it could be helpful to engage in external benchmarking activities to compare practices of peer institutions in relation to improvement of quality assurance arrangements for programmes
12. Address the possible confusion between students' participation in quality assurance of courses and students' specific involvement in the design/updating of QA arrangements; in addition to gathering feedback from students on teachers' performance, satisfaction with university services etc. ensure effective student engagement in the design/improvement of QA practices, and empower them to contribute to improvement initiatives specifically in relation to quality assurance arrangements.

2.3. Academic Staff

On the academic staff, we start with **Standard 3.1.** "Candidates for employment are provided with full position descriptions and conditions of employment. To be presented in tabular form data about full time (FT) and part time (PT) academic/ artistic staff, such as: name, qualification, academic title, duration of official (valid) contract, workload for teaching, exams, consulting, administrative activities, research, etc. for the study program under evaluation.".

As indicated by the standard, a table is presented which presents 32 permanent staff, 4 part time staff (note that all the PT staff contracts are expired!) and 5 visiting staff, for a total of 41. However, the table appears to be incomplete, as the list of CVs name 43 distinct individuals, and that is excluding the visiting/invited research, meaning that some individuals are not included in the table. These individuals are:

- Elvida Pallaska
- Gazmend Krasniqi
- Edrina Gashi
- Fuat Pallaska
- Valdrin Haxhiu
- Muhamet Ahmeti
- Nazmi Misini
- Ramiz Hoxha
- Rexhep Shaqiri
- Haliti Sylaj
- Visar Krelani

In addition, the following individuals are mentioned in the table but their CVs have not been provided (excluding visiting staff):

- Deniz Celcima
- Muhamet Gervalla
- Trendeline Haliti

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- Valdrim Hoxha

This represents a cumulative discrepancy of 15 individuals, which amounts to 35% to 37% of the total presented in the list of CVs and in table respectively. This discrepancy is way too prevalent to consider this standard met.

On **Standard 3.2.** "The teaching staff must comply with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative Instruction on Accreditation.", the SER shows the distribution of academic degrees of 41 full time and part time academic staff while the actual number in the list in Figure 5 is 36. The distribution mentions 32 PhDs, 3 PhD candidates and 6 MSc, however the table differs by presenting only 28 PhDs and 5 MSc, while the number of PhD candidates remains at 3. The article referenced in the SER could not be found, but it reflects word by word Standard 3.4, so it is most likely not the one article relevant for this standard. The article in question instead refers to the share of academic staff with PhD degree and full-time residency. In this regard UBTC does comply with the requirements. However, the SER should be modified to reflect the relevant information in this regard only. Also, the numbers presented do not reflect the information given at the previous standard, and that should be fixed.

On **Standard 3.3.** "Academic staff do not cover, within an academic year, more than two teaching positions (one full-time, one part-time), regardless of the educational institution where they carry out their activity." No discrepancies could be found within the information provided. It appears that the academic staff both in full time and part time are not occupying more than one position, thus meeting the requirement.

On **Standard 3.4.** "At least 50% of the academic staff in the study program are full time employees, and account for at least 50% of the classes of the study program.", it is another prime example of the SER diverging into unrelated information. The standard is met, because 89% of the staff presented in Figure 5 are full time employees, and the remaining 11% mark in their CV's only a course each. However, this information is nowhere to be found in the SER. Instead, it repeats some information from Standard 3.2, and then diverges into information about the gender distribution of the staff affiliated to the program. This will be a common topic along the review report, but the SER in its current state could be completely scrapped and done all over again, this time addressing only the information that is relevant to the accreditation process.

On **Standard 3.5.** "For each student group (defined by the statute of the institution) and for every 60 ECTS credits in the study program, the institution has employed at least one full time staff with PhD title or equivalent title in the case of artistic/applied science institutions.", the story once again repeats. The standard is most likely met, because the program itself has only 120 credits and UBTC counts with 28 staff with PhD associated with the program under evaluation. In this case, only 2 of those 28 suffice to cover for this standard's requirement. That being said, the SER once again diverges to present information that appears to not be related to the program under evaluation. Instead, it shows a table (Figure 10) with the name of 5 people, only one of which has a PhD (as required by the standard), to cover for 300 credits for whatever reason. Therefore, 2 people with PhD specifically hired to cover for the 120 credits of this program are not mentioned, and thus the standard is not met.

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On **Standard 3.6.** "Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties" is finally a good example of the SER addressing accurately the standard under evaluation. The SER in this section goes at lengths to mention a wide variety of ways in which a staff member can access professional development. This section of the SER gives special emphasis to giving support to young researchers, which often face the most struggle. This standard is therefore met.

On **Standard 3.7.** "The responsibilities of all teaching staff, especially full-time, include the engagement in the academic community, availability for consultations with students and community service.", again some deviation from the topic can be seen in the SER. In this case, only the last short paragraph, stating "All full-time members of the academic staff are available for students and for the College 40 hours per week. During this time they are engaged in several activities which include: teaching, research activities and publishing, consultation" answers the question to the availability of the teaching staff for consultation. That short paragraph alone hints at the compliance of the standard. However, for future reference it would be advisable to specify the amount of dedicated hours per week each full-time staff member is available to students for consultation. The rest of the text in the SER addressing this standard is not relevant, thus the need for refining persists.

On **Standard 3.8.** "Academic staff evaluation is conducted regularly at least through self-evaluation, students, peer and superiors' evaluations, and occur on a formal basis at least once each year. The results of the evaluation are made publicly available.", matter relating to this standard were discussed during the audit visit. During the audit visit, it was mentioned that evaluation feedback questionnaires are made at the end of every term for the courses, and regularly for the staff. It was also noted that the results from these evaluations are made public, indicating that in this regard the standard is met. In the SER it is also indicated that the staff evaluation is conducted yearly, and the results are made public, consistent with what was discussed on site. The SER then specifies how the evaluation is composed. In contrast to other sections of the SER, this one is to the point and well-written.

On **Standard 3.9.** "Strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials.", conversations related to this topic took place during the audit visit. During the audit visit, emphasis was placed on the fact that year to year the curriculum can be updated by a limited share of the content, in order not to diverge too much from the accredited curriculum. However, it was indicated during the audit that the feedback received from students, staff and other stakeholders is used to increase the quality of the learning materials. In the SER, the section referring to this standard is again slightly vague, but in general the sentiment is consistent with what was discussed during the audit.

On **Standard 3.10.** "Teachers retired at age limit or for other reasons lose the status of full-time teachers and are considered part-time teachers.", the SER recognizes that the official retirement age in Kosovo is 65 years, and all full-time employees of UBTC are subject to this rule. Academic staff can proceed to work after the abovementioned age limit only as a part-time employee, and the CV's and list of employees support this fact. In this regard, this standard is met.

	Compliance

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Standard	based on the review made by the student expert	
	Yes	No
Standard 3.1. Candidates for employment are provided with full position descriptions and conditions of employment. To be presented in tabular form data about full time (FT) and part time (PT) academic/ artistic staff, such as: name, qualification, academic title, duration of official (valid) contract, workload for teaching, exams, consulting, administrative activities, research, etc. for the study program under evaluation.		**X**
Standard 3.2. The teaching staff must comply with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative Instruction on Accreditation.	**X**	
Standard 3.3. Academic staff do not cover, within an academic year, more than two teaching positions (one full-time, one part-time), regardless of the educational institution where they carry out their activity.	**X**	
Standard 3.4. At least 50% of the academic staff in the study program are full time employees, and account for at least 50% of the classes of the study program.	**X**	
Standard 3.5. For each student group (defined by the statute of the institution) and for every 60 ECTS credits in the study program, the institution has employed at least one full time staff with PhD title or equivalent title in the case of artistic/applied science institutions.		**X**
Standard 3.6. Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties.	**X**	
Standard 3.7. The responsibilities of all teaching staff, especially full-time, include the engagement in the academic community, availability for consultations with students and community service.	**X**	
Standard 3.8. Academic staff evaluation is conducted regularly at least through self-evaluation, students, peer and superiors' evaluations, and occur on a formal basis at least once each year. The results of the evaluation are made publicly available**.**	**X**	
Standard 3.9. Strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials.	**X**	
Standard 3.10. Teachers retired at age limit or for other reasons lose the status of full-time teachers and are considered part-time teachers.	**X**	

Compliance level: 80% Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

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1. As it has been mentioned before, the SER continues to be a big issue and requires significant refinement at the very least. Some examples are mentioned in the evaluation on specific standards for this section, but in general the issues noted in the previous sections persist.
2. The list of staff needs to be corrected. Over a third of the staff is a discrepancy between the people listed in the SER and the CVs provided. The list itself skips several numbers (22 and 34-37 for Figure 5, 22 for Figure 6, etc.) or start at aleatory numbers (Figure 7 starts at 30, Figure 8 starts at 34, etc.)
3. For standard 3.4, the information in the SER that actually addresses the requirements is not found in the report. This is a big point for correction of the SER. Likewise the SER section on Standard 3.5 appears to be imported from another report, since it refers to a different amount of credits, and anyway does not refer to the required PhD-holding employees.

2.4. Educational Process Content

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

During the audit visit, discussions often brought up topics related to this particular standard. The program itself appears to be modelled in close collaboration with the industry and with the development of the job market in sight. The curriculum is also built to reflect the evolving nature of the energy sector in Kosovo and the world. The selection of elective courses offers a wide range of multidisciplinary choices for specialization in the program. In this regard, the SER is consistent with the discussions had during the audit visit, and thus this standard is met.

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

According to the National Qualifications Framework (NFQ), the syllabi must contain the following:

- title of qualification/module.
- rationale/justification.
- purpose of the qualification/module, target group.
- NQF qualification/module, level, and credit value.

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▪ entry requirements and access.
▪ opportunity to progress after completion of the qualification/module.
▪ qualification structure.
▪ evaluation forms for the qualification/module (assessment).
▪ quality assurance arrangements.
▪ other detailed specifications.

From these requirements most are met, however there is missing information, namely "entry requirements and access" and "opportunity to progress after completion", the later interpreted as which other courses require completion of this module first. The lack of this information thus would mean that the standard is not met. On the topic, the SER gives a very detailed account on how the courses are designed, implemented, and evaluated. However, the SER fails to specifically mention the NFQ requirements and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area, and how those requirements are specifically met.

On **Standard 4.3.** "The disciplines within the curriculum are provided in a logical flow and meet the definition and precise determination of the general and specific competencies, as well as the compatibility with the study programs and curricula delivered in the EHEA. To be listed at least 7 learning outcomes for the study program under evaluation.", it is perceived from the program that the courses are given a logical flow. In turn, the SER presents an extensive list of learning outcomes, 32 to be precise.

The aforementioned list of learning outcomes is significantly better composed than the list of learning outcomes presented in the section for Standard 1.2. However, there are still improvements to be made. The learning outcome "Knowledge of contemporary issues" appears again, and it is as mentioned before way too vague, and it should be either complemented to become more specific or be removed altogether. There is also still some repetition, as lifelong learning appears twice, with the very last learning outcome bringing nothing new, that one could just be removed. That being said, the standard is still met.

Standard 4.4. States "The disciplines within the curriculum have analytical syllabuses which comprise at least the following: the discipline's objectives, the basic thematic content, learning outcomes, the distribution of classes, seminars and applicative activities, students' assessment system, the minimal bibliography, etc. The full course description/ syllabuses of each subject/ module should be attached only in electronic form to the self-assessment report for the study program under evaluation.". Attached to the application for accreditation is the Syllabi for all of the courses. After the requested corrections, all courses reflect clear didactic and assessment methods. Therefore, the standard is met. That being said, the syllabi is still riddled with formatting and aesthetic problems. Some of these issues can be related to the OS or even screen size used to access the documents, but it is clear that some (if not most) of the issues are of origin.

The case of **Standard 4.5.** "If the language of instruction is other than Albanian, actions are taken to ensure that language skills of both students and academic staff are adequate for instruction in that language when students begin their studies. This may be done through

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language training prior to the commencement of the program." is not applicable, as the language of instruction is Albanian.

On **Standard 4.6.** "The student-teacher relationship is a partnership in which each assumes the responsibility of reaching the learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are explained and discussed with students from the perspective of their relevance to the students' development.", the SER provides some relevant information. According to the SER, at the beginning of every semester the students are provided with information about the program, as well as the facilities, responsibilities and learning outcomes. For each specific course, it is also mentioned that teachers take care of delivering the specific learning outcomes of their course at the beginning of the semester. It is also mentioned that all that information is also available to access at any time in the faculty's web portal. Therefore, this standard is met.

Standard 4.7. states "Teaching strategies are fit for the different types of learning outcomes programs are intended to develop. Strategies of teaching and assessment set out in program and course specifications are followed with flexibility to meet the needs of different groups of students.". During the audit visit, for a program that is focused on developing hands-on technical skills, emphasis was made on the high share of lab work, which is fitting to the program in question and for the desired learning outcomes.

The content of the SER related to this section is also consistent with what was presented during the audit visit. In this case, the SER presents the variety of teaching strategies used to convey useful knowledge and experience to the students. Therefore, this standard is met.

On **Standard 4.8.** "Student assessment mechanisms are conducted fairly and objectively, are appropriate for the different forms of learning sought and are clearly communicated to students at the beginning of courses.", the syllabi are the best indicator on how student assessment takes place. In the corrected Syllabi, now all courses related to the program have a clear distribution of assessment which adds up to 100% in each course. In addition, most courses with laboratory work now have assign weight value to lab work, although not all (e.g. Physics, Information and Communication, etc.). It is advisable that all courses with laboratory work consider the lab exercises as part of the grading, which is particularly important for a hands-on technical degree. This has been already suggested after the audit visit, but since it is still not implemented throughout all the courses then the standard could not be considered as met.

The SER goes a bit more in detail on how assessments take place and the requirements for each grade category, which is relevant to point under evaluation. Moreover, some of the details on evaluation are also relevant for the evaluation of the next standard.

On **Standard 4.9.** "Appropriate, valid and reliable mechanisms are used for verifying standards of student achievement. The standard of work required for different grades is consistent over time, comparable in courses offered within a program, and in comparison, with other study programs at highly regarded institutions.", the SER presents some information that is relevant, particularly in the section previous to this. The SER in the previous section provides a basis of the standard that defines how grades are obtained.

The actual section of the SER referring to the current standard elaborates on the procedures on which grades are obtained and also how can they be appealed and on what basis, which is

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somewhat relevant to the current standard but not fully. That being said, with the information presented in the previous point it can be inferred that the standard is met.

On **Standard 4.10.** "Policies and procedures include actions to be taken in to dealing with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or inconsistently assessed.", it appears that once again the relevant information in the SER is presented in the previous section. This appears to be a pattern for the third standard in a row and should be addressed. In any case, considering the appealing protocols in which a student can request and carry a review of a grading procedure has been mentioned in the previous section.

In contrast, the information presented in the SER for the current section appears not to be particularly relevant for the current standard, as it addresses instead procedures in which students struggling with the program or its courses receive support. Nevertheless, considering the relevant information had been presented previously, the standard could be considered as met.

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

Information regarding this standard was discussed during the audit visit, in which information was provided about the practices used to facilitate internships in the industry and how those internships can be evaluated. Of course, this practice is challenging, as the nature of internships can be very different from one to another. Furthermore, the SER presents in the paragraphs 2 and 3 of this section some additional information about the protocols behind internships and their evaluation. Therefore, the standard can be considered as fulfilled.

Finally, **Standard 4.12.** "In order to facilitate the practice stages, the higher education institution signs cooperation agreements, contracts or other documents with institutions/organizations/practical training units.", is addressed. During the audit visit the discussion repeatedly turned into highlighting the close cooperation UBTC has with the industry. In addition, in the meeting with the industry representatives it was pointed out the existence of cooperation agreements between UBTC and external stakeholders that facilitate the implementation of internships. Multiple company representatives stated the significant amount of placings for practicians offered, and also provided first person accounts of people that have proceeded to be employed after their practice period. In turn, the SER wording in this section directly reflects what was discussed at the time of the audit meeting, thus fulfilling the standard.

Standard	Compliance based on the review made by the student expert

	Yes	No
Standard 4.1. The study program is modelled on qualification objectives. These include subject-related and interdisciplinary aspects as well as the acquisition of disciplinary, methodological and generic skills and competencies. The aspects refer especially to academic or artistic competencies, to the capability of taking up adequate employment, contributing to the civil society and of developing the students' personality.	**X**	
Standard 4.2. The study program complies with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. The individual components of the program are combined in a way to best achieve the specified qualification objectives and provide for adequate forms of teaching and learning.		**X**
Standard 4.3. The disciplines within the curriculum are provided in a logical flow and meet the definition and precise determination of the general and specific competencies, as well as the compatibility with the study programs and curricula delivered in the EHEA. To be listed at least 7 learning outcomes for the study program under evaluation.	**X**	
Standard 4.4. The disciplines within the curriculum have analytical syllabuses which comprise at least the following: the discipline's objectives, the basic thematic content, learning outcomes, the distribution of classes, seminars and applicative activities, students' assessment system, the minimal bibliography, etc. The full course description/ syllabuses of each subject/ module should be attached only in electronic form to the self-assessment report for the study program under evaluation.	**X**	
Standard 4.5. If the language of instruction is other than Albanian, actions are taken to ensure that language skills of both students and academic staff are adequate for instruction in that language when students begin their studies. This may be done through language training prior to the commencement of the program.	**NA**	**NA**
Standard 4.6. The student-teacher relationship is a partnership in which each assumes the responsibility of reaching the learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are explained and discussed with students from the perspective of their relevance to the students' development.	**X**	
Standard 4.7. Teaching strategies are fit for the different types of learning outcomes programs are intended to develop. Strategies of teaching and assessment set out in program and course specifications are followed with flexibility to meet the needs of different groups of students.	**X**	
Standard 4.8. Student assessment mechanisms are conducted fairly and objectively, are appropriate for the different forms of learning sought and are clearly communicated to students at the beginning of courses.		**X**
Standard 4.9. Appropriate, valid and reliable mechanisms are used for verifying standards of student achievement. The standard of work required for different grades is consistent over time, comparable in courses offered within a program, and in comparison, with other study programs at highly regarded institutions.	**X**	

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

Compliance level: 82% Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. Starting by the standards not met, standard 4.2 is a very technically specific standard referencing clearly specific pieces of legislation. This is the kind of information that will not come up during the audit visit, because it would require from foreigners to know in incredible detail the Kosovar legislation. Instead, the expert team will consistently be able to rely only on what is presented in the SER and the legislation itself. With that in mind, this section for the SER should be written first referencing the specific legislation mentioned and then clarifying how the program meets the legislation requirements. Any deviation from the legislation will have this standard failing to be fulfilled, and this should be taken into account for the current and all future SERs.
2. On standard 4.8, it is important for all courses that use laboratory work to have that work as part of the evaluation process. This is particularly relevant for a program that has been prepared with the purpose of preparing field professionals and technicians, since the alternative is that students can potentially skip lab work, still get full mark and somehow miss the main experience point of the program. If the course uses lab exercises, participation and reporting on those exercises should represent a share of the grade. It does not need to be the dominant share but it should be considered.
3. In general, this whole chapter of the SER has been better than previous ones, while still presenting significant deviations. This will continue to be mentioned along the evaluation because the problem is consistent.

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2.5. Students

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

According to the SER the Students Admission is Regulated by the Faculty Council Regulation on Admission. Specifically, the report mentions that the appropriateness of the secondary school for enrolment is defined by this Regulation. However, upon closer examination of the mentioned Regulation, the ET found that it does not contain any information regarding the secondary school requirements for enrolment. This discrepancy between the self-evaluation report and the actual content of the Faculty Council Regulation on Admission has caused confusion and raised questions about the admission procedure. To address this issue, it is necessary that the official website is updated and provides comprehensive and accurate details about the programme itself and admission process to the program, ensuring that future applicants have access to the correct and up-to-date admission requirements.

The admission information also lacks a comprehensive description of the selection process and the specific criteria used to evaluate applications, as well as foreign qualifications in accordance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention. This omission may raise questions among prospective applicants who possess foreign qualifications and are seeking clarity on how their credentials will be assessed for admission. Furthermore, the Students Handbook, specifically on page 14, mentions that one of the functions of the Rector is related to specific cases for study conditions that are not advertised in the competition. However, the exact nature of these cases and the process through which they are handled are not clearly defined in SER and in the Regulation on Admissions to the progarmme. So, it is recommended to provide explicit guidelines and transparent information about the evaluation process to ensure that all applicants, regardless of their educational background, have a clear understanding of the requirements and expectations. It is also essential to provide comprehensive and detailed information regarding the role of the Rector in addressing such cases, including the procedures to be followed and the criteria to be applied. Implementing these measures could allow more transparency, fairness, and equal opportunities for all prospective students.

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

According to the SER, the Regulation on Undergraduate Studies, the program of study is open to students that have completed secondary school. A candidate is eligible for admission if he/she fulfils the minimum admission requirement set forth by the MEST. The ET however, noted that the Regulation for the First Cycle Studies of UBT College does not involve information on the requirement of completion of secondary school and instead mentions that applicants have the right to be enrolled at UBT on the basis of a written request submitted to the Student Affairs Service. This again leads to the need of clarity in relation to admission process that has been addressed in the previous paragraph.

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

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The faculty plans to enroll 70 students to the programme annually, which means that in the second year after the launch of the programme there will be 140 students in the programme. The programme has 33 full-time academic staff members and 4 part-time staff who are involved in teaching on the programme. This translates to a student-to-staff ratio of approximately 3.9:1 which indicates a relatively favorable situation, as there are fewer students per staff member. However, it is important to consider the context of the program. Energy Engineering and Management is a specialized field, and the quality of education and the effectiveness of the teaching process depend not only on the ratio but also on the expertise and availability of the staff, the program's curriculum, and the availability of appropriate resources.

The fact that the faculty is also running a Bachelor's program and plans to open MSc programme in the same field suggests that there is existing expertise and resources dedicated to this subject area. But the Master's program in the same field, is planned to enroll 150 students per year that in two years' time will result in a significant increase in student numbers. And this increase may pose challenges in terms of maintaining the same level of interactivity and personalized attention to students, as it is planned in the current program. However, it also presents an opportunity for the faculty to allocate additional resources, hire more staff members, and adapt the teaching strategies to accommodate the larger cohort. To ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process in the professional Energy Engineering and Management program, it is important to provide sufficient resources, including laboratory facilities, equipment, and study materials for all students to support hands-on learning experiences and practical training. This could also involve proportional increase in staff and resources along with launching MSc programme in the same field. In order for the dimensioning standard to be met, the number of students the program can host will be limited, taking into consideration the second program under evaluation as well.

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

According to the Regulation for the First Cycle Studies the teacher is obliged to publish the results of the written exams in 7 days if the number of students is between 1-50. But according to Student Handbook, the professor of the respective subject is obliged to submit the report and the test together with the results of the exam, expressed in percentages, at the relevant UBT service at least 14 days from the date of the exam. As such it is not clear in how many days professors provide feedback to students in 7 or 14 days. If it is in 7 days, this timeframe can be challenging, especially if the feedback requires detailed and individualized assessments. While 7 days could be enough for simple assessments or multiple-choice exams, it may be more demanding for assignments or exams that require extensive qualitative evaluations, such as group-work or projects. The ET, however considered that it is only according to the student's request, that the teacher is obliged to give the student a written evaluation of the examination.

According to Students Handbook, students can check the results of the exams and verify the fulfillment of the conditions to continue the studies in the following academic year (non-start students) at the Students Service Office. To streamline the process and provide convenient access to examination results and fulfillment of study conditions for students, the ET suggests

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implementing an online platform or system that allows students to access their grades and verify their eligibility to continue their studies in the following academic year. By doing so, students would not need to visit the Student Service Office physically, saving time and effort for both students and staff.

It is commendable that the faculty has in place the system that allows students to receive assistance when they are facing academic difficulties and academic staff receives professional development support in theory and practice of student assessment. But the ET noted that the syllabi of courses do not contain information/metrics for assessing achievement of learning outcomes by students. It is essential to incorporate information and metrics for assessment in the syllabi of courses, along with assessment rubric. This could enable students to understand the criteria by which they will be assessed and facilitate transparency and consistency in grading.

Standard 5.5. *The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified bythe academic record.*
The academic record verifies students' academic achievements and progress. The ET did not see the academic records physically. But during the interviews students have not expressed discontent in relation to the academic records, and it suggests that students trust the institution's processes and are satisfied with the certification of their results.

Standard 5.6. *Flexible treatment of students in special situations is ensured with respect to deadlines and formal requirements in the program and to all examinations.*
The faculty has arrangements in place that ensure flexible treatment of students in special situations with respect to deadlines and formal requirements in the programme. But it is suggested to include information on this in students' handbook. It is also recommended to include in the information on admission to the programme how the faculty will accommodate the needs of students with disabilities and their special needs in general.

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

The faculty has the system in place to keep records of student completion rates and graduation rate is one of the indicators that the faculty uses to assess its performance. However, since the programme has not enrolled students for the last five years and it has no graduates, it was not possible to see for the ET all this being put in practice.

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

The Student Handbook which contains information on ethical behavior (also encompassing academic integrity) is designed only for BA and MA students. So, it is necessary for the faculty to develop handbook or find another way for familiarizing Level 5 programme students with the principles of academic integrity. The Code of Ethics that is common for both students and staff presents several examples of academic integrity in scientific research but there is no direct reference to academic integrity. It could be useful if the Code of Ethics explains that academic integrity encompasses honesty,

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trustworthiness, fairness, and responsible conduct in all aspects of academic work, including research, assignments, exams, and collaboration. It could also be helpful to highlight the importance of educational initiatives to foster a culture of academic integrity. This could be done in a number of ways – e.g. promoting awareness campaigns, workshops, and resources to educate students about academic integrity, proper citation practices, and responsible research conduct etc.

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

The UBT College recognizes the importance of upholding students' rights and obligations and actively emphasizes them in Students Handbook. However, there are some areas of concern that need to be addressed to ensure that students' rights are publicly available, promoted to all those concerned, and enforced equitably. Regarding the right to academic appeals, it is concerning that according to the First Cycle of Study Regulation, the decision of the Commission on grading of students after the third semester is not subject to appeal. To ensure a fair and transparent process, it is recommended to establish a mechanism for students to appeal all types of decisions made in relation to them. This can involve an independent body or an appeals committee that reviews cases and ensures that due process is followed.

Furthermore, it is important to address the disparity in distance learning opportunities for different groups of students. Currently distance learning is allowed only for athletes. This while not providing the same flexibility for students with young children is inequitable. The institution should try to create a supportive environment that accommodates the needs of all students, including those with childcare responsibilities. Offering flexible learning options, such as distance learning or adjusted study schedules not only for athletes but also for students with childcare responsibilities, could help ensure equal opportunities for all students.

Lastly, the Student Handbook stating to refer to regulations on the ground floor of the institution without providing direct access to these regulations may create confusion and hinder students' ability to fully understand their rights and obligations. It is recommended to improve the accessibility of these regulations by providing direct links to students, ensuring that they can easily access and refer to the relevant information.

Standard 5.10. *The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties andstudy programs are clearly regulated in formal internal documents.*

There are clear procedures regulating transfer of students between higher education institutions, faculties and study programmes.

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

The faculty has developed schedules for tutorials and staff is available for consultations when needed. But the ET analysed the core literature given in the syllabi of the programme considering the dates of publications and this analysis revealed a concerning pattern. It has been found that

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around 47% of the study resources indicated as core reading materials in the syllabi were published between 2000 and 2010, meaning that a significant portion of the curriculum relies on resources from the previous decade. This reliance on older literature may not adequately reflect the current trends, and developments in the energy and engineering fields. Furthermore, approximately 23% of the core study materials were published during the 1980s and 1990s, which may not fully capture the advancements that have occurred since then. In an industry where innovation is crucial, using outdated resources could hinder students' understanding of new technologies and best practices. Remarkably, only 9% of the books were published during the most recent period of 2020-2021. This discrepancy suggests that there is a substantial gap between the available literature and the latest research in energy and engineering. It is important to acknowledge that while staff members are available for tutorials to support student learning, this alone may not be sufficient to address the challenges posed by the lack of up-to-date literature in the Energy and Engineering program. Tutorials provide an opportunity for students to engage with their instructors, ask questions, and gain additional insights. However, without access to contemporary literature, students may not have the necessary resources to deepen their understanding of current theories, methodologies, and practical applications within the field. While staff members can share their expertise and experiences, up-to-date literature plays a crucial role in expanding students' knowledge base and exposing them to the latest research findings. It enables students to critically analyze current trends, explore innovative solutions, and develop a well-rounded understanding of the dynamic nature of the energy and engineering sectors. As such it is important for the programme to be updated to incorporate recent publications, to equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge for them to be successful in their future careers nationally and internationally.

Standard	**Compliance**	
	Yes	**No**
Standard 5.1. There is a clear and formally adopted admission procedure atinstitutional level that the study program respects when organising students' recruitment. Admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied for all students.		**X**
Standard 5.2. All students enrolled in the study program possess a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent document of study, according to MEST requirements.	**X**	
Standard 5.3. The study groups are dimensioned so as to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process.		**X**
Standard 5.4. Feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments is given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed.		**X**
Standard 5.5. The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record.	**X**	

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Standard 5.6. Flexible treatment of students in special situations is ensured with respect to deadlines and formal requirements in the program and to allexaminations.	X	
Standard 5.7. Records of student completion rates are kept for all courses and for the program as a whole and included among quality indicators.	**X**	
Standard 5.8. Effective procedures are being used to ensure that work submitted by students is original.	X	
Standard 5.9. Students' rights and obligations are made publicly available,promoted to all those concerned and enforced equitably; these will include rights to appeals		**X**
Standard 5.10. The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs are clearly regulated in formal internal documents	**X**	
Standard 5.11. Academic staff is available at sufficient scheduled times for consultation and advice to students. Adequate tutorial assistance is provided to ensure understanding and ability to apply learning		X

Compliance level: 55% Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. Ensure that official website is updated and provides comprehensive and accurate details about the programme itself and admission process for the program, ensuring that future applicants have access to the correct and up-to-date admission requirements
2. It is recommended to provide explicit guidelines and transparent information about the evaluation process to ensure that all applicants, regardless of their educational background, have a clear understanding of the requirements and expectations
3. Provide comprehensive and detailed information regarding the role of the Rector during admissions in addressing specific cases (referred to in Students Handbook), including the procedures to be followed and the criteria applied to these specific cases
4. To ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process in the professional Energy Engineering and Management program, it is important to provide sufficient resources, including laboratory facilities and equipment (along with launching MSc programme in the same field), for all students to support hands-on learning experiences and practical training
5. Consider the ways which allow students to access their grades and verify their eligibility to continue their studies in the following academic year with no need of visiting Student Service Office physically, that could save time and effort for both students and staff.
6. To enable students understanding the criteria by which they will be assessed and facilitate transparency and consistency in grading, incorporate information and metrics for assessment in the syllabi of courses, along with assessment rubric
7. It is recommended to include in the information on admission to the programme how the faculty will accommodate the needs of students with disabilities and their special needs in general
8. In addition to considering academic integrity in Code of Ethics, consider introducing educational initiatives to foster a culture of academic integrity. This

could be done in a number of ways – e.g. promoting awareness campaigns, workshops, and resources to educate students about academic integrity, proper citation practices, and responsible research conduct etc.

9. Establish a mechanism for students to appeal all decisions made in relation to them. This can involve an independent body or an appeals committee that reviews cases and ensures that due process is followed
10. Address the disparity in distance learning opportunities for students having childcare opportunities by offering flexible online learning opportunities to them (as it is the case for students who are athletes)
11. Provide a comprehensive and up-to-date education, it is imperative for the Energy and Engineering program to incorporate a greater proportion of recent publications, enabling students to stay informed about the latest developments and emerging trends in their field.

2.6. Research

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

In this regard, not much was mentioned during the audit visit, since for this program at technician level research was not given the highest focus. Therefore, all evaluations in this section will take into account mainly the SER and referred annexes. Correspondingly, the SER makes mention of the multiple research centers and consortiums UBT is aligned with to move forward with the research in the field. In addition, the SER references to the research plan annex (annex 9 in the list of documents, however referred to as annex 11 in the SER for some reason). Taking the abovementioned into account, there seems to be enough information to determine that the standard is met.

On **Standard 6.2.** "Expectations for teaching staff involvement in research and scholarly activities are clearly specified, and performance in relation to these expectations is considered in staff evaluation and promotion criteria.", there was also no discussion during the audit visit, so the standard will be evaluated with the SER alone.

Earlier in the SER, mention had been made of the requirements research-wise for the teaching staff to receive promotions within the UBTC structure. In addition, the section on this standard in the SER lists the minimum requirements from teaching staff as:

- At least one publication annually- preferably in an international peer-reviewed journal or book published by international prestigious publishing houses (meaning usually a book of chapters of various authors, while one full book is considered equivalent of at least three journal articles);
- At least one participation in a scientific conference during an academic year;

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- At least one relevant personal professional development activity during an academic year;
- At least one review on a relevant publishing house or international conference.
- The program however, welcomes as much output as possible.

Based in the abovementioned information alone, it can be determined that in this regard the program meets the standard.

Regarding **Standard 6.3.** "Clear policies are established for defining what is recognized as research, consistent with international standards and established norms in the field of study of the program.", the SER once again presents a clear list of what is recognized as research.

The list is as follows:

- Peer reviewed books;
- Peer reviewed articles in journals in the field of study;
- Peer reviewed book chapters;
- Inputs in and creation of datasets (including international datasets);
- Publications through peer-reviewed scientific conferences;
- Publication in platforms agreed by the Academic Council based on national legislation.

The above definition however does not provide a definition that is narrow enough, as "peer reviewed articles in journals" and "peer reviewed scientific conferences" still leaves a lot of room for not-so-good quality research and outlets to fit this definition. A minimum bar should be set with requirements such as, for example (but not necessarily);

- The article should be published in an international journal and in English,
- The journal should be indexed in SCOPUS, GoogleScholar or Sage,
- The impact factor of the target journal should be higher than 1,
- The conference should be hosted in English and the proceedings published with ISBN,
- The book chapter should be published by publishing houses X, Y or Z
- Etc.

The point would be to make more specific what is the minimum bar, even if it is set much lower than for the examples given in the list above, but it is important to make it specific. Considering that the standard does not define the degree of specificity, this standard will be considered as met.

On **Standard 6.4.** "The academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity.", it has been quite difficult to evaluate. The reason is that the standard clearly refers to "research results on the same topic as their teaching activity". Instead, the SER makes reference to the document "Staff Publications" (referred in the SER as annex 14 but instead found as annex 12), which is a comprehensive list of publications including some that are not on the topic of teaching. Several of those are also in Albanian. Also, the list includes individuals that are missing from the list of staff provided in the first chapter. Moreover, the list appears not to be updated, as it contains almost no publications in 2021 and zero publications thereafter.

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In addition, the topic of teaching is not indicated in the same annex, so it is needed to alternate between different files to try to figure out if the publications are in the correct field, which is terribly impractical. Nevertheless, for the staff presented in the list it was possible to find at least a research item on the topic. Therefore, the standard could be considered as met but the presentation of information should be much improved.

Standard 6.5. states "The academic and research staff publish their work in specialty magazines or publishing houses, scientific/applied/artistic products are presented at conferences, sessions, symposiums, seminars etc. and contracts, expertise, consultancy, conventions, etc. are provided to partners inside the country and/or abroad.". Once again, the information in the SER and list of publications are the only available sources for the evaluation of this standard.

In the SER, the last paragraph recites a group of university partners with which UBTC has established cooperation, all of which are situated in continental Europe. This list addresses the second part of the standard, requiring that research is "provided to partners inside the country and/or abroad". For the first part of the standard, reference is made again for to the list of staff publications. It should be noted that the SER makes reference to an upgoing trend of publications, but referring only to the years 2020/2021, which might indicate as mentioned in the previous point that the list of publications is indeed outdated! Once again, with the list of publications at hand and the cited cooperation agreements, the standard can be considered as met. However, it is no small mishap to present outdated list of publications.

On **Standard 6.6.** "Research is validated through: scientific and applied research publications, artistic products, technological transfer through consultancy centers, scientific parks and other structures for validation", the SER cites word by word what was already presented for Standard 6.3 for the first couple paragraphs, resulting in needless repetition of information. The standard wording itself is somewhat repetitive as well, as there is not so much textual difference between the current point and previous one, adding to the confusion.

Since a list of publications has been made available, with many of the research outputs cited being in peer reviewed outlets, there is naturally a degree of validation to the research presented in that list. Just on that alone, the standard can be considered as met. Moreover, the wording of the standard should be changed eventually to reflect in no vague terms what is the requirement and request.

Standard 6.7. "Each academic staff member and researcher has produced at least an average of one scientific/applied research publication or artistic outcome/product per year for the past three years." Is significantly more specific. The only information available to evaluate this is present in the SER and in the Staff Publications Annex.

The list in Staff Publications names 33 individuals, with their publications in no specific chronological order in some instances, which makes the evaluation of this point unnecessarily difficult. In addition, the information for the publications themselves does not follow any particular format, and many contain only a link and do not mention the publishing year. Nevertheless, considering that we are in the year 2023, the evaluation of at least one publication per year in the last 3 years will consider the period 2020-2022. Since, as mentioned before, it

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appears that the list is not updated, very few staff members (9 out of the 33 listed) meet this criterion, and thus the standard is not met.

On **Standard 6.8.** "Academic and research staff publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full-time staff.", the requirement is rather straightforward. By extensively sampling articles published in relevant period of 2020-2022, it could be observed that the affiliation of the staff in question as cited in the article was UBTC. Therefore, this standard is met.

For **Standard 6.8.*** "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." It can be found a consistency error, in this case on the KAA side giving two standards the same number for at least 2 years in a row. This was certainly highlighted in evaluations that took place last year, but hopefully by next year it will be corrected.

In response to the standard, the SER cites that teachers are allowed to share their most recent research outputs within their teaching materials. However, the section mentions nothing about encouragement to do so, which is what the standard refers to. Thus, in absence of indications of encouragement, the standard will be considered as not met.

About **Standard 6.9.** "Policies are established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.", the SER is once again the only information source to evaluate compliance. In this regard, the only section of the response that is relevant to the standard in question is the last paragraph, stating that "The policy on intellectual property and procedures for commercialization of ideas are clearly set at the UBT-institutional level through the document 'Research and Innovation Strategy'."

Given that the policy document governing the intellectual property exists, it can therefore be inferred that the standard is met.

Finally**, Standard 6.10.** "Students are engaged in research projects and other activities." is addressed. Although the program under evaluation is a level 5 technician degree, the SER lists six different ways in which the students can engage in research. Another way to engage students with research mentioned in the previous section of the SER but not mentioned in the current section, is that also students are involved in data collection thorough voluntary surveys.

The listed means of engagement as well as information discussed during the audit visit are thus consistent with the standard, and it can be considered as fulfilled.

Standard	**Compliance**	
	Yes	**No**
Standard 6.1. The study program has defined scientific/applied research objectives (on its own or as part of a research center or interdisciplinary program), which are also reflected in the research development plan of the	**X**	

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

Compliance level: 91% Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

1. Standard 6.3 requires a definition of what is recognized as research. However, UBTC's definition is not narrow enough to guarantee international quality of research. The minimum bar for what is recognized as research should be defined in more specific terms, so for example predatory journals can be avoided, as well as predatory

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conferences, which are quite pervasive. Setting such limits, even at a rather low requirement level will initially reflect by potentially lowering the amount of publications, but simultaneously increasing the quality and impact of the research being published. Some examples of how the lower bar can be defined is given in the corresponding section to this standard in this evaluation. Such clear definitions are present in other European universities, and I encourage this to be considered for future definitions.

2. On Standard 6.7, the requirement is quite straightforward and in this case the issue could be the result of outdated documentation. Nevertheless, it is likely that even if the list of publications was up to date, there would be still staff that is not meeting the standard requirements. One way to alleviate the lack of publications is (beyond updating the publication list) to strengthen research collaboration. By aligning with institutions that favour research, it is possible to be part of very active research teams without the need to lead the research itself, which can make the publication goal more reachable. Of course, encouragement for such activities should be given to the academic staff that is consistently failing to meet this standard.
3. About standard 6.8*, the solution for compliance is significantly simpler. Instating a policy that requires the academic staff to at least mention in their lectures the research published during the previous school cycle would suffice.
4. For standard 6.4 makes it paramount to update the list of publications, not only for the research that was published recently, but also to make sure to indicate for each academic staff member which subjects and topics they are covering, and then make sure to tailor the list in order to reflect only publications that align with those subjects and topics. Otherwise, the list as it is creates confusing scenarios in which different evaluators could consider the standard is not met.
5. Finally, for transparency the list of publications could be redesigned so it always presents the most recent research first (it is pretty random in the current list), and also differentiate type of research output (journal article, conference article, book chapter, etc.) and under which affiliation. In addition, all items cited in the list should follow an internationally accepted referencing style (for example Harvard). In the current form, the information on each article appeared inconsistent and in aleatory order. Moreover, there is at least one instance of repetition in the list, so as part of some of the abovementioned filtering the list should be presenting only unique items once.

2.7. Infrastructure and Resources

Starting with **Standard 7.1.** "The adequate long-term implementation of the study program is ensured in quantitative terms as regards premises, human resources and equipment. At the same time, it is guaranteed that qualitative aspects are also taken into account.", is a topic that was discussed during the audit visit initially. UBTC certainly offers a wide range of facilities and services in a permanent manner to both students and staff. The premises include

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auditoriums, classrooms, laboratories, leisure facilities, library, computer rooms, sport facilities, etc. In total, as reported in the SER, across campuses UBTC comprises with more than 5 hectares of permanent facilities.

In addition, during the audit visit some of the facilities' planned and ongoing investments were mentioned. In general, the quality of the facilities and premises was remarkable, particularly the laboratory equipment and spaces. Regarding the human capital of UBTC available for this program, the estimated ratio of student to staff is at about 4-1, which of course would be negatively affected by the accreditation of this program and still remain at a very good level. Moreover, UBTC is the oldest private educational institution in Kosovo, thus speaking to the continuity of their operation. Taking all the abovementioned into account, it could be considered that the standard is fulfilled. However, knowing also the ratio of administrative staff to student and how that evolves as the number of students grow would be desirable, as this part of the human capital of UBTC is not mentioned in the SER.

Regarding **Standard 7.2.** "There is a financial plan at the level of the study program that would demonstrate the sustainability of the study program for the next minimum three years.", the information in the SER is somewhat limited. While the standard clearly refers to the financial plan at the study program specifically, the SER only refers to the faculty and only talks about the upcoming 2 years, while the standard refers to the next 3 years. This hints to the potential absence of a specific financial plan for the program, which then reflects in the standard not being met.

Standard 7.3. refers to "The higher education institution must demonstrate with adequate documents (property deeds, lease contracts, inventories, invoices etc.) that, for the study program submitted for evaluation it possesses the following, for the next at least three years:
a) owned or rented spaces adequate for the educational process;
b) owned or rented laboratories, with the adequate equipment for all the compulsory disciplines within the curriculum, wherever the analytical syllabus includes such activities;
c) adequate software for the disciplines of study included in the curriculum, with utilization license;
d) library equipped with reading rooms, group work rooms and its own book stock according to the disciplines included in the curricula."

This is another case in which it appears the standard has not been carefully read. The SER presents a list of laboratories and facilities, however it fails to present or refer to the official documents mentioned in the standard wording "property deeds, lease contracts, inventories, invoices etc.". In absence of the documents requested by the standard, it can only be evaluated as not compliant.

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

In order to stablish the capacity of the program, the following assumptions were made:

- General classrooms can be used for any program, and thus are not a strict capacity limitation,

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- Lab and experiments were considered to take 2 hours units,
- Student teams for lab courses can form teams no bigger than 2 (for a field technician degree, a team of more than 2 would significantly reduce the exposure of students to the much-needed hands-on experience),
- Lab capacity will be considered according to the provided "template for lab specifications and capacity" file. However, when discrepancies between the actual capacity and the declared capacity were noticed, a different capacity was assumed. This assumed capacity never exceeded the blanket 25 students per lab declared in the file.

The student number limitation is thus calculated based on the laboratories' capacity, as for a technical degree the lab experience is paramount. With the abovementioned in mind, the program capacity by the limitations of laboratory is calculated as follows:

$$\mathbf{LWS} = \frac{(\mathbf{Dlah} * \mathbf{5})}{\mathbf{LoE}} \qquad (1)$$

From Equation 1, LWS stands for Lab weekly slots, while D_{lah} represents the daily lab access hours (multiplied by 5 to consider a working week). Finally, LoE represents the length of experiment, assumed as 2 hours as abovementioned. For the lab total weekly capacity limit of each lab, the following was calculated:

$$\mathbf{TWLC} = \frac{(\mathbf{LWS} * \mathbf{ALC})}{\mathbf{Ts}} - \mathbf{CSu} \qquad (2)$$

From equation 2, the total weekly lab capacity (TWLC) is defined as LWS (as defined in equation 1) multiplied by the active lab capacity (ALC), then divided by the team size (2 as mentioned in the assumptions, Ts) and finally subtracting the current student users (CSu) from other programs. Finally, an average for the TWLC of all labs is performed. Some individual labs presented close to full capacity with the former students taken into account. However, these cases were for labs of elective courses, thus having those cases averaged with the rest will return a reasonable number of places for the program. In addition, the labs that have the most limited capacities do not match the labs for the level 7 program under evaluation, thus evading a double threat for over occupancy.

The aforementioned calculation resulted in a capacity of 89 students for the labs of the program, which rounded up to 90 (considering the occasional dropout) it would mean that the current labs have capacity for **ONLY 45 students admitted per year** (so at the second year the laboratory limit of 90 students is reached). Within that student limit alone, the standard could be considered as met.

Next, is **Standard 7.5.** The education institution's libraries must ensure, for each of the study programs:
a) a number of seats in the reading rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program;
b) a number of seats in the group work rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program;

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c) their own book stock from Albanian and foreign specialty literature, enough to cover the disciplines within the curricula, out of which at least 50% should represent book titles or specialty courses of recognized publishers, from the last 10 years;
d) a book stock within its own library with a sufficient number of books so as to cover the needs of all students in the cycle and year of study the respective discipline is provided for;
e) a sufficient number of subscriptions to Albanian and foreign publications and periodicals, according to the stated mission.

Considering the SER to evaluate this standard, it once again the information provided does not seem to reflect the request made by the standard. Although in reality the standard is most likely met, the information provided is insufficient to clarify it. In terms of seating capacity, the SER should be providing the specific number of seats in reading rooms and work rooms rather than just stating that the 10% is covered, especially when considering that the number of students is not yet defined at the moment the SER is composed. For example, a simple statement as "the total number of seats in reading rooms is 220" is the information needed to understand if the standard is met. Similarly, for the book requirements there should be a refined table stating the books used as textbook for the program, and number of specimens of that book in particular, for each book relevant to the program. Otherwise, the whole book list is too extensive to evaluate for this standard, and not every book is relevant to the courses of the program. Therefore, the standard cannot be considered as met.

Finally, **Standard 7.6.** "The infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the program is adapted to students with special needs." is easy to evaluate, since at least in the main campus, the presence of ramps and elevators for people with limited mobility were available throughout the premises. Therefore, this standard is in this case met.

Standard	**Compliance based on the review made by the student expert**	
	Yes	**No**
Standard 7.1. The adequate long-term implementation of the study program is ensured in quantitative terms as regards premises, human resources and equipment. At the same time, it is guaranteed that qualitative aspects are also taken into account.	**X**	
Standard 7.2. There is a financial plan at the level of the study program that would demonstrate the sustainability of the study program for the next minimum three years.		**X**
Standard 7.3. The higher education institution must demonstrate with adequate documents (property deeds, lease contracts, inventories, invoices etc.) that, for the study program submitted for evaluation it possesses the following, for the next at least three years: a) owned or rented spaces adequate for the educational process;		**X**

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b) owned or rented laboratories, with the adequate equipment for all the compulsory disciplines within the curriculum, wherever the analytical syllabus includes such activities; c) adequate software for the disciplines of study included in the curriculum, with utilization license; d) library equipped with reading rooms, group work rooms and its own book stock according to the disciplines included in the curricula.		
Standard 7.4. The number of seats in the lecture rooms, seminar rooms and laboratories must be related to the study groups' size (series, groups, subgroups); the applicative activities for the specialty disciplines included in the curricula are carried out in laboratories equipped with IT equipment	**X**	
Standard 7.5. The education institution's libraries must ensure, for each of the study programs: a) a number of seats in the reading rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program; b) a number of seats in the group work rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program; c) their own book stock from Albanian and foreign specialty literature, enough to cover the disciplines within the curricula, out of which at least 50% should represent book titles or specialty courses of recognized publishers, from the last 10 years; d) a book stock within its own library with a sufficient number of books so as to cover the needs of all students in the cycle and year of study the respective discipline is provided for; e) a sufficient number of subscriptions to Albanian and foreign publications and periodicals, according to the stated mission.		**X**
Standard 7.6. The infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the program is adapted to students with special needs.	**X**	

Compliance level: 50% Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. Again, starting by the non-compliant standards, Standard 7.2 points out at the fact that a specific 3-year financial plan for the program is missing, and should be composed and/or presented for the next accreditation application.
2. For standard 7.3, it is again just missing documents specifically mentioned by the standard that were subsequently not presented. Those documents surely exist, and for an institution that currently holds 25 accredited programs and has been operating for more than a decade, it is important to take seriously the applications and read and understand carefully all requirements.
3. About standard 7.5, the similar situation appears, in which the information required for evaluating the standard is simply not presented. Much like in the previous point, surely

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that information exists and could be provided. This must be a learning experience for future accreditation applications of this and any other program.

4. It would be recommendable to present, regarding standard 7.1, also the administrative staff to student ratio for the faculty. In general of course the academic staff is more relevant, but the quality of experience by students can be influenced by an insufficiency of administrative staff.
5. For standard 7.4 the number of students that can actively using all labs cannot be the same, since the size and capacity of labs is clearly different. A non-transparent response on the capacity of labs forces an estimation based on lab pictures and memory from the visit, and could result in a limitation of the number of students that can register for the program.

3. FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

UBTC should strongly reconsider their methodology for drafting SERs based on the case of this program alone. A careful and informed read of the standards and requirements would guide a more concise and accurate report and list of documents. Facilitating the work of the external evaluation team is always more likely to return better results, both for the institution, the program and the accreditation agency. We are sure that UBTC is capable of producing documents worthy of the reputation that the institution holds.

Standard	Compliance level
1. Mission, objectives and administration	83% Substantially compliant
2. Quality management	33% Partially compliant
3. Academic staff	80% Substantially compliant
4. Educational process content	82% Substantially compliant
5. Students	55% Partially compliant
6. Research	91% Fully compliant
7. Infrastructure and resources	50% Partially compliant
Overall compliance	**68 % Partial compliance**

Compliance level: 64% Partially compliant.

In conclusion, in line with the Manual requirements, the Expert Team recommends to decline the accreditation of the level 5 Energy Engineering and Management program.

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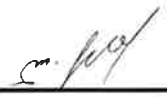
Expert Team

Member

	**Francisco Javier Farfan Orozco**	**13/08/2023**
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)

Member

	**Lali Giorgidze**	**13/08/2023**
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