



**Republika e Kosovës**  
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo  
Agjencia e Kosovës për Akreditim  
Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju  
Kosovo Accreditation Agency



*UBT College*

**MASTER IN ENVIRONMENTAL ENERGY AND  
ENGINEERING (Level 7)**

**Accreditation**

**REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM**

*June 14, 2023, Prishtina / Online Malmö*

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Context

**Date of site visit:**

**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 “SER Master in Environmental Energy and Engineering”*
- *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 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*

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*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**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Participants</b>
<b>09:00 – 09:20</b>	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated	
<b>09:25 – 10:25</b>	Meeting with the heads of the study programme	
<b>10:30 – 11:15</b>	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff (for both programs)	
<b>11:15 – 12:15</b>	Lunch break	
<b>12:15 – 13:00</b>	Visiting tour of the facilities and infrastructure (for both programs)	
<b>13:00 – 13:45</b>	Meeting with teaching staff	
<b>13:50 – 14:35</b>	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders	
<b>14:35 – 14:45</b>	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts	
<b>14:45 – 14:55</b>	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program	

### **1.3. A brief overview of the institution under evaluation**

This section will sound familiar, as it will be used for both programs under accreditation. UBT College (UBTC) is portrayed as the largest private education institution in Kosovo. Founded in

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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 audit 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 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 51 and 52 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. The wording of the program's mission statement is also just slightly different from that of the level 5 program in the same line, thus providing at degree of consistency and continuity.

In principle both mission statements align, and thus the standard can be considered as met. However, an effort could be made to redefine the mission statement of the program in order to make it clearer and more concise. In general, the SER document 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.

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:

- Apply critically the main theories, models and concepts used in the study of Electrical Energy and Smart Grids, and analysis of the impact of international organizations, including the EU, on domestic policy and policy making
- Demonstrate understanding of the main debates in the academic literature concerning energy engineering, smart grids, renewables, solar energy, thermal energy, environmental impact of energy, biomass and the impact of international organizations on domestic policy and policy making
- Demonstrate substantive knowledge of national policy processes and policies in key policy domains, theory and research in sustainable engineering, and how international organizations affect domestic policy and policy-making processes
- Undertake independent applied projects in Electrical Energy and Smart Grids
- Apply critically the main theories, models and concepts used in the study of energy policy and management
- Demonstrate understanding of the main debates in the academic literature concerning electrical energy, smart grids, energy in built environment, energy efficiency and sustainable energy production
- The ability to make professional written and oral communication presentations

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- The ability to plan and produce written assignments involving complex energy engineering concepts and methods
- The ability to pursue further independent research and practice in smart grids, and sustainable energy engineering and environment.
- 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 engineering problems
- 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 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 tools necessary for engineering practice
- In-depth understanding of specialist bodies of knowledge within the engineering discipline
- Discernment of knowledge development and research directions within the engineering discipline
- Knowledge of contextual factors impacting the engineering discipline
- 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
- 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

As it can be seen, the list of learning outcomes is quite comprehensive. However, in the list there are items present that are too vague, and in some cases repeated. For example, the learning outcome “An ability to communicate effectively”, “An ability to communicate effectively with a range of audiences” and “Effective oral and/or written communication in professional and

lay domains” have effectively the same meaning, and there is no point in having all of those. Keeping either of them is sufficient.

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 USA, etc. thus this should be rephrased to refer at the specific contemporary issue it targets, or otherwise be removed.

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 degree of refinement. Since the specific connection between the academic and professional advice is not made to the development of learning outcomes in the SER, the standard in this case will not be considered as met.

On **Standard 1.3.** “The study program has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept.”, the SER presents some relevant information. Among the information presented, the didactic methods are mentioned, considering from courses to minor specialization, and including internships, master thesis projects and scientific research.

Consistent to what is mentioned in the SER, emphasis was made during the audit visit about the importance of research at the level 7 program, and some of the ways research is encouraged and facilitated through locally organized conferences and study exchanges at relevant European universities. Taking all the aforementioned in mind, it can be determined that this standard is met.

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.

In contrast, most of the information presented in the SER addressing this section is not particularly relevant for the standard in question. The only relevant information about this standard presented is defining the people responsible for following the protocols to deal with issues, as well as the stakeholders and how often the council meets. For future applications the SER should be composed in a way that reflects the wording and information presented during the audit visit.

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.

Moreover, as clarified in the SER, ethics review committees are established both at a faculty level (sub-committee) and at an institutional level (main committee). It is further declared in the SER that options for appealing decisions regarding ethics evaluations are available, giving the last unappealable decision to the institutional ethics committee in charge. This of course foments the compliance to ethics regulations, and thus the standard could be considered as met.

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.” There was discussion during the audit visit as well as in the SER. During the audit visit, it was mentioned that there was a continuous evaluation of the policies and procedures, as well as content of the program. Although the periodicity of the meetings was not specified, it was hinted that they happened on need to basis.

In the SER, it is stated that the council in charge of reviewing the regulations and policies meets at least twice per semester, which then would indicate that the periodicity of the meetings and evaluations far exceeds the minimum requirement to meet the standard.

Standard	Compliance based on the review made by the student expert	
	Yes	No
<i>Standard 1.1.</i> The study program mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution.	X	
<i>Standard 1.2.</i> 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
<i>Standard 1.3.</i> The study program has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept.	X	
<i>Standard 1.4.</i> 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	
<i>Standard 1.5.</i> All staff and students comply with the internal regulations relating to ethical conduct in research, teaching, assessment in all academic and administrative activities.	X	

<i>Standard 1.6.</i> 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.	<b>X</b>	
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**Compliance level:** (83%) Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. The mission statement of the program should be made clearer and more concise. In its current form it is about a page in length and somewhat vague. The section on Standard 1.1 could be comprised of only the mission statements of the institution and the program, and some short commentary on how they align. Everything else is not only irrelevant but also makes it more difficult to evaluate the standard.
2. On Standard 1.2, clear emphasis should be made on the ways in which internal and external actors interact to define the learning outcomes of the program. This interaction is not clarified in the current state and the learning outcomes themselves require refining.
3. On standard 1.3, Research Methods course description mentions both quantitative and qualitative methods, but greater emphasis is given to quantitative methods. It would be beneficial to have balance between both types of research in the course for students to develop a well-rounded understanding of both quantitative and qualitative research methods in the field. Considering that Research Methods course is optional, it is important to ensure that the program provides alternative opportunities for students to develop research through integrating research components into other courses, or providing research supervision to support students in their independent research projects. It would also be recommended to develop Master’s Thesis guide or handbook for students to provide them with clear instructions, guidelines and expectations for their thesis work
4. In general, the SER for this section presents too much information that is unrelated to the topic under evaluation. This practice makes the evaluation more difficult and more likely to fail. Particularly important for future accreditation applications is to completely rewrite the section and have it reflect only the relevant information for the evaluation.

**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.

Participation of staff in self-evaluation refers to the active involvement of employees in assessing their own performance and of the programme itself. It should also involve staff members reflecting on their work, identifying strengths, areas of development, collaboration for achieving the set goals and is an example of staff taking ownership of their work to contribute to the overall quality improvement of the programme. The respective section of the SER did not involve information on how staff participates in ongoing self-evaluation and reporting. Instead emphasis was made on the use of ISO 9001 Certification process for assuring and improving the quality and efficiency of the educational process in general. While ISO 9001 Certification involves self-evaluation, it is not a guarantee that all staff participate in self-evaluation. Considering that the MSc program under review is a new programme, the ET had no evidence that self-evaluation of staff within the framework of ISO 9001 Certification was done in relation to this programme too. Notwithstanding this, quality assurance processes of the programme should go beyond certification and incorporate a robust system of internal evaluation, continuous improvement, and stakeholder engagement, which was difficult to be evidenced for the ET. The faculty plans to conduct periodical self-evaluations of academics and administrative staff for the programme but this has not yet been undertaken. According to the Quality Regulation policy, staff involvement in self-evaluation is identified at the initial stage only, when the programme is still being developed. This implies that once the program is established, staff members may not have ongoing opportunities to actively participate in self-evaluation processes. This limited involvement in self-evaluation might hinder the effectiveness of continuous quality improvement efforts. The emphasis of the Quality Regulation on internal review being initiated by the faculty suggests that staff input is primarily sought during formal evaluation periods rather than as an ongoing practice. This approach needs to be addressed as it may result in a lack of staff engagement and ownership in the quality improvement processes. Therefore, it is necessary that regular communication channels are established to facilitate staff engagement in reporting quality-related issues and sharing best practices.

As for participation of staff in self-evaluation as an ongoing practice, the SER lacked critical reflection of staff on past performance and goal-setting for future improvement of the programme. In the feedback report that has been provided by the faculty as the additional evidence, it was noted that on average only 44% of staff agreed strongly that they value interaction with colleagues, while 41% of staff agreed to this statement strongly. This finding can have implications for staff participation in self-evaluation and collaboration for improvement; when staff members do not value interaction with colleagues, there is a reduced likelihood of them engaging in a meaningful discussions and sharing perspectives during self-evaluation processes. Therefore, it would be good to encourage open communication and establish forums for knowledge sharing and collaboration. To foster sense of community, it would also be important to involve in this process all staff members, including Doctorate and MA degree holders equally, as these groups reported lowest level of appreciation of interaction with colleagues (5.42% and 15,67% respectively).

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

The faculty has developed some Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to evaluate the quality and improvement of the programme. These KPIs relate to staff, students, graduates

and external stakeholders. But they are formulated in a way that they are not measurable and time bound, so it is not clear how they will be used for monitoring, evaluation and planning.

According to the SER, it is planned to conduct annual review of programme for monitoring and analyze the data received from feedback of students, graduates and stakeholders. These activities are included in UBT Quality Regulation and Quality Manual. But since the programme has not yet been launched the ET only reviewed existing surveys through which feedback from different stakeholders will be used and applied for evaluation and planning. It should be noted that some of these surveys only provide generic information that may not be effective for evaluation and planning. For example, graduates survey involves questions on whether students have undertaken internship during their studies and in which sector, graduates general satisfaction on Career Service etc. While these questions may give information on general trends their effectiveness may be limited and may not offer specific guidance on how to improve the educational programme. It is suggested to use these surveys for gathering more specific and comprehensive data capturing crucial aspects such as relevance of coursework, skills acquired, impact of the programme on long-term career outcomes etc. Further it would be needed to integrate data on individual experiences and challenges faced too by students/graduates in evaluation and planning for improvement. This would be particularly relevant for improvement of planning and evaluation process since MSc students typically have more advanced knowledge and specialization (and this kind of professional experience and maturity has been evidenced during interviews with students from similar Masters programme of the faculty).

Evaluation and planning processes for improvement should also be addressing research component of the programme. Feedback from MSc students can shed light on the research process, supervision quality, and support received. So, it is recommended that normal planning process of the programme, also include feedback from programme students particularly for enhancing the research experience and ensuring effective guidance and mentorship for MSc students.

**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. However, while the institution has established quality assurance mechanisms and guidelines, their practical implementation and effectiveness can only be determined once the program is launched and operational. At this stage, the ET has not been able to assess if these processes are effectively implemented since the program has not yet been launched.

**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.**

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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. General satisfaction surveys that UBT College plans to implement for the programme will provide overview of quality issues. However, (as it is discussed in the following section), it is also important to ensure comprehensive quality assessment that will provide not only general overview of quality issues but will enable getting more specific 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 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 measurable and time-bound criteria. Without specific, measurable, and time-bound KPIs, it becomes challenging to track progress, assess achievements, and drive continuous improvement effectively.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the college holds ISO 9001 and EFQM certificates that indicates that the institution has established quality management systems and follows certain recognized frameworks; while it is commendable to have these certifications, they 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, along with utilizing perspectives of students many of them already have professional experience in the field. This could particularly be relevant for developing mechanism/tool for assuring the quality of the research component (overall quality of the research process and research experience, supervision quality, support received etc.).

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

While it is commendable that the faculty has developed quality assurance questionnaires and intends to collect survey data from students, graduates, and employers, it is important to note that the program has not yet been launched, and therefore, there are no students or graduates to provide feedback. The ET also found that quality evaluations of programmes in general are

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not made publicly available by the faculty that raises doubts that the same approach can be applied to the programme after its launch. 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, in this early stage, employers could only speak about the need for the program in general terms and were not be able to provide specific insights into the program's appropriateness or effectiveness. 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 and willingness to collaborate with the institution. 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.

***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.***

The quality assurance framework of UBT College involves consideration of different outcomes. However, as the program under review has not yet been launched, it is impossible to see these data and assess the relevant outcomes. Due to this the ET found evaluation of the programme with the requirements of this standard as not applicable and did not include it in the calculation of the compliance percentage of the programme with this standard.

***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. But as the programme has not yet been launched the ET found review of the programme with this standard requirement as not applicable and excluded it from the final calculation of compliance percentage.

***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. It could also be helpful to engage in external benchmarking activities to compare practices of peer institutions in relation to

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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 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
<i>Standard 2.1.</i> All staff participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity.		X
<i>Standard 2.2.</i> Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes.		X
<i>Standard 2.3.</i> Quality assurance processes deal with all aspects of program planning and delivery, including services and resources provided by other parts of the institution.	X	
<i>Standard 2.4.</i> 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	
<i>Standard 2.5.</i> Quality assurance processes ensure both that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance.		X
<i>Standard 2.6.</i> Survey data is being collected from students, graduates and employers; the results of these evaluations are made publicly available.	N/A	
<i>Standard 2.7.</i> 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.	N/A	

<i>Standard 2.8.</i> 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.	N/A	
<i>Standard 2.9.</i> The quality assurance arrangements for the program are themselves regularly evaluated and improved.		X

**Compliance level:** (33%) Partially complied

**ET recommendations:**

1. Establish regular communication channels to facilitate engagement of all staff in self-evaluation and reporting on quality-related issues and sharing best practices
2. For improving effectiveness of evaluation and planning process for improvement, it is suggested to use surveys for graduates for gathering more specific and comprehensive data capturing crucial aspects such as relevance of coursework, skills acquired, impact of the programme on long-term career outcomes etc.
3. For improving effectiveness of evaluation and planning process for improvement is is suggested to use surveys for external stakeholders that may provide insights into the practical relevance of the program, industry expectations, and areas where the curriculum could be strengthened to better align with professional needs.
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 internships 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. Evaluation and planning processes for improvement should also be addressing research component of the programme by engaging with students to learn on their perspectives on research process, supervision quality, and support received; it is recommended that normal planning process of the programme, also include feedback from programme students particularly for enhancing the research experience and ensuring effective guidance and mentorship
8. After the launch of the programme ensure transparency and accountability, by making quality evaluations publicly available (if necessary, in anonymized form) that can allow stakeholders, including prospective students, to access relevant information about the program's performance and outcomes
9. 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 their evaluation of graduates' performance, job readiness, and alignment with industry needs, ensure to include questions that



specifically address the program's contribution to graduates' skill sets and their preparedness to meet industry demands in terms of research skills and expertise

10. Periodically review and update policies and procedures for quality assurance, considering their effectiveness; 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;
11. 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."

In the SER, although the description of conditions of employment are described, once again the table with the information about the academic staff related to the program presents some discrepancies. The program provides CVs for 44 individuals, and in contrast, the table contains information for only 35 individuals (considering the permanent staff, FT and PT). The individuals not included in the table in the SER are:

- Diellza Berisha
- Edrina Gashi
- Lavdim Menxhiqi
- Valdrin Haxhiu
- Ramiz Hoxha
- Rexhep Shaqiri
- Vesa Morina
- Visar Krelani
- Zhilbert Tafa

Therefore, there is a discrepancy of 9 out of 44, amounting to over 20% of the academic staff. It is possible that there has been a mix in between both programs under accreditation because there were discrepancies identified in both. Moreover, another hint that the list is outdated is given by the fact that all personnel listed as part-time have all their contracts expired! Nevertheless, each program is to be evaluated individually, and thus it is due to this very significant discrepancy that the standard cannot be considered as fulfilled.

**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 provides the following information. Out of 36 academic staff (in the list there are actually only 35) 84.8% are PhD, 3% are PhD candidates and 12.1% are MSc. In reality, according to their own list the distribution is 85.7%, 2.9% and 11.4% respectively, which is only a small deviation, but it also the SER presents a distribution for 39 staff rather than 36 (or the actually presented 35).

The legislation refers to the qualifications required to occupy the respective positions. That being said, the SER goes on to address another requirement more relevant to Standard 3.4, and does not really provide the relevant information to evaluate the standard. This must be changed for future accreditation applications.

**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 the limit of positions allowed, 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 88.6% of the staff presented in Figure 5 are full time employees, and the remaining 11.4% 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 30 staff with PhD associated with the program under evaluation. In this case, only 2 of those 30 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 11) with the name of 3 people, one of which has a PhD (Sami Gashi) that has been declared as industrial chemical in Figure 5 but somehow is now cited as electrical engineer. A look at his CV indeed shows that his background is rather related to chemical engineering. One wonders why would you choose 3 individuals at all, when only 2 were needed to cover for the 120 credits of the program, then chose these particular 3 individuals only to give the qualifications of one of them incorrectly (and on top of that, have them numbered from 1 to 2 although they are 3).

Out of the individuals in the list of Figure 11 there are enough PhDs to cover for the standard requirement. However the mistakes present in the SER make it really difficult to make a case for the standard being met.

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. In addition, students did mention that their feedback regarding the distribution of courses had been taken into account.

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.

Standard	Compliance based on the review made by the student expert	
	Yes	No
<i>Standard 3.1.</i> 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
<i>Standard 3.2.</i> The teaching staff must comply with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative Instruction on Accreditation.	X	
<i>Standard 3.3.</i> 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	
<i>Standard 3.4.</i> 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	
<i>Standard 3.5.</i> 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	
<i>Standard 3.6.</i> Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties.	X	
<i>Standard 3.7.</i> 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	
<i>Standard 3.8.</i> 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	
<i>Standard 3.9.</i> Strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials.	X	

<i>Standard 3.10.</i> Teachers retired at age limit or for other reasons lose the status of full-time teachers and are considered part-time teachers.	<b>X</b>	
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**Compliance level:** 90% Fully compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. The list of academic staff currently does not represent the CV’s provided, and does not reflect the numbers presented in the SER. This is a type of unforced error that should not happen. Careful consideration should take place in following accreditation applications. In general, the lists presented in this section have a lot of numbering issues, starting at random numbers and skipping numbers also. This might have led to the confusion on the total number of academic staff mentioned, causing discrepancies in all instances in which the number of academic staff was relevant.
2. For standard 3.2, the correct legislation should be referred to and mentioned with clear reference to the law in question. Thereafter, the relevant information on the topic should be provided so the evaluation can accurately take place. Making reference to the incorrect legislation pieces and providing irrelevant information sharply hinders the evaluation effort.
3. On Standard 3.5, a reasoning should be given to the amount of individuals presented (in the current case, explain why 3 individuals and not 2, the required, or 6, another random number) as response to the standard. Also, as a reasoning for the selection of such individuals, why the specific staff was named in that table? Finally, MAKE SURE that the information presented in the table is accurate. The huge mistakes made in a 3 row table are hard to understand.
4. In general, the corresponding section of the SER, as in previous sections, contained a lot of information that was irrelevant to the evaluation of the standards. A shorter and more concise response tailored address to each of the standards in a literal and specific manner would do wonders for the evaluation and the institution’s overall performance in the accreditation process.

**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 further presents information about specialization options for the master's program, thus providing an additional channel of selected development for the students. Considering the aforementioned, this standard can be considered as 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.
- 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 and meet the determination of the general and specific competencies. In turn, the SER presents an extensive list of learning outcomes, 34 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 repetition, for

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example: “An ability to communicate effectively”, “An ability to communicate effectively with a range of audiences”, “The ability to make professional written and oral communication presentations”, all of which effectively mean the same. That being said, it can be inferred that that the standard is 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. For example, the using of different spacing formats, different indentation levels within the same course syllabus, different color schemes, aleatory presence (or absence) of the symbol “%” when shares are presented, etc. 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 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 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. In the case of the master’s program, further emphasis was made in strengthening the design capabilities of the students.

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.

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. In addition, the SER provides a degree of detail on the evaluation protocol and process for thesis work, necessary to complete and graduate from the program. The protocols and requirements are available within the online environment of UBTC, as well as the tracking of the grades.

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, and the corrected syllabus reflects this suggestion, thus the standard can be considered as met.

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 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

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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 practitioners 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 review meeting, thus fulfilling the standard.

Standard	Compliance based on the review made by the student expert	
	Yes	No
<i>Standard 4.1.</i> 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	
<i>Standard 4.2.</i> 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
<i>Standard 4.3.</i> 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	

<i>Standard 4.4.</i> 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.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 4.5.</i> 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.	<b>NA</b>	<b>NA</b>
<i>Standard 4.6.</i> 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.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 4.7.</i> 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.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 4.8.</i> 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.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 4.9.</i> 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.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 4.10.</i> Policies and procedures include actions to be taken in to dealing with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or inconsistently assessed.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 4.11.</i> 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.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 4.12.</i> In order to facilitate the practice stages, the higher education institution signs cooperation agreements, contracts or other documents with institutions/organizations/practical training units.	<b>X</b>	

**Compliance level:** 91% Fully 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. For several standards in a row in this section, the relevant information to the standard under evaluation was presented in the section before, highlighting a potential confusion during the drafting process of the SER. For clarity, in future accreditation rounds this should be corrected.
3. Regarding the Syllabi, the syllabus for the course “Energy Storage Technologies” appears to have some major formatting issues. In its current form it is quite difficult to understand the distribution of teaching methods and should be corrected.
4. 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.

## **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 program of study is open to students that have completed a Master studies in Environmental Energy and Engineering and relevant fields (Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Computer Engineering, Civil Engineering, Physics, Environmental Engineering, Mechatronics and other Energy related fields). The SER also states that those interested to join the program should normally have a Master degree in natural sciences and that students with grades 7.5/10 and higher are directly considered for admission into the programme. Later on the institution clarified that there was a technical error in the SER. Further, 5.2 section of the SER mentions that applicants to the programme need to submit Master's Degree Diploma and CV. The ET team assumes that this too can be a technical error and BA degree thesis had to be mentioned in the SER but it is still unclear why reference is made to scores 7.5/10 and higher when 100-point grading is used at BA level studies in Kosovo. Further, it is not clear how applicants having grades 7.5/10 are identified to be directly considered for admission into the programme.

Another ambiguity in relation to admissions was raised from the Students Handbook, which (specifically on page 14) mentions role of Rector in specific cases for study conditions that are not advertised in the competition. However, the exact nature of these study conditions are ambiguous. So, it is recommended that if this statement is related to admissions the role of the Rector in addressing such cases, including the procedures to be followed and the criteria to be applied need to be further clarified.

**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, applicants to the programme should possess BA degree which also implies having school graduation diploma.

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

The faculty plans to enroll 150 students to the programme annually, which means that in the second year after the launch of the programme there will be 300 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 6:1 which indicates a relatively favorable situation, as there are fewer students per staff member. However, the faculty also runs a Bachelor's program and Level 5 programme in the same field, the latter enrolling 70 students per year that may result in a significant increase in student numbers. This increase may pose challenges in terms of maintaining the same level of student-centeredness particularly in terms of research of project components, as faculty members will need to allocate time for supervising student research projects and theses and thus the number of staff should consider the availability of faculty members for individualized research guidance. This standard can only be considered as fulfilled taking a limited number of students much lower than the one requested in the accreditation form. Considering the estimations that will be presented in section 7.4, the number of students that can be admitted to the program will be limited to 30 per year. The institution clarified that lab capacities provided for the ET refer to the current situation and that the institution can enroll 150 students per year. But the ET cannot consider this as the review is conducted considering currently available resources.

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

The programme has not yet been launched and the ET was not able to see how feedback to students is actually implemented. But the faculty has in place the system that allows students to see their grades within 7 – 14 days, considering the number of students in the group. 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 by the 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 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 yet been launched, 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. 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, 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 to appeals and complaints are publicly available, promoted to all those concerned, and enforced equitably. Regarding the right to complaints and academic appeals, it is concerning that according to the SER information on

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Complaints and Appeals procedure is given in Student Handbook but actually, the Student Handbook does not include information on this. The Student Handbook only mentions that the function of Faculty Coordinator is to scrutinize complaints regarding academic regulations in the studies, Legal Office deals with complaints in relation to administrative services and staff but students are advised to submit complaints to Deans Office of the Faculty. Even though the faculty has submitted description of Appeals Procedure, there is no mentioning of it in Students Handbook.

It is important that Students Handbook and respective regulations of the College make distinction between students right to complaints and students right to appeals. A complaint is a formal expression of dissatisfaction regarding a particular issue or incident the goal of which is to resolve the issue or seek and explanation for the issue. While an appeal is a formal request made by student to review a decision or judgment that has already been made, and which student thinks is incorrect, unfair, or against their best interests. As such the goal of the Appeal from the perspective of student is to change it or to have it reconsidered. It is necessary to explain the rights of students for both complaints and appeals in respective regulations of the college and familiarize students with it. Further it is recommended to provide adequate support and guidance to student throughout the appeals and complaints process. This may include and not limited to the access to advisors or advocates who can help them understand the procedure, gather evidence, and articulate their concerns effectively.

***Standard 5.10. The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study 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 around 56% 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 11% 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 11% of the books were published during the most recent period of 2017-2021. 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 Environmental 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,

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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 Environmental 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 that can enable them to be successful in their future careers nationally and internationally.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
<i>Standard 5.1.</i> There is a clear and formally adopted admission procedure at institutional level that the study program respects when organising students' recruitment. Admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied for all students.		<b>X</b>
<i>Standard 5.2.</i> All students enrolled in the study program possess a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent document of study, according to MEST requirements.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 5.3.</i> The study groups are dimensioned so as to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process.		<b>X</b>
<i>Standard 5.4.</i> Feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments is given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed.	<b>N/A</b>	
<i>Standard 5.5.</i> The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 5.6.</i> Flexible treatment of students in special situations is ensured with respect to deadlines and formal requirements in the program and to all examinations.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 5.7.</i> Records of student completion rates are kept for all courses and for the program as a whole and included among quality indicators.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 5.8.</i> Effective procedures are being used to ensure that work submitted by students is original.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 5.9.</i> Students' rights and obligations are made publicly available, promoted to all those concerned and enforced equitably; these will include rights to appeals		<b>X</b>
<i>Standard 5.10.</i> The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs are clearly regulated in formal internal documents	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 5.11.</i> 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		<b>X</b>

**Compliance level:** 60% Partially compliant

### **ET recommendations:**

1. Clarify admission requirements and ensure all applicants, regardless of their educational background, have a clear understanding of the admission requirements and expectations
2. 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
3. Provide resources for maintaining the same level of student-centeredness for research project components and individualized research guidance considering the workload that staff has in programmes of the same field at Level 5 and BA level
4. Incorporate information and metrics for assessment in the syllabi of courses, along with assessment rubric, to facilitate transparency and consistency in grading and enable students understanding the criteria by which they will be assessed
5. 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
6. Ensure that the Code of Ethics explains that academic integrity relates to all aspects of academic work, including research, assignments, exams, and collaboration. Work on fostering a culture of academic integrity and responsible conduct of research
7. Explain the rights of students for both - complaints and appeals in respective regulations of the college and familiarize students with these documents. Further, it is recommended to provide adequate support and guidance to student throughout the appeals and complaints process. This may include and not limited to the access to advisors or advocates who can help them understand the procedure, gather evidence, and articulate their concerns effectively.
8. Incorporate a greater proportion of recent publications, enabling students to stay informed about the latest developments and emerging trends in the 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 section, 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). Furthermore, the SER cites 27 distinct areas related to the program that have already produced publications. 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;
- 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 three 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.

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

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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 34 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 appears that the list is not updated, very few staff members (9 out of the 34 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. In this regard, the SER lists six different ways in which the students can engage in

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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 through 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
<i>Standard 6.1.</i> The study program has defined scientific/applied research objectives (on its own or as part of a research center or interdisciplinary program), which are also reflected in the research development plan of the institution; sufficient financial, logistic and human resources are allocated for achieving the proposed research objectives.	X	
<i>Standard 6.2.</i> 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	
<i>Standard 6.3.</i> 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	
<i>Standard 6.4.</i> The academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity.	X	
<i>Standard 6.5.</i> 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	
<i>Standard 6.6.</i> Research is validated through: scientific and applied research publications, artistic products, technological transfer through consultancy centers, scientific parks and other structures for validation.	X	
<i>Standard 6.7.</i> 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
<i>Standard 6.8.</i> Academic and research staff publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full-time staff.	X	
<i>Standard 6.8.*</i> 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	
<i>Standard 6.9.</i> Policies are established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.	X	

<i>Standard 6.10.</i> Students are engaged in research projects and other activities.	<b>X</b>	
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**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 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 most 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. The list of publications should refer only to the academic staff cited in the first section of the SER. Presenting publications of staff that is not affiliated with the program will result in unfavourable assessments.

6. 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 (sometimes is just a link). 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 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 establish 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,
- Lab and experiments were considered to take 2 hours units,
- Student teams for lab courses can form teams no bigger than 2 (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 the lab experience is paramount. With the abovementioned in mind, the program capacity by the limitations of laboratory is calculated as follows:

$$LWS = \frac{(D_{lah} * 5)}{LoE} \quad (1)$$

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:

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

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 147 students for the labs of the program, which rounded up to 150 (considering the occasional dropout) it would mean that the current labs have capacity for **ONLY 75 students admitted per year** (so at the second year the laboratory limit of 60 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;
- 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
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	<b>made by the student expert</b>	
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<i>Standard 7.1.</i> 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.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 7.2.</i> 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.		<b>X</b>
<i>Standard 7.3.</i> 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.		<b>X</b>
<i>Standard 7.4.</i> 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	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 7.5.</i> 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.		<b>X</b>
<i>Standard 7.6.</i> The infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the program is adapted to students with special needs.	<b>X</b>	

**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. The plan and information should refer specifically to the program, rather than just to the institution or faculty.
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. This has just been an error of omission from the SER-writing body.
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 that information exists and could be provided. This must be a learning experience for future accreditation applications of this and any other program. As suggested in this evaluation report, the SER should clearly define the seating capacities and relevant book numbers. It is for the evaluators to decide if those seating places are sufficient, so statements like “Several seats in the reading rooms correspond to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program” do not make a case for the standard. Similar story with the books, compose a list that contains the name of the books relevant to the program, their bibliographic information and the number of specimens of each. Similarly as to the sitting places point, a statement such as “A book stock within its own library with enough books to cover the needs of all students in the cycle and year of study the respective discipline is provided for” is not evidentiary enough, numbers should be provided so the expert team can evaluate.
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 (as stated in the lab capacity filled template file), 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 audit visit, and could result in a limitation of the number of students that can register for the program. This is the reason behind the request of a layout plane of the labs showing clearly the seating capacity was originally requested. The pictures presented instead can be much more subjective.

### 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.

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Compliance level</b>
1. Mission, objectives and administration	(83%) Substantially compliant
2. Quality management	(33%) Partially compliant
3. Academic staff	(90%) Substantially compliant
4. Educational process content	(91%) Fully compliant
5. Students	(60%) Partially compliant
6. Research	(91 %) Substantially compliant
7. Infrastructure and resources	(50%) Partially compliant
<b>Overall compliance</b>	<b>Partially compliant</b>

**Compliance level:** Partially compliant.

In conclusion, in line with the Manual requirements, the Expert Team recommends decline the accreditation of the level 7 Environmental Energy and Engineering, MSc program.

