



## ***UBT COLLEGE***

### **INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION**

### **REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM**

*26 November, 2024*

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## INTRODUCTION

### Sources of information for the Report:

- *SER*
- *Additional documents*
- *Site-visit*

### Criteria used for institutional and program evaluations

- *Accreditation Manual*

### Site visit schedule

Institutional Re-accreditation Procedure at UBT College	
On site evaluation:	<b>20 November 2024</b>
Expert Team:	Prof. Dr. Melita Kovacevic Dr. Mauro Zarrelli Ms. Marija Vasilevska
Coordinators of the KAA:	Shkelzen Gerxhaliu Fjolle Ajeti

Time	Meeting	Participants/Comments
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<b>09:00 – 09:55</b>	Meeting with the management of the institution ( <i>no slide presentation is allowed, the meeting is intended as a free discussion</i> )	Edmond Hajrizi, Visar Hoxha, Binak Beqaj, Kestrim Avdimetaj, Ermal Lubishtani, Bekim Marmullaku, Selman Berisha
<b>10:00 – 10:45</b>	Meeting with Quality assurance representatives and administrative services	Dugagjin Sokoli, Ylber Limani, Artan Tahiri, Artiane Fazliu, Elinda Krasniqi, Murat Retkoceri, Mirlinda Jashanica, Lirigzona Morina
<b>10:50 – 11:35</b>	Meeting with Deans of Faculties (Head of programmes in case of smaller colleges)	Agron Thaci, Blerton Abazi, Muhamet Gervalla, Fisnik Laha, Visar Krelani, Xhemajl Mehmeti, Shpend Dragusha, Deniz Celcima,, Hajdi Xhixha, Armend Ymeri, Ahmet Maloku, Alma Lama, Besnik Qehaja, Fidan Feka
<b>11:40 – 12:40</b>	Lunch break	
<b>12:40 – 13:30</b>	Visiting tour of the facilities and infrastructure	Fisnik Laha, Lirigzona Morina, Murat Retkoceri, Elmi Kelmendi
<b>13:30 – 14:15</b>	Meeting with teaching staff	Egzone Osmanaj, Arta Mulliqi, Gonxhe Beqiri, Hyrie Koraqi, Besa Jagxhiu, Alfred Marleku, Jorida Xhafaj, Elmi Kelmendi, Njomëza Zejnullahu, Liridon Kryeziu, Besnik Skenderi, Sokol Loci
<b>14:20 – 15:05</b>	Meeting with students	Endrit Hasani (SHKI) Fjolla Krasniqi (Arkitekturë) Elion Brada (SI) Anila Bislimi (Biokimi) Sadedin Nika (Ndertimtari) Albulena Morina (Mekatronike) Fisnik Ferizi (MBE)

		Hana Ferati (Law).
<b>15:10 – 15:55</b>	Meeting with graduates	<p>Abian Morina (SHKI)</p> <p>Blerta Vula Rizvanolli (Arkitekturë),</p> <p>Dion Bardhi (Shkencat e Ushqimit)</p> <p>Adonis Gerxhaliu (Mekatronike)</p> <p>Shpat Musliu (MBE)</p> <p>Gertë Berisha (Law)</p> <p>Gzim Ademi (SI)</p>
<b>16:00 – 16:45</b>	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders	<p>Ideal ismajli (SHKI)</p> <p>Driton Kryeziiu (Ark/Ndertim)</p> <p>RC Cola –Shqiprim Jashari (Shkencst e Ushqimit)</p> <p>Shkelqim Kabashi (Laboratori mjekësor PINEA)</p> <p>Sakip Imeri (SCAAK dhe EK Consulting)</p> <p>Ramush Bardiqi (Judge in the Commercial Court).</p> <p>Fatos Fondaj - Industry - Katrori ITS (Sistemet e Informacionit)</p>
<b>16:50 – 17:00</b>	Internal meeting – Expert Team and KAA	
<b>17:00 – 17:10</b>	Closing meeting with the management of the institution	

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

UBT College is a private higher education institution, established in 2004. During its twenty years of functioning it has developed as a comprehensive higher education institution that offers number of programmes. It has reach international cooperation and number of partnerships.

As of the academic year 2024/2025, UBT College serves more than 10,000 students across its bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs. UBT offers over 50 accredited study programmes in fields of engineering, computer science, law, political science, media, health sciences, economics, and architecture.

## **INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION**

### **1. PUBLIC MISSION AND INSTITUTIONAL OBJECTIVES (ESG 1.1)**

**Standard 1.1 The higher education institution has a well-defined mission statement that comprises three main pillars: teaching, research, and community service and it is publicly available.**

UBT College fulfils all the criteria of a well developed and presented mission of the institution. According to the mission, UBT College has a clear identity of a higher education institution focused on teaching, research and service to society and has all the accompanying documents that are relevant for the institutional functioning. It is a recognised institution at national level, but also among international institutions and partners.

The mission statement is the result of the joint work of internal and external stakeholders, and reflects the impact of the various partners and their feedback. received by the UBT either directly during the process of developing the mission statement or as a continuous exchange with different groups of stakeholders.

**Standard 1.2 The institutional mission is clearly reflected in the strategic plan, decision making and long-term institutional objectives.**

The mission statement serves as a solid foundation for the development of strategic planning and other relevant documents necessary to enable the institution to function and operate at all levels. It also served to define goals for institutional development, taking into account the different pillars of the mission. Following the mission statement, the UBT proved to be able to have a systematic approach to formulating, approving and implementing the mission, reviewing it and at the same time identifying mission achievements by analysing the achievements of its strategic plan. UBT's mission has defined and differentiated medium- and

long-term goals, such as academic programmes vs. global partnership and contribution to Kosovo's socio-economic development. The mission complies with the usual international standards and is available on the institutional website.

According to the SER, the mission of UBT contributes to the commitment to education and research ; active community engagement; preparing leaders for the 21st century; focus on innovation and creativity; and global and local impact.

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant

## **2. STRATEGIC PLANNING, GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION (ESG 1.1, ESG 1.6)**

**Standard 2.1 The HEI has developed a comprehensive strategic plan that covers all aspects of its operations for a minimum of five years. This plan includes teaching, learning, research, artistic work, quality assurance, student services, investment in infrastructure, and community service initiatives, leadership, HR, internationalization etc. The plan was created in consultation with both internal and external stakeholders to ensure it meets the needs of all parties involved.**

UBT College has demonstrated a clear understanding of the importance of structured strategic planning promptly addressing the previous recommendation for this section. Appropriate and effective effort have been put in developing a clear and structured strategic planning, breaking it down into short (1-2 years), medium (3-5 years), and long-term (beyond 5 years) objectives. This comprehensive timeframe allows for adaptive responses to immediate needs for units while addressing future challenges of the overall UBT.

In details, short-term goals (1-2 years) address immediate needs, such as curriculum updates and enhancements in teaching quality, while medium-term goals (3-5 years) focus on institutional growth, including research capacity building and partnerships. Long-term goals (beyond five years) aim at transforming UBT into a regional and international leader in higher education and research. This is positively assessed and well reported within the submitted Self Evaluation Report.

The active updates based on internal and external stakeholders involvement through groups, interviews and consultation have indeed ensure input collection to enrich the strategic plan and aligns it with broader institutional goals operational developments and formative evaluations show adaptability to internal and external changes. In addition, UBT's strategic plan has been integrated with its budget processes, allowing for regular financial adjustments based on evolving priorities. While responsiveness has been ready and effective still the lack of a formal schedule for updates may create inconsistencies in revisions, leaving some aspects outdated. The strategic plan of UBT is comprehensive, integrating clear strategic goals aligned with the institution's mission of academic excellence, innovation, and societal contribution. The

organization and the content of the Strategic Plan is well structured presenting concrete operational plans breaking down these goals into specific, actionable steps with defined timeframes, ensuring accountability. The presence of monitoring mechanisms, such as KPIs, allows for regular assessment of progress, ensuring that the institution can measure success effectively and this is also a suitable action at the previous evaluation recommendation. .

The strategic plan operates through a detailed action plan ensuring a practical and results-driven approach; it is suitably framed within a clear timelines and resource requirements from the different units of the UBT systems to both achieve the targets and efficiency. The distribution of responsibilities across all levels of management ensures that the institution operates cohesively, with each department and individual contributing to overall success and this is further enhanced by the implementation and use of monitoring tools, including periodic reviews and feedback loops.

For the onsite meeting has emerged that training programs tailored to managerial and administrative staff are indeed required. It is not clear how the UBT puts in place mechanism for collecting and incorporating feedback from all levels of management to refine the action plan.

As also reported in SER, the strategic plan is linked to the information management system (IMS) and this results in a significant strength, enabling real-time monitoring and data-driven decision-making. The IMS acquires and consolidates data from various institutional functions, such as academics, research, and finances, providing an overview of operational progress.

UBT has established a robust system for monitoring KPIs across key domains, such as student enrolment for the teaching, research output to assess the research activities and financial performance to control and monitor the budget and its allocation. Stakeholder involvement in determining and reviewing KPIs is not sufficiently highlighted, moreover it is not clear how the KPI are linked with the KPI outcomes to quantify the incentives for departments and staff to drive performance improvements although incentives are foreseen and indicated.

## **Standard 2.2 The strategic planning is supported by the annual and long-term budgeting process, allowing for frequent updates and adjustments.**

UBT very well report and presents how strategic planning and financial management can be harmonized to drive institutional growth and at the same time ensure adaptability in case of critical issues. Implementing some articulated advanced reporting systems, robust risk assessments, and dynamic budgeting practices, UBT has adopted and within the SER clearly emerges a suitable approach to achieve its strategic objectives but at the same time to be prepared and resilient to changing circumstances.

Strategic Planning is well integrated with the financial management and this is evidenced within the related section of the SER. The annual budgeting is approach in details with reference to specific indicators which allow UBT to be at the same time dynamic and transparent securing long-term sustainability



UBT's establishment of a comprehensive financial reporting and management integrating real-time financial analytics to monitor revenues, expenditures, and cash flows. The implementation of this approach enables timely adjustments, aligning financial activities with strategic goals, in addition regular financial reviews can contribute to mitigate deviations. It is reported in SER and also confirmed during the meeting with UBT stakeholder that financial reports are made available and accessible.

The dynamic nature of UBT's budgeting process is evident in its capacity for likely frequent updates and adjustments, moreover By aligning financial resources with key areas such as teaching excellence, research innovation, and infrastructure development, the institution ensures that its operational planning supports its long-term vision.

BT employs a robust system to monitor key performance indicators (KPIs) that reflect its strategic priorities, including metrics related to student enrolment, research outputs, and financial performance.

**Standard 2.3 The HEI has established a responsible, efficient, and effective internal organization structure, procedures and policies, with the involvement of stakeholders in decision-making.**

UBT College has established transparent and publicly available procedures for the election of its decision-makers and other elected positions, as outlined in the Regulation on Election Procedures for Governing Bodies and Key Decision-Making Positions

The regulation covers the election processes for various governing bodies and positions, including:

- ✓ Election of the Rector: The election process is initiated by the Academic Council, with final appointment by the Board of UBT College (Articles 2-5).
- ✓ Election of Deputy/Vice Rectors: Nominated by the Rector and appointed by the Board based on Academic Council recommendations (Articles 6-8).
- ✓ Election of the Board of UBT College: Members are appointed by the founder, based on recommendations from the existing Board (Articles 9-10).
- ✓ Election of the Steering Council: Representatives from academic and administrative units are elected through internal processes (Articles 11-12).
- ✓ Election of Deans and Heads of Departments: Candidates are nominated by Faculty Councils or department staff, with final appointment by the Rectorate (Articles 13-16).
- ✓ Election of the Secretary of UBT College: Appointed by the Board following an internal review (Articles 17-19).
- ✓ Election of Unit Managers: Nominated by unit staff and appointed by the Board (Articles 20-21).

All regulations are available on line and the link was indicated in the SER.

The delineation of the roles and competencies of owners and management prevents conflicts of interest and ensures academic independence and this is outlined in the Statute (March 2020) and well indicated in the SER. In particular, the owners focus on strategic and financial oversight, while academic affairs are managed autonomously by the academic council and other governance bodies, preserving academic freedom.

The inclusion of academic staff, administrative staff, and students in consultative and decision-making bodies fosters a participatory governance model. As reported in SER:

- the **Academic Council** (Article 26 of Statute) includes student representatives, with one student elected from each faculty, alongside administrative personnel like the Secretary of UBT College HEIPP, who is a permanent, non-voting member.
- the **Steering Council** (Article 27) includes both administrative personnel, such as the Secretary of Quality Assurance, Senior Financial Officer, and Senior Officer for Student Issues, and can invite a student representative when necessary or requested by a student organization.
- at the faculty level, the **Faculty Council** (Article 41) includes two student representatives delegated by the students of the faculty, along with business or institutional representatives and academic staff, ensuring comprehensive stakeholder engagement in faculty-level decisions.

Students are given voting rights. They are encouraged to actively participate in committees, ensuring that their voices are heard in key decisions related to curriculum, quality assurance, and institutional policies. This was also confirmed by the interesting meeting with the students meeting during the visit.

The process of electing student representatives is designed to be fair, transparent, and free from discrimination. The statute outlines that student representatives are elected by their peers through a democratic and inclusive process. This ensures that all students have the opportunity to participate in selecting their representatives without facing bias or discrimination.

Well-established structures, such as student councils and committees, provide a formal platform for student representation, supported by the UBT Statute (2020) and the Statute of the Student Organization (May 2019).

#### **Standard 2.4 The HEI has appropriate and sufficient administration that demonstrates effectiveness and supports the HEI in daily operations.**

The UBT demonstrates a strong foundation in administrative practices, with specialized staff, digital infrastructure, and competency development initiatives contributing to effective daily operations.

The administration is sufficient and specialized demonstrating effectiveness, and it supports the UBT internal stakeholders HEI in daily operations. Their roles are clearly defined fostering accountability and efficiency with a well-documented organogram and job descriptions which overlaps and inefficiencies while enabling smooth daily operations.

The UBT adoption of digital platforms for internal and external communication enhances efficiency and transparency. These platforms streamline processes like student registration, academic scheduling, and administrative correspondence. The implementation of these digital tools indeed reduces paperwork and ensures faster communication.

Administrative staff are continuously trained to adapt to new technologies and processes, nevertheless from the meeting on site it emerges that a more attention to the tailored continuous learning should be put. Training opportunities might not always be matching the real and necessary skill to acquire for the specific work position in administrative roles.

UBT implements performance evaluations for administrative staff and this ensures accountability and provides a basis for professional development.

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. Formalize a structured timeline (e.g., annual or biennial reviews) for updating the strategic plan with specific mechanisms and frequency of updates more detailed;*
- 2. If the strategical is very clearly and structured reported, the role of specific departments in implementing and monitoring strategic actions could be clarified to enhance accountability;*
- 3. Provide training for staff and faculty to maximize the effective use of IMS tools;*
- 4. Regular audits of job descriptions and responsibilities can help maintain clarity and prevent workload imbalances;*
- 5. Implement robust cybersecurity measures to ensure optimal use of digital platforms*
- 6. Develop role-specific training programs to address the unique needs of different administrative positions;*
- 7. Create structured mechanisms to regularly gather feedback from students and academic staff on administrative performance, ensuring that concerns are addressed promptly.*

### **3. FINANCIAL PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT (ESG 1.6)**

**Standard 3.1 The HEI demonstrates that it has sufficient financial resources in the short and medium term to reach its mission and objectives set out in the strategic plan and can demonstrate financial sustainability.**

UBT is a private higher education institution with sound finances and sufficient budget to carry out the activities planned according to the strategic plan. The finances are planned and distributed according to different pillars and objectives, and they include both medium-term as well as long-term objectives. The institution has a five-year budget plan with expressed flexibility to adapt to circumstances and potential different needs.

UBT is a financially sustainable institution and its finances allow it to be an efficient, modern and attractive learning environment capable of achieving its strategic objectives. The way in which finances are presented is transparent, easy to follow and undoubtedly supports institutional autonomy.

**Standard 3.2 The HEI ensures appropriate funding for educational activities.**

UBT is an institution with a clear ambition to be recognised as an excellent teaching and learning environment. In order to achieve this, the SER believes that it is of utmost importance

to fund all the programmes offered and that there are also plans to broaden the offer and open additional programmes in the future.

UBT works intensively with various partners, both within the national context and with relevant partners outside Kosovo. The diversified partnership could contribute financially, primarily through various projects and investments, but also indirectly to the quality of the education offered. The UBT has successfully managed to have a number of professional, contracted projects that are relevant to the local, national society, but at the same time contribute significantly to the overall institutional budget and available financial resources.

Significant, stable income comes from tuition fees, ensuring stable and sound financial situation.

**Standard 3.3. The HEI has officially approved a research budget that is sufficient to support its institutional research objectives, including funds for research equipment and facilities.**

Although the UBT has increased the budget for research in recent years, there is still a lack of investment and transparent competitive funding for performing research. Unfortunately, there are some misunderstandings, and not enough distinction is made between contract research and services and basic or applied research.

According to the comments received upon the submission of a draft report, it was emphasized that 'Basic and applied research is funded through the salaries and wages budget line, which constitutes the largest share of the overall budget at 44.13% (€6,200,640). Within this allocation, each professor's tenure contract includes 672 hours annually dedicated to research activities.'. Research cannot be funded by salaries, salaries or their part only means that staff are obliged to do research, no more and no less. This is how academic staff are paid for their work, but some academic staff are research active and some are not. The salary itself is no guarantee of actual research activity..

The UBT College has a five-year budget plan for project funding and the increase is significant, more than doubling over five years. This type of income will undoubtedly be relevant for the functioning of the institution and will allow it to carry out contract research, but it is still not focused on basic or applied research driven by the creativity of the individual or the team. This type of research also has strong limitations for having research productivity in terms of publishing scientific papers in relevant international research journals.

As stated in the SER "the college plans to invest in research infrastructure, strengthen industry partnerships, and boost participation in international research initiatives. This growth, driven by the institution's commitment to enhancing research capabilities, should make our

stakeholders feel optimistic about the college's future growth' is a futuristic perspective and may be achieved in the future.

**Standard 3.4 A senior governing body (or Specialized Office) is responsible for overseeing and managing the institution's budgeting and accounting functions. They ensure that financial auditing reports are regularly prepared and published.**

The UBT has a specially designed office, Finance office, which is responsible for institutional finance and the implementation and monitoring of the budget. The office is also responsible for internal auditing and the publication of reports, which are carried out on a regular basis. Financial office is a senior governing body reporting to the Management Board and it is led by its director.

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. Allocate more money for performing research; allocation should be defined differently, avoiding primarily financing the presentation on conferences;*
- 2. More investment is needed for research infrastructure;*
- 3. Students must have internships as an integral part of their training and receive payment for their work; even if this is not directly and fully financed by the institution, some kind of agreement must be made with industrial partners;*
- 4. Consider changing the name of the finance and budget office to make it more transparent and generic.*

**4. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, RESPONSIBILITY AND PUBLIC  
ACCOUNTABILITY MISSION AND INSTITUTIONAL OBJECTIVES (ESG 1.1, ESG 1.8)**

**Standard 4.1 The HEI has policies and effective mechanisms for monitoring unethical behavior and all the employees and students are informed thereof.**

UBT prioritizes academic integrity and freedom through comprehensive policies, including a Code of Ethics, a Regulation on Procedures Against Plagiarism, and a Generative AI Policy, all accessible on its website (<https://www.ubt-uni.net/en/ubt-en/about-ubt/regulations-and-policies/>) in a readable format. These policies outline expectations for ethical conduct and academic honesty, supported by tools like Turnitin for plagiarism detection and enforced through workshops, orientation sessions, and ongoing education. An Ethics Commission and faculty-level sub-committees ensure accountability and transparency in handling violations. UBT also provides resources such as advanced libraries, specialized laboratories, and access to scientific databases to support research and innovation. Written assignments are rigorously checked for plagiarism, with penalties applied based on severity, while the Generative AI Policy addresses ethical AI use in teaching and research, as Evaluation Team learned during the evaluation visit. Annual reports from the Ethics Committee and a clear procedure for intellectual property ownership further reinforce UBT's commitment to high ethical standards and academic excellence.

**Standard 4.2 The HEI ensures the availability of information on important aspects of its activities (teaching, scientific/artistic and social activities)**

From analysing the SER, data and information received during the evaluation visit and reviewing the UBT's website it can be concluded that UBT College demonstrates a strong commitment to transparency and accessibility. This commitment is applicable by providing detailed information across all aspects of its operations, including teaching, research, and student support services. Academic staff profiles, qualifications, and research interests are regularly updated and accessible on the official website, ensuring clarity and accountability.

The College outlines its teaching methodologies, learning outcomes, program structures, and assessment procedures to foster a better understanding of its academic offerings. Research activities are actively shared through platforms like the UBT Knowledge Center and the Research Information Management System (RIIMS), which provide updates on ongoing projects, collaborations, and significant outcomes.

UBT also ensures public access to student theses and detailed information on tuition fees, scholarships, and financial assistance through dedicated web pages. Social and extracurricular activities, graduate employment prospects, and student support services, such as the Career Center, further highlight UBT's dedication to student success. Additionally, institutional accreditation outcomes and other key updates are transparently communicated, reinforcing UBT's accountability to stakeholders.

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. *UBT should establish regular activities for promotion of the Code of Ethics among students and academic staff.*

**5. QUALITY MANAGEMENT (ESG 1.1, ESG 1.2, ESG 1.7, ESG 1.9)**

**Standard 5.1 The HEI has established and implemented a highly structured and efficient quality assurance and improvement system, which is continuously being improved.**

UBT has demonstrated a prompt commitment to establishing and continuously improve a structured and efficient quality assurance (QA) and improvement system. Operative and fundamental actions have been taken following the recommendations from previous accreditation.

The UBT QA system is now a well-structured, and continually improving implemented system that integrates strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, and resource investments. Since the previous accreditation, UBT has appointed a Director and four staff members at the central level of the Quality Office, adopting for each Faculty a Quality Coordinator responsible for QA and remote campuses are equipped with a Quality Officer and a Quality Commission, which report to the central QA Office for institutional QA and collaborate with faculty QA Coordinators for faculty-specific QA processes.

To maintain and enhance the performance of its QA system, UBT has established a comprehensive set of procedures to monitor, to evaluate and to improve, along with regular self-evaluations at institutional, thematic, and faculty levels to acquire necessary data, information and feedback to directly implement actionable quality improvement plans (QIPs). The QA functions are integrated across UBT, and in particular each Faculty conducts an Annual Internal Self-Evaluation Report, following the QA Manual of UBT. Whereas at central level, UBT produces a Comprehensive Internal Self-Evaluation Report every three years, carried out separately for teaching and learning, research, and administrative resources. So far, all thematic evaluations have been completed, except for the one on administrative resources. The structural foundation of UBT's QA system is the Quality Committee and Quality Management Office, which have been established as specialized units and they ensure that QA activities are systematically managed and that all stakeholders, including students, faculty, alumni, and industry representatives. The complex and the multilayer architecture for the UBT QA system with central unit and peripheral and also faculty-based units can result indeed

effectives but very prone to overload and reduced flexibility with concrete risk to become too much fragmented in its action.

**Standard 5.2 The HEI has quality policies and procedures that include the collection and analysis of relevant data, with the purpose of ensuring and improving the quality of all institutional activities (academic activity, student services, administration, etc.). These procedures include all stakeholders of the higher education institution (students and external stakeholders - employers, alumni, representatives of professional organizations, civil society organizations and internal stakeholders).**

UBT College has established robust mechanisms for the systematic collection and analysis of data related to its processes, resources, and outcomes. The institution employs a comprehensive approach that integrates feedback from various stakeholders, including students, faculty, alumni, and industry partners. The institution's commitment to data-driven decision-making is evident in its use of the Student Management Information System (SMIS), which plays a central role in tracking student performance, progression, and satisfaction. It is clear that UBT College tends to identify trends and areas for improvement analysing data and feedback from stakeholders ad example for curriculum adjustments that align more closely with labour market demands.

This iterative process of data collection, analysis, and action exemplifies a commitment to continuous improvement. The institution conducts regular surveys to assess student satisfaction with their programs, learning resources, and support services. These surveys provide valuable insights into the student experience and help identify areas where improvements can be made. The Career Office at UBT also is acting toward the monitoring of the career paths of graduates, collecting data on employment outcomes. As clearly emerged from the on site visit, UBT is committed to share statistical data with stakeholders, fostering a culture of accountability and continuous improvement. Very positively is assessed the central database that retains statistical data for quality monitoring and reporting of data related to student performance, progression, and overall academic success, accessible to all academic departments and administrative units. The involvement of all academic and administrative units in quality assurance procedures is a clear, and this is building the overall College quality management.

Active participation of students in quality assurance processes is presented within the SER but it was also clear by the meeting with students from different faculties. Student are engaged and encouraged to take part to various initiatives, such as regular feedback mechanisms, representation in quality assurance committees, and focus groups. Interesting is the organization of quality assurance awareness workshops, which educate students about the importance of quality management and their role in the process.

**Standard 5.3 The HEI established a formal process for the design and approval of its study programs.**

The SER indicates that UBT College has implemented a thorough internal quality assurance process for its study programs also following the recommendation of previous accreditation



process. This process is not merely a formality; it is a systematic approach that involves multiple stages of evaluation and feedback. Each study program undergoes rigorous scrutiny before it is formally approved by the institution to assess the alignment the UBT strategic goals, compliance with national and international standards, and responsiveness to stakeholder needs. The commitment to continuous improvement is evident in the institution's Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs), which are developed based on the findings from internal evaluations.

The SER outlines that UBT College has well-defined procedures and policies for the development and approval of study programs. Internal stakeholders, including faculty members and academic staff, play a critical role in the design and approval process. Moreover, the involvement of external stakeholders, such as industry representatives and past alumni, ensures that the programs are aligned with the needs of the job market.

Procedures and key indicators for monitoring the quality of study program delivery have been introduced to monitor how the programs are well-designed and implemented. All collected information are taken from student evaluations, course assessments, and feedback from faculty. Key performance indicators (KPIs) are also used to assess program delivery is a best practice in quality management, providing measurable benchmarks

**Standard 5.4 The HEI periodically monitors and reviews the study programs to ensure that the programs are in line with mission and the institutional strategy. The monitoring of the study programs involves active stakeholder participation.**

The SER indicates that UBT College has established clear procedures for monitoring, reviewing, and improving the quality of its study programs. Highlighted examples of improvements made based on stakeholder feedback have been included in SER. By actively seeking input from stakeholders, UBT College can identify areas for enhancement and implement changes that directly address the needs and expectations of its community still committed with the UBT plan and goals.

The periodic monitoring procedures at UBT College also include checks on the feasibility of the ECTS allocation, learning outcomes, and workload estimates ensuring that the academic structure of the programs is practical and suitable for students. These elements are regularly reviewed.

A strength of UBT College's quality management system is the active involvement and feedback from students, staff, alumni, and employers through various mechanisms, including questionnaires and focus groups. The involvement of alumni and employers in the monitoring process is crucial for ensuring that the study programs remain relevant and aligned with industry expectations.

Student practice or internships at UBT College rely on procedures for monitoring and improving the quality of these experiences; however, as emerged by the on site visit, the procedure poorly take into account former work of the students and remuneration for the working period if not in the form of travel re-fundings, additionally it is not clearly indicated

how the internships provide meaningful learning opportunities within the specific Faculty or academic objectives of the programs.  
continuous improvement.

The SER indicates that the outcomes of the monitoring processes are shared with relevant parties and published on the institution's website.

Finally, the SER emphasizes that revised and up-to-date study programs are published on UBT College's website and this provide clear and accessible information about study programs.

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. Although the institution has taken steps to assist under-represented and vulnerable groups, UBT could establish targeted initiatives such as dedicated scholarships, tailored support programs, and inclusive teaching methodologies. Regular assessments to measure the impact of these initiatives on academic and social outcomes should be integrated into the QA system;*
- 2. UBT's QA system includes the evaluation of scientific and professional activities. However, more emphasis could be placed on integrating research outputs into teaching and learning processes;*
- 3. Publishing an annual QA report would increase transparency;*
- 4. UBT could introduce periodic peer reviews and standardized training programs for QA staff at all campuses, sharing best practices;*
- 5. To keep pace with evolving standards and practices in higher education, UBT should schedule periodic reviews of its QA policies. This could include aligning with emerging international standards or revising policies based on stakeholder needs and institutional goals;*
- 6. Sharing case studies of successful QA interventions within the UBBT central and external campuses could be of help for internal and external stakeholders;*
- 7. Internships and students placement should be clarified not only for the expected and programmed learning outcomes but also for the remuneration of the students work itself.*

## 6. LEARNING AND TEACHING (ESG 1.2, ESG 1.3)

**Standard 6.1 The HEI has established policies and procedures that apply to all study programs. The institution actively monitors the implementation of these policies and procedures to ensure their effective realization.**

The UBT is a higher education institution focused on teaching activities with the aim of creating a stimulating learning environment and attracting students. It has established the necessary policies and procedures to develop curricula and ensure their proper implementation, such as UBT Statute, Academic Regulations, Curriculum Design, Assessment Methods, Student Support, Quality Assurance and Administrative Processes. relevant documents are available on the institutional website.

UBT developed a set of performance indicators (KPIs) that facilitate monitoring and if needed adjustments of the curricula. There are internal structures and procedures that assure a smooth process. There are also so called process indicators that include staff-student, student-class, and student-computer ratios, which ensure that resources for process indicators faculty and students are sufficient to maintain optimal teaching and learning conditions. Input indicators such as the number of academic staff, the availability of classrooms and laboratories, and financial inputs (e.g., program fee income and research expenditures), are tracked to ensure that the necessary resources are in place to support the program.

There is regular annual monitoring of all the KPIs and tis is a regular institutional review process. Careful analysis and its results are reported to different academic and administrative bodies and units.

**Standard 6.2 The study programs' intended learning outcomes are formulated clearly, precisely, and comprehensively according to the best practices; they are aligned with the published mission and strategic goals of the higher education institution, and they are publicly available. \*Mandatory**

Learning outcomes are clearly and comprehensively defined and articulated. They are aligned with the institution's mission and strategic goals. They are all publicly available. Learning outcomes are comparable with similar programmes in other European institutions and follow best practice. They are also aligned with the National Qualifications Framework and the European Qualifications Framework.

The learning outcomes take into account the learner's perspective. They are differentiated as knowledge, skills and competences and use appropriate wording in their formulation and elaboration.

**Standard 6.3 The HEI demonstrates that each study program is designed considering the correlations between learning outcomes, teaching methodology and assessment.**

**\*Mandatory**

The curriculum of each programme respects all the rules and expectations of well designed and presented programmes. UBT has a policy for the constructive alignment of learning outcomes with assessment and ensures that all learning activities, including lectures, practical work and assessments, are directly linked to the achievement of planned outcomes. Assessment methods, including examinations, projects and practical assignments, are tailored to measure the achievement of learning outcomes and are regularly reviewed and updated to maintain alignment with current educational standards and industry requirements. All curricula and course syllabi can be found on the UBT website. The ECTS are distributed and assigned according to the rules and actual working load for each course.

**Standard 6.4 The HEI ensures that ECTS allocation is appropriate.**

All programmes and courses follow the appropriate distribution and allocation of ECTS. According to the SER and the information collected during the site visit, workload calculations have been carried out carefully and the ECTS `User's Guide has been consulted regularly and implemented appropriately.

UBT regularly reviews the ECTS system allocated to different programmes and courses and updates its distribution if needed. Students' feed back is considered to be relevant and informative.

**Standard 6.5 The study program's intended learning outcomes comply with the National Qualification Framework and the European Qualifications Framework level descriptors.**

The study learning outcomes comply with both the National Qualification Framework and European Qualification Framework level descriptors. There is a clear distinction between the learning outcomes at different levels, bachelor's and master's, and this applies equally to all study programmes. In addition, the learning outcomes of each programme are aligned and compatible in terms of the level and specific qualification that the student will achieve upon completion of that particular programme. The intended outcomes are carefully defined with the aim to be aligned with the level and profile qualification that will be gained upon the graduation. In order to assure this, different procedures are applied, such as mapping learning outcomes to qualification framework, curriculum development itself, stakeholder engagement, and quality assurance process.

**Standard 6.6 If the HEI study programs lead to degrees in regulated professions, they are aligned with the national and EU Directives and recommendations issued by the national and international professional associations.**

UBT has a few programmes of regulated professions, such as dentistry, pharmacy and psychology, civil engineering, and they are all aligned with the national and EU Directives and recommendations issued by the national and international associations. UBT has proved its well informed procedures that assure all the necessary procedures for each of the regulated professions.

**Standard 6.7 The higher education institution ensures student-centred teaching and learning.**

The UBT College pays great attention to the implementation of appropriate teaching methods and the use of modern pedagogical approaches in classrooms and teaching. While doing this, they also pay attention to have complementary methods and teaching approaches with the intended learning outcomes. They apply a wide range of different methods, depending on the course and its content, while at the same time paying a special attention to interactive approach and continuous engagement of students.

According to the information collected from both staff and students, student-centred teaching and learning is in place, while the learning environment is very positive and friendly. Students reported that they felt very comfortable approaching professors and engaging with them in a constructive, motivating learning process.

By using student evaluations and paying attention to the feedback they receive, UBT adapts its curricula accordingly and makes necessary improvements and changes. This has also been recognised by their students. The whole teaching and learning process is very much facilitated and modernised with the process of digitalisation and continuous use of modern technology in classrooms.

**Standard 6.8 The HEI ensures that evaluation and assessment are objective and consistent and ensures that intended learning outcomes are achieved. (ESG 1.3.)**

Students are informed at the very beginning of the teaching process about the requirements and expectations, as well as the criteria for grading. After the exam, students receive the grade and they also receive feedback on the grades they have received. Something that does not exist in European universities is the possibility for students to refuse the grade and take the exam again. This does not happen at UBT only, but it is a common practice in many Kosovar higher education institutions and should be reconsidered and changed according to the general practice in European higher education institutions.

Academic staff do receive some training to acquire and develop additional teaching skills or other skills that could help them in a teaching process, but it seems that this professional training still does not cover all staff and that there is room for further improvement. In

particular, the development of tests and assessment methods is very demanding and requires specific knowledge and skills.

**Standard 6.9 The HEI ensures that a functional procedure and mechanism for student appeals is in place. (ESG 1.3.)**

UBT has procedures and mechanisms for student appeals. Students are informed of their options and possibilities for appeal from the very first day they enter the institution, during Orientation Day. If there is an appeal, it will be sent to the Appeals Committee, which will invite the parties to present the facts relating to the appeal. The procedure sets out all the steps and requirements and how the final decision is reached, both in terms of time and who is involved.

It is also possible to refer the matter to the Ethics Committee if the complaint concerns an ethical issue relating to a professor or other member of the teaching staff.

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. Increasing opportunities for additional skills development for teaching staff and involving more academic staff;*
- 2. Consider the possibility of students refusing the grade if everything has been done correctly.*

## **7. RESEARCH**

**Standard 7.1 The HEI has developed a research strategy which is integrated within the institutional strategy and aligns with its institutional mission. This strategy is reflected in a detailed action plan, which includes clearly specified performance indicators and is made publicly available.**

UBT College has developed a well-integrated and strategically aligned research agenda that reflects the institution's mission and vision. By involving academic staff, students, and external stakeholders in its research efforts, the institution fosters a collaborative research environment that contributes mainly to societal development.

UBT College has developed the Strategic Plan 2022-2027, which foresees the raising of capacities in scientific research and innovation. Within the Strategic Plan of the College, strategic objectives "Development of Research, Innovation and Social Responsibility", publicly available, have been foreseen, which have then been developed into specific objectives:

- Increasing the participation of academic staff and students in the advancement of science, technology and innovation
- Increase in participants with advanced qualifications in the field of science and engineering.
- Increasing outputs for relevant knowledge that respond to the dynamic labor market.
- Creation of international joint group for increasing the impact of local researchers.
- Improvement of existing infrastructure and development of new infrastructure to support scientific research

The strategic approach to research emphasizes the creation and dissemination of knowledge, ensuring that research initiatives contribute not only to academic growth but also to the wider community and society. The alignment of the research strategy with UBT's institutional mission ensures that research activities directly support the college's goals of innovation, academic excellence, and societal impact. The SER reports that "The mission, which emphasizes creating a dynamic and innovative academic environment, drives the research strategy to contribute to the development of Kosovo's knowledge economy." In the opinion of the ET, the research carried out is mainly related to applied activities, fostering cooperation and services with the private sector and public institutions, contributing slightly to the advancement of knowledge in the specific field.

Students are integrated into the research process, UBT not only provides them with valuable hands-on experience but also in research projects, particularly those that address local or global societal challenges, enables the college to contribute directly to the development of practical solutions, thereby enhancing its societal impact.

Moreover, UBT's research strategy has ensured that the institution has an adequate number of researchers with the right qualifications and expertise to meet its strategic research goals. By appointing senior positions responsible for research, UBT ensures that there is a clear strategic direction for research and that it remains a priority within the institution also to attract necessary external fundings. These senior roles are also crucial in fostering a culture of research excellence and in overseeing the implementation of the research strategy.

Additionally, UBT has established research and development (R&D) units that play a pivotal role in promoting the institution's expertise, identifying commercial development opportunities, and supporting the creation of proposals and business plans. The ability to create spin-off companies is particularly noteworthy as it aligns with global trends where universities are increasingly seen as drivers of innovation and economic development. By providing assistance in preparing research proposals and contracts, these units not only help secure funding for research projects but also ensure that UBT's research outputs can be effectively commercialized, leading to the development of products, services, or technologies that can benefit the wider community and industry.

If from a side this is a very efficient supporting systems for the researcher and the field experts, on the other side, it emerges that the UBT researchers is mainly counting on management support for the acquisition of fundings and new research programs limiting the effort for a competitive research environment at national and international level. Indeed as also point out by the UBT upon the draft report, the UBT is implementing strategy for the training of staff

personnel for proposal writing and alignment with major international funding priorities and bodies, nevertheless the expected benefits are still light and only likely in the long term. The management should be thinking of a proper Grant Office to better implement best practice and guideline for proposal writing as support for the academic and scientific personnel.

The development of a detailed action plan for research, which includes specific performance indicators, drive in the direction of UBT's commitment to systematically improving its research profile. The action plan establishes measurable targets, enabling the institution to assess progress and adjust strategies as needed.

Despite these commendable efforts, one area where UBT could strengthen its research strategy is by focusing more explicitly on competitive, grant-based research activities. Currently, much of the research at UBT appears to be related to external consultancy or applied technical activities, with less emphasis on high-level, competitive academic research. To further enhance its research profile, UBT could consider increasing its participation in competitive research funding programs, both nationally and internationally. This could involve encouraging faculty to engage in interdisciplinary research projects, pursue external grants, and collaborate with leading research institutions. By diversifying its research funding sources and expanding into competitive research, UBT could elevate the impact and visibility of its research activities. Additionally, while UBT devoted effort to involve students in research, there may be further opportunities to formalize and expand student participation in more diverse research areas. Introducing more research-based programs and integrating research projects into the curriculum could help to further embed research into the academic experience for students, giving them the opportunity to develop research skills early on in their academic careers.

#### **Standard 7.2 The HEI ensures that academic staff are committed to the achievement of high-quality research work and/or professional activity.**

UBT has developed an internal policy regulating academic research and professional activities, as seen in the "Regulation on Research Work and Publications." Ensuring that all academic work adheres to globally recognized benchmarks. This policy effectively prompts academic contributions to peer-reviewed publications indexed in platforms such as Scopus and Web of Science with incentives.

UBT's recognition of academic staff's contributions, including scientific publications, technology transfer, and consultancy services, is significant with mechanism to validate the contribution accounting for the level of innovation and specific applied research. This is further supported by the institution's incentive system, which includes monetary rewards for publications in high-impact journals (100 euro and 800 euro respectively for Q1 and Q2 ranked journals).

The indicator highlighting high-quality scientific publications is organised on requirements for academic staff to accumulate specific points for promotion based on indexed publications and other categorised contributions adherent mainly to the national standards. UBT actively promotes research achievements at national (annual conference hosted by the UBT) and international conferences supporting participation with financial grants. The College encourage



also applied research and projects with its collaborations with local and international partners in line with UBT's broader strategic objectives. Upon reviewing the actions taken following previous recommendations, UBT's implementation of an Intellectual Property and Commercialization Policy addresses critical gaps, ensuring that both staff and students have a clear framework for ownership and commercialization. The introduction of incentive schemes, such as financial rewards and workload adjustments, strengthens the institution's research culture. Nevertheless, ongoing monitoring of these initiatives' effectiveness in boosting research output and quality remains essential.

**Standard 7.3 The HEI ensures that the academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity.**

UBT has taken significant steps to ensure that academic staff achieve and maintain a proven track record of research results closely aligned with their teaching activities. The declared attempt is to integrate research activities and results into teaching fostering a supportive environment for scholarly endeavours and to deliver research-informed education. Although the policy and the incentives are pushing in this direction still there is no clear evidence of the achievements neither in terms of competitive research funded programs and relevant publications

The encouragement of academic staff to incorporate their research findings into their teaching is a notable and well declared attempt and this is evident where faculty use their studies as case studies or foundations for course content. Nevertheless, this is still to develop and currently not well supported by the consistency and quality across all Faculties.

Incentive systems, such as monetary rewards for high-impact publications and reduced teaching loads for productive researchers, are essential components of a vibrant academic ecosystem. These measures not only reward productivity but also create a competitive and motivated academic environment. Moreover, initiatives like the “Researcher of the Year” award and institutional recognition in annual reports highlight the institution's efforts to publicly acknowledge scholarly achievements. The engagement of students in research activities with academic staff is another area where the institution is putting efforts, students involvement is indeed a fundamental learning experience but it is opinion of the ET that the level of involvement could be improved at research and academic experience.

In responding to recommendations from previous evaluations, the institution has demonstrated a clear commitment to improvement. For instance, the implementation of formal mentoring programs and the establishment of financial incentives for research productivity directly address areas of concern.

**Compliance level:** Partially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. The research strategy should be reviewed periodically to ensure that it continues to align with the institution's evolving mission and societal needs.*
- 2. Impact of the carried-out research by competitive funded call is not relevant*

3. *Encourage collaboration between departments and faculties to address complex societal challenges.*
4. *Strengthen existing incentives by offering rewards not only for high-impact publications but also for patents, applied research, and contributions to local community development.*
5. *Provide ongoing professional development opportunities for academic staff to enhance research skills, including training on grant writing and the use of advanced methodologies.*
6. *Develop formal guidelines for embedding faculty research into course content.*
7. *Promote cross-departmental collaboration on research projects that align with teaching objectives.*
8. *Periodically review the alignment between faculty research and teaching activities*

## **8. STAF, EMPLOYMENT PROCESSES AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (ESG 15.)**

**Standard 8.1 Teacher recruitment is in line with national legislation, internal regulations in effect and it is based on objective and transparent procedure.**

UBT College's approach to teacher recruitment is indeed supporting the commitment to maintaining an objective and transparent process that aligns with national legislation and internal regulations. The recruitment process is conducted in accordance with national legislation (the Labor Law of the Republic of Kosovo No. 03/L-212, the Law on Higher Education of the Republic of Kosovo No. 04/L-037), the statute, and internal regulations of UBT, ensuring an objective and transparent process.

Two internal regulations regulating the teacher recruitment are:

- Employee Handbook of UBT is available online in <https://www.ubt-uni.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Employee-Handbook-of-College-UBT-1.pdf>

Regulation on Recruitment of UBT is available online in <https://www.ubt-uni.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Regulation-on-recruitment-1.pdf>

The UBT's effort to advertise vacancies systematically and to implement an adequate selection methods providing comprehensive information to candidates is effective to attract diverse candidates who will contribute to the institution's mission and targeted innovation.

Various channels are being used for advertising available position, including its official website, social media platforms, and the Career Center enhancing visibility for the UBT institutions but also promoting diverse candidates to apply. The job announcements are reported to include comprehensive details about the positions, such as job descriptions, required qualifications, necessary documentation for application, and application procedures. Applicants, for academic position, are requested in the first stage to submit their published works listed in SCOPUS and related to the specific field of study, with a particular emphasis on those where they are the first author or the corresponding author. The process is led by a Recruitment Committee for each open position, which includes representatives from the

Human Resources department and relevant academic departments. The process is conducted taking into account standardized evaluation criteria, such as educational qualifications, research output, teaching experience, and professional expertise, ensures that candidates are assessed fairly and consistently. The candidate are well informed regarding the internal regulations, the code of ethics, recruitment and promotion procedures, and professional development opportunities, as the UBT makes available an online Employment Handbook and UBT's Staff Development Operational Plan (2023-2028) (link provided).

**Standard 8.2 The higher education institution has enough permanent academic staff adequately qualified for the delivery of the study programs.**

UBT College demonstrates a strong commitment to employ a qualified and sufficient number of academic staff to deliver the offered study programs. Among the current 599 total academic staff members, 537 hold a full-time contracts and 430 possessing doctoral degrees. These number and the related percentages indicates that a substantial majority of the teaching staff is not only present but also highly qualified, in fact 95.81% of courses are taught by full-time academics who as also emerged from onsite meeting are well committed in acting as mentorship and support for the students promptly reacting to their input and queries. The SER includes detailed CVs of the academic staff, highlighting their qualifications, research achievements, and professional experiences engaged in research and scholarly activities. At UBT College, academic staff do not cover more than two teaching positions within an academic year, thus the faculty members can dedicate sufficient time and effort to their teaching responsibilities. Moreover, teaching staff can be engaged in a maximum of three courses per semester, suitably managing their teaching loads in principle saving time for research activities, professional development, and administrative duties.

Evidence are provided that at UBT College at least 50% of the academic staff involved in delivering study programs are full-time employees. The SER includes employment contracts that substantiate this claim, reinforcing the institution's transparency and accountability in staffing practices. The SER indicates that UBT employs at least one full-time staff member with a doctoral degree for every student group defined by the statute of the HEI and for every 60 ECTS in the study program. The student-teacher ratio that does not exceed 1:30 but hold at 1/16.2, ensuring adequate attention and support for each students. Only in Faculty of Computer Science this value reach the threshold of 1/30 being this study field the most populated and requested one.

The provided indication for the workload distribution, declared to be aligned with relevant EU standard and other universities and current legislation is not clear neither it has been clarified during the meeting. In details, Table 43 of the SER, reports that Staff Type such as Administrative devote 7 hour for Teaching, e for Mentoring and 7 for Preparation of the teaching out of 40 working hour per week. This is controversial and unclear. . Nevertheless the comment provided by UBT at ET Draft Report has clarified this issue nevertheless the indicated table should be rebuilt clearer manner.

Whereas the Academic Staff Type, according to the information reports in the SER, devote a balanced workload among teaching obligations, professional and scientific work, personal development, and administrative duties.

Students final theses are mentored by a sufficient number of academic staff (430 holding a PhD) providing adequate support. UBT currently does not offer professional programs classified as "Bachelor Professional" degrees. However, the institution has applied for several such programs this year, including a Professional Bachelor in Design and a Professional Bachelor in Computer Science. These programs are designed for individuals who already possess significant qualifications and work experience in their respective fields

**Standard 8.3 The promotion and re-appointment of teaching staff is based on objective and transparent procedures and policies which are publicly available, which include the evaluation of excellence, and they arise from the higher education institution's mission and strategic plan.**

The establishment of a long-term operational plan for developing academic staff is a critical component of UBT College's strategy. This plan is intricately linked to the institution's mission and strategic objectives, emphasizing the importance of continuous professional development. The report indicates that UBT has a structured approach to staff development, which includes training programs, workshops, and opportunities for international collaboration. This alignment with the institution's mission ensures that the academic staff are not only equipped with the necessary skills but are also encouraged to engage in activities that enhance their teaching and research capabilities. The operational plan for 2024-2029 highlights professional development as a key priority, addressing the specific needs of academic staff through targeted training initiatives. For instance, language training, Microsoft training, and VR/AR training are part of the development strategy, which reflects the institution's commitment to keeping pace with technological advancements and educational trends. This proactive approach to staff development is commendable, as it not only enhances the qualifications of the teaching staff but also contributes to the overall quality of education provided by the institution.

The transparency and objectivity of the promotion procedures at UBT College are well-documented in the Self Evaluation Report. The institution provides clear examples of completed recruitment procedures, including vacancy announcements and the composition of selection committees. This level of transparency is crucial in fostering trust among academic staff and ensuring that the promotion process is perceived as fair and equitable. Moreover, the report outlines the decision-making process of selection committees, which includes expert evaluations and reports. This structured approach ensures that promotions are based on merit and that all candidates are evaluated against the same criteria. The availability of this information to the public further enhances the credibility of the promotion process, as it allows for external scrutiny and accountability. UBT College's commitment to promoting academic staff based on excellence and significant achievements is a cornerstone of its promotion policy. The report highlights that promotions are contingent upon meeting national criteria and legislation, which encompass various aspects such as teaching activity, international engagement, high-impact publications, and contributions to academic projects. This multifaceted approach to evaluating excellence ensures that promotions are not solely based on teaching performance but also consider research contributions and community engagement.

The inclusion of student feedback as a critical component of the evaluation process is particularly noteworthy. By incorporating student evaluations into the promotion criteria, UBT College acknowledges the importance of teaching effectiveness and student satisfaction. This holistic approach to assessing academic staff performance aligns with best practices in higher education and underscores the institution's commitment to maintaining high academic standards.

The report emphasizes that UBT College ensures the promotion process for academic staff is conducted promptly once the necessary requirements are met. This commitment to timely promotions is essential for maintaining staff motivation and job satisfaction. By streamlining the promotion process, UBT College demonstrates its recognition of the hard work and dedication of its academic staff, which in turn fosters a positive work environment. The institution's policies and administrative procedures are designed to facilitate efficient promotion processes, ensuring that there are no unnecessary delays. This proactive approach not only enhances the professional development of academic staff but also contributes to the overall stability and effectiveness of the institution. The implementation of a comprehensive staff performance evaluation system at UBT College is a significant strength of the institution. The evaluation process incorporates feedback from multiple sources, including students, supervisors, peers, and self-assessments. This multifaceted approach ensures that the evaluation of academic staff is thorough and considers various perspectives. The report indicates that the results of these evaluations are integral to decisions regarding promotions, reappointments, and contract renewals. By utilizing a diverse range of feedback, UBT College ensures that the evaluation process is balanced and reflective of the staff member's overall contributions to the institution. This commitment to a rigorous evaluation process not only supports the professional growth of academic staff but also aligns with the institution's strategic goals.

#### **Standard 8.4 The higher education institution ensures and supports academic staff in their professional development.**

The UBT has established a structured plan for the professional development of academic staff by adopting a Long-Term Staff Development Operational Plan (2023-2028) addressing not only the immediate training needs of academic staff but also future challenges. The envisaged training contemplate different courses to improve pedagogical skills, research capabilities, and technological competencies. Among these, emerging digital tools and pedagogical methods along with language proficiency stand as particular relevant.

The SER reports that UBT College's is committed to facilitate international mobility for its academic staff by fostering the participation in international programs, study visits, and collaborative projects in various forms, such as financial assistance, administrative support for travel arrangements, and recognition of international experiences in promotion and evaluation processes.

UBT organises specific training for its academic staff on teaching methods and higher education offering to the faculty members training on essential topics such as ECTS credits, learning outcomes, and assessment methods.

The onboarding procedure for newly employed staff members is a critical aspect of UBT College's commitment to professional development. The report indicates that the institution has established a comprehensive onboarding process designed to familiarize new faculty with the institution's strategic goals, research priorities, ethical standards, and operational procedures. This is essential for ensuring that new staff members are well-prepared to contribute effectively to the institution from the outset.

A well-structured onboarding process not only helps new faculty acclimate to the institution's culture but also sets the stage for their professional development journey. By providing new staff with the necessary resources and support, UBT College is demonstrating its commitment to fostering a positive and productive work environment..

**Standard 8.5 The HEI ensures that its external associates have adequate qualifications and work experience to deliver study programs in line with the program's objectives and intended learning outcomes.**

As also has emerged from the external stakeholders and graduates meeting UBT College recognizes the importance of integration with the study program of external input and professional experience from various sectors to shape the students formation toward contemporary insights and practical experiences into the classroom. The involvement of external associates or industrial local partnership active in close field indeed supports the students to acquire a more comprehensive training in line with latest developments and challenges. Inclusion I n form of seminar or lessons from external professional associate has also emerged meeting the UBT past graduates still cooperating with UBT academic staff. Training provided to external associates, by organizing specific training sessions focused on the preparation and delivery of teaching is also in place and implemented. This training includes essential components such as understanding ECTS credits, learning outcomes, teaching methods, and assessment strategies.

Externals are also encouraged to formally participate in the supervision of final and graduation theses, this is also performed by internship of the students at external site providing certified and hand-on practice.

This practice fosters networking opportunities for students, as they gain access to industry contacts and potential careers. On this regard the official regulation of UBT with external partners does not account for explicitly for compensation for the work performed by the students and this is not in line with EU University, as discussed during the meeting travel and expenses refunds are ensured only.

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. *Develop a structured and ongoing professional development program specifically tailored for external associates involved in students mentorship especially with formal internship partners;*

2. *Include within the formal regulation and agreement with students hosting partner for final thesis or practice internship period proper minimum compensation;*
3. *Establish formal partnerships with key industry stakeholders to create a feedback loop that informs curriculum development and teaching practices;*
4. *Develop a robust evaluation system that assesses the performance of external associates based on student feedback, peer reviews, and self-assessment;*
5. *Encourage external associates to engage in research activities and collaborative projects with academic staff;*
6. *Implement regular surveys and feedback mechanisms for students and external associates to assess the effectiveness of teaching and the integration of industry knowledge into the curriculum.*

## **9. STUDENT ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT SERVICES (ESG 1.4, ESG 1.6)**

### **Standard 9.1 An admission policy is clearly defined and is made publicly available.**

The Evaluation Team had the opportunity to meet with highly motivated students and graduates, who highlighted their reasons for choosing UBT, including its focus on innovation and technology, exceptional academic staff, cutting-edge laboratories, and advanced infrastructure. While UBT had arranged for a meeting with incoming students as well, due to time constraints, the Evaluation Team opted to engage only with the students present in the room.

UBT has clear and transparent admission requirements and procedures for bachelor's and master's programs, applicable to both national and international students. These are publicly available on UBT's user-friendly website in Albanian and English, along with an online registration form. Key requirements for bachelor's programs, following the national regulation system, include secondary education completion, the Matura Exam, and GPA equivalency for international students, while master's programs may require additional tests like TOEFL or GMAT and bridging exams for specific fields.

International students must follow procedures for diploma recognition through the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation of Kosovo. Admission processes also include comprehensive evaluation of transfer students' study periods for compatibility with UBT programs. Students confirmed during the site visit that they are well-informed about admission procedures through the website, Moodle, and the Student Handbook.

### **Standard 9.2 The HEI collects and analyses information on student progression and takes appropriate actions to ensure students completion of the study program.**

UBT has implemented both formal and non-formal systems to monitor students' progress effectively. Through UBT's Moodle platform, each student's academic progress is systematically tracked, covering continuous assessments throughout the academic year,

including exams, assignments, and projects. Students and graduates have reported that professors actively monitor their progress, offering personalized advice and guidance to support their development. The electronic system also tracks student progression and completion rates, providing comprehensive data for academic oversight.

The SER shares the support mechanisms for students who are facing challenges, including initiatives like "Learning to Learn" tutorship, peer assessment with high-achieving students, and options for reduced course loads. Additionally, academic staff are readily available for consultations, always supporting the students to catch up with the studies in cases needed, facilitated by an online scheduling system that simplifies appointment management. Students and graduates consistently highlight the strong cooperation between academic staff and students, a feature highly praised by the evaluation team.

Feedback from students is collected through questionnaires, contributing to the ongoing monitoring and enhancement of their academic progress. This integrated approach ensures a supportive and responsive learning environment at UBT.

Finally, the student misconduct and cheating are regulated through the Code of Ethics and the Regulation on Anti-Plagiarism. In addition, UBT are using Turnitin system for checking and ensuring the originality of the students' work.

**Standard 9.3 The HEI ensures appropriate conditions and support to outgoing and incoming students (national and international students).**

UBT places significant emphasis on supporting and promoting internationalization, both by welcoming and recruiting international students and by facilitating exchange opportunities for students from Kosovo to study abroad. The International Relations Office serves as the central hub for managing and promoting student mobility programs, including Erasmus+, which remains the most popular choice among UBT students. On average, 30 students annually participate in exchange programs, a number that has doubled for the 2023/2024 period compared to the previous year, as it can be concluded by analysing the available data in the SER. The office also actively fosters international collaborations through numerous Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) with universities worldwide. Additionally, UBT is cooperating with USA Universities offering scholarship opportunities for students in those universities (partnerships with University of Iowa and University of Northern Iowa).

UBT provides comprehensive support for exchange students, including application guidance, detailed program information, and success stories, all available on the university's website in both Albanian and English. The feedback from students who participated in Erasmus+ (whom the Evaluation Team met during the evaluation visit) programs was overwhelmingly positive, with no reported issues regarding the recognition of ECTS credits upon their return. However,



students expressed a desire for more exchange opportunities outside Europe and stronger practical connections with other universities.

International students are fully integrated into UBT's quality assurance processes, with their feedback actively collected and addressed, as detailed in the SER. Additionally, UBT has seen an increase in the number of incoming international students over the last two academic years, reflecting the institution's growing global engagement.

**Standard 9.4 The higher education institution ensures adequate resources for student support. The needs of a diverse student population (part-time students, mature students, students from abroad, students from under-represented and vulnerable groups, students with learning difficulties and disabilities, etc.) are taken into account.**

UBT is supported by a highly dedicated and student-oriented academic and administrative team focused on delivering comprehensive services to enhance the student experience. The administrative staff ensures students receive seamless academic and student support services, while also offering specialized resources such as career guidance and psychological counseling.

From the SER and the meetings during the visit the Evaluation Team concludes that UBT prioritizes student well-being and success through a comprehensive range of support services. The Office for Psychological Counseling provides essential mental health support and emotional guidance, while Academic Advising, Career Services, Library Services, and Study Coordinators offer personalized academic and professional development support. Health professionals and technical support staff ensure seamless operation of digital learning platforms, laboratories, and technical infrastructure. This integrated approach reflects UBT's commitment to fostering both academic achievement and personal growth.

At the start of each academic year, UBT organizes an introductory session and provides students with a comprehensive Student Handbook and the Convention of Students' Rights and Responsibilities. Additional events such as Career Days, Open Day, Welcome Days, and Reading Week further support and inform students throughout their academic journey. The Evaluation Team observed the dedication of UBT's Career Center in assisting students with career preparation, with students expressing high satisfaction with the services offered.

UBT has a dedicated Regulation for handling student complaints, outlining the circumstances under which complaints can be submitted and detailing the appeals process. The Convention on Students Rights in its article number 34 regulated the right to academic complaints explaining the steps for the complaint. During the site visit, students confirmed their awareness of their rights and obligations, indicating they are well-informed about the procedures for submitting complaints.

As described in the SER, UBT offers diverse financial support options, including workplace-sponsored financing, merit-based scholarships, tuition reduction for vulnerable groups, and a work-and-study scheme for students involved in administrative roles. Scholarships and rewards for research contributions are governed by clear guidelines, which are published on UBT's website for transparency and accessibility. In addition, the Convention on Students Rights is regulating the Right to information for financial aid in Articles 9 and 10.

UBT offers a variety of leisure and non-academic activities to enhance the student experience, overseen by a dedicated Director of Student Support Services.

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. UBT should actively seek partnerships with universities outside Europe to provide students with a broader range of cultural and academic experiences, catering to their interest in more diverse exchange opportunities;*
- 2. UBT should enhance collaborations with its partner international universities by creating joint programs, research initiatives, and internship opportunities to offer students more practical learning experiences and global exposure.*

**10. LEARNING RESOURCES AND FACILITIES (ESG 1.6) \*Mandatory**

**Standard 10.1 The HEI ensures adequate premises and equipment for performing education processes and research.**

UBT has spanned its activities among the following campuses: UBT Pristine, UBT Prozeren, UBT Lipjan, UBT Gjilan, UBT Ferizaj and UBT Peje. The management of UBT informed the Evaluation Team that in the last couple of years they were focused on development of UBT Innovation Campus in Lipjan serving as a technology transfer place. The evaluation site visit took place in UBT Lipjan and the evaluation team visit few laboratories, the library, the TV and media sector, classrooms, and few teaching and learning places. The premises are modern, student-focused, and equipped with the latest technology, providing an enhanced learning environment. Given the location outside the main city, UBT ensures organized transportation for all students based on their class schedules. Students, academic staff and Faculties' deans expressed high satisfaction with the provided transport services.

The premises in Lipjan are owned by UBT, while the ones in Dukajini are rented with a Contract until 2031, as it can be concluded by the Contracts and additional documents included among the SER's Annexes.

The SER outlines plan for constructing a dormitory to meet the increasing demand for long-term housing, particularly for students from distant regions who have highlighted this need over the years.

UBT boasts 90 fully equipped laboratories and state-of-the-art technological resources, supporting research, teaching, and learning across its campuses. It also features research and incubation centers, along with innovation hubs, to support its mission of integrating education, research, and industry collaboration. The institution takes pride in its advanced technological infrastructure. The Evaluation Team observed that UBT has well-equipped laboratories, providing students with opportunities for research and practical learning. Among the available labs are: Biochemistry and Biology Labs, Mechatronics and Electronics Labs, Telecommunication and Networking Labs, Pharmaceutical Technology Labs, Media Labs for UBT Radio, TV, and production, Psychology, Anatomy, and Surgery Labs, Creative Design, Fine Arts, and Architecture Labs, Cyber and Cryptography Labs. The students shared that the Labs are available and open for students' usage in the afternoons.

The SER shares a list of 60 software with valid licenses based on the different field of studies including Computer Science and Engineering, Management Business and Economy and others. UBT highlights that their mechatronics lab, designed by a team of internationally renowned experts, stands out as a leading facility not only in Kosovo but across the Balkans.

The access to UBT facilities in Lipjan is adjusted for students and staff with special needs. Elevators and special access are provided to ensure inclusivity. While classrooms are located on the second floor, some laboratories have narrow entrances. However, UBT is actively working to improve accessibility for all students.

Academic staff expressed satisfaction with the facilities and workspaces available to them during the evaluation visit. According to the SER, the allocation of 4 m<sup>2</sup> of gross area per staff member for office space is considered sufficient and is adhered to. The Lipjan campus also offers diverse facilities, including sports services, cultural spaces, common areas, cafeterias, and dedicated spaces for teaching, learning, and leisure, as observed by the Evaluation Team.

Finally, a senior staff member acts as a Director of Campuses overseeing the development of infrastructure and resources.

## **Standard 10.2 The HEI ensures adequate library resources for their study programs.**

UBT provides over 1,000 dedicated spaces for reading and group work across its campuses, including the Lipjan Innovation Campus, Dugagjini Center, and the Office and Training Center in Kalabria, Prishtina. The library is well-equipped with both physical and electronic resources, supporting academic needs with 250,000 physical books, including international publications from leading institutions like Vienna University of Technology and Harvard University. Students also have access to extensive digital resources, including EBSCO, SAGE, and JSTOR, along with Wi-Fi, computers, and printers. The electronic library is easily accessible through dedicated platforms, ensuring seamless access to e-books, journal articles, and other publications.

The library offers extended hours to accommodate students' schedules, providing ample space for group work and study, as observed by the Evaluation Team during their visit to the Lipjan Campus library. The team noted the availability of chairs and tables across two floors and was introduced to the library's online system, which facilitates efficient resource management and student access.

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. *Create a mobile application or a centralized contact point to provide students with seamless access to all services offered across UBT campuses, ensuring they stay continuously informed.*

## **11. INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION**

**Standard 11.1 The HEI has formulated and implemented a proactive institutional collaboration plan that aligns with its mission institutional strategy. This plan is clearly reflected in the institution's decision-making and resource allocation in this field.**

UBT has been very focused on building good partnerships and working with a range of local, national, regional and international institutions and individuals. This is fully in line with its mission and strategic plan, especially its medium and long-term objectives. As the institution wishes to be a relevant partner in the development of society, partnership is seen as very important. A number of MoUs have been signed and most of them are active.

The UBT participates in and organises a number of different professional and academic events that bring together academic staff, partners from different institutions and sectors outside academia, and students.

**Standard 11.2 The HEI has implemented mechanisms to facilitate collaboration with national and/or international higher education institutions, networks and organizations. The HEI provides support to teaching staff to establish partnerships with the academic community, locally and/or globally.**

UBT is a very internationally oriented institution, and in addition to many local and national activities, it also supports its staff and students to visit other countries and institutions. During the site visit, students in particular reported good experiences and willingness for mobility. The whole process has been facilitated by the fact that Kosovo has a new, easier visa regime or no visa requirement for the majority of European countries.

In order to increase the visibility of the institution, the UBT College also supports and finances the participation of academic staff in various academic events such as workshops, conferences, etc.

**Standard 11.3 The HEI established and maintain relationships with local industry, public sector, employers and local community.**

The UBT College is very well connected with the industrial sector, the public sector and the local community. This is evidenced by various activities and outcomes, either in terms of signed contracts and agreements, existence of industrial boards, organised internships for students and/or projects undertaken but supported with these external stakeholders.

**Standard 11.4 The HEI has established and maintains relationships with its alumni.**

UBT staff and students pay a lot of attention to their alumni and are in regular contact with them. They use their expertise, experience and willingness to work and cooperate with UBT as a great advantage. This was confirmed during the site visit by both parties, UBT representatives and graduates.

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. Try to optimise number of industrial boards; having a board for each department it does not seem to be the most efficient approach;*
- 2. Better inter-connectivity among industrial boards could bring better results*
- 3. Additional support for staff to be mobile as well as to motivate them to have study visits would be beneficial for the whole institution/*

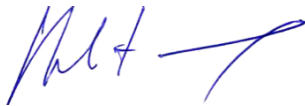
**Overall evaluation and judgments of the ET**

According to the KAA Accreditation manual, in order to be granted a positive decision for program re/accreditation, every education provider has to demonstrate at least a substantial compliance level in the overall judgment. Therefore, failure in meeting at least an overall substantial compliance level entails delaying, withdrawing, suspending or denying accreditation.

UBT College demonstrated an overall full compliance, with only one partial compliant area of evaluation. According to the Manual requirements, the Expert Team **recommends to reaccredit the UBT College for the period of 5 years.**

### Expert Team

#### Chair



**Melita Kovacevic.**

**November 30, 2024**

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)

#### Member



**Mauro Zarrelli**

**November 30, 2024**

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)

#### Member



**Marija Vasilevska**

**November 30, 2024**

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)

**Member**

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