UBT College

INSTITUTIONAL

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

09-06-2023, Pristina

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: 4th of May 2023

Expert Team (ET) members:

- *Professor Anastasios Dagiuklas*
- *Juraj Bogat, Student expert*

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- *Ilirjane Ademaj Ahmeti, KAA Officer*
- *Arianit Krasniqi, KAA Officer*

Sources of information for the Report:

- *Self-Evaluation Report*
- *Programme Syllabus*
- *CVs of the academic staff*
- *Events with Photos and Description*
- *Code of Ethics*
- *Industrial Board*
- *Infrastructure*
- *Internship Job*
- *Technology and Educational Investment*

Criteria used for institutional and program evaluations

The experts team followed the program re-accreditation assessment areas and respective performance indicators, developed by Kosovo Accreditation Agency that are presented in Accreditation Manual – 2021

1.2. Site visit schedule

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Time	Meeting	Participants
09:00 – 09:50	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated	Edmond Hajrizi, Besnik Qehaja, Besnik Skenderi
09.55 – 10.35	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff	Kastriot Gjocaj Diellza Berisha Murat Retkoceri Artan Tahiri Bardha Mulhaxhaj
10:45 – 11:45	Meeting with the heads of the study programme:	Blerim Zylfiu Shkelqim Berisha Betim Gashi Medina Shamolli
11:45 – 12.45	Lunch break	
12:45 – 13:15	Visiting tour of the facilities and infrastructure	Kastriot Gjocaj Murat Retkoceri Artan Tahiri
13:15 – 14:05	Meeting with teaching staff	Lavdim Menxhiqi Greta Amha Lavdim Beqiri Xhelal Jashari

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		Vesa Morina Valdrin Haxhiu Lamir Shkurti Blinera Zekaj Arber Kadriu Behar Haxhismaili Elton Boshnjaku Dion Mulaj Blerina Rrmoku
14:10 – 14:55	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders	Dukagjini Group, IMBUS, Uranik Hodaj Detion Qoqaj Berdyna Tech ,Fatos Berdynaj, Bota Digjitale Elkos Grup BKT Bank
14:55 – 15:05	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts	
15:05 – 15:15	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program	

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1.3. A brief overview of the institution under evaluation

UBT College is a private college that operates in the following campuses: UBT Prishtina, UBT Prizren, Lipjan, Gjilan, Ferizaj and Peje. UBT offers Bachelor courses in Management, Business and Economics, Computer Science and Engineering, Security Studies, Mechatronics Engineering, Information Systems, English Studies, Law, Architecture and Spatial Planning, Sport Science and Movement, Construction Engineering and Infrastructure, Political Science, Psychology, Media and Communication and Energy Engineering and Management.
Peje's branch offers a dynamic and innovative 21st century academic environment. The branch provides a supportive and challenging opportunity for the students, faculty and staff in participatory and self-governance setting. Peje's branch mission is to:

- be a preeminent center of intellectual and cultural activity in Kosovo
- improve the region's quality of life through the skills, knowledge, experience and engagement of its faculty, staff, students and alumni.
- contribute to the growth, and strategic development of the Kosovo and region
- serve the region, by preparing leaders for the 21st century with a global outlook and the skills needed for educational, social, economic, political, environmental and cultural advancement.

The Programme under evaluation is the Level 5 Professional Diploma in Software Development and IT program that will be offered in Peje campus. The program duration is for 2 years with ECTS credits.

2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

2.1. Mission, Objectives and Administration

The mission of the Peje Branch is to achieve academic excellence, maintain and increase internationalization, create positive working and learning environment, as well as to partner with the community. To accomplish this mission, the branch has established objectives related to teaching, research, and service activities.

The mission of the Level 5 Professional Diploma in Software Development and IT program that will be offered in Peje Branch, is to provide students with a comprehensive education in software development and IT, emphasizing both theoretical and practical knowledge. The program aims to prepare students for successful careers in the software development and IT industry by providing them with the skills and competence necessary to design, develop, and maintain software systems. The program considers a mixture of teaching activities (e.g. lectures, lab work, and hands-on projects), research and best practices in software development and IT, applied to real-world projects. The rationale of this programme comes from the fact that there is a shortage of IT graduates to support ICT business needs. The team has established collaboration with industries to establish internships to students. The developments observed

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on the Program level correlate well with these objectives, which complies with the strategic directions at the level of the Faculty and institution.

The management at the Peje campus is to design and offer a professional diploma in Software Development and IT to serve the local region of the industry partners, and to create opportunities for students that has finished the high school (secondary education). During the local visit, the management team informed the ET that there is a huge shortage of IT skilled graduates within Kosovo.

The program will use a variety of teaching methods, such as lectures, lab work, and hands-on projects, to ensure that students have the opportunity to learn both the theoretical and practical aspects of software development and IT. The research concept of the program is based on the application of research methods to the software development and IT field. There is a plan that the student will work on real-life problems through UBT spin-off company.

The team has built the curriculum taking into consideration Kosovo Qualification Framework good practice suggested by the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM), the International Association for Computer Information Systems (IACIS) and Bologna declaration.

Studies are carried out in accordance with general principles applicable to the performance of the activities at the program, Regulations and Guidelines of the Academic Council and Statute of UBT. The Subject Leaders are responsible for assuring the normal running of all types of teaching courses carried out within the scope of the given subject as well as performing all necessary administrative tasks related to teaching courses in cooperation with Vice-Dean and the Dean. The Subject Leaders are also responsible for addressing problems related to teaching courses, proposing appropriate solutions, and recommending necessary textbooks.

Few shortcomings have been identified: There are no pre-requisites in the module delivery. It is not clear whether there is a minimum pass threshold requirement for each sub-component. The resit process in case that a student fails in a sub-component, is not very clear. There is no process regarding Extenuating Circumstances in case that either a student has missed a deadline, or she/he could not attend the exams. It is not clear where there is a penalty associated with late penalty submission. There are many resits attempts on the exam sub-component (3-5) in case of failure, which is a poor academic Practice. There is no process regarding the assessment of students with Specific Learning Difficulty (e.g. dyslexia, blind or partially sighted students etc). There is no process of progressing students to the Bachelor Course. Part-time delivery has not considered. It is not clear how research will be embedded in the curriculum.

Ethics is an area that the team has taken into consideration. The College has license for Turnitin, which is usable/accessible on campus, and staff and students are encouraged to use the system more regularly. During the visit, it was highlighted in the ET that there are challenges with plagiarism, especially with the software code/programmes. Each module leader applies a

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different penalty policy in case of plagiarism and poor academic practice. There are no measures at the faculty to avoid cases of contract cheating i.e. the cases when students submit works that have been done by a third party. It is not clear whether the academic staff received training on plagiarism and academic misconduct.

Standard	***Compliance***	
	Yes	***No***
Standard 1.1. The study program mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution.	*X*	
Standard 1.2. Relevant academic and professional advice is considered when defining the intended learning outcomes which are consistent with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.	*X*	
Standard 1.3. The study program has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept.	*X*	
Standard 1.4. There are formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues. These are made publicly available to all staff and students.		*X*
Standard 1.5. All staff and students comply with the internal regulations relating to ethical conduct in research, teaching, assessment in all academic and administrative activities.		*X*
Standard 1.6. All policies, regulations, terms of reference and statements of responsibility relating to the management and delivery of the program are reviewed at least once every two years and amended as required in the light of changing circumstances.	*X*	

Compliance level: 66% Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *ET recommends that selection requirements for candidates from high schools are not very clear (Marks for topics such as Mathematics, English, Science).*
2. *A formal assessment for English language is required.*
3. *During the visit, the ET discussed the resit and the dropout process. However, there are no processes regarding these in the SER. This needs to be included in the programme regulations.*
4. *It is not clear how Industrial Board recommendations have been considered in the curriculum structure.*

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2.2. Quality Management

As a private institution, UBT Peje is aware that the quality of the studies, working conditions, giving and receiving feedback to both the students and the professors is one of the top priorities in order to maintain its' positive impact on society.

The main team and individuals with responsibility for quality assurance at the institutional level, are the following stakeholders: The Governing Body, President, Academic Council, Quality Assurance Committee, Quality Manager, Heads of Faculties and Departments, Faculty Councils, Academic Staff and Students. The Program Coordinator has the responsibility to ensure that the academic quality assurance policies and procedures, and their adherence, ensuring arrangements and resources are in place to support the academic quality assurance system, the recruitment, and selection of highly skilled and qualified staff. Adequate procedures are also developed to address potential deviations. However, the procedure regarding this deviation is not very clear.

The overall quality management at UBT College consists of two tiers. The first tier is related to the overall quality management across the Institution comprising 9 members. There is a selection process for the selection of the members. The second tier is related to the sub-commission that is related to the specific programme. After the physical visit, the ET has understood that there are appointed QA coordinators at the branch levels in Peje, who collaborate with QA unit in Pristina. There is no information about the roles and responsibilities between the two tiers. Additionally, the interactions between tier-1 and tier-2 are not very clear.

With regards to this new study at level 5 of the EQF, it is especially necessary that the quality assurance mechanisms are well implemented and conducted. The ET has no doubts that the good practice from BSc will also be applied to the professional diploma study. There is, however, a slight concern how will the professional diploma study impact the BSc studies with regards to enrolment quantity, but that is something that, for now, we can only speculate and therefore it shall not be a decisive criterion for this evaluation.

It seems that there is an established collaboration among the different stakeholders, following a top-down model. There is ongoing feedback from staff, students and external stakeholders, including examiners and the consideration of the output from the institutional and programmatic reviews' self-evaluations processes and feedback. It is not clear how changes and improvements are fed back to the Quality Assurance team. The Project Coordinator is mainly responsible for all administration tasks and liaising with industrial partners. There are no clear processes regarding the academic quality management of Program, especially on the learning and assessment methods related to practical and soft-based skills and problem-based solving using different methods including group-based assignments.

Regulation on Quality Assurance of UBT considers involvement of all staff in the internal quality assurance procedures, which also involves reflection by all staff in the process of self-evaluations. This is supported by structural units which are responsible on internal quality assurance. There is no bottom-to-up approach where functions and responsibilities have been established so that academic staff can contribute towards the improvement of teaching and learning in the Program.

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The institution fosters a supportive and enriching environment for students. Their student-centered approach ensures that each individual receives personalized attention and guidance, nurturing their growth and success. Moreover, the ET would like to highlight the active involvement of students in the quality assurance committees. This approach is highly commendable as it reflects a genuine commitment to inclusivity, transparency, and student empowerment. A Quality Assurance unit has been established at Peje branch that administers a number of surveys from students and academic staff. It mainly includes feedback from students collected from annual surveys and feedback from staff during faculty meetings. However, there is no incentive about the students' engagement on filling the questionnaire. Additionally, it is not clear the workflow that must be followed if there are complaints and issues raised by students regarding teaching and administrative issues.

The institution will undertake a regular periodic evaluation, once every two years for the Level 5 Professional Diploma in Software Development and IT. This procedure is implemented as part of the accreditation process and is essential to ensure that the offer is catered to student needs and the labour market. This is managed by the Dean, Chairs of Departments, two academic staff members, student representatives, alumni representative, program administrator, student services officer and industry representatives. It is not clear where an alumni portal will be established by the Department to monitor the professional progress of the graduates.

The quality assurance procedures in the staff selection process, appraisal and staff development are outlined in the Quality Manual. Diversity and Inclusion are not part of the selection process. There is no information about the appraisal and the interaction between the appraisee and the line manager.

Quality evaluations cover most of the quality issues for the overall program and for its components. This includes monitoring and evaluation of the learning outcomes to each module across the Program by defining ECTS workload, methods of assessments, knowledge, skills and competencies that the Program should comply with, in order to be adopted by the Senate. Additionally, arrangements of quality assurance have considered evaluation of internship experiences and skills obtained by students through internships. Evaluation of implementation of internships could guide the faculty in understanding to what extent internships serve as the opportunity for students to employ their knowledge in a real-world setting, how intellectually stimulating and beneficial internship is for building the skills needed for future etc. This would also allow to continuously improve internship experiences of students. One of the challenges regards the fact that there are no quality criteria regarding the qualifications and knowledge of applicants (skills obtained from the high school), especially in the areas of Mathematics, English, ICT and Science. It is not clear what methodologies and approaches could be followed to manage challenges associated with candidates/students with diverse background skills.

According to the SER, the QA Office will collect data from students, graduates and employers. The SER states that a questionnaire will be provided on program structure, academic staff's teaching and infrastructure and administrative services available at UBT Peje campus. All these data will be used to measure student's satisfaction. It is important to define a mechanism, so that at least 75% of the students will respond in this survey.

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Standard	*Compliance*	
	Yes	*No*
Standard 2.1. All staff participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity.	*X*	
Standard 2.2. Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes.	*X*	
Standard 2.3. Quality assurance processes deal with all aspects of program planning and delivery, including services and resources provided by other parts of the institution.	*X*	
Standard 2.4. Quality evaluations provide an overview of quality issues for the overall program as well as of different components within it; the evaluations consider inputs, processes and outputs, with particular attention given to learning outcomes for students.		*X*
Standard 2.5. Quality assurance processes ensure both that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance.	*X*	
Standard 2.6. Survey data is being collected from students, graduates and employers; the results of these evaluations are made publicly available.		*X*
Standard 2.7. Results of the internal quality assurance system are taken into account for further development of the study program. This includes evaluation results, investigation of the student workload, academic success and employment of graduates.	*X*	
Standard 2.8. The institution ensures that reports on the overall quality of the program are prepared periodically (e.g. every three years) for consideration within the institution indicating its strengths and weaknesses.	*X*	
Standard 2.9. The quality assurance arrangements for the program are themselves regularly evaluated and improved.		*X*

Compliance level: 67%, Partially compliant.

ET recommendations:

1. *The ET recommends, that training is required so that different stakeholders can plan and implement the quality assurance system.*
2. *The ET recommends, that the Program must introduce formal mechanisms for Program academic staff to take more ownership on the QA outcomes of the Program, along with QA unit.*
3. *The ET recommends, that the team must introduce formal mechanisms for gathering feedback from alumni for the purpose of quality enhancement of the Program;*
4. *The ET suggests that feedback is necessary from the Program Coordinator back to the Quality Assurance team regarding improvements/changes in the program.*

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2.3. Academic Staff

The employment procedures follow the Labour Law and the Administrative Instruction on Accreditation of HEIs. The Peje campus has 106 out of 154 are PhD holders. However, only 113 CVs have been provided. The academic staff are also engaged with other courses that the School offers (BSc). All academic staff appear with the same workload in terms of teaching (40%), administration (20%), research (30%) and community service (10%). This is in contradiction with the following statement in the SER report: "The allocation of the work must recognize the position of the employee within a research–teaching nexus."

Few academics have used their personal email on their contact details. The CV format is not homogeneous. Within the 120 ECTS, 4 permanent academic staffs have been allocated. None of them has a PhD (one of the academics has been enrolled in a PhD programme in a University abroad), which is below KAA requirement of 1 PhD academic staff to every 60 ETCS.

The job specifications of the academic refer to module management, teaching (lecture-tutorials), scientific/research work, mentoring, support sessions as well as administrative work. Additionally, the academic staff has contacts with students for additional explanation needed based on scheduling on a weekly basis using either the UBT learning platform or e-mail. The academic staff administer exams, by giving extra hours before the exam period, and discussing exam results with students.

Academic staff retire at age 65, but with the possibility of part-time employment even after retirement up to age 70. The SER states that the staff members assigned in the curricula as Subject Leaders cover nearly 90 percent of the teaching workload. This is not very clear, since there are approximately 154 academic staff that they will deliver the teaching and tutorial activities of the Programme. The SER has not taken into consideration the workload of the academics participating in the delivery in other Programmes. Additionally, the workload has not taken into consideration the extra administration load for the academics with senior administrative roles. The SER states that training will be provided to the academic staff related to pedagogical skills: student-centered learning, curriculum design, writing learning outcomes, lesson planning, design and delivery, group learning, problem-based and project-based learning, E-learning, Assessment, and integrating key skills into the curriculum. It is not clear whether such training is mandatory. It is not clear whether training objectives are assessed. This has the risk to result in highly inconsistent staff development, especially where institutional drivers need to be accounted for. Additionally, the training is not linked directly with staff performance.

The Staff development plan aims to provide a framework for allowing appropriate development opportunities that are designed to improve the knowledge, skills, and behaviours of staff. It is not clear whether such opportunities for existing staff also go through the open competition and staff know in advance what they are required to do to aim to gain insights on them. It is not clear whether equal opportunities will consider gender balance, diversity and inclusivity.

The SER states that the consultation of senior members of staff within the institution includes the professional development of those in management roles within the institution. However, there is no discussion how new staff will have the chance to obtain management roles.

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Staff have also indicated that they demonstrate professional expertise, having worked or currently working within the ICT industry. This is an important characteristic of the staff engaged in the Programme and it allows for the teaching experience to be enhanced considerably by sharing good practices and real-life experiences from the industry. Additionally, it can highlight the realities and challenges of the professional world and allowing students to get different experience about different career options.

Staff performance will be monitored continuously through the appraisal. In every given year, there is evaluation regarding the review of the performance of the academic role, the achievement of goals and objectives, and the implementation of staff development plans by line managers. Deans are responsible for performing the initial staff performance evaluation using a point-based numerical assessment of the distribution of efforts in line with the performance criteria set in the Regulation for Staff Appraisal. There is no input regarding the teaching performance evaluations of the academic staff by the students. The ET thinks that it is unclear if individual development plans are drafted and how/if these are linked into the broader development directions of the Faculty.

There is a clear driver to develop teaching practices and learning materials, also by inclusion of problem-based solving and research-based activities. There is also dedicated percentage of the academic for research-based activities. This can be challenging from the fact that the College does not run PhD programmes.

Standard	***Compliance***	
	Yes	***No***
Standard 3.1. Candidates for employment are provided with full position descriptions and conditions of employment. To be presented in tabular form data about full time (FT) and part time (PT) academic/ artistic staff, such as: name, qualification, academic title, duration of official (valid) contract, workload for teaching, exams, consulting, administrative activities, research, etc. for the study program under evaluation.	*X*	
Standard 3.2. The teaching staff must comply with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative instruction on Accreditation.	*X*	
Standard 3.3. Academic staff do not cover, within an academic year, more than two teaching positions (one full-time, one part-time), regardless of the educational institution where they carry out their activity.	*X*	
Standard 3.4. At least 50% of the academic staff in the study program are full time employees, and account for at least 50% of the classes of the study program.	*X*	
Standard 3.5. For each student group (defined by the statute of the institution) and for every 60 ECTS credits in the study program, the institution has employed at least one full time staff with PhD title or equivalent title in the case of artistic/applied science institutions.		*X*
Standard 3.6. Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties.	*X*	
Standard 3.7. The responsibilities of all teaching staff, especially full-time, include the engagement in the academic community, availability for consultations with students and community service.	*X*	

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Standard 3.8. Academic staff evaluation is conducted regularly at least through self-evaluation, students, peer and superiors' evaluations, and occur on a formal basis at least once each year. The results of the evaluation are made publicly available	*X*	
Standard 3.9. Strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials.		*X*
Standard 3.10 Teachers retire at age limit or for other reasons lose the status of full-time teachers and are considered part-time teachers.	*X*	

Compliance level: 80% Substantially compliant.

ET recommendations:

1. *The ET recommends that the Program must establish clear development directions at Faculty level and ensure that performance reviews and training opportunities are guided by strategic institutional aims.*
2. *The ET recommends that more research workload time is allocated to academic staff that are research active.*
3. *The ET recommends allocating more academic staff with PhD titles to the Program.*

2.4. Educational Process Content

The Program does not require either an entry exam in English and Mathematics or any demonstration of competence on admission. This may be challenging since English language and basic Mathematics (e.g. discrete mathematics, linear algebra, statistics) are basic requirements for any ICT programme. The ET found that, whereas the program may have been fortunate to have students apply with good level in English and Mathematics, this does not exclude the risk posed to students by lack of a formal procedure to test the entry requirements set. The ET found that this could be an underlying cause for either potential high drop-out rates or low progression rates.

The Programme covers different topics in the area of IT ranging from programming, software development to networking, Artificial Intelligence, cloud technologies, mobile and cyber security. Inter-disciplinary skills and competences are not evident.

The SER states that the best practices of international educational institutions and industry have been embedded on the curriculum, aiming to strengthen students' commitment to gaining such knowledge. However, this is not evident.

The study program for the Level 5 Professional Diploma in Software Development and IT in UBT gives a broad view in software development and in IT perspective and provides ample opportunities.

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The program duration is two years, comprising four semesters. The first two semesters offer basic knowledge in programming and algorithms, then the next two semesters are extended to technologies and competences in achieving the objectives set out in the curriculum.

The proposed curriculum structure is aligned with the QF criteria regarding level knowledge, skills, competencies and learning outcomes. The learning outcomes provide good guidelines for instruction and evaluation and there is a good reflection to the module descriptions.

Another exemplary fact about the institution that it provides its' students with the opportunity to obtain prestigious Microsoft, Cisco, OSCP, AWS and PCI certificates free of charge. Not only that, but the institution is strictly future oriented and provides its' students with opportunities to develop AI and ML systems. This will definitely attract many new students. People with intrinsic motivation and those who want to achieve academic career will probably tend to enrol into BSc, while the people who are more focused on the labour market will tend to enrol into the professional diploma studies.

As noted under Standard 5, the fact that students are not alerted to the mathematics, ICT and language requirements. This suggests that on admission students may not know what is expected of them and when they do start engaging with the program, they may realise they cannot cope. The ET found that this could be an underlying cause for the high drop-out rates or the low progression rates.

The pre-requisites and dependencies among the modules must be established across the Programme delivery. There are, however, a few issues which the ET observed in relation to the logical sequencing and progression of the modules proposed within two years.

The "Introduction to Programming" module should give emphasis on the programming philosophy and principles. The tutorials should consider activities using two parallel computing environments: C and Python. The object-oriented approach (JAVA programming) is quite challenging in semester 1, by taking into account the fact that the students will be graduates from the high-school.

The module entitled, "COMPUTER ARCHITECTURE AND ORGANIZATION" is more appropriate for programes related to computer engineering. The ET suggests that these concepts should be introduced to the "Introduction to Information Technology" module.

The topic entitled "INTRODUCTION TO ALGORITHMS" must consider Pre-requisite Learning from the "Introduction to Programming" module. PHP should be considered to "Web Technologies" module. It is not clear why Photoshop will be used in this module. More soft-base skills should be embedded in the "SOCIAL ISSUES AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES" module.

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Topics such as structure, I/O and memory management should be considered in the "PROGRAMMING LANGUAGES 1" module. Linux based activities must be embedded in the module entitled "OPERATING SYSTEMS". There is overlapping on the learning outcomes between ""INTRODUCTION TO ALGORITHMS" and "DATA STRUCTURES, ALGORITHMS AND COMPLEXITY" modules. The module "Security Technology and Implementation" necessitates knowledge in the areas of networking and cloud. Therefore, this module must be delivered at a later stage.

Technologies such as WiFi and IEEE 802.11 must be considered in the module entitled "Computer Networks and Communication". Tools such as Ethereal, gns-3 and open-source networking tools should be considered on the practical-based activities. No-relation Databases (Handoop) must be also considered in the module entitled "DATABASE SYSTEMS".

The module entitled "Virtual Systems and Services", must be more generic το cover topics such as hypervisors and virtualisation using public clouds infrastructures (e.g. AWS). The module entitled "IS Management and Leadership", must be OBLIGATORY. In the module entitled "Mobile Communications", topics related to GSM, GPRS and EDGE" are becoming obsolete and they should be replaced by 5G technologies. The modules related to Cyber Security should consider the use of Kali Linux distribution so that the students obtain knowledge in Ethical Hacking. The module entitled "Intelligent Systems" should address learning outcomes related to machine learning algorithms. Activities should consider the use of open data sets (e.g. Kaggle). There is lack of activities related to Data Management and Mining that is quite important. Some of the modules require specialised infrastructure to run the practical-based activities. There is a need of more exposure to open resource activities and tools.

Standard	***Compliance***	
	Yes	***No***
Standard 4.1. The study program is modelled on qualification objectives. These include subject-related and interdisciplinary aspects as well as the acquisition of disciplinary, methodological and generic skills and competencies. The aspects refer especially to academic or artistic competencies, to the capability of taking up adequate employment, contributing to the civil society and of developing the students' personality.	*X*	
Standard 4.2. The study program complies with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. The individual components of the program are combined in a way to best achieve the specified qualification objectives and provide for adequate forms of teaching and learning.		*X*
Standard 4.3. The disciplines within the curriculum are provided in a logical flow and meet the definition and precise determination of the general and specific competencies, as well as the compatibility with the study programs and curricula delivered in the EHEA. To be listed at least 7 learning outcomes for the study program under evaluation.		*X*

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Standard 4.4. The disciplines within the curriculum have analytical syllabuses which comprise at least the following: the discipline's objectives, the basic thematic content, learning outcomes, the distribution of classes, seminars and applicative activities, students' assessment system, the minimal bibliography, etc. The full course description/ syllabuses of each subject/ module should be attached only in electronic form to the self-assessment report for the study program under evaluation.	*X*	
Standard 4.5. If the language of instruction is other than Albanian, actions are taken to ensure that language skills of both students and academic staff are adequate for instruction in that language when students begin their studies. This may be done through language training prior to the commencement of the program.		*X*
Standard 4.6. The student-teacher relationship is a partnership in which each assumes the responsibility of reaching the learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are explained and discussed with students from the perspective of their relevance to the students' development.	*X*	
Standard 4.7. Teaching strategies are fit for the different types of learning outcomes X programs are intended to develop. Strategies of teaching and assessment set out in program and course specifications are followed with flexibility to meet the needs of different groups of students.	*X*	
Standard 4.8. Student assessment mechanisms are conducted fairly and objectively, are appropriate for the different forms of learning sought and are clearly communicated to students at the beginning of courses.	*X*	
Standard 4.9. Appropriate, valid and reliable mechanisms are used for verifying standards of student achievement. The standard of work required for different grades is consistent over time, comparable in courses offered within a program, and in comparison with other study programs at highly regarded institutions.		*X*
Standard 4.10. Policies and procedures include actions to be taken in to dealing with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or inconsistently assessed.		*X*
Standard 4.11. If the study program includes practice stages, the intended student learning outcomes are clearly specified and effective processes are followed to ensure that those learning outcomes and the strategies to develop that learning are understood by students. The practice stages are allocated ECTS credits and the work of the students at the practical training organisations is monitored through activity reports; students during practice stages have assigned tutors among the academic staff in the study program.	*X*	
Standard 4.12. In order to facilitate the practice stages, the higher education institution signs cooperation agreements, contracts or other documents with institutions/organisations/practical training units.	*X*	

Compliance level: 59% Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *The ET encourages the Program to consider setting admission requirements for English language and Mathematics competence or having a placement test, prior to admission, to identify students in need of additional training.*
2. *The ET recommends that the Program should apply further revisions to sequence, type and location of modules within the curriculum, including more evident elective strands geared towards the various careers the program aims to cater for.*

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3. *The ET encourages the Program to consider some elements of curricular specificity which can relate to the regional opportunities of the campus.*
4. *The ET strongly recommends that the Program should revise the assessment approaches following European practices, more generally.*
5. *The ET recommends that the Program should ensure the assessment policy is applied consistently and clarify the procedures for re-sits.*
6. *The ET recommends that the assessments marks must be non-negotiable.*
7. *The ET recommends that the Program should make internship as a stand-alone curriculum component with ECTS, specific learning outcomes and clear assessment procedures.*

2.5. Students

The Programme is regulated by the Faculty Council Admission Regulation. All who have completed lower secondary and upper secondary education together are eligible to enrol in the program. The potential candidates that qualify for admission to the Programme, they must meet the minimum admission requirements set by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. According to the Regulations for university studies, the program is open to all students who have or have not passed the National Matura exam. However, there are no criteria related to Mathematics, English and minimum ICT requirements. A qualitative evaluation is required, otherwise this may lead to high dropout rates.

The teaching methodology in the Programme consists of case-studies, project work, problem-based learning and simulated learning in groups. The ET considers that both lecture and tutorials take place in a reasonable teacher-student ratio class. The teacher-student ratio class is 50:1 for the lectures and 25:1 for the tutorials. Academic staff would provide extra contact hours with students every week for more explanation of modules for students that either did miss, or have difficulties to get into modules. Other support provided include voluntary workshops in problem areas and exam preparation activities. There is no clear information how and whether constructive feedback will be provided to the students. It is not clear whether all assessments must be submitted via the Virtual Learning Environment and appropriate rubric must be considered. Additionally, a moderation must be considered to the assessment components to avoid biased marking.

Written exams are determined by the Subject Leader and the course committee. The practical part of the exam may be taken separately from the theoretical part. The exam content is determined by the course syllabus, whereas the mode of examination, assessment, and duration of certain parts of the exam shall be regulated by the Faculty Council. The weighting of each component must be provided to the Module Guide. This weighting of each component has been provided to the Syllabus. However, in few modules the weighting of the Final Exam is below 25%; this is not a good academic practice. The SER report does not include information about the process that will be followed in case that a student fails in a sub-component. Additionally, there is no discussion about the process that must be followed in case that a student cannot either submit a coursework or participate in the exam due to Extenuating Circumstances. There is a no penalty process regarding late report submissions.

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Disability Assistance at UBT College aims to provide support to students with disabilities and help achieve educational goals. Students with physical disabilities, learning disabilities, persistent illness or short-term illness or impairment are required to enrol accordingly at admission to UBT College to ensure that they receive appropriate assistance during their studies. It is not clear whether there is an adjustment policy of the sub-components for students with disabilities.

The faculty has purchased Turnitin license that will allow to determine similarities between submitted courseworks, against resources that are available on the Internet. Compulsory course of Academic Writing is expected to introduce concepts of academic integrity to students that will be contributing to ensuring originality of work submitted by students. It is not clear whether the academic staff will be trained on policies regarding poor academic practice.

Bachelor Studies Regulation sets out that students have the right to appeal against the decision related to their admission, as well as grades that they receive during their studies. Information on this is distributed to students during orientation week and E-system. Bachelor Studies Regulation also describes rules of students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study Programs.

The SED describes the general requirements for the transfer of students from other universities. All applicants must have passed or failed the high school matriculation exam, the program from which the student requests the transfer must correspond to the content of the level 5 program to which the transfer is requested.

Standard	***Compliance***	
	Yes	***No***
Standard 5.1. There is a clear and formally adopted admission procedure at institutional level that the study program respects when organising students' recruitment. Admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied for all students.		*X*
Standard 5.2. All students enrolled in the study program possess a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent document of study, according to MEST requirements	*X*	
Standard 5.3. The study groups are dimensioned so as to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process	*X*	
Standard 5.4. Feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments is given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed.	*X*	
Standard 5.5. The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record.	*X*	
Standard 5.6. Flexible treatment of students in special situations is ensured with respect to deadlines and formal requirements in the program and to all examinations.		*X*
Standard 5.7 Records of student completion rates are kept for all courses and for the program as a whole and included among quality indicators.	*X*	
Standard 5.8 Effective procedures are being used to ensure that work submitted by students is original.		*X*

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Standard 5.9 Students' rights and obligations are made publicly available, promoted to all those concerned and enforced equitably; these will include the right to academic appeals.		*X*
Standard 5.10 The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs are clearly regulated in formal internal documents.	*X*	
Standard 5.11 Academic staff is available at sufficient scheduled times for consultation and advice to students. Adequate tutorial assistance is provided to ensure understanding and ability to apply learning	*X*	

Compliance level: 63% Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *The ET recommends that all student feedback is provided through Moodle. This implies that all courseworks must be submitted via the VLE.*
2. *The ET recommends that academic staff must be trained to check academic integrity and apply penalties to poor academic practice.*
3. *The ET recommends that the Programme should consider penalties associated with late coursework submission.*
4. *The ET should consider process with respect to Extenuating Circumstances.*
5. *The ET recommends that the Program should monitor drop-out rates and analyse reasons for drop-out to allow the Program to establish mechanisms to identify early on and prevent drop-out risks.*

2.6. Research

The Programme has defined a Strategic Research Plan guides towards research opportunities. The Programme has defined strategic objectives in terms of promote internationally competitive research and scholarship, cultivate excellence through selective investment in emerging areas of research, facilitate collaborations across disciplinary and institutional boundaries, recruit and retain outstanding students, research fellows, and faculty, encourage effective communication and dissemination of research results, optimize use of our research and scholarship resources and recognize the full value of intellectual property.

The UBT College organizes annually an International Conferences in various fields, giving the opportunity to the academic staff to present their research work. However, limited activity and strategy is described so that the academic staff present the research outcome at international level. All scientific activities are supported financially, technically, and logistically. However, limited information is provided regarding the process to support these activities.

The document entitled "Regulation on Researches and Publications" of UBT College, defines that all academic staff are required to participate in research and to publish their research papers on the scientific journal of UBT College. The College has a research center called the Research Center for Computer Science and Engineering, which offers research projects and some activities such as: Artificial Intelligence, 5G networks, smart system development and public

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administration; care systems and IT; Library Information Systems; other major, data mining, information modeling and simulation, internet security and automation. It is not clear how these research activities are supported. The College does not run any postgraduate research programmes to ensure the sustainability of the research. The ET recognizes that this is a challenge for the academic staff.

UBT has adopted the Administrative Instruction for platforms and international journals review as a standard for its research policy. However, it seems that there is a lack of adopting this policy, since the vast majority of research outcomes are published at national level to UBT journal and conferencing.

Current projects run at UBT College, include participation in the following programme: Erasmus+, Tempus, USAID, IOM, industry projects serve as a development for the staff and the institution and improve teaching aspects as well that students will benefit the most at the end of these projects. Such programmes can contribute towards the internationalization of the College. However, there is limited research exposure since these are mainly training programmes. The ET recognizes that can be a challenge due to the lack of research student community through a PhD programme.

The SER has provided information about the academic staff's workloads and balance towards research aims and objectives. Academic staff believe workloads are reasonable and expectations for involvement in research and scholarly activities are well clarified. Staff evaluation and promotion criteria take account of research output.

Standard	***Compliance***	
	Yes	***No***
Standard 6.1. The study program has defined scientific/applied research objectives (on its own or as part of a research centre or interdisciplinary program), which are also reflected in the research development plan of the institution; sufficient financial, logistic and human resources are allocated for achieving the proposed research objectives.	*X*	
Standard 6.2. Expectations for teaching staff involvement in research and scholarly activities are clearly specified, and performance in relation to these expectations is considered in staff evaluation and promotion criteria.	*X*	
Standard 6.3. Clear policies are established for defining what is recognized as X research, consistent with international standards and established norms in the field of study of the program.		*X*
Standard 6.4. The academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the X same topics as their teaching activity.	*X*	
Standard 6.5. The academic and research staff publish their work in speciality magazines or publishing houses, scientific/applied/artistic products are presented at conferences, sessions, symposiums, seminars etc. and contracts, expertise, consultancy, conventions, etc. are provided to partners inside the country and/or abroad.	*X*	
Standard 6.6. Research is validated through: scientific and applied research publications, artistic products, technological transfer through consultancy centres, scientific parks and other structures for validation.	*X*	

Standard 6.7. Each academic staff member and researcher has produced at least an average of one scientific/applied research publication or artistic outcome/product per year for the past three years.	*X*	
Standard 6.8. Academic and research staff publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full-time staff.	*X*	
Standard 6.9. Academic staff are encouraged to include in their teaching information about their research and scholarly activities that are relevant to courses they teach, together with other significant research developments in the field.		*X*
Standard 6.10. Policies are established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.	*X*	
Standard 6.11. Students are engaged in research projects and other activities.	*X*	

Compliance level: 81% Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *The ET encourages the Program to consider developing master's level opportunities or strengthening the possibilities for graduates to continue the studies.*
2. *The ET recommends establishing research collaborations with peer institutions from abroad so that a solid research community is set-up.*

2.7. Infrastructure and Resources

The College offers 3 lecture rooms with capacity 50-70 seats and 2 rooms with capacity 70-100 seats. Additionally, there are 3 tutorial rooms with capacity of 25-30 seats. The above infrastructure is shared with the BSc programme. Two of the labs are equipped with 25-30 high-end desktop PCs and one lab is equipped with 25 laptops. The ET noted that that access to specialized infrastructure (e.g. 5G, AR/VR, IoT) was not accessible during the visit. There is no specific space so that students can work on research projects and courseworks. Additionally, there is no available space for the research centre that has been established.

The College has managed to secure funding in projects in the areas of Efficient Energy, Mechatronics Laboratory, GIS Laboratory, Design Studio, Computer Science Lab. However, it seems that there is no dedicated space for this laboratory to make the research activities sustainable.

The vast majority of core study literature indicated in the syllabi represent recently published resources that are available to students from the College library. Online study resources can only be accessed on-campus and the institution could consider enabling access to these resources off-campus too. The College also offers to the students, full access to libraries and electronic academic platforms such as J-store, EBSO, UBT Koha, Sage Journals.

Standard	***Compliance***	
	Yes	***No***

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Standard 7.1. The adequate long-term implementation of the study program is ensured in quantitative terms as regards premises, human resources and equipment. At the same time, it is guaranteed that qualitative aspects are also taken into account.		*X*
Standard 7.2. There is a financial plan at the level of the study program that would demonstrate the sustainability of the study program for the next minimum three years.	*X*	
Standard 7.3.. The higher education institution must demonstrate with adequate documents (property deeds, lease contracts, inventories, invoices etc.) that, for the study program submitted for evaluation it possesses the following, for the next at least three years: a) owned or rented spaces adequate for the educational process; b) owned or rented laboratories, with the adequate equipment for all the compulsory disciplines within the curriculum, wherever the analytical syllabus includes such activities; c) adequate software for the disciplines of study included in the curriculum, with utilization license; d) library equipped with reading rooms, group work rooms and its own book stock according to the disciplines included in the curricula.		*X*
Standard 7.4. The number of seats in the lecture rooms, seminar rooms and laboratories must be related to the study groups' size (series, groups, subgroups); the applicative activities for the specialty disciplines included in the curricula are carried out in laboratories equipped with IT equipment		*X*
Standard 7.5. The education institution's libraries must ensure, for each of the study programs: a) a number of seats in the reading rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program; b) a number of seats in the group work rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program; c) their own book stock from Albanian and foreign specialty literature, enough to cover the disciplines within the curricula, out of which at least 50% should represent book titles or specialty courses of recognized publishers, from the last 10 years; d) a book stock within its own library with a sufficient number of books so as to cover the needs of all students in the cycle and year of study the respective discipline is provided for; e) a sufficient number of subscriptions to Albanian and foreign publications and periodicals, according to the stated mission.	*X*	
Standard 7.6. The infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the program is adapted to students with special needs.		*X*

Compliance level: 33% partially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *The ET recommends that the Program should reconsider the number of administrative staff to be hired for the Program and consequently, costs related to it to ensure adequate administrative support of the delivery of the Program, should the expansion, as planned, be possible*

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2. *The ET recommends that the Program should ensure adaptation of the infrastructure so that students with special needs can have access across the facilities.*
3. *The ET recommends that the specialised infrastructure (e.g. 5G, IoT, AR/VR) is deployed at Peje campus.*
4. *The ET recommends that appropriate lab must be established for the Research Centre to maintain the research activities.*

3. FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

ID	Evaluation Criterion Title	Compliance Level
1	Mission, Objectives and Administration	66% Partially compliant
2	Quality Management	67% Partially compliant
3	Academic Staff	80% Substantially compliant
4	Educational Process Content	59% Partially compliant
5	Students	63% Partially compliant
6	Research	81% Substantially compliant
7	Infrastructure and Resources	33% Partially Compliant

Overall, the program caters for the specific situation in Kosovo, specifically the Peje region, with an environment for study in the area of IT and software development. The program is showing increasing focus on development and improvement of skills and competences so that graduate can get a job in the IT industry after two years of study. Quality assurance processes seem to be gaining in robustness but still demonstrate some variability. Research has been given a strategic direction and staff and students will be aligned with a relevant response in this area, however the lack of PhD students does not make the research activities sustainable.

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program Software Development and IT Professional Diploma offered by UBT College at the Peje campus is **Partially compliant** with the standards included in the KAA Accreditation manual. Overall, the ET considers that the Programme must NOT be accredited.

Compliance level: Partially compliant.

Expert Team

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