



Republika e Kosovës  
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo



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

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**UBT COLLEGE**

**BA DESIGN**

**ACCREDITATION**

**REPORT OF THE EXTERNAL EXPERT TEAM**

**23 April 2025**



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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 CONTEXT

The accreditation of this new BA Design programme, was conducted by a team of three external experts (ET). One participating in a site visit to the College's Prizren campus and two others via audio and visual Microsoft Zoom links coincident with the site visit.

## 1.2 SITE VISIT SCHEDULE

Programme Accreditation Procedure at UBT College - Prizren	
Programmes:	<b>Design, Professional BA 180 ECTS</b>
Site visit:	<b>03 April 2025</b>
Expert Team:	Prof. Dr. Alan Brickwood Prof. Dr. Costas Mantzalos Mr. Juraj Bogat
Coordinators of the KAA:	Arianit Krasniqi, Senior Officer at KAA

### Site Visit Programme

Time	Meeting	Participants
<b>09:00 – 9:40</b>	Meeting with the management of the Faculty where the programme is integrated	Edmond Hajrizi Visar Hoxha Ariana Gjoni Aferdita Statovci Gazmend Ejupi Cennet Lika
<b>09:45 – 10:30</b>	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff	Artan Tahiri Ylber Limani Mevludin Shabani Murat Retkoceri Agnesa Shala
<b>10:35 – 11:20</b>	Meeting with the program holders of the study programme	Kaltrina Veselaj Shllaku Besfort Salihu Uran Krasniqi
<b>11:25 – 12.25</b>	Lunch break	



<b>12:30</b> <b>13:20</b>	–	Visiting facilities	
<b>13:25</b> <b>14:10</b>	–	Meeting with teaching staff	Ajhan Bajmaku Sebil Spat Albulena Bilalli Hana Zeqa Arbresha Hoxha Roland Asllani
<b>14:15</b> <b>15:00</b>	–	Meeting with students	Alma Salihi Shkurte Voci Eron Rrafshi Shemsije Rakaj Bleana Halili Arbenita Kadiri
<b>15:05</b> <b>15:50</b>	–	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders	Vatra- Shkëlqim, Ajazaj Arkitekturre Studio Katapo- Valon Bllaca Moritex- Ersun Silik Maker Space -Arbër Kryeziu Kooperativa- Yll Çitaku
<b>15:55</b> <b>16:00</b>	–	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts	
<b>16:05</b> <b>16:10</b>	–	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program	

### 1.3 A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE INSTITUTION AND PROGRAMME UNDER EVALUATION

UBT College was established in October 2004 in Pristina, the capital of Kosovo. It developed out of previous experience from the Institute of Enterprise Engineering and Management (IEME) and is also supported by its Centres in various other towns in Kosovo.

It describes itself to be student-centred with a philosophy to be that of offering internationally competitive programmes in higher education (HE) and lifelong learning that cater for both ‘demand and supply’ sides of the education system with innovative programmes essential for economic and social developments in areas of law, political sciences, media and communication, mechatronics, energy efficiency, medical sciences and integrated design.



The College currently offers 31 Bachelor level and 14 Masters programmes on three sites at Pristina, Ferizaj and Prizren. Specifically:

**Bachelor Programmes (Pristina)**

Acting	Arts and Digital Media
Modern Music, Digital Production and Management	Civil Engineering and Infrastructure
Medical Biochemistry	Computer Science and Engineering
Agricultural and Environmental Engineering	Food Science and Bio technology
Mechatronics Engineering	Management, Business and Economics
Radiology Technician	Law LLB
Architecture and Spatial Planning	Civil Law and Property Rights
Psychology	Dental Technician
Information Systems	English Language
Energy Engineering	Political Sciences
Media and Communication	Tourism
Security Studies	Criminal Law

**Bachelor Programmes (Ferizaj)**

Management, Business and Economics
Architecture and Spatial Planning
Computer Sciences and Engineering

**Bachelor Programmes (Prizren)**

Computer Science and Engineering
Food Science and Biotechnology
Law
Architecture and Spatial Planning
Management, Business and Economics

**Masters Programmes Pristina**

Mechatronics Engineering	Architecture and Spatial Planning
Health and Physical Activity	Information Systems and Management
Food Science and Technology	Computer Science and Engineering
Paramedical Science	Management, Business and Economics
Biochemistry	Agriculture and Environmental



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Political Science	Pharmacy
Information Systems and Management	Language, Media and Communications
Public Policy and Management	

The proposed programme was described as being based upon, but substantially different to, an earlier ‘integrated design’ programme that had not been run by the College for several years.

## 2 PROGRAMME EVALUATION

### 2.1 MISSION, OBJECTIVES AND ADMINISTRATION

#### Standard 1.1

This three-year (6 semester) BA Design programme shares a common mission and set of strategic objectives, that are entirely consistent and in line with those of UBT College, the economic development of Kosovo and more broadly the needs of society. This was made clear in the SER, in conversations with the leadership, management and teaching staff and enthusiastically endorsed in discussions the External Team (ET) were pleased to be able to have with stakeholders.

Those stakeholders, represented highly experienced leaders of mainly medium to large businesses that have already established their own ‘brand’ success and reputations in design for architecture, graphics, film, advertising and fashion. All spoke enthusiastically about their experience of working with the College in connection with other programmes in the faculty, including the earlier Integrated Design programme. This included collaboration over the provision of summer school work experience for students, studio and factory visits, internships and the provision of access to specialised industry standard facilities not otherwise available within the College. Their support for the new programme was impressive.

#### Standard 1.2

The SER is thorough and makes clear that the programme is subject to policies and procedures on academic integrity and freedom that prevent all types of unethical behaviour. Staff and students are made fully aware of relevant documents that are also made publicly available. This was confirmed in meetings the ET held with management, the teaching team and students.

It was evident to the ET both from the information contained in the SER and during the event that the programme is committed to academic integrity and freedom, highlighting the benefits of transparency, ongoing communication, and the promotion of ethical



behaviour in fostering a positive, inclusive, and trustworthy academic environment. Specifically:

Commitment to Academic Integrity The study program places a strong emphasis on upholding the highest standards of academic integrity. By adhering to established policies and procedures, the programme fosters an environment where honesty, fairness, and respect for intellectual property are prioritised. This commitment ensures that students and faculty alike are held to rigorous ethical standards, cultivating a culture of trust and credibility within the academic community.

Clear Prevention of Unethical Behaviour. The programme's focus on preventing unethical behaviour demonstrates a proactive approach to maintaining a professional and respectful academic environment. Through well-defined policies, it sets clear expectations for academic conduct and discourages practices such as plagiarism, cheating, and fraud. This approach helps create a level playing field for all students, ensuring that success is determined by merit and hard work.

Promotion of Academic Freedom. By adhering to policies that support academic freedom, the program creates an open and safe space for intellectual exploration, critical thinking, and scholarly debate. Students and staff are empowered to express diverse ideas and viewpoints, which not only enrich the learning experience but also align with the broader goals of academic freedom, ensuring that individuals can pursue knowledge without fear of undue censorship or restriction.

Transparency and Accessibility: The availability of these important policies and procedures to the public demonstrates the institution's commitment to transparency and accountability. By making these documents accessible, the institution ensures that both current and prospective students, as well as staff members, are well-informed about the ethical standards expected of them. This transparency builds confidence in the institution's commitment to upholding high academic and ethical standards.

Active Communication with Stakeholders: The fact that both staff and students are regularly informed about these policies reflects a strong commitment to ongoing education and awareness. This ensures that everyone involved in the academic community is fully aware of their rights, responsibilities, and the consequences of unethical behaviour. Regular communication about academic integrity helps reinforce the values of honesty and respect, creating a strong foundation for academic success.

Cultivation of Ethical Awareness: By embedding policies on academic integrity and freedom into the fabric of the study programme, the institution not only prevents



unethical behaviour but also promotes a culture of ethical awareness among students and staff. This emphasis on ethics helps prepare graduates for responsible citizenship and professional conduct, ensuring that they leave the institution equipped with the values necessary to contribute positively to society.

**Strengthening Reputation and Trust:** The Institution's rigorous approach to academic integrity and freedom enhances its reputation as a trusted and respected educational provider. By preventing unethical behaviour and ensuring transparency, the programme attracts students who value ethical standards and are committed to academic excellence. This strengthens the institution's standing within the academic community and beyond.

### **Standard 1.3**

The ET was able to confirm from the SER and from its meetings with administrative and teaching staff that relevant information is collected, analysed and used to ensure the effective management of study programmes. This information is also made available publicly via the College's website.

The effective management of the programme relies on accurate, current, and trustworthy data. Additionally, specific action plans are established to track the progress and execution of the new programme.

The SER confirms that there are well-defined ethical standards in place to oversee both teaching and research activities.

Suggestions for enhancing the study program, provided through previous quality assurance evaluations and after consultation with various stakeholders, are carefully reviewed and effectively implemented.

### **Standard 1.4**

It is evident that the delivery of the programme is typically supported in this large and well-established institution by appropriate and sufficient administrative support staff both centrally and at local level, to achieve its goals. Specifically, there is an overarching Administrative and Budgetary Support Policy to ensure sufficient support. At Faculty level there is a Dean, Programme Director, Programme Coordinator and Quality Officer, each with clearly defined roles.

The SER also affirms that the administrative staff participate in ongoing professional development, which is essential for their job performance. Training sessions are held



three times a year, organised and funded by the Rectorate, as confirmed during the on-site visit discussion.

The study program is supported by adequate administrative resources to meet the teaching and learning requirements of both students and academic staff, as stated in the SER. The SER also highlights that administrative staff undergo continuous professional training, including language courses, computer skills and other relevant areas of development.

### **Standard 1.5**

The SER makes clear this programme followed its normal rigorous quality assurance system as a new programme and will continue to be subject to similar ongoing regular scrutiny. As such it will be able to draw upon, and benefit from, a massive institutional knowledge base of quality and standards befitting a new programme start-up in a large and mature institution such as UBT. Continuous improvement based upon experience drawn from previous internal and external quality assurance procedures should be the norm.

**ET Recommendations:** None

## **2.2 QUALITY MANAGEMENT**

### **Standard 2.1**

Universum College is an established and mature institution with quality assurance standards and principles established and developed, since its inception over the past 20 years, according to the Bologna Process and regulations laid down by KAA. The latter drawing heavily upon participation and advice from teams of advisers and experts from across the world. This to ensure a comparability of standards internationally and the promulgation of up-to-date thinking and ‘best practice’.

At institutional level there is a comprehensive, thorough and robust system of common requirements for the design of new programmes, modification of existing ones and for the processes of monitoring, review and formal evaluation. This is inclusive of all staff and is cascaded down to Faculty level.

### **Standard 2.2**

The proposed programme would be anchored in a robust institutional quality management system that ensures compliance with national and international regulations while maintaining high academic and industry standards.



There is a Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) comprising dedicated staff in charge of quality control and who described their principal functions to be that of cultivating and maintaining a ‘quality culture’. This, in addition to their day-to-day collection, collation and feedback of findings from a wide variety of sources. One example being advice from external stakeholders that meet to provide an industry perspective as to whether programmes are in line with the National Qualifications Framework and needs of the market.

As a consequence, the programme would have a structured approach to continuous improvement, incorporating regular evaluations of curriculum, teaching methodologies, and learning outcomes to meet both regulatory requirements and industry expectations.

### **Standard 2.3**

The programme would be periodically monitored and reviewed to ensure it is delivering its objectives.

This process of monitoring and review is thoroughly described in the SER to include a clear articulation of what programmes are setting out to achieve; the selection and recruitment of suitable students; the content and balance of the teaching and learning experience; effective outcomes; and fair assessment for the purposes of monitoring, feedback to students, for progression and award and for when things go wrong. These measures also include the collation of information on the workload of students and staff; student, staff and stakeholder/employer feedback and the destination of graduates.

Faculty members are regularly trained and updated on best practices, ensuring that instruction remains relevant and of the highest quality. Additionally, comprehensive student feedback mechanisms, internal audits, and industry partnerships are utilised to monitor and enhance a programme's effectiveness. By adhering to rigorous quality assurance protocols and fostering a culture of excellence, the programme would consistently deliver a high standard of education that equips students with the knowledge and skills necessary to thrive in the highly competitive world of design.

### **Standard 2.4**

The study program demonstrates a strong commitment to transparency and accessibility by ensuring that all relevant information is clear, accurate, and up-to-date. The details provided are objective, offering prospective students and other stakeholders a reliable understanding of the programme's structure, goals, and requirements. By making this information publicly available, the programme fosters an environment of openness and trust, empowering individuals to make informed decisions about their educational path.



This approach reflects the institution's dedication to providing high-quality, transparent, and easily accessible information that supports both prospective and current students. The ET found the processes in place highly satisfactory – seemingly covering all eventualities in a sensitive and flexible manner.

All relevant information about the study programme is clear, accurate, objective, up-to-date and is made publicly available via the institution's website.

**ET Recommendations:** None

## **2.3 ACADEMIC STAFF**

### **Standard 3.1**

All teaching staff are recruited in line with national legislation and internal regulations based on objective and transparent procedures. Those same principles also apply to processes of staff advancement and promotion.

The SER confirms that UBT advertises job vacancies both nationally and internationally through various channels, such as the institution's website as well as local media. Recruitment within the Department where the BA in Design programme resides, adheres to clear, objective, and transparent procedures, which include job announcements, selection committees, and comprehensive committee reports. The recruitment process is strategically aligned with the Faculty's goals, ensuring that selection procedures meet specific needs and involve a thorough evaluation. Additionally, candidates are provided with complete position descriptions and employment conditions, including UBT's internal regulations and its Code of Ethics for both staff and students.

### **Standard 3.2**

The full-time teaching staff team is strong. It comprises people that are highly qualified, competent, youthful, motivated and experienced to deliver the curriculum effectively. The overall position on staffing is stable and secure. All staff confirmed their commitment to student-centred learning with strong tutorial support.

The SER provides listings of some 38 full-time staff, of which at least 50% are full time, and their engagement by qualification, title, tenure and by the amount of time they are allocated to spend on this programme. Information on other commitments those staff have elsewhere in UBT is also included. Staff planning over the next few years, probably assuming an annual intake of 100 students, refers to the appointment of additional staff



towards a probable student staff ration of 8:1. This against a general KAA and institutional standard upper limit of 30:1.

### **Standard 3.3**

The College has established and follows well-documented, clear, and transparent procedures for the promotion of academic staff, as confirmed in the SER. One of the key criteria for promotion is the requirement for academic staff to have published in internationally recognised journals that have a significant impact in their field. To be eligible for advancement, staff must also engage in international activities relevant to their academic discipline, such as presenting at international conferences and participating in research projects, mobility etc as confirmed in the SER. Additionally as it became evident during the site visit, and the meeting session with the teaching team, art and design practise is also considered to be a professional activity that contributes to the advancement and promotion. The ET fully supports this approach and urges the UBT to establish clear and formalised guidelines on this. Additionally, student feedback plays an essential role in evaluating the quality of teaching and academic support provided by staff, influencing their promotion assessment.

### **Standard 3.4**

The SER identifies a fairly full list of opportunities provided for staff development ranging from study programmes for new recruits, workshops on quality assurance, learning and teaching and participation in international activities such as mobility programmes, study visits to foreign higher education institutions, international projects and sabbatical breaks.

The academic staff involved in the delivery of the study program are provided with ample institutional support for their professional development, reflecting the institution's commitment to fostering continuous growth and excellence in teaching and research. This support includes access to various resources, such as funding for attending academic conferences, workshops, and seminars, as well as opportunities to participate in specialised training programmes aimed at enhancing their subject expertise and pedagogical skills. Furthermore, the institution encourages staff to engage in collaborative research projects, facilitating partnerships with national and international scholars. Through these initiatives, the institution not only enhances the professional competencies of its staff but also ensures that they stay at the forefront of developments in their respective fields. This investment in professional development contributes to a dynamic learning environment, benefiting both the academic staff and students alike.



All staff are subjected to regular evaluation of their performance to include satisfaction surveys completed by students anonymously.

**ET Recommendations:** None

## **2.4 EDUCATION PROCESS CONTENT**

### **Standards 4.1 and 4.2**

The study programme's learning outcomes are, in broad terms, well-articulated according to best practice and entirely in-line with the Institution and Faculty's mission and objectives. They are also both coherent and enabling for students to achieve the stated programme objectives. They are made publicly available and comply with National Qualification and European Qualifications Frameworks.

Care needs to be exercised in making comparisons with similar sounding programmes outside Kosovo. This is especially so when the institution being compared against is located in a major international centre of excellence, such as Fashion in London, Rome or Paris. In those centres, institutions have enormous advantages in being able to readily access world class teaching knowledge, assets and people – especially with regard to part time associate teaching inputs.

### **Standard 4.3**

The balance of student study is at a ratio for practice and theory at 60:40, respectively, and with an emphasis upon student-centred learning. This is consistent and common with comparable practice-based design programmes elsewhere.

The ET did however engage in detailed discussions with subject leaders, teaching staff and stakeholders on the choice of some of the subjects contained in the curriculum. This, in terms of balance, complementarity and how these contributed to student learning outcomes.

Of particular interest to the ET was the apparent strong emphasis of 'fine art' in the first two semesters of the programme. A programme clearly structured to provide students with a broad basis of 'general design' in year 1; followed in year 2 by 'streaming' into three alternative specialisms of graphic design, fashion design and interior design and; in year 3, a return to 'general design practice' whilst maintaining their individual choice of one of the three specialism pathways. All leading to a culminating major 'capstone' project.



Alternatives were discussed to include substituting some, or most, of the fine art components with studies that might, for example, include enhanced drawing skills, contemporary cultural factors, basic anthropometry or heightened awareness of some of the major changes taking place in industries graduates would aspire to work in.

The ET's questioning of 'fine art' studies centred upon what was inevitably a fairly full and demanding curriculum and especially how graduates from this programme might be able to compete alongside graduates from some other programme, that contained more dedicated time spent studying a similar chosen specialism.

The response received by the ET on this was robust and reassuring.

Staff argued from a number of angles that included experience previously, the enthusiasm of employers for the proposed UBT approach (including its content and balance of studies) and what can best be described as an approach less based upon the Bauhaus model and more akin to how design is taught in, for example, France or Italy.

Stakeholders agreed and added further dimensions. One being that their principal criteria for the employment of graduates should ideally place intellectual development and maturity at a higher priority than industry related skills. The latter being something they themselves could far better provide and secondly 'transferability' - that not all graduates will become mainstream specialist designers. Some preferring, perhaps, related careers as managers, journalists or teachers.

Reference to product design and furniture design in the SER seemed incidental. English language features in all parts of the curriculum and is taught in semester 3 as an elective.

The Semester 6 Capstone Project towards the close of year 3 confirmed expectations of a culminating comprehensive test of a student's ability to draw together all that they had learnt and be able to present this in a professional manner.

#### **Standard 4.4**

Not applicable

#### **Standard 4.5**

The Regulation on Compulsory Practice at UBT College provides a comprehensive framework for incorporating professional traineeships into higher education programs. It defines the purpose of the practice, emphasizing the application of theoretical knowledge in real-world contexts (Article 1). The regulation also outlines the roles and



responsibilities of all parties involved, including the College, the traineeship provider, and the student (Article 2).

The document specifies the duration of the traineeship, aligning it with the ECTS credit system, and details the distribution of study hours between practical work and independent study (Article 3). While students are primarily responsible for securing a traineeship placement, the College offers assistance when needed (Article 4). The regulation further clarifies the mentor's role in supporting the student, as well as the process for developing and approving the work program (Articles 5 and 6).

Upon completion of the traineeship, students are required to submit several documents, including a written report, which will be assessed by their mentor (Article 7). The regulation also allows for an exemption from the traineeship for students who have relevant prior work experience (Article 8). To maintain consistency, the regulation provides templates for all essential documentation related to the traineeship (Article 9). Finally, the regulation specifies its effective date (Article 10).

The regulation can be accessed online at [UBT College Regulation on Compulsory Practice](#), and documents associated with the regulation, such as the certificate of completion, work program template, and written report template, can be found in the Annex of this SER.

#### **Standard 4.6**

The study programme is delivered through student-centred teaching and learning.

The BA in Design is designed around a student-centred approach to teaching and learning, placing the needs, interests, and active participation of students at the core of the educational experience. This approach encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning, fostering a deeper understanding of the subject matter through interactive and collaborative methods. Faculty members act as facilitators, guiding students in their exploration of course content and encouraging critical thinking, problem-solving, and independent inquiry.

Student-centred learning is evident in various teaching strategies, such as project-based assignments, group discussions, case studies, and hands-on activities, which help students apply theoretical knowledge to real-world situations. The programme also prioritizes personalised learning, offering opportunities for students to tailor their academic paths based on their individual interests and career goals.



In addition, the programme integrates regular feedback mechanisms, where students are actively involved in the assessment process, providing them with clear guidance on their progress and areas for improvement. This continuous interaction between students and instructors ensures that learning is dynamic and responsive to the evolving needs of the students.

By fostering a collaborative learning environment, the programme promotes peer learning and teamwork, which are essential skills in both academic and professional settings. Overall, the student-centred approach ensures that learning is engaging, relevant, and aligned with the students' academic and professional aspiration

#### **Standard 4.7**

The programme provides a clear description of how the overall intended learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, and competencies) are linked to the contribution of each individual module in achieving those outcomes. This is confirmed in the SER, which states that the study programme has established a well-defined structure connecting the intended learning outcomes with each module offered.

The programme employs systematic assessment methodologies that ensure a comprehensive evaluation of individual learning outcomes. These methodologies address all relevant areas of knowledge, skills, and competencies, and are adapted to evaluate student progress in alignment with the programme's objectives. The assessment methods are adjusted as necessary to meet the learning outcomes required for each module.

It was clear from meetings with teaching and students teams that students are informed promptly about their assessment results and provided with feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of their performance. If needed, students receive additional guidance and support to enhance their learning process and address any areas of difficulty.

Moreover, the programme has effective appeals procedures in place, allowing students to express concerns or complaints regarding assessments or programme requirements. These procedures are transparent and accessible, ensuring that complaints are handled fairly and efficiently. The experts fully support this statement.

#### **Standard 4.8**

The BA in Design ensures fair and consistent grading of students. The assessment criteria are carefully designed to accurately reflect students' knowledge, abilities, and the skills they have acquired by meeting the intended learning outcomes. These criteria provide a



clear and measurable description of student performance, ensuring that the evaluation process is grounded in the demonstration of knowledge, skills, and competencies.

As highlighted in the SER, ECTS credits are assigned to each module based on the total number of hours required for students to achieve the learning outcomes. For instance, a module worth 6 ECTS involves approximately 150–180 hours of student engagement, including lectures, exercises, individual study, and assessments. The calculation for 1 ECTS is based on 25 hours of student activities. The ET fully supports this statement which also follows the Bologna Process, - a process well maintained in European institutions.

**COMPLIANCE LEVEL:** Fully compliant

**ET RECOMMENDATION:** The Faculty, together with its external stakeholders, revisits the debate over the content and balance of studies at a suitable point. Probably best after it has graduates from its first cohort at the end of the 3-year cycle.

## 2.5 STUDENTS

The SER provides comprehensive information on institution-wide arrangements for student admission, participation in decision-making, rights of representation, feedback, what students can expect, what is expected from them and support for them when difficulties arise. These arrangements are very thorough and have been developed from experience, drawn widely upon best practice from elsewhere and subjected to continuous improvement – a characteristic of effective QA systems. In all circumstances they are delegated, mirrored and adapted to suit local circumstances and needs within prescribed limits.

The programme fosters a positive and supportive environment that actively contributes to the academic and personal growth of its students. Students consistently report feeling encouraged and valued throughout their studies, with faculty and staff offering mentorship and guidance at every stage of their educational journey. The programme's collaborative atmosphere allows students to engage in constructive feedback, peer support, and open communication, creating a sense of community that enhances their learning experience. Additionally, the programme provides ample resources, including access to industry experts, workshops, and career development services, which help students feel empowered to succeed. This supportive approach not only boosts students' confidence but also motivates them to strive for excellence and achieve their full potential in the creative industry. Specifically:

### Standard 5.1



The admission processes are transparent, fair, equal for all candidates, and without any discrimination towards any group of people. All documentation required by the law and by institutional policies is properly verified by the institution.

#### Standard 5.2

Student progress is carefully monitored and analysed since the timely completion of the studies is in best interest of both the student and the College. Students who face difficulties can approach teachers for additional consultation, even outside of dedicated office hours.

#### Standard 5.3

Students are informed and encouraged to participate in international exchange mobility programmes, but there seem to be only few cases of it occurring. However, the faculty has some strong international relations with other universities and institutions with lots of possibilities for exchange.

#### Standard 5.4

The Faculty, the Department and the professors all seem to treat their students with the utmost respect. All the student rights are met, there are no reports of any major incidents in any regard, students are treated with flexibility regarding their jobs and other obligations. There are set mechanisms for students appeals and students are fully aware of them. There will be challenges arising from increased students over time but the SER presents a detailed, confident and convincing plan to handle those challenges.

**ET RECOMMENDATION:** None

## 2.6 RESEARCH

### Standard 6.1

Whilst UBT describes itself as a teaching institution predominantly, it has nevertheless given research a high priority to ensure its knowledge base, its teaching staff and the material they deliver is professionally up-to-date and vital to students and the communities it serves. It is all consistent and in alignment with the College's mission and research led strategic goals.

The programme evaluation demonstrates a strong alignment between the study programme and both the institution's and academic unit's mission and research strategic



goals. The curriculum and its objectives are designed to complement the overarching institutional vision, emphasising academic excellence, research innovation, and community engagement. By closely adhering to the research strategic goals, the programme fosters a research-driven environment that encourages scholarly inquiry and the application of cutting-edge methodologies. This alignment ensures that students not only gain a comprehensive education but also contribute to the advancement of the institution's research priorities, thereby enhancing the academic unit's reputation and impact. Furthermore, the programme supports the development of both theoretical and practical skills that prepare students for leadership roles in research, furthering the institution's commitment to excellence in higher education and research.

### **Standards 6.2**

Research engagement is a condition of teaching staff employment. It is expected to permeate the curriculum of all student programmes. There is formal encouragement for collaboration with external knowledge bases and practice and the College takes advantage of opportunities offered by external schemes.

Staff are committed despite a generally discouraging emphasis in the use of language in the SER that fails to recognise 'equivalence' between traditional 'research' and 'practice' more appropriate to fields such as creative design. Criteria for advancement, for example, lists mandatory requirements and criteria for the promotion of academic staff largely focused upon traditional methods such as minima of publications per annum! This programme, and creative arts endeavours in the College more generally, could benefit from a more tailored approach that encourages creative practice as an alternative to scientific research and to which staff and students can delve into niche areas such as sustainable design practices, digital fashion technologies or the intersection of fashion and cultural identity. By incorporating more specialised research topics and fostering a creative environment, the programme would not only better support the unique needs of teaching staff and students but also inspire original contributions to the ever-evolving fashion industry itself, for example.

It would be desirable if the institution forms a formal policy regarding the creative practise as an equivalent to academic research. In academia, creative practice is essential as it encourages innovation and allows for exploration beyond the boundaries of traditional research. Unlike conventional research, which often focuses on analysis and theory, creative practice emphasizes hands-on experimentation, artistic expression, and the generation of new ideas through direct engagement with materials and processes. This approach fosters critical thinking, problem-solving, and personal expression, allowing for the development of unique insights that may not emerge through traditional research methods, ultimately contributing to a richer and more diverse body of knowledge



The programme evaluation reveals that the academic staff engaged in the study programme are highly committed to achieving high-quality research work and professional activity. Faculty members are not only experts in their respective fields but are also actively supported by the institution through professional development opportunities, research funding, and access to state-of-the-art resources. This environment empowers the academic staff to pursue innovative research initiatives and maintain a high standard of professional practice. Additionally, the institution fosters a collaborative culture, encouraging interdisciplinary research and the sharing of knowledge, which further enhances the faculty's ability to conduct impactful work. As a result, the staff's dedication to producing cutting-edge research and contributing to the academic community is reinforced, ensuring that the program remains at the forefront of academic and professional excellence.

### **Standards 6.3**

The program evaluation highlights that the academic staff involved in delivering the study program are actively encouraged and supported to participate in various forms of collaboration with national and international partners and stakeholders. The institution provides numerous opportunities for faculty to engage in partnerships that foster knowledge exchange, joint research projects, and professional development. These collaborations not only enhance the academic staff's research capabilities but also broaden their exposure to diverse perspectives and methodologies. Through participation in international conferences, workshops, and research networks, faculty members are able to stay at the forefront of global academic trends and contribute to global academic discourse. This emphasis on cooperation strengthens the programme's international reputation and ensures that students benefit from a curriculum enriched by a wide range of global insights and expertise. The possibility to also embark on Erasmus+ mobility and/or research projects provided an additional benefit for the staff to keep up with the internationalisation of the institute.

### **Standards 6.4**

The teaching staff engaged in the study programme possess a proven record of research and/or practise achievements directly aligned with the topics they teach throughout the three major fields of Graphics, Interior and Fashion design. Faculty members are not only skilled educators but also active researchers and/or practitioners in their fields, ensuring that their teaching is informed by the latest developments and findings. This connection between research and teaching enhances the learning experience, as students benefit from up-to-date knowledge and exposure to current academic debates. The faculty's ability to integrate their research/practise into the curriculum enriches course content and fosters a dynamic, evidence-based learning environment. Moreover, the faculty's research/



practise success provides students with valuable role models, inspiring them to engage in scholarly inquiry and pursue research-driven careers. This alignment between research/practise and teaching strengthens the programme's academic integrity and ensures that students receive instruction grounded in real-world expertise.

#### **ET RECOMMENDATION:**

It would be desirable if the institution – within the next 3 years - added some formal policy regarding creative practise being an equivalent to academic research. In academia, creative practice is essential as it encourages innovation and allows for exploration beyond the boundaries of traditional research.

## **2.7 INFRASTRUCTURE AND LEARNING RESOURCES**

### **Standard 7.1**

Assessing the adequacy of access to facilities on a programme seeking an annual student intake of 100 is not straightforward. This is especially so with a practice-based programme requiring regular and repeated student access to workshops, equipment, software and other learning materials for skills tuition and projects involving ‘making’ through to similarly specialised desk-based learning.

The SER was clear on what space would be available specifically for this programme and for research both of a general and specialist nature with very detailed listing of how existing space at Prizren could accommodate such an increase year-on-year. This included facilities dedicated to practical design, innovation, creative making activities and other specially equipped space for screen-based digital two-dimensional design work.

In addition, the ET’s attention was drawn to the campus being located on, and part of, a regional business development site, *The Innovation & Training Park, Prizren*’ and of the benefits this was already delivering in terms of access to facilities and how it could readily deliver even more access to specialist workshops and ‘state of the art’ manufacturing facilities. Facilities not otherwise accessible and certainly not affordable for the College under normal circumstances. The ET were shown video clips of students from UBT attending a summer school at a factory owned by one of the stakeholders.



The College demonstrates a strong commitment to providing adequate premises and equipment to support both educational processes and research activities. The facilities are well-maintained, spacious, and equipped with state-of-the-art technology, fostering an environment conducive to both teaching and learning. The research infrastructure, including laboratories, workspaces, and collaborative areas, is equally well-supported, allowing for effective scholarly inquiry and innovation. This commitment ensures that both students and faculty have the necessary resources to excel academically and professionally.

### **Standard 7.2**

Taking into account the ready interchangeability and availability of material at the College's two sites and common student access to personal and College terminals, the ET is entirely satisfied that students would have adequate access to books, periodicals and other on-line material in support of their studies on this programme.

UBT ensures that library resources for the study programme are more than adequate to support the educational needs of students and faculty. The library is well-stocked with a diverse range of print and digital materials, including academic journals, textbooks, and research databases, which are frequently updated to reflect the latest developments in fields. Access to online resources and interlibrary loans further enhance the ability to support the academic requirements of the programme. A robust library infrastructure, such as this, is essential in fostering a rich, research-oriented learning environment for all stakeholders.

### **Standard 7.3**

The ET is equally satisfied that the programme is appropriately funded to deliver its intended educational activities and research initiatives. The institution allocates sufficient financial resources to support both the curriculum and faculty research, allowing for continuous improvement of programme quality. This funding supports key elements, such as faculty development, research projects, and the acquisition of teaching materials, ensuring the programme remains innovative, relevant, and of high academic standard. The stable and adequate funding enables the programme to sustain its objectives and continue to meet the evolving needs of students, staff, and the broader academic community.

**ET Recommendations:** None



### 3 FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXTERNAL EXPERT TEAM

1. MISSION, OBJECTIVES AND ADMINISTRATION	Fully Compliant
2. QUALITY MANAGEMENT	Fully Compliant
3. ACADEMIC STAFF (Mandatory)	Fully Compliant
4. EDUCATION PROCESS CONTENT	Fully Compliant
5. STUDENTS	Fully Compliant
6. RESEARCH	Fully Compliant
7. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES (Mandatory)	Fully Compliant
<b>Overall Compliance</b>	Fully Compliant

The External Expert Team is grateful to the College management, teaching team, students, stakeholders and to employers for their open and dynamic contribution to the event, and wishes them well for the future.

This proposed new three-year BA Professional Design Programme is timely and an appropriate addition that could, within a short time, become a serious asset within UBT's portfolio of higher education serving Kosovo's industrial economy. It will probably be very popular with students and the industries it aims to serve.

It has many appropriate ingredients for that to start to happen. There is a strong community of committed and experienced staff; experience of operating at a relevant level, the potential to recruit highly motivated students and good working relationships with industry. It will need a continued commitment across these fronts, develop its intellectual



assets to a high level by research and practice and by exposure and association with the best.

**In conclusion, the External Expert Team considers the BA Professional Design programme to be Fully Compliant with the Standards included in the current KAA Accreditation Manual.**

**The External Expert Team therefore recommends the study programme be accredited for an initial 3 (three) years and with a maximum annual intake of 30 students.**

#### **Expert Team**

Professor Alan Brickwood  
23 April 2025

Professor Costas Mantzalos  
23 April 2025

Mr Juraj Bogat  
23 April 2025