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UNIVERSITETI “FEHMI AGANI” IN GJAKOVA

PROGRAM BACHELOR IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

Re-accreditation

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

FINAL REPORT

Gjakova, February 24, 2025

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INTRODUCTION

Sources of information for the Report:

- SER
- Anexes
- KAA Accreditation Manual

Criteria used for institutional and program evaluations

Standards & performance indicators for external evaluation according to the Accreditation Manual of KAA

Site visit schedule

Program Accreditation Procedure at University “Fehmi Agani” Gjakovë	
Programs:	Primary Education, BA (Re-accreditation) Mathematics Education, MA (Accreditation)
Site visit on:	04 February, 2025
Expert Team:	Melita Kovacevic Miklos Hoffmann Elisa Knief
Coordinators of the KAA:	Naim Gashi, General Director of KAA Shpresa Shala, Senior Officer at KAA

Time	Meeting	Participants
09:00 – 09:50	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the program is integrated	Ilmi Hoxha Edita Haxhijaha Ruzhdi Kadrija Mimoza Kurshumlia
09:55 – 10:40	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff	Emirëjeta Kumnova Nita Pruthi Elinda Pruthi Mentore Zejnullahu Abedin Sadrija Bujar Nura Rina Xhiha
10:45 – 11:45	Meeting with the program holders of the study program Primary Education, BA	Zamira Gashi Shatri Venera Vala Këndusi Edita Haxhijaha Ruzhdi Kadrija
11:50-12:40	Meeting with the program holders of the study program Mathematics Education, MA	Melinda Mula
12:45 – 13:45	Lunch break	
13:50- 14:35	Visiting facilities	
14:40- 15:25	Meeting with teaching staff (mixed of both programs)	Laura Naka Sindorela Doli Kryeziu Behxhet Gaxhiqi

		Lulzim Zeneli Zeqir Hashani Valbona Berisha Shpresa Tolaj Gjonbalaj Vllaznim Mula
15:30- 16:15	Meeting with students	Vlera Morina Albina Rragomaj Yllka Berisha Eliona Kastrati Ardita Thaqi Florentina Marashi Erijona Krasniqi Ema Rudi Driada Blakaj Alisa Podrimçaku Zyhra Sylaj
16:20- 17:05	Meeting with graduates	Sihana Kryeziu Vlorë Rudaj Elzona Halilaj Elona Dodaj Elona Hajdari Rina Muhaxheri Nora Emra Albanita Zeneli Aurela Berisha
17:10-17:55	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders	Pleurat Rudi- <i>principal in SHFMU “Zekeria Rexha” in Gjakova</i> Veprorë Shehu - <i>NGP Medica Kosova</i> Zymer Berisha DKA (<i>Educational Municipality Directorate</i>) in Gjakova Naser Gega - DKA (<i>Educational Municipality Directorate</i>) in Peja Valma Kamisha - <i>Principal of primary school (SHF) “Kelmend Rizvanolli” in Gjakova</i> Berat Bejtullahu - <i>Principal in SHFMU “Yll Morina” in Gjakova</i> Yllka Juniku - <i>principal of Gimnasium “Hajdar Dushi” (high school) in Gjakova</i> Fatos Axhemi - <i>Jakova Innovation Center Gjakova, director of the center</i> Mimoza Shala-Daija <i>Principal school “Mehmet Akifi” Gjakova</i> Arianit Krypa - <i>Prime Academy manager</i>
18:00-18:10	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts	
18:10-18:20	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program	Ilmi Hoxha Edita Haxhijaha Ruzhdi Kadrija Mimoza Kurshumlia Zamira Gashi Shatri Venera Vala Këndusi Melinda Mula

A brief overview of the program under evaluation

Fehmi Agani University in Gjakova is a higher education institution of regional importance. It has a total of five faculties, one of which is the Faculty of Education, which offers programs in pre-school and primary education. Bachelor in Primary Education is one of the programs Faculty offers. The last evaluation was in 2019. It is a four-year study program with in total 240 ECTS. The Primary Education, BA programme was last time re-accredited in 2021.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

The program evaluation consists of 7 standard areas through which the program is evaluated.

1. MISSION, OBJECTIVES AND ADMINISTRATION

Standard 1.1 The study program is in line with the higher education institution's mission and strategic goals, needs of society and it is publicly available. (ESG 1.1)

Both the University and the Faculty have defined their mission and strategic goals, and the proposed new educational program is in line with these. According to the SER, UFAG's mission is "to create knowledge through contemporary teaching and research methods, fostering student enthusiasm and promoting academic integrity". The university has undertaken a number of activities, based on its regulations and decisions, to implement its mission and vision. At the system level, management and monitoring of the teaching process and activities have been established. This has also been brought down to the faculty level. According to the institutional strategic planning, programs have been offered at bachelor and master level.

Standard 1.2 The study program Is subject to policies and procedures on academic integrity and freedom that prevent all types of unethical behaviour. The documents are publicly available, and staff and students are informed thereof. (ESG 1.1)

The Faculty, as a university unit, follows and implements in its daily routine various mechanisms and tools developed to prevent plagiarism and academic/research misconduct. There is a Code of Ethics which defines standards of ethical and professional behaviour. Academic integrity is emphasised through various faculty and program activities and is addressed to both academic staff and students. The University Senate has also established an Ethics Council, which is responsible for promoting the principles of ethical behaviour among students and for implementing the Code of Ethics in the necessary contexts. All documents and information related to the Ethics Council are publicly available. Students are also well informed.

Standard 1.3 Relevant information is collected, analysed and used to ensure the effective management of the study program and other relevant activities and such information is publicly available. (ESG 1.7)

The Faculty of Education regularly monitors and periodically reviews all its programs. This process involves various members of staff, both administrative and teaching. Programs are reviewed annually, and various indicators are analysed, including the expected and achieved results, course syllabi, the

content of course descriptions, the content of teaching activities, and so on. All these activities are used to improve the existing programs, but also to plan changes, according to SER. However, it is not clear and fully transparent where this information is shared, it is not publicly available and it is not clear what actually happens once the information is collected and analysed.

Standard 1.4 The delivery of the study program is supported by appropriate and sufficient administrative support to achieve its goals in teaching, learning, research, and community service. (ESG 1.6)

The Faculty of Education has a modest but probably sufficient administrative staff, given the size of the Faculty, covering various areas of management and student support. There is a student services officer, a student records officer, a legal officer, a dean's assistant, a placement officer, a learning coordinator and a librarian. There are additional staff that are shared by all the faculties, such as IT officers or financial officers.

Standard 1.5 The recommendations for quality improvement of the study program from previous internal and external quality assurance procedures are implemented. (ESG 1.10)

In the last accreditation period, the programme followed some of the recommendations of the evaluators as well as the suggestions for improvement received from the Advisory Board. A good example of these changes is the increase in the number of hours allocated to student practice, few courses changing their position from elective to compulsory. There has been an increase in the number of electives, additional improvements in the methodology used, etc. Following the suggestions of the Advisory Board, the student handbook for pedagogical practice has been updated, as well as the further development of pedagogical skills.

ET recommendations:

1. *To ensure that the management of the programs is effective and efficient, the information collected, the analysis carried out and the changes implemented are publicly available.*

QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Standard 2.1 The study program delivery is subject to an established and functional internal quality assurance system, in which all relevant stakeholders are included. (ESG 1.1)

The Faculty has established all relevant procedures, documents and regulations for the implementation of internal quality assurance. Each academic unit has its own Quality Assurance Committee, there is a coordinator, while at the institutional level there is a Central Quality Assurance Committee.

The staff responsible for quality is made up of representatives of the academic staff, administrative staff from the Central QA Office, a representative from the Office of Academic Affairs and a student representative. There is also a responsible Vice-Rector at university level.

Documents are publicly available. The monitoring of programs is carried out on an ongoing basis and is analysed and updated annually.

Standard 2.2 The study program is subject to a process of design and approval established by the HEI. (ESG 1.2)

Study programs are developed according to the institutional mission and strategic objectives. It has well-defined procedures for approving new programs, and various internal and external stakeholders are involved in this process. The Advisory Board, a body of external stakeholders, plays a specific and important role before a new program is proposed. Once the program is approved and accredited, it is monitored within the institutional system of internal quality.

Standard 2.3 The study program is periodically monitored and reviewed to ensure its objectives are achieved. The monitoring of the study program involves stakeholder participation. (ESG 1.9)

All stakeholders involved directly or indirectly in the implementation of the program also contribute to the process of monitoring and reviewing the program. This process is ongoing and the data collected is analysed on an annual basis. Faculties and/or individual units conduct surveys and collect additional information from employers and students. The information they collect is used to make changes to the program where necessary.

Standard 2.4 All relevant information about the study program is clear, accurate, objective, up-to-date and is publicly available. (ESG 1.8)

The majority of documents, policies and regulations are publicly available on the institutional website, but there is still some information that is not accessible. When it comes to the results of some surveys, especially student evaluations, or some statistical data and figures that speak about the efficiency and functioning of the Faculty are not accessible. According to the SER, the Faculty carries out a number of surveys and conducts questionnaires among students, employers and mentors, but the results and outcomes of these activities are not publicly available. The Qatek project is a good example of how better reporting and more efficient access to different documents and reports could be managed, but it needs to be further developed and implemented in a more systematic way.

ET recommendations:

- 1. Additional efforts should be done in order to update all the information relevant for the study programs and to make them publicly available*

3. ACADEMIC STAFF

Standard 3.1 The study program delivery is supported by teaching staff who are recruited in line with national legislation, and internal regulations in effect, and it is based on objective and transparent procedure. (ESG 1.5)

UFAGj has a clear process for recruiting academic staff, and this is fully in line with the Law on Higher Education in the Republic of Kosovo No. 04/L-037, Law No. 03/L-212 of Work, and the internal regulations in force at UFAGj. In addition to these legal acts in force, the employment of academic staff is carried out according to the Statute of UFAGj, the Administrative Guidelines and Regulations of the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation, the Regulations of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency, the Regulation for the selection procedures regarding appointment, reappointment and promotion of academic staff at UFAGj.

Standard 3.2 The study program is supported by sufficient permanent academic staff who are adequately qualified to deliver the study program. (ESG 1.5)

The program is run by the Faculty of Education. The Faculty has the necessary number of full-time qualified staff in the field of education in general. The total number of full-time staff is 23, of which 18 are Ph.D. holders, and among them are 5 professors, 7 associate professors and 6 assistant professors. Responsible program persons are full-time employed, three of them are associate professors, one is an assistant professor. They have degrees in a broad field of education, mostly related to pedagogy and psychology, but when trying to match their expertise with their publication productivity, it is evident that some of them have not published for some years, and that even if there are some papers related to topics in primary education, they actually publish in very broad and often distant topics from the field of primary education. In this way, their expertise becomes questionable, as it is very difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile their teaching with the research they have carried out. The research of their doctoral theses is also not very closely related to the field of the program, although some of them have recently graduated (e.g. Zamira Gashi Shatri, thesis topic - Student Self-Assessment System in Pre-University Education).

The qualification and experience of the academic staff engaged in the delivery of the study program is only partly adequate and relevant to the courses they teach. In the level of primary education, methodology is just as important as the scientific background itself, if not more important in fact. There are professors who have solid experience and/or relevant degree and background for the given course, but there are several staff members with typically hard science or engineering diplomas and doctoral degrees who have no experience and background in educational and methodological aspects of the given course, which is a serious drawback. It must be acknowledged that making science and explaining science need two different sets of competences: a scientist is not necessarily capable of explaining the methodology of how to teach the very basics and fundamental principles of the given field in the primary education course. Examples of these courses and teachers:

course	teacher	degree and problem
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Mathematics in Primary Education I-II.	Ilmi Hoxha	PhD in Pure Mathematics, but no visible experience in
		primary education or its methodical aspects, no publications in this field
ICT in Primary Education	Agon Kokaj	MSc in Micro-electronics and Nanoelectronics, PhD in Mechatronics, but no visible experience in primary education or its methodical aspects, no publications in this field
Figurative Art with Methodology	Shpresa Tolaj Gjonbalaj (part-time)	Master of Fine Arts, PhD in Art History (in the SER it was mistakenly described as PhD in Kinesiology), but no visible experience in primary education or its methodical aspects, no publications in this field
Philosophy of Education	Edita Haxhijaha	Master of Education – Teaching and curriculum, PhD in Social Studies with profile in Psychology, minor visible experience and no publication activity in the field of the Philosophy of Education
Basics of Natural Sciences with Methodology	Lulzim Zeneli	MSc and PhD in Chemical Sciences, with no visible experience in primary education or its methodical aspects, no publications in this field
Children and Learning in Nature	Zeqir Hashani	MSc and PhD in Biology, with some experience in secondary school, but no visible experience in primary education or its methodical aspects, no publications in this field

There are other examples of this, where various aspects of the required experience are missing, sometimes diplomas and research for the doctorate are far removed from primary education, sometimes the field is completely different and there is no evidence that any sub-specialisation has been developed, and, last but not least, very little or no research and published work that would demonstrate a link between research and teaching. On top of this, when checked against other, different standards, it is obvious that research productivity is generally low. The most worrying consequence of this current lack

of staff expertise is visible in the content and structure of the program itself. The courses taught by the proposed staff do not meet the expected criteria and relevant experience for teaching.

The staff listed in the SER and, in part, according to the information gathered by the ET during the site visit, do not have more than the permitted number of teaching hours and do not teach in other institutions. However, the fact that some teachers' names appear repeatedly in different programs makes this very doubtful. Indeed, one of the members of staff present at the site visit, when asked by ET about individual workload, said that she had 19 hours of teaching per week.

Standard 3.3 The study program is supported by teaching staff who are subject to advancement and reappointment based on objective and transparent procedures which include the evaluation of excellence. The advancement of staff arises from the higher education institution's strategic goals and is in line with the legislation and internal regulations in effect. (ESG 1.5)

The teacher advancement procedures engaged in the study program are transparent and well defined. However, after reaching the level of associate professorship there is little motivation to make further efforts in terms of research activities. The university tries to encourage the academic staff to follow a more active and regular publication practice, but the financial support and the publication awards are well functioning only in those cases, where the staff members already possess the required research attitude. For academic staff with limited or no yearly activity in scientific research, these interventions are seemingly not sufficient. An action plan for a more comprehensive academic development is a must here. The results of the QA feedback are taken into account in the advancement and re-appointment of teaching staff, but staff members with no or minimal research activity can still have a relatively good performance result, therefore this is not fully motivating.

Standard 3.4 The academic staff engaged in the delivery of the study program is entitled to institutional support for professional development. (ESG 1.5)

As it was clear from the SER, and also confirmed by the discussions during the on-site visit, UFAGJ has a dedicated support for academic staff declared in the Academic Development Plan, which outlines three strategic objectives in this regard. The educational and didactic development and advancement of academic staff is well supported by the various trainings provided by the Didactic Center for Teaching Excellence (DCTE), and this process is well functioning. UFAGj has established a clear evaluation system conducted by the Quality Office, whose analysis helps detecting the staff's developmental requirements, and after identifying these needs, they are offering various trainings.

Standard 3.5 External associates who teach at the study program have adequate qualifications and work experience for the delivery of the study program and achievement of the intended learning outcomes. (ESG1.5)

The involvement of external associates into the delivery of the study program is insufficient. It is positive that UFAGj established a general framework of the involvement of external collaborators, with training sessions organized at the beginning of the academic year to ensure they are well-prepared for

the teaching process, and with introducing them to the regulations and practices in higher education, ECTS credits, learning outcomes, teaching methods, and assessment techniques.

According to the SER, external staff involved in the program have different roles, such as supervising and/or participating in the assessment of students' final work. They contribute to the students' education by bringing professional experience. Their workload is regulated and defined.

However, when is checked their educational background as well as their research productivity, it does not correspond to the area of program study. The SER lists 3 staff members as external collaborators, but on the website they are only listed as part-time staff. One of them, Dr Shpresa Gjombalaj, has a PhD in art history, but there are no publications listed that could be related to primary education. It is not clear why she is listed as an external staff member, while her CV states that she will be employed by the UFAGj from 2023. Another external member of staff is Dr Nertila Kusari, who has a PhD in sports and no research work related to doctoral training. Similarly, the third external staff member, dr. Ardi Pieca, who also has a doctorate in kinesiology, but no research work relevant to primary education.

ET recommendations:

- 1. The university has to ensure that the research work and experience of its teaching staff are more closely linked to the content of the courses taught. This can be achieved either by introducing new research topics, hiring new staff, or by distributing courses more appropriately among lecturers.*
- 2. Teaching staff must be further motivated and stimulated to become more involved in research and projects.*
- 3. At the institutional level, it is important to develop support mechanisms for progress in research and more active teaching staff.*

4. EDUCATIONAL PROCESS CONTENT

Standard 4.1 The study program intended learning outcomes are formulated clearly, precisely, and comprehensively according to the best practices; they are aligned with the published institution's/academic unit's mission and strategic goals and are publicly available. (ESG 1.2)

The program learning outcomes, as explained and analysed in the SER, do not fully correspond to the learning outcomes set out in the curriculum and in the individual courses. There is no visible thread linking the program learning outcomes to the individual courses. Although, according to the information provided in the SER, there is a well established relationship between program objectives and program learning outcomes. At the same time, some program learning outcomes do not have corresponding courses that enable these learning outcomes to be achieved at program level (an example is designing and carrying out research projects on specific and pedagogical aspects).

The learning outcomes do not pay enough attention to the development of generic and specific competences and almost never differentiate between knowledge, skills and competences in the curricula and syllabi, although this is explained and mentioned in the SER.

Standard 4.2 The study program intended learning outcomes comply with the National Qualification Framework and the European Qualifications Framework level descriptors. (ESG1.2)

It is well assured that the intended learning outcomes of the study program overall comply with the National Qualifications Framework and the descriptors of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) belong to this level of study. The program and curriculum are adequately structured with the classification of learning outcomes to three components: knowledge, skills, and competencies and these outcomes are in line with the level and profile of qualification gained by the students.

Standard 4.3 The content and structure of the curriculum is coherent and enable the students to achieve the intended learning outcomes and to progress smoothly through their studies. (ESG 1.2)

While the program offers a relatively wide range of courses, which could be found in many other international programs of primary education, the distribution of courses is peculiar and it is not easy to find a valid justification. In particular, the division between compulsory and elective courses, where a course such as Developmental Psychology is elective and could not be chosen, is totally inappropriate. There are other examples, such as a course on Children's Rights and Teacher Ethics, or Personality Psychology, which are electives. Another example is Strategies and Methods of Reading and Writing, one of the critical skills for children, for their overall school performance. This is another example of electives that could be omitted throughout the educational cycle. Of course, with such a distribution of courses, some courses could be skipped altogether, so that a graduate with a primary education diploma could be a person who never learned about developmental psychology and/or personality psychology.

On the other hand, the distribution of ECTS is primarily determined by the position of the course, whether it is optional or compulsory, and not by its content and actual workload. For some courses it is difficult to see the logic behind the distribution of hours between lectures and practical work, e.g. Physical Education has 3 hours of theoretical work, lectures and 2 hours of practical work. The same rationale applies, for example, to the course Fundamentals of Natural Sciences with Methodology or Introduction to Psychology or Children's Literature.

Some courses have a special issue related to their content. For example, the course ICT in Primary Education is treated as one of the main courses according to the number of ECTS, but it is not clear why it has the title 'in primary education', because the content is very general and mostly outdated (e.g. disc drives, CDs, creating files, saving files, etc.). It could be justified to offer such a course to students who need it, but it should be an optional course, not a compulsory one.

Another example is the compulsory course Introduction to Psychology. First of all, the syllabus is done in a sloppy way, without taking care that it is written correctly (which it is not, with wrong words, many

typos, repetitions, etc.). For such an introductory course the choice of topics and their distribution over the weeks is rather inappropriate, especially considering that it is intended for students who will be training to become primary school teachers.

Another example is the course Methodology of Social Sciences, a compulsory course, which has a long list of readings - as it says 'basic literature', eight titles of books, the oldest from 1998, the most recent from 2014, the majority before and around 2000. Could this be literature for a generation of students, future teachers, born after 2000?

These are just a few examples that point to a very serious problem with the content and structure of the educational process.

Standard 4.4 If the study program leads to degrees in regulated professions, it is aligned with the EU Directives and national and international professional associations. (ESG 1.2)

Primary school teachers are a regulated profession and their training meets the professional criteria defined at national level. According to the SER, but also to the information collected during the site visit, the University Advisory Board has been consulted and the Faculty has received some suggestions, recommendations. However, there are no written documents clearly stating the nature of these recommendations and the process of their adoption.

Standard 4.5 The intended learning outcomes of the student practise period are clearly specified, and effective processes are followed to ensure that learning outcomes and the strategies to develop that learning are understood by students (if applicable). (ESG 1.2)

Students have practice throughout the program and this is gradually increased with each semester/year of study. In general, the student practice period in the field of education is well regulated, including a mentoring system. However, it is not ensured that the total amount of fieldwork in this program ensures the achievement of the specific learning outcomes associated with it. During the placement they have mentors from the placement but also a teacher from the program. Arrangements are made for students to undertake placements outside their institution. The Faculty has well-established relationships and agreements with a number of institutions in the region where students can undertake their placements.

Standard 4.6 The study program is delivered through student-centred teaching and learning. (ESG 1.3)

During their studies, students are exposed to and experience a wide range of teaching and learning methods. Student-centred teaching is continuously implemented and fully internalised by teachers. The pedagogical approaches adopted focus on the development of students' competences. During the site visit, students also reported that they like the way their teachers teach and that they feel that they have a very active role in the teaching and learning process.

Standard 4.7 The evaluation and assessment used in the study program are objective and consistent and ensures that intended learning outcomes are achieved. (ESG 1.3)

The assessment criteria and methods are well defined, as are the grading criteria for the program, and these are made available to all students in advance. This is in accordance with the regulations. However, learning outcomes are not clearly analysed in terms of knowledge, skills and competences. They are rarely mentioned in this way in the curricula.

The study ensures an objective and reliable assessment system. Students receive feedback and can discuss it with their teachers. Although students reported that they had not experienced a situation where they needed appeal against the grade they received, they say that there is a possibility to do so and this is also confirmed by the procedures and regulations that the institution has.

Standard 4.8 Learning outcomes are evaluated in terms of student workload and expressed in ECTS. (ECTS 1.2)

It is very difficult to say whether the workload has been carefully assessed. As mentioned earlier, it seems that the workload, namely ECTS, has been equally distributed among the courses, depending on their status as compulsory or elective. All compulsory courses have 6 or 5 ECTS, the majority of elective courses have 4 ECTS. However, when the readings are checked, than it seems that there is not necessarily a matching between the readings - that demand of a workload and the allocated ECTS.

However, on the other hand, within the curriculum and individual syllabi, the workload is adequately calculated for each course and credits are assigned to all learning activities that lead to the program learning outcomes. The credit system is proportional to the workload at each stage of the program and this is appropriately assessed throughout the student's studies.

The educational content and structure of the program is extremely weak and does not guarantee good quality education. The curriculum with all its courses needs serious restructuring and reorganisation.

ET recommendations:

1. *There are serious disciplinary shortcomings in the curriculum,*
2. *It might have been advantageous to consider some international recommendations when adjusting the curriculum.*
3. *Curriculum requires different distribution of courses as well as updating the contents and literature*

5. STUDENTS

Standard 5.1 Clear admission policies, including requirements, criteria and processes for the study program are clearly defined and are publicly available. (ESG 1.4)

The SER states that admission requirements and criteria for the study program align with international conventions incorporated into the UFAGj Statute and national regulations. This information is available on the UFAGj website and social media platforms. However, specific details regarding admission procedures for international students are not explicitly provided. Applicants for the bachelor's program must hold a high school diploma, while those applying to a master's program must possess a bachelor's degree, in accordance with national regulations. The SER outlines two distinct enrollment procedures: one for students who have passed the maturity exam and another for those who have not. Candidates who have taken the maturity exam must achieve a minimum score of 40 out of 100 points on the admission exam, whereas those who did not take the exam are required to obtain at least 70 points. The student selection process, as described in the SER, is based on assessing applicants' knowledge and competencies in relation to the academic and professional demands of the study program.

However, the admission procedure is presented in a general manner, lacking a specific focus on evaluating candidates' competencies in detail. The HEI upholds a strong anti-discrimination policy, ensuring equal opportunities for all students. Candidates with certified special needs are granted additional points to support their access to higher education. Moreover, the SER states that the Faculty of Education conducts an annual admissions competition, allocating 12% of available seats to students from non-majority communities. Additionally, 5% of the total number of admitted students is reserved for applicants from the regions of Preshevo, Bujanovac, Medvegja, Albania, North Macedonia, and Montenegro. The SER also highlights that recognition procedures for study periods are integrated into the institution's academic framework, aiming to facilitate students' academic progression. However, the report lacks concrete evidence and detailed information on how these procedures are implemented in practice.

Standard 5.2 Student progression data for the study program are regularly collected and analyzed. Appropriate actions are taken to ensure the student's completion of the study program. (ESG 1.4)

The HEI has a structured system for monitoring student progress and providing individualized support through three key stages: student assessment, individual reports, and assistance from the academic development office. Emphasizing the importance of teacher-student communication, the institution integrates feedback as a fundamental aspect of its educational philosophy. Student progress data is systematically collected through reports from the student services office, the academic development office, instructors, and the University Management System (SMU).

Additionally, the HEI tracks student completion rates for each cohort, ensuring continuous evaluation of academic performance. This information is regularly communicated to the Dean, Vice Dean, and program leaders, while all reports are made accessible through the official website and the University Management System. The HEI also ensures transparency by publishing a detailed description of the Master's study program on its website, including the program's mission and objectives. Furthermore,

it has a well-defined procedure for study transfers at the beginning of each academic year or semester, with credit transfer policies clearly outlined and communicated to students.

Standard 5.3 The study program ensures appropriate conditions and support for outgoing and incoming students (national and international students). (ESG 1.4)

The HEI informs students about international mobility programs through various channels, including information sessions, emails, flyers, and the UFAGj website, with the Office for International Cooperation playing a central role in disseminating this information. According to the SER, students receive guidance and support from this office, particularly regarding application procedures. Interviews with students highlighted collaborations with Zurich University and a mobility program in Albania, while mobility data indicates consistent and strong participation over the years. The university has established regulations for recognizing ECTS credits, with clearly defined procedures for transferring and acknowledging credits earned through international mobility programs. These procedures adhere to standard protocols, and detailed information is readily accessible. Additionally, UFAGj's website is available in English, ensuring that all application procedures and requirements are accessible to international applicants.

However, there is no clear evidence of structured initiatives or programs specifically designed to attract international students. The only reference to international student enrollment is that courses may be conducted in English if foreign students are admitted. While the university states that it is working to attract international students by offering advisory assistance, a suitable study environment, and information on living arrangements and community integration, it does not appear to have a concrete international recruitment strategy. Instead, its primary focus remains on promoting outgoing student mobility.

The HEI offers foreign language courses for international students and provides a limited selection of courses in English, which are publicly listed in the subject catalog. Furthermore, the HEI requires students to submit a report at the end of the academic year, which is reviewed by the institution, with appropriate measures implemented by the International Office. However, neither the website nor the SER provides detailed information on the process of collecting, analyzing, and addressing this feedback. While the SER includes mobility-related data for academic staff, students, and administrative personnel, this information is not published on the university's website. Making student mobility data publicly available would enhance transparency and allow prospective students to assess the university's level of global engagement.

Standard 5.4 The study program delivery is ensured through adequate resources for student support. The needs of a diverse student population (part-time students, mature students, students from abroad, students from under-represented and vulnerable groups, students with learning difficulties and disabilities, etc.) are taken into account. (ESG 1.6)

The SER indicates that the university employs a sufficient number of staff to support students, with clearly defined roles, including academic counseling and student services officers. New students receive comprehensive information packages during an initial meeting with faculty staff, which include all necessary documents, such as study regulations. Additionally, the university's website provides

details on study regulations, tuition fees, and scholarship opportunities, ensuring transparency and accessibility. Students enrolled in the program benefit from multiple support structures.

The Career Development Office offers training focused on skill development and provides information on career opportunities. Furthermore, the Didactic Center for Excellence in Teaching (DCET) selects student tutors to assist their peers with academic matters, fostering a collaborative learning environment. The student complaint procedures are well-defined and transparent. Information on these processes is available through the university's website, electronic platforms, open days, and the Student Handbook. Moreover, students can submit complaints through designated complaint boxes located within the faculty. Beyond academic support, the university offers a variety of extracurricular activities, as outlined in the SER. Students are informed about these opportunities through multiple channels, including the Student Parliament, Student Council, academic staff, the university's website, and social media platforms.

ET recommendations:

- 1. Enhance the clarity and accessibility of information on the university's website by publishing international mobility opportunities and providing comprehensive data on student participation in international mobility programs over the past five years. Currently, this information is available in the SER for academic staff, students, and administrative personnel but should also be publicly accessible to help prospective students assess the university's global engagement.*
- 2. Explore ways to publish program-specific admission criteria for international students, and include details on additional assessments and required documentation.*
- 3. Explore ways to define and publish procedures for assessing prior knowledge and competencies, giving examples of assessment criteria.*
- 4. Strengthen both outgoing and, in particular, incoming student mobility by developing a structured pathway to attract international students.*
- 5. Increase the international dimension of the program by fostering greater collaboration with global institutions and expanding participation in international conferences. These initiatives will better equip students for success in a globalized environment.*

6. RESEARCH

Standard 6.1. The study program aligns with the institution's/academic unit's mission and the research strategic goals.

UFAGj has its clear strategic goals in terms of research activities, and the study program is designed in line with these goals to provide valuable experiences for students in educational research, promoting academic integrity, freedom of expression and critical thinking, and the scholarly development. These are well integrated into the curriculum as well, for example in courses with methodological content or contemporary trends in education. Therefore, the study program adequately supports the university's

strategic research goals and academic values, including transparency, accountability and non-discrimination. The university also has a clear advancement in recognizing international standards and metrics in research.

Standard 6.2. The academic staff engaged in the study program is committed and supported to achieve high-quality research work and/or professional activity.

It is very positive that the university recently established a research support system, including financial support. Rewarding high quality research activities and publications is a basis for improving the productivity of the academic staff in this regard, which is fully in line with the university 2021-2025 strategic objectives. Publication in indexed international journals and participation in scientific conferences are started to be encouraged by the university, which is a good sign for the future.

That said, the publication activity of the academic staff involved in this specific study program still falls short of what could be expected at this level. The willingness to publish scientific papers closely related to the field of this study program varies greatly in both quantity and quality. It is important to note that this is about the publication activity related to this study program, because there are colleagues who publish at a high level, but whose scientific work - and thus their publications - are very far from the specific field of primary education, so these are of little relevance to the present evaluation. Beside staff members with regular and good quality research activities, there are also colleagues who have not published scientific papers for years, or published only a couple of papers in journals not indexed by the relevant databases. In the future, this latter group must be further encouraged to be engaged in higher quality scientific activity, either by further supportive actions, or by more severe consequences of insufficient level of research.

The staff members possess the required academic degree (mostly PhD) for their professional activities.

Standard 6.3 The academic staff engaged in the delivery of the study program is encouraged to participate in different aspects of cooperation with national and international partners.

The university has an organizational background to support project-based national and international cooperation activities, and the faculty staff members indeed participate in such projects. That said, the Table in p.90 of the SER shows a relatively limited number of this kind of projects, and the university must make further steps towards a more effective internationalization, including joint research and knowledge transfer through outgoing as well as incoming staff and student mobility. Students gave very positive feedback about the few cases when they were able to participate in international mobility actions – these opportunities must be widening in the future. The cooperation with local public sector players (schools) is effective and fruitful – this could be extended to international level.

Standard 6.4 The teaching staff engaged in the study program has a proven record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity.

Some of the staff members publish their work in high-quality scientific or professional publications, and their research activity is closely related to their field of involvement in the study program. Others

have publications in journals of good reputation, but the field of these papers has nothing in common with the methodical and educational aspects of this specific study program (Chemistry, Pure Mathematics). Although it holds that academic staff engaged in the study program are encouraged to include the results of their research in their everyday teaching practice, due to the varying level of research activities, only part of the teaching staff can include their scholarly activities relevant to the courses they teach. Only few professors – mostly in pedagogical topics – can involve their research activity into their everyday teaching practice. This aspect must be further strengthened in the future.

ET recommendations:

- 1. Research activity must be boosted in the group of academic staff with low-level or no recent publication record.*
- 2. Beside the few good examples, more members of the teaching staff must conduct research closely related to the field of courses they intend to teach.*
- 3. International cooperation actions, including students exchange opportunities must be widening in the future.*

7. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

Standard 7.1. The HEI ensures adequate premises and equipment for performing education processes and research. ESG (1.6)

According to Tables 19 and 20 of the SER, UFAGj has appropriate premises suitable for conducting teaching and research activities in general. This was also approved by the on-site visit of the ET. Regarding this specific study program, the equipment related to the teaching of primary education is satisfactory. The faculty possesses facilities for pre-school and primary school teaching practices, including a primary level classroom to imitate, model and practice school lesson, which is of utmost importance in this study program. Mathematics and language games, logical games and further supporting materials for this age level are also ready to use. However, premises and equipment are only partially adjusted to students for special needs (for example only the ground floor is fully accessible).

Standard 7.2 The HEI ensures adequate library resources for study program. (ESG 1.6)

The small library is adequately equipped with reading rooms for individual work, spaces for group work and its own book stock according to the courses included in the study program. The variety of books in the field of teaching methodology of various disciplines as well as pedagogical aspects of primary education is sufficient. Students and research staff have access to various research databases, including EBSCO and ACM Digital Library. Note, that Z-library is also listed in the SER, but its legal status is doubtful, therefore its use is not recommended.

Standard 7.3 The study program is appropriately funded to deliver its intended educational activities and research. (ESG 1.6)

Although the financial background of the university is seemingly stable, the SER does not provide budget calculations for this specific study program. As a consequence, the financial background of the

study program and the required number of students is insufficiently specified. That said, the financial status of the faculty seems to be stable, and the faculty participate in various national and international projects, gaining some additional financial support.

ET recommendations:

1. *The adjustment of premises for students with special needs must be extended.*
2. *A financial calculation at study program level would help the decision makers and the accreditation bodies to evaluate the specific program in the future.*

Final recommendation of the ET:

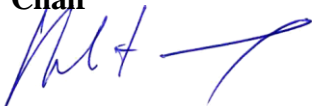
According to the KAA Accreditation manual, in order to be granted a positive decision for program re/accreditation, every education provider has to demonstrate at least a **substantial compliance** level in the overall judgment. Therefore, failure in meeting at least an overall substantial compliance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


The ET concludes that the **Primary Education, BA**, programme prepared for re-accreditation is evaluated as **non compliant**.

In conclusion, in line with the Manual requirements, the Expert Team recommends **not to re-accredit** the program *Primary Education, BA*..

Standard	Compliance level
1. Mission, objectives and administration	Substantially compliant
2. Quality management	Substantially compliant
3. Academic staff	Non-compliant
4. Educational process content	Partially compliant
5. Students	Substantially compliant
6. Research	Partially compliant
7. Infrastructure and resources	Fully compliant
Overall compliance	Non-compliant

Expert Team

Chair 	Melita Kovacevic	24 February, 2025
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)

Member 	Miklos Hoffmann	24 February, 2025
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)

Member 	Elisa Kief	24 February, 2025
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)