



HAXHI ZEKA UNIVERSITY PEJA

APPLIED ECOLOGY IN AGRIBUSINESS, BSC.
Accreditation

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

Peja, March 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
INTRODUCTION	3
Site visit schedule.....	3
A brief overview of the programme under evaluation.....	6
PROGRAMME EVALUATION	7
1. MISSION, OBJECTIVES AND ADMINISTRATION	7
2. QUALITY MANAGEMENT.....	9
3. ACADEMIC STAFF.....	11
4. EDUCATIONAL PROCESS CONTENT.....	14
5. STUDENTS	18
6. RESEARCH.....	22
7. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES	25
FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET	26

INTRODUCTION

Sources of information for the Report:

- *SER*
- *Syllabus*
- *Staff CVs*
- *Annexes*
- *Discussions and observations during the site visit*

Criteria used for institutional and program evaluations

- *KAA indicators*
- *Compliance level according KAA*

Site visit schedule

Programme Accreditation Procedure at University “Haxhi Zeka” in Peja	
Programmes:	Applied Ecology in Agribusiness, BSc, 180 ECTS (Accreditation)
Site visit on:	19 February 2025
Expert Team:	Prof. Joachim Muller, Prof. Sanja Kalambura Ms. Ștefania Armășelu
Coordinators of the KAA:	Arianit Krasniqi KAA Officer Leona Kovaçi, KAA Officer

Site Visit Programme		
Time	Meeting	Participants
09:00 – 09:50	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated	Prof. Dr. Nexhdet Shala, Dean of Agribusiness Faculty Prof. Dr. Ibrahim Hoxha, Vice Dean for budget, finance and infrastructure Prof. Dr. Ismajl Cacaj, Vice Dean for Teaching, student affairs and research Prof. Asoc. Dr. Arieta Camaj, Board member MSc. Ukë Selimaj, Faculty Secretary
09.50 – 10.35	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff	Genta Kastrati, Quality Assurance MSc. Luan Lulaj, Quality Assurance MSc. Ukë Selimaj, Faculty Secretary

		<p>MSc. Myhybije Zallqi, Official of Student Affairs</p> <p>MSc. Abetare Pelaj, Official of finances</p> <p>MSc. Alberina Brahimaj, Official of Archive and protocol.</p> <p>MSc. Agon Buçuku, Information Technology Expert</p>
10:40 – 11:40	<p>Meeting with the heads of the study programme Applied Ecology in Agribusiness, BSc, 180 ECTS</p> <p>Prof. Joachim Muller,</p> <p>Prof. Sanja Kalambura</p> <p>Ms. Ștefania Armășelu, Student Expert</p>	<p>Prof. Ass. Dr. Milaim Musliu, heads of the study programme</p> <p>Prof. Asoc. Dr. Ilir Morina, heads of the study programme</p> <p>Prof. Ass. Dr. Gjokë Duhanaj, heads of the study programme</p> <p>Prof. Dr. Naser Bajraktari, heads of the study programme</p>
11:40 – 12:40	Lunch break	
12:40 – 13.10	Visiting Facilities	Prof. Asoc. Dr. Ilir Morina
13:10 – 13:55	Meeting with teaching staff	<p>Prof. Ass. Dr. Kastriot Pehlivani, Professor at Faculty of Agribusiness full-time</p> <p>Prof. Dr. Agim Rysha, Professor at Faculty of Agribusiness - full-time</p> <p>Prof. Asoc. Dr. Laura Naka, Professor at Faculty of Agribusiness - part time.</p> <p>Prof. Ass. Dr. Filipos Ruxho, Professor at Faculty of Agribusiness - part time</p> <p>Prof. Ass. Dr. Astrit Bilalli, Professor at Faculty of Agribusiness - full-time</p> <p>Prof. Ass. Dr. Shyherete Muriqi, Professor at Faculty of Agribusiness -full-time</p> <p>Prof. Asoc. Dr. Albona Shala, Professor at Faculty of Agribusiness - part time</p> <p>Dr. Violeta Berlajolli, Professor at Faculty of Agribusiness - part time</p>
14:00 – 14:45	Meeting with students	<p>Vesa Lleshi, students from Faculty of Agribusiness – third year TU</p> <p>Rina Lokaj, students from Faculty of Agribusiness - second year TU</p> <p>Zerina Hajdar, students from Faculty of</p>

		<p>Agribusiness – second year TU Erlisa Tolaj, students from Faculty of Agribusiness – third year TPB Kristiana Gajanaj, students from Faculty of Agribusiness - third year TPB Seinas Gruda, students from Faculty of Agribusiness – second year TPB Denis Habibi, students from Faculty of Agribusiness – third year TU Anita Asllani, students from Faculty of Agribusiness – third year TU</p>
14:45 – 15:30	Meeting with graduates	<p>Erodita Morina Graduated from Faculty of Agribusiness TU Gerta Berisha, Graduated from Faculty of Agribusiness TU Besiana Hoxha, Graduated from Faculty of Agribusiness TU Mendim Kelmendi, Graduated from Faculty of Agribusiness TPB Gentiana Lajqi, Graduated from Faculty of Agribusiness TPB Egzona Gashi, Graduated from Faculty of Agribusiness TPB Elona Shllaku, Graduated from Faculty of Agribusiness TU Agonis Cacaj, Graduated from Faculty of Agribusiness TU Rina Bujupaj, Graduated from Faculty of Agribusiness TU</p>
15:35 – 16:20	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders	<p>Zana Lipoveci, The human resources department at Elkos Group Lahë Avdullahu, SHPK Oreksi Alban Ibrahim, “Jeta e re”; Rodon Bala, Beer Factory Musa Berisha, Food Technologist at Devolli Group, Ilirjana Zymberaj, Food and Veterinary Agency, Republic of Kosovo Besnik Lila, BOOST BERRIES S.H.P.K.</p>

		Arben Osmanaj, Kosovo Agriculture Institute
16:20 – 16:30	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts	
16:30 – 16:40	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program	

A brief overview of the programme under evaluation

The University of Peja "Haxhi Zeka" (UHZ) is a public university with five faculties (Faculty of Business, Faculty of Tourism, Hospitality and Environment Management, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Agribusiness and Faculty of Arts) founded in 2011. The new B.Sc. study program “Applied Ecology in Agribusiness” as proposed by the Faculty of Agribusiness (FAB) is organized according to the Bologna system, comprising three-years in six semesters with 180 ECTS in total. According to the SER, the program is designed in accordance with the Law No. 04/L-037 on Higher Education in the Republic Kosovo, Law No. 08/L-110 on Kosovo Accreditation Agency, Regulation (AKA) No. 04/2024 on the Accreditation/Reaccreditation and Validation Manual for Higher Education Institutions and Study Programs at the Bachelor’s and Master’s levels, the Bologna Process, the Statute of "Haxhi Zeka" University and the Strategic Plan of University “Haxhi Zeka” 2023-2026. The program is designed for 40 students.

PROGRAMME EVALUATION

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)

The mission of the study program is in line with the missions of UHZ as it is stated in the SER and confirmed during the site-visit discussion. The agricultural sector in Kosovo is still under development and an important element of the national economy. Therefore, agriculture and agribusiness related study programs are of special high importance for Kosovo.

A particular positive aspect of the study program under evaluation is the close collaboration with local enterprises (confirmed amongst other topics in the site-visit discussion). This is generally of high relevance in order to provide internships, topics for B.Sc.-theses and foster subsequent job opportunities for students. This is of extraordinary importance in Kosovo due to the difficult situation of its labor market. The SER confirms that the study program has a long-term vision of fulfilling its function and mission.

The program under evaluation is based on a thorough analysis of the labor market, including employment prospects for graduates. "This has been verified through consultations with the industry board (corporate panels) and experts from the University of Iowa. They have analyzed, reported on, and developed questionnaires within the framework of a partnership project with the private sector to strengthen higher education." (SER).

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)

It is indicated in the SER that the study program follows specific procedures for handling cases of plagiarism, informing staff and students about the course of the process. Ethical standards are in place and publicly available, as is stated by the SER and confirmed during the site-visit. In summary it can be concluded that there are clear ethical regulatory standards that govern teaching and research.

According to the SER it can be confirmed that the Ethics Commission and other structures are active in monitoring and dealing with cases of unethical behavior, and their decisions are distributed anonymously to ensure transparency and fairness.

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)

According to the SER there is a comprehensive information management system in place and intensively used. Discussions with representatives from all levels of the study program confirmed that the information management system includes relevant, updated and reliable information. Furthermore, concrete action plans are mentioned during the on-site-visit and in the SER to monitor the implementation of the study program.

As confirmed by representatives from all levels the information management system includes relevant, updated and reliable information. Furthermore, concrete action plans are in place to monitor the implementation of the study program. In addition, the SER indicates that there are clear ethical regulatory standards that govern teaching and research.

Recommendations for improving the study program, given by previous quality assurance procedures, are analysed and implemented effectively (SER).

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)

All study program activities and operations are subject to a policy and review process that ensures adequate and efficient administrative staff and budgetary support as it is confirmed in the SER.

The study program has sufficient administration to support the teaching and learning needs of students and academic staff. This is confirmed in the SER. It is also mentioned in the SER that the administrative staff is subject to continuous professional training as mentioned above, including training in foreign languages, computer and other important skills.

The SER also confirms that the administrative staff is subject to continuous professional training, which is important for the performance of their duties. Staff trainings are held several times a year, which are organized and financed by the rectorate. This has been confirmed by the site-visit discussion.

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)

According to the SER recommendations for improving the study program have been analyzed and concrete actions have been taken based on previous internal and external quality assurance processes. These include the creation and implementation of action plans and reports on the implementation of recommendations by expert panels. Examples of results achieved include improvements to the program based on these recommendations, which have been documented and analyzed to ensure that quality standards are met.

It has to be strongly positive remarked that there is fixed schedule for a regular review provided and a Table of progress is attached to the SER, as well as a SWOT-analysis has been conducted.

ET recommendations:

- 1. Increase student involvement in the respective procedures*
 - 2. Specific budget allocation to additional professional development of teaching staff is recommended*
 - 3. Intensified exchange with comparable programs at international level is recommended*
- Timeline: next application round***

2. 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)

Internal quality assurance procedures such as quality assurance regulation and quality assurance guidelines for the study program are defined by the internal regulations of UHZ. “Quality assurance coordinators in the academic units are responsible for verifying the SMU platform and ensuring the accuracy and completeness of information on the university website.” (SER). QA-coordinators do not have any teaching obligations according to the SER. This has been confirmed during the site-visit discussion and is stated in the SER as well.

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

UHZ in 2022 has approved the Regulation for Study Programs in which the entire procedure from the initiation of the program to its monitoring is clearly defined. It has been repetitively confirmed that the study program fulfils this request. It aligns with UHZ mission and strategic goals.

The study program under evaluation underwent an adequate and transparent internal quality assurance process and was formally approved by the designated strategic management bodies

of the institution. Its continuous improvement is planned. Such a process is explained in the SER in detail. A continuous improvement system should be further elaborated and implemented.

The process for the development and approval of the study program is well-defined by internal procedures as well as external procedures, e.g. submission of the program description to KAA where it undergoes an evaluation and accreditation procedure including international experts from suitable fields of expertise. The Council for Quality Management and Evaluation has assessed that the program meets the conditions for proceeding with the application for accreditation.

In the SER it is stated that Key Performance Indicators for this level of study program have been established. These performance indicators are measured through the forms set out in the respective regulation. However, key performance parameters should become highlighted more prominently.

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)

Discussions with stakeholders of the study programs have been taken place during the site-visit. The ET got the impression that this board is quite active and attentive. The monitoring includes surveys of employers to determine the competences needed in the labor market, analyzes carried out in collaboration with stakeholders and examples of improvements based on stakeholders' evaluations of the study program.

The study program undergoes regular checks to establish whether the estimated workload allocation (ECTS) of students and the defined learning outcomes are achievable, realistic and adequate. The course syllabus determines regular assessments of students' achieved results during the course.

There is a career office available, which collects all the data related to the practical work of the students.

The collected information is analysed and concrete actions are taken to ensure that the program is up to date.

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

All policies, regulations and guidelines pertaining to the study program are publicly available and such information is accessible by all interested parties.

For all potential students and those currently registered as well as for all interested parties, the faculty continuously publishes on the UHZ website a summary of the study programs, which

information is as follows, but not only: Schedules of lectures and exercises, consultation hours, data about the study program, the purpose and objectives of the study program, learning outcomes, teaching procedures, division of subjects according to the syllabus. In the SER it is stated that this information is accurate and constantly updated.

ET recommendations:

- 1. Reports of surveys and evaluations should be exemplarily provided as documents in the Appendix of the SER.*
- 2. A monitoring system for measuring continuous progress should become further elaborated.*
- 3. Key quality parameters of the study program such as number of applications, enrolment, completion rate, duration of the study and grade overview should be included into the QA mechanism on a regular basis and also provided in the SER continuously.*
- 4. Aggregated results of the course evaluations should be provided to the teaching staff, the FAV management and included in the SER*

Timeline: next application round

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)

In the SER it is stated that UHZ announces vacancies through the university's website and on various employment portals and that the announcements include all the requirements and criteria for the open positions. Although the inserted link is not working, the ET trusts, that the announcements are internationally visible.

Selection of candidates is done by a selection commission comprising three professors where at least two members are from the narrow field with the position. The commission's reports are published for public discussion for a period of 15 days. The reports are voted on in the Council of the Academic Unit, passed on to the Studies Committee and finally decided by the UHZ Senate. However, examples of completed carried out teacher recruitment procedures, copies of vacancy announcements, the composition of selection committees, reports of the selection committees and the decision made by Senate were not found in the annex of the SER.

The teacher recruitment procedure is oriented by the strategic goals of the Strategic Plan of UHZ 2023-2026, found in Annex 5, and is in accordance with the legislation and internal regulations as provided in the annexes.

According to the SER, candidates for employment at UHZ are provided with full job position descriptions and terms of employment, which include a series of documents and regulations governing staff activities and responsibilities.

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)

Eighteen full-time UHZ staff members with doctoral degree are allocated to the study program covering the required fields of natural, ecological and agricultural sciences. According to UHZ statutes, staff in a regular employment cannot have another full-time employment contract in any institution of higher education. Six further staff members with part-time contracts are allocated to the study program. That means that more than the required 50% of the teaching staff have full-time contracts and more than one staff member with doctoral degree is available per 60 ECTS. The ratio of full-time academics to students for the study program is 1:10, which is better than the required ratio of 1:30. As proven by the CVs in the annex the qualification of the teaching staff is appropriate for the study program in terms of academic level and research field.

According to the SER, the workload of the academic staff complies with the relevant legislation and by-laws in force. For academic staff is not overloaded with teaching obligations, since the teaching commitment does not exceed 6 hours of lectures per week, which is below the norm of many other European institutions. The workload of the academic staff allows an appropriate distribution of teaching obligations, including student mentoring, professional and scientific work, professional and developmental tasks, as well as administrative and community service tasks.

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)

In the SER it is stated that UHZ regulations ensure that every step of recruitment and advancement of academic staff, including the announcement of vacancies, the composition of selection committees, and the reports of the committees, is based on clear and fair principles, guaranteeing an impartial and merit-based assessment of all candidates. However, examples were not provided and the cited document was not found in the annex.

According to UHZ regulations the promotion of academic staff to higher ranks is based on excellence as proven by number of monographs, textbooks, publications in international scientific journals, supervision of degree these and students' evaluations. The requirements for various academic levels are precisely presented in the SER.

The evaluation process for advancement and re-appointment includes the use of questionnaires completed by students, management, colleagues, as well as teacher self-evaluation. In terms of students' evaluations, the average of the results of the last three years are taken into account.

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)

UHZ provides trainings for the academic staff, supports scientific projects with funding of up to 10,000 €, and scientific publications with financial awards. Furthermore, the staff is supported for participation in international scientific conferences and mobility. Further incentives are offered by the "Researcher of the Year Award", the "Best Paper of the Year Award" and the "Sabbatical Year". UHZ has an annual operational plan for the professional development of the academic including the teaching process, scientific research, administrative services, and services for society. According to the SER, support also includes specialized training and resources aimed at improving testing and assessment practices. International activities are strongly supported by opportunity of spending a sabbatical year outside the country on full salary after showing five years of research and teaching experience.

By UHZ participation in international programs like that with Iowa State University, HERAS, ERASMUS +, STEPS, BUGI, and MASHTI academic staff are specifically trained in the preparation and implementation of teaching and assessment, including ECTS, learning outcomes, teaching methods, supervision skills, and assessment methods.

According to the SER, UHZ has not yet implemented specific training for new staff, however this activity is foreseen in the revised Strategic Plan of the University and the Strategic Plan of the Faculty of Agribusiness, which includes holding different trainings depending on the needs of the academic staff. Each new member engaged in UHZ, is invited to meetings with the management of the faculty, with the secretary of the academic unit, with the information technology office as well as with the office for academic affairs and the quality officer. Mentoring from more senior colleagues is offered to provide advice on developing research projects and to support the creation of project teams that bring together different expertise to improve the quality of research.

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)

In the SER it is stated that external collaborators are engaged to integrate the latest research, current trends and practical knowledge from the labor market into the teaching process. Specific trainings are organized for external collaborators or oriented through the teacher's manual, especially for those coming from the business sector. External collaborators engaged in the study program are encouraged to participate in the supervision of final theses. This is regulated through the "Regulation on Evaluation Procedures for the Engagement of External Associates". Co-supervision of final theses by external collaborators was also confirmed by the stakeholders from the job market during the site visit. The workload and expectations of

external collaborators are defined in the employment contract. Links to the regulations are provided in the SER.

ET recommendations:

1. *Specific trainings for new academic staff should be implemented*
Timeline: on arrival of new staff
2. *In the next SER, examples of completed carried out teacher recruitment procedures, copies of vacancy announcements, the composition of selection committees, reports of selection committees should be provided*
Timeline: next application round

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)

According to the SER (p. 38) and based on the site-visit, the expert team can confirm that the study program "Applied Ecology in Agribusiness" (BSc) has been designed in a way that ensures clearly defined learning outcomes that correspond to the bachelor's level. Learning outcomes include an understanding of fundamental concepts - students acquire basic knowledge of ecology and agronomy, practical skills through the use of laboratory equipment, conducting analyses and assessments, applying knowledge in practise through the implementation of sustainable agricultural practises, and analysing costs and environmental impacts, integration of theory and practise through project planning, application of innovative technologies and supply chain management, and development of business communication skills.

Since the program is currently in the accreditation phase, it has not yet been publicly published, but it aligns with the strategic goals outlined in the document "FAB_Strategic_Plan_2023-2026" (Annex 6, p. 32).

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

The intended learning outcomes of the study program align with the National Qualification Framework and the European Qualifications Framework. According to the SER (pp. 41–43),

the curriculum is structured to develop key competencies, including critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and independent research skills. Academic support policies ensure that students have access to additional lessons, consultations, and tailored teaching methods to enhance their learning outcomes. The curriculum follows a logical progression, with foundational courses providing the necessary knowledge and skills before students advance to more specialized and complex subjects in the later semesters (SER, pp. 41–43).

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)

Each course generally aligns with the intended learning outcomes; however, there are some inconsistencies in the defined learning outcomes of individual subjects. For example, the English language course does not have any defined learning outcomes, the Physiology of Plants course presents its learning outcome in the form of a single sentence, while the Entrepreneurship course includes an excessive number of learning outcomes. During the curriculum review, it was also observed that not all course syllabi follow the same structure, leading to inconsistencies in the sequencing of learning outcomes for certain subjects. The distribution of ECTS credits reflects the expected workload, ensuring that students can effectively engage with course content. Assessment methods are clearly described and evaluate student achievement at different stages. At this stage, it is essential to establish a standardized format for learning outcomes and consider that having seven learning outcomes at the course level may be excessive.

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)

Not applicable.

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)

According to the SER (pp. 41–43), the study program does not provide for an internship as an independent course. Consequently, there is a lack of clearly defined learning outcomes and competences that students should acquire upon completion of the degree program.

Given the importance of this degree program for the Faculty, future students and the labor market, it is necessary to revise the curriculum and learning outcomes by introducing a separate course "Professional Internship" that enables students to acquire practical skills. Although

some practical skills are taught in the existing courses, especially through laboratory exercises, this degree program aims to train professionals who will work directly in agribusiness operations. It is therefore essential to introduce a work placement of at least 120 hours.

In the discussions during the site visit, both employers and students emphasized the need for more practical trainings. This form of internship should be professionally supervised in cooperation with the employers, which would further increase the competitiveness of the program. To reflect the introduction of the work placement, consideration needs to be given to merging certain courses or reassessing their relevance at BSc level, e.g. courses such as scientific research and similar subjects.

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

According to the SER (pp. 47–49) and the discussions during the site-visit, the teaching process will be delivered through a combination of lectures, seminars, theoretical and laboratory exercises, practical work, field work, professional excursions, consultations, and student-led research activities.

Although the programme is still in the accreditation phase, the materials provided and discussions with students suggest that various teaching methods are already being used that place students at the centre of the learning process. This is also confirmed by the high level of satisfaction of students enrolled on other degree programmes and by the commitment of the professors, who demonstrate a strong understanding of student-centred teaching models.

The pedagogical methods used in the programme are at a satisfactory level and are presented in the curricula as a combination of project-based learning, problem-solving activities and the development of creative and critical thinking skills. The adaptability of teaching methods to different student groups is well implemented, although further efforts should be made to improve the English language skills of both teachers and students to promote internationalisation. Improving language skills will create opportunities for sharing best practise with institutions from neighbouring countries.

The technologies used in teaching are in line with modern trends and can be easily applied to distance learning.

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)

According to SER (pp. 49–51), the assessment methods used in the degree programme ensure a systematic assessment of individual learning outcomes that cover all relevant areas of knowledge, skills and competences as defined in the learning objectives of the degree programme. In order to ensure objective and reliable grading system, the UHZ has an appeals procedure in accordance with Article 110 of the UHZ Statutes. The entire procedure is handled via the SEMS system (SER, p. 50).

As part of the programme, students are subject to both formative and final assessments. Formative assessments are conducted throughout the learning process, e.g. at the first and second intermediate assessments, to provide students with timely feedback to address their weaknesses and continuously improve. An analysis of the curricula shows that the most frequently used assessment methods include partial examinations, final examinations, seminars and laboratory work. The grading process is structured to be objective and reliable (SER, p. 50). Professors are required to familiarise students with the learning outcomes and the grading system at the beginning of the semester.

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

According to the SER (pp. 51–52), the workload of the students was adjusted by aligning the working hours with the ECTS credits. The ECTS credits are calculated according to the ECTS methodology (ECTS -2015-Users guide, Annex 35) and are also described in the Student Load Regulation (SER, p. 51). The assessment points are determined based on the course components, considering the time students need to complete the objectives of each subject.

ET recommendations:

1. *Develop a standardized syllabus template to ensure consistency of course descriptions, assessment methods, learning outcomes and reference materials.*
Timeline: to be implemented prior to the start of the academic year
2. *Introduce an Internship or Student Practice course and revise all other subjects to increase their relevance to the aims of the programme.*
Timeline: to be implemented prior to the start of the academic year

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)

According to SER, page 53, admission criteria for both national and international students are defined in accordance with the Higher Education Law, the university's Statute, and the Regulation on basic Bachelor of Science and bachelor of arts studies.

The university follows national regulations by requiring that students enrolling in a bachelor's program possess a high school diploma and pass the State Matura exam.

According to SER, page 54, the university employs a points-based evaluation system, with high school performance contributing 30 points, Matura exam results contributing 30 points, and the entrance exam accounting for 40 points. A minimum score of 40% in the entrance exam is required for admission. This structured approach provides an objective basis for ranking applicants.

The institution asserts that the admission process is applied fairly and consistently to all students, using a ranking system to select the most qualified applicants. While the university states that the process is non-discriminatory, the report does not mention specific mechanisms that ensure fairness, such as anti-discrimination policies, appeal procedures for rejected applicants, or measures to prevent bias in decision-making. Additionally, there is no reference to accommodations for students with disabilities or special needs.

The university has established procedures for recognizing prior study periods, including completed semesters, academic years, and studies undertaken at other institutions. This information is included in the academic calendar, which is publicly available (<https://unhz.eu/en/kalendaret/>).

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 university has implemented a structured system for monitoring student progress, primarily using the SEMS system and end-of-semester questionnaires. The presence of a dedicated Quality Office and academic coordinators responsible for tracking student performance ensures that data collection is systematic. Additionally, the Tutorial System is in place to provide academic support to students facing difficulties, supplemented by regular consultations with professors (<https://unhz.eu/en/sherbimi-konsultor/>). From the site-visit, the students interviewed had a positive response regarding their collaboration, having teachers available to answer their needs anytime.

According to SER, page 55, the university's Office for Educational Issues systematically tracks student performance, monitoring progression rates and course completion statistics. This data is used to identify students in need of additional support through tutorial and peer-to-peer learning programs.

The university states that monitoring results are shared with both students and staff through reports and official communications. During the interviews, the teachers also stated they provide and receive such analysis.

SER, page 55, states that students are well informed about their academic progression opportunities, including options for further studies or career pathways. This is facilitated through guidance and counselling provided by academic staff and the Career Development Office. Furthermore, program manuals and informational sessions help students make informed decisions regarding their future. The students interviewed at the site-visit were happy with their choice and with the opportunities of internships/career paths available.

The university has well-defined policies for the transfer of students within its own institution and from other universities, as outlined in its Statute (articles 138-140) and Bachelor Studies Regulation (article 15). The transfer process follows clear procedures, requiring students to submit formal requests along with academic transcripts and course syllabi. These requests are reviewed by the Study Commission, which compares curricula before making a recommendation, with the final decision being made by the Academic Unit Council. The existence of set transfer periods (September 1-15 and February 1-15) provides structure and predictability for 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 university demonstrates a commitment to informing students about international mobility opportunities through the Office for International Relations, informational sessions, written materials, and online resources.

The Office for International Cooperation plays a role in promoting and facilitating student participation in exchange programs, securing funding, and disseminating relevant information. The university has also adopted regulations supporting student mobility, reinforcing its commitment to internationalization.

The university has established a clear regulation for recognizing ECTS credits based on national and international accreditation standards (<https://old.unhz.eu/Dokumente/Senati/300-%20Regulation%20for%20the%20workload%20of%20Students%20at%20UHZ.PDF>).

UHZ publishes information about application procedures and admission requirements for study programs offered in a foreign language. However, the report states that this is not applicable to the Faculty of Agribusiness, limiting the accessibility of its programs to international students.

The university engages in activities to attract foreign students, such as organizing summer and winter schools, which serve as a promotional tool for UHZ's academic environment.

Currently, UHZ does not systematically offer foreign language courses for international students, as most programs are in Albanian. While the university acknowledges the need for potential language support, the lack of structured courses may hinder the integration of international students.

UHZ actively collects and analyses feedback from local and international students regarding their mobility experiences through surveys and interviews. The university claims to use this feedback to improve exchange procedures and services.

The university states in the SER that it systematically tracks the number of students participating in international mobility for both short-term (up to three months) and long-term (more than three months) programs.

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 university has a well-structured academic and administrative support system, with sufficient staff at both faculty and university levels. According to SER, there are 6 full-time professors, 2 associate professors, 4 assistant professors, and 2 PhD candidate assistants in the academic team. Also, there is a requirement that lecturers hold a doctoral degree (Dr.sc.) and that exercise collaborators are PhD candidates or MSc holders.

From an administrative perspective, the faculty benefits from a dedicated student service office, a faculty secretary, and a protocol and archive office, in addition to a broad range of university-wide support offices. These include critical departments such as the Office for Academic Affairs and Teaching Excellence, Career Development Office, Office for Quality Assurance and Evaluation, and the International Cooperation Office, all of which contribute to student support.

The university organizes a Welcome Week, during which students receive important academic and administrative information. This initiative, along with the distribution of brochures, manuals, and information packages, ensures that new students are well-oriented. HZU has announced its first edition of newsletter, which provides official information on academic and scientific activities taking place in the Rectors' Office, Faculties, the Institute for Science and Arts, as well as other organizational units of the university (<https://unhz.eu/en/blog/buletini-i-pare-informativ-i-universitetit-haxhi-zeka/>).

The university has an active tutorial system, providing students with regular academic guidance from professors. The Career Development Center offers soft skills training and career-related assistance, while international mobility guidance is handled by the International Cooperation Office. During the site-visit, students who attended the interview expressed a

positive opinion about their relationship with professors and tutors, stating that the tutoring system provides them with real opportunities for academic and professional development.

According to SER, the appeals and complaints system at UHZ is well-structured, with multiple layers of review, from faculty-level complaint boxes to resolution at the Senate level if necessary. The presence of a Complaints Commission provides an institutionalized approach to handling student complaints.

The university organizes summer and winter schools, study visits, and provides spaces for sports and cultural activities, demonstrating support for student engagement.

Overall, the study program at Haxhi Zeka University demonstrates a well-structured approach to academic planning, student support, and mobility opportunities. The university has established mechanisms for tracking student progress, providing guidance, and ensuring administrative and academic support. Students interviewed during the site-visit expressed satisfaction with their relationships with professors and tutors, highlighting the opportunities available to them. However, there are areas for improvement, particularly in enhancing transparency in student assessment and curriculum updates, expanding services for vulnerable groups, and increasing the university's efforts in attracting and supporting international students.

ET recommendations:

1. *Strengthen non-discrimination policies by explicitly defining fairness mechanisms, appeal procedures, and accommodations for students with disabilities.*
2. *Enhance student advising for mobility programs by implementing structured one-on-one consultations to help students navigate exchange opportunities.*
3. *Increase financial support for mobility students by allocating institutional funding or negotiating with partners for scholarships and financial aid.*
4. *Introduce structured language support for international students through preparatory language courses or collaborations with external institutions.*
5. *Expand foreign-language program offerings to attract more international students and increase accessibility to UHZ's study programs.*
6. *Expand career counseling services, especially for final-year students, to enhance job market readiness.*
7. *Publish statistics on complaints and resolutions to improve transparency and evaluate the system's effectiveness.*
8. *Clarify funding distribution for extracurricular activities and ensure equitable access for all students.*

Timeline: next application round

6. RESEARCH

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

According to the SER (p. 60), the study program is fully aligned with the mission of UHZ and the Faculty of Agribusiness and meets the academic and professional development needs of students in the fields of agriculture, environment and food. The programme builds on the existing mission and vision and fills a gap not previously covered by other programmes.

During its development, the programme was benchmarked with similar programmes in the region and tailored to the needs of the Kosovar labour market. As a result, it contributes to the fulfilment of the UHZ's strategic goals.

The objectives of the programme are in line with the Strategy for Research, Scientific and Artistic Activities 2023–2026 (SER, p. 50). The programme also benefits from strong financial support from the administration, which funds research (10 000 Euro), 3 publications, conferences, study visits, various training programmes and research projects.

Discussions with faculty members during the site visit revealed a high level of professional commitment and satisfaction with the resources available for academic and professional development. At the institutional level, policies have been established to ensure high quality research and the integration of research findings into the teaching process at UHZ (SER, p. 60).

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.

The UHZ directly supports its academic staff in publishing research papers in relevant databases such as Web of Science and SCOPUS. The Regulation for Publication (SER, p. 61) promotes the writing of textbooks addressing the lack of teaching materials in Albanian.

During discussions with faculty members good practices in writing and publishing textbooks were highlighted. The Office of Scientific Research ensures that all faculty publications are regularly updated and publicly available on the UHZ website (SER, p. 61). A review of the website confirmed the existence of a list of publications by the Faculty of Agribusiness: https://unhz.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/List-of-scientific-papers-published-in-journals-indexed-on-WEB-OF-SCIENCE-SCOPUS-platforms_Faculty-of-Agribusiness_2024-2.pdf The document shows that most of the publications are indexed in the SCOPUS database, which is a positive indicator of research activity. However, when reviewing the CVs submitted as an Annex to the SER, it became clear that a significant portion of the faculty's work was not

included in the above-mentioned document. It is therefore necessary to revise the existing publication descriptions to improve the quality and completeness of the academic contributions of the faculty. Also, the list should be managed so that each publication is linked to the respective faculty member on the Faculty's website and follows a standardised citation style. This would improve the visibility and organisation of research outputs and make it easier to track individual researchers and their areas of expertise.

In addition, a review and analysis of the Faculty of Agribusiness web pages revealed insufficient visibility of research activities. This lack of information detracts from the perceived importance of the Faculty's research work and its overall academic value. An improved online presentation of research activities would enhance the Faculty's reputation and emphasise the contributions of its researchers.

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.

From the documents submitted (SER and Appendix) and discussions with the teachers, the teachers are highly motivated to work together both nationally and internationally. The strong partnerships with employers, the good relationships with alumni and the active cooperation with foreign universities also speak in favour of this. In fact, this study program was partly developed based on programmes from EU institutions.

The strong connection with industry and employers in the Peja region has created the opportunity to develop this new programme as a vision for the future. As this programme is unique in Kosovo, it has great potential for success, provided that the faculty and the business sector remain committed. Discussions with employers have shown that there is considerable demand for this study program.

However, in the context of collaboration on joint projects, this expert panel has not been provided with a list of faculty projects, including project descriptions. Evidence of co-operation agreements with industry was provided as an appendix to the SER document

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.

According to SER (p. 63), teaching staff are actively involved in research, publish their work and take part in conferences in their respective fields. During discussions with teachers confirmed that they incorporate their research findings into their lessons in order to deepen and clarify the teaching content. However, there was no evidence during the site-visit or in the SER document (p. 63) of student involvement in research activities, which is a recommended

component for this programme. Greater student involvement in research would further enrich the learning experience and be consistent with best academic practise.

ET recommendations:

1. *A comprehensive list of faculty members, including professors and visiting professors, who teach courses in the programme should be submitted in full*
Timeline: next application round
2. *Clear evidence of technology transfer initiatives should be documented and included to meet the necessary requirements.*
Timeline: next application round
3. *Strategies for involving students in research should be developed within the first accredited year and implemented thereafter.*
Timeline: end of first study year
4. *The Faculty of Agribusiness website should be updated to include professors' CVs and a full list of their publications.*
Timeline: before start of the program
5. *The website needs to be significantly improved to increase the visibility and credibility of the faculty.*
6. **Timeline: before start of the program**

7. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

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

As inspected during the site visit, the Faculty of Agribusiness of UHZ is providing suitable lecture halls, laboratories, library and IT infrastructure for the study program. Land and buildings are available from former military installations. Buildings are in a good condition and extensions are under construction.

For teaching an auditorium maximum with 130 seats, three teaching halls with capacities of 50, and 30 seats are available and equipped with internet connection and LED projectors. Five student laboratories for various applications are available and equipped with basic equipment. However, instrumentation is aged and investments are required. Shortcomings are partly compensated by performing internships and thesis work in cooperation with surrounding agribusiness companies and the Agricultural Institute of Peja. A computer working room is available and software with valid licenses is provided. The faculty management assures that the premises will be available for the study program at least for the next five years. Upper floors are accessible by elevators for students and staff members with impaired mobility.

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

UHZ is providing a library with reading rooms, offering suitable spaces for individual study and smaller rooms for group work. The number of seats in the reading room and the group work rooms is sufficient for the number of students to be enrolled in the study program. A stock of books covering subjects included in the study program is available

The library provides services and access beyond regular class times, ensuring that students and academic staff have the opportunity to use the library's resources when needed. The library operates on the basis of the regulation as documented in the appendix of the SER.

The library offers a considerable book stock of Albanian and international literature. The library has a sufficient number of subscriptions to local and international publications, including periodical journals and electronic sources. It offers access to a wide range of online resources. Efforts to provide new titles and relevant materials to support the development of study programs have been noted in the discussions during the site visit.

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

The SER contains a 5-years financial plan for the study program. In total a budget of 220,000 € is provided by the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Kosovo in the first year, continuously increasing to 348,000 € in the fifth year. The budget is allocated mainly to staff salaries, followed by computers and software, laboratory equipment, literature and building infrastructure.

UHZ is a public university and does not charge tuition fees. Additional financial sources are generated through government-funded projects of various ministries and of NGOs. UHZ is part of the ERASMUS-EDU-2024-CB-VET project and has a partnership with Iowa State University which is supported by USAID, which should continue for the next 4 years according to the contract. However, this plan became quite uncertain since the new US administration started to withdraw funds from USAID. Further financial resources are generated by cooperation with the local companies in the agribusiness.

ET recommendations:

1. *In the current difficult political situation of USAID provision should be made for the case of losing subsidies*

Timeline: immediate start

2. *Laboratory equipment should be continuously renewed by using project funds*

Timeline: 15% reinvestment per year

FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program “Applied Ecology in Agribusiness (B.Sc.)” proposed by the Faculty of Agribusiness of the University Haxhi Zeka, Peja is substantially compliant with the standards included in the KAA Accreditation manual and, therefore, recommends to accredit the study program for a duration of 3 years with a number of 40 students to be enrolled in the program.

1. MISSION, OBJECTIVES AND ADMINISTRATION	Substantially compliant
2. QUALITY MANAGEMENT	Substantially compliant
3. ACADEMIC STAFF *Mandatory	Substantially compliant
4. EDUCATIONAL PROCESS CONTENT	Substantially compliant
5. STUDENTS	Fully compliant
6. RESEARCH	Fully compliant
7.INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES *Mandatory	Fully compliant
Overall Compliance	Substantially compliant

Expert Team

Chair



Prof. Dr. Joachim Müller

14.03.2025

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)

Member



Prof. Dr. Sanja Kalambura

14.03.2025

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Stefania Armaselu, Student Expert



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