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University “Haxhi Zeka” in Peja

B.Sc. PLANT PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGY
Reaccreditation

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

February 2025, Peja

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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 Programme

Programme Accreditation Procedure at University “Haxhi Zeka” in Peja	
Programmes:	Plant Production Technology, BSc, 180 ECTS (Re-accreditation)
Site visit on (hybrid):	19 February 2025
Expert Team:	Prof. Reiner Doluschitz, Prof. Jasna Novak Mr. Juraj Bogat
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 MSc. Myhybije Zallqi, Official of Student Affairs MSc. Abetare Pelaj, Official of finances MSc. Alberina Brahimaj, Official of Archive and protocol. MSc. Agon Buçuku, Information Technology Expert
10:40 – 11:40	Meeting with the heads of the study programme Plant Production Technology, BSc, 180 ECTS Prof. Reiner Doluschitz, Prof. Jasna Novak, online	Prof. Dr. Ismajl Cacaj, heads of the study programme Prof. Asoc. Dr. Nazmi Hasanaj, heads of the study programme Prof. Asoc. Dr. Defrime Berisha, heads of the study programme

	Mr. Juraj Bogat, Student Expert	
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	Prof. Ass. Dr. Kastriot Pehlivani, Professor at Faculty of Agribusiness full-time Prof. Dr. Agim Rysha, Professor at Faculty of Agribusiness - full-time Prof. Asoc. Dr. Laura Naka, Professor at Faculty of Agribusiness - part time. Prof. Ass. Dr. Filipos Ruxho, Professor at Faculty of Agribusiness - part time Prof. Ass. Dr. Astrit Bilalli, Professor at Faculty of Agribusiness - full-time Prof.Ass.Dr. Shyherete Muriqi, Professor at Faculty of Agribusiness -full-time Prof. Asoc. Dr. Albona Shala, Professor at Faculty of Agribusiness - part time Dr. Violeta Berlajolli, Professor at Faculty of Agribusiness - part time
14:00 – 14:45	Meeting with students	Vesa Lleshi, students from Faculty of Agribusiness – third year TU Rina Lokaj, students from Faculty of Agribusiness - second year TU Zerina Hajdar, students from Faculty of 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
14:45 – 15:30	Meeting with graduates	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
15:35 – 16:20	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders	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 SH.P.K. 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	

Overall instructions for HEIs:

1. No presentations of any kind are allowed, as the meetings are intended to be free discussions
2. The students selected for the meeting should reflect a diversity in terms of fields of study, programme, study cycle, year of study, students with special needs if any, etc.
3. The teaching staff selected for the meeting should reflect a diversity in terms of faculties and programmes, full-time and part time, local and international, etc.
4. The students, graduates and employers of graduates should not be employed at the institution.
5. Anyone whose attendance won't be agreed in advance with KAA, and the Expert Team will be asked to leave the interview session.
6. Nametags are to be provided for all people attending the meetings.

A brief overview of the institution and program under evaluation

The University Haxhi Zeka is embedded in an agricultural dominated landscape, surrounded by a couple of agribusiness companies like a brewery, dairy and juice and vegetable processing factories. Therefore, by providing knowledge and skills in various aspects of plant production, agro-environment and food processing technology the bachelor study programmes “Plant Production Technology”, “Agro-Environment and Agroecology” and “Food Technology” are well corresponding with the mission of UHZ, which is: “Haxhi Zeka University continues its positive academic and artistic tradition, it creates an environment and transformative academic experiences to achieve its aims. It also applies advanced scientific standards and assists the economic development of the Peja region and the country in general” “to prepare leaders for making Kosovo a more competitive country”.

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 labour 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 labour 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 analysed, 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 behaviour, 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 (SMU) 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)

„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.“ (SER).

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.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

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:** until next evaluation 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 analyzed 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.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

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: until next evaluation 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)

On the basis of the SER, teaching staff engaged in the performance of the study program B.Sc. *Plant production technology* are employed following the national level legislation (Law on Higher Education in the Republic of Kosovo) and the internal regulations and guidelines of the Faculty of Agribusiness (Statute, the Regulation on Selection Procedures for the Appointment, Reappointment and Promotion of Regular Academic Staff and the Regulation on Evaluation Procedures for the Employment of External Staff).

Open job vacancies advertised on the Haxhi Zeka University website, contain informations related to the job description and recruitment selection criteria, and in order to be available at the national or international level, according to SER, are allegedly published on Kosovo employment portals, or as it is customary on official gazette, but it is not specified which ones.

SER refers to the internal Regulation on evaluation and selection procedures in connection with the appointment, re-election and advancement of academic staff, according to which it is prescribed that the recruitment procedure is a clear, objective and transparent process. To meet high academic standards, the candidate recruitment process is carried out through several levels of scrutiny, including evaluation by a three-members selection committee, the Academic Unit Council, Studies Committee at the central level for review and for the final decision by the University Senate.

It is confirmed that the Faculty has established appropriate procedures for selecting highly qualified candidates for each position, which are in line with the strategic goals of the institution as defined in the Strategic Plan of the “Haxhi Zeka” University 2023-2026 and the specific needs of the study program and that the candidates are duly informed on all the necessary details regarding recruitment process.

For the ET it is hard to estimate that the ratio of teaching assistants to professors, and to correlate it to the number of students. During the conversation, the impression was that there is a need for the employment of the younger researchers to enhance academic capacities primarily teaching and research. Generating such an analysis would help in creating an effective recruitment plan in the upcoming periods.

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)

SER states that a total of highly qualified 14 professors and 1 assistant participate, in teaching in the subjects offered by curriculum, and that external collaborators are hired as needed, depending on the number of enrolled students. On the other side, the report also includes Table 3. Staff engaged in the Plant Production Technology, BSc study program, which contains the names of 20 professors (page 33).

Permanently employed teaching staff may enter into a permanent employment contract only at the Faculty of Agribusiness as defined per Statute, and may hold a maximum of two teaching positions during an academic year: one full-time and one part-time, regardless of the educational institution at which they are employed. According to SER, 80% of the lecturers of the study program are full-time employees of “Haxhi Zeka” University.

The SER clearly defines workloads for professors, from a maximum of 6 hours of lectures per week, and for assistants, up to 10 hours of exercises per week, which can be exceeded by up to

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20% in the event of the need for the absence of individual staff. Having in mind such distribution of the workload and since only 1 assistant participates in study program performance, as stated by SER, it is hard to envisage her/his real-time engagement.

The SER reports that in the terms of respecting the optimal ratios the related to the full time employed staff to the number of the students as well as optimal distribution of the ECTS, the Faculty policy follows specific requirements stated in the Law No. 08/L-110 on Kosovo Accreditation Agency. However, it is hard to observe how study load and ECTS are being matched.

During the conversation in the on-site-visit the teaching staff reported that the quota for the study program in this academic year was 40 students and ET believes that active number of the students, as well as distribution of the ECTS are distributed in accordance this standard. Given that SER claims to effectively monitor student-teacher ratios with the aim of maintaining and improving the level of support and quality of teaching, it would be useful to record the results of these analyses to identify trends and take appropriate actions accordingly. Each member of the academic staff is available once a week for two-hour consultations with students.

A review of the extensive CVs shows that the engaged academic staff have extensive experience in their fields of specialization. However, in individual CVs the articles and the participation at the scientific conferences are jointly listed and this is something to be avoided in future. These two categories should be separately presented and additionally when listing the scientific articles, it is recommendable to indicate some quality parameters such as journal impact factor or quartile. Also it is advisable that the CVs are uniformly written, e.g. in EUROPASS format.

As the self-evaluation report points out, the distribution of teaching duties, professional and scientific work, mentorship and other obligations aimed at institutional contribution through, for example, socially beneficial impact, of each academic staff member is optimally distributed.

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 line with this standard, at least in theory, the Faculty of Agribusiness (FAB) relies on policies and regulations governing the recruitment and promotion of academic staff, which, as

in most cases, are primarily defined by the Law on Higher Education in the Republic of Kosovo and the Statute of the University "Haxhi Zeka".

SER points out that, fundamentally guided by the principles of academic freedom, autonomy and professional integrity, creating conditions for the further development of excellence in teaching and scientific research, the Faculty's procedures for the selection and promotion of academic staff are in line with the strategic goals of the University and in accordance with legislation. The promotion of academic staff to higher ranks is transparent and based on excellence and significant achievements of the candidates, as defined by the Statute and the aforementioned Regulations, which prescribe the number of monographs, textbooks, publications in international scientific journals indexed in the WoS and Scopus platforms and mentorships undertaken. Student feedback is also perceived positively and is considered an important aspect during teaching staff promotion procedures. Also, during the process of staff evaluation in the process of re-election or promotion, the results of questionnaires filled out by students, Faculty management and colleagues are also taken into account, and include assessment of own performance by teacher self-assessment.

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)

Academic staff engaged in the implementation of all study programs at the University level receive institutional support for their professional development, and the SER provides a budget allocated for participation in scientific projects or for publishing scientific articles. According to the SER, staff also have support for participation in international scientific conferences and mobilities. Additionally, scientific excellence itself is recognized by awarding the teaching staff members by two awards, namely the "Researcher of the Year Award" and the "Best Paper of the Year Award", but it is not documented that the academic staff of this study program has been awarded in the period since the last reaccreditation.

UHZ has an annual operational plan for the professional development of teaching staff on the study program from the aspect of teaching process, scientific research, administrative services and services to society, but it is not clearly demonstrated what these concrete actions are. It is generally described that these are mostly professional development programs related to teaching methodology and professional training as confirmed in SER. This is difficult to verify for ET, although during the interview, the teaching staff confirmed their support for their professional development, as the University's Academic Development Plan (from 2020) is available in the annex, and it refers to the period 2017-2022, which is confusing because the SER claims that an annual professional development plan for teachers has been established. Some parts in SER related to the compliance with the specific indicators are repetitive and overly worded. Therefore, the recommendation is, when reporting, to be more structured and to provide the adequate documentation directly with the claim.

The higher education institution demonstrates that all academic staff engaged in the study program participate in international activities important for their professional development and the study program itself. For longer training abroad at HEI, professors have the opportunity to use a sabbatical year for research at a foreign university, through the application of a scientific project and for those having at least five years of experience in scientific research and teaching. During this 1-year period, the employee receives a full salary. It would be useful to have an overview of academic mobility and stays in tabular form abroad in order to quantify the number of employees who use this opportunity.

The professional development of employees was formalized through the implementation of a project by the Faculty of Agribusiness in cooperation with Iowa State University, HERAS, ERASMUS +, STEPS, BUGI, MASHTI and through the Center of Excellence near UHZ, mainly within the aspect pedagogical training for higher education and strategies that enhance effective teaching (ECTS, learning outcomes, teaching methods etc.).

Newly employed teachers for the delivery of the study program, in accordance with the Strategic Plans of the University and the Faculty, undergo adequate training to strengthen teaching competencies before beginning their teaching activity at the HEI. Also as support and guidance for newly employed teachers, the University has developed a Teaching Staff Handbook. It is a practice at FAB is that the management structures ensure that new staff are familiarized with the premises and context of FAB at the outset of employment. In this context the meeting with the Faculty management, the secretary of the teaching unit, the IT officer, the teaching affairs officer and the quality officer are organized as a support to become familiar with the faculty's work system, the applied teaching methodologies, the main forms of assessment, the student profile and the organization of the teaching process as a whole as well as their rights and obligations.

Full support to academic staff in the development of their research concepts is ensured through several mechanisms at University level. E.g. younger scientists are mentored by senior colleagues, and also SER states that the creation of project teams that bring together diverse expertise is encouraged to improve the quality and impact of research. Administrative and technical support is also provided to academic staff to facilitate the identification of funding possibilities in the relevant field 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)

The engagement and qualifications of external collaborators in the study program are regulated by the University Statute and the Regulations on the Procedure for Assessing the Engagement of External Collaborators.

In order to be hired as an external associate in a study program, suitable candidates must have a PhD in the field of the subject and one publication in international scientific journals, with preference given to those who also hold the academic title of lecturer or professor obtained at one of the public universities.

For the position of external training associate, candidates must have completed a master's degree or equivalent in a relevant field, with an average point grade of at least 8 during their studies at both levels. Preference is given to candidates with a PhD. If more than one candidate meets these criteria, the evaluation committee will take into account the student and mentor grades, experience in the subject area, and other desirable competencies.

By sharing their practical expertise and knowledge, external collaborators contribute to aligning the teaching process with the needs of the labour market. This approach enables the implementation of the latest trends in the relevant field. Otherwise, also for external collaborators, especially for those coming from the business sector or from abroad, special training is organized and they are supported through the information contained in the Teacher's Manual. External collaborators from industry and agencies also highly contribute to organizing practical training for students and are co-mentors of final theses as confirmed during the conversations. The list of the external associates engaged in the supervision of final and graduation theses (co-supervision activities) would be valuable for check, as it is hard for ET to assess the ratio of the permanent staff towards external associates.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. In the next SER the ratio of teaching assistants to professors with indicated percentage of external associates, correlated to the number of active students must be included.*
- 2. Specific budget allocation to additional professional development of teaching staff is recommended and the evidence of organization of specific training for its academic staff should be provided.*
- 3. Intensified exchange with comparable programs in international level is recommended*
- 4. Some parts in SER related to the compliance with the specific indicators are repetitive and overly worded. Therefore, the recommendation is, when reporting, to be more structured and to provide the adequate documentation directly with the claim.*

Timeline: Immediate start and completion before the end of the summer semester 2027

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)

SER confirms that the learning outcomes for the bachelor's degree in Plant Production Technology are aligned with the standard and that they follow the mission and vision of the institution, although during the conversation the question arose whether the verbs used are at the appropriate level as suggested by Bloom's taxonomy. SER listed the learning outcomes and obviously there is a place for the improvement. In general, it can be concluded that the set learning outcomes of the study program are aligned with the mission of the University, which states that the higher education institution is dedicated to educating students as future experts in accordance with the needs of the labour market and in order to contribute to the long-term economic development of the region and Kosovo. Likewise, given the alignment with the University's vision, the defined learning outcomes contribute to the recognition of the study program as well as their graduates in the labour market in the field of agribusiness and the environment. The SER elaborates on the learning outcomes individually in terms of arguing that they are in line with the general goals and objectives of the study program. Emphasis is placed on acquiring basic and advanced knowledge in the field of plant production technology, and acquiring practical and laboratory skills based on education in soil analysis and physical-chemical analysis applied for evaluation of the quality and safety of agricultural products. In the future, there is room to improve the learning outcomes so that they are more precise and clear, which can instantly influence the improved planning of the study program and thus encourage revisions of the content of the curriculum.

The expressions such as know should be avoided as these are difficult to assess accurately and does not convey the exact nature of the learning outcome being sought. A list of appropriate verbs based on Benjamin Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning Objective sere always is helpful in creating outcomes.

The learning outcomes of this study program, according to the SER, are aligned with similar study programs within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) that are implemented within the University of Zagreb and the University of Agriculture in Tirana.

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

SER declares that the defined learning outcomes of the study program are aligned with the National Qualifications Framework and the level descriptors of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). As stated, this harmonization results from and is reflected in the curriculum of the study program, ensuring that the structure and content in accordance with national and European standards of academic and professional qualifications.

Although it is stated that the learning outcomes for the study program are formulated to be in accordance with the level and profile of the acquired qualification, modification is recommended in terms of improved addressing of this standard. It is crucial that the content clearly reflects the specifics and objectives of the program, and that it does not overlap with other study programs delivered within the institution.

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)

According to SER, the curriculum is systematically designed to enable students to gradually acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and competences without overlapping between different modules or levels of study. Therefore, within this aspect, in the future, SER would be interested in having overviews related to the average year of study as well as the grade point average of students on an annual basis.

It seems according to the Table 4. that the subjects offered in the curriculum are logically designed, starting with basic concepts and gradually moving to more complex ones to ensure expected progression for students.

It is structured in such a manner that after following the core courses, students attend and progress to specialised courses and electives. This is ensured by defined methodological conditions that are designed so that previous learning outcomes serve as the foundation for acquiring knowledge of more specialized subjects in subsequent semesters. For example, for the most advanced courses such as Plant Genetic Improvement, Phytopathology, etc., students must successfully complete courses Plant Physiology or Fundamentals of Genetics. The last semester includes three compulsory courses and offers elective course together with the preparation of a thesis by which the student acquires 10 ECTS. The Faculty refers to the Practical Work Manual (in Albanian only) in regulating the implementation of student internships, which includes the expected learning outcomes, rights and responsibilities of all participants involved, as well as templates for all documents required for the implementation

of the internship. According to SER, the internships are well integrated into the study program, and students are provided with defined learning outcomes, expected development of professional skills, and requirements and goals to be achieved during the internship period at collaborating institutions in the field of agro-industry in the final year of the study program. Procedures related to internships are aligned with Kosovo legislation, and internships are recorded by the competent institution as work experience. During the internship, students are supervised by mentors appointed from among the professors of the study program and also supervised by those from the hosting institution as stated during the interviews.

The study program of the Faculty of Agribusiness is compared with similar study programs of Universities in Europe. This comparison showed that it is aligned from the highest to the lowest percentage, respectively, with the Faculty of Agriculture and Environment of the University of Agriculture in Tirana, with the program of the Faculty of Agriculture and Biotechnology of the University of Tetovo, and with the program of the Faculty of Agronomy of the University of Zagreb, the program of Agricultural Sciences of the University of Hohenheim, and the program of the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, Food Sciences and Environmental Management of the University of Giessen. SER states that this study program is designed to provide students with academic mobility and competitiveness in the European and global labour markets, as its content and structure are aligned with international standards.

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)

It is necessary to initiate the process of harmonizing the study program with the prescribed conditions defined in EU directives, and also to consider in the future the possibility of recommendations from professional associations such as the professional chamber, and to consider the possibility of taking a professional exam.

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)

The SER confirms as follows: “The internship phase is well integrated into the study programme and students have a clear understanding of the requirements and objectives to be achieved during this period. Effective processes are followed to ensure that students clearly understand the learning outcomes that are linked to the internship period and the strategies for developing these outcomes.”

There is sufficient supervision. During the internship, students are supported by mentors assigned from the academic staff. Mentors play a crucial role in guiding and supervising the internship process (SER).

In addition, UHZ has drafted a Practical work manual, which includes the expected learning outcomes, the rights and responsibilities of all actors involved, as well as templates for all the documents necessary to carry out the internship.

The learning outcomes of the internship are clearly specified and appropriate.

For practical work students receive ECTS credits. Evaluation methods are appropriate and clearly specified; they include midterm evaluations, final evaluation, final presentation and final exam. As for the practical phase foreseen for certain courses, they are divided into ECTS credits, broken down into working hours, which are regularly monitored through activity reports, including student practice records.

The UHZ has signed cooperation agreements with main stakeholders and the department has a strong collaboration with the private sector and is frequently contacted for professional consultation, pointing to the fact that it has a good reputation in the real sector, which is growing.

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

In the study program generally small groups of students are enrolled. This normally implies a more student-centred pedagogical approach as professors can dedicate individual attention to students.

“The study program has a well-defined didactic and research concept, combining advanced research methods and innovative teaching methods to provide advanced and accessible knowledge to students.” (SER).

The SER confirms that the study program is implemented using a wide range of pedagogical methods that are tailored to achieve the intended learning outcomes and are consistent with the level of study. The methods used, including interactive lectures, seminars, workshops, practical projects and case studies. However, no further details are presented in the SER.

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)

It is confirmed in the SER, that assessment is objective and consistent, ensuring that the intended learning outcomes are achieved fully and accurately

The SER states: “This relationship is clear and transparent, making it easy for students to understand how each module contributes to the achievement of the intended overall outcomes of the study programme.”, considering the individual contributions made by each module.

It is confirmed by a statement in the SER: The study program ensures an assessment process that is objective and reliable for all students. The assessment criteria are clear, predetermined and applied equally to ensure that each student is assessed fairly and in accordance with the established standards.

It is confirmed in the on-site-visit discussions that students receive timely feedback and detailed comments on assessment results that identify their strengths and weaknesses through consultations.

There is a functional student complaint procedure for the study program, which includes the possibility of submitting comments through the Information Management system, submitting physical complaints to the complaint box, and addressing them to the management for further review. (SER).

The SER confirms that “the program has functional appeal procedures in place. The experts trust this statement.

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

"Haxhi Zeka" University has approved the Student Load Regulation, which aims to determine the student load to achieve learning efficiency and to fairly distribute the time needed to fulfil their academic tasks. Learning outcomes are assessed in terms of student workload and are clearly expressed in ECTS credits.(SER).

The study program ensures objective and reliable grading of students.

Assessment criteria are structured in such a way that they clearly reflect what students have learned and are able to do as a result of meeting the intended learning outcomes.

The student workload is carefully calculated and ECTS credits are assigned to all learning activities based on the number of hours of engagement required by students to achieve the learning outcomes.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Define the role of program coordinators in assessing the adequacy of overall learning outcomes of students and monitoring of student success.*
- 2. Formally appoint study program coordinators who will be responsible and authorized to follow up on the implementation of the recommendations in this report.*

Timeline: until next evaluation round

5. STUDENTS

After conducting online and in-situ evaluation, following detailed descriptions in the self-evaluation report and fruitful sessions with the faculty management, QA officials, teachers, students, graduates and stakeholders, the ET is under the impression that the Faculty deals with its students with the utmost respect and professionalism. No immanent and obvious misconducts have been reported nor discovered. Moreover, the general impression is that students thrive in the environment the Faculty prepared for them. Students do not seem to have any major issues with studies in any aspect. They are proactive, they participate in various student bodies, they organize themselves and they help each other.

There are certain situations which are described as concerning, and it is regarding enrollment of students for the sole purpose of obtaining scholarships. The ET recommendation here is to give out scholarships based on results achieved in the previous academic year. This type of regulations works pretty well at other universities and it mitigates the above mentioned issue.

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)

Information about the admission and enrollment are clearly defined and publicly available on the website. Process is fair and straightforward.

Students enrolled in the program possess the required documentation.

Selection of suitable candidates is done via entrance exam where candidates need to score a certain number of points in order to obtain the right to enroll. Of course, all other criteria must be met as well.

The criteria are not discriminatory in any way.

The HEI does have an adequate procedure for recognizing periods of the study – it is governed by internal regulations which are based on current Law.

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)

Coming from the conversation and report all the academic staff of the study program are supportive and available for students in defined office hours and additionally through various online communication channels.

Regular monitoring of student progression and completion rates is essential for maintaining the quality and effectiveness of the study program. Taking appropriate actions when necessary, ensures continuous improvement and student success. According to the SER, if a situation occurs, there are established procedures (like organizing additional lectures) to address the situation.

All student results are available in the SMU both to students and teachers.

Students are informed during their studies about the possibilities of continuation of studies. Moreover, some of them participate in research activities with their teachers which undoubtedly deepens their interests and knowledge in the field.

The study program complies with the University policies and procedures regarding student transfers and recognition of qualifications.

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

There is The International Cooperation Office established within the University which regularly publishes international calls and opportunities for exchange.

The International Cooperation Office (ICO) also supports and stimulates students to participate in exchange programs.

The University has adopted regulations for recognition of ECTS points.

No application information was found online in language other than Albanian.

ICO ensure support to incoming students and helps them integrating while studying at UBIM.

The University offers courses in English and German language for foreign students.

ICO conducts survey at the end of transfer period and implements suggestions.

The University collects all statistical data about transfers and nobilities.

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)

There seems to be a sufficient number of professional, supporting, technical, and administrative staff.

Students disseminate information among themselves, but all of the information is publicly available. The student representatives transfer the newest and most important information to the rest of the student body.

Students are mentored by their teachers throughout their studies who can then guide them. Mentors in a narrower sense of word are selected when writing thesis.

Students have the right to appeal and challenge professor decisions. There is also a set mechanism if student rights are not being respected.

No active sports or other activities were mentioned nor proven to exist. Some limited budget is available, but students seem to be more interested in working and research opportunities.

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

1. Suggest to relevant institutions to change the rules of awarding scholarships in order to decrease the dropout numbers.
2. Increase, as much as possible, student involvement in research projects.

Timeline: until next evaluation 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 SER, the implemented study program is fully aligned with the mission of the University "Haxhi Zeka" and the Faculty of Agribusiness, focusing primarily on the academic and professional development of students in the fields of agriculture, environment and food. The Faculty of Agribusiness recognizes and is aware of the potential of its own role in providing the quality of the higher education of graduate experts in profiles aligned with the recent labour market needs, which can directly contribute to the economic development of the region and beyond. The Faculty is oriented to ensure that the study program is implemented in accordance with the mission and vision of the institution, and to integrate the strategic goals of scientific research, encouraging innovation and knowledge development in the topics of the syllabus. The intention for the Faculty is to strengthen scientific capacities, therefore, activities are supported that involve students and academic staff in improving their knowledge and skills, and ultimately with the aim of social impact by influencing the economy and quality of life of the local community. Since the Faculty recognises and advocates the significance of the scientific research in the context of the study program quality, ET suggest that the Faculty establishes research development plan as a separate document. as a strategic roadmap that outlines an academic researcher's goals and activities for example over a three-year period. Developing such strategic research plan supports Faculty to stay aligning its research outcomes with its vision and mission.

The compliance of the Plant production technology study program with the strategic research goals of UHZ is monitored and coordinated by the Office for Scientific Work and the Scientific Research Coordinator.

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.

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According to SER, it is not specified, but probably at the University level, funds are provided for APC for publishing scientific papers, participation in conferences, international mobility, research projects, study visits and various training opportunities, but it is not specified if these funds are granted to members of the Faculty's academic staff.

The structure of the study program, according to SER, follows clear policies that define recognized research and strives to harmonize with international standards. The excellence of academic staff engaged in the study program is recognized through financial support to conducting out research and/or quality professional activities, and by awarding employees for best paper of the year" and as "Researcher of the Year", both at university level, but SER does not state if during the evaluation period, whether employees of Faculty for Agribusiness were awarded. Financial support and rewarding employees is an encouraging practice, but given the number of study programs at the University, increasing this fund could significantly contribute to strengthen the research activities of academic staff.

The research and/or professional activity of the academic staff is recorded in the database for which the Research Office is responsible, and it would be advisable if the data were available for the academic staff of the study program in the Table. CV screening in a regards of scientific productivity of the academic staff reflects in numerous activities and years of experience. From the uploaded CVs, it is evident that teaching staff regularly publishes scientific articles and are active as consultants and in this regard national requirements for publication and promotion purposes are respected. However, it is difficult for ET to assess whether the results of their research have been published in high-quality scientific or professional publications, and whether their research or professional achievements are presented at national and international conferences since these data are not systematically presented. The table for the year of 2024 is presented, however there is a need to monitor activities over several years, i.e. for the period until the next accreditation. Also Table 6 at page 76 of the SER should include project reference and the numbers of the published papers per academic member. Cumulative activity data should be categorized and presented in such a format in the SER, and trends should be commented on for at least three years to provide an overview and take appropriate steps for improvement. Although it is difficult to verify from CVs, ET believes that academic staff involved in the delivery of the study programme are qualified to a high standard. Namely, it seems that the high ratio of the engaged employees holds PhD titles and have long lasting experience according to their CVs.

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 aspect of the collaboration of academic staff with domestic and international partners is generally described as satisfactory, and presents that the academic staff is having the support of the University. According to SER, the academic staff members currently have several different forms of cooperation with national institutions on applied research (ministries) and a few others with foreign universities.

The SER elaborates extensively that teaching staff, engaged in the study program, collaborates with local business partners and participate in the transfer of technology and knowledge with business partners and the public sector, but does not record any examples or evidence of such collaborations. Although cooperation agreements are attached, the Faculty must regularly collect and record data on the involvement of its employees in various cooperation projects.

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.

The teaching staff engaged in the study program publishes the results of research related to the methodological units they teach within a particular subject, and integrates the research results into the content of the course itself. As part of additional literature for exam preparation, students are offered teaching materials and books or scientific publications of professors. Students enrolled in the study program are involved in research activities in collaboration with academic staff, which is primarily realized when developing thesis topics, where students work closely with their professors to develop research skills and contribute to significant scientific projects.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. The number of publications in internationally recognised journals could possibly be expanded upon further in the next couple of years.*
- 2. It would be valuable that the Faculty establishes a research development plan as a separate document which will be a basis as a strategic roadmap that outlines an academic researcher's goals and activities for example over a three-year period.*
- 3. Providing financial support and rewarding employees who excel in scientific performance is an encouraging practice, but given the number of study programs at the University, increasing this fund could significantly contribute to strengthening the research activities of academic staff.*
- 4. Faculty management should encourage and stimulate research productivity of the academic staff and enhance it through international cooperation.*

Timeline: until next evaluation round

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 are 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 literature in Albanian language and international. 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 government started to withdraw funds from USAID. Further financial resources are generated by cooperation with the local companies in the agribusiness.

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

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*

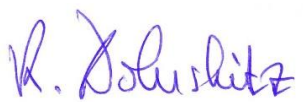
Timeline: 15% reinvestment per year

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program “Plant Production Technology (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.

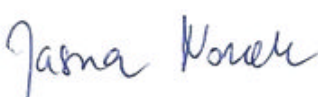
Standard	Compliance Level
Mission, objectives and administration	Substantially compliant
Quality management	Substantially compliant
Academic Staff	Substantially compliant
Educational Process Content	Substantially compliant
Students	Fully compliant
Research	Substantially compliant
Infrastructure and resources	Substantially compliant
Overall Compliance	Substantially compliant

Expert Team

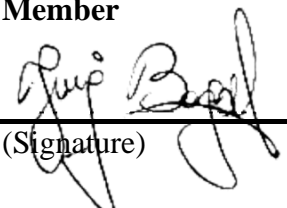
Chair

	Prof. Dr. Reiner Doluschitz	10.03.2025
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)

Member

	Prof. Dr. Jasna Novak	10.03.2025
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)

Member

	Juraj Bogat, Student Expert	10.03.2025
(Signature)	(Print Name)	(Date)