



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo
Agjencia e Kosovës për Akreditim
Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju
Kosovo Accreditation Agency



Public University “Kadri Zeka Gjilan”

International Relations and European Studies

Accreditation

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

21 May 2024, Gjilan, Kosovo

1

Contents

INTRODUCTION	3
2. PROGRAM EVALUATION	5
2.3. Academic Staff.....	19
2.4. Educational Process Content.....	23
2.5. Students.....	28
2.6. Research.....	31
2.7. Infrastructure and Resources.....	34
FINAL RECOMMENDATION BY THE ET	38

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: 21 May 2024

Expert Team (ET) members:

- *Professor Dr. Hans-Joachim Giessmann*
- *Dr. Anna Bara*
- *Mr. Marko Komso*

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- *Ms. Leona Kovaci*

Sources of information for the Report:

- *Self-evaluation report (SER) submitted by the Faculty*
- *Additional documentation provided by the Department and Institution (CV's, appendices, syllabi, list of publications)*
- *Information gathered during the meetings with the management of the institution, quality assurance team, administrative staff, teaching staff, and external stakeholders*
 - *Website of the University <https://uni-gjilan.net/en/>*
 - *University Strategy Development and Action Plan 2017-2022 <https://uni-gjilan.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Strategic-development-and-the-action-plan-2.pdf>*
 - *Statute of the University*
 - *Education Strategy 2022-2026 <https://masht.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/03-Strategjia-e-Arsimit-2022-2026-Eng-Web.pdf>*
 - *National Development Strategy – 2030 <https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net/en/national-development-strategy-2030/>*

Criteria used for institutional and programme evaluations

- *KAA accreditation manual (updated 2022)*
- *KAA manual for external evaluation of higher education institutions (2021)*
- *KAA manual annex 4.3 template for the external review report*
- *National Qualifications Framework (NQF) <https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-05/Kosovo%202023.pdf>*

1.2. Site visit schedule

<i>Time</i>	<i>Meeting</i>
<i>09:30 – 10:20</i>	<i>Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated</i>
<i>10:20 – 11:10</i>	<i>Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff</i>
<i>11:10 – 11:20</i>	<i>Short break</i>
<i>11:20 – 12:20</i>	<i>Meeting with the heads of the study programme</i>
<i>12:20 – 13:20</i>	<i>Lunch break (provided at the evaluation site)</i>
<i>13:20 – 14:10</i>	<i>Visiting Facilities</i>
<i>14:10 – 15:00</i>	<i>Meeting with teaching staff</i>
<i>15:00 – 15:10</i>	<i>Lunch break (provided at the evaluation site)</i>
<i>15:10 – 16:00</i>	<i>Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders</i>
<i>16:00 – 16:10</i>	<i>Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts</i>
<i>16:10 – 16:20</i>	<i>Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and programme</i>

1.3. A brief overview of the institution under evaluation

Insert general information about the institution, its legal status, its mission, the study programmes it is offering, and others.

The Public University “Kadri Zeka Gjilan” (UKZ) is organised and governed based on the Law on Higher Education of the Republic of Kosovo, on the Statute of UKZ and other relevant regulations. The University consists of academic units, which are governed and administered in three main pillars: the Steering Council, the Senate and the administration. The Rector is the main managing authority. Rector and Vice Rector were available for the Expert Team (ET) during their site visit on May 21, 2024. The ET learned about the structure of the university, the variety of standard operational procedures for the University’s management and evaluation of programmes and administration.

UKZ has approved all relevant regulations to govern decision-making and operationalise education, the Law on Labour, the Law on Public Officials, the Law on State Administration, the Law on General Administrative Procedure, the Statute of UKZ, etc. References are on the University website (SER, 10-11) The organisation of decision-making structures in academic matters is done in accordance with the Statute of the University. Decision-making structures in academic matters are established in compliance with the Statute of the University (Chart in SER, p. 13).

UKZ is open and encourages all candidates who meet the formal requirements to enrol in university studies, in all programmes which are accredited. At UKZ, all studies are conducted in the Albanian language. The teaching process at UKZ takes place from 8am to 8pm.

Candidates who have completed high school, without any restrictions on gender or other affiliation, are invited to apply for enrolment. According to the UKZ Statute, there are two vacancies for admission of new students, in June and September. The largest number of students is from the region of Gjilan, Kamenica, Novobërda, Viti, Ferizaj, Kaçanik, Hani i Elezit, Partesh, Klllokot, Ranillug, but also a significant number is from other regions of Kosovo, especially in master's programmes, as well as from Serbia (municipalities: Presheva, Bujanoc and Medvegja) and from North Macedonia (Kumanova).

2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

The institutional evaluation consists of 7 subheadings through which the administration, organisation and management of the institution, as well as teaching and research are assessed.

2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

The assessment by the Expert Team (ET) is based on the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) of the University and its appendices as well on additional information that the ET has obtained during the site visit in Gjilan.

The Public University “Kadri Zeka Gjilan” (UKZ) intends to implement for the first time from September 2024 onwards a Bachelor programme (B.A) in “International Relations and European Studies”. The design of the programme under scrutiny is said to be informed by the Mission Statement of the UKZ which reads as follows:

“A temple of knowledge that cultivates learning and knowledge development, encourages critical thinking and the spirit of entrepreneurship for new research, which helps social and technological development, prepares responsible and professionally capable young people to be part of a virtual and global society, part of an open labour market and, at the same time, a model for other members of society”,

and the related documents, as follows:

- the National Development Strategy 2030;
- the Education Strategy 2022-2026;
- the UKZ Strategic Plan 2023-2028,
- the labour market research in Kosovo, the region and the EU,
- an Alumni Student Career Research 2023 and
- the research on the accreditation needs of International Relations Studies (IRS) and European Studies (ES).

The programme is designed to span over 6 semesters, equivalent to 3 years, and offers a total of 180 ECTS. The subjects offered for study are accompanied by approximately 4,500 teaching hours. After completing the studies, the student is awarded a *Bachelor of Arts in International Relations and European Studies (BA)*. According to the general guidelines for accredited B.A. programmes the programme cohorts should comprise 100 students.

The main objective of the programme, in compliance with the principles and mission, will be to satisfy the needs for the professional development of individuals in the field of international relations and European studies. The decision to design a B.A. programme in the proposed field caters to the needs of Kosovo's aspiration to become fully integrated into the European Union as well as the national labour market and society.

Accordingly, the programme's objectives reflect the key elements of UKZ's strategic objectives to:

- Provide study programmes in relation to market demands and social development
- Develop scientific activity to improve the quality of studies and innovation
- Foster internationalisation as an element of internal development
- Create infrastructural conditions for quality learning, and
- Develop effective management practices.

Efforts to build the programme on the pillars as aforementioned have been proven by the staff and external partners of the UKZ during the visit of the ET on May 21, 2024. They are reflected in the overall aims of the programme, to

- prepare students for the labour market, with a special emphasis on raising their skills in the field of international relations and European studies through the implementation of contemporary scientific achievements
- prepare graduates to deepen their research, analytical, and scientific skills, and advance to higher levels of study.

More specifically the objective is spelled out in the programme's mission, which emphasises the aim to

“prepare professionals to cope with the challenges that arise due to the complexity of international relations, political interdependence, globalisation of the economy, and the universalization of communications, by providing students with the scientific and technical skills to develop knowledge and critical thinking, that enable them to perform functions in various settings such as international organisations, local and transnational corporations, state and regional institutions, local government bodies, and other similar institutions.”

For that purpose, the ET has found useful that the programme design – which has been developed over a time span of five years, according to the information by the Rector – is based on consultations with different stakeholders about compliance of programme and practice needs prior to the drafting of design. The ET was able to talk during the site visit to a number of external stakeholders about their high interest in the programme and their involvement in shaping the content of teaching and training. The close partnership between the UKZ and external stakeholders was indeed impressive.

According to the mission statement UKZ has developed a programme design along the following studying objectives for the students, to

- help students gain a clear understanding of international relations and European studies;

- enhance students' analytical, evaluative, interpretive, and theoretical skills in examining issues with systematic critical reflection during their studies;
- focus on current events, modern issues, international relations and organisations, theories of conflict and cooperation, theories of European integration, and international political economy;
- develop students' soft and practical skills and to teach them research methods to prepare them for analytical work, approaches, and worldviews of high professional and scientific quality;
- prepare students for a successful career in the local, regional, and global labour market or postgraduate studies in universities outside Kosovo.

During the ET's site visit, the UKZ leadership as well as the programme responsible staff explained convincingly the high need to prepare quality staff in Kosovo for the processes of increasing the number of recognitions and membership of Kosovo in international organisations, the regional integration with the neighbouring countries Albania, North Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, the need to enhance the mobility/comparability of the programme with similar programmes in the states of the European Union by coping to standards set by the Copenhagen and Bologna processes. The combined focus on IR and ES aims at a cohort of graduates with flexible career options in academia and practice.

However, the general demographic trend at the country level should not be overlooked, as well as the general trend of the decline in the number of students in public higher education (See KESP 2022- 2026), coupled with high drop off rates.

Therefore, it must be taken into account, this programme has to be (a) competitive to other programmes, (b) attractive for students eligible to apply and (c) sustainable in terms of faculty, offers, and funding. UKZ should not ignore the risk of further decline of students' interest in a programme, which is not competitive, attractive, and sustainable.

That's why the programme design seeks to offer a wide and basic range of knowledge and skills of broad applicability, including analytical skills, effective communication, multilingual proficiency (both verbal and written), and extensive research capabilities. According to the SER and the statements provided during the site visit, the graduates from this study programme should be able to enter into flexible careers and have the ability to specialise according to their educational or professional interests. Accordingly, the courses offered originate in manifold disciplines (political science, sociology, anthropology, law, regional and security studies, language etc.) in order to offer the students opportunities to choose future specialisation according to their interests.

Whereas the programme is basically based on teaching in Albanian, it comprises elements of English-speaking classes beyond language courses by integrating international experts from the fields of academia and practice (30%, according to the findings of the meetings). Another advantage of the programme is the membership of former practitioners, such as high-profile diplomats, as associate professors in the academic staff of the programme and the possibility of having guest speakers and experts on invitation.

With its combined structure of knowledge acquisition and skills training at bachelor level, this study programme claims to be unique at the university level in Kosovo, and, in fact, offers a profile of *applied* studies that can help graduates to enter professional activities in the field right after graduation. Since there is a lack of comparative models in Kosovo, the designers of the programme drew lessons from comparable programmes at universities abroad, mainly from countries, which have gone through similar transformations after the end of socialist rule in Eastern Europe.

The programme is designed to encourage the students to understand better the nexus of theory and practice. Therefore, the syllabi for all classes have a considerable share of “practice elements” (30%). As far as content is concerned, the ET was informed that the practice part comprises exercises but may also refer to input from external experts or practitioners to the respective classes. The percentage of 30% seems to be rather formalistic; we could envisage a more flexible share of practice elements, depending on the content, objective and placement of the class within the overall time table of the course in its total. Apart from the share of practice elements, many syllabi seem to be packed, some ambitious even above B.A. level, when it comes to mandatory readings. A plausible way to mitigate potential conflict due to overstretch could be the decision to allow the Council to make proposals to revise the syllabi based on an annual assessment.

The programme includes the opportunity for international engagement of the students, including short-term and long-term exchanges to partners abroad. However, even if UKZ assumes that exchange student quotas in such programmes like Erasmus+ or ICM are often not filled, which may provide additional opportunities for students enrolled in the B.A. programme, it is difficult to predict, neither if (a) all students from a B.A. cohort will be assigned to one of the programmes nor if (b) it would be advisable to offer “long-term exchanges” for B.A. students at all, if they are expected to enter post-graduate professional assignments in a reasonable timeframe. The programme would fulfil its basic requirements already if it can deliver a cohort of graduates who earn credits more easily transferable due to comparability with international standards – which is particularly relevant for eligibility of grades for international master programmes, including the M.A. programme that is planned by UKZ to be established already in three years at the latest – usable for the first bunch of graduates from the B.A. programme. A good start, however, is to align to the international standards from the outset of admission to the B.A. programme. The timeline to enrol the first cohort of students (regular quota is 100 students) is very tight, and based on the perception of the ET and also the self-assessment of UKZ might be not realistic for 2024. For an acceptable minimum to start with, UKZ hopes to enrol 50 students minimum for the first academic year, which is 50% of the norm for accredited programmes. A general challenge is a shrinking number of students who apply for studies in Kosovo. Whereas that might not be the case for a newly established B.A. programme with a high percentage of skills training, it may have more impact on enrolment in the years to come, especially against the backdrop of similar programmes run by other universities in the region. The intended consultations and collaboration with partner universities in the neighbouring countries may offer opportunities to keep the programme sustained. However, the test comes with implementation.

A positive enabler is the availability of scholarships. A particular care of students should be at least considered for those who come from extreme low-income families. The current practice of granting scholarships purely based on performance in High Schools (grade above 8.5) may adequately take different practices of grading at different schools into account or may lead to a streaming of the cohort along social circumstances.

In principle, three different types of scholarship are offered: municipality, university, and government.

Some effort will be necessary to enhance the language skills of students, respectively of those who are less trained or skilled than their fellow students. Although the classes will be held in Albanian, advanced knowledge will be needed for readings and internships, for listening to guest speakers, and – of course – for better chances on the labour market after graduation. The integration of language classes (English and German) into the programme is definitely a Plus. At the same time, some language skills training will also be necessary for staff who command only Albanian or poor English.

For the time being, UKZ seeks to achieve a minimum quota of 20% teaching in English. However, if the subsequently planned future M.A. Programme will be based mainly on English language classes, more efforts are necessary to qualify not only students but also staff beforehand.

According to the syllabi submitted (see more in detail in chapters 4 and 5) most courses in the B.A. International Relations and European Studies Programme start off with theoretical modules. These modules are crucial for students to understand the fundamental theories and concepts that underpin international relations and European studies.

As mentioned before, it is not fully transparent as of now how the quota requirement of 30% practice will be effectively integrated especially into those lectures, apart from the internships that are mandatory to all students as part of the programme. According to the faculty staff, assistants basically will bear the brunt of practice parts, mainly in the form of skills training, but also, if possible, through 2-4 week-long activities in ministries or other institutions of practice or through lectures provided by practitioners as part of the regular classes. To ensure fair distribution, the Council will decide on the concrete allocation of students to institutions.

The ET considers both - a full coverage of interests to learn from practice through short-term internships and a fair distribution of students according to their interests or motivation - hard to achieve for a cohort of 100 people. Even if the programme would start with a smaller number of students, any rolling enrolment will increase the need for available internships for – and the interest of – students rapidly. Apart from available spots and the need for placement criteria, comparable learning outcomes must be defined for all – and for each – student(s), which will pose a tremendous challenge. UKZ can apparently build on solid partnerships and experiences, however, the particular profile and goal of the programme may cause some limitations on the availability of partners and internships.

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) will be fully applied. Each subject has its syllabus that provides information on content, ECTS credits, faculty, and goals. At B.A. level, it is essential to apply theory, principles, and methods based on both theoretical and practical knowledge and understanding of the field of work or study. Additionally, it is necessary to consistently exercise judgement when conducting research, analysing data, interpreting results, and applying theories, principles, and methods. Students must also possess the skills required to take on responsibilities and improve their broader knowledge, skills, and competencies to pursue further specialisation. The programme design is suitable to match the needs as mentioned. However, since it is a newly established programme, without any experience with classes and students yet, it remains to be seen if the design will turn into a living reality according to the current expectations.

According to the SER: By calculating that the total number of hours per semester is 750 including lectures, exercises, practical work, seminars, individual work (in the library or at home) and exams or other assessment activities in all subjects that form the structure of the semester curriculum. Each subject's credits are determined by the professor and cannot exceed 750 hours or 30 total credits per semester. In cases where an incomplete number of credits is presented, rounding is allowed. For example, a subject with 135 hours will have 5 credits but may have 6 credits. Similarly, a subject with 105 hours will have 4 credits. The study plan (point 2.4) provides information on the number of ECTS credits per course and the course contents for the semester. Credits are earned by passing exams and the student earns the number of credits designated by the study plan for that subject. To obtain a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations and European Studies (BA) degree, a student must earn a minimum of 180 ECTS. (SER, p. 24).

Overall, based on what the ET was able to take from the documents and the experiences during the site visit, the programme does align with the principles and mission of the university. It is ambitious and aims to contribute towards the professional development of individuals mainly from Kosovo in the field of international relations and European studies. The programme has a complex design, based on international relations, European studies, integration, international IGOs and NGOs in collaboration with foreign policy experts, employees of institutions, diplomatic service employees, diplomats, ambassadors, local and foreign politicians, and other relevant experts.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 1.1. The study program mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution.	X	

Standard 1.2. Relevant academic and professional advice is considered when defining the intended learning outcomes which are consistent with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.	X	
Standard 1.3. The study program has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept.	X	
Standard 1.4. There are formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues. These are made publicly available to all staff and students.	X	
Standard 1.5. All staff and students comply with the internal regulations relating to ethical conduct in research, teaching, assessment in all academic and administrative activities.	n/a	
Standard 1.6. All policies, regulations, terms of reference and statements of responsibility relating to the management and delivery of the program are reviewed at least once every two years and amended as required in the light of changing circumstances.	n/a	

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

Recommendations:

1. *Admission and Enrolment procedure should be started as soon as possible for a realistic outlook of a sufficient number of students from the very outset of the programme.*
2. *The 70:30 structure of lectures should provide general guidance but should not be looked at in a formalistic matter. We propose more flexibility, based on the content, the objectives and the placement of the class within the overall structure and timetable of the programme.*
3. *We advise UKZ to reassess the benefit of international exchanges, especially if long-term, for all students as integral part of the curriculum in this B.A. programme. A minimum requirement at least would be to develop a clear understanding of the functional role of individual absence from university, a clear understanding of the learning objectives and integration into the curriculum, a clearly defined role and responsibility of supervision abroad, last not least a provision of logistics and funding that is non-discriminatory for individual students.*

4. *The partnership between external stakeholders, the UKZ and the faculty has impressed the Expert team. We encourage UKZ to build and expand longer-lasting partnerships based on Memorandums of Understanding or other forms of binding agreements. The individual responsibility of teaching staff may not suffice to establish reliable partnerships for reasons of different access or experience. If the programme counts on internships for all students, more offers might be needed. We recommend UKZ to establish a structured and controllable internship planning for the programme.*

5. *We strongly recommend UKZ to develop a long-term strategic planning to ensure sustainable implementation of the programme beyond the first year(s). The number of limited contracts is very high, which may provide risks to the programme if staff members become attracted by opportunities outside of the programme's faculty or even outside UKZ.*

2.2. Quality Management

The organisation of the Higher Education sector in Kosovo is regulated by the Law on Higher Education No. 04/L-037, adopted in August 2011. Kosovo has adopted the Bologna Process as a model for the HEI and started introducing Bologna Reforms as of 2001, following the general adoption of the Bologna Process provisions across HEI in Kosovo, without being yet a signatory of the Bologna Declaration. Currently, national legislation and UKZ regulations serve to implement and operationalise the objectives of the Bologna. Part of the reforms in higher education at the UKZ, along with other HE institutions, is the implementation of the ECTS credit system, the three-cycle degree system, student and staff mobility, and quality assurance system.

The assessment by the ET is based on the documentation and the information provided by the Director of the Quality Assurance Office (OADQ) and her staff during the site visit in Gjilan.

UKZ has adopted a number of tailor-made instruments to enhance and maintain quality of programmes, which the university wants to apply also for the new programme under scrutiny for accreditation. All staff and students are expected to participate in self-evaluation and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their respective sphere of activity. The quality management is centrally steered and coordinated. Of utmost relevance to the process are questionnaires for all the different stakeholder groups. Guiding document for quality management is the “Manual for Planning and Evaluation of Performance (MPEP)” (see below). In total, ten types of questionnaires are currently in use:

- for students related to administrative services in UKZ
- for students regarding the evaluation of UKZ Professors
- for students regarding the evaluation of UKZ assistants
- for self-assessment of the academic staff
- for evaluation of the teachers by the Dean
- for evaluation of Administrative Officers by the Secretary

- for alumni
- for students before graduation
- for students who drop out of UKZ
- for external evaluation/employer.

The Office for Quality Assessment provides supervision for quality monitoring for all academic units. After every assessment, there are mandatory reflection sessions for each term, in person and/ or electronically, for which a report will be elaborated. Main interests aim at how students appreciate teaching methods, how they assess quality of learning material, if they were able to file requests, or ask open questions. Recent surveys in other programmes included open questions for students. Some students may take it as something technical also because it is mandatory and fully anonymous. However, so far, in other programmes the method has proven all in all useful. For example, assessments have resulted in some changes of syllabi.

The usual return rate in other programmes so far is considered high, not only for the staff but also for the students because for the latter responding to the questionnaires has been made mandatory in order to students' admission to exams and graduation. The regulations in place ensure the involvement of all management, staff and students in the internal quality assurance procedures. As described more in detail below, a designated structural unit is in place – though obviously understaffed for the complexity of the quality management system – to support the process of evaluations and self-evaluations and to cooperate in order to further improve the quality of all programmes at UKZ.

The quality management process aims at inter-linking bottom-up participation and a centralised top-down improvement approach. After every assessment, there are periodic reviews, including in-situ assessments and electronic assessments, mandatory for each term. Since the programme is bound to start in fall 2024, it is way too early to reflect on potential outcomes of any future assessment. However, the system as it stands, and the high motivation of the Quality Assurance Coordinator and her small team, which the ET was able to witness during the site visit can be considered a good start for the new programme. The QA team closely coordinates with all branches involved in the quality management system at UKZ.

The implementation of the entire quality assurance system in UKZ is carried out based on the following documents:

- the Statute of UKZ,
- the Strategic Plan,
- the Regulation on Quality Assurance,
- the Manual for Planning and Evaluation of Performance,
- the Key Performance Indicators and the ECTS Guide (as revised in 2023).

In 2020, the UKZ issued a regulation on the functioning of the Supervisory Council for Quality and Evaluation (SCQE) No. 01/2911 dated 18.12.2023 which determines the mode of operation of this body. According to the Self-Evaluation Report, SCQE is an advisory body which, in cooperation with other professional bodies of UKZ, plans, designs, monitors, analyses and administers the procedures for evaluation of the learning and teaching process, scientific research and all evaluations of other fields covered by UKZ.

The assessment of the quality management system for the new B.A. programme is based on the assumptions that the proven approaches and instruments will be equally applied. However, this assumption has to stand the test in practice only once the programme becomes launched. For the time being, it is the bunch of tools and documents that the ET was able to look at for the sake of its assessment and recommendations.

Apart from the general guidelines for UKZ, as stated in its Statute and the Strategic Plan, the Regulation on Quality Assurance and Evaluation defines the quality assurance and evaluation system, mechanisms, instruments, actors of quality assurance, while the regulation also defines the duties and responsibilities of the parties involved in this process.

The evaluation of the performance of AS in UKZ is developed through the Manual for Planning and Evaluation of Performance (MPEP) which, in the institutional aspect, determines the key performance indicators to

- plan, monitor, evaluate, develop and affirm the excellence of performance in fulfilling the mission and objectives,
- improve all necessary services to the students through quality teaching,
- improve curricula and study programmes in service to the society,
- enable the harmonisation of the performance objectives of the academic staff with the performance standards determined by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency, as well as to
- identify the level of competence needed of the academic staff in the field of research and in the conditions for their research work offered by UKZ.

Since 2020, all academic staff at UKZ and at every beginning of the year plans their work in several dimensions through Individual Development Plans, which includes four objectives: which are: 1) learning process; 2) research / scientific / artistic works; 3) managerial duties, and 4) services for society.

All individual plans are subject to the evaluation of the performance of the entire academic staff and are used for the follow- up year new planning.

The quality assurance system at the UKZ is based on three main pillars: Documents, structures and instruments for assessment which are designed to contribute to the achievement of objectives towards the fulfilment of the University's and programmes missions. The QA system is continuously monitored and frequently revised according to experiences and needs.

For example, in 2023, UKZ has approved new policies for quality assurance by revising all the documents approved in 2020. Through these measures it was possible to complete the documents based on the recommendations of QMEC for improvements when difficulties in

implementation were encountered. Through the review of quality assurance policies, UKZ assumes that documents have become more practical and more accessible for implementation. All processes, mechanisms, instruments, reports, data collection, time limits and all responsibilities of individuals and units involved in the process have been defined and confirmed anew.

Quality assurance covers activities that include planning, implementation, evaluation and review. All this is based on the documentation in force, in detail these activities are foreseen in the Annual Calendar for Quality Assurance. The Reporting is based on (1) underpinning regulations, the aims of research methodology and methods, the data collection and analysis and a detailed, tabular breakdown of all answers from the questionnaires. Based on the analysis a list of concrete recommendations concludes the report. Some recommendations from the most recent evaluation report resonate with the findings and recommendations by the ET also for the new programme, for example:

- Syllabuses should be developed based on learning outcomes, and the achievement of these outcomes should be continuously monitored to ensure high quality in the teaching process.
- Teachers should be encouraged for continuous professional development through training, seminars, and conferences.
- The compatibility of literature in the curriculum with the literature used by teachers with students should be monitored to ensure full academic alignment.
- Forms of motivation should be found for teachers who have shown good performance during evaluation, such as rewards, recognition, and advancement opportunities.
- New and innovative courses should be developed that align with the needs of the job market and students' interests, including new technologies and global trends.
- Scientific research among staff and students should be promoted and supported to increase academic quality and contribute to scientific development.
- International cooperation with other universities and research institutions should be increased for the exchange of experiences and to offer new opportunities for students and staff.

The review of individual performance as well as of strategic objectives is defined by the regulation for quality assurance. From the results obtained, the mechanisms that work in quality assurance take into account the inputs and suggestions. OADQ has created a database with data collected from evaluations over the years. This data is available to all interested parties. These data may be of value also for the focus on high priority areas for making the new programme effective and rewarding from the very outset. According to the information, the ET could obtain from documentation and during the site visit, the Office for Academic Development and Quality (OADQ) has the following data from last years in all programmes:

- First hand materials (Questionnaires: Physical and electronic copies)
- Research results (General results for the institution, academic units and academic and administrative staff) UKZ has these types of reports in physical or electronic form, from UMS, Moodle, UKZ platform, Google Form and from attendance device.

The revised tool set programme includes a new evaluation tool that allows professors to assess the performance of students who attended his or her course. The OADQ hopes for subject specific assessment of individual students. All evaluations (surveys, questionnaires, etc.) are to be safely stored in the Office for Academic Development and Quality, while the reports of this Office are archived and stored in the UKZ Archive, according to Law No. 04/L-088 on State Archives. All documentation is in line with EU standards of data protection and with the evaluation manual for academic staff.

At the end of each semester, the faculty staff in charge of the study programme receives the evaluation reports. These reports contain data on both regular and engaged academic staff, as well as the administrative staff. The data within the reports serve as the baseline information for the advancement and engagement process of the academic and administrative staff. Self-assessment, students' and Dean's assessment of individual staff performance accumulate to 30/30/40 share of the basis for the assessment in total. The breakdown of assessments is based on the three elements of teaching, research and administration/ management.

While the comprehensiveness of data is appreciated in principle, a strict focus (synthesised and prioritised information) would help to keep the workload of faculty staff manageable. Current staffing in numbers does not comply with those needs. Either hiring additional staff for OADQ is considered or the application of tools should focus on priorities to be defined more precisely to make it better manageable for OADQ as well as for the Dean and faculty staff. Of particular relevance, for a new programme to be established, staff training on didactics, advanced adult teaching, and resource methodology will be necessary.

While this is already part of conceptual thinking, the implementation will require time, planning and resources and tailor-made offers for those experienced staff who is less familiar with modern methods of interactive teaching as well as engaged staff, possibly more proficient in the use of modern technologies, but less experienced in dealing with (large) groups of students. Similarly, if the future master programme is based on classes in English language. The current lack of proficiency must be addressed at least until the end of the first cycle of the B.A. programme in three years.

Quality assurance arrangements are frequently reviewed (last in 2023), adjusted and amended in order to ensure standards and effectiveness. For that purpose, the quality assurance system is continuously supervised by MCQE, OADQ, Academic Units, Senate and SC of UKZ. According to the information by the UKZ management, the following tools in place will also be used for the new B.A. programme:

- Regular supervision of the apparatus for recording the entrances and exits of the academic and administrative staff (time-management);
- Faculties councils continuously identify/improve study programmes, based on needs;
- Faculty Councils approve changes to course syllabuses as well as their design according to Bloom's taxonomy;
- Administration was reorganised, which improved administrative services for students;
- Through UMS, studies at UKZ are evaluated by pre-graduation students (after all exams are completed);

- Through UMS, the reasons for dropping out of studies are assessed;
- Every academic year the success (possibility) of the students is monitored.

As is the case for other programmes and universities, plagiarism and – increasingly AI technologies – pose a serious threat to the quality of students’ studies and research. It is important that means of making students aware of risks and of necessary technical surveillance are being used to prevent any forms of plagiarism from the very outset.

UKZ is using some technical applications such as Google-classroom for papers and is currently acquiring Turnitin software as the standard tool to check papers and theses. Similar considerations are made for the case of AI without any decision taken so far. The ET strongly recommends acquisition of anti-plagiarism software, skills training for using it for the staff and transparent information for the students about the risks of using sloppy methods or of cheating. The code of ethics, which students must sign prior to graduation, should become signed much earlier, perhaps already as part of the enrolment process.

<i>Standard</i>	<i>Compliance</i>	
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Standard 2.1. All staff participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity.</i>	<i>X</i>	
<i>Standard 2.2. Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes.</i>	<i>X</i>	
<i>Standard 2.3. Quality assurance processes deal with all aspects of programme planning and delivery, including services and resources provided by other parts of the institution.</i>	<i>X</i>	
<i>Standard 2.4. Quality evaluations provide an overview of quality issues for the overall programme as well as of different components within it; the evaluations consider inputs, processes and outputs, with particular attention given to learning outcomes for students.</i>	<i>x</i>	

<i>Standard 2.5. Quality assurance processes ensure both that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance.</i>	<i>X</i>	
<i>Standard 2.6. Survey data is being collected from students, graduates and employers; the results of these evaluations are made publicly available.</i>	<i>X</i>	
<i>Standard 2.7. Results of the internal quality assurance system are taken into account for further development of the study programme. This includes evaluation results, investigation of the student workload, academic success and employment of graduates.</i>	<i>x</i>	
<i>Standard 2.8. The institution ensures that reports on the overall quality of the programme are prepared periodically (eg. every three years) for consideration within the institution indicating its strengths and weaknesses.</i>	<i>X</i>	
<i>Standard 2.9. The quality assurance arrangements for the programme are themselves regularly evaluated and improved.</i>	<i>X</i>	

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

Recommendations:

- 1. Of particular relevance, for a new programme to be established, targeted staff training on didactics, advanced teaching and resource methodology will be necessary.*
- 2. While this is already part of conceptual thinking, the implementation will require time, planning and resources and tailor-made offers for those experienced staff who is less familiar with modern methods of interactive teaching as well as engaged staff, possibly more proficient in the use of modern technologies, but less experienced in dealing with (large) groups of students.*

3. *Similarly, if the future master programme is based on classes in English language, the current lack of proficiency must be addressed at least until the end of the first cycle of the B.A. programme in three years.*
4. *The plagiarism tool (Turnitin) should be acquired before the programme start. All affected faculty staff should be made familiar to the tool and the use of it.*
5. *All students should sign the code of ethics as part of their enrolment process.*
6. *The University should re-consider the current staffing of the Quality Assessment Office and adjust the numbers of staff according to the effectiveness and efficiency of assigned tasks.*
7. *Stricter focus (synthesised and prioritised data) of quality assessment would help to keep the workload of faculty staff manageable.*

2.3. Academic Staff

According to the Self-Assessment Report, all staff have full position descriptions and are aware of the conditions of employment. Respective data exist in a tabular form comprising information about full time (FT) and part time (PT) academic staff, with reference to name, qualification, academic title, workload for teaching, exams, consulting, administrative activities, research, etc. for the study programme under scrutiny. According to the University's management the number of qualified staff to run the programme is sufficient. The number of qualified staff in Law is higher than in the fields of International Relations and European Studies.

The imbalance has to be taken into account for future recruitments and assignments of engaged staff and visiting scholars. Though the idea of UKZ to focus on multi-degree professors could be an option, the respective market is small, and at the end, multi-disciplinarity of the programme originates in the quality of disciplinary offers. Learning about mixed methods should be based on a good basic knowledge of the disciplinary variety of methods, which should be a key learning objective for a B.A. programme in comparison to advanced studies in an M.A. or postgraduate programme.

The level of digitalization is low and further professionalisation of digital skills must be improved.

The practice of contracts limited to one year, or mostly even only to one semester, especially for engaged staff may be based on understandable (primary financial) reasons, it implies serious risks, however, for the sustainability and full coverage of all curriculum.

Also, Individual Development Plans, are limited in scope and perspective, if contract timelines are too short, and attractors to leave the University for the sake of career planning or social security exist.

For the time being, the programme for the first cycle of three years does not fully match the requirement of 50 per cent full time employees and 50 per cent coverage of all classes.

Over the course of last year, UKZ has announced vacancies for the recruitment of new academic staff. Also, UKZ has paid remarkable attention to the advancement of staff members through research, teaching skills and academic graduation. The programme benefits from a high number of experienced associate senior staff, however, the expert team has expressed concerns that for the sustainability of the programme an increase of regular staff will be necessary.

The current number of 4 regular senior academic staff is considered a risk that must be mitigated. Advancements in research and teaching skills of assistant professors may serve the needs to consolidate the number of full professors for the programme across the different disciplines and to form a basis for the design also of the intended future M.A. programme.

UKZ does provide academic staff with opportunities to advance their knowledge of teaching and scientific methodology, as well as project design training. These activities affect the overall development, updating of knowledge and improving the performance of the academic staff. It also provides training for other training programmes, such as the use of technology and necessary university applications. However, since the B.A. programme is new, it remains to be seen if this programme will also benefit from what is a proven habit at the University as a whole.

Particular importance should be directed to the promotion of female senior staff since, with a few exceptions, most senior positions are occupied by male professors.

According to the University's management, the number of regular staff will increase once the programme has become accredited. However, the Expert Team must assess the state of the art (which, to our assessment, seems to be fragile), but takes note of the systematic efforts to prepare for further recruitments. Guest speakers may enrich the content of the programme. However, they cannot sustainably fill the gap of regular staff available to the students for individual consultation, let alone for being examiners and supervisors.

UKZ pays attention to a fair professor-student numerical ratio. According to SER, the current ratio is close to the European average: 1 academic staff with 21 students (1:21). This ratio is also claimed to be in the International Relations and European Studies program. However, as said before, the number of tenured track staff is still limited, partly due to the young age of the institution, partly due to the specificity of the programme, partly because it is completely new, and partly due to funding restrictions.

The Expert Team acknowledges the fact that a programme in the making will most likely further improve as implementation advances. Current efforts to solidify the financial base for internships and research are appreciated. However, more efforts will be needed to ensure sufficient funding for all programme activities as planned.

All teaching staff is engaged in the three areas of activities: teaching, management and research. The responsibility to invest into research is up to the individual staff, but UKZ is interested in the development of staff in all three areas. That's why all three areas are, for example, part of the Individual Development Plans of all staff.

Six weekly hours for regular staff are mandatory. Extra 4 – 6 hours per week are possible on demand or request. Engaged staff have a weekly workload of 10 hours for teaching, other time is reserved for preparations, consultations, administration, and research. Due to the shortage of faculty, some balancing or arrangement will be needed for those staff who already have other teaching obligations, for example in the law faculty, because it will be hardly possible for them to do both during the same semester.

Academic staff evaluation is planned to be conducted regularly based on the QA system that is established at UKZ, through self-evaluations, students and superiors at least once each year. The results of the evaluation are made accessible and serve as a baseline for the improvement of the programme and its quality.

The Regulation for the selection procedures related to the (re)appointment and promotion of the academic staff clearly stipulates that the academic staff will be evaluated in terms of their research outputs for further academic promotion.

Based on the Kosovo labour law, the employee reaches retirement age when he or she turns 65. This rule also applies to the academic staff of UKZ. In special cases, retired professors can engage in teaching until the age of 70 upon request.

<i>Standard</i>	<i>Compliance</i>	
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Standard 3.1. Candidates for employment are provided with full position descriptions and conditions of employment. To be presented in tabular form data about full time (FT) and part time (PT) academic/ artistic staff, such as: name, qualification, academic title, duration of official (valid) contract, workload for teaching, exams, consulting, administrative activities, research, etc. for the study programme under evaluation.</i>	X	
<i>Standard 3.2. The teaching staff must comply with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative instruction on Accreditation.</i>	X	
<i>Standard 3.3. Academic staff do not cover, within an academic year, more than two teaching positions (one full-time, one part-time), regardless of the educational institution where they carry out their activity.</i>	X	

<i>Standard 3.4. At least 50% of the academic staff in the study programme are full time employees, and account for at least 50% of the classes of the study programme.</i>		<i>x</i>
<i>Standard 3.5. For each student group (defined by the statute of the institution) and for every 60 ECTS credits in the study programme, the institution has employed at least one full time staff with PhD title or equivalent title in the case of artistic/applied science institutions.</i>	<i>X</i>	
<i>Standard 3.6. Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties.</i>	<i>X</i>	
<i>Standard 3.7. The responsibilities of all teaching staff, especially full-time, include the engagement in the academic community, availability for consultations with students and community service.</i>	<i>x</i>	
<i>Standard 3.8. Academic staff evaluation is conducted regularly at least through self-evaluation, students, peer and superiors' evaluations, and occur on a formal basis at least once each year. The results of the evaluation are made publicly available.</i>		<i>x</i>
<i>Standard 3.9. Strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials.</i>	<i>X</i>	
<i>Standard 3.10. Teachers retired at age limit or for other reasons lose the status of full-time teachers and are considered part-time teachers.</i>		<i>x</i>

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

Recommendations:

1. *The regular staff base (tenured track) must be improved, especially regular senior staff to mitigate risks to the quality and sustainability of the programme. A doubling of regular staff is recommended and respective planning for development of current staff and for recruitment should be undertaken.*
2. *Contracts for engaged staff should be prolonged to a minimum of 1 – 2 years. Budgetary planning should be revised accordingly.*
3. *The number of female staff should be increased and a promotion to regular senior academic staff be considered.*
4. *UKZ should care for reliable long-term MoUs, agreements or contracts to ensure the practice parts in lectures and a sufficient number of good quality internships for the programme. A roster, structured according to demand, existing offers, gaps, and opportunities should be established.*
5. *A comprehensive risk assessment should be elaborated, which takes into account the requirements of the programme against the backdrop of needs for basic funding, number of students, availability of staff, coverage of topics, and quality internships.*

2.4. Educational Process Content

*(Insert all comments or observations, commendations and suggestions relating to this general area and its allocated standards, as specified in the KAA Accreditation manual. Consideration should be given to the adequacy of processes and results achieved in each of the standards.)
(minimum two pages)*

The Law on National Qualifications defines a qualification as official recognition of achievements via a completion of education or training, or satisfactory performance in a test or exam. The assessment of the courses confirms that the study programme complies with the qualification objectives in International Relations and European Studies. During the meetings, the ET learned that the programme was designed based on standards and models of universities that have a tradition in developing similar programmes.

The programme is conceived to develop specific knowledge, skills, and competencies. In line with the Education Strategy 2022-2026, which is the main document for the development of the education sector in Kosovo for the period 2022-2026, the programme offers the students a combination of theoretical learning and practical skills. The structure of the programme with 30% practical exercises within the courses is considered to respond to the market needs in furnishing professionals who are ready to take up employment upon graduation. To this end, as stated in the SER, the UKZ signed cooperation agreements with various local and international institutions, which enable students to carry out internships in governmental institutions, specialised agencies, municipalities, non-governmental institutions, international

organisations, and Embassies. Internships are mandatory for the completion of a degree. Overall, the structure of the learning process suggests a high correlation between the market needs and the training offered at the programme.

To provide for and promote academic mobility of higher education students, the higher education system of Kosovo makes use of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). One ECTS credit equals 30 working hours. To successfully graduate from the programme, all students will have to complete a cycle of undergraduate studies of 180 ECTS. Candidates are subject to an admission exam.

The SER offers an overview of courses' aims and expected learning outcomes, along with teaching methodology, evaluation/assessment system, and technical support tools. In terms of content, syllabi outline thematic focus and distribution of classes and seminars/applicative activities, accompanied by a selected bibliography. The ET learned at the meetings that e-learning tools for academic purposes include Google Classroom, Google Meet, and Moodle. It should be noted that the Faculty of Social Sciences does not seem to have a dedicated page accessible from the UKZ landing page.

The ET assessed the level of correlation between the content of the course and the learning objectives as partial. While all courses offer a combination of lectures and practical exercises, it is not clear how the practical exercises will be conducted. It is also not clear how the individual components of the programme will complement each other in achieving the specified qualification objectives. While the syllabi suggest some concrete forms of teaching the course material, the question remains how the teaching will be organised when professional staff are involved as lecturer or trainers of practical exercises, without specific training in adult learning methodology and teaching methods that facilitate the educational process for the students.

The ET has certain reservations about the academic feasibility of the programme as it stands. While the programme offers a range of relevant courses, the proposed formats of teaching and training need to be detailed. The aims and expected learning outcomes come across as overambitious for the intended students' background and the duration of the programme. They seem more suitable for the advanced academic (MA) level rather than 1st year of bachelor degree. Relatedly, the design of the courses - along with the choice of literature and sources - however commendable - seems too complex/advanced for the level of the BA students. The selection of learning materials and literature for majority of courses is largely not available in open access and requires means of institutional access. This, and the fact that the language of the programme is Albanian, while greatest portion of the literature is in English, calls for a clarification of how the materials will be accessed, comprehended, and discussed. A comparative study of classical grand theories of International Relations does not seem to be adequately covered. Evaluation/passing criteria for the final exam/test, which requires at least 50% of the questions correct, seems low. The ET suggests that the programme conveners to revisit the syllabi and adjust the learning materials accordingly.

<i>Standard</i>	<i>Compliance</i>	
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Standard 4.1. The study programme is modelled on qualification objectives. These include subject-related and interdisciplinary aspects as well as the acquisition of disciplinary, methodological and generic skills and competencies. The aspects refer especially to academic or artistic competencies, to the capability of taking up adequate employment, contributing to the civil society and of developing the students' personality.</i>	X	
<i>Standard 4.2. The study programme complies with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. The individual components of the programme are combined in a way to best achieve the specified qualification objectives and provide for adequate forms of teaching and learning.</i>		x
<i>Standard 4.3. The disciplines within the curriculum are provided in a logical flow and meet the definition and precise determination of the general and specific competencies, as well as the compatibility with the study programmes and curricula delivered in the EHEA. To be listed at least 7 learning outcomes for the study programme under evaluation.</i>		x
<i>Standard 4.4. The disciplines within the curriculum have analytical syllabuses which comprise at least the following: the discipline's objectives, the basic thematic content, learning outcomes, the distribution of classes, seminars and applicative activities, students' assessment system, the minimal bibliography, etc. The full course description/ syllabuses of each subject/ module should be attached only in electronic form to the self-assessment report for the study programme under evaluation.</i>	X	

<p><i>Standard 4.5. If the language of instruction is other than Albanian, actions are taken to ensure that language skills of both students and academic staff are adequate for instruction in that language when students begin their studies. This may be done through language training prior to the commencement of the programme.</i></p>	<p>n/a</p>	
<p><i>Standard 4.6. The student-teacher relationship is a partnership in which each assumes the responsibility of reaching the learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are explained and discussed with students from the perspective of their relevance to the students' development.</i></p>	<p>n/a</p>	
<p><i>Standard 4.7. Teaching strategies are fit for the different types of learning outcomes programmes are intended to develop. Strategies of teaching and assessment set out in programme and course specifications are followed with flexibility to meet the needs of different groups of students.</i></p>	<p>X</p>	
<p><i>Standard 4.8. Student assessment mechanisms are conducted fairly and objectively, are appropriate for the different forms of learning sought and are clearly communicated to students at the beginning of courses.</i></p>	<p>n/a</p>	
<p><i>Standard 4.9. Appropriate, valid and reliable mechanisms are used for verifying standards of student achievement. The standard of work required for different grades is consistent over time, comparable in courses offered within a programme, and, in comparison with other study programmes at highly regarded institutions.</i></p>	<p>X</p>	
<p><i>Standard 4.10. Policies and procedures include actions to be taken in to dealing with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or KAA inconsistently assessed.</i></p>	<p>X</p>	

<p><i>Standard 4.11. If the study programme includes practice stages, the intended student learning outcomes are clearly specified and effective processes are followed to ensure that those learning outcomes and the strategies to develop that learning are understood by students. The practice stages are allocated ETCS credits and the work of the students at the practical training organisations is monitored through activity reports; students during practice stages have assigned tutors among the academic staff in the study programme.</i></p>	<p>n/a</p>	
<p><i>Standard 4.12. In order to facilitate the practice stages, the higher education institution signs cooperation agreements, contracts or other documents with institutions/organisations/practical training units.</i></p> <p><i>*To be inserted the overview of the programme (with all areas to be filled out)</i></p>	<p>x</p>	

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *The ET recommends that all learning courses elaborate at least seven learning outcomes as prescribed by the KAA criteria.*
2. *The ET recommends adjusting syllabi and recommended literature to the level of knowledge and comprehension of the potential students, especially in the first year.*
3. *The ET recommends to amend the list of references/ bibliography of the courses that cover a comparative study of classical grand theories of IRES in the syllabi to include some sources and not only secondary literature.*
4. *The ET recommends to provide opportunities for the students to also attend courses at other departments within the faculty - or, if in line with the programme objectives, at the level of the entire University.*
5. *The ET recommends that funding be provided for the literature on specific subjects, including via a subscription to scholarly databases, as well as for the translation of key literature into Albanian.*
6. *The ET recommends adding information about the Faculty of Social Sciences to the “Faculties” section of the UKZ <https://uni-gjilan.net/en/faculties/> to increase its visibility.*

2.5. Students

(Insert all comments or observations, commendations and suggestions relating to this general area and its allocated standards, as specified in the KAA Accreditation manual. Consideration should be given to the adequacy of processes and results achieved in each of the standards.) (minimum two pages)

No meeting with students from the program took place as this is a first-time accredited program. The information is collected from the Self-evaluation report and conversations with administrative, academic, and Monitoring and Evaluation (MEL) staff of the university during the visit.

The evaluation process at the UKZ for the program of International Relations and European Studies affirmed the existence of comprehensive information beyond the pre-supplied documents, showcasing institution-wide arrangements for student admissions, rights of representation, and soliciting student feedback through 'satisfaction surveys.'

Students' decision-making role in the UKZ organizational structures is ensured through their participation in the decision-making bodies of the UKZ. Based on the Statute, two student representatives are voting members of the UKZ Senate; one observer student is a member of the Managing Council; and two voting students are members of the Study Committee. At the Council of Faculty, students are represented by one member for each academic unit, with the right to vote. The Ethics Committee includes at least one student representation. The existence of a student union at a university level ensures that student voices are heard through regular elections. Student rights and obligations are readily accessible via the faculty's website or by consulting administrative staff or older students from the university.

The UKZ management provides support for the organization of student activities through the allocation of physical spaces, and with logistics, generally.

The faculty has a clear and transparent admission procedure, which is equal for all candidates, with the requirements for admission being publicly available ahead of time. According to the regulations, all students enrolled into the study programs must complete high school, and a proof of graduation diplomas will be mandatory for the enrolment.

The SER states that a total of 2,264 students have been enrolled in UKZ in 2020 to 2023. In line with the existing national legislation, UKZ reserves special quotas for the admission of students from small communities (Serbian, Turkish, Roma) or from municipalities outside Kosovo (Serbia and North Macedonia). UKZ also provides conditions for the admission of persons with special needs.

The Faculty initially envisaged 100 students for the 1st year of enrolment, also confirmed in the SER. During the meetings, the ET discussed the matter with the administrative and academic staff. The number of students intake will largely depend on its attractiveness and how the new program will be presented to future students. During the meetings, the University shared an aspiration to enrol half the initial number (50 students) in the first academic year, and the ET considers this number realistic, in view of the necessary timely preparations for the start of the Fall 2024 semester.

The UKZ applies the organization of curricula based on the higher education three-cycle system and the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), implementing the Bologna process recommendations. Future students must achieve a minimum grade of 6 for passing. This means that students must achieve a minimum of 50% of the final grade for the respective subjects, which seems low to the ET. The academic records certify students' progress throughout their study cycles, with completion rates analyzed for individual courses and the entire program, serving as quality benchmarks.

As with other programs at the UKZ, the students will be provided with clear guidelines related to their responsibilities, the learning process, and the support available should issues arise. During the meetings, it was mentioned that students will receive Guidelines for Students at the beginning that chart enrollment procedures, program specifics, and teaching-related activities.

Each teaching staff will reserve regular hours/time slots for consultations with the students to discuss any matter related to the study materials, the overall learning progress, and/or drafting of written outputs – as per usual UKZ practice. All students will be informed about the schedule, along with the common practice of the faculty that the students may contact teaching staff directly whenever they need any support or additional information, also outside of the consultation hours.

The UKZ facilitates the transfer of students through a public call, available in open access in the Albanian language via <https://uni-gjilan.net/lajmet/njoftim-per-studentet-e-interesuar-per-transferim-nga-universitetet-tjera-ne-universitetin-publik-kadri-zeka/>. The eligibility criteria for students seeking to transfer from other institutions are clearly defined.

The university is the process of acquiring Turnitit a plagiarism detection software for submitted papers, including seminar papers. Currently, academic staff are using free plagiarism software such as google classroom SMU. Non-Kosovo candidates, those who completed their bachelor's studies outside Kosovo, must provide MEST's recognition decision when applying.

<i>Standard</i>	<i>Compliance</i>	
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Standard 5.1. There is a clear and formally adopted admission procedure at institutional level that the study program respects when organising students' recruitment. Admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied for all students.</i>	X	
<i>Standard 5.2. All students enrolled in the study program possess a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent document of study, according to MEST requirements.</i>	X	
<i>Standard 5.3. The study groups are dimensioned so as to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process.</i>	N/A	

<i>Standard 5.4. Feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments is given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed.</i>	N/A	
<i>Standard 5.5. The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record.</i>	N/A	
<i>Standard 5.6. Flexible treatment of students in special situations is ensured with respect to deadlines and formal requirements in the program and to all examinations.</i>	X	
<i>Standard 5.7. Records of student completion rates are kept for all courses and for the program as a whole and included among quality indicators.</i>	X	
<i>Standard 5.8. Effective procedures are being used to ensure that work submitted by students is original.</i>	X	
<i>Standard 5.9. Students' rights and obligations are made publicly available, promoted to all those concerned and enforced equitably; these will include the right to academic appeals.</i>	X	
<i>Standard 5.10. The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs is clearly regulated in formal internal documents.</i>	X	
<i>Standard 5.11. Academic staff is available at sufficient scheduled times for consultation and advice to students. Adequate tutorial assistance is provided to ensure understanding and ability to apply learning.</i>	X	

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. According to the general guidelines for accredited B.A. programs, the program's cohort should comprise 100 students. Accordingly, the Faculty initially envisaged 100 students for the 1st year of enrolment - confirmed both in the SER and during the site visit. During the meetings, the ET discussed this number with the administrative and academic staff, with a shared conclusion that enrolling half the initial number (50 students) in the first academic year would represent an acceptable alternative, if approved by the KAA as well. Bearing in mind the necessity of timely preparations for the start of the Fall 2024 semester, the ET considers the reduction of the number of students for enrolment from the initially planned 100 to 50 as realistic and feasible and supports the Faculty in this alteration for the first cohort. The ET also recommends that in this case, the UKZ should take measures to increase of numbers up to 100 students for subsequent cohorts.*

2. *The ET draws the attention of the Faculty that with the exponential spread of AI tools to create academic content, it has become more difficult to detect plagiarism. The ET recommends to discuss the nuances with the students, with the emphasis on the value of integrity in academic work, as well as dedicate teaching time to explaining the procedures for the use of citations/proper referencing in drafting academic outputs.*

2.6. Research

(Insert all comments or observations, commendations and suggestions relating to this general area and its allocated standards, as specified in the KAA Accreditation manual. Consideration should be given to the adequacy of processes and results achieved in each of the standards) (minimum two pages)

The Senate of UKZ approved the Strategy for Scientific Research, which defines scientific research activity at the UKZ and lists objectives in scientific research. UKZ supports research projects requested by the academic units. Additionally, the Strategic Plan 2023-2028 of the UKZ includes a Strategic Objective 2, which seeks to enhance scientific activity to improve the quality of research and innovation through the establishment of Research Institutes and prioritisation of research projects, amongst other measures. The targets seem to be related to the applied sciences, as the Plan aims to establish and operationalize at least two research institutes within the university, each undertaking at least one research and development project in accordance with internal regulations.

Specific to the proposed programme, the research objectives align with the strategic objectives of the UKZ. As the SER states, they are set out to

- Provide ongoing professional development for staff in scientific research methodology;
- Offer training to students on research methodology;
- Engage both staff and students in regional and international research projects;
- Ensure a publication of at least one scientific research paper per staff member per year
- Encourage collaborative research projects between professors and students;
- Establish an advisory board for the programme;
- Create a research laboratory for social sciences;
- Apply for international exchange programmes;
- Pursue scientific funds from local and international programmes;
- Organise - and partake in - local and international scientific conferences and other professional activities, such as debates, symposia, conferences, and roundtables.

To achieve these objectives, a comprehensive research plan will be elaborated, which encourages interdisciplinary collaboration. The programme foresees a submission of at least one project per year for local funding.

Horizon Europe programme remains a main funding tool in providing research support. Therefore, training sessions are provided to the academic staff to build their knowledge on project proposal drafting, application preparation, and subsequent project implementation.

The Regulation for Scientific Research Activity is in place, which provides for possibilities to obtain funding for scientific research. The meetings confirmed that the Governing Council set aside a budget of 30,000 Euros to support the scientific publications of the academic staff. The UKZ provides technical and financial support for the publication of academic works/research results: academic staff are eligible to receive funds for at least two scientific publications. Professors with publications in SCOPUS or WoS-SCIE indexed journals may be eligible for financial support from UKZ on the basis of research priority and available funds. The Regulation on Research-Scientific Activity provides for monetary compensation for publications in international journals with an impact factor. "Researcher of the year" award is in place to celebrate an individual with the most outstanding research and scientific contributions during the year. To facilitate scientific research, staff and students have access to the EBSCO and ScienceDirect databases.

UKZ supports the organisation of local and international scientific conferences/roundtables through an annual science fund. Each academic staff member may receive funding from the University to partake in at least one international scientific conference per year, and pre-defined criteria apply. The UKZ also provides funding for at least one project per academic unit annually. The meetings confirmed the intention of the academic and administrative staff to explore opportunities for utilising budgets of other organisations to support research, including those offered by the European Commission, USAID, Western Balkan funds, Visegrad funds, etc.

The SER lists teaching of students' research methods as part of the Specific Objective 4 (O4) of the programme, to prepare students for analytical work. To this end, a designated course on Research Methodology is offered to the students in the 3rd semester of the programme. Three types of research activities, namely completion of a research internship, presentation and/or publication of original research, and engagement into international research projects may help the students to earn additional ECTS Credits.

The SER specifies that an establishment of a programme advisory board is envisaged, which will include a wide range of stakeholders to provide input and guidance. Academic staff will collaborate with the communities to organise various events. The programme's objective is to enhance the research capabilities of both academic/teaching staff and students through designated training.

The lists of publications by the academic staff confirms a steady flow and, in some instances, considerable increase of research activities and publications of research results over the past three years, linked to their specific areas of expertise and teaching.

UKZ has several regulations in place to ensure the protection of intellectual property, including Regulations for the work of the Publishing Council of the UKZ (Regulations-KB), the Regulations for the Code of Ethics in the UKZ, and the Regulations for the Scientific Research

Activity in the UKZ (Regulations-KSH), which guarantee the protection of intellectual property within the university and beyond. Furthermore, the UKZ has a guideline (so-called PI-Guideline), which outlines rules for the ownership of intellectual property developed by academic/teaching staff and students. It also establishes procedures for the commercialization of intellectual property owned by the university.

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

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

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *The ET recommends continuation of training for the academic/teaching staff that increase their skills and capacities to draft project proposals directed at securing funding at the national and international level.*
2. *The ET recommends continuing the already existing good practices to encourage academic staff and, eventually, students to publish research-based outputs.*

2.7. Infrastructure and Resources

(Insert all comments or observations, commendations and suggestions relating to this general area and its allocated standards, as specified in the KAA Accreditation manual. Consideration should be given to the adequacy of processes and results achieved in each of the standards.) (minimum one page)

Being a public university, the UKZ is funded from the Budget of Kosovo. The university drafts its budget in consultation with MEST and the Ministry of Finance, approved within the framework of the Budget Law of Kosovo. The tuition fees are set by MEST. The financial planning provisions for the current program are included in the UKZ Financial Plan 2024 and the Procurement Plan 2024. The ET received upon request a separate budget calculation for

the first three years of the program. However, because of the number of students ought to be possibly doubled after the first year, which would be a remarkable increase, the ET considers the currently envisaged moderate annual flat budget rise a potential risk. Based on the institutional guarantees, as expressed by the Rector, the ET has come to the conclusion, that UKZ will provide University funds to ensure the orderly implementation of the program.

The campus consists of two large interconnected facilities that are suitable for teaching activities. The UKZ, together with the Municipality of Gjilan and the Government of Kosovo, is planning the expansion of the current campus / construction of a new campus. The project plan was shared with the ET and is available in the open access via a link to the Document No. 05/2940 <https://uni-gjilan.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Zotim-per-dhenien-ne-shfrytezim-te-prones-komunale-per-Kampusin-Universitar-te-UKZ.pdf>. The ET was informed that in the meantime, UKZ added new teaching and library spaces to the current campus in 2020- 2023.

The SER states in a number of sections that UKZ lacks sufficient infrastructure for academic and administrative staff. The available spatial infrastructure for academic and administrative staff is referred to as old and insufficient. Similar conditions apply to the engaged (external) academic staff, for whom only partially sufficient spatial infrastructure is available.

For the students, the UKZ makes available facilities with adequate teaching halls and technological equipment (Smart Boards, Projectors, etc.). Some classrooms are designed as big auditoriums with adequate number of seating places, several writing surfaces, smart boards, projectors, etc. The distribution of Laptops for professors is foreseen. During the meetings with the University and Faculty management and the academic staff, the ET could see a number of meeting rooms, which had adequate setup for the conduct of meetings with interpretation equipment, if necessary. Additionally, the campus has several computer labs equipped with modern computers and connected to printers.

According to Article 142 of the Statute, students have the right to express dissatisfaction with the quality of the university's infrastructure by lodging a complaint with factual evidence to support their claim.

The ET recognizes that the Faculty is putting efforts into transforming the premises into a pleasant habitat for students with meeting places/social science lab to be used by the students for socializing and group work.

The premises are equipped with an elevator for students with mobility difficulties. The city of Gjilan has a small student center that meets the minimum requirements.

During the visit of the Library, the ET learned that the Library has a space of approximately 500 m², with 3 reading rooms with adequate light and a good number of desks for reading and studying. Separate dedicated spaces are available for group/projects-related work.

The book section of the Library contains literature in Albanian, English, Serbo-Croatian, and a limited stock of literature in Greek, French, Spanish, and Turkish, with a total of 54,000 books and magazines. The book section specific to the proposed program remains an area of development. The Faculty and the Administration of the University is well aware of the needs

and plans to make improvements. The ET has a number of recommendations in this regard (in the *recommendations* section below).

Additionally, students have access to the "Fan S. Noli" City Library in Gjilan, and an agreement was signed with the Network of Electronic Libraries of Kosovo to facilitate access to other electronic libraries. UKZ is part of the Erasmus+ "Research Cult" project that aims to create access to an international library. UKZ allocates funds each year to purchase books as well as receives book supplies through Erasmus+ projects (SMAHPS, ENEMLOS, etc.)

The UKZ offers access to various software programs, including a license for MS365, SPSS, etc. that facilitate the learning teaching processes. Additionally, E-learning platforms Moodle and Gsuite for Education are used to enhance the learning and collaboration among students and between students and academic/administrative staff. Furthermore, the University has access to a range of databases that provide access to secondary literature and research resources.

<i>Standard</i>	<i>Compliance</i>	
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Standard 7.1. The adequate long-term implementation of the study program is ensured in quantitative terms as regards premises, human resources and equipment. At the same time, it is guaranteed that qualitative aspects are also taken into account.</i>	X	
<i>Standard 7.2. There is a financial plan at the level of the study program that would demonstrate the sustainability of the study program for the next minimum three years.</i>	X	

<p><i>Standard 7.3. The higher education institution must demonstrate with adequate documents (property deeds, lease contracts, inventories, invoices etc.) that, for the study program submitted for evaluation it possesses the following, for the next at least three years:</i></p> <p><i>a) owned or rented spaces adequate for the educational process;</i></p> <p><i>b) owned or rented laboratories, with the adequate equipment for all the compulsory disciplines within the curriculum, wherever the analytical syllabus includes such activities;</i></p> <p><i>c) adequate software for the disciplines of study included in the curriculum, with utilisation licence;</i></p> <p><i>d) library equipped with reading rooms, group work rooms and its own book stock according to the disciplines included in the curricula.</i></p>	<p>X</p>	
<p><i>Standard 7.4. The number of seats in the lecture rooms, seminar rooms and laboratories must be related to the study groups' size (series, groups, subgroups); the applicative activities for the speciality disciplines included in the curricula are carried out in laboratories equipped with IT equipment.</i></p>	<p>X</p>	
<p><i>Standard 7.5. The education institution's libraries must ensure, for each of the study programs:</i></p> <p><i>a) a number of seats in the reading rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program;</i></p> <p><i>b) a number of seats in the group work rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program;</i></p> <p><i>c) their own book stock from Albanian and foreign speciality literature, enough to cover the disciplines within the curricula, out of which at least 50% should represent book titles or speciality courses of recognised publishers, from the last 10 years;</i></p> <p><i>d) a book stock within its own library with a sufficient number of books so as to cover the needs of all students in the cycle and year of study the respective discipline is provided for;</i></p> <p><i>e) a sufficient number of subscriptions to Albanian and foreign publications and periodicals, according to the stated mission.</i></p>		<p>x</p>

<i>Standard 7.6. The infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the program is adapted to students with special needs.</i>	X	
--	----------	--

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *The Faculty Library is not connected to any regional or European library network through inter-library loan. This is not a limit per se, given the exponential development of access to the online libraries around the world and the availability of subscriptions to library resources across the Universities. The ET recommends an adequate allocation of funds to ensure interlibrary loan.*
2. *The ET recommends that the Program ensures access to library resources for students and staff off-campus.*
3. *The ET recommends allocating adequate financial resources for the administrative support of the program. Costs related to adequate administrative support and onward expansion after the first year in terms of number of students from 50 to 100 should be duly considered.*
4. *The ET recommends strongly to establish as soon as possible a more detailed budget and annual budget breakdown in order to ensure the financial sustainability for the entire 3-years period and prepare for a solid medium-term financial base for programme.*

FINAL RECOMMENDATION BY THE ET

The proposed BA programme in International Relations and European Studies caters to a specific market niche in Kosovo in high demand for specialists. The gradual retirement of the professional diplomatic core and professionals with necessary experience to respond to the needs in this area call for a systematic training of professionals with adequate skills and knowledge.

The B.A. programme that is submitted for accreditation fulfils most essential requirements. The Expert Team acknowledges the efforts by the university management and the faculty to transfer proven regulations for the entire university to the programme and to adapt them appropriately. In its interdisciplinary design and methodology, it is well tailored to the specific needs of Kosovo, especially to increase the number of graduates who are available for the national labour market or for international assignments with strong knowledge and skills profiles after graduation or after completing the planned postgraduate studies. To this end, the link between the programme objectives and the labour market needs clearly informs the

programme design, which combines interactive teaching methods applied to theory and practise with elements of on the job-training and research according to professional specifications. Administrative and academic staff and stakeholders demonstrate a high level of satisfaction with the UKZ and the programme design.

The close coordination and cooperation with partners in international academia and practice as well as with actual and potential donors offers good conditions for an exciting profile. The material and logistical conditions for implementing the programme are good. The bureaucratic management of the programme appears to be sufficiently secured. The current staffing of the teaching staff has some risks due to the low percentage availability of permanent staff and of medium level teaching staff who are predominantly employed on short-term contracts.

The curriculum is overall coherent and comprehensive, although in some cases the syllabi requirements exceed the standard level of a B.A. degree programme. The teaching process integrates a methodology of learning by doing and engaging with a variety of stakeholders as trainers and potential employers.

The teaching methodology is sufficiently differentiated and, with a consistently high percentage, gears towards promoting practical skills. However, the capacity to secure the skills component planned for each teaching subject and for all internships to be provided for the students will first have to be proven by the coverage for the first cohort. The University is currently planning for only 50 students in the first academic year, which counts to only 50% of the norm, but related to the short time of preparation until Fall 2024. With the standard size of 100 students per cohort, this requirement will increase significantly with a regular implementation of the programme subsequently in parallel streams.

The university is taking further precautions against any attempts of plagiarism and is procuring appropriate software. Similar precautions have to be taken against the use of AI. Their implementation requires early sensitization of each student and sufficient instruction for all teaching staff.

Research activities and publication of research outputs are well regulated. Incentives for research are provided primarily through interesting teaching content, which should also be reinforced through visiting professorships and practical experience. The university is well equipped for research opportunities, but the stock of specialised books and journals is far from being sufficient and must be secured through cost-free electronic access of the students to international databases.

Quality management is sophisticated, almost too extensive to be adequately implemented with the small base of resources, especially as those limited resources are designed to serve several degree programmes. Quality assurance processes in place adequately ensure the monitoring and evaluation of the programme progress. The integration of language qualifications into the curriculum is appreciated. However, the number of courses taught in English should be increased in order to support the future international mobility of students and graduates.

In summary, the team of experts supports the accreditation of the **B.A. Programme in International Relations and European Studies**, as it fulfils the essential assessment criteria set out in the KAA Accreditation Manual substantially compliant.

However, as this is a fundamentally new programme with no previous experience at this university and as important issues require further clarification (e.g. ensuring a sufficient number of students, longer-term appointments and the provision of practical teaching skills and appropriate internships),

the Expert Team recommends **accreditation for an initial period of three years**, the quota recommended of 50 students minimum, corresponding only to the passage of the first cohort. For subsequent cohorts enrolment of 100 B.A. students must be achieved.

Expert Team

Member/ Chair

09/06/2024



Professor Dr Hans Giessmann

09/06/2024

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)

Member



Dr. Anna Bara

09/06/2024

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)

Member



Marko Komšo

09/06/2024

09/06/2024

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)