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***UNIVERSITY OF PRISHTINA ‘HASAN PRISHTINA’***

***Master programme Clinical and Community Psychology***

**PROGRAMME EVALUATION**

**Final Report**

**REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM**

*Zagreb-Tbilisi, March 29, 2023*

## Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION .....	2
1.1. Context.....	2
1.2. Site visit schedule .....	3
1.3. A brief overview of the institution under evaluation .....	4
2. PROGRAM EVALUATION .....	4
2.1. Mission, Objectives and Administration.....	4
2.2. Quality Management.....	5
2.3. Academic Staff.....	7
2.4. Educational Process Content.....	8
2.5. Students.....	11
2.6. Research.....	13
2.7. Infrastructure and Resources.....	14
3. FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET.....	16

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Context

**Date of site visit: March 15, 2023**

2

### **Expert Team (ET) members:**

*Prof. Melita Kovacevic, PhD*

*Giga Khositashvili, student expert (online)*

### **Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):**

*Shkelzen Gërxhaliu, Senior Expert for Evaluation and Monitoring*

### **Sources of information for the Report:**

- Self- Evaluation Report
- Code of Ethics
- Memorandums and Agreements related to the Study Program
- Quality Assurance Measures (Survey forms and Analyses)
- Sample of the entrée exam questions
- Course syllabuses
- A guide for revising course syllabus
- Interview Outcomes
- University web-page

### **Criteria used for institutional and program evaluations**

- *Standards for institutional evaluation as outlined in the Accreditation Manual 2022 of the KAA*

### **1.2. Site visit schedule**

<b>2. Time</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
<b>09:00 – 09:45</b>	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated
<b>09.50 – 10.50</b>	Meeting with the heads of the study programme Clinical and Community Psychology, MA
<b>11:00 – 11:40</b>	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff
<b>11:40 – 12:40</b>	Lunch break (provided at the evaluation site)
<b>12:40 – 13.10</b>	Visiting Facilities
<b>13:10 – 13:55</b>	Meeting with teaching staff
<b>14:00 – 14:45</b>	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders
<b>14:45 – 14:55</b>	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts

## 2.1. A brief overview of the institution under evaluation

University of Prishtina is recognized and central national higher education. Faculty of Philosophy as one of the faculties is the oldest institution and it was the first academic unit of higher education in Kosovo, founded in 1960. It always had an important role as educational institution as well as the focal point for reflecting on political and social changes in the country. Faculty has seven departments, and Department of Psychology is one of them. Faculty has in total 6 programmes accredited, 6 MA programmes, as well as 3 BA programmes in the process of accreditation or reaccreditation.

## 3. PROGRAM EVALUATION

### 3.1. Mission, Objectives and Administration

The proposed master programme in Clinical and Community College resulted from institutional experience and following the needs of the society. It is well fit to overall institutional missions, and as much as put an emphasis on teaching and learning, it also emphasizes research focus and societal needs that are evidently growing in this area. The institution clearly recognizes its responsibility to develop and offer the programme that will, on one side, increase employability of students but, at the same time, help society to function better in different domains of life.

While designing the programme, academic staff and responsible persons for the programme, consulted all the relevant stakeholders gaining more insights and at the same time being more strongly supported in their endeavours. Having staff that is engaged both, academically, but also in society, helped them to identify societal needs and to match them with their capacities. As a result, they created learning outcomes that correspond and are consistent with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European higher Education Area.

There are formal policies, guidelines and regulations that are the base for all institutional and programme activities, decisions and any academic issue. Department of Psychology which is offering a new programme on a master level is a responsible unit of the Faculty proving this with its approach to different academic topics, such as quality management, the way programmes are delivered and monitored (Standards 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6).

The only Standard that is not completely met is 1.3. although the SER emphasizes a good alignment of teaching and research activities and there are some evidence for this claim, the ET considers that additional steps are needed. Primarily, the overarching of didactic and research concepts cannot be only on declarative level nor to be only intertwined in teaching. In order to meet the standard research conditions, in particular for clinical psychology, must be provided in broader scope.

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. A Further develop research capacity which will enable better alignment of research and teaching*

### **3.2. Quality Management**

According to the documentation submitted by the university, the Quality Assurance Office has responsibility for conducting assessments for academic staff and university administrative services. This Office also arranges for questionnaires to be sent to employers and alumni. During the interviews with graduates/employers and academic staff, it was confirmed that they are actively involved in this process by filling out the survey forms and providing feedback to the university. The collected data are analyzed by the Quality Assurance Office and further steps are then planned. The Expert Team was therefore satisfied that all staff participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity. Standard 2.1 is thus met.

In addition to the central Quality Assurance Office in each faculty, there is a Quality and Evaluation Coordinator. The detailed responsibilities for the coordinator are to communicate with all the stakeholders within the given study program, to collect and analyze the information and submit it to the relevant decision makers.

The evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into the normal planning processes. The Expert Team was satisfied that QA processes deal with all aspects of Programme planning and delivery, including services and resources provided by other parts of the institution. The Expert Team was also satisfied that quality evaluations provide an overview of quality issues for the overall Study Programme as well as of different components within it and that the evaluations consider inputs, processes, and outputs, with particular attention being given to learning outcomes for students.

During the interviews with the QA representatives, it was determined that, besides managing the evaluation processes, they are responsible for Program design and for providing support in course syllabus development, design of the assessment methods within the courses, and

monitoring the academic achievements of the students within the course. The academic staff confirmed that the support they get from the QA team is oriented on their professional development. The Expert Team was satisfied that the quality assurance processes ensure both that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance. Standards 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, and 2.5 are therefore met.

Each year, the Quality Evaluation Coordinator of the Faculty of Philosophy conducts assessment of the stakeholders of the Study Program and reports on the outcomes to the stakeholders for further discussion and interventions. In total, there are three different types of questionnaire that are designed by the QA office and confirmed by the Senate of the University. The Students and Academic and Administrative Staff Questionnaires are filled in each semester.

The Expert Team concluded that the quality assurance processes for the given study programme ensure both that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance. During the site visit the Expert Team could not meet with students, as they are not enrolled yet, but could meet with the graduates who studied at the same faculty. They confirmed that during their studies they participated in assessing the processes with the questionnaires. After obtaining the data, the Quality Assurance Coordinator of the Faculty is responsible for writing an Annual Report on the Study Programme's implementation and submitting this to the Faculty Council. After examining all details, the Report is then sent to University Council.

In addition, there is a regular improvement in the given study programme based on the internal and external quality recommendations. The Expert Team therefore concluded the results of the internal quality assurance system were taken into consideration for further development of the study programme, including an investigation of student workload and academic success.

The Expert Team was also satisfied that the institution ensures that reports on the overall quality of the Study Programme are prepared periodically for consideration within the institution indicating its strengths and weaknesses. Standards 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, and 2.9 are thus met.

The Expert Panel found that, although the questionnaires are used and data collected, they are not publicly available and the stakeholders were not as well informed as they should be about the changes and interventions made, or planned to be made, as a consequence. It is therefore the Expert Teams' recommendation that the outcomes of the questionnaires are better communicated to all interested parties by making them publicly available.

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

***ET recommendations:***

- 1. It is recommended that the outcomes of the questionnaires are better communicated to all interested parties by making them publicly available.*

**3.3. Academic Staff**

Faculty of Philosophy, namely Department of Psychology, is well established unit that with responsibility is staking care of its academic staff and all the procedures related to its employment, promotions, further professional development etc. While majority of policies and regulations are developed and managed on central, university level, there is also distribution of responsibilities and an important role of the faculty and Department management.

The are available data on all the staff, with clear, transparent information related to their employment status, duration of their contract and all other relevant information that follow national legislation as well as the institutional regulation. University and the Faculty is also very strict and follow carefully staff-s commitments to other teaching positions outside the UP, this way contributing to their capacity and overall teaching and research quality. Department of psychology has sufficient staff fully employed who can be the carrier of the proposed programme. Of course, the ET warn them that the workload of the existing staff will be enlarged and that it might become an issue in the coming years, in particularly after enrolment of more than one new generation for a new programme. Although it is sufficient number of staff with the PhD degree, there is still significant number of staff with assistant position. This is something that it will additional efforts to be changed in near future. Certainly one factor will be staff readiness to be promoted in terms of their research productivity and sufficient research productivity.

Staff has opportunity to be further professionally trained and to receive training with special focus. Most of these opportunities are centrally managed. In addition to this fact, it is certainly benefit for the Department and programmes is the fact that significant number of staff received their education abroad, in number of prominent European universities. Evidently, they still have networks that could facilitate their daily work, but also more ambitious future activities.

The academic staff evaluations as well as evaluations of teaching materials and teaching approaches staff implement are administered regularly, but they also serve to make changes and to improve teaching environment.

Staff is continuously, and in different ways, directly via their academic activities or their extracurricular engagement, connected to society and involved in different services related to their expertise. The ET is glad to conclude that all the standards are met.

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. *Considering a working load with a new programme, plan further development of staff, their promotions and possible new employments in order to maintain the quality and its further improvements.*

### **3.4. Educational Process Content**

Standard 4.1 is met. The Study Programme is modelled on qualification objectives, including the capability of taking up adequate employment, contributing to the civil society and of developing the students' personality. The study programme is structured to prepare students for workplace and offers specialist options in various key areas of Clinical Psychology. It is also addressing issues of key concern to the region. There is also a real need to train clinical psychologist who can be involved in taking care of post-traumatic cases among the civilians. As the Self-Evaluation Report notes, graduates from the study program will have the theoretical, practical, analytical and argumentation skills needed for a wide variety of career paths in professional. There is regular engagement with a variety of external bodies to work to keep improving the learning outcomes of the study programme.

Standard 4.2 is met. The Study Programme complies with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. This study programme, apparently the first of its kind in Kosovo, meets the standard set by similar programmes offered by some other Western universities. It emphasizes the importance in developing the practical skills, with students taking up internships or field research in variety of external institutions. The programme consists of 120 credits which is divided into four semesters, starting with theoretical subjects in the fourth semester students have to write the MA thesis and have to take a mandatory practical component. The individual components



provide for adequate forms of teaching and learning programme and are combined in a way which achieves the specified qualification objectives. All of the academic staff have official University emails, and 'all activities including communications, student announcements and uploading of reading materials are done via study information system.

Standards 4.3 is met. The disciplines within the curriculum have appropriate analytical syllabuses. Successful completion of the study programme provides students with knowledge, skills and competences in line with the National Qualifications Framework. 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. The given programme is a full-time study program that lasts four semesters (two academic years) and the curriculum provides expertise across the core areas of Clinical Psychology. The curriculum is structured around a combination of mandatory and elective courses. Each course includes both lectures and teaching seminars. Mandatory courses aim to provide students with a comprehensive theoretical and practical knowledge of the key issues of Clinical Psychology. Still, the ET observed that in number of syllabi the provided list of literature is not realistic, it is too big and it is not transparent what is the actual volume of readings students have to do. In addition, student assessment, at least in some courses, is too much based on physical presence, participation etc., and not enough on actual achievements and knowledge (Standard 4.4)

Standard 4.5 is met. The Self-Evaluation Report explains that courses consist of lectures, seminars, exercises, and assignments. A mix of assessment methods is used. although the Study Programme is offered in Albanian, much of the reading material is in English and almost all professors can teach in English. In addition, lectures by International Visiting Professors will be in English. This is a real strength and is something on which the Department of Psychology and the broader university should continue to build. In addition to this, it worth mentioning that applicants have to pass the English language exam when getting on this study programme, otherwise they will not be enrolled.

Standard 4.6 is met. The Self-Evaluation Report states that the Department of Psychology has established a policy for building a genuine student-professor partnership in which the professor and the student take joint responsibility for achieving the learning outcomes. According to the

SER, the university supports teaching staff to update their skills in teaching and learning. In addition, the study programme aims to have 20 student per year, and create seminar groups with even less students, to guarantee the quality of the teaching and learning is not damaged. During the interviews with graduates of the similar study programme, they confirmed that smaller groups are being effective and they are satisfied with this. Learning outcomes are explained and discussed with students and their relevance to the students' development is explained.

Standards 4.7 and 4.8 are met. Teaching strategies are fit for the different types of learning outcomes that the program wishes to develop and strategies of teaching and assessment are set out in program and course specifications and then followed with flexibility to meet the needs of different groups of students. Student assessment mechanisms are conducted fairly and objectively and are appropriate for the different forms of learning sought. They are clearly communicated to students at the beginning of courses. The assessment strategies and forms differ from course to course and it is depended whether it a practical or more theoretical field.

Standard 4.9 is met. 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 the programme, and in comparison, with other Study Programme at highly regarded institutions. The assessment methods are pre-defined and stated in the course syllabus in advance. The assessment activities are designed according to the course content and take account of the principles of academic integrity. During the interviews, the graduates said the course syllabus were available to them via web-pages, so they can get information regarding the course any time.

Standards 4.10 and 4.12 are met. Policies and procedures do include actions to be taken in to dealing with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or inconsistently assessed. Graduates highlighted that they can submit a complaint within two days of being informed about their grades. In addition to this, the academic staff also stated during the interviews that the mechanisms of appeals are on place. The University has signed some memoranda and contracts with the local organizations dealing with the Clinical Psychology or providing services related to it (Ministry of Health; International organizations operating in Kosovo; Non-governmental organizations etc.).

Standard 4.11 is met. According to the SER in order to graduate from the study programme students have to take minimum of 100 hours of practice. This component is divided mostly on two courses – Practicum I and Practicum II that are offered on the second and third semester of the studies. In addition to this, as mentioned during the interviews by the heads of programmes there are some subject with practical tasks embedded. The Department of Psychology has 18 years’ experience of existence, therefore it has a good connection with employers.

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. *Revisit syllabi and make improvements in terms of readings, distribution of student obligations related to grades etc.*

### **3.5. Students**

Standard 5.1 is met. There is a clear and formally adopted admission procedure that the Study Programme uses when organizing student recruitment. Admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied for all applicants. According to the University’s procedures, the entrance exam consists of an exam related to the content of Psychology (mostly multiple choice questions) and writing an essay in English, in order to determine the foreign language level.

In addition, applicants must provide proof that they have graduated from a BA Programme. All students stated that they went through those procedures. Standard 5.2 is thus met as the procedures mean that all students enrolled in the Study Programme will possess a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent document of study. During the interviews with Faculty managers and the Head of the Programme, it was revealed there is competition in recent years to recruit new students. For this reason, the administration decided to consider the students’ previous learning achievements, plus the grades they get in the entry exam and only after that finalize the list of the accepted students.

Standard 5.3 is met. The study groups will be tailored so as to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process. The maximum number of the students each year on the given study programme is 20, which means in some classes there might be maximum of 20 students. But when it comes to seminars, they are usually conducted in a smaller group.

During the interviews with graduates of the Psychology programme, the Expert Team tried to find out whether students felt comfortable with the number of the classmates. They confirmed that the groups are not overloaded.

Standard 5.4 is met. During the interviews, academic staff stated that they provide feedback on each and every activity relating to the courses. Although the expert panel could not double check it with students, the graduates from the Psychology programme mentioned that they got both verbal and written feedback from their professors. Some mentioned that lecturers also give general feedback on the commonly made mistakes during the classes. According to the regulations students are able to submit a complaint about grades within the two days after getting them.

Standards 5.5, 5.6, and 5.7 are met. According to the SER, as well as the outcomes of the interviews with the staff members shows that the results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record. All of the grades are saved in the information system. This makes it possible to create analyses and also make a record for the individual student. There is flexible treatment of students in special situations: The Study Programme offers peer-to-peer consultations to students who required extra support from the teaching staff. In addition, individual study plans are designed if there is a need for that. Finally, records of student completion rates are kept for all courses and for the Study Programme as a whole and included among quality indicators.

Standard 5.8 is not met. Effective procedures are not universally being used to ensure that work submitted by students is original. The University states that the plagiarism is checked in the Master thesis or research publication of the students. However, none of the text matching software is being used for this purpose. SER mentions that in case of necessity the teacher is using the free software to guarantee the original work is submitted, but this is done in a voluntary basis. During the interviews with graduates the expert panel tried to find out if the students were familiar with the principles of academic integrity, as it turned out, they have an information in general but could not recall any case neither from their practice nor something from their classmates of detecting the plagiarism. Expert panel recommends that the university enhance the mechanism regarding the academic integrity, including considering license to the text matching software.

Standards 5.9 and 5.10 are met. Although the expert panel could not meet students, the SER and the interviews with the staff members indicate that there is extra support from the teaching staff, with consultations and peer to peer meetings. In general, the graduates are very satisfied with the way they are treated both from academic and administrative staff. According to the SER there is an opportunity for inter-university transfer in accordance with the rules and regulations established by the university.

Standard 5.11 is met. Academic staff are available at sufficient scheduled times for consultation and advice to students. The interviews of the academic staff indicated that the adequate tutorial assistance is provided to ensure understanding and ability to apply learning.

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. *It is recommended that the university enhance the mechanism regarding the academic integrity, including considering license to the text matching software.*

### **3.6. Research**

Department of Psychology has its strategic plan that comprises 2023, it has also dedicated section to research which emphasizes particular focus of interest. So far, the focus was mainly put on schools, what is not surprising considering the number of children and youth who are in a school system. Society is facing many challenges as violence, use of narcotics, overall mental health issues, but with a new programme in clinical and community psychology, new strategy that will be developed has to define some new and different strategic objectives. Since the Department opted to have a programme both for clinical and community psychology, the given distinction will need to be reflected in the new strategy as well. (Standard 6.1)

Again, from the ET experience and observations Faculty of Philosophy and, accordingly, Department of Psychology act responsible when it comes to follow regulations, to have defined procedures, expectations as well as assessment of research performance. The whole institution tries to support and increase research productivity and to facilitate this process, so the criteria for staff evaluation and promotion are clearly defined (Standard 6.2, 6.3, 6.4).

There is evidence that the system supports staff in their research activities and institutional expectations are clearly set up. Over the years, the ET experience is that there are obvious improvements and standards are higher. At the same time, it has to be noticed that financing of

research is still not sufficient, and while always is heard that participation in conferences is supported, what is actually needed is to support research itself. This is inevitable first step to be well heard at any relevant international conference. The other extremely relevant aspect is the fact that research infrastructure is still modest, if not missing.

The research staff is active in segments of research that also matches their teaching activities and topics, they publish in different journals, but definitely more and more in internationally recognized ones (Standard 6.5). However, overall research productivity still needs to be increased. As stated in the SER, the Standard 6.7 will be included in a new Strategy, however for now, the institutional criterium is one paper in two years. The ET would like to stress that for the future plans it would be crucial to develop administrative support, either institutional or on the central level, to reach this objective. (Standard 6.7).

The ET observed that teaching staff is trying to involve students in small research projects as well as to intertwine research and teaching. It has been also heard from the external stakeholders that sometimes during the practical experience, students opt to collect data and perform small research tasks. Evidently, this is a signal they receive from their teachers and it should be further supported. (Standard 6.8, 6.9, 6.11).

There are still no developed policies or procedures regarding intellectual property (Standard 6.10)

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. Develop strategic objectives that will support research productivity*
- 2. Develop policies and regulation needed for intellectual property which will also open new research possibilities and outcomes in the field of social sciences*
- 3. Institution must put more emphasis and provide more resources to reinforce research environment*
- 4. Establish administrative support, but with specific professional skills, to give a support to academic staff in preparing papers for international journals as well as to prepare research proposals*
- 5. Adequate training will facilitate project-grant applications for international research funding*
- 6. If research wants to be improved, academic staff needs to increase, while teaching load of each academic staff needs to decrease*

**3.7. Infrastructure and Resources**

General observation is that the Faculty of Philosophy as well as Department of Psychology is situated in an adequate, spacious and modern environment (Standard, 7.1). The ET, during the

14

site visit had chance to visit the facilities and was told, besides what is there, that there are serious commitment and short-term plans of the existing faculty management to renovate the space. This will contribute to have better, friendlier library, easier for access for more students, to design inner communication space for staff and students and this way to improve the existing space. The ET recognized all those plans as very beneficial for the Faculty and Department. Although, it is important to notice, the Department already now has relatively sufficient fundus of books and journals (Standard, 7.5).

When it comes to budgeting a new programme, unfortunately there is no specifically allocated budget, as stated also in the SER (Standard 7.2). The existing budget needs to be stretched also for a potentially new programmes. The option that is mentioned in the SER, as increase of budget due to research grants would be seen as definitely less than optimal one. The ET would like to stress that, in general, research money are so limited that if there is any inflow of budget it should be strictly used to support research.

Although, as earlier stated, Department has on a disposal enough square meters, enough space, what the ET observed is insufficient specifically shaped and arranged space for clinical psychology. Clinical psychology courses, primarily those directly related to the field, need specially designed space with for example, one-way mirror, cameras to record different clinical processes and to later analyse them, simulated space for therapy etc. In this terms space is not prepared and if not changed quickly, it will be a very weak point. Recently, a year ago it has been established Institute of Psychology, and it also got a space (2 rooms) for its purposes. However, the ET observed that it is still in very 'row' conditions and it does not leave an impression that it is really used in organized way and regularly; it does appear more as a storage space. It is important to mention that the space itself has its potential and it could be transformed into multifunctional space and this way enrich working conditions for staff and students focused on clinical and community psychology.

In addition, Kosovo in general is still missing enough standardized test with norms. Department must put special efforts in developing some new materials, adapting international ones etc. The study of clinical psychology requires good materials to work with (Standard 7.3).

The infrastructure and facilities are sufficiently adapted to students with special needs (Standard, 7,6).

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. Refurnish the existing space, making it appropriate for clinical and community psychology needs*
- 2. Purchase more equipment and materials for clinical and community psychology*

15

3. *Make plans how to develop, adopt testing instruments existing internationally, but not being available in Kosovo*

#### 4. FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

5. Overall compliance:

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

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

In conclusion, in line with the Manual requirements, the Expert Team recommends **to accredit** the master program in *Clinical and Community Psychology* for three years, with maximum enrolment of 25 students per year.

**Expert Team**

**Chair**





**Melita Kovacevic.**

**March 29, 2023**

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(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)

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**Giga Khositashvili.**

**March 29, 2023**

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(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)

**Member**

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(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Date)

**Member**

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