



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



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***UNIVERSITY OF PRISHTINA***

***MASTER OF SCIENCE IN ECONOMICS***

***RE-ACCREDITATION***

**REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Context

**Date of site visit: 27.03. 2023**

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**Sources of information for the report:**

- *Self-evaluation report "Bachelor of Economics", 2022, including course catalogue*
- *KAA Accreditation Manual; updated version 2021*
- *Syllabi*
- *Site visit*
- *Staff CVs (Full time, part-time)*
- *Annexes: 14 annexes in total*

**Additional sources of information for the report: see appendix**

**Criteria used for institutional and program evaluations**

### 1.2. Site visit schedule

*Insert site visit schedule (as provided by KAA)*

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

The Faculty of Economics is organised as an academic unit of the University of Prishtina "HASAN PRISHTINA", Kosovo's largest public higher education institution since 1971/72.

The Faculty of Economics offers three levels of study: Bachelor (three-year studies), Scientific Master (two-year studies), and Doctoral studies (three-year studies). According to the SER, five Bachelor programs, five Master programs and five Doctoral Studies were accredited and offered to students in 2020). In the meeting with the faculty management, the experts were informed that about 7.300 students are currently studying at the Faculty of Economics.

According to the self-evaluation report, the basic mission of the Faculty of Economics is to "prepare capacities that contribute to the overall economic and social development of Kosovo and beyond, to advance global knowledge in the field of economy. This mission is in line with the mission of the University of Prishtina as a public institution of higher education in Kosovo.". The internationalisation of the Faculty of Economics was presented as a primary target of particular importance. During the site visit, it appeared that focus on Data-driven topics in education and research are regarded as main qualities, too.

As can be learned from the SER, the Faculty of Economics strives to achieve these objectives through specific measures. The most important measures include the following:

- The progression of teaching activity in Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctorate programs,
- Ongoing reforms related to curricula, teaching methodology, modern literature, etc.,
- Intensive engagement in research,
- Engagement of academic staff with high degrees in scientific areas,
- Continuous training of academic staff, and
- Overall infrastructure improvement

These measures are considered crucial in leveraging the transformation into a "leading centre for the advancement of knowledge and education in the field of economy in the region" (SEP)

#### 1.4. Mission, Objectives and Administration

The mission of the Faculty of economics is described as to “prepare cadres that contribute to the overall economic and social progress of Kosovo and beyond, while advancing global knowledge in the field of economics” (SER, p. 3). The study program Master of Science in Economics’ mission "is to offer to its students a comprehensive and specialized academic and scientific education in the field of economics” (SER, p. 8). To achieve this mission, the Program prepares “students in economic theory and focuses on training students in scientific research methods”(SER, p. 8).

While the program content (as inferred from the syllabi and the on-site discussions seems consistent with the program purpose, no evidence-based information was provided in the SER nor during the site visit on the consistency with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. In particular, no explicit formulations which would link the intended learning outcomes of the Program to specific level descriptors relevant to the Program were provided.

The didactical concept is not elaborate. The SER argues that the Program uses "Student-centred learning" but does not define this broad term (see, e.g. Trinidad 2019). Therefore it is difficult to see which variant or combinations of variants of SCL are used in the Program. The SER continues to list 6 "principles". We note that the SER does not address assessment, a key element of constructive alignment (Biggs 1996), an essential and widely-used foundation of "student-centred learning". While the SER document contains rather normative statements and no evidence, some of the elements could be backed up by information on the on-site interview.

The research concept is not elaborate either. The SER lists a set of activities that speak to research in general but are not principles. These activities are rather general and do not address how research and education are linked (a topic of interest for a program accreditation). The SER is not very precise about the status of the Institute for Scientific Research ("is in initial stages of consolidation").

Rules for ethical conduct are known and usually complied with. The link to the decisions of the disciplinary commission only includes decisions from 2016 and 2017 and must be outdated. Plagiarism detection remains an issue. The site visit revealed that the software is costly and does not seem to work well on Albanian texts. Teachers need to identify plagiarism individually.

Regarding review cycles, the SER provides only normative statements but no evidence of review policy or reviews performed. The only information on periodic reviews is on the national accreditation in Standard 2.8. This information does not cover all areas from Standard

1.6 and the frequency required by 1.6. During the interview, it appeared that evidence might be visible through published amendments of policy documents.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
<i>Standard 1.1.</i> The study program mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution.	X	
<i>Standard 1.2.</i> 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
<i>Standard 1.3.</i> The study program has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept.		X
<i>Standard 1.4.</i> 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	
<i>Standard 1.5.</i> All staff and students comply with the internal regulations relating to ethical conduct in research, teaching, assessment in all academic and administrative activities.	X	
<i>Standard 1.6.</i> 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.		X

**Compliance level:** Partially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. *The Program should define its didactical concept and specify which (combination of) implementation of student-centred learning are used.*
2. *The Program should specify the links between assessment, learning objectives, and learning activities (constructive alignment) in its specification of the didactical concept.*
3. *The Program should define and provide evidence about the level of its intended learning outcomes at the descriptive levels of the European Framework of Qualification.*
4. *The study program should strive for a fundamental revision of the didactic and teaching concept concentrating on three priorities: (1) creating a coherent concept of student-centred teaching and learning, (2) integration of modern teaching practices, (3) visible*

*integration of research at the program level and strengthening the linkages between teaching and research.*

- 5. The study program should clearly define its research concept and provide evidence as to how the research concept is implemented. Since the position of the research institute remains vague, the Program should take independent action.*
- 6. The Program should seek free alternatives to plagiarism software or identify funding sources for industry-leading software. The language issue may not be resolved entirely, but a plagiarism checker may be linked to local and national thesis repositories. In addition, procedures on how to address upcoming plagiarism issues that arise from ChatGPT.*
- 7. The Program should develop and communicate a formal review cycle of all its activities. The (re)accreditaiton and student evaluations should not be the only formal procedures.*

## 1.5. Quality Management

The Self Evaluation Report (SER) outlines the university's quality management procedures. However, no evidence exists of using the PCDA methodology (plan-check-do-act). Although the SER states that evaluation and improvement planning are integrated into regular planning processes, no practical evidence was presented on-site to demonstrate how this is accomplished and what methodologies are used in the Faculty quality assurance system.

UP employs a set of questionnaires created as part of a European initiative, and the university has implemented a process to review these questionnaires regularly. The university employs a survey instrument as part of its course evaluation process, which students complete and is accessible to instructors and administrators. However, there is no indication that the evaluation outcomes are discussed with the students. Apart from the course evaluation, the university administers other surveys, the results of which are utilised for internal quality management purposes but are not publicly disclosed. As a result, the transparency of these results is inadequate. Also, there is no evidence of surveys designed for alumni, employees, and other stakeholders.

The self-report acknowledges (in a list of weaknesses) states that there is a need for improvement in alumni tracking at the university (for example, creating a database). It was noted during the visit that although the university maintains connections with alumni, there is a lack of institutional integration. Therefore, it is crucial to enhance efforts to engage graduates, such as establishing an alumni network and conducting formal surveys of alumni. It is positive, and it is evident from SER and the list of evidence that when course evaluations reveal unsatisfactory results, appropriate measures are taken by the university. These measures and procedures are adequately documented. However, most cases that were presented in evidence are not contemporary.

There is enough evidence to conclude that Quality assurance processes that deal with all aspects of program planning and delivery, including services and resources provided by other parts of the institution, are regulated according to the Quality Assurance and Evaluation Regulation at the University of Prishtina. The Central Quality Assurance and Evaluation Commission oversees the assessment of university activities, with participation from all university stakeholder groups. The Quality Assurance Central Committee and Assessment at Rectorate formulate a five-year and annual action plan that outlines the activities to be undertaken, including evaluations of academic units. Quality assessments are conducted to identify issues related to program quality. The Dean of the Academic Unit ensures that the academic development coordinator fulfils their responsibilities in conducting evaluations at the university and academic unit levels. After each evaluation activity, the Dean of the Academic Unit formulates an improvement plan and includes the necessary measures in the academic unit's annual budget. Based on available documentation and on-site discussions, the expert(s)

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confirm that the collected data is used for ongoing development, with clear responsibilities assigned to the relevant parties. Although SER states that these activities are part of improvement plans, there is no evidence of that presented.

Based on the available documents and on-site discussions, the expert(s) note that the collected data is utilised for continuous development. The relevant parties have well-defined responsibilities, which are being effectively carried out. Previous evaluation results have also led to corresponding adjustments to the study programs, including study content, workload and professional qualification. However, it is extremely important that SER is written based on new data. For example, in SER is data collected several years ago in a project with TUCK Business School – it is not relevant for the need of this accreditation process.

Program administrators receive reports for each course delivery, which specify any planned content that could not be covered and challenges faced in implementing planned strategies. After reviewing the course reports, suitable modifications are made to the teaching plans. Students evaluate the teaching quality of courses at the end of each semester. The course results are analysed by the Faculty for academic staff, and information is provided regarding quality assurance measures, as well as a ranking of plans to enhance quality. However, there is no evidence or reports on how the public or university members are informed about quality development in a public report which points to a lack of transparency in that regard.

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Compliance</b>	
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<i>Standard 2.1.</i> All staff participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 2.2.</i> Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes.		<b>X</b>
<i>Standard 2.3.</i> Quality assurance processes deal with all aspects of program planning and delivery, including services and resources provided by other parts of the institution.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 2.4.</i> Quality evaluations provide an overview of quality issues for the overall Program as well as of different components within it; the evaluations consider inputs, processes and outputs, with particular attention given to learning outcomes for students.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 2.5.</i> Quality assurance processes ensure both that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 2.6.</i> Survey data is being collected from students, graduates and employers; the results of these evaluations are made publicly available.		<b>X</b>

<i>Standard 2.7.</i> Results of the internal quality assurance system are taken into account for further development of the study program. This includes evaluation results, investigation of the student workload, academic success and employment of graduates.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 2.8.</i> The institution ensures that reports on the overall quality of the Program are prepared periodically (eg. every three years) for consideration within the institution indicating its strengths and weaknesses.		<b>X</b>
<i>Standard 2.9.</i> The quality assurance arrangements for the Program are themselves regularly evaluated and improved.	<b>X</b>	

**Compliance level:** Partially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. *Development of a rigorous quality management system based on a proven quality management framework (PDCA-cycle - Plan-Do-Check-Act - approach) which is communicated to all stakeholders and serves as a basis for participatory action involving all stakeholders.*
2. *The creation of a system for alumni tracking and its subsequent integration into institutionalised surveys.*
3. *Publication of evaluation results from the general surveys.*

## 1.6. Academic Staff

Based on the formal staff profiles, the online staff information and the evidence from the site visit, it is evident that the academic staff at the University of Prishtina (Department of Economics) is suitably qualified to deliver a high level of student learning experience: Most staff have professional titles and proven track record of academic activities in the chosen specialist area.

The staff appointment process includes educational, scientific, research and service criteria. The staff is externally motivated to perform well in their educational tasks by including educational criteria. Outside of the career track, however, staff evaluations seem to be largely driven by the formal feedback given by students. Formal self-, peer-, and supervisors evaluation is not evident. Nevertheless, the interviews during the site visit confirmed that these methods of evaluation as used informally and irregularly. It also remained unclear to what extent evaluation results are made public (Standard 3.8). We acknowledge the limits of publishing personal-level evaluations to outside stakeholders, though. Summing up the evidence-supported staff evaluation, we argue that it works largely through the career track and evaluations by students. This leaves a gap for those at the top level of the career track.

To enhance the quality of teaching strategies and the quality of learning material, staff must use training opportunities (two compulsory workshops as a minimum requirement) through the Centre for Teaching Excellence (CTE) of UP. The CTE seems to offer additional courses, even though its website contains little information and seems outdated. The additional material that we requested did not provide detail about these training activities either.

An additional discussion point during the site visit was the overall attractiveness of the academic profession in Kosovo in general. Our impression was that the Program does not have current issues with staffing. Also, the age pyramid within the group suggests no immediate concerns about staff availability. However, we understood that a relatively low wage level compared to the private sector for highly qualified staff might negatively impact staff acquisition and retention.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
<i>Standard 3.1.</i> 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 program under evaluation.		X
<i>Standard 3.2.</i> The teaching staff must comply with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative instruction on Accreditation.	X	
<i>Standard 3.3.</i> 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.	X	
<i>Standard 3.4.</i> At least 50% of the academic staff in the study program are full time employees, and account for at least 50% of the classes of the study program.	X	
<i>Standard 3.5.</i> For each student group (defined by the statute of the institution) and for every 60 ECTS credits in the study program, the institution has employed at least one full time staff with PhD title or equivalent title in the case of artistic/applied science institutions.	X	
<i>Standard 3.6.</i> Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties.	X	
<i>Standard 3.7.</i> The responsibilities of all teaching staff, especially full-time, include the engagement in the academic community, availability for consultations with students and community service.	X	
<i>Standard 3.8.</i> 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.		X
<i>Standard 3.9.</i> Strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials.		X
<i>Standard 3.10.</i> Teachers retired at age limit or for other reasons lose the status of full-time teachers and are considered part-time teachers.	X	

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. *Explore and implement additional formal ways of staff evaluation (see, e.g. Adachi et al. 2017; Conchina 2022). Some of the current instruments are informal. For those outside of the career trajectory, the only formal evaluation seems to be by students.*

2. *Motivate staff to develop continuously, also outside the offers from the Center for Teaching Excellence. Monitor and celebrate successful participation.*
3. *Develop strategies for (remaining and) becoming an attractive employer in the long run.*
4. *Professionalize the CET and update the communication about its offers.*

## 1.7. Educational Process Content

The MA in Economics program's curriculum encompasses a comprehensive set of competencies essential for pursuing a career as an economist in public institutions, large private enterprises, and data-centric business environments. As a postgraduate program, it prioritizes macro and micro-economics, econometrics, economic policies, as well as analytical and methodical skills. Additionally, the program offers several elective courses over three semesters, allowing students to acquire advanced knowledge in particular areas of economics. On a general level, an issue that was raised when talking to students from the BA program - lack of basic soft skills like academic writing is damaging the o further development of students, was confirmed by MA students as well.

The curriculum faces another concern, which is the absence of a digitalization component, possibly indicating a structural issue, as it is also absent from the Masters program. To address this, the master program should introduce advanced courses covering diverse aspects of digital economics and business intelligence as elective courses in the curriculum. In addition, relevant methodologies such as data modelling, algorithms, and data structures can be included in the curriculum. Moreover, both students and the faculty members highlighted the difficulty in meeting the skill requirements of private sector companies, stating the need for greater integration between theoretical concepts and practical applications. They also expressed concern about the limited chances for students to engage in research activities, which deviates from the program's mission. This feedback indicates the presence of potential mismatches between the program's intended learning outcomes and its instructional delivery, highlighting the need for investigation.

While the curriculum offers the disciplines in a logical sequence, which fulfils the defined competencies for analytical and methodological abilities necessary for scientific work, it fails to include crucial topics and competencies essential for a contemporary MA program dealing with the latest developments and issues in field of economics. As it is stated in SER mission of program, it aims to equip students with theoretical knowledge in economics and research skills, enabling them to pursue careers in academic or institutional research. However, the lack of current methodologies raises doubts about whether the curriculum can adequately prepare students for academic or political environments that demand strong digitalization skills, necessitating some changes in the curriculum.

The feedback gathered from both the meetings with professors and students was consistent regarding the student-teacher relationship. Students expressed their appreciation for the accessibility of teachers for consultation and the willingness of teachers to offer extra support when needed. They also confirmed the communication of learning objectives at the outset of each course. The MA program in Economics relies on smaller student cohorts to facilitate

teaching, with an average class size of around 40 students for many courses, though not all. For elective courses, the class size was reported to average around 20-25 students in the meeting with professors.

The program's teaching strategy is a weakness, as it is described in a normative way without any practical information about its implementation. Despite the ECTS credit system, learning outcomes, and professor-student interaction being cited in SER as facilitating student-centered learning, it is not clear how this concept is being implemented in practice. Self-regulated learning strategies are crucial for a master's program, and it is uncertain how student-centered learning can be achieved without them.

Lectures are the primary method of teaching, but some syllabi do indicate practice-oriented teaching methods. While most syllabi outline course objectives and content, as well as exam formats, specific examination methods are rarely mentioned, and there is no explicit overall teaching strategy. Another issue about the teaching strategies stems from the similarities of the formulations in the SER for the BA and the MA program in economics.

Additionally, learning objectives do not often differentiate between various competencies, such as professional, methodical-analytical, social, and personal competencies.

Upon analyzing the provided syllabi, it becomes evident that there are variations in the quality of course descriptions. However, in comparison to the syllabi for the BA program, the overall quality is relatively higher. Moreover, a significant number of syllabi stand out for using active verbs to define learning outcomes at the course level, but there are some syllabi – for example *Advanced Mathematics* – that does not contain Learning outcomes at all. The same problem applies for assessment – some syllabi do it in great detail with all information needed. On the other hand, syllabi of *Advanced Microeconomics* only gives information on what activities in percentage form grade.

The absence of e-learning as an essential component of a contemporary teaching approach is a notable flaw in the program, and SER does not address it.

The presentation of provisions for fair verification of student achievement was clear, and their implementation was confirmed in the meeting with students and graduates. The workload was also deemed reasonable from the student's perspective. In case of any objections from students regarding inadequate or inconsistent assessment, an IT-based system and regulations were introduced to facilitate the handling of such situations

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
<i>Standard 4.1.</i> The study program 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.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 4.2.</i> The study program complies with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. The individual components of the program are combined in a way to best achieve the specified qualification objectives and provide for adequate forms of teaching and learning.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 4.3.</i> 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 programs and curricula delivered in the EHEA. To be listed at least 7 learning outcomes for the study program under evaluation.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 4.4.</i> 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 program under evaluation.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 4.5.</i> 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 program.	<b>n.a</b>	
<i>Standard 4.6.</i> 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.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 4.7.</i> Teaching strategies are fit for the different types of learning outcomes programs are intended to develop. Strategies of teaching and assessment set out in program and course specifications are followed with flexibility to meet the needs of different groups of students.		<b>X</b>



<i>Standard 4.8.</i> 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.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 4.9.</i> 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 program, and in comparison with other study programs at highly regarded institutions.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 4.10.</i> Policies and procedures include actions to be taken in to dealing with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or KAA inconsistently assessed.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 4.11.</i> If the study program 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 program.	<b>n.a.</b>	
<i>Standard 4.12.</i> 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>*To be inserted the overview of the program (with all areas to be filled out)</i>	<b>n.a.</b>	

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. *Evaluate all courses to ensure that learning taxonomies and active verbs are consistently and appropriately used to define learning outcomes in a modern and up-to-date manner.*
2. *It is highly recommended that the program creates a unified teaching approach that encompasses diverse formats for teaching and learning. These formats should be suitable for various kinds of learning outcomes, levels of competencies, and groups of students.*
3. *Systematically incorporate into the curriculum the topics of digitalization, different soft skills, academic writing - including its development, impact, manifestations, and relevance across various levels and areas of economics.*
4. *Develop e-learning, online teaching, and online examination formats as essential components of program.*

## 1.8. Students

The admission procedures and policies at the university are well-documented and implemented in the study programs. The Dean of the academic unit, in consultation with the department heads, prepares a proposal for admission quotas for regular and part-time students in Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctorate programs, taking into account the previous admission processes, graduation reports, and the demand for studying at the Faculty of Economics. Once approved by the University of Prishtina Senate, the Rectorate announces the conditions and competition for admission of prospective students. The Faculty of Economics then conducts the admission exams based on the announced competition.

The university has established clear admission requirements for candidates and made them publicly available. During the visit, it was stated by all parties involved that everything is clear on this standard - a transparent points system is used to assess applicants, with the aim of identifying qualified candidates.

In the first- and second years, large lectures are held for some courses, while smaller seminars with a more discussion-based format are offered for others. After that, most lectures and seminars are in smaller groups. Students appreciated the flexibility of teaching staff to accommodate exceptional situations that may, for example, result as a consequence of the fact that most Master students are working.

The university has implemented an Electronic Management System for Students (SEMS) and made relevant documentation available for public viewing. This system records students' individual achievements and attendance in their courses. From the documentation available, it is apparent that the university utilises a highly advanced and modern IT-based system, which was confirmed on the site visit.

Discussion with students strongly implies that they are well informed on their obligations and rights – they are aware that they can take an exam in up to three attempts. If the student is unable to pass the exam after the third attempt, an evaluation is conducted by a commission. If the student still fails to pass the exam after the fourth attempt, they will fail the entire academic year automatically. All procedures are in place, and everything is well documented. The course syllabus provides students with information about the exam's number, date, and evaluation criteria. The academic year consists of three regular exam periods, and the university offers flexible treatment to students in exceptional circumstances. For instance, students who have lodged a complaint or are part of a specific study program may be assessed by an examination committee in addition to regular exams.

According to the available documents and after the discussions at the university, the evaluators can also state that the lecturers are accessible to the students and can be approached for problems.

All rights and obligations of students are publicly available. The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs is clearly regulated in formal internal documents.

There are some weaknesses on the Masters level that were confirmed by both students and alumni. For example, lack of space for student associations, lack of connection between students and alumni, non-active student activities and underdeveloped campus facilities are all issues that need to be addressed.

Also, a weakness that was raised during the discussion is a lack of software for plagiarism detection, especially in new circumstances like language models (ChatGPT). It is important for the university to implement a system to verify academic works and final papers for any instances of plagiarism. This includes checking corresponding examination papers and theses and taking necessary actions to address any detected plagiarism.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
<i>Standard 5.1.</i> 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.	x	
<i>Standard 5.2.</i> All students enrolled in the study program possess a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent document of study, according to MEST requirements.	x	
Standard 5.3. The study groups are dimensioned so as to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process.	x	
<i>Standard 5.4.</i> Feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments is given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed.	x	
<i>Standard 5.5.</i> The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record.	x	
<i>Standard 5.6.</i> Flexible treatment of students in special situations is ensured with respect to deadlines and formal requirements in the Program and to all examinations.	x	

<i>Standard 5.7.</i> Records of student completion rates are kept for all courses and for the Program as a whole and included among quality indicators.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 5.8.</i> Effective procedures are being used to ensure that work submitted by students is original.		<b>X</b>
<i>Standard 5.9.</i> Students' rights and obligations are made publicly available, promoted to all those concerned and enforced equitably; these will include the right to academic appeals.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 5.10.</i> The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs is clearly regulated in formal internal documents.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 5.11.</i> 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.	<b>X</b>	

**Compliance level:** Fully compliant

**ET recommendations:**

- 1. It is highly advisable for the university to implement a system to verify academic works and final papers for any instances of plagiarism. This should involve checking corresponding examination papers and theses and taking necessary actions to address any detected plagiarism.*

## 1.9. Research

The programs' research objectives seem to be defined at the Faculty level (Institute for Economic Research; standard 6.1, first sentence). However, the nature of that IER remained unclear, and the faculty webpage does not show any activities of that Institute. Moreover, "research objectives" – as can be seen from the SEP texts, only address measures to reach objectives and not objectives themselves. The Institute's webpage is silent about research objectives. During the site visit, it became apparent that an implicit understanding of (common) research objectives seems to be emerging, yet, the research efforts of staff members remain largely uncoordinated (Standard 6.1).

Expectations for the inclusion of teaching staff in research and academic activities are clearly defined. Performance related to these expectations is considered in the criteria for staff evaluation and promotion set out in the Regulation on Selection Procedures for Appointment, Not Appointment and Advancement of Academic Personnel at the University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina". The discussion with academic Faculty members during the site visit showed that academic staff is informed about the criteria for evaluating and promoting staff and considers them achievable (Standard 6.2)

Even though the SE report did not provide information for standard 6.3 (clear policies are established for defining what is recognised as research), we can state that a clear understanding of what is recognised as research exists explicitly in the promotion criteria (see Standard 6.2), implicitly in a joint understanding of research (site visit evidence), and in the fact that staff members collaborate internationally. Nevertheless, "policies for defining" are not evident.

Staff research topics and staff teaching topics align (Standard 6.4). This is based on comparing the titles of the academic output with course titles. This alignment allows teachers to include in their teaching information about their research and scholarly activities that are relevant to the courses they teach (Standard 6.8/9). This alignment also allows staff to engage students in research projects and use real-life data in classes (Standard 6.11).

However, the research activity of staff is skewed: Some are active publishers, others less so, and for some, there is no recent research activity (based on CVs, Google scholar). Thus, the achievement of standard 6.7 is not met. This, of course, limits the potential for some staff to connect research and teaching.

For those that publish regularly, the outlets used for scientific publishing are up to standard (Standard 6.5). Self-organised conferences and an edited journal cannot serve as evidence for research valuation. The site visit showed that research projects with practice are common. Such projects serve well to establish validation and impact. Lastly, we could not find evidence of

policies for intellectual property rights and clear procedures set out for commercialisation (standard 6.10)

Additional observations include that several staff members have completed their studies as a whole or a part of them outside of Kosovo and have brought their international experiences in teaching, learning and research. This experience is updated by collaborations with international universities.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
<i>Standard 6.1.</i> The study program has defined scientific/applied research objectives (on its own or as part of a research centre or interdisciplinary Program), 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.		<b>X</b>
<i>Standard 6.2.</i> 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.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 6.3.</i> Clear policies are established for defining what is recognised as research, consistent with international standards and established norms in the field of study of the Program.		<b>X</b>
<i>Standard 6.4.</i> The academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 6.5.</i> 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.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 6.6.</i> Research is validated through: scientific and applied research publications, artistic products, technological transfer through consultancy centres, scientific parks and other structures for validation.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 6.7.</i> 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.		<b>X</b>
<i>Standard 6.8.</i> Academic and research staff publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full time staff.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 6.9/6.8.</i> 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.	<b>X</b>	
<i>Standard 6.10.</i> Policies are established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialisation of ideas developed by staff and students.		<b>X</b>
<i>Standard 6.11.</i> Students are engaged in research projects and other activities.	<b>X</b>	

**Compliance level: Partially compliant**

**ET recommendations:**

1. *The Program will profit from an explicit research development plan, including objectives, means to reach the objectives, and procedures to update the research development plan. At the very least, the Faculty should explicitly show how the Program is structurally embedded in a fully functioning Research Institute.*
2. *At the same time, formulate explicit policies for the process of what defines research and explicit definitions of what the Program considers research.*
3. *Communicate the research profile of staff better. There is information on the Albanian version of the home page but not on the English one. The information does not seem to be searchable.*
4. *Communicate how students are involved in research. Highlight and celebrate best-practice examples.*
5. *Establish policies for establishing intellectual property rights and clear procedures set out for the commercialisation of ideas have to be developed by staff and students.*
6. *Develop instruments that support the research activities of junior staff.*
7. *Incentivise all staff to at least reach a minimum continuous flow of research output.*

## 1.10. Infrastructure and Resources

The Faculty of Economics has about 3,500 m<sup>2</sup> of physical space, not including corridors and various halls, which can accommodate lectures and exercises for all study programs. Of 3,500m<sup>2</sup>, about one-third are classrooms. All the academic staff has offices equipped with computers, internet, printer/scanner. Heating and cooling are adequate but may be improved in the reading room and some staff offices.

According to the Statute of the University of Prishtina (Art. 60 and Article 61), the Faculty of Economics is allocated a percentage of the financial resources from student fees to improve educational quality and cover unforeseen expenditures for educational matters. This percentage is decided by the Steering Council of the University of Prishtina. This implies that the Faculty of Economics has no legal competencies for independent financial planning and management. As a result, there is no financial plan at the level of the study program that would demonstrate the sustainability of the study program for the following minimum of three years. One item that refers to the student level (SE Report Annex 16 - Budget planning 2023-2025, "own source revenue –student fees) shows that planned revenue from the student fees is minimal compared to the planned expenses. It is not made evident how and who finances the difference (Standard 7.2).

While the amount of computers seems sufficient for classes, the amount of computers for open student access is limited. Since not every student owns a laptop (site visitation evidence), the Faculty may invest in hardware accessibility. Internet accessibility, server and storage capacity are good (Standard 7.3. c).

The Faculty of Economics has its own library and reading room. However, it has very little room for the many admitted students each academic year (Standard 7.3.d). The number of places in the reading rooms in this reading room is 100 (this number is less than 10% of the active Faculty of Economics students in all programs). However, the Faculty of Economics students are within walking distance of the National Library of Kosovo (KCB), which has over 400 places in reading and learning rooms.

At present, the infrastructure of the Faculty of Economics is not fully adapted to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Currently, the elevator reaches the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, which covers almost all student needs. However, access to staff rooms is limited. Given that the Faculty has realistic plans to move to a new building, we suggest paying additional attention to barrier-free access there (Standard 7.6.).



Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
<i>Standard 7.1.</i> 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.	X	
<i>Standard 7.2.</i> 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.		X
<i>Standard 7.3.</i> 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: a) owned or rented spaces adequate for the educational process; b) owned or rented laboratories, with the adequate equipment for all the compulsory disciplines within the curriculum, wherever the analytical syllabus includes such activities; c) adequate software for the disciplines of study included in the curriculum, with utilisation licence; d) library equipped with reading rooms, group work rooms and its own book stock according to the disciplines included in the curricula.	X	
<i>Standard 7.4.</i> 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.	X	
<i>Standard 7.5.</i> The education institution's libraries must ensure, for each of the study programs: a) a number of seats in the reading rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program; 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; 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; 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; e) a sufficient number of subscriptions to Albanian and foreign publications and periodicals, according to the stated mission.	X	
<i>Standard 7.6.</i> The infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the Program is adapted to students with special needs.	X	

**Compliance level:** Substantially compliant

**ET recommendations:**

1. *The Faculty needs to invest in additional student computer spaces. This may include wholesale options for student laptops.*
2. *Explore the use of e-books to enhance the somewhat limited amount of textbooks on loan.*

## 2. FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

The interactions during the site visit conveyed a powerful sense of teamwork and ownership by all program stakeholders. Teachers, students, and stakeholders from practice showed commitment to the Program. Students felt they were provided with relevant education within appropriate processes and didactics. Alumni and stakeholders confirmed that education prepares students well to become effective in their (future) professional roles. All stakeholders look forward to continuing to provide the best learning outcomes to current and future students. Having considered the documentation provided and discussed it with the during the site visit, the Re-accreditation Panel recommends the following:

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Compliance level</b>
Mission, objectives, administration	Partially compliant
Quality management	Partially compliant
Academic staff	Substantially compliant
Educational process content	Substantially compliant
Students	Fully compliant
Research	Partially compliant
Infrastructure and Resources	Substantially compliant
<b>Overall compliance</b>	<b>Substantially compliant</b>

The experts assess the overall compliance at the level of **Substantially Compliant**. However, the following recommendations need to be considered in relation to program re-accreditation:


1. Several grammatical, translation, spelling and formatting errors appear throughout the SER. Some information is misplaced. Some questions have not been answered fully in the SER. Appendices were not translated, and descriptive data about student performance was at the barest minimum. Consequently, a part of the visitation time was needed to address questions that must have been addressed before. We also understand that the SER is a public report. In its current form, it does not reflect the quality of the education that we saw on-site.
2. It is strongly recommended that the Program develops an explicit and well-argued catalogue of program-based intended learning outcomes and link them in an explicit and comprehensible way to (1) the relevant descriptor levels of the European Qualification Framework and (2) to the intended learning outcomes at the course level. Such links provide orientation to internal and external stakeholders and may stimulate discussions on where to invest in future development efforts best.

3. It is strongly recommended that the program members reflect upon and report the alignment between appropriate test forms comprehensively and intended learning outcomes (constructive alignment).
4. It is strongly recommended that the program management formalises and visualises key processes related to education planning, delivery, control, and medication (PDCA cycle). This would help to make these processes transparent to all stakeholders and create a widely-shared basis for discussion.

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the Master of Science in Economics study programme offered by the University of Prishtina is **substantially compliant** with the standards included in the KAA Accreditation Manual and, therefore, recommends accrediting the above study programme for a duration of three years with **80 students** to be enrolled on the programme.

## Expert Team

### Member



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Rainer Harms

20.04. 2023

### Member



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(Signature)

Domagoj Švigir

20.04.2023.

## Appendix: List of additional documents requested

Student evaluations	
Requested	Received
Samples of students surveys from 2022 (update from Appendix 19)	yes
Overview of student evaluations for Bachelor for the past academic year, all courses (rather than one averaged example for one year)	yes
Standard 2.4: Overall evaluation by students, translated	yes
Referring to 1.4: Grade distribution, progression, and completion rates. Example descriptive statistics for all courses of the last academic year	yes

Organisation of studies	
Requested	Received
Regulations regarding the appeal of exam grades	Yes
Performance indicator 1.6: Evidence for the claim "UP is an institution that promotes equal values and rights for all students regardless of ... (Bachelor SEP, p. 14), translation with source	Yes; reference to UP Statue, Art. 7. No further data
Standard 5.2: evidence for study load balancing / for tracking individual students' performance erf progress / for program completion of categories of students (e.g. gender, or others)	Evidene not conclusive
Documentation of program-level learning outcomes(maybe you call those target learning outcomes?; in addition to the individual-level learning outcomes that you reported for each course)	No; we were provided with the National Qualification Framework, and not its adaptation to the program intended learning outcomes
5.9 Document that contains the "rights and obligations of students."	Yes, UP Statue, Art. 145
4.10 Source of policies for actions taken to address situations where student achievement	Yes

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standards are inadequate or inconsistently evaluated (and translation)	
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<b>Staff and staff development</b>	
<b>Requested</b>	<b>Received</b>
KPI for Academic Staff	Evidence partially conclusive
Standard 3.1.a, first sentence: A typical position description that is used to communicate to prospective employees (a job announcement)	Yes
Standard 3.2: Art. 171, par 2 ( of the document that addresses qualification levels)	Yes
Programme of the Center for Excellence in Teaching (CET) that teachers have to go to (including descriptions of the seminars and training offered to teachers)	No
PI 6.5: Evidence from the performance evaluation as to what extent project finance is included in the individual performance review system	Evidence is not conclusive

<b>Research</b>	
Performance Indicator 6.3: evidence for research support for junior staff	Evidence is not conclusive
Pi 6.6: Evidence for research cooperation; one example, for example, a paper or conference piece that uses data from this partner	Yes
Supportive documents or university relations that prove the claim made about performance indicator 7.3	Yes
Evidence of meeting with other stakeholders – Employers	Yes

**Yes**

<b>Thesis work</b>	
Requested	Received

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Bachelor Thesis Manual	Yes
Masters Thesis Manual	Yes
Forms for a request for granting the bachelor thesis and supervisor appointment	Yes
A document that shows the process leading to the Bachelor / Master thesis (preparation, proposal, supervisor allocation, supervision, finalisation, grading, including the grading rubric).	Yes
A list of the ten most recent master and bachelor theses (title, candidate name, supervisor name).	Yes
An example of a bachelor and master thesis that is graded at the top of the scale and one each at the bottom of the scale ( not translated)	yes
Thesis graduation statistics: finished on time / after time	Yes
Form for a request for the evaluation of the Master's thesis	No; the document delivered is a proposal evaluation form

<b>Quality control documents</b>	
<b>Requested</b>	<b>Received</b>
PI 3.4: Translation of the part in Annex 9 that states that evaluation results are taken into account for evaluation decisions.	<b>Yes</b>
A flow chart of the internal quality management processes (rather than the accreditation flowchart on p. 21).	<b>No</b>
For standard 4.9: Art. 108 and 109 of UP statute translated	<b>Yes</b>
PI 2.4 translation of the regulation that talks about the composition of the Central Commission of Quality Assurance + source	<b>Yes</b>
For standard. 4.10: translated pieces of that regulation that the SEP text refers to	<b>Yes</b>
PI 4.1 document that shows the foundation of the "stages of approval by the UP statute">	<b>Yes</b>



(translation of the particular parts of the UP statute	
Quality management manual/regulations regarding quality management, if it exists, which contains the descriptions of the individual processes and measures	<b>Evidence partially conclusive</b>
Regulation that addresses the uni central commission for quality assurance (appendix 3)	<b>Yes</b>
Regulation for Quality Assurance and Evaluation at the University of Prishtina	<b>Yes</b>

<b>Other</b>	
Requested	Received
Most recent meeting minutes of the Faculty Council and Ethics Committee (the latest we have is 2018)	Yes
Regulation on the establishment and functioning of the advisory board	Yes
PI 7.2: Name of the senior staff member responsible for oversight of infrastructure and resources.	Yes