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UNIVERSITY OF PRISHTINA

ACCREDITATION

Joint Master Degree in Innovation and Quality in Education

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

April, Prishtina-Tbilisi



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: 28.03.2024

Expert Team (ET) members:

- *Elene Jibladze, Ilia State University, Georgia*

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- *Shkelzen Gerxhaliu, Director of Department*
- *Leona Kovaci, Senior Officer*

Sources of information for the Report:

- *SER*
- *Additional documents provided by the Faculty of Education of UP*
- *Site visit meetings and infrastructure tour*

Criteria used for institutional and program evaluations

- *Standards and guidelines provided by the KAA relevant for the program accreditation/re-accreditation*

Criteria used for program evaluation:

The experts team followed the program re-accreditation assessment areas and respective performance indicators, developed by Kosovo Accreditation Agency that are presented in Accreditation Manual – 2021.



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1.2. Site visit schedule

Date: 29.03.2024

Expert Team

- Elene Jibladze, Ilia State University, Georgia

Coordinators of KAA

Shkelzen Gerxhaliu, Director of Department
Leona Kovaci, Senior Officer

Site Visit Program

Programme Accreditation Procedure at UP, Faculty of Education	
Programmes:	Subject Teaching (with 7 specializations), MA Educational Sciences (with 4 specializations), MA Innovation and Quality in Education, MA
Site visit on (hybrid):	29 March 2024
Expert Team:	Prof. Milan Pol, Expert Prof. Elene Jibladze, Expert (<i>joins online</i>) Prof. Juliette Torobian, Expert Mr. Domagoj Svirgic, Student Expert
Coordinators of the KAA:	Shkelzen Gerxhaliu, Director of Department at KAA Leona Kovaci, Senior Officer at KAA

Site Visit Programme

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Time	Meeting	Participants	Room
09:00 – 09:45	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated	Blerim Saqipi Kastriot Buza Milaim Mazreku	Salla e Doktorates-Kati III (+online)
09:50 – 10.50	Meeting with the heads of the study programme Educational Sciences (with 4 specializations), MA, Prof. Milan Pol, Expert	Naser Zabeli, Vlora Sylaj (<i>unsure due to urgent surgery</i>) Ardita Devolli Fjolla Kaçaniku Arlinda Beka	Salla Regio Emilia - Kati II
09:50 – 10.50	Meeting with the heads of the study programme Innovation and Quality in Education, MA, Prof. Elene Jibladze, Expert	Blerta Perolli Shehu Iliriana Tahiraj	Salla e Takimeve ne Dekanat - Kati IV (+online)
10:50 – 11:50	Lunch break		Restaurant: Mozzaik
11:50 – 12:40	Meeting with teaching staff	For IQ-Ed: 1. Prof. Asoc. Blerim Saqipi 2. Prof. As. Fjolla Kacaniku	For IQ-Ed: Salla e takimeve Dekanat (+online)
14:25 – 15:10	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders	1. Rreze Hoxha – Organizata TOKA 2. Hana Hasimja – Organizata BONEVET 3. Supije Zhitija – SHFMU Gjergj Fishta	Salla e Doktorates – Kati III (+online)



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		4. Ardiana Ismaili - Drejtorja e Arsimit, Prishtinë 5. Shpresa Shala- ShFMU Xhemajl Mustafa 6. Visar Osmani – ShFMU Emin Duraku	
15:10 – 15:20	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts		Salla Doktorates Kati III (+online)
15:20 – 15:30	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program		Salla Doktorates Kati III (+online)

1.3. A brief overview of the institution and program under evaluation.

The Master in Innovation and Quality in Education is going to be a joint degree program developed by the consortium of four universities: University of Prishtina, University of Ljubljana, University of Warsaw and University of Tallin. The program development was made possible with the funded project of Erasmus Mundus Design Measure. The project, implemented for over a year, sets the priority of developing a new, innovative, high-level integrated transnational study programme at the Master level. It involves programme and partner countries and higher education institutions, and promotes the field of education as an under-represented thematic area in Erasmus Mundus Joint Master programmes.

All the documents relevant to the program development, were drafted through involvement of the representatives of the participating institutions resulting in high degree of harmonization and intensive capacity building for the representatives of the Faculty of Education of UP (as it was mentioned by them during the cite visit). It is worth highlighting that two of the participating institutions in this project have prior experience in designing and implementing the Joint Master Program, similar to the one under evaluation, hence their experience was highly valuable in this preparatory work.

The structure of the Master's program encompasses comprehensive elements aimed at nurturing upcoming leaders and creative thinkers in education who will manage and improve education quality in response to societal changes. The programme will develop knowledge, skills and creative competencies for educational design and innovation. It intends to serve European community,

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government, and organizational leaders, trainers, educators and other professionals in the public, private, non-governmental, and non-profit sectors. The program will run in English language.

This MA programme will be organized in a hybrid mode - combining the online and on-campus learning (on multiple campuses of the universities involved) and working environment by cultivating personal transformative learning and professional efficacy.

The program will prepare well equipped change makers in education - students of different nationalities and backgrounds will develop teamwork and collaboration skills for solving real-world problems, high-impact instruction and change management. It will build on experiential learning designs and technology transfer. The participants in this programme will learn to foster a "culture of innovation" in multi-faceted learning environments, workplaces and community contexts.

The program graduates will be relevant locally as well as globally - The programme will acknowledge and build on local, national and transnational policies and practices in the field of Education. It is intended to complement, harmonize and extend the local dimension on education policy, leadership and innovation towards quality improvement.

It is important to highlight that this MA program stands separate from the education leadership program that the Faculty is currently offering, which aims to graduate motivated and innovative school leaders. In this case, as it is highlighted in SER and was further elaborated by the program development team members, the program aims to build the capacity of education decision makers internationally, who are equipped with innovative practises and value contextual nuances in educational experiences.

The program aims to attract international students from around the world, perhaps with the emphasis on those from the region. It will be actively advertised in the respective counties of the consortium members as well as outside. The program plans to recruit 25 students annually.

Each of the universities has a particular role to play in the program implementation and program delivery process. As per design of the program, the education processes will be mainly organized on other campuses of consortium members. UP will act as a coordinator of the multi-campus cooperation and take upon an important role in the program management. UP will also be responsible for delivering several courses independently, as well as together with the colleagues from other partner universities. UP will also host the cohorts of students in Prishtina for the summer schools. While UP will not be directly admitting students in the program, they will legally be enrolled in all four partner institutions and will be granted the joint diploma.



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Apart from the capacity building purposes, launching of this joint program will create opportunities of experience sharing, cross-fertilization of ideas and hence steady development of the Faculty of Education and its internal quality mechanisms.

The prerequisite for the program to be launched is for it to go through the external quality assurance assessment in their respective educational systems, hence the purpose of this evaluation.



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2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

The mission of the programme is *to develop a cadre of future leaders and innovators in the education field that are ready to find and implement, through an evidence-based approach, more innovative ways to tackle pressing problems in education and improve education quality to respond to the demands of lifelong learning and knowledge-based society*. This very well aligns with the mission of the Faculty of Education of the University of Pristina, which states that it aims to “offer quality programs for the preparation and continuous professional development of educators, teachers and other specialists in the field of education, the development of research-scientific activities and community networking”. Further on, part of the mission of the UP highlights internationalization and becoming competitive on the international market (<https://uni-pr.edu/page.aspx?id=2,47>), which is what this program will constitute to.

As this is the joint program among four institutions, the missions of the respective institutions were also checked and these are as follows:

University of Ljubljana: apart from positioning itself as a university with a strong research profile in Slovenia, UL commits to the interdisciplinarity, academic openness, sharing experiences and research findings with other universities, and contribution to the world knowledge (<https://www.uni-lj.si/en/university/about-us/mission-and-vision>). In this way, the MA program’s mission is part of the knowledge sharing, teaching openness and the evidence-based approach.

University of Warsaw: in its mission statement emphasizes the synthesis of universal and local values, which is the main focus of the current MA program.

Tallin University: Part of the TU reads - “We are the innovators of education and the promoters of research-based mindset in the society and in the organisation thereof.” (<https://www.tlu.ee/en/tallinn-university-development-plan-2023-2027>). The pathos of nurturing innovative educators in the MA program fully speaks to the commitment of the academic community of the TU.

The learning outcomes of the program correspond to the Erasmus Subject Area Code (05.0 – Education, Teacher Training) and correspond to the MA (Level 7) education of the EQF. However, ET was not able to completely check the correspondence of the LOs with the NQF, hence cannot assess this point due to lack of evidence.



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As mentioned in the introductory chapter (p. 9-10), the program embraces evidence-based approach, it is planned to be hands on and practice oriented, while emphasizing the role of conceptual clarity and mastery of different approaches in education for sound decision making. The program embraces technology as a tool for program delivery (as the program will be run in different campuses with hybrid mode of teaching), as well as the topic in education which keeps gaining relevance rapidly. Approach to the student body is one of collaboration and mentoring.

The Faculty is well integrated into the UP's institutional framework and also has the Faculty level policies and regulations which guides its procedural and academic matters. Important guiding documents for students, such as student orientation packages are available and disseminated to incoming students. The statute and other key regulatory documents are readily available. All stakeholders, including staff and students, adhere to internal regulations regarding ethical conduct in research, teaching, and assessment, which is centrally defined at the University level. While ET understands that the state universities tend to adhere to rather centralised management, it urges the central administration to re-think certain regulations in the light of the precedents that this Joint Program may bring. With the UP committed to internationalization and earning the name internationally, it will be important that the university regulations do not hinder the developments towards this goal.

While the UP and the Faculty of Education have sound regulatory framework that they operate in, this joint degree program has demanded additional efforts to scrutinise the policies and guidelines of each university and harmonise those particularly for this program. It is worth noting here that the Faculty of Education will not be hosting the students on campus (other than the summer schools) and the selected academic personnel will be participating in the MA program based on the pre-defined regulations and requirements defined by the consortium. Therefore, the internal regulations of the UP are relevant as long as those are in line with the Consortium Agreement, which is the governing document of the joint degree program. The important moment to bear in mind is that over the course of the year (or more) the members of the consortium, including members of the faculty, have been meeting regularly, deliberating, and developing relevant documentations which would ensure the smooth implementation of this joint degree program. These agreed upon guiding documents and essential information about the program will be available to the students by every member of the consortium.

A few words need to be mentioned about the Faculty of Education in the UP separately. It was important for the ET to learn that the Faculty has its multi-year development plan available and has been documenting its annual progress against the development plan as well. As for the current phase of the faculty development, its organisational development and institutionalization of introduced changes have been the priority. This translates into the capacity building of current staff, and purposeful recruitment of new academic staff. For instance, one of the faculty members was recently hired with this joint degree program in mind and to accommodate Faculty's goal to increase number of international programs.

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Nevertheless, the ET lacks evidence to assess whether the program development team within the consortium has developed the review mechanisms for the main pillars of the program development and its smooth management.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 1.1. The study program mission is in compliance with the overall mission statement of the institution.	X	
Standard 1.2. Relevant academic and professional advice is considered when defining the intended learning outcomes which are consistent with the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.	X 0.5	
Standard 1.3. The study program has a well-defined overarching didactic and research concept.	X	
Standard 1.4. There are formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues. These are made publicly available to all staff and students.	X	
Standard 1.5. All staff and students comply with the internal regulations relating to ethical conduct in research, teaching, assessment in all academic and administrative activities.	X	
Standard 1.6. All policies, regulations, terms of reference and statements of responsibility relating to the management and delivery of the program are reviewed at least once every two years and amended as required in the light of changing circumstances.	X 0.5	

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Ensure coherence of the LOs with the National Qualifications Framework.*



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2.2. Quality management

In the UP, the QA processes appear to be well structured and systematic and involves multiple layered scrutiny to ensure that the quality is assessed from different perspectives – teaching, assessment, student performance, etc. In addition, the Faculty of Education is also involved in the EU funded project "Towards a quality-oriented system of initial teacher education to increase teacher professionalism in Kosovo- QATEK"(2020-2024), which aimed to develop quality culture in teacher education entities by developing internal QA mechanisms which fit the particular contexts. As the result of this project, the Faculty has developed its QA Policy. The instruments outlined in this policy were finalized by February 2021, which have been gradually used by the Faculty to inform its decision-making processes. As per SER, these instruments will be modified to answer the specifics of the joint degree program.

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. Below the segment on continuous program improvement is highlighted.

Regarding continuous program improvement, the Faculty of Education established the Academic Development Office (ADO), responsible for developing new programs and assessing/reviewing existing ones. In the case of the joint degree program, a feasibility study was conducted by the project team, and its findings were integrated into the program development process.

The SER mentions that internal QA involves the entire staff. However, during the site visit, it was evident that the content of the SER was not entirely a team effort, as QA officers seemed to dominate. In light of the Faculty's plan to further strengthen organizational cohesion, ET intends to highlight two issues with the above point:

1. QA and program development should work harmoniously, with QA playing a supportive role in program development.
2. SER development processes should be done in close cooperation with program development teams, avoiding functional fragmentation. The program team should review the final SER as a mandatory step.

The 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. Apart from the course evaluation, the university administers other



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surveys, the results of which are utilised for internal quality management purposes. As it tends to be the case, the data collected through various assessment instruments mentioned above, are predominantly used internally at the administrative and academic levels, but not so often discussed with the students. ET suggests, it could be beneficial for the overall faculty ecosystem that the students are also aware of the results and the changes that are being planned based on those results, as this will be creating more transparent system internally and practicing the evidence-based culture at full.

Nevertheless, since the Faculty of Education will not be admitting students for this program, it will not be the one collecting data. However, it is important that the role and the mechanisms of data collection for the QA purposes is discussed and clearly defined beforehand to avoid difficulties during the program implementation.

The SER also mentions that the relevant policies, regulations, guidelines, and manuals will be regularly reviewed annually or biannually in a participatory manner. The ET assumes that the review processes/procedures/mechanisms are developed within the Erasmus Mundus project, however the SER lacks specific details on these processes/procedures/mechanisms according to which these reviews will be done.

Apart from the description of the QA system at UP and the Faculty levels, the SER also outlines the quality management systems of all four universities in the consortium and provides a better feel of what the overall QA system will look like during the program implementation. The ET understands that besides the approved regulations at UP level, the consortium has developed the degree policies and the Partnership Agreement, approved by all partners, that regulates the organization, functioning, duration of studies, the teaching processes, the curriculum development, student assessment, thesis writing, the rights and obligations of students, and other key areas. Based on these regulations, the consortium plans to monitor the quality of the provision of the program. While this is the plan, the SER also highlights that the challenging point for this to work is that some aspects of the QA of the joint degree programs might create the need to alter internal QA procedure/process in one of the consortium members. ET agrees with this observation and suggests initiating the discussions on QA processes locally as soon as it is possible, as this might be a lengthy process.



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Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 2.1. All staff participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity.	X	
Standard 2.2. Evaluation processes and planning for improvement are integrated into normal planning processes.	X 0.5	
Standard 2.3. Quality assurance processes deal with all aspects of program planning and delivery, including services and resources provided by other parts of the institution.	X	
Standard 2.4. 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.	X	
Standard 2.5. Quality assurance processes ensure both that required standards are met and that there is continuing improvement in performance.	X	
Standard 2.6. Survey data is being collected from students, graduates and employers; the results of these evaluations are made publicly available.	N/A	
Standard 2.7. 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.	N/A	
Standard 2.8. 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.	X	
Standard 2.9. The quality assurance arrangements for the program are themselves regularly evaluated and improved.	X 0.5	



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Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

- 1. Within the efforts of further institutional development of the Faculty, harmonize functions between the program development teams and the QA emphasizing the leading roles of the content/program developers and the QA as the vehicle of evidence based decision making.*
- 2. Initiate discussions with regards to the needed alterations in the QA mechanisms (or processes/procedures) locally as soon as possible to avoid delay in decision making.*
- 3. Cultivate the quality culture by sharing the QA assessment/review results with the students.*

2.3. Academic staff

Each consortium member has dedicated full-time academic staff to the program: six at the University of Ljubljana, five at Tallin University, five at the University of Warsaw, and seven at the University of Prishtina, Faculty of Education. The program development team explains that the Faculty plans to allocate two to three lecturers for each course, whether they are teaching or co-teaching. This approach serves two primary purposes: ensuring the sustainability of the teaching process by maintaining the availability of academic staff and providing a capacity development opportunity for the Faculty. Consequently, the Faculty has chosen to involve more academic staff than other consortium members.

In this manner, the program is populated predominantly (if not fully) with the full time academic staff from four universities.

At the Faculty, academic staff selection and promotion adhere to the UP Statute, with compliance to legal requirements outlined in Administrative Instruction 15/2008 for teaching positions. All faculty members are registered on the E-Accreditation platform and are restricted from establishing additional working relationships within or outside the country. Teaching staff responsibilities are defined in the Governing Council's decision, covering teaching, research, exam administration, participation in academic evaluations and decision-making forums, committee work, and student



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supervision. The annual evaluation of teaching quality by students informs decisions on staff promotion and contract renewals.

Other universities are governed in accordance to their respective legislations and university regulations. SER showcases the academic capacity of each university (pp.31-32), which are sound and the CVs of the selected academic personnel match the obligations and the coursework provided in the program description. ET is confident that the program will be run smoothly with the involvement of the identified academic personnel within the consortium.

As the program coordinator, UP, Faculty of Education have engaged two full-time academic staff members with doctoral degrees for the Innovation and Quality Education MA program, as per requirement 120 ECTS.

The Faculty of Education has been actively involved in identifying and addressing the professional development needs of its academic staff. E.g. In 2021-2022, the Faculty launched a needs assessment survey to identify professional development needs of the academic staff and to propose relevant training, workshops, and seminars particularly on innovative teaching pedagogies, use of ITC in classroom pedagogies, and reflective practice, among others. Once needs are identified, the professional development opportunities are provided both locally - the UP offers certain professional development opportunities through the Centre for Excellence in Teaching (QPM), and more often – internationally, through different projects or donor organized trainings/workshops/study visits. Few are mentioned below.

Collaborations with European and American universities have led to capacity-building trainings, including programs like ERASMUS and TLP, which have significantly enhanced teaching quality. Notable investments include sending teachers for extended stays at institutions like Indiana University and benefiting from Fulbright Scholarships for academic exchanges. The faculty has also engaged in regional projects focusing on teaching methodologies and content development. Furthermore, partnerships with institutions like Arizona State University and the University of Zurich have resulted in the creation of online courses and collaborative initiatives in areas such as sustainable development education and values-based education. Additionally, the Faculty regularly hosts international scientific conferences to provide a professional platform for research presentations and academic exchange.

As mentioned throughout this report, once of the main motivations of the Faculty to be part of this ambitious project is to gain experience and build capacity internally. The collegial experience sharing and capacity building have already been taking place throughout the project when developing this joint degree program under evaluation. One point of concern, which is also identified in the SER is that not all of the academic staff will be able to participate in the teaching processes of the program



and one of the main reasons to this is low English language proficiency. In its long term recruitment plan the Faculty has prioritised to recruit staff with strong English language skills. At the same time, it encourages the academic staff to improve their English through language courses offered in the UP. However, this does not seem to be working effectively due to time constraints and the aptitude to learn the language in some of the elderly academic staff members.

Overall, the academic staff in the Faculty seems proactive, motivated and ready to actively participate in this joint degree program.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 3.1. Candidates for employment are provided with full position descriptions and conditions of employment. To be presented in tabular form data about full time (FT) and part time (PT) academic/ artistic staff, such as: name, qualification, academic title, duration of official (valid) contract, workload for teaching, exams, consulting, administrative activities, research, etc. for the study program under evaluation.	X	
Standard 3.2. The teaching staff must comply with the legal requirements concerning the occupation of teaching positions included in the Administrative instruction on Accreditation.	X	
Standard 3.3. Academic staff do not cover, within an academic year, more than two teaching positions (one full-time, one part-time), regardless of the educational institution where they carry out their activity	X	
Standard 3.4. 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	
Standard 3.5. 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	



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Standard 3.6. Opportunities are provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties.	X	
Standard 3.7. The responsibilities of all teaching staff, especially full-time, include the engagement in the academic community, availability for consultations with students and community service.	X	

Compliance level: Full compliance

ET recommendations:

1. consider organizing regular experience sharing activities/events to spread the international MA program experience among other faculty members in order to define best practices and institutionalize them for a sustainable faculty development.

2.4. Educational process content

The Joint MA program – Innovation and Quality in Education is carefully designed to align with its philosophy of hands-on, flexible and student centered learning. Rather than relying heavily on pre-structured courses, the program aims to have a tailored approach where course content and assignments will take into account students’ academic/research interests. Having said that, this does not mean that the program lacks structure, rather the contrary – the program development team in the consortium seem to have spent considerable time and effort on putting different building block of the program together with four main domains of: Educational Policy and Systems, Evidence-based solutions to Educational Problems, Innovation and Development, and Quality Assurance. Each domain combines the set of mandatory and elective courses which are offered to student in a logical flow, leading them to their final action research project and an MA thesis.

While program is coherent and all of the elements seem to be meticulously thought through, ET suggests to have a final look at the program’s learning outcomes and assess their attainability and measurability against the designated courses for each of the four domains.

Obligatory courses, attended by the entire cohort, provide essential knowledge and skills, while elective courses allow students to tailor their learning based on their preferences and lab assignments. These courses are predefined in individualized study plans, nurturing students' interests by customizing



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assignments, readings, and seminar work according to their orientation/lab assignment and research theme.

The program's structure revolves around three core components: general courses, program orientations/labs, and the education intervention project (i.e. action research projects). These components are seamlessly integrated throughout the two-year curriculum, emphasizing inquiry and research as foundational pillars of the learning experience and paving through the skills pathway starting from analytical skills development all the way towards problem-solving skills.

A distinctive feature of the program is its focus on addressing real-world educational challenges. Students enter the program with a specific problem they aim to solve in their educational contexts, guided by the program orientations and supported by their mentors. This problem-based learning approach not only enhances students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills but also empowers them to make tangible contributions to improving education in their local communities or aim internationally.

The program's labs, categorized into Classroom Practice Lab, Organizational Development Lab, and System Level Lab, provide focused environments for students to delve into multidisciplinary perspectives and tackle educational problems at different levels—ranging from classroom practices to broader system-level reforms. Each lab will be chaired by partner universities, leveraging their expertise and research interests.

The program will be implemented for a duration of 2 years, taking into account the diverse backgrounds of students. In the first semester, students will engage in general courses as a group, fostering foundational knowledge and developing generic skills essential for their academic journey. This period also allows students to design individual plans with the guidance of the mentors, which will be assigned to them according to their motivation and research interests. In the second semester, students will be intensively working in the labs, moving towards their intervention projects.

The student-lecturer relationship and teaching environment described in the program and during the site visit emphasizes collaboration, mentorship, and hands-on learning. The assessment mechanisms are aligned with the course LOs and has a good balance of individual and team assignments to nurture both individual and collaborative work. Student reflections are also an important part of the assessment, which is a perfect tool to assess student's progress. The SER mentions that the challenge of implementing multi-campus program is that the assessment scales differ from one campus to the other. Which is why the conversion mechanisms will be developed before the program is launched. As each



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partner university will be offering one semester of studies on their campus, the course credits will be automatically recognized from one campus to the other.

Academic staff from partner universities actively participate in teaching and mentoring roles, fostering collaborative research activities and creating a supportive environment for students' growth and development. This collaborative approach extends to the labs, where students engage with real-world educational challenges and work alongside experts to design and implement meaningful interventions.

It is worth highlighting again, that in this joint program, academic staff from the Faculty of Education will be teaching and co-teaching several courses, and The UP will host a summer school in Pristina. However, UP will not be hosting the cohort of students for a semester. The coursework will be covered by other three consortium members, as clarified throughout this evaluation report. As the program is international, it will be offered in English language and the students will be selected with the prerequisite of English language proficiency in mind.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 4.1. 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.	X	
Standard 4.2. 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.	X	
Standard 4.3. The disciplines within the curriculum are provided in a logical flow and meet the definition and precise determination of the general and specific competencies, as well as the compatibility with the study programs and curricula delivered in the EHEA. To be listed at least 7 learning outcomes for the study program under evaluation.	X	



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Standard 4.4. The disciplines within the curriculum have analytical syllabuses which comprise at least the following: the discipline's objectives, the basic thematic content, learning outcomes, the distribution of classes, seminars and applicative activities, students' assessment system, the minimal bibliography, etc. The full course description/ syllabuses of each subject/ module should be attached only in electronic form to the self-assessment report for the study program under evaluation.	X	
Standard 4.5. If the language of instruction is other than Albanian, actions are taken to ensure that language skills of both students and academic staff are adequate for instruction in that language when students begin their studies. This may be done through language training prior to the commencement of the program.	N/A	
Standard 4.6. The student-teacher relationship is a partnership in which each assumes the responsibility of reaching the learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are explained and discussed with students from the perspective of their relevance to the students' development.	X	
Standard 4.7. 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.	X	
Standard 4.8. Student assessment mechanisms are conducted fairly and objectively, are appropriate for the different forms of learning sought and are clearly communicated to students at the beginning of courses.	X	
Standard 4.9. Appropriate, valid, and reliable mechanisms are used for verifying standards of student achievement. The standard of work required for different grades is consistent over time, comparable in courses offered within a program, and in comparison, with other study programs at highly regarded institutions.	X	
Standard 4.10. Policies and procedures include actions to be taken in to dealing with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or inconsistently assessed.	X	
Standard 4.11. 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	N/A	



activity reports; students during practice stages have assigned tutors among the academic staff in the study program.		
Standard 4.12. In order to facilitate the practice stages, the higher education institution signs cooperation agreements, contracts or other documents with institutions/organisations/practical training units.	N/A	

Compliance level: Substantially compliant.

ET recommendations:

1. ET recommends to have a final look at the program's learning outcomes and assess their attainability and measurability against the designated courses for each of the four domains (e.g. using the SMART technique).

2.5. Students

The consortium has developed Study and Examination Regulations where the application procedure and criteria are defined. A separate body, the Secretariat, will organize the admissions process and document it as well. The joint admissions board will be a decision-making body. It also states that, commensurate with national legislature, the final decision upon the admission of students will be made by the Partner institution in accordance with local legislature.

Those who have a BA degree and successfully pass the entrance exam will be able to enroll in the program.

Study groups in the programs are designed to be small and seem to support effective and interactive exchange among study groups. The student mobility between the partner universities is clearly defined in the Consortium Agreement. Mobility Plans will be developed for each student, adhering to the following basic rule: each student should spend his/her time in at least two campuses with the result of completing 30 ECTS on each campus. Mobility terms and procedures are detailed in the Study and Examination Regulations.



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Furthermore, as stated in the Consortium Agreement, each student who completes the degree program, including compulsory mobility programs, and meets national regulations, receives a joint Master's degree and a diploma supplement endorsed by the Partner Institutions and adapted to national legislation.

The consortium members commit to offer the following services to the students:

- Administrative support (Visa and Residence Permit applications, Health insurance, support for housing, application fee and payments, scholarships, insurance)
- Academic support (academic coaching and advising, learning support, academic tutoring, career guidance, learning plan)
- Psycho-social support (personal coaching, counseling, group and peer support)

As mentioned before, the student-centered approach, which is the cornerstone of the program, creates a network of academic and non-academic staff (each consortium is committed to having one coordinator on campus) available for advising, learning support, or other needs. The aspect of cultural sensitivity and integration of international students on each campus holds special importance in the Consortium Agreement.

On each campus, students will have comprehensive access to university resources, including libraries, workshops, conferences, webinars, and lectures in English relevant to their academic interests. Student rights and responsibilities are also detailed in the Consortium Agreement, which encompasses the main principles of equal and fair treatment. However, highlighting inclusiveness and addressing the needs of special needs students is lacking.

Local Examination Boards (equivalent of it in each partner university) will be responsible for monitoring ethical conduct and cases of academic dishonesty. At the Consortium level, this board has the obligation to escalate these issues to the Master's Board (the body responsible for the overall quality and standards of the degree program).

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No



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Standard 5.1. There is a clear and formally adopted admission procedure at institutional level that the study program respects when organising students' recruitment. Admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied for all students.	X	
Standard 5.2. All students enrolled in the study program possess a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent document of study, according to MEST requirements.	X	
Standard 5.3. The study groups are dimensioned so as to ensure an effective and interactive teaching and learning process.	X	
Standard 5.4. Feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments is given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed.	X	
Standard 5.5. The results obtained by the students throughout the study cycles are certified by the academic record.	X	
Standard 5.6. Flexible treatment of students in special situations is ensured with respect to deadlines and formal requirements in the program and to all examinations.	X	
Standard 5.7. Records of student completion rates are kept for all courses and for the program as a whole and included among quality indicators.	X	
Standard 5.8. Effective procedures are being used to ensure that work submitted by students is original.	X	
Standard 5.9. Students' rights and obligations are made publicly available, promoted to all those concerned and enforced equitably; these will include the right to academic appeals.	X	



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Standard 5.10. The students' transfer between higher education institutions, faculties and study programs is clearly regulated in formal internal documents.	X	
Standard 5.11. Academic staff is available at sufficient scheduled times for consultation and advice to students. Adequate tutorial assistance is provided to ensure understanding and ability to apply learning.	X	

Compliance level: Fully compliant

ET recommendations:

1. While it might be an overall pathos of the equal treatment, ET suggests to make it clearer, what is the policy and the approach of the Consortium towards the students with special needs.

2.6. Research

As mentioned throughout this report, the MA program in Innovation and Quality in Education explicitly focuses on building research skills among students and making them capable of both using research in decision-making and conducting good-quality research products individually. The program design incorporates a research dimension with three labs, coursework on research methods, and an overall approach to problems from the point of view of scientific inquiry.

Research is strongly emphasized in all partner universities, which is succinctly overviewed in the SER and clearly visible in the Consortium Agreement, websites of the partner universities, and their disclaimers provided as part of the SER.

In this section, the capacity of the UP Faculty of Education is discussed at length as the primary focus of this evaluation.

The UP Faculty of Education has made significant strides in developing a research culture internally. In its strategic document for 2022-2026, Strategic Objective 2 is dedicated to Research, Innovation, and Internationalization. The Faculty's plans are elaborate and ambitious in developing research capacity internally, given the insufficient state funding for research and therefore, the lack of research funds at

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the institutional level. The SER highlights the proactive initiative of the Faculty to promote amendments to the regulation concerning the financial provisions for scientific research, which now enables funding of high-quality research projects. However, the site visit meetings made it clear that the scarcity of funds remains a major challenge to maintain and strengthen the research agenda.

Nevertheless, given the constraints, the Faculty's management has remained focused and has prioritised research capacity building in several ways:

1. Institutional strengthening of its research centre and keeping the research clusters stable for creating opportunities for researchers with different interests and appetites. At the same time, create the intellectual spaces for collegial interchange, and possibly - collaborative research.
2. Capacity building of the academic staff in research methods through training, but also by creating possibilities of exposure to international experiences via international research projects.
3. creating research exchange spaces locally by instituting an annual conference in the University of Pristina.

Expectations regarding the involvement of teaching staff in research and scholarly activities are clearly defined, with performance in these areas factored into evaluation and promotion criteria. This ensures a cohesive integration of research and teaching, ultimately enhancing academic excellence and knowledge dissemination. According to data provided by the Faculty, research output is steadily increasing since 2020, with 31 research papers published in internationally indexed journals (in Scopus and Web of Science) by 2023.

Additionally, several internationally funded projects have facilitated experience sharing and opened doors for international collaborations. Academic staff publish under the institution's name, reinforcing the faculty's scholarly identity and affiliations within Kosovo's academic landscape.

However, what is currently lacking are internal collaborations among colleagues within the faculty, as well as interdisciplinary collaboration at the university level or beyond. This deficiency has been identified as a weakness in the SER, and the ET expects the faculty to devise a strategy to address it. An institutional obstacle hindering internal collaboration is that the university only recognizes single-authored publications from its academic staff for promotion. The ET suggests that the faculty's longer-term strategy advocates for collaborative and interdisciplinary research, which holds merit in its own right, thereby improving the local research landscape. This would benefit faculty who must balance teaching, administrative duties, and research responsibilities while feeling the pressure of meeting international standards and “catching up”.



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Being part of this MA program creates the possibility of long-term exposure to international colleagues and hence presents an excellent opportunity for collaborative research. This is one additional strong reason why UP needs to reconsider its policy on recognizing the scientific efforts of academic staff and widen its framework to include collaborative research (both with local and international colleagues).

The research output of the academic staff of the Faculty is disseminated effectively through presentations at local and international conferences and engagements with partners domestically and internationally. These interactions enhance the visibility and impact of the faculty's research output and, more importantly, assist researchers in becoming part of the academic communities of their respective research domains.

The Consortium Agreement provides a detailed section on Intellectual Property Rights (Section 13), which elaborates on the principles and main conditions of working together, considering the intellectual property rights of each partner university, as well as the matter of intellectual property rights if products are created in collaboration.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, as well as in Section 2.4, MA students will have the opportunity to work on short projects during specific courses but will also be assigned to the lab that suits their research interests and pursue their final research project there. Hence, this joint MA program is designed with a strong research component and with the strong involvement of MA students in research projects.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Standard 6.1. 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.	X	
Standard 6.2. Expectations for teaching staff involvement in research and scholarly activities are clearly specified, and performance in relation to these expectations is considered in staff evaluation and promotion criteria.	X	



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Standard 6.3. Clear policies are established for defining what is recognized as research, consistent with international standards and established norms in the field of study of the program.	X 0.5	
Standard 6.4. The academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity.	X 0.5	
Standard 6.5. The academic and research staff publish their work in speciality magazines or publishing houses, scientific/applied/artistic products are presented at conferences, sessions, symposiums, seminars etc. and contracts, expertise, consultancy, conventions, etc. are provided to partners inside the country and/or abroad.	X	
Standard 6.6. Research is validated through: scientific and applied research publications, artistic products, technological transfer through consultancy centres, scientific parks and other structures for validation.	X	
Standard 6.7. Each academic staff member and researcher has produced at least an average of one scientific/applied research publication or artistic outcome/product per year for the past three years.	X 0.5	
Standard 6.8. Academic and research staff publish under the name of the institution in Kosovo they are affiliated to as full-time staff.	X	
Standard 6.8. Academic staff are encouraged to include in their teaching information about their research and scholarly activities that are relevant to courses they teach, together with other significant research developments in the field.	X	
Standard 6.9. Policies are established for ownership of intellectual property and clear procedures set out for commercialization of ideas developed by staff and students.	X	
Standard 6.10. Students are engaged in research projects and other activities	X	

Compliance level: Substantially compliant



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ET recommendations:

1. *ET recommends that the faculty develops a strategy/approach to address lack of collaborative and interdisciplinary research factoring in to overcome the institutional practice of recognising only single authored research output.*

2.7. Infrastructure and resources

For the purposes of discussing infrastructure and resources of the UP Faculty of Education in relation to the needs and necessities of the student body and the academic personnel, it is worth reiterating that the UP will not be hosting students on campus throughout the academic year for this Joint MA program and educational activities will commence at three partner universities. As it is mentioned in the SER, these partner universities, situated in easily accessible central locations in respective capital cities, offer well-maintained infrastructure capable of accommodating up to 25 students per semester, with experience in international student support including orientation activities. While claims about facilities and accessibility are not evaluated by the ET, external quality assurance processes in partner universities will assess the infrastructure accordingly.

According to the Statute of the University of Prishtina, the Faculty is allocated a percentage of financial resources from student fees annually to improve educational quality and cover unforeseen expenditures related to educational matters. This percentage is decided by the Steering Council of the University of Prishtina. This type of centralized financial management, while simple to manage, detracts from the Faculty's capacity for independent financial planning and management, which might become crucial for the smooth long-term development of the faculty if it has not already posed a challenge.

In the case of this program, the UP central budget was not allocated to its development. The program was developed through an Erasmus Mundus Design Measure. If the program is accredited (in Kosovo and in the respective countries of partner universities), the consortium will apply for Erasmus Mundus Joint Master (EMJM) funding. The program will be launched only if EMJM funding is acquired. The funding runs for six-year periods with the possibility of funding renewal over several rounds. This is how financial sustainability and feasibility of program implementation are secured. As the program development team explained, the consortium is not going to launch the program without obtaining EMJM funds.

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As mentioned earlier, the program will be offered in hybrid mode, and the academic staff members of the Faculty will teach several courses, some of which will happen remotely. As described in the SER and observed during the site visit, internet accessibility, server capacity, and storage are good. Additionally, the Faculty has 24 classrooms equipped with the necessary technology, as well as three computer labs. Nevertheless, it is important that the Faculty/University gradually improves its digital capacity to meet its internationalization ambitions. While the Joint MA program can be a catalyst for new developments, even in terms of infrastructure and management processes, it is important that the pursued changes are sustainable. Sustainability is only attainable if the local actors are committed to it.

The Faculty also has its own library and reading room. Currently, the Faculty hosts a large number of students, and the library cannot cope with this high number. The capacity of the reading room needs to be increased to meet the needs of the current student body. However, students of the Faculty of Education are within walking distance of the National Library of Kosovo (KCB), which has over 400 places in reading and learning rooms. Currently, the infrastructure of the Faculty of Education is not fully adapted to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

In a medium-term perspective, as the internationalization is one of the strategic priorities of the UP, it is crucial that the international student office is established in due time and that the future infrastructure development accounts for hosting international students. For instance, as mentioned earlier, the Faculty of Education will organize and host the summer school for the participants of the IQEd. It is not entirely clear whether the university could host about 25 international students and offer its dormitory facility.

In conclusion, while the academic institution boasts commendable facilities and strategic initiatives, there are avenues for refinement with a focus on internationalization, inclusivity, and further digitalization. Proactive measures aimed at bolstering research infrastructure can catalyze scholarly pursuits, fostering a culture of innovation and inquiry within the academic community. This joint degree program could be the catalyst for this type of infrastructural development.

<i>Standard</i>	Compliance	
	Yes	No



Standard 7.1. The adequate long-term implementation of the study program is ensured in quantitative terms as regards premises, human resources and equipment. At the same time, it is guaranteed that qualitative aspects are also taken into account.	X	
Standard 7.2. There is a financial plan at the level of the study program that would demonstrate the sustainability of the study program for the next minimum three years.	X	
Standard 7.3. The higher education institution must demonstrate with adequate documents (property deeds, lease contracts, inventories, invoices etc.) that, for the study program submitted for evaluation it possesses the following, for the next at least three years: 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.	N/A	
Standard 7.4. The number of seats in the lecture rooms, seminar rooms and laboratories must be related to the study groups' size (series, groups, subgroups); the applicative activities for the speciality disciplines included in the curricula are carried out in laboratories equipped with IT equipment.	X 0.5	
Standard 7.5. 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;	X	



<p>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;</p> <p>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;</p> <p>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;</p> <p>e) a sufficient number of subscriptions to Albanian and foreign publications and periodicals, according to the stated mission.</p>		
<p>Standard 7.6. The infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the program is adapted to students with special needs</p>		<p>X</p>

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Continue improving digitalisation and distance learning facilities to meet growing internationalization ambitions.*
2. *Match infrastructure development plans with the medium to long-term plans of inclusivity, innovation, and internationalization, so that the educational ecosystem positively comes together.*



3. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

The Expert team would like to commend the programme development team for their proactive engagement with the Panel during the validation event. There was a very strong sense of teamwork and ownership exhibited by the programme development team. This is the first case of international cooperation to develop a joint program and the team at the Faculty has done an excellent job with it. Having considered the documentation provided and discussed it with the programme development team, the Accreditation Panel recommends the following:

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

The overall compliance is assessed by the experts at the level of **Substantially Compliant**.

However, the following recommendations need to be considered in relation to programmes re-accreditation in future period:

1. *Ensure coherence of the LOs with the National Qualifications Framework.*



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2. *Within the efforts of further institutional development of the Faculty, harmonize functions between the program development teams and the QA emphasizing the leading roles of the content/program developers and the QA as the vehicle of evidence based decision making.*
3. *Initiate discussions with regards to the needed alterations in the QA mechanisms (or processes/procedures) locally as soon as possible to avoid delay in decision making.*
4. *Cultivate the quality culture by sharing the QA assessment/review results with the students.*
5. *Consider organizing regular experience sharing activities/events to spread the international MA program experience among other faculty members to define best practices and institutionalize them for a sustainable faculty development.*
6. *Consider organizing regular experience sharing activities/events to spread the international MA program experience among other faculty members to define best practices and institutionalize them for a sustainable faculty development.*
7. *Have a final look at the program's learning outcomes and assess their attainability and measurability against the designated courses for each of the four domains (e.g. using the SMART technique).*
8. *While it might be an overall pathos of the equal treatment, ET suggests making it clearer, what is the policy and the approach of the Consortium towards the students with special needs*
9. *At the faculty level, develop a strategy/approach to address lack of collaborative and interdisciplinary research factoring in the overcoming of the institutional practice of recognising only singl- authored research output.*
10. *Continue improving digitalisation and distance learning facilities to meet growing internationalization ambitions.*
11. *Match infrastructure development plans with the medium to long-term plans of inclusivity, innovation, and internationalization, so that the educational ecosystem positively comes together.*

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program *IQED* with the standards included in the *KAA Accreditation manual* and, therefore, recommends to *accredit* the study program for a duration of **5 years** with a number of **25 students** to be enrolled in the program.

4. APPENDICES (if available)

None



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Expert Team

Chair

(Signature)

Elene Jibladze

(10.05.2024.)