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***UNIVERSITY OF PRISHTINA “HASAN PRISHTINA”
FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE AND VETERINARY
M.Sc. PLANT PROTECTION AND PHYTOMEDICINE
REACCREDITATION***

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

December 2024, Prishtina

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
INTRODUCTION	3
Site visit schedule	3
A brief overview of the institution under evaluation	3
PROGRAMME EVALUATION	6
1. MISSION, OBJECTIVES AND ADMINISTRATION	6
2. QUALITY MANAGEMENT	8
3. ACADEMIC STAFF	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4. EDUCATIONAL PROCESS CONTENT	15
5. STUDENTS	19
6. RESEARCH	21
7. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES	24

INTRODUCTION

Sources of information for the Report:

- SER
- Syllabus
- Staff CVs
- Annexes
- Info acquired during the visit

Abbreviations

EHEA: European Higher Education Area

ET: Expert team

FAV: Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary

HEI: Higher Education Institution

KAA: Kosovo Accreditation Agency

MEST: Ministry of Education Science and Technology

OFQA: Office for Quality Assurance

SER: Self-evaluation report

SWOT: Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

UP :University of Prishtina

Programme Accreditation Procedure at UP Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine	
Programmes:	UP Pomology and Viticulture, MSc UP Plant Protection-Fitomedicine, MSc
Site visit on (hybrid):	18 December 2024
Expert Team:	Prof. Reiner Doluschitz Prof. Kiriaki Zinoviadou Ms. Nadia Manzoni
Coordinators of the KAA:	Ms. Leona Kovaçi, KAA Officer Ms. Ilirjana Ademaj Ahmeti, KAA Officer

Site Visit Programme

Time	Meeting	Participants
08:30 – 09:00	Meeting with the management of the faculty	Arben Musliu Sali Aliu Alltane Kryeziu

		Fatgzim Latifi
09:00– 10:00	Meeting with the program holders of the study programme UP Pomology and Viticulture, MSc	Prof. Vahid Avdiu Prof. Bedri Dragusha
10:05 – 11:05	Meeting with the program holders of the study programme UP Plant Protection-Fitomedicine, MSc	Prof. Arben Mehmeti Prof. Fadil Musa
11:05 – 11:45	Meeting with teaching staff	Sali Aliu, Muhamet Zogaj, Mentor Thaqi, Saranda Musa, Betim Bresilla, Mimoza Jakupaj, Xhavit Ramadani, Muhamet Zogaj, Lavdim Lepaja, Sami Kryeziu, Mergim Zogaj
11:45 – 12:45	Lunch break	
12:45 – 13:25	Meeting with students	Xheneta Isufi, Kaltrina Selimi, Djellorita Lushaku, Yll Shtavica, Florent Hoxha, Rexhep Dervishaj, Adhuron Hoti, Blendi Gashi, Diellza Uka, Fjolla Plakolli, Elira Sheholli, Xhemile Xhemajli,
13:25 – 14:05	Meeting with graduates	Naim Delijaj, Fatlinda Muqiqi, Ymer Ymeri, Burim Ahmeti, Liridon Mustafa, Drilon Blakaj, Adni Islami, Egzona Hajra Egzon Maqani
14:10 – 14:50	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders	Lirim Sadiku-AgroEko, Samet Fetahu-Agro Sodovina, Karsten Klapp-GoBeyond, Qendrim Selimi- Agroelita, Muhamet Demolli- Greenhouse production, Zenel Bunjaku-IADK, Naim Rrahmani- Asociation of walnuts & hazelnuts, Xhavit Alija-Prilli 98
14:50 – 15:00	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts	
15:00 – 15:10	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program	Arben Musliu Sali Aliu Alltane Kryeziu Fatgzim Latifi Gezim Hodolli
15:10 – 16:10	Visiting Facilities at FAV	Arben Musliu Vahid Avdiu Arben Mehmeti

Overall instructions for HEIs:

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

A brief overview of the programme under evaluation

The Faculty of Agriculture was founded on August 26, 1973. The aim of this foundation has been the faster development of the agricultural sector in Kosovo by graduating well educated people with superior qualifications in agriculture. By decision of the Senate of University in Prishtina in 1996, the veterinary section was established with the aim of educating professionals in veterinary medicine that would serve animal health, food industry, food security and food safety in general. In 2001, the Senate of the University of Prishtina approved curricula based on the Bologna Declaration for Bachelor Degree. In 2006 the Faculty Council and its academic staff proposed expanding the Faculty of Agriculture to the Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary (FAV). The proposal became approved by the Senate of the University of Prishtina (UP) and subsequently the Minister of Education, Science and Technology issued an amending Decision no. 883/01-B, on December 2006. In 2023 a total of 2239 students (BSc and MSc) graduated according to the report of the Student Services of FAV

The statistics for students in Master programs, Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary, grouped by programs and academic years (from 2016/17 up to 2024/25) are provided below.

Table 1. Number of students enrolled in Master's study programs at the Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine divided by Departments:

Department	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Agriculture and Food Economics	24	19	19	19	19	17	20	19	19
Plant Protection - phytomedicine	12	14	10	10	10	10	9	8	5
Pomology and Viticulture	11	12	10	10	14	7	9	10	7
Urban Agriculture	/	/	/	/	/	15	16	/	/
Crop Science	/	/	/	/	/	/	12	10	12
Horticulture-Fruits and Vineyards	12	11	11	10	17	/	/	/	/
Food Sciences	/	/	/	40	40	30	/	/	/
Public Health	11	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/

The program under evaluation for reaccreditation is a 2-year M.Sc. study program in Plant protection and Phytomedicine with 120 ECTS. The number of students on FAV degree

programs is generally declining. One important reason for this is the demographic development in Kosovo and the decreasing interest of the young generation in agriculture, however there are other reasons specific to this faculty and to this programme that will be identified in this report and which require attention.

PROGRAMME EVALUATION

1. MISSION, OBJECTIVES AND ADMINISTRATION

Standard 1.1 The study program is in line with the higher education institution's mission and strategic goals, needs of society and it is publicly available. (ESG 1.1)

The mission of the study program is in line with the missions of FAV and UP as it is stated in the SER and confirmed in the on-site-visit discussion. The agricultural sector in Kosovo is still under development and an important element of the national economy. Therefore, ag-related study programs are of special high importance for Kosovo.

A particular positive aspect of the study program under evaluation is the close collaboration with local and national agribusiness-enterprises. This is generally of high relevance in order to provide internships, topics for BSc.-theses and foster subsequent job opportunities of students. This is of extraordinary importance in Kosovo due to the difficult situation of its labor markets. The SER confirms that the study program has a long-term vision of fulfilling its function and mission, in creating a perspective for the new generation, modernizing and reforming the education system in accordance with the requirements of the labor market in Kosovo, as well as with Regional and European Integration in the fields of Agriculture, Veterinary, Food, and Agribusiness.

The program under evaluation is based on a rudimentary analysis of the labor market, which does not include statistics or data on the employment outcomes for graduates as no regular graduate tracking or surveys are conducted for this programme. The basics analysis however was developed in cooperation with actors from the labor market and agricultural organizations.

The intended learning outcomes of the study program are in line with the missions of FAV and UP as stated in the SER.

The infrastructure, in particular the provision of premises has improved somewhat compared to the former situation from springtime 2024 when the last evaluation took place. It is stated in the SER that there are 3.2 m² available space for each student. However, since FAV has still no permanent solution for the infrastructure, it is hard to estimate the relation between students and space.

Standard 1.2 The study program is subject to policies and procedures on academic integrity and freedom that prevent all types of unethical behaviour. The documents are publicly available, and staff and students are informed thereof. (ESG 1.1)

It is indicated in the SER that the study program follows specific procedures for handling cases of plagiarism, informing staff and students about the course of the process. Students and staff are informed about the appropriate steps to follow after a positive result from the software appeared.

Ethical standards are published on the university website, included in student packs and handbooks for staff and students, and are rigorously monitored. This is confirmed by the SER. In summary it can be concluded that there are clear ethical regulatory standards that govern teaching and research.

According to the following statement in the SER it can be confirmed that the Ethics Commission and other structures are active in monitoring and dealing with cases of unethical behavior, and their decisions are distributed anonymously to ensure transparency and fairness. Based on the Statute, the Regulation, and the Code of Ethics, the Department of Agroecconomics continually shows the rights and obligations of the students.

Discussions with representatives from all levels of the study program confirmed that the information management system (SEMS) includes relevant, updated and reliable information. Furthermore, concrete action plans are mentioned during the on-site-visit to monitor the implementation of the study program. This is not explicitly confirmed in detail in the SER.

Standard 1.3 Relevant information is collected, analysed and used to ensure the effective management of the study program and other relevant activities and such information is publicly available. (ESG 1.7)

The information management system (SEMS) includes relevant, updated and reliable information. Furthermore, concrete action plans are in place to monitor the implementation of the study program).

It is confirmed in the SER that there are clear ethical regulatory standards that govern teaching and research.

Recommendations for improving the study program, given by previous quality assurance procedures, are analyzed but the implementation is not effective (see Standard 1.5).

It is not explicitly mentioned in the SER about student involvement. Additionally, the SER is somehow structured differently in the section of standard 1.4.

Standard 1.4 The delivery of the study program is supported by appropriate and sufficient administrative support to achieve its goals in teaching, learning, research, and community service. (ESG 1.6)

All study program activities and operations are subject to a policy and review process that ensures adequate and efficient administrative staff and budgetary support. This is confirmed in the SER.

The SER also confirms that the administrative staff is subject to continuous professional training, which is important for the performance of their duties. Staff trainings are held 3 times a year, which are organized and financed by the rectorate. This has been confirmed by the on-site-visit discussion.

The study program has sufficient administration to support the teaching and learning needs of students and academic staff. This is confirmed in the SER. It is mentioned in the SER that the administrative staff is subject to continuous professional training as mentioned above, including training in foreign languages, computer and other important skills.

Standard 1.5 The recommendations for quality improvement of the study program from previous internal and external quality assurance procedures are implemented. (ESG 1.10)

Recommendations for improving the study program, given by previous quality assurance procedures, are analyzed and partially implemented (SER). Action plans have been developed to address issues identified by experts and concrete improvements have been made based on these recommendations. Examples include increase the number of staff in the department, Action Plan for gender equality. However, these activities should be increased and improved.

It is claimed in the SER that reviews of policies and regulations are conducted “as appropriate in the circumstances of the change”, however, there is no fixed schedule for a regular review.

ET recommendations:

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

- 1. Increase student involvement in all relevant procedures of the study program.*
- 2. External comments and recommendations should become considered more intensively and efficiently and a team should be designated for following up on expert recommendations regularly..*
- 3. Specific budget allocation to additional professional development of teaching staff is recommended*
- 4. Intensified exchange with comparable programs in international level is recommended*

2. QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Standard 2.1 The study program delivery is subject to an established and functional internal quality assurance system, in which all relevant stakeholders are included. (ESG 1.1)

UP Senate in February 2007 decided to establish the Office for Quality Assurance. By the Law on Higher Education and the Statute of UP University of Pristina "Hasan Prishtina" has developed its internal system for quality assurance. The position of a quality assurance coordinator has been installed. The quality of education provided is monitored and reviewed by the Office of Quality Assurance (OFQA). This is confirmed in the SER and in the on-site-visit discussion..

There is a quality assurance policy. However, it is not mentioned explicitly in the SER whether this is publicly available and fully implemented.

Internal quality assurance procedures for the study program are defined by the internal regulations of HEI (for example, quality assurance regulation, quality assurance guideline, etc.).

The policies and processes of the internal quality assurance system form a cycle for continuous improvement (PDCA) should become further elaborated and more efficiently used.

The position of a quality assurance coordinator has been installed. However, it is not mentioned explicitly in the SER whether this coordinator does not have teaching obligations. SER indicates that the program must have a dedicated staff to oversee and ensure quality, independent of other teaching obligations.

The SER confirms that UP each year prepares electronic questionnaires for students through which it measures quality, complaints, suggestions or student requests. Aspects of academic staff performance are included as well.

Standard 2.2 The study program is subject to a process of design and approval established by the HEI. (ESG 1.2)

It has been repetitively confirmed that the study program fulfils this request. It aligns with the institution's/academic unit's mission and strategic goals.

The study program under evaluation here underwent an adequate and transparent internal quality assurance process and was formally approved by the designated strategic management bodies of the institution. Its continuous improvement is planned. Such a process is explained in the SER in detail. A continuous improvement system should be further elaborated and implemented.

The process for the development and approval of the study program is well-defined by internal procedures as well as external procedures, e.g. submission of the program description to KAA and there undergo an evaluation and accreditation procedure including international experts from suitable fields of expertise.

From the SER it can be quoted that Principal Performance Indicators for this level of study program have been set up. These performance indicators are measured through the forms set

out in the respective regulation. However, key performance parameters should become highlighted more prominently.

Standard 2.3 The study program is periodically monitored and reviewed to ensure its objectives are achieved. The monitoring of the study program involves stakeholder participation. (ESG 1.9)

There is a Stakeholder Board established at the faculty. Discussions with members of this board have been taken place during the on-site-visit. International experts and evaluators had the impression that this board is quite active and concerned. The monitoring includes surveys of employers to determine the competences needed in the labor market, analyzes carried out in collaboration with stakeholders and examples of improvements based on stakeholders' evaluations of the study program.

The study program undergoes regular checks to establish whether the estimated workload (ECTS) allocation of students and the defined learning outcomes are achievable, realistic and adequate.

As already mentioned before, the course syllabus determines regular assessments of students' achieved results in the course. (see also SER).

It is confirmed in the SER that FAV established the AGRO Career Center for Jobs, since its establishment 40 young graduates in agriculture have been placed in private agribusiness companies. The department maintains constant contact with graduates and often mediates their employment through cooperation with private companies, banks, agencies.

There is a stakeholder survey established. Each academic year, the University of Prishtina through SEMS assesses the academic staff. The assessment results are made public. Student visits, organized by the Department of Agricultural Economics, to agricultural businesses, allow constant contact with employers from whom feedback is received as well as from employed students and also a list of cooperation with private companies and agencies is provided by the Department. The ET trusts this statement and recommends to keep up with this integrated system of information flow.

In the SER it is announced that processes for monitoring and improving the quality of student placements are clearly defined, consistently implemented and include stakeholder assessments such as student, mentor and employer questionnaires.

The collected information is analysed and concrete actions are taken to ensure that the program is up to date. Concerning this request the SER can be quoted as follows: "The information collected from all internal and external actors is used for updating. Texts and materials used as references for lectures are constantly updated and systematically published in the SEMS."

All monitoring results and action plans are publicly announced on the website of UP, and all stakeholders are kept informed of changes or improvements in the program.

Standard 2.4 All relevant information about the study program is clear, accurate, objective, up-to-date and is publicly available. (ESG 1.8)

All policies, regulations and guidelines pertaining to the study program are publicly available and such information is easily accessible by all interested parties.

Information on admission criteria, recognition of qualifications, enrolment quotas, syllabuses, learning outcomes, credits, assessment methods, and final qualification are published in a respective regulation (<https://dokumente.uni-pr.edu/>).

It is clearly mentioned in the SER that pass rate and dropout rate information can be found through SEMS. Students who decide to leave the faculty are obliged to deregister as detailed in the respective regulation.

The responsible units for the maintenance of publicly available information on the study program is accurate and is in place and it provides reliable, objective and updated information. It is convincing and the ET trust that UP and FAV regularly update all published information and make it accurate according to the needs of the program and society. This information is easily accessible on the website of the Faculty and the website of the University. This is confirmed by respective statements in the SER as well as it has been reported during the on-site-visit discussions.

ET recommendations:

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

- 1. Reports of surveys and evaluations should be exemplarily provided as documents in the Appendix of the SER.*
- 2. A monitoring system for measuring continuous progress of students should become further elaborated.*
- 3. Key quality parameters of the study program such as number of applications, enrolment, completion rate, duration of the study and grade overview should be included into the QA mechanism on a regular basis and also provided in the SER.*
- 4. Aggregated results of the course evaluations should be provided to the teaching staff, the FAV management and included in the SER.*
- 5. Office for Quality Assurance should be better staffed on UP and FAV level*

3. ACADEMIC STAFF

Standard 3.1 The study program delivery is supported by teaching staff who are recruited in line with national legislation, and internal regulations in effect, and it is based on objective and transparent procedure. (ESG 1.5)

In the provided SER information regarding the announcement of the vacancies nationally and internationally as well as examples of completed carried out teacher recruitment procedures are lacking. During the visit it was confirmed that UP has adequate procedures

for the selection of the best candidates for each position that is aligned with national legislation. The selection, re-election, and promotion of academic staff at the University of Pristina is determined by the regulation for selection procedures related to the appointment, reappointment, and promotion of academic personnel. For more details about the regulation and the selection and promotion procedures, see the link below <https://dokumente.uni-pr.edu/>. Unfortunately most of the documents in this inventory are in Albanian but the visiting team trusts that all procedures are done according to the National legislation

Standard 3.2 The study program is supported by sufficient permanent academic staff who are adequately qualified to deliver the study program. (ESG 1.5)

The Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary (FAV) currently has 54 permanent staff, of which 17 serve as full professors, 18 as associate professors, 17 as assistant professors, and 2 as teaching assistants. To implement all study programs offered by FAV, 38 additional academic staff is engaged as part-time staff. The following table lists the names of permanent academic staff involved in the FAV. About 9 professors and teaching assistants have been assigned to implement the proposed study program in Plant protection-Phytomedicine. In that respect the department is in compliance with the rule that requires for every 60 ECTS in the study program, at least one full-time staff with a doctoral degree or equivalent title in the case of an applied science institution to be employed.

As clearly stated in the SER The University of Pristina (UP) in coordination with KAA and the Tax Administration of Kosovo does not allow UP academic staff to cover within an academic year more than two teaching positions, one full-time and one part-time.

Unfortunately relatively limited information has been provided via the SER and a number of indicators had to be evaluated during the visit. It can be declared that at least 50% of the academic staff who are involved in delivering the study program are full-time HEI employees (employment contracts). However, despite the fact that table 4 provides the names of permanent and temporary academic staff at Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary as well as their expertise it is not possible to identify the names of the staff that is directly involved in this MSc program. This can be achieved only by studying the tables provided for Standard 4.

The provided CVs prove that the number and qualifications of academic staff are adequate for the implementation of the study program and for performing scientific/professional activity at the required level. As stated in the SER all academic staff involved in teaching in Msc Plant Protection and Phytomedicine possesses proper documentation as required by applicable regulations approved by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA). Moreover, all the academic staff involved in Msc Plant Protection and Phytomedicine studies has completed the online forms of the Accreditation Agency.

The academic staff respects fully the working hours and besides teaching, each of the academic staff at least twice a week has consultations with students, this is shown at the door of the professor's office. In addition, the request/appointment to meet with the professor can be administered electronically via SEMS.

As the number of active students is limited the required ratio of students to full-time academics for the study program (1:30) is easily achieved. During the visit it was observed that a number of staff members are involved in more than one programs delivered in FAV. Despite the fact that this is a common practice in a large number of International Institutions it creates confusion when it is required to calculate the total workload of the members. Moreover, the fact that only the name of the permanent staff appears on the curriculum provided in Standard 4 can lead to the conclusion that only two full time faculty are providing most of the compulsory courses. Despite the fact that it is not stated in the SER the visiting team trusts that the distribution of faculty responsibilities - including student mentoring, teaching, research professional development, administrative duties, and community service - is well balanced and responsibly managed.

Standard 3.3 The study program is supported by teaching staff who are subject to advancement and reappointment based on objective and transparent procedures which include the evaluation of excellence. The advancement of staff arises from the higher education institution's strategic goals and is in line with the legislation and internal regulations in effect. (ESG 1.5)

As mentioned in the SER the participation of teaching staff in various training courses related to didactic and scientific research topics is monitored and evaluated with additional scores during the process of academic promotion and renewal of working contract with the respective faculty of UP (regulation No. 886, dated 27.04.2022, for more detailed information see the link <https://dokumente.uni-pr.edu/>).

Standard 3.4 The academic staff engaged in the delivery of the study program is entitled to institutional support for professional development. (ESG 1.5)

It is important that the strategy in teaching is faced as a continuous process that is implemented by UP and in collaboration with universities. This process is subject to all the academic staff of FAV but also to the faculty of the Plant protection department. Improving the quality of teaching and training with the newest teaching methods is one of the necessary criteria that must be met by each teacher who intends to advance to a higher academic level, but also those who claim to become part of the teaching staff. In the meetings that were conducted during the visit the ET had the opportunity to discuss with faculty and to confirm that this is the case.

It is crucial to point out that UP has approved the amendment of the Regulation for the financing of research activity - scientific, artistic, and sports (Regulation No. 886, dated 27.05.2021 <https://dokumente.uni-pr.edu/>). According to this regulation, the UP will finance

three publications per academic year, for staff members, from the two previously supported, according to the provisions of the regulation in question. In addition, the budget of financed projects has increased from 8 thousand Euros per academic unit to 25 thousand Euros per project (two projects per academic unit).

UP has established the Center for Excellence in Teaching which offers comprehensive training for newly hired teachers. Existing staff members are required to attend two training sessions before the expiration of their first contract.

In addition to participating in teaching training, organized by the University of Pristina itself, academic staff participates abroad in various training, and mobilities through various schemes projects offered by higher education institutions. The participation of teaching staff in various training courses related to didactic and scientific research topics is monitored and evaluated with additional scores during the process of academic promotion and renewal of working contract with the respective faculty of UP and that gives them additional incentives(regulation No. 886, dated 27.04.2022, for more detailed information see the link <https://dokumente.uni-pr.edu/>).

Standard 3.5 External associates who teach at the study program have adequate qualifications and work experience for the delivery of the study program and achievement of the intended learning outcomes. (ESG1.5)

The engagement of external collaborators is based on the criteria established in the evaluation procedure regulations for the engagement of external collaborators. More info regarding the criteria and regulations is provided in <https://dokumente.uni-pr.edu/> but it is in Albanian. However, the training they receive in order to be able to effectively supervise students following the required academic standards is not clarified in the SER.

ET recommendations:

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

- 1. The total workload of all faculty should be clearly demonstrated and the involvement of temporary staff in each course should be declared.*
- 2. Faculty should be constantly trained on the use of AI and other technologies so that they will be able to evaluate student work more effectively.*
- 3. In the future the SER should include more information and links to inventories that include all the required documents should be provided.*
- 4. The number of permanent staff should be increased as FAV relies greatly on a number of faculty that are occupied temporarily and this fluidity can negatively affect the overall quality.*
- 5. Develop a concrete guide including assessment criteria that will be used by any stakeholders that are involved in thesis or internship supervision.*

4. EDUCATIONAL PROCESS CONTENT

Standard 4.1 The study program intended learning outcomes are formulated clearly, precisely, and comprehensively according to the best practices; they are aligned with the published institution's/academic unit's mission and strategic goals and are publicly available. (ESG 1.2)

The mission of the Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary is stated as “transfer of knowledge and competences to future experts in all branches of the agro-food chain” including “Production and processing of raw materials of plant and animal origin and food security” and “Plant protection during production, storage and their processing”. Therefore the learning outcomes and the goals of the study programme are aligned with the overall institution's mission.

However, the objectives of the study programme are formulated in a way that privileges scientific research in phytomedicine and plant protection: “The overall objective of the study program in Plant protection-Phytomedicine is to educate and to prepare students for the scientific and research work in the field of Plant protection. Students are required to learn to utilize contemporary scientific literature in order to gain the necessary knowledge to determine direction of the research. Students are required to learn how to set a scientific hypothesis, plan and conduct research, select adequate research methods, and interpretation of research results with critical analyses, and logical conclusions. The intended learning outcomes of the course are therefore not aligned to the goals of the study programme, as there is not enough emphasis on the research competences and skills, but rather a large component of the learning outcomes pertains to “knowledge”. This misalignment can have serious consequences on the expectation management, teaching and assessment methods as well as ultimately graduate skills and employability.

The curriculum designers have used good practices from an international project when devising the learning outcomes. However, the learning outcomes are mostly phrased in terms of “knowledge” and there is insufficient emphasis on competences and skills that students are expected to acquire through the study programme.

The learning outcomes were modelled on the curriculum harmonised among 8 international universities in a TEMPUS-funded project from 2010s. Therefore they meet the criteria of being modeled on good practice from abroad, however, this project is now 15 years old and there is an urgency to update the curriculum in line with advances in scientific discovery, technology and pedagogy.

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

The learning outcomes of the MSc study programme in Plant Protection and Phytomedicine are correctly attributed to EQF level 7. The learning outcomes were modelled on the curriculum harmonised among 8 international universities in a TEMPUS-funded project from 2010s. All of the participating universities committed to mutually recognising each others qualifications in plant protection/phytomedicine under certain conditions. The evaluation team received the consortium agreement which is of good quality, however it is not clear to what extent this recognition of qualifications among consortium universities has been put into practice through international exchanges.

The positive consequence of having participated in this international project is that ECTS credits are assigned to the courses and that the balance between core mandatory and elective subjects is satisfactory. There are no elective subjects in the first semester, but there are 2 electives in the second semester, weighing 12 ECTS and another elective weighing 6 ECTS in the third semester. In addition, there is a 6 ECTS short internship in the third semester and a 30ECTS thesis in the final semester. The electives can be chosen from the list of 15 proposed electives, but considering the class is so small, the students probably have to agree on the same elective course to make it sustainable which means that the electives are not exactly a free choice of students and students do not have full autonomy in choosing their specialisations, as should be the case in a Masters programme.

It is highly unusual that all courses weigh 6 ECTS across all 4 semesters and it is also unclear why each of the courses has the exact same distribution of theoretical lectures and practical exercises (each is assigned the number 2 in the table on 5 of the SER, without explanation of what the numbers stand for).

It is not explicit from the curriculum, though it can be assumed, that the level that is expected of students is higher than that of the Bachelor studies. No overlap with other Master programmes is evident.

Standard 4.3 The content and structure of the curriculum is coherent and enable the students to achieve the intended learning outcomes and to progress smoothly through their studies. (ESG 1.2)

There does not appear to be a progressive increase in complexity of subjects and demands from students between the first semester and the final fourth semester. For instance, the courses do not progress from more general to more specialised courses over the course of the Master programme, which would be expected as students build their more specialised skills on the previously gained general knowledge. The flow of courses is therefore not clear and the distinction between general and specific competences is not made. As a result, it is also

not evident that the learning outcomes of previously passed courses are sufficient prerequisites for next courses in the curriculum, at least not on paper.

The structure of the curriculum includes half of the courses each semester being mandatory and the other half elective. Students choose from a possible list of 15 elective subjects, however, considering the class is so small, the students probably have to agree on the same elective course to make it sustainable which means that the electives are not exactly a free choice of students and students do not have full autonomy in choosing their specialisations, as should be the case in a Masters programme.

It is highly unusual that all courses weigh 6 ECTS across the first three semesters and it is also unclear why each of the courses has the exact same distribution of theoretical lectures and practical exercises (with lectures assigned 2 hours and practical exercises assigned 2 hour per week).

The literature assigned for courses is often very outdated, up to 30 years old or older in some cases. Many of the assigned literature pieces are in English, which is not necessarily a drawback but no English language course is provided to students as part of the study programme and it is questionable how good the student's English skills are.

When it comes to comparability with learning outcomes of programmes abroad, in terms of content, there is a distinct lack of courses that can cover more current topics. As the Green Deal in Europe is forcing for a greater percentage of organic production, courses on Ecological pest management and Regenerative Agriculture should be incorporated in the curriculum. Additionally, courses on Genomics and bioinformatics and the use of such technologies should be added into the program.

Standard 4.4 If the study program leads to degrees in regulated professions, it is aligned with the EU Directives and national and international professional associations. (ESG 1.2)

N/A This study programme does not lead to a regulated profession.

Standard 4.5 The intended learning outcomes of the student practise period are clearly specified, and effective processes are followed to ensure that learning outcomes and the strategies to develop that learning are understood by students (if applicable). (ESG 1.2)

The curriculum includes both practical work in each mandatory and elective course (which forms 50% of the final course grade) and an internship of 6 ECTS in the third semester. Lab assistants assist professors in running the practical exercises. Students get assigned a member of academic staff from the Plant protection study program to accompany their internship,

during which they write a journal. The FAV has signed a cooperation agreement with main stakeholders to facilitate the internships.

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

This standard is very difficult to verify. Small groups (in this case 5-6 students per year) normally imply a more student-centred pedagogical approach as professors can dedicate individual attention to students. However, the whole Master course including elective subjects is taught essentially by 2 members of academic staff which means students do not have access to different teaching styles and diversity in pedagogical approaches. The two professors have an h-index of 2 and 10 after a decades long career in academia, which is considered very low, and they have not been able to publish well cited work for a number of years, presumably also due to high teaching load and many administrative responsibilities in the faculty. There is also no contingency plan should one of the two professors (who are also study programme coordinators and who teach in other study programmes in the Faculty) be in some way incapacitated to teach. In that case, the sustainability of this programme would be seriously harmed.

Standard 4.7 The evaluation and assessment used in the study program are objective and consistent and ensures that intended learning outcomes are achieved. (ESG 1.3)

The evaluation methods are too heavily reliant on written and oral exams, according to the detailed syllabus. Where courses have a heavy component of skills development and practical knowledge, the assessment methods should be adapted accordingly, and students' applied knowledge and skills should be assessed through applied and practical tests, both in group teamwork assignments and individual assignments. The detailed syllabus lists only generic evaluation methods for each subject and their respective weight for the final overall grade, in this form: "Midterm Evaluation 35%, Homework or presentations, seminars 15%, Regular attendance 10%, Final exam 40%, Total 100%". This is insufficient for students to know in what form the evaluation, homework and final exam will be administered – whether it is a written question and answer exam, a multiple choice exam, a presentation or group project or other type of evaluation. Therefore, the conclusion is that the evaluation does not adequately align with the learning outcomes when expressed in knowledge, skills and competences. Students are informed about assessment methods at the beginning of each term.

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

The workload is calculated and ECTS assigned to all learning activities that lead to the program learning outcomes including the learning outcomes of the program components, however see standard 4.7. for the drawbacks of the assessment criteria.

ET recommendations:

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

- 1. Revise the study programme objectives according to latest advances in technology and scientific discovery and ensure alignment of learning outcomes with the overall study programme objectives.*
- 2. Review the allocation of ECTS points per subject to ensure that the allocation of ECTS is in line with the workload and the assessment criteria in each subject.*
- 3. Revise the intended learning outcomes in a way that ensures inclusion of competences and skills including research skills, critical and creative thinking and other competences relevant to the labour market.*
- 4. Allocate more teaching staff to the programme to ensure that students are taught by a larger number of staff with expertise in the subject area and to ensure that professors have sufficient time for research and publications alongside their teaching and administrative responsibilities.*

5. STUDENTS

Standard 5.1 Clear admission policies, including requirements, criteria and processes for the study program are clearly defined and are publicly available. (ESG 1.4)

In the academic year 2024/2025, there was no open call for admission in the summer phase, only in the autumn phase, because the study programme did not have accreditation during the summer of 2024. This meant that there was a very low enrolment. Reportedly, previously the ratio of applications to enrolments used to be 2:1 (so approximately 20 interested students for 10 spots) but in this academic year, only 5 students were enrolled, down from 8 in previous year and 9 in the year before that. This may be an exceptional case, but the enrolments should be monitored continuously in the years to come as they are decreasing steadily and such low numbers may make the programme unsustainable in the future.

Conditions for admission of students are set by the University of Prishtina, which announces the competition for enrolment of students publicly. The procedure is open to all interested students. The SER states that the admission of students for studying at a MSc level at the Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary is based on the success in the admission test and the score earned in graduation test, as prescribed in the UP regulations. The students admitted to the programme possess a high school graduation diploma, as per UP regulation.

Students who have completed BSc studies in related fields, such as Plant production and Agro-economy, are favoured when applying for the MSc in Plant protection-Phytomedicine and the rectorate sets additional conditions for students who have completed other study

programmes. This practice means that admission criteria are not equally and fairly applied to all students.

Standard 5.2 Student progression data for the study program are regularly collected and analyzed. Appropriate actions are taken to ensure the student's completion of the study program. (ESG 1.4)

There is no evidence of neither student progression monitoring practice nor student completion incentives in this MSc programme. The lack of an established quality culture means that there is no high level of awareness of the importance of learning from data such as student progression rates for internal quality improvement.

It is tolerated and socially acceptable (and propagated by the student union as one of their key demands towards the Faculty) for students to make extensive use of the option to retake exams up to 5 times during the year, for students to be inactive but not officially removed from the student register or to take many years to complete the degree.

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

The programme has no incoming international students and therefore also no conditions in place to welcome them or support them, nor measures in place for offering foreign language training, such capacities do not exist. On the other hand, the outgoing students are supported by one professor and secretarial staff and report very positive feedback in terms of facilitation of their international exchange. Many students take advantage of strategic partnerships with several universities abroad and report good experiences. Precise numbers or statistics were not provided. The level of English of student representatives was also advanced. However, the conditions are not in place for upscaling or mainstreaming such support for international mobility and too much hangs on the shoulders of one academic staff member, their availability and willingness to provide support and advice. This support should be more made systematic and not dependent on one person if internationalisation will be upscaled. The collection of feedback from international students happens informally and if measures are taken to improve procedures of international exchange as a result, this is not documented or systematised.

Standard 5.4 The study program delivery is ensured through adequate resources for student support. The needs of a diverse student population (part-time students, mature students, students from abroad, students from under-represented and vulnerable groups, students with learning difficulties and disabilities, etc.) are taken into account. (ESG 1.6)

The resources for student support beyond academic support are very limited. Students do not emphasize the importance of any support staff beyond their academic mentors, meaning that academic professors are also career counsellors, work experience matchmakers, academic exchange counsellors, mental health counsellors and have many other hats on. Students do not demonstrate a high level of awareness of student rights or disability/learning difficulty rights/mental health support/counselling. They do, however, report a good chain of reporting via the class student representatives who take up their concerns and issues with the right committees in the Faculty. The main topic which these student representatives seem to deal with is ensuring that enough exam retake dates are provided to students, which shows the lack of awareness of other student rights.

Students are provided with information about vacancies, internships and international exchanges via a centralised newsletter of the University of Prishtina's career development centre, however, many work opportunities are found through informal contacts.

Student life outside of lectures and practical lessons is not centred around the faculty, as most students are working students and the limitations with infrastructure and dislocated facilities do not allow for a campus life to thrive. Extracurricular activities and contribution to the social life of the faculty are therefore not in the scope of activities of this faculty.

ET recommendations:

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

1. *Ensure that admission policies are equally treating Bachelor students from all study programmes when entering the programme and that students can take make-up or preparatory classes before or in parallel to enrolling in the programmes.*
2. *Mainstream support and counselling for international exchange and make it less dependent on the engagement of academic staff.*
3. *Regularly collect, analyse and act upon student progression and student completion data, for the purpose of internal quality improvement.*
4. *Introduce student support services dedicated to improving the quality of university life and learning of students and empower the student union to monitor and enhance this process.*

6. RESEARCH

Standard 6.1. The study program aligns with the institution's/academic unit's mission and the research strategic goals.

The study program Plant protection-Phytomedicine at the master level pays great attention to research activities for academic staff and students. Although, specific reference to link

between the program's the scientific/applicative research objectives and the research development plan in higher education institutions (research strategy) is missing from the SER the visiting team trusts that it is very well defined.

Despite the fact that according to the SER Financial and logistical support for research in this specific program is lacking, the policies for promoting scientific research within the university are included within the Strategic Education Plan in Kosovo, the National Science Program in the Republic of Kosovo, the Strategy for scientific research and development, etc. By December 2020, the University of Prishtina approved the regulation for financing scientific research projects proposed by the UP staff. Funding has been ensured so as to award faculty that are active in publishing in scientific journals while university finances one research project for each academic unit with an amount of 25,000 Euros. Other financing schemes within this regulation include fees for participating in international conferences, financing the publication of books or book chapters.

The fact that UP has established "RESEARCH PROJECTS SUPPORTING UNIT" In order to support research projects highlights that commitment to enhancing research activities and this was also highlighted during the meeting of the visiting team with the Senior management team.

Detailed information on human and financial resources is lacking in the SER and only based on the discussions during the meeting it can be confirmed that there are various opportunities for funding for research purposes provided by UP.

Standard 6.2. The academic staff engaged in the study program is committed and supported to achieve high-quality research work and/or professional activity.

The academic staff of the Plant protection department is consistently committed to publishing its research work in international scientific journals, which are indexed in the platforms that are also recommended and accepted by the University of Pristina (UP) Regulation and the Administrative Instruction (AI) of Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MEST). Data on these activities of department academic staff are published in their CVs which are also uploaded to the KAA's electronic system. Very kindly the faculty took the time and provided a list of publications during the team visit upon our request. Each regular staff member has published on average more than two scientific-research publications in the last three years. However, the quality of the journals is not equal and the faculty has to put more effort in publishing in peer reviewed journals with high impact factor. Moreover, it is crucial that the h index of the faculty increases as this is an indicator of research quality.

According to the regulation for promotion of academic staff adopted by the senate of University of Pristina (Source: <https://www.uni-pr.edu/desk/inc/media/C15E46D5-5159-4E97-B8CB-D69734E39CA4.pdf>), one of the main criteria for promotion of the academic staff, are

the number of scientific articles published in various scientific international journals, indexed in SCOPUS, Web of Science, EBSCO, etc. Therefore, promotion of the academic staff provides great incentive to increase the focus on research for all academic staff.

It is very encouraging to find out that, UP has also established a special office called, the Office for Research and Sponsored Projects of UP to enhance staff participation in research and participation in conferences. This office operates based on regulation No. 1/112 dated 25.04.2020. The main role of this office is to support the development and improvement of research projects, announce calls for research projects, and monitor implementation of research projects.

Standard 6.3 The academic staff engaged in the delivery of the study program is encouraged to participate in different aspects of cooperation with national and international partners.

Department of Plant protection cooperates closely with colleagues from Giessen, Germany, partners from Hungary, Iisalmi-Finland, and other partners from regional countries. The faculty has cooperation agreements with foreign institutions of higher education, institutes, for the purpose of conducting joint studies, projects and research and a list of those was provided.

During the visit it was very clear that faculty participate in developing collaborative research agreements with colleagues from other higher education institutions, both domestically and internationally. The teaching staff involved in the study program is supported in collaborating with local partners in the public sector and business industries through joint research projects, collaborative development strategies, and the shared use of equipment and technologies for knowledge transfer. Although, the demand for conducting research from local public and private entities in Kosovo is still relatively underdeveloped the expertise created within the Department is provided in various forms thanks to cooperation with international actors and organizations. Examples of these collaborations include GIZ, the Austrian Development Agency, the American Embassy, the Hungarian Embassy, USAID, etc. The list of implemented and under implementation of scientific research projects is provided as supplementary document to SER.

Standard 6.4 The teaching staff engaged in the study program has a proven record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity.

Staff expertise findings are included in the content provided to students and are made public to the community to assist in resolving problems related to this field of study.

At the MSc level, the practical aspect of the study involves mainly student work in the field of study, which is also realized through various research projects either within the university or other relevant organizations. Students of the study program in Plant protection-Phytomedicine are engaged in research in various forms e.g. research assistant position allows them to work closely with faculty or experienced researchers, students-led research (BSc and MSc Thesis), encouraging students to publish their research findings in academic journals or present them at conferences, hosting workshops or seminars on research.

ET recommendations:

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

- 1. Additional funding should be secured so as to further boost research within the programme and to upgrade scientific equipment*
- 2. Faculty should attend training in preparing applications for national and international funding*
- 3. A position of Vice Dean of Research and Extension should be created in order to enhance research efforts as well as the collaboration with the industry.*
- 4. All academic staff should be given sufficient time and resources in order to be able to publish their research findings.*

7. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

Standard 7.1. The HEI ensures adequate premises and equipment for performing education processes and research. ESG (1.6)

As the new teaching, research and office building of the FAV is still not completed and the recent provisional accommodation in a secondary school was no longer acceptable, the UP has provided lecture halls at the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering (FME) on Rruga Agim Ramadani Street, near the city center. This current temporary solution is much better than the one encountered by the ET during the on-site visit in spring 2024.

The lecture halls, provided by FME on a temporary basis, are adequate in number and quality for the study program under evaluation. The rooms are located in the basement of the building and are accessible by stairs and via elevators for students with walking disabilities.

As the FAV laboratories are still located on the previous premises and the research farm is located on the premises of the new FAV building, the students have activities at three distant

locations, which requires time consuming traveling through city traffic. The FAV management is making an effort to cluster the teaching activities in a way to reduce traveling during the day. The current situation is not optimal but temporarily acceptable until the new FAV building is ready for occupancy. FAV management was able to credibly demonstrate through correspondence that the endangering power lines would be relocated in the foreseeable future, and the move to the new building is unlikely to take place within the years 2025/2026.

The FAV laboratories, still located on the previous premises of the FAV, are in good structural condition and well equipped. The computer training room is well equipped with student workplaces. State-of-the-art software is available with valid licences.

Standard 7.2 The HEI ensures adequate library resources for study program. (ESG 1.6)

According to the SER, the Central University Library and the FAV Library offer reading rooms with a sufficient number of seats and easily accessible support services. The FAV Library provides good internet coverage, enabling students to access electronic resources. Additionally, the opening hours extend beyond regular lecture times. The book collection includes a sufficient amount of Albanian and foreign professional literature, and the libraries maintain an adequate number of subscriptions to both domestic and international journals.

Standard 7.3 The study program is appropriately funded to deliver its intended educational activities and research. (ESG 1.6)

According to the SER, funding for basic infrastructure and operational expenditures related to the study program is incorporated into the overall UP budget, which is allocated by the Assembly of Kosovo through the national budget law, in conjunction with revenues generated by the institution. The FAV operates with an annual budget designated for materials and services. Beside this regular budget, equipment is occasionally purchased through acquired projects.

ET recommendations:

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

- 1. The move to the new FAV research, teaching and office building has top priority. While the power lines are being moved, the building must be renovated and completed simultaneously.*

1. OVERALL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE ET

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program M.Sc. Plant Protection and Phytomedicine offered by the University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina”, Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary is substantially compliant with all Standards as included in the KAA Accreditation manual and, therefore, recommends to accredit the study program for 3 years with an intake of 10 students.

As shown above, the compliance levels per general areas are:

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

However, the Expert team strongly recommend that the faculty invest all efforts in improving the curriculum, material conditions - renovation and moving to the new building should be top priorities.

Expert Team

Chair



Prof. Dr. Reiner Doluschitz

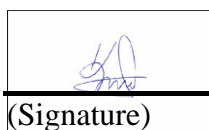
7/02/2025

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