UNIVERSITY OF PRISHTINA "HASAN PRISHTINA"

FACULTY OF MATHEMATICS AND NATURAL SCIENCE

Department of Biology

Study program: Ecology and Environmental protection, MSc

RE-ACCREDITATION

REPORT OF THE EXPERT TEAM

April, Zagreb

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Date of site visit: April 5, 2024

Expert Team (ET) members:

- Prof. Sanja Kalambura, PhD University of Applied Science Velika Gorica, University of Zagreb, expert
- Prof. Mark Davies, Professor Emeritus, expert
- Jadranka Pelikan, MSc.Bioprocessual engineer, PhD, student

Coordinators from Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):

- Leona Kovaçi, KAA Officer

Sources of information for the Report:

- Self-evaluation report University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina", Faculty of Mathematical natural science*), Department of Biology,* study program: Ecology and environmental protection - MSc
- Course Syllabuses
- Professors CV

Requested documents:

- Proof for the standard of work required for the various grades is consistent over time and comparable across courses offered within a degree.
- Authorisation from the UP Ethics Committee to conduct research on animals, in English or Albanian.
- Protocol on animal experiments, if possible, in English or Albanian.
- Test example with learning outcomes.
- Schreen shot off internal page/ intranet for students.
- List of publications in the library related to the two study programmes.

- Results of the student evaluation reports of the last 3 years – Programme evaluation BSc, MSc.
- Internship report tamplate.
- Total number of students per year in the last 3 years for the Bachelor's programme and dropouts.
- Memorandum of Understanding for student internships.
- Information on the summer school – when, how many students, topic.
- Restourant, caffe resources for students.

Additionally, Received documents:

- *Rregullore për financimin e veprimtarisë kërkimore - shkencore, artistike dhe sportive në universitetin e prishtinës 'Hasan Prishtina"*
- *Rregullore e vlerësimit të cilësisë në upkpi-up-included academic staff*
- *Rregullore për procedurat përzgjedhëse lidhur me emërimin, riemërimin dhe avancimin e personelit akademik*
- *Rregullore për themelimin dhe parimet e funksionimit të komisionit për etikë në kërkime shkencore*
- *Kodi i etikës i stafit akademik*
- *Regulation on disciplinary measures and procedures – english*
- *Rregullore për procedurat përzgjedhëse lidhur me emërimin, riemërimin dhe avancimin e personelit akademik në up*
- *A short guide for reviewing*
- *Exam examle*
- *Guidelines for the evaluation of classes and the use of their results*
- *Msc thesis-example.*
- *Non exame evaluation-example*
- *Quality assurance*
- *Quality system at UP*
- *Regulation on quality assurance*
- *Statute of the University of Pristina*
- *Tema e masterit -Fetije Shaqiri*
- *The center for teaching excellence*
- *Roadmap Document advising the senior management of the University of Prishtina (UP)on how to measure the performance of the academic staff.*

Criteria used for program evaluation:

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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.

1.2. Site visit schedule

Date: 5th of April 2024

Expert Team

- Prof.Sanja Kalambura,PhD University of Applied Science Velika Gorica, University of Zagreb, expert
- Prof. Mark Davies, Professor Emeritus, expert
- Jadranka Pelikan, MSc.Bioprocessual engineer, PhD, student

Coordinators of KAA

- Leona Kovaci, Senior Officer for Evaluation and Monitoring

Site Visit Program

Time	Meeting	Participants
09:00 – 10:00	Meeting with the management of the faculty where the programme is integrated	Prof.dr.Idriz Vehapi Prof.dr.Ferdije Zhushi Etemi Prof.dr.Arben Haziri Prof.asoc.Ferim Gashi Prof.asoc.Kajtaz Bllaca Msc.Jeton Hyseni
10:00 – 10.50	Meeting with quality assurance representatives and administrative staff	Prof.ass.Ilir Mazreku Besnik Loxha Artan Alidemaj

10:50 – 11:00	*Short break*	
11:00 – 12:00	Meeting with the heads of the study programme: Ecology and Environmental Protection, BSc 180 ECTS, Prof. Mark Davies	Halil Ibrahimi Elez Krasniqi Agim Gashi
11:00 – 12:00	Meeting with the heads of the study programme: Ecology and Environmental Protection, MSc 120 ECTS, Prof. Sanja Kalambura	Avni Hajdari Linda Grapci Kotori
12:00 – 13:00	*Lunch break*	
13:00 – 13.50	Meeting with teaching staff	Prof.asoc. Kimete Lluga Prof.asoc. Bekim Gashi Prof.Assist. Lulzim Millaku, Dr. Naim Berisha Dr. Fisnik Asllani, Dr. Donard Geci MSc. Bujar Kadriaj
13:50 – 14:35	Meeting with students	Amra Vuçitërna Artiola Zeneli Arbnora Thaqi Arta Peci Trumza Haxhiu, Erza Reka, Zana Bahtiri, Eriona Miftari, Eljesa Seta Dafina Maksuti.
14:35 – 14:45	*Short break*	
14:45 – 15:30	Meeting with graduates	Valmira Gashi Hana Zeka Linda Cafdarbasha Andonita Buçinca
15:30 – 16:15	Meeting with employers of graduates and external stakeholders	Agron Shala - Kosovo Hydro meteorological Institute Afrim Berisha - Kosovo Environmental Protection Agency Fadil Bajraktari - Kosovo Institute for Nature Protection Qenan Maxhuni - KEERC

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16:15 – 16:50	Visiting Facilities	
16:50 – 17:00	Internal meeting of KAA staff and experts	
17:00 – 17:10	Closing meeting with the management of the faculty and program	

No	Study programs	Experts	Responsible persons of study programs
1	Ecology and Environmental Protection, BSc (Re accreditation)	Mark Davies, expert Sanja Kalambura, expert Jadranka Pelikan, student	Halil Ibrahimi Elez Krasniqi Agim Gashi
2	Ecology and Environmental Protection, MSc (Re accreditation)	Sanja Kalambura, expert Mark Davies, expert Jadranka Pelikan, student	Avni Hajdari Linda Grapci Kotori

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

The University of Prishtina (UP) is the largest University in Kosovo, offering a diverse array of programs (bachelor, masters, and doctorate) in different Faculties, including programs in mathematics and natural sciences. The studies in the field of mathematics and natural sciences (chemistry, biology, physics and mathematics) in the UP, for the first time started in 1960, as part of the Faculty of Philosophy. Later, in 1971 section of exact sciences separated from this faculty, and then form this section the Faculty of Mathematical and Natural Sciences (FMNS) was established with the verdict of the Assembly of Kosovo (Official Paper of SAP of Kosovo, no, 37/71). Since that time, full-time and correspondence studies were organized in five departments: Chemistry, Biology, Physics, Geography and Mathematics.

The study program Master Ecology and Environmental Protection is a continuity of the Bachelor of Ecology and Environmental Protection study program.

The specific objectives of the UP are given in Self-evaluation report (SER) are following:

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– To act as an institutional and leadership centre for advancing the knowledge, creative ideas and science in the Kosovo higher education system.
– To have a leading role in the development of education, science, culture, society and economy of Kosovo.
– To actively participate in the process of promoting civic democracy.
– To create and support the highest standards in teaching and learning, scientific research as well as in and artistic creativity.
– To use its resources in the most efficient way.
– To maximize cooperation and participation in higher education activities at national, regional and international levels.
– To adapt to European standards.
– To undertake the appropriate reform steps in the integration process in European Higher Education Area, the European Research Area.

According to the UP Statute, the University create equal opportunities for all, without any discrimination based on gender, race, sexual orientation, marital status, language, religion, political belief, nationality end etc. FMNS, in accordance with the Statute of the UP, sets up the criteria for admission of new students for each academic year. The number of students is proposed by the academic units (faculties), respectively by departments based on their human and material resources, then these quotas approved by the Council of FMNS and by UP Senate. For students who come from families of vulnerable social categories, there is assistance program provided to support their studies, foreseen by the Administrative Instruction published by MEST. The semester fee is also acceptable for most of the social categories (students), while students from the most remote places from Prishtina can stay in dormitory at the University Campus. Teaching in FMNS is organized in a regular (full-time) form and involves a variety of activities planned to achieve the objectives of the courses and the program. These activities include lectures, laboratory work, theoretical and practical exercises, seminars, scientific research, mentoring of students, etc. Curriculum development at FMNS is regulated and implies the development of a series of processes and experiences that students must develop to obtain a degree.

The objectives of the MSc. study program Ecology and the Environment Protection are:

– To provide students with a comprehensive understanding of ecological and environmental concepts and principles, including their application in solving complex problems.

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- To equip students with the skills necessary to conduct independent scientific research and carry out managerial tasks, with a focus on using approaches in line with European standards and best practices.
- To develop effective communication skills, enabling students to communicate research findings and ideas to different stakeholders (including policymakers, researchers, and the general public).
- To foster an understanding of the importance of sustainability development and equip students with the knowledge and skills to promote sustainable practices in their future professional roles.
- To prepare students for advanced studies, including PhD programs, and provide them with the tools necessary to pursue successful careers in academia, industry, government, or non-profit sectors.
- To promote and advance the Ecology and Environmental fields in the national and international labour market by producing highly skilled and knowledgeable graduates in their respective areas.

BRIEF ANALYSIS OF ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

ADVANTAGES OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION:

1. FMNS has ambition and opportunity to lead both education and science in the region
2. Very Good connection with the local and business community
3. Clear mission of the program
4. Satisfactory motivation of professors and management for study program
5. Communication between teaching staff and students is on a good level, teaching staff is available to all students.

DISADVANTAGES OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

1. Internationalization aspects are not yet sufficiently developed.
2. Small number enrolled students.
3. Very poor visibility of the program.
4. Access to learning resources (library and e-books) is limited.

5. The web site does not have enough information's about the institution and does not update the information quickly enough.

6. Implementation of proposals obtained from student's surveys is not on the level that it needs to be.

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

1. Collection and analysis of quality data at all levels at UP.
2. Integration into the local community.
3. Internship program and satisfied students.
4. Good connections with NGO and government bodies.
5. Implementation of different quality insurance instruments.

Recommendation to fulfil after reaccreditation in 2021:

1. *All learning outcomes need to be revised and improve since they are not at the MSc. level.*

2. *The learning outcomes for study programme need to be revised. Especially part which is addressed to careers and general skills.*

3. *The study program should strive for a fundamental revision of the SWOT analysis since strengths and weakness are not in balance and also threats are sometimes actually weakness.*

4. *The study program should strive for a fundamental revision of the SWOT analysis since strengths: The expected learning outcomes of the individual courses as well as entire program are in accordance with the level 7 of the National Qualification Framework is not in correlation with written learning outcomes.*

5. *Study program mission need to be clear and visible*

6. *It is desirable that the total number of learning outcomes at the level of the study program be between 15 and 20.*

7. *Integration of modern teaching practices and research at the program level, especially integration of e-learning and online teaching and learning at all levels of the teaching concept and the entire curriculum in a differentiated way.*

8. *The didactic concept should take into account all relevant stages and elements of the*

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teaching and learning process.

9. *QAS needs to be embedded into practice and mechanisms designed to enable feedback and action within appropriate timescales.*

10. *As set of key performance indicators need to establish (agreed), monitored and reviewed at key times throughout the academic year.*

11. *Open discussion of the course evaluation results with the students.*

12. *Open discussion of the course evaluation results with the teachers.*

13. *The Faculty should make efforts to develop and implement a quality management system which ensures proactive involvement of all stakeholders following a PDCA-cycle approach.*

14. *The culture must change to one of continuous improvement with appropriate feedback and timely/efficient loops e.g., annual cycles*

15. *Write a Development Strategy for Faculty and make it public.*

16. *Be very clear in publication what changes have been brought about by evaluation results.*

17. *The Faculty should make efforts to set functional and operational quality system with all stake holders.*

18. *In different operational quality bodies, it is necessary to involve external stakeholders and Alumni.*

19. *Establishment of alumni tracking and the corresponding integration into institutionalised surveys.*

20. *Introduce additional subjects with a focus on current and future knowledge and skills, both for current students and for external experts who need more advanced knowledge.*

21. *Accept all recommendations from last report.*

22. *Improving the pedagogical competencies of teachers should become part of regular institutional activities.*

23. *The University should encourage teachers to significantly increase outbound mobility.*

24. *Literature revision in Syllabuses is obligatory.*

25. *It is important to ensure objective and transparent grade weight given by each evaluator for academic staff.*

26. *Results of evaluation should be public, at least average grade for study program.*

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27. *Workload of teachers should be monitored as well as the total number of courses per teacher to boost the teaching quality and to give time for scientific activity and professional and personal development.*
28. *Make teachers aware of alternative teaching strategies, including the periodic evaluation of the alignment of teaching methods and learning outcomes (ongoing process.)*
29. *Teachers should to a greater extent include the latest research, trends and knowledge on the labour market in the teaching process.*
30. *Literature should be more on international level and in electronic version.*
31. *Provide access to a range of electronic tools for teaching, professional and research activities.*
32. *Increase the number of training and educations for teaching staff to achieve better results in the teaching process.*
33. *Formalize Peer review process.*
34. *Revise and standardize all learning outcomes.*
35. *It is recommended to have 4-7 outcomes per course and a maximum of 10 for the study program*
36. *Make a constructive alignment and incorporate the acquisition of generic skills into the outcomes*
37. *Multiple electives that will generate general competencies such as management*
38. *Changing internship for elective course is not recommendation, it should be organised by Faculty instead*
39. *Increase a number of contracts or Memorandums of understanding for internship*
40. *Change the subjects that can cover more environmental protection. In this form program is more natural protection*
41. *Link the learning outcomes of the study program with the competencies*
42. *In order to better support international exchange, it is necessary to introduce lectures and courses in English in all studies. These lectures and courses should be defined as compulsory for all students, including homework.*
43. *Improve the design of your webpage to promote the recruitment of students*
44. *Continue further developing the ALUMNI organization.*
45. *The drop-out and graduation rates should be included into the quality indicators at the study level programme until the next reaccreditation.*
46. *Design an action plan for the graduation rate improvement, monitor its implementation, and report, annually. Adjustment necessary upon the reporting.*
47. *Anti-plagiarism system does not exist, it should be introduced with clearly defined procedures.*

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48. *The University will launch the policy to make students' theses available to the public to discourage possible plagiarism. Additionally, the Faculty should organise workshops for the staff and students on the awareness raising about plagiarism and its consequences for the future of the students or an academic staff committing it.*

49. *Post-evaluation action plan design and implementation is compulsory, at least once per year, for the academic staff to improve the teaching process and the knowledge transfer for the teaching staff towards the students.*

50. *Each Academic staff member should have developed their own plan of research and teaching activities, implement it and monitor its implementation. The Plan should include no. of paper planned to publish, no. of workshops attendance with presentations and participation per year and the planned trainings for professional advancement. Cumulative plan for the academic staff should be available for the next reaccreditation.*

51. *Teaching staff should involve students in the research activities. Publications should be listed.*

52. *The study programme management should find the way of meeting the standard.*

53. *Young researchers should be more supported and involved in the research activities by the senior staff. They should meet the standard of a paper published per year in average in the past three years.*

54. *The journals for the publications should be diverse, international indexed in bases such as SCOPUS, WOS etc.*

55. *Ensure appropriate provision for learning resources for students and staff with disabilities or difficulties.*

56. *Investments in IT-resources is recommended to improve students' needs for studying experience.*

It is important to note is that this evaluation by the ET was very difficult because in by far the majority of cases the SER does not provide evidence for its claims of compliance with the standards, and neither does it point to any documents where such evidence might be located. This considerably hampered the performance of the expert team, which did not have adequate resource, including time, to require the University to revisit its analysis of compliance with each standard. Accordingly, this expert evaluation report is produced based on the material supplied by the FMNS, and thus may be compromised.

Moreover, the SER supplied for the previous re-accreditation suffered from the same failing and thus it is disappointing that there has been no institutional learning in how to produce a useful self-evaluation. Indeed, some parts of the two SERs are identical.

It is also important to point out that only some of the ET recommendations are implemented after reaccreditation - 2021. During the visit of the ET, the impression is given that the implementation of reaccreditation is a burden and not an opportunity for improvement. Therefore, the ET below details all the elements that need to be implemented in order for this programme to achieve the results and reach the expected number of students.

2. PROGRAM EVALUATION

2.1. Mission, objectives and administration

The University mission statement is broad, not particularly ambitious, and does not set any direction in its description of the University's activities: '*University of Prishtina is an autonomous public institution of higher education that develops academic education, scientific research, artistic creativity, professional counselling and other areas of academic activities*'. The mission is supported by several more ambitious objectives, the most relevant of which to the program is '*to have a leading the role in the development of education, science, culture, society and economy of Kosovo*'. In part by being broad the mission of the University articulates well with the program mission and is reflective of it.

The MSc program in Ecology and Environmental Protection is designed as a continuation of the BSc Ecology and Environmental Protection study program. Its primary mission is to advanced students' ecological and environmental expertise, empowering them to tackle complex ecological and environmental challenges, create innovative solutions for sustainable development and fostering a healthier planet for future generations.

According to SER the objectives of MSc study program are:

− To provide students with a comprehensive understanding of ecological and environmental concepts and principles, including their application in solving complex problems.
− To equip students with the skills necessary to conduct independent scientific research and carry out managerial tasks, with a focus on using approaches in line with European standards and best practices.

– To develop effective communication skills, enabling students to communicate research findings and ideas to different stakeholders (including policymakers, researchers, and the general public).
– To foster an understanding of the importance of sustainability development and equip students with the knowledge and skills to promote sustainable practices in their future professional roles.
– To prepare students for advanced studies, including PhD programs, and provide them with the tools necessary to pursue successful careers in academia, industry, government, or non-profit sectors.
– To promote and advance the Ecology and Environmental fields in the national and international labour market by producing highly skilled and knowledgeable graduates in their respective areas.

The program defines eight (8) learning outcomes. In general, these are in accordance with the level 7 descriptor of the National Qualifications Framework, and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. The learning outcomes specify the acquisition of knowledge, but also the ability to apply that knowledge to practical tasks related to ecology and environmental protection, and to develop communication skills through the development of problem-solving skills and broader thinking skills. In their creation the views of a small number of external stakeholders, as part of the Faculty-level Advisory Board, was taken into account and there was internal, but not external, academic discussion. The program may wish to consider seeking external academic advice when the program learning outcomes are next reviewed.

The University has a Code of Ethics for academic staff. There is a well done prescribe approach to academic integrity and ethics, and the documentation addresses important topics. Management has defined integrity and ethics as a matter of policy. However, plagiarism detection software is not currently used.

Individual teachers have much independence and discretion as to what they teach and how it is taught. The notion is that they are individual academic agents whose academic freedom is to be protected. While giving freedom to academic staff is on the one hand a noble act, such freedom can have unintended negative consequences. These arise when practice differs between individual staff and thus coordinated, predictable, and stable situations in which students can learn to the best of their abilities are not readily apparent. Some of the issues referred to in this report have their origins in misplaced and misused academic freedom. The first issue is that coordinating staff to teach a coherent whole program, with logical progression along a defined trajectory is difficult. There are program leaders but their hands are tied

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somewhat since they do not have the authority to push their colleagues to comply with a single vision, or didactic or research concept. As a result the program is the sum of its courses, rather than them acting in synergy with a definite purpose. There is a need to develop and apply an overarching didactic and research concept.

Formal policies, guidelines and regulations dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues are established at the level of the University and are fixed across the institution. These management instruments are made available to both staff and students. Both staff and students met by the ET were aware of these instruments insofar as they impinge on their work or study. Staff were well-versed in the specifics of particular policies and students were clear on the rules that applied to them. Much general program administration takes place at the level of the FMNS, though there is operational discussion at departmental committee meetings, chaired by the Head of Department. The ET considered that great emphasis was placed on the results of questionnaires in shaping the program, particularly those issued to students; the ET also considered that such data are not always reliable (and heard evidence suggesting this) and in any case only permit reactive, rather than proactive change. Though students have representation at Faculty-level, students reported difficulty in engaging with the representative system in relation to the management of their program. Students are not part of the constitution of the Departmental Committee and so their input into the management of their own programme is severely restricted. This should be rectified to permit proactive change resulting from a dialogue between staff and students.

Regulations exist at the level of the UP in terms of ethics in both teaching and research, and disciplinary matters. The ET saw no evidence that such regulations were either breached or inappropriate.

Statements of responsibility relating to the management and delivery of the program are reviewed on an on-going basis at departmental committee meetings. However, more general policies, regulations, and terms of reference that are largely set at the level of the University are not revisited on any cyclical basis, rather they are reviewed reactively as operational matters dictate and the ET was unable to determine whether or not these instruments had fixed expiry dates.

Teaching methods presented in SER are different for different subjects. The most applied are discussions, exercises, practical work in the field, small working groups and etc. It has to be standardised and defined on the way that clear what is teaching methodology and evaluation methods.

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

Compliance level: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *The program may wish to consider seeking external academic advice when the program learning outcomes are next reviewed Develop and apply an overarching didactic and research concept.*
2. *Develop means for students to be part of the decision-making program management processes.*

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3. *Ensure that all policies, regulations, and terms of reference relating to the management and delivery of the program are reviewed at least once every two years.*

4. *Study program mission need to be clear and visible.*

5. *Integration of modern teaching practices and research at the program level, especially integration of e-learning and online teaching and learning at all levels of the teaching concept and the entire curriculum in a differentiated way.*

6. *The didactic concept should consider all relevant stages and elements of the teaching and learning process.*

2.2. Quality management

According to SER functionality, quality assurance and finances of the University of Prishtina are regulated by Law No. 04/L-037 on Higher Education in the Republic of Kosovo" and by the Statute of UP. Based on articles 210- 225 of the Statute, the Senate of the University of Prishtina on 30. 12. 2016 approved the Regulation on Quality Assurance and Evaluation which regulates quality assurance and evaluation mechanisms and procedures at the University of Prishtina. This Regulation defines the role and responsibilities of each respective stakeholder within the University of Prishtina to realise the evaluation and quality assurance activities.

The Committee for Quality Assurance and evaluation at the faculty level is composed from a member from the Faculty Management, the Faculty Coordinator for Quality Assurance, students and academic staff. The appropriate, and the major of functions (activities) appear to be implemented. To ensure a proper evaluation of study programs and course implementation, the UP has developed questionnaires for academic staff, administration and students. These questionnaires are carried out separately and contain questions relevant to each category. The process is organized in electronic form and managed via Students Electronic Management System (SEMS) and System for Quality Management (SQM).

By combining different types of questionnaires, the authority management of UP aim to get full overview of quality issues of each program including different components such as: the evaluations inputs, processes and outputs, as well as learning outcomes for students. All information's are gathered periodically (each semester) by anonymous questionnaires, while the evaluate results are taken in consideration by each the respective management authorities to address the problems.

Expert team want to point to the fact that is challenging for the University to carry out numerous evaluations, especially in the case of electronic evaluations, when evaluation fatigue sets. Maybe to think about transparent communication and publication of evaluated results.

Also, questionnaire for *Course evaluation and teaching* is carried out on the students. Through anonymous questionnaires, students have the opportunity to periodically evaluate each course and academic staff. UP also use other sources for the evaluation: quality of research activities of academic staff measured through publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals, participation in scientific conferences, projects and other activities.

After last 3 years re-accreditation FMNS still do not have mechanisms to 'close the loop' and take appropriate action. For this reason, efforts should be further intensified to involve more in operational activities. It is necessary to ensure PDCA cycle Plan, Do, Check, Act. The part Act seems to be missing in this cycle. From the available documents and the discussions on site, it is clear to the experts that the data collected will also be used for continuous development, but it has to be show somehow. It is necessary to provide some transparency and communicate/report the issues and actions of the QAS to different stakeholder groups, including where appropriate students.

The QAS is relatively immature, which is to be expected given its implementation post previous reaccreditation. The QAS needs also to be complemented by a cultural change where staff do not view the QAS as a threat but a tool to realise continuous improvement and to achieve and maintain the highest standards in education and science. Unfortunately, there are no reports on how the public or University members are informed about quality development in a public report beside web site.

FMNS has recognised that there is room for improvement in the area of internationalization, funding process and student participation in QAS.

Alumni are very important part of Quality Assessment. They can conduct corresponding institutionalised surveys and implement results to improve all quality aspects.

Information on the activities of the University is available on the website in Albanian. In addition, communication with stakeholders is maintained in a variety of ways.
The FMNS is obviously taking its social role seriously.

The FMNS had in 2021. a strategy plan for 2 years that includes establishing new study programmes, research centres and intensifying cooperation with industry to become a regional centre of excellence. The strategy is entirely appropriate and plans to operationalise this are

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documented. As part of the plan, the following recommendations must be implemented to ensure that the education is not/has not been compromised. ET did not receive any documents which will give more detail according to this.

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	
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.		X
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.	X	
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

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *QAS needs to be embedded into practice and mechanisms designed to enable feedback and action within appropriate timescales.*
2. *As set of key performance indicators need to establish (agreed), monitored and reviewed at key times throughout the academic year.*
3. *Open discussion of the course evaluation results with the students.*
4. *Open discussion of the course evaluation results with the teachers.*
5. *The Faculty should make efforts to develop and implement a quality management system which ensures proactive involvement of all stakeholders following a PDCA-cycle approach.*
6. *The culture must change to one of continuous improvement with appropriate feedback and timely/efficient loops e.g., annual cycles*
7. *The Faculty should make efforts to set functional and operational quality system with all stake holders.*
8. *Establishment of alumni tracking and the corresponding integration into institutionalised surveys.*
9. *Introduce additional subjects with a focus on current and future knowledge and skills, both for current students and for external experts who need more advanced knowledge.*
10. ***Accept all recommendations from last report.***

2.3. Academic staff

The institution employed qualified staff that are responsible for the programme of ecology and environmental health and other academic student services wherever they are offered in order to improve the effectiveness of the institution. For implementation of study program are there is 22 teaching academic staff, 14 of them as professors and 8 teaching assistants. For this study program, two full-time academic staff are appointed as responsible persons which means more than one professor per each student group or for every 60 ECTS credits.

According to SER and ET visit discussion for specific courses such as: "Analytical and instrumental chemistry", the staff is hired from the Department of Chemistry, "Circular economy" staff is hired from the Faculty of Economy, and for the course "Sociology and Environment" staff is hired from the Department of Sociology.

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Young staff members must follow training organized by the Centre for Excellence in Teaching (UP), to improve teaching quality. To develop teaching and assessment competence a short program is available to new staff that covers basic aspects of pedagogy including how students learn and methods for promoting independent learning. Teachers found this program valuable and could cite what they had learned from it. This program is not mandatory, but is a requirement if staff want to have their contract renewed or be promoted.

A scrutiny of the CVs of staff revealed that their demonstrated expertise in terms of both teaching experience and research outputs qualifies them to, collectively, teach the various and appropriately diverse courses of the program. Individual teaching workloads are not excessive, though some teachers volunteer to teach more hours because they are paid additionally for this, and this may naturally have an effect on their other duties, including research and research output. Staff met by the ET were satisfied with their allocation and balance of duties and reported sufficient time available for research. Retirement is mandatory at 65, but staff may be retained in a part-time capacity until 70.

Staff that had been appointed relatively recently reported the provision to them of both full position descriptions and conditions of employment, the latter as part of an employment contract. However, these were issued only after employment had commenced, and without a legally signed contract their position as employees was temporarily extremely vulnerable, and the position in relation to insurance was unclear. To aid transparency and allow expectations to be met, the provision of information about the teaching positions should be issued to all candidates for employment while they remain candidates. Other aspects of the recruitment process, including procedural aspects, legal aspects, and the mechanism for choosing staff are sound.

A minority of staff also hold part-time, sometimes temporary teaching positions at both the UP and other higher education providers. For this to occur permission must be sought and granted from the relevant University authority. These supplemental positions are limited to one per person at any one time. There is a UP statute relevant here, but it only refers to the prohibition of an additional full-time position.

In general students reported satisfaction with the attention paid to them by staff and indicated that staff were available to give additional feedback and instruction to students who were struggling. The duties of staff extend to community service, but the nature, duration and frequency of such service was not indicated in the SER or other documents and could not be discerned by the ET.

Where it is identified, usually from student evaluations, that a teacher's teaching or assessment practice could be improved they are first counselled within the department, and if necessary,

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required to attend a short developmental program conceived and delivered by the Centre of Teaching Excellence.

The ET noted an assumption within the department that experience equates to excellence in teaching such that those with experience cannot benefit from professional development. This is both erroneous and deprives experienced staff of exposure to the latest developments in teaching and assessment. While the UP provides some useful development activities for all teaching staff, some in conjunction with overseas organizations, the uptake of these opportunities is not monitored and the department is unaware of the professional updating undertaken by its staff and of the overall complement of competence and expertise across its teaching staff, except through student evaluations. Students cannot be expected to know of all the varied means of supporting their learning, and so reliance on their feedback is questionable at best. Professional updating is *ad hoc*, and reliant on the individual motivations of staff.

Evaluation of academic staff is by student questionnaire only, though some self-evaluation through reflection takes place. The use of questionnaires is a retrospective and reactive process and opportunity for 'in flight' improvement is missed. Other means of evaluation by peers and superiors are largely absent. The results of any evaluations are not made public.

The ET was unable to identify any specific strategy for quality enhancement in relation to developing teaching in general or teaching competence, or in relation to the provision of learning materials. The lack of any strategy or concerted drive is perhaps best exemplified by the lack of attention to the recommendations delivered as part of the previous re-accreditation – many have not been actioned or are only in process now. Instead, enhancement occurs organically and is typically reactive, rather than proactive. Issues are dealt with as they arise, rather than being anticipated. To some extent this situation is a product of the administrative arrangements at the University, where the locus of change and decision-making is not with the program, or even department, but sits partly at the faculty-level and mostly at the University level. Developmental change is therefore slow, and systems for enhancement would face the obstacle of considerable bureaucracy. Nonetheless the ET noted that new laboratories are in development and are projected to be occupied in 2025.

Literature proposed in Syllabuses need to be improve and changed. This is still the weak part of this program.

In European quality academic and teaching strategies one of the important tasks is to develop good own teaching materials. This must be focus for the future in this MSc program.

	Compliance

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Standard	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	
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	
Standard 3.8. Academic staff evaluation is conducted regularly at least through self-evaluation, students, peer and superiors' evaluations, and occur on a formal basis at least once each year. The results of the evaluation are made publicly available.		X
Standard 3.9. Strategies for quality enhancement include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials.		X
Standard 3.10. Teachers retired at age limit or for other reasons lose the status of full-time teachers and are considered part-time teachers.	X	

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *All candidates for employment should be provided with full position descriptions and conditions of employment while they remain candidates.*
2. *Ensure that all staff who teach and assess are provided with adequate training in teaching and assessing before they commence their duties.*
3. *Ensure and monitor the professional updating of all teachers in relation to developments in teaching and assessing practice.*
4. *Academic staff evaluation should be conducted regularly at least through self-evaluation, students, peer and superiors' evaluations, occur on a formal basis at least once each year, and the results made publicly available.*
5. *Develop strategies for quality enhancement to include improving the teaching strategies and quality of learning materials.*
6. *Improving the pedagogical competencies of teachers should become part of regular institutional activities.*
7. *The University should encourage teachers to significantly increase outbound mobility.*
8. *Literature revision in Syllabuses is obligatory.*
9. *It is important to ensure objective and transparent grade weight given by each evaluator for academic staff.*
10. *Teachers should to a greater extent include the latest research, trends and knowledge. on the labour market in the teaching process.*
11. *Literature should be more on international level and in electronic version.*
12. *Provide access to a range of electronic tools for teaching, professional and research activities.*
13. *Formalize Peer review process.*

2.4. Educational process content

The program content is designed to meet the program objectives as stated in Section 2.1.
This Ecology and Environmental Protection program is subject-related and it covers interdisciplinary aspects. It combines ecological and environmental subjects, it is designed as a continuation of the BSc Ecology and Environmental Protection study program. The program is offered in the Albanian language.

 The learning outcomes for the study program are set in line to describe study program and on the satisfactory level.

The ET considered that the objectives provide a sound basis on which to build a curricular structure, and comprised an appropriate balance of academic subject, interdisciplinarity,

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methods for investigating the subject and promoted the development of soft skills. All students gain experience of research as part of the production of a diploma thesis and engage in a course to specifically prepare them for this experience. A variety of elective courses are available that give students opportunities to specialise and follow their own interests without compromising the integrity of the program or the achievement of its objectives and overall learning outcomes. The overall relationship between the program content and its objectives is adequate, but could be much stronger if an overall didactic direction was articulated and adhered to.

There is significant compatibility with other programs in the EHEA and the program is benchmarked against a similar program at the University of Zagreb, indeed the course complement is extremely similar. The foregoing is the findings of the ET: the SER was silent on logical flow within the program.

The ET formed the view that the program complies with the National Qualifications Framework, and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area, but that this might be serendipitous. The SER simply reported the relevant level descriptors of these frameworks without any indication of how the program meets them or how the University knows that they are met.

Both teaching and assessment methods are diverse and appropriate to the program and likely employment of graduates. Courses are specified in short descriptions, which contain all relevant material, including learning outcomes and assessment tools, and are made available to students at the first session of each course and online. However, students met by the ET were unaware of the nature of learning outcomes or how they might be used to support or guide their learning. In this case it is difficult for the student-teacher relationship to be a partnership in which each assumes the responsibility for reaching the learning outcomes. Further the students reported that occasionally not all assessments as listed in the syllabus are performed. This raises problems in calculating the overall mark for the module, and will skew the balance of assessments in a way that deviates from that published. It may also affect the assessment of the achievement of one or more course learning outcomes, which may compromise the achievement of the program learning outcomes.

Staff reported that they would prefer it if all teaching and assessing was in English, which is the *lingua franca* of their research and other professional activity. This would also make resources more readily available to students, since most modern textbooks are in English. However, students met by the ET reported that many of their colleagues do not yet possess sufficient skills in English for this to be an effective medium of instruction for them.

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This is compounded by a lack of specificity in some learning outcomes at course level that renders them extremely difficult to assess. There are many examples of unqualified learning outcomes: 'Understand …', 'Use …' and 'Acquire …'. Some academic staff claimed to be aware of Bloom's taxonomy in relation to classification of learning outcomes into levels of complexity and specificity, but the ET noted that this awareness does not necessarily translate into practice. Within a constructively aligned system all the learning outcomes must be met by a student in order to pass a course, but program staff reported to the ET that only some of the learning outcomes need to be met and this may explain why those cited above are difficult to assess, though the process for deciding which ones, if any, should be met by students was unclear to the ET. This fundamental lack of understanding further supports the need for the ongoing professional development of teaching staff.

For some courses attendance attracts a mark, up to 20 % of the overall mark. This is problematic in two ways. First it is inconsistent across courses and individual teachers decide whether attendance should be rewarded. This was explained to the ET as a matter of academic freedom. Second, in higher education marks are awarded and credit gained exclusively for learning, and all marks should be awarded in relation to meeting or exceeding the learning outcomes. There is no place in higher education for rewarding anything other than learning. If attendance is considered beneficial in some way, then it could be used to access assessments, i.e. as a condition to be able to submit work or attend an examination.

However, many other course learning outcomes are appropriate and are generally in line with the level descriptors of the external frameworks.

It is unclear to the ET who has oversight over assessment settings and who monitors for overall alignment with level descriptors. Assessment arrangements do not involve multiple assessors, i.e. second marking is not practiced, nor is any form of moderation. Assessment practice was explored with staff who agreed that the arrival at assessment grades, except for those assessments with rigidly defined marking, such as multiple choice questionnaires, is largely a tacit process and is undefined; that one marker's understanding of what constitutes a grade of, for example 7, may not correspond with another's understanding; and that individuals may assign different grades to the same student work. The SER reported that, 'The verifying standard of student achievement per each course is described in syllabuses', but this is true for only a sub-set of courses, where a marking rubric is included and in any case such a rubric specifies the standard but does not verify it.

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Assessment is regulated at the level of the UP and its policies and procedures include actions to be taken in to dealing with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or inconsistently assessed.

This study program is offered only on Albanian language. Professors are obliged to present the syllabuses to the students in the first lecture, including learning outcomes but from the experience this has to be repeated true semester.

Student assessment is described in each syllabus and according to SER if students are not satisfied with the assessment, they have the right of the objection, and then the faculty management is obliged to create an ad-hock committee for evaluation of the student. There is no data about concrete cases.

The internship is mandatory and practical part will be realized in relevant public or private Institutions. Students who get a place for an internship can last at least one month (full-time) workload, and it will be validated with 5 ECTS, comparable to the workload of an elective course. Within the UP, a Centre for Career Development exists, which offers advice to students regarding the internship. The practical part is also specified to learning outcomes, and workloads are allocated to ETCS credits.

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	

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 activity reports; students during practice stages have assigned tutors among the academic staff in the study program.	X	
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.	X	

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Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Ensure that in both teaching and assessing, teaching staff have and apply a common understanding of the degree of challenge to be applied.*
2. *Revise course learning outcomes so that they are all assessable and match the expectations of the external frameworks.*
3. *Ensure that all learning outcomes are assessed.*
4. *Ensure that marks and credits are awarded only for learning, and not for any other factor, such as attendance.*
5. *Learning outcomes should be explained and discussed with students from the perspective of their relevance to the students' development.*
6. *Implement a mechanism to ensure that all assessments as specified in the course documents are performed.*
7. *Develop appropriate, valid and reliable mechanisms for verifying standards of student achievement.*
8. *Increase a number of contracts or Memorandums of understanding for internship.*

2.5. Students

This study programme presents more classical approach in teaching in which the student and their needs are not in the focus. The programme and the teachers should be more oriented towards students and their needs. The recommendations from the previous re-accreditation process were not improved but shifted to the UP level, in majority of cases. It is clear that the Heads of the programme did not put enough effort to improve the conditions according to the recommendations, therefore, several of them remain unfulfilled. There is an evident unwillingness to improve the study programme above the legally prescribed minimum.

UP Statute and the FMNS Regulation for Master Studies (2023) are clear and describe a detailed admission procedure. Admission requirements are consistently and fairly applied for all students who apply for enrolment (p.51). The SER states that To be enrolled in this this program, students should have a Bachelor's Degree (180 ECTS) in Ecology and Environmental Protection, Biology or similar.

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The previous Re-accreditation Expert Team's Report approved the MSc study programme with no more than 30 students' enrolments in 1st year. The SER applies for the same quota.

The SER does not contain specific information about enrolments at the year of the study level nor the graduates and dropouts, therefore the ET asked for additional information. The report states that the laboratory part of the teaching is conducted in smaller groups, which is confirmed on the site.

According to the Statute of the UP (2022) Article 110: Examinations shall serve as the regular mode of evaluation of knowledge. The procedure of delivery of an examination is defined by the study program. The mode of determining the knowledge and passing the exam shall be defined by the course syllabus.

The study programme syllabi have defined fashion of examination.

The feedback is provided soon after the exams. The assistance is in a form of consultation meetings with the teachers available twice per week, yet there is no record about it. The consultation schedule is visible placed in front of the teachers' office. There is available mechanism for complaints. In case of dissatisfaction students can take exam in front of a special commission.

The SER refers to the UP Statute in which Article 231 defines: the General Secretary of the UP keeps the records of the following: applicants for admission; students enrolled for all programs of study and scientific research; graduates; staff under contract; property; financial accounts; research, artistic, and consultancy projects; commercial contracts; academic work performance reports; evaluations; other matters as required by the Steering Council, the Rector, or the Senate. According to the Article 233 all data shall be stored in a standardized electronic form. Upon finishing all obligations and collecting 120 ECTS at the study programme (according to the SER), the student will receive diploma and diploma supplement. The Heads confirmed there is SEMS system available to the students, teachers and administration.

The support mentioned as flexible treatment of students in special situations is three examinations period is usually organised according to the UP Regulations while the SER does not refer to it. The UP Regulation nor any other document does not contain other types of special conditions except for the exams. The ET considers that UP should improve its strategy into support students in special situations. No records have been provided on how often students apply, for what reason and what is the percentage of the approval. It is possible that there is a non-formal procedure in application for individual cases, but there is no evidence about that.

According to the information provided, there are processes in place to collect and analyse data referring to the student progression and drop-out rates available in the SEMS system, collected and processed at the UP level (General Secretary). They are not included in quality indicators.

The SER (p.52) refers to the UP's regulations which define how to deal with academic misconduct, including plagiarism and other forms of cheating. Even though it states that there is anti-plagiarism check at the UP level available, yet its application has not been confirmed. Therefore, this standard has not been achieved.

The Statute of the University of Prishtina (Article 145) defines clearly student rights and obligations. The document is publicly available.

The evaluation process has confirmed the presence of information, outside the documents supplied in advance of the visit, that demonstrate institution-wide arrangements for student admissions, rights of representation, student's transfer, student feedback via 'satisfaction surveys', complaint procedures and similar. There is an established mechanism for students' rights ensured. The SER states (p. 52) that each Student's organization has its statute approved by its members in conformity to general regulations issued by Governing Board of University. Status will cover the principles for equal possibilities and non-discrimination; Student's interests will be represented within university through these bodies.

Regarding the student mobility, the University Regulation on the student transfer and mobility in the University of Hasan Prishtina (2017) clearly describes available possibilities and procedures. The ERASMUS + programmes available for international mobility of the students and the staff.

Standard	Compliance	
	Yes	No
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	
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: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Design an action plan for the graduation rate improvement, monitor its implementation, and report, annually. Adjustment necessary upon the reporting.*
2. *Post-evaluation action plan design and implementation is compulsory, at least once per year, for the academic staff to improve the teaching process and the knowledge transfer for the teaching staff towards the students.*

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3. *The SER should contain sufficient and specific data for assessment of the study programme according to the standards. The SER lacks Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) such as number of student enrolment to each year, number of graduates per academic year, number of dropouts, average duration of the studying, mobility participation and similar. For the next re-accreditation KPIs should be presented with clearly set threshold indicators and their achievement.*

4. *The recommendation regarding high drop-out of the study programmes' students is for the Faculty to develop the support system that will reduce the unwillingness of the enrolled students to finish their study.*

5. *Improve the anti-plagiarism check of the students' works, deliver the evidence of its usage.*

6. *Include students' performance in quality indicators.*

2.6. Research

The Study programme has not developed the research objectives nor indicators. The SER (p. 54) listed projects that had been implemented over past five years. It is clear that the research approach is rather reactive than proactive. The researchers follow opportunities available by applying to calls for grants from various donors. The SER refers to the UP strategy and the its goals, it seems that there is a lack of awareness that each faculty should develop the strategic goals with the departments with clearly set indicators for monitoring their implementation.

The UP Regulations define research and teaching working hours, the study programme teaching staff follow the regulations as well as the criteria for advancement in scientific promotion.

There are clear policies established for research that are compliant to international standards and norms, yet they are not fully implemented. The Department of Biology conducts research that include animals. The UP developed the policy and the procedure about it, but the Department does not follow it. There is no evidence of the UP's Ethical Committee Approval for conducting research on animals, nor protocol developed and implemented for performing research on animals.

The Directive 2010/63/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes that is obligatory to all European researchers. Since the Study Programme researchers publish their work in international publications and participate in the scientific events with their results presentations at the same market as the European researchers, they should apply the Directive.

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The SER provide the list of publications with citations. The ET verified the majority of it through SCOPUS authors search and Research gate data base. The graduation procedure includes research part performed by the students individually.

The SER (p.64) states that the intellectual property rights are regulated at UP with Code of Ethics and other Regulations, as well as with national Laws. For those interested to commercialization of their ideas, they have to apply in MEST for patents.

The SER and the Heads of the study programme did not provide supporting evidence on academic staff encouragement for including their research and scholarly activities relevant to courses they teach in the teaching.

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
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
Standard 6.4. The academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity.	X	
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	
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: Partially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *The Department of Biology should develop own research plan with clear objectives, indicators and performance.*
2. *Each Academic staff member should have developed their individual plan of research and teaching activities, implement it and monitor its implementation. The Plan should include no. of paper planned to publish, no. of workshops attendance with presentations and participation per year and the planned trainings for professional advancement. Cumulative plan for the academic staff should be available for the next reaccreditation.*
3. *Teaching staff should involve students in the research activities. Publications should be listed.*
4. *The Department must get the UP's Ethical Committee Approval for each research including animals before the research starts. Written approval should be available as the supporting evidence.*

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5. *The Department must develop and implement a protocol for performing research on animals. All academic staff conducting research on animals should be obliged to apply it.*

2.7. Infrastructure and resources

The SWOT analysis in SER expresses the strengths of the study programme such as number of labs or lab equipment for each course sufficient for this programme and electronic monitoring system in the classrooms. Weaknesses are identified as poor conditions in the classrooms, labs, or office spaces for work and studies, lack of technical staff for maintenance of existing equipment, there are no funds for purchasing textbooks for the organized courses. Opportunities are a construction of the FMNS facility and creation of modern infrastructural facilities; while as for threats there is only one identified: Failure to resolve the issue for the FMNS facility by the relevant institutions. ET expresses concern as the same SWOT elements were listed three years ago.

The building is in very poor condition as no funds are being invested because a new facility is under construction. This ET did note recived any additional document regarding new facilities.

The laboratories are cramped, they are located in the basement and have limited seats. This is currently not a problem for the small number of students on the MSc programme but could become a problem in the future. The classrooms are equipped with chairs and tables, projector and board, but the quality is questionable. It is fair to say that students have something to sit on. As for the equipment in the labs, it is listed in the SER, but true the visit this ET did not give the impression that all the equipment listed was being used in teaching.

In the ancillary facilities such as the toilets, there is no paper and soap on any of the floors. Therefore, the ET relies on the SER regarding the conditions of the space and books in the library.

Department of Biology (including this study program) have its yearly financial plan covering chemicals, consumables, equipment, transportation and accommodation needed for lab and field works, which ensure the sustainability of the study program for the next years. The students of Department of Biology use the premises of the University Library which is within the University Campus. The UP library offers access in many books in the field of biology as well as in digital platforms ScienceDirect.

Standard	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.	X	
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	
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	

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b) a number of seats in the group work rooms corresponding to at least 10% of the total number of students in the study program; c) their own book stock from Albanian and foreign speciality literature, enough to cover the disciplines within the curricula, out of which at least 50% should represent book titles or speciality courses of recognised publishers, from the last 10 years; d) a book stock within its own library with a sufficient number of books so as to cover the needs of all students in the cycle and year of study the respective discipline is provided for; e) a sufficient number of subscriptions to Albanian and foreign publications and periodicals, according to the stated mission.		
Standard 7.6. The infrastructure and facilities dedicated to the implementation of the program is adapted to students with special needs		X

Compliance level: Substantially compliant

ET recommendations:

1. *Ensure appropriate provision for learning resources for students and staff with disabilities or difficulties.*
2. *Investments in IT-resources is recommended to improve students' needs for studying experience.*

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. 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	**Partially compliant**
Quality management	**Substantially compliant**
Academic Staff	**Substantially compliant**
Educational Process Content	**Substantially compliant**
Students	**Substantially compliant**
Research	**Partially 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:

- Integrate of modern teaching practices and research at the program level, especially integration of e-learning and online teaching and learning at all levels of the teaching concept and the entire curriculum in a differentiated way.

- Put a live open discussion of the course evaluation results with the students and

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teachers.

- The Faculty should make efforts to continue in a quality management system which ensures proactive involvement of all stakeholders following a PDCA- cycle approach.
- Revise and standardize all learning outcomes, make a constructive alignment, and incorporate the acquisition of generic skills into the outcomes.
  Enable smoother procedure for the transfer between Universities and ECTS recognition.
- Provide mechanisms to ensure that work submitted by students is original.
- Continue further developing the ALUMNI organization.
- The University should aim to create an environment which welcomes all students, enabling them to participate fully in university life. This applies to students with physical disabilities.

On the end Quality should be developed at the Faculties -components of the University. This ET strongly supports the development of a quality culture, and therefore it is necessary to monitor the parameters and analyses at each Faculty and not to use the analyses of other faculties as their own in order to show only the element of the existence of a formal procedure.

In conclusion, the Expert Team considers that the study program *Ecology and Environmental protection, MSc* offered by *University of Prishtina, Faculty od mathematics and natural science, Department of Biology, is Substantially compliant* with the standards included in the *KAA Accreditation manual* and, therefore, recommends *to accredit* the study program for a duration of *3 years* with a number of *30* **students** to be enrolled in the program.

4. APPENDICES *(if available)*

None

Expert Team

Chair

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(Signature)   (Prof. PhD. Sanja Kalambura, expert)   (19.04.2024.)

Member –expert

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(Signature)   (Prof. PhD Mark Davies, expert)   (19.04.2024.)

Member – student expert

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(Signature)   (Jadranka Pelikan, student expert)   (19.04.2024.)